

# Tatler

22ND ANNIVERSARY ISSUE



It's Anne Curtis.  
'Nuff said.

ASIA'S  
MOST

# STYLISH





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ASIA'S MOST

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A studio photograph of three women with long, wavy brown hair, wearing white ribbed athletic sets (crop tops and leggings). They are posed against a black background. One woman is lying on her side in the foreground, while two others are sitting behind her. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting their skin and the texture of the clothing.

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# AROUND ASIA

Every month, we curate an online selection of stories from the previous month's print editions of Tatler Asia for you to enjoy

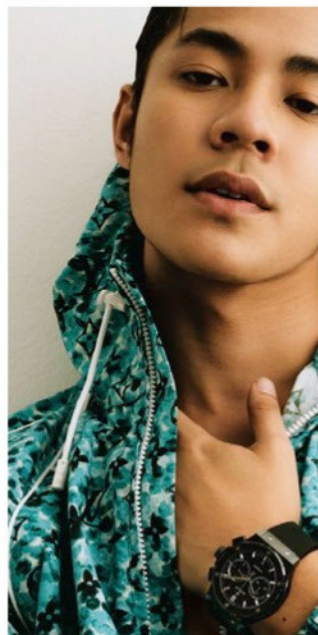
## TATLER HONG KONG

Mixologist Lorenzo Antinori left his role as beverage manager at the Four Seasons Hong Kong earlier this year to open a bar similar to those found in his hometown. He told *Tatler* why a Rome-inspired hotspot is right for Hong Kong, and what he hopes it will teach customers about the beauty of simplicity and *la dolce vita*.



## TATLER MALAYSIA

He's only 22, but actor Meerqueen is already a household name and beloved by luxury brands. The rising star told *Tatler* about starring in a hit TV series and dealing with the unexpected struggles of his journey so far.



## SHANGLIU TATLER

Christie's Asia president Francis Belin, who is a 2021 Asia's Most Influential honouree, is modernising the auction business by breaking down boundaries between different geographies and types of sales, as well as collaborating with rival houses. He shared how he's empowering the collector and how he wants to take auctioning to the next level.



## TATLER TAIWAN

When Evan Chen was younger, his father—an amateur racer who inspired his love of the sport—did not initially approve of his dreams of going pro. But a win at the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia in 2015, followed by triumphs at races around the region, led to Chen becoming Taiwan's youngest professional racing driver today. The 2018 Gen.T honouree spoke with *Tatler* about overcoming challenges on the road to success.

## TATLER PHILIPPINES

The winner of the inaugural season of *Drag Race Philippines, 2023* Gen.T honouree Precious Paula Nicole sat down with *Tatler* to talk about the Precious Foundation, which she set up to support the Golden Gays, and to chat all things artistry, self-belief and empowerment.



## TATLER SINGAPORE

Theodoric Chew, the co-founder of startup Intellect, wants to reframe society's perspective on mental health and break it down to relatable, everyday struggles. Since Intellect's launch in 2019, it has worked with experts to offer counselling and self-care programmes in a digital format, making them accessible to more people.



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## THE FRENCH CONNECTION

Angelo Comsti tries Casa Luisa, a newly-opened restaurant in San Pedro, Laguna that offers Filipino fare made with French culinary techniques.

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## DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

From The Rivière diamond necklace auctioned off at Christie's to the Heart of the Ocean by Harry Winston, these ten diamond necklaces are some of the most coveted in the world.



## A GIRL'S SECRET

Singer and actor Ana Karylle Padilla Tatlonghari-Yuzon, also known as "Karylle", likes to keep everything simple and uncomplicated—even in her skincare routine. Despite her busy schedule, the multihyphenate shares tips and tricks on maintaining her youthful glow.





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## On the Cover



Photography **BJ Pascual**  
Words **Ryanne Stephanie Cheng Co**  
Creative Direction **Vince Uy**  
Styling **Liz Uy with Joy Bernardo, Patrick Perez and Jolo Bartolo of Stylized**  
Make-up **Robbie Piñera**  
Hair **Raymond Santiago**  
Styling Assistants **Miki Bernal and Rae Delgado**  
Outfit **Alaia, Dior Jewellery Schiaparelli**  
Location **Siren Studio**

IMAGES COURTESY OF WHITE CUBE; WESLEY VILLARICA; CHANEL; GIULIA VEZZOSI





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## On the Cover



Photography **BJ Pascual**  
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IMAGES SAMI KHANTACHEI; CHRISTIAN LOUBOUTIN; ALEXANDER MCQUEEN; ROLEX





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## On the Cover



Photography **BJ Pascual**  
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IMAGES BY PASCUAL; CARTIER; WIG TYSMANS; COURTESY OF NAY PALAD HIDEAWAY





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# Here's to 22 and Beyond!

Our September issue features our much-awaited Asia's Most Stylish (AMS). On the cover is a woman who needs no introduction. Anne Curtis, whose career spans over 25 years, is a movie, style and social media icon. She has become the benchmark and the definition of a superstar today.

In April of this year, we were at the opening of Tiffany & Co in New York along with Heart Evangelista and Senator Chiz Escudero. When we got back to Manila, I asked Anne if she would be our Most Stylish this year, and she readily agreed and took on the task of preparing for the shoot. I won't get into the details, but we had to go through two continents to get the most gorgeous clothes and accessories. And the result is simply exceptional and jaw-dropping, photographed by one of the best, BJ Pascual.

Nine others joined Anne for this year's Most Stylish; I would like to thank our two photographers who helped make it happen: Wesley Villarica and Patrick Diokno. The Philippines' picks join the rest of Tatler Asia's runway-ready, originals, avant-garde and trendsetters. Watch out for it!

Also, in this issue, we capture the somewhat reclusive but most in-demand designer Paul Cabral. He has dressed every administration from President Cory Aquino till today and has kept the humility, creativity and, most importantly, the clientele. He will unveil his 60-piece collection this month at the Goldenberg Mansion, (his first show in his career), and we are sure this will be one of the year's fashion highlights. On my trip to Florence last July, I met up with a good friend Laudomia Pucci who told me about the new initiative they are doing at the venerated brand. Besides continually archiving her father's collection, she has opened up the Pucci headquarters for events and a design school; please check out this exclusive *Tatler* piece titled, *The House of Pucci*.

Not to be missed is the home of the celebrated landscape designer Ponce Verdiano's in Nagcarlan, Laguna, as well as the former Yves Saint Laurent home in Morocco, Villa Mabrouka, which has now been converted into a hotel designed by Jasper Conran. We then head to Siargao and speak to Bobby Dekeyser, Herve and Vince Lampert about the rehabilitation of the once devastated resort Nay Palad Hideaway, its revitalised design and vision and why they wanted to rebuild. They had only one standard answer: "We love the Philippines!"

In more fashion news, we tackle gender fluidity and highlight the emerging Asian designers in the region who are making their presence felt on the world stage. We



Anne Curtis gets glammed up by hair stylist Raymond Santiago and make-up artist Robbie Piñera for the Asia's Most Stylish cover shoot

also say goodbye to one of the country's foremost fashion mavericks, Pepito Albert, through the memories and friendships of some of his muses and closest friends.

This issue also marks our 22nd anniversary. I can't believe we have made it this far! Let's see if I did the math correctly. That's about 264 issues, and not once did we do a joint issue or not print due to the pandemic or other reasons. I am incredibly grateful for all those years, which have shaped me into who I am today and what the magazine has evolved into. Thank you to the hardworking *Tatler* team, the advertisers, photographers, writers, stylists and especially the readers. Thank you to God, who has made a once-upon-a-time dream a reality. The publishing world has changed; thank you for growing and evolving with us. Thank you for being with us on this fantastic journey!



—Anton San Diego, editor-in-chief



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# THE GUEST LIST



## BJ PASCUAL

With countless magazine covers, fashion editorials and commercial content up his sleeves, the prolific BJ Pascual remains one of the most sought-after photographers and influential social media sensations in the country today. In this issue, he captures no less than the fabulous Anne Curtis, one of Asia's Most Stylish honourees this year, who graces this month's cover.



## TATS MANAHAN

By profession, Tats Rejante Manahan is a surface decorator specialising in historical paint finishes, and a conservator/restorer for wall paintings. By advocacy, she has been involved in organisations whose concerns apply to her profession for the past 20 years: International Council on Monuments, Heritage Conservation Society and the Southeast Asian Cultural Heritage Alliance. Currently she holds the position as President of Alice Reyes Dance Philippines. In this issue, she writes about the much-anticipated musical, *Rama Hari* (p. 50).



## WESLEY VILLARICA

An accomplished photographer and brand filmmaker, Wesley Villarica is known for his ability to capture the beauty and uniqueness of life through his lens. With a diverse background that includes degrees in psychology, a brief stint in law school, and an MBA, he has transformed his passion for photography into an 18-year-long career at his production company Parallax Studio. He is part of the amazing team who captured this year's Asia's Most Stylish (p.92).



## PATRICK DIOKNO

Patrick has worked full time on the design side of the publishing industry for about eight years. He's a photographer, graphic designer, and an art director. His work has appeared on most advertising platforms; billboards, digital space and the pages of local glossies. Now a freelance creative, the talented lensman also photographed some of this year's Asia's Most Stylish honourees (p.92).





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*Hamilton* is coming to the Philippines **Inset:** *Genealogy* by Korean artist Yun Suknam

A sneak peek at two much-awaited musicals: *Hamilton* and *Rama Hari*, what to see at this year's Frieze in Seoul, and the late Pepito Albert's muses share their most precious memories of the famed designer

# Later Frieze







IMAGES: GMG PRODUCTIONS (SPREAD); HANCOCK GALLERY (INSET)

# SCENE



**1.** Peps Bengzon and Sara Appleton in the mountains of Sun Valley, Idaho **2.** Exchanging vows amid family, friends and nature **3.** The newlyweds **4.** The Bengzon brood: Pepito, Peps and Mela **5.** Bridal bouquet and bride's jewellery **6.** Ted Bardolph, George Appleton



WORDS: PI PASCUAL IMAGES COURTESY OF MELA BENGZON





2

# Mountain of Love

The majestic mountains of Sun Valley lent a magical background to the beautiful wedding of Jose Roman Agustin Mosqueda “Peps” Bengzon IV and Sara Appleton.

A favourite vacation place of the Appletons, Sun Valley in Idaho is a popular retreat in the American Northwest frequented by celebrities like Demi Moore, Clark Gable and Marilyn Monroe. Its most illustrious resident, however, would be Ernest Hemingway, who lived there in the last years of his life.

Peps and Sara, who met in New York in the spring of 2020, both agreed that the Big Apple is not the environment they’d like to

exchange their vows in. In 2021, they checked out Sun Valley, travelling five times in two years to this favourite place of Sara. It was perfect for their very special day.

On June 24, 2023, wedding guests flew from different parts of the US, Europe and Asia, including the groom’s father, Pepito Bengzon, who came from the Philippines to witness his only son’s special day.

The couple’s friend, Angelo Gayanelo, officiated the non-traditional wedding which told the story of Peps’ and Sara’s journey together and how their love for one another developed from start to finish.



3



4



6



5



7. Free-flowing bubbly 8. The blooming bride 9. Mela Bengzon, Chris Bonehill 10. The couple with Mavelle Bengzon, Michelle Bengzon, Claire Austin, Ellen Le, Gabrielle Tandet, Alice Appleton, Kate Appleton, Julio de Guzman, Angelo Gayanelo, Brett Neustadt, Michael Chang, Peter Lee, Raj Mainthia, Julien Sheinbaum 11. A tablescape at the reception 12. Sara and Peps with Frazier Bardolph, George Appleton, Alice Appleton, Ted Bardolph, Dilip Badlani, Mira Badlani, Kate Appleton, Sonia Badlani, Albert Appleton, Dorothy Appleton, Mela Bengzon, Pepito Bengzon, Mavelle Bengzon, Doris Ensomo, Michelle Bengzon, Chris Bonehill 13. The couple ready for their new journey ahead



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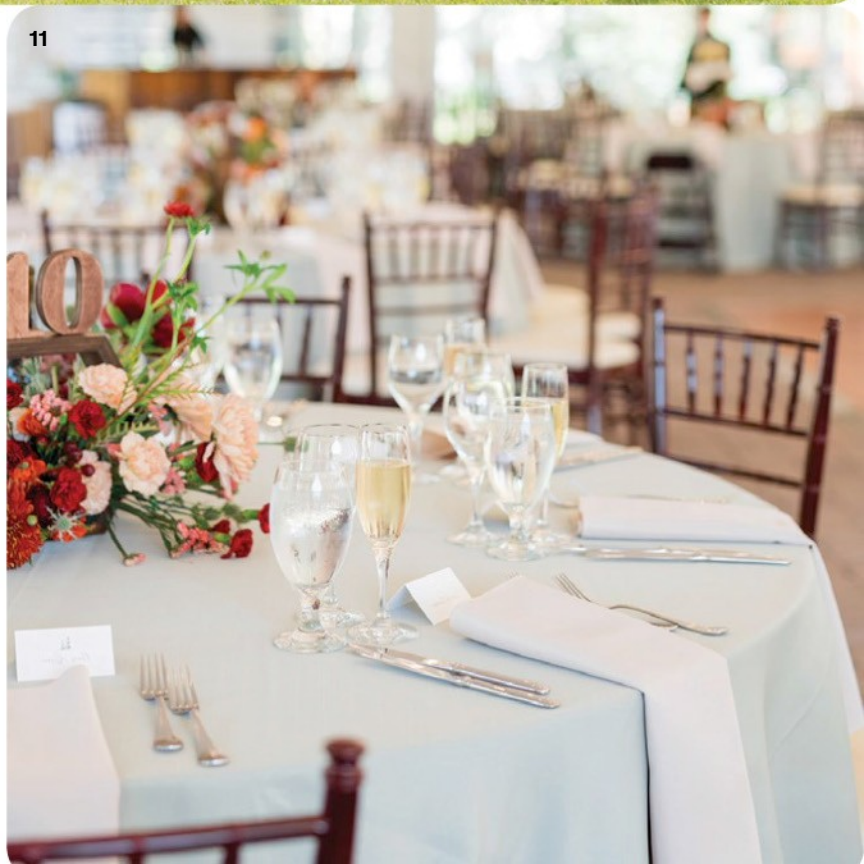
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Sharing a love for music and theatre, the couple chose a playlist from famous musicals and movies. Their wedding theme? Mountains and Musicals.

The wedding party procession song came from *The Sound of Music*. A song from *Hercules* played as Sara walked down the aisle, resplendent in her bespoke Galia Lahav lace wedding gown that shimmered in the sunlight, as bright as the smile on her face. Instead of a veil, the bride chose a customised tiara by Marie T Hunt, a modern interpretation of the

*kokoshnik*, a traditional Slavic headpiece worn by Russian and Eastern European women. It complemented the magnificent 19th century inspired diamond earrings from her mother-in-law, Mela Bengzon. For her bouquet, she chose flowers that went with the nature theme of the venue.

The groom wore a bespoke tuxedo by Saville Row tailor Stephen Kempson in midnight plum, an unusual choice but worked perfectly with the colours of the Sun Valley landscape. His groomsmen were in light asphalt grey suits while the



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bridesmaids were in deep Bordeaux silk dresses—all echoing or complementing nature's palette.

For the exit, the couple and their entourage did a fun dance groove number to the music of *Grease*.

Not to be outdone, the groom and his mother did a dance number to the song *Can't Take My Eyes Off You* from *Jersey Boys*. The father of the bride, Albert, then wowed the guests with a sweet and a touching song, *My Girl*, from the musical *Ain't Too Proud*. Before dinner, it was the couple's turn to showcase their well-known musical talent with a duet from *Moulin Rouge*.

Every song featured in the wedding was selected

from a musical that played a prominent role in the couple's relationship. Before the programme ended, the couple performed their first dance to the iconic waltz from *Beauty and The Beast*, striking a magnetic picture of radiance that drew all eyes on the dance floor.

A variety of songs from the Seventies to the present played by a guest DJ kept the energy level on high. Guests were displaying their individual dance moves.

But even the sun must set, though not until Sun Valley has captivated every member of the wedding party enough to lure them to make another visit. A baby shower perhaps? ┘



Ben Chan is one of the pillars of the Philippine fashion retail industry





# Building An Empire

Ben Chan, who helms the eponymous brand, Bench, continues to redefine the cultural and retail landscape

*By RYANNE STEPHANIE CHENG CO. Photography by Patrick Diokno*

A proudly homegrown brand that has expanded to international locales, Bench is a well-known portmanteau of Ben Chan's name. It has grown into a ubiquitous staple in malls and lifestyle spaces and is best known for its affordable line of clothing, swimwear, accessories and self-care products (such as soaps and perfumes). Through its established presence around the country—and in regions such as the United States, China and the Middle East—Bench has proven to be among the most enduring Filipino brands in the market.

It first launched in 1987 when its founder, Chan, took the opportunity to sell men's jeans and shirts at a local department store. At the time, they were able to get local actor, Richard Gomez, as the model for the brand. Now in 2023, Bench is known for its ability to enlist some

of the world's most recognised celebrities as its brand ambassadors. These include everyone from American musicians such as Bruno Mars and Adam Levine to Asian actors such as Jerry Yan, Lee Min-ho and Ji Chang-wook. They've also managed to enlist big-time influencers like Bretman Rock. "The world is changing fast, and it is exciting not just to witness it but also to live it," said Chan in a recent *Tatler* interview. "I always look forward to what's happening today, what's next tomorrow, and what the future may bring us."

Perhaps this fresh mindset is what makes Chan's businesses so enduring. He is constantly learning on the job, expanding in every direction that has a potential for growth, and never forgetting that the needs and whimsies of consumers are ever-changing. "In these times, learn to adapt," he advises. During

the pandemic, Chan quickly shifted his efforts to e-commerce; but even today, he continues to update and upgrade the way his stores work in the digital space. "E-commerce has provided an equal platform of opportunity for the industry, whether for a small home-based or an international brand," Chan notes. "We will continue to innovate our systems, logistics, shopping experience and product value so we can continue to bring the best possible products to our market with the best possible experience."

With this drive for customer satisfaction, Chan has expanded his empire to include an impressive portfolio of other international lifestyle brands. Under Suyen Corporation, Chan and his team helm a handful of recognisable brands such as La Senza, Aldo, Charles & Keith and Urban Revivo. "We have [also] just opened the new



Chan is the man  
behind popular  
homegrown  
brand, Bench



## “It has been our passion to promote Filipino culture through fashion design”

Fritz Hansen flagship store designed by Jaime Hayon. [To add to that], we will be opening food concepts from various cuisines around the world,” the founder reveals.

Despite his interest in bringing the international to the Philippines, Chan has also shown consistent passion for promoting and expanding Filipino horizons. This not only includes the local retail landscape, but also the cultural space Filipinos inhabit. Apart from running his ever-growing empire, Chan promotes traditional clothing through projects such as Ternocon. In collaboration with the Cultural Center of the Philippines, Chan’s Bench brand spearheads the annual effort that promotes the marriage of creativity and nationalism. “It has been our passion to promote Filipino culture through fashion design,” notes Chan. The third Ternocon, which took place last January 2023, aimed to “preserve an integral part of our Filipino heritage through education, exhibition and public awareness”.

At the moment, the business mogul is also currently working on a book titled *A Terno Century*. “[The book] traces the evolution of the Philippine dress with butterfly sleeves through ten decades of photos from museums and private collections, a follow-up to our *Fashionable Filipinas* book on the evolution of terno.”



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## SERVING LOOKS

*These Asia's Most Influential honourees are in the business of making people look good and feel good, creating successful brands that are recognised beyond their borders*

### SINGAPORE

Less a trendspotter than a tastemaker, entrepreneur Cynthia Chua seems to possess an unerring instinct for creating successful



concepts. Chua's Spa Esprit Group currently owns 15 brands, ten of which are F&B outlets; these include Tiong Bahru Bakery, Common Man Coffee Roasters and Tippling Club. And yet the group is still very much known for its presence in beauty and wellness, where it got its start. The initial success of Spa Esprit in 1996 provided Chua with the impetus to create the waxing chain Strip, eyebrow grooming salon Browhaus, retailer Beauty Emporium, and luxury intimate care brand Two Lips, which opened its first physical store in late 2021. Today, Spa Esprit Group brands are in more than 70 outlets throughout Asia, including Manila, Bangkok, Shanghai and Hong Kong.

### TAIWAN

Founded in 1978, Shiatzy Chen has grown over the past four decades from a knitwear label into Taiwan's most established luxury fashion house, with locations all over Asia and a boutique on the chic Avenue Montaigne in Paris. Through it all, Tsai-Hsia Wang Chen has remained the label's creative force, and both the creator and the brand are the de facto representatives for Taiwan fashion. Then, as now, Wang Chen's eye for impeccable tailoring and attention to craftsmanship lies at the foundation of Shiatzy Chen, bringing her signature style—a marriage of traditional Chinese influences with modern western sensibilities that she calls “neo-Chinese chic”—to the world's most famed runways, including at Paris Fashion Week.



### MALAYSIA

A good rug can really pull a room together, but in designer Omar Khan's hands, it lends more than just a splash of colour to the interior. The Malaysia-based designer imbues his work with depth and thoughtfulness, telling a story that is bigger than the rug itself. For his 2022 collection *Mystical Markings*, for example, Khan drew upon ancient iconography, reflecting on how symbols, talismans, floral patterns and colours have divine properties. His pieces stand out for their exquisite materials and the deft combination of traditional craftsmanship and a contemporary aesthetic.



### HONG KONG

It's not easy to land on a description for Federico Tan—tastemaker, fashion insider, marketing

whiz, entrepreneur, cultural connector—or all of the above. The founder of marketing and communications agency The Advisory Council has worked with galleries and artists to launch exhibits and collaborate on projects, and with musicians like Pharrell Williams and Ciara. But it was in fashion that he got his start—he helped launch Diesel in China, as the brand's head of marketing in Asia, before striking out on his own—and here he remains, working with leading brands that include Miu Miu, Loewe, Gucci, Adidas and Sacai. Tan has also been actively involved with Belowground at the Landmark Atrium in Hong Kong, a space that serves as a bridge to connect luxury retail with contemporary culture.





JO MALONE  
LONDON







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# Head Turner

The new Range Rover Velar features a new set of technologies and a visually compelling design that mesmerises motorists

On the road, the Range Rover Velar can make heads turn. Its sleek and polished build attracts people with more refined tastes regarding vehicles. This year, the beloved SUV gets an upgrade—it lets go of its wire-esque grille and takes on a sharper and more modern design.

For lovers of off-road travels, the new Range Rover Velar will not disappoint; the car offers enough leg room which fits passengers and huge parcels alike. The Velar is packaged neatly in a smooth exterior with super slim LED headlights at the front and a lower rear bumper. Inside, the Velar welcomes travellers with a redesigned touchscreen display to give an illusion that it is floating on the dashboard. It also features Wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, allowing the driver to provide complex tasks like remotely switching home lights.

The vehicle promotes driver and passenger comfort by providing a full suite of technologies, including

intelligent technology such as Adaptive Cruise Control with Steering Assist.

Released on Range Rover's official TikTok channel on February 1, 2023, the new Velar is already one of the most popular vehicles on the app, going viral after it earned over 5.2 billion views worldwide. Its exclusive, never-before-seen aesthetics has reintroduced the car as a model suited for passengers with diverse personalities.

"Range Rover offers the most refined luxury vehicles for discerning clients. The world of modern luxury and expectations for experiences are changing," says Jaguar and Land Rover chief commercial officer Lennard Hoornik.

Hoornik asserts the importance of reaching audiences with different personalities through social media. "Launching a Range Rover TikTok channel is an opportunity to reach

**Clockwise, from top right:** The new Range Rover Velar 2024 has a sleek and modern-looking exterior; The Velar's touchscreen display; The backlight of the new Range Rover Velar.



diverse, new audiences with unique content, building advocacy among creators and modern leaders," he says.

"We are responsible for reimagining the future of mobility and modern luxury, and we cannot do this without a global community. TikTok will help enable that ambition," he concludes.





From left: Lin-Manuel Miranda; Jason Arrow as Alexander Hamilton in the Australian production

# My Name Is...

Critically acclaimed and award-winning musical *Hamilton* arrives on Philippine shores

By Franz Sorilla IV

The stage is set for the Asian premiere of Lin-Manuel Miranda's acclaimed musical, *Hamilton*. The musical is on its new international tour, which begins in Manila this September 17. Much-anticipated by fans and theatre aficionados, this Philippine leg of *Hamilton* was made possible by GMG Productions and The Theatre at Solaire.

"We have assembled an extraordinary cast of superstars from productions worldwide for *Hamilton*'s new international tour," says Michael Cassel, tour producer. "We can't wait to introduce them to you as we make our way to exciting new places for the first time."

*Hamilton* retells the tragic and inspiring life story of Alexander Hamilton, an immigrant and one of America's founding fathers who played a crucial role in the American

Revolution and in shaping the United States' early political history. Based on the 2004 biography penned by Ron Chernow, this sung-and-rapped-through musical brings to the revolving centre stage *Hamilton*'s storied past with much vigour and colour.

The musical production has been known for its diverse and inclusive casting. Actors of Filipino descent who have been part of *Hamilton* include Marc de la Cruz (Alexander Hamilton, King George, John Laurens, Philip Hamilton, James Reynolds and Philip Schuyler); Rachele Ann Go (the first Eliza Schuyler Hamilton in the West End production); Christine Allado (Peggy Schuyler, Maria Reynolds); Karla Puno Garcia (a "swing", or an offstage performer who goes onstage if one from the ensemble backs out).







IMAGES COURTESY OF GING PRODUCTIONS





Veering from traditional casting, *Hamilton* was described by Miranda as “America then, as told by America now”. Its music is an eargasmic combination of hip-hop, R&B, pop, soul and traditional-style show tunes. When it premiered Off-Broadway in 2015 at the Public Theater in Lower Manhattan, the shows were sold-out and received wide acclaim. Perhaps, credit is due to Miranda, who originally played the titular role for several months.

*Hamilton* quickly became the talk of the town since it premiered at the Richard Rogers Theatre on Broadway in 2015. Introducing greater acceptance of contemporary music on Broadway, *Hamilton* has been lauded for its revolutionary stage movement, poignant lyrics and riveting performances. It has drawn appeal towards young audiences and impressed critics and theatre aficionados for its provocative commentary on the current American government and society.

The notable choreography by Andy Blankenbuehler was also a crowd-drawer.

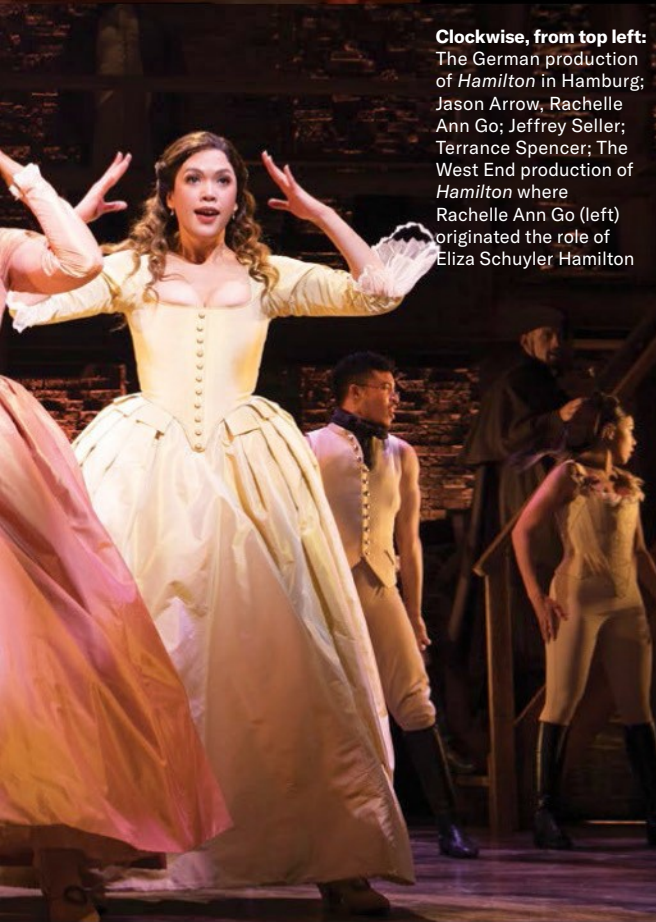
After receiving accolades from Drama Desk, Tony, Laurence Olivier, Grammy and Pulitzer Prize, *Hamilton* launched its US national tours and international productions in Puerto Rico, Australia and Hamburg (where it was translated into German). For *Hamilton*'s new international tour, Manila and Abu Dhabi were chosen for the Asian leg from 2023 to 2024.

The Manila company is led by Jason Arrow as Alexander Hamilton, DeAundre' Woods as Aaron Burr, Akina Edmonds as Angelica Schuyler, Darnell Abraham as George Washington, David Park as Marquis de Lafayette/Thomas Jefferson, Shaka Bagadu Cook as Hercules Mulligan/James Madison, Jacob Guzman as John Laurens/Philip Hamilton, Elandrah Eramiha as Peggy Schuyler/Maria Reynolds and Brent Hill as King George.



PHOTOGRAPHY: DANIEL BOUD (JAYSON ARROW)





**Clockwise, from top left:**  
 The German production of *Hamilton* in Hamburg; Jason Arrow, Rachelle Ann Go; Jeffrey Seller; Terrance Spencer; The West End production of *Hamilton* where Rachel Ann Go (left) originated the role of Eliza Schuyler Hamilton



Go also returns to her home country to reprise the role of Eliza Schuyler Hamilton. The Filipina singer-actress, who has been making a name for herself on Broadway and West End, expressed in a television interview her excitement to finally perform a musical close to her heart in front of her fellow Filipinos. She recalled that when she auditioned for the role of Peggy Schuyler in *Hamilton*, she lost her voice while preparing. Surprisingly, her voice came out on audition day, and she landed the part of Eliza.

The international tour company of 34 performers is completed by Claire Abajjah-Griffin, Kirrah Amosa, Curtis Angus, Kyla Bartholomeusz, Taylor Broadard, Trey Curtis, Aniya Danée, Lachlan Dearing, Winston Hillyer, Indigo Hunt, Marcus John, Julian Kuo, Iosefa Laga'aia, Ashton Lash, HaNy Lee, Terrance Martin, Trevor Miles, Eliza Ohman, Callan Purcell, Joshua Rivera, Wesley Ryan, Emmy Saheki, Terrance Spencer and Dayton Tavares.

“The entire creative team and I are thrilled that *Hamilton* will be seen by new audiences all over the world and for them to experience the talents of this inspiring company,” says Jeffrey Seller, producer of *Hamilton*.

With its globally impactful narrative of diaspora, social unrest and representation, *Hamilton* is a must-see musical that showcases these stories through the eyes of an emerging hero. It combines personal strife, ambitions and intelligence with the collective struggle, pointing out that self-made success is met by making a difference for the nation. As it wows audiences on its limited run in Manila, *Hamilton* also hopes to awaken the soul of every Filipino.

“We’ve had so many incredible Filipino company members as part of the *Hamilton* family all over the world, and now we get to bring our show to your beautiful country,” says Miranda in a recorded interview courtesy of GMG Productions. “To all the Pinoy Hamifans, *mga kaibigan* [friends], we’ll see you at The Theatre at Solaire this September. *Tara! Mahal Kita!* [Let’s go! I love you!],” Miranda says.



# Chasing After Rama Hari

Three years in the making, the much-anticipated ballet performance is finally taking centre stage

By Tats Rejante Manahan. Photography by Jojo Mamangun



**I**n the months leading up to March 2020, Ballet Philippines' founder and National Artist for Dance Alice Reyes, along with the company of dancers, were well into rehearsals for the culminating performance of the season marking the Golden Anniversary of Ballet Philippines. Two years prior, the company's President of the Board of Trustees, Margarita Moran-Floirendo, had cajoled Reyes out of retirement in New York City, where she was enjoying the life of a satisfied chilled-out grandma, to lead the company through a two-year retrospective of the company's original works. Together with Ryan Cayabyab, National Artist for Music, composer of the score for

*Rama Hari*, Reyes had auditioned current musical theatre stars and pop singers to fill in the singing roles originated by OPM singing legends led by Basil Valdez and Kuh Ledesma. After April's end that year, Cayabyab and Reyes were already in orchestra rehearsals with Cayabyab's son, Toma, taking up his father's baton.

In one of the studios at ABS-CBN, the network's orchestra and the new cast, this time led by award-winning theatre actor-singer Gian Magdangal and Sheila Valderama Martinez, with their alternates David Ezra and Aicelle Santos, drew a palpable vibe and energy driven by the alternately heart-wrenching and exciting score, with

Cayabyab coaching the rhythms. Reyes huddled in a corner with visiting Star Magic head Johnny Manahan. Reyes and Manahan's friendship go a long way from the early days of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP). Reyes is just jump-starting the new dance company, and Manahan frequents the museum gallery as one of CCP's early Thirteen Artists. Resent too at rehearsals in those early days would have been Rolando Tinio, who wrote the lyrics, Bienvenido Lumbera, the libretto and Salvador Bernal, who designed the sets and costumes. Little did Cayabyab, Reyes and these three gentlemen know that approximately 40 years later, all five of them would have





**From far left:** The lead cast of *Rama Hari*: Shiela Valderrama, Gian Magdangal, Karylle Tatlonghari-Yuzon and Arman Ferrer; Monica Gana as Sita

# To say that *Rama Hari* is timeless is perhaps underscoring the age-old discourse on “what is Filipino”

been honoured as National Artists in their respective artistic turfs.

As expectations for opening night rose, so did the dark shadow of the Covid-19 virus loom ominously, and by mid-March 2020, excitement would morph into anxiety that would last for the next two and a half years. Adding to the gloom was the scheduled shutdown of the CCP for significant renovations.

Undeterred by the shadow of desolation, Reyes sought to continue the dancers’ training, “adopting” them for a time at the CCP, inviting other dancers who also had been displaced by theatres and dance companies that had closed down, to attend classes at a space provided by the cultural centre and creating online performances that provided occasional remuneration from generous supporters of the arts. In the meantime, Cayabyab spearheaded a nightly online concert titled *Bayanihan Musikahan*. Originally planned to run for just two weeks, the list of artists willing to perform to raise funds for those seriously hit by the virus expanded through all three major islands of the country, each artist performing online from their respective homes.

By late 2022, as the virus sullenly but indeed retreated,



the chase to stage *Rama Hari* was more than ever on. From the cremated virus ashes rose a new dance company peopled by the once displaced dancers, now even physically and artistically astute, driven by the desire for perfection in their art. Carrying their mentor's name, Alice Reyes Dance Philippines opened their first season with *Alay Nina Alice at Agnes*, featuring the iconic works of Reyes and the newly proclaimed National Artist for Dance, Agnes Locsin, honoured in June 2022. The season's ending performance, *Puso ng Pasko*, featuring music arranged by Cayabyab, is a refreshing dance narrative motivated by the template of the popular Christmas dance staple, *The Nutcracker*, capped in 2022. The ballet was brilliantly created by seven young up-and-coming choreographers under the mentorship of Reyes Ronelson Yadao (artistic director), Erl Sorilla, Lester Reguindin, John Ababon, Al Abraham, Dan Dayo and Bonnie Guerrero.

Season 2023 opened in April with Agnes Locsin's riveting *Encantada*, which had the audience dancing in the theatre aisles at the show's end. Earlier, the audience waited in line to enter, starting from the Art Deco gates of the newly restored Metropolitan Theater, winding to Arroceros Park.

As the virus slowly makes its presence less felt, the chase for *Rama Hari* commences, with Reyes, Cayabyab, the dancers and the singers revved up for rehearsals for the anticipated curtain to rise on September 15, 16, 22 and 23, 2023.

Looking back on the days that his creative process churned, Cayabyab recalls that despite the Indian origins of the myth and legend of Rama Hari, an adaptation of the Indian classic *The Ramayana*, he did not rely on any Indian influences where the music was concerned, instead, interpreting the score with



Ejay Arisola as Rama

a more South East Asian flavour, leaning more on the power of *wayang kulit*, the traditional form of puppet shadow play, using a kulintang ensemble.

As 1980 was the dawning of Original Pilipino Music (OPM), of which Cayabyab was an early member and influencer, he “focused on turning out an OPM-inspired work which is not rock, but pop”. This being his first significant work, the then 24-year-old composer, by his admittance, tried “to put everything that I knew and what I newly learnt into a single piece of work”.

His score, nonetheless, was, according to Reyes, “brilliant”, complimenting her choreography that utilised a medley of Asian theatre “Thus, the singers as narrators [were] weaving in and out of centre stage [with] the extensive use of hand props, the shadow play...” interpreted in modern choreography.

Where the libretto is concerned, Bien Lumbera authored the script with “varying levels of usage: an elevated diction



for the protagonist and Filipino slang for the demons Ravana and Soorpanakha”. Rationalising this angle, he explains that “the intrusion of a very contemporary diction could jar the audience into perceiving that the ancient epic of India is also “now” and “Filipino”.

To say that *Rama Hari* is timeless is perhaps underscoring the age-old discourse on “what is Filipino”. In the historical context, the various influences that have marinated our culture throughout the centuries have contributed to the hybridity of the Filipino race, sensibility and personality that could very well be embraced in totality, perhaps defining in part or in whole the uniqueness of our heritage, as displayed in this collaborative masterwork of five National Artists, interpreted by a younger generation of artists through the lively art of song and dance.

*Rama Hari* opens at the Metropolitan Theater in Manila on September 15 and 16 and at the Samsung Performing Arts Theater on September 22 and 23. Tickets available at Ticketworld.



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# MORE THAN A DESIGNER

Pepito Albert was in a league of his own regarding fashion design; he was also larger than life, called it as he saw it, and the best friend a girl could ever have. Seven of his muses pay tribute to a man we lost too soon

*By Chit L Lijauco. Photography Monique Villonco and Frank Hoesfmit*









**T**he noted chef Margarita Forés was at an artisan shop in Comporta, Portugal, showing her travelling group the beautiful ceramic cross she bought the day before. Suddenly, she had a spark and blurted out, “Let’s buy one for Pepito, too!” Then she went out briefly to greet her son Amado and his girlfriend. It was 2:45pm.

When she returned, she saw friends Monique Villonco and Maricris Brias crying and embracing. Monique just got a text message that Pepito had just died—almost at 2:45pm Portugal time on May 27. He was 63.

Pepito De Leon Albert was a pillar of Philippine fashion. An architect by profession, he got his rudiments in the fashion business from the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising in Los Angeles, California. He launched his career in LA in 1987, earning a paean from the *Los Angeles Times* in 1989 as “the current West Coast darling of the fashion press”. Albert’s rising star peaked with a covetable cover in *Vogue* showing Uma Thurman wearing his dress to a red-carpet event. He returned to the Philippines in 1990 after 15 years of living abroad and, armed with this excellent

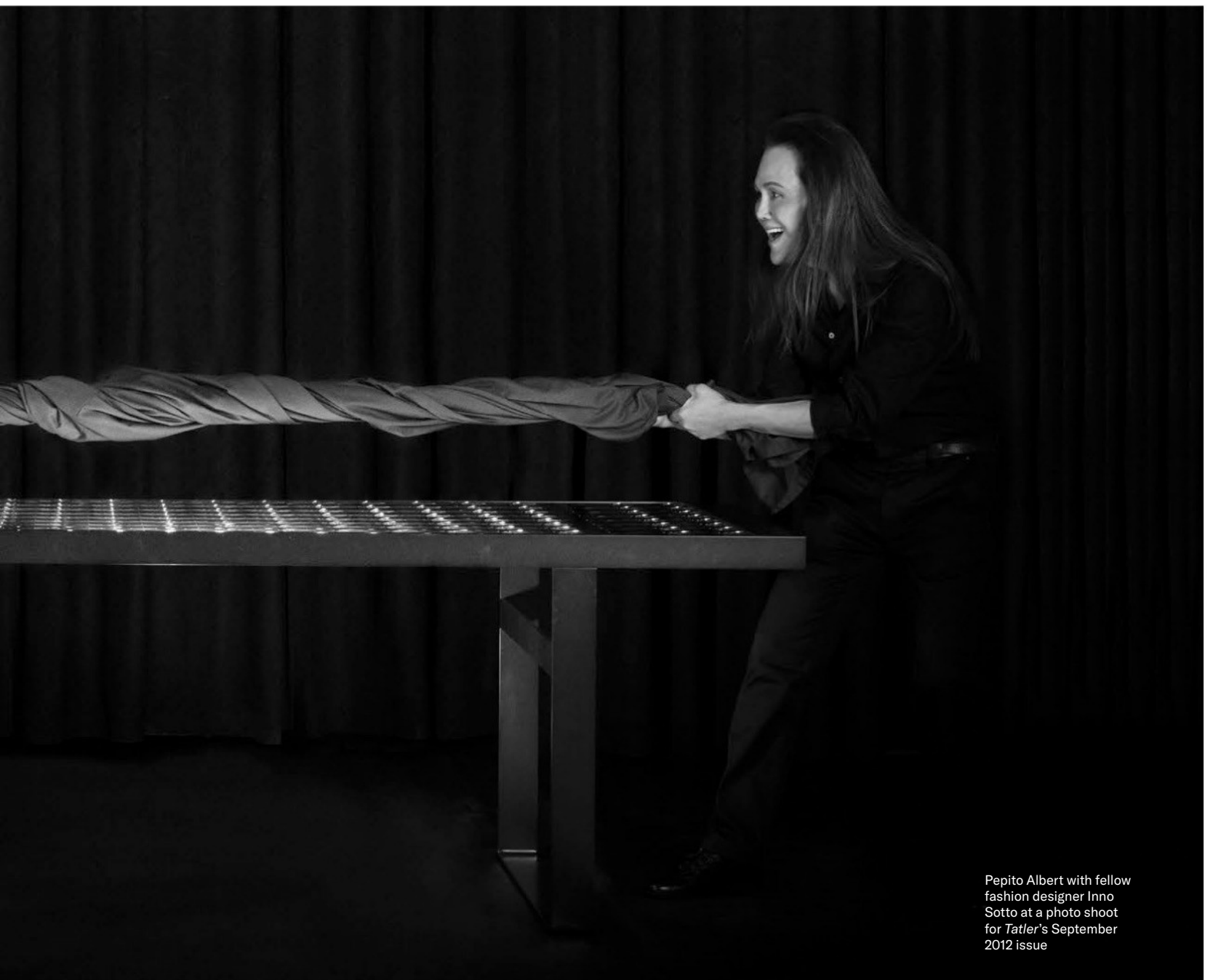
track record in fashion, immediately drew a formidable clientele from society’s A-List crowd.

“Clientele”, however, is not entirely accurate to call his muses. Albert becomes more than just a designer to them; he becomes their friend, their confidante.

“With Pepito, I did not even fit,” says style icon Mandy de la Rama Santos. “There was a time when I was newly married, and we went out quite a lot. Pepito would call me the night before and ask, ‘Where are you going tomorrow evening?’ The next day, something would arrive, like a top perhaps. He just made it. He’d say, ‘Wear this.’ It was probably someone else’s *retazo* [cloth remnants], but it was always stunning. Whenever I wore his clothes, I would get compliments for it.”

Santos, one of the many who first heard of Albert through the *Vogue* cover, was introduced to the designer by a friend and started going to him for her clothes. “We hit it off the first time we met,” she recalls; but adds, “You know, clothes were just an afterthought, to be dealt with only when I needed a new outfit. We became the closest friends and would hang out. He would come to my office





Pepito Albert with fellow fashion designer Inno Sotto at a photo shoot for *Tatler's* September 2012 issue

a lot. We'd eat and smoke together when he was still smoking." They were so close that Albert even had the gumption to change her paediatrician when she had her daughter, Solenne.

Another Albert muse is Kaye Tinga, behind the home accessories shop W17. "I met Pepito in 1997 when I was pregnant with my second child," Tinga tells *Tatler*. "I needed a dress for a family wedding and was looking for someone who could make me look chic even as I got bigger and bigger." She found her designer of choice in Albert, who made a steel blue dress made of Thai silk with a matching short jacket for her. "I felt very Grace Kelly," she remembers.

A friendship quickly followed after that steel blue dress. "To everyone who didn't know Pepito, he may have looked intimidating; but if you got to know him better, you'd know that he's funny, super intelligent and the most reliable friend," she describes Albert.

Her admiration extends to her friend's design genius. "Pepito's proportions were always on point, and he understood how a woman should look," Tinga

comments, saying that she saw his architectural background in his work.

"Pepito knew the lines of design," the businesswoman Fe Rodriguez chimes in. "He knew what would fit a client. He knew what fabric would go well with the style." Also Albert's muse, Rodriguez, had known the designer for over three decades. That she had amassed a sizeable wardrobe ("I have a closet full of Pepitos") can be traced to the fact that "he knew what would be nice for my body and my height, and he knew my style".

She met Albert in 1989, when her daughter, Mary Faye, was getting married. The young lady had just finished her studies in LA and was familiar with the work of Albert there. So, for her wedding, she sought out the designer, who had already returned to the Philippines, to do her bridal gown. This first encounter revealed to Rodriguez not only the amazing talent of Albert but also how fully he can be trusted to accomplish the task.

"When Pepito was doing my daughter's wedding gown, I heard some stories that he can be super delayed in delivery. But my daughter had such confidence in him that she kept



“To everyone who didn’t know Pepito, he may have looked intimidating; but if you got to know him better, you’d know that he’s funny, super intelligent and the most reliable friend” — KAYE TINGA

telling me not to worry. True enough, the gown arrived at 2am on the wedding day,” Rodriguez relates. It was the most beautiful gown she had seen but more than this, she knew she could trust him completely.

Of his muses, the businesswoman Rica Lorenzo knew Albert in several ways. Firstly, they were family. His cousin, Lea de Leon-Lorenzo, is her sister-in-law. Then, of course, they became close friends. “He was very frank with me but always very kind, direct but fair, and brutal in his honesty. These never bothered me,” shares Lorenzo.

Albert helped Lorenzo through several crises. He held her hand through her breast cancer surgery and a phase of anxiety and depression. Albert helped her put up a fashion store called Ideé for her therapy. “Pepito secretly designed everything. This went on for several years, so I also knew him as a business partner,” she says.

When the designer got sick, it was Lorenzo’s turn to give him her full support. “When he felt very ill, he would ask me to buy his favourite things abroad. He had a weakness for shoes and colognes,” she relates.

A week before he died, Albert requested Lorenzo to be beside him for his last rites. She brought her nephew, a priest, who gave Albert his final blessing in the company. “It was heart-wrenching to watch him go through that because he never complained, even when he was so bored or even in pain,” Lorenzo remembers. She went to Davao after that to visit the family farm, which she manages and went back to Manila on the weekend. She texted Albert that she would see him the next day, a Sunday, but she did not expect an answer because she knew he was getting weak. “He died that Saturday evening,” she says. “I never got to visit him.”

Another of Albert’s closest friends is the former beauty queen Carol Masibay Garcia, who recalls long mahjong sessions with him and non-stop laughter. One of her favourite memories was when Albert just returned from the States, and they decided to go to this town in the north

because of a miraculous apparition. She relates, “He asked me, ‘Sister, why is everyone looking at us, especially the children?’ I told him, ‘Sister, you look like the apparition with your long black hair, silver bracelets and rings, Gucci clog shoes, and black linen from head to toe!’” They both couldn’t stop laughing. Garcia adds, “As a designer, Pepito is a genius; he knows the proper cut and style for one’s body shape. I can still wear all the clothes he made for me. I was happy that I could visit him at the hospital when he texted me, and spent hours with him when his mother passed away. I miss him, our lunch with friends, the non-stop laughter and his cutthroat comments. I will miss him terribly, but I know he is in a better place now.”

Like many of Albert’s muses, Forés also cannot remember when exactly they met. “But it feels like we have been friends forever,” she says.

She was also the muse of Inno Sotto, usually for statement gowns, but she went to Albert “for the more practical stuff”. Especially when she said she needed to conceal the bumps in her figure, Albert would create pants and dresses that would make her look thin.

Their friendship deepened when Albert turned Forés on to yoga in 2010. He would even collect her for yoga sessions as they lived nearby. “Whatever his yoga journey was, he always included me,” she says. They also went walking around her village in the mornings. And when his doctor ordered him to let go of his vegetarian and pescatarian diet as he needed more energy to battle his health condition (he was diagnosed with the onset of colon cancer in September 2021), Forés regularly sent food to him.

“Pepito was there for me during my most challenging times, as well during the happy moments such as my milestones,” Forés mentions what she cherishes most in their friendship. He was there when she went through a personal crisis. He was always there to help organise her birthday parties and to support challenging projects. He was not one to miss



In Pepito, lucky ladies got not just an ace couturier, they also acquired a loyal and generous friend



a milestone in her life. “But quietly, always in the background. He was timid,” says Forés.

Albert also mentored Forés’ son Amado, which she is forever grateful for. The designer dabbled in the art business in his last years and found a mentee in Amado who was also interested in the art world. “So, even if Pepito and I were not talking, he and Amado would have their own conversation, about a gallery opening, perhaps,” Forés says. Expectedly, Amado was also very devastated when Albert died.

Her reminiscing takes her to the last Christmas Eve. The New York-based international fashion designer Josie Natori was then in town, so she and Forés took Albert to Greenbelt 3. “He wanted to see the then newly-opened mall, so in his wheelchair, he went around with us and his aide James.

She also has nothing less but the highest praises for the designer. “Pepito’s design aesthetics always stood out...sleek, modern and minimal. Of his peers, I always thought Pepito as being more contemporary. More importantly, he was so creative and passionate about design and the arts,” she adds.

Before her short trip to Portugal, Forés could visit Albert at home. He had given strict instructions about not

receiving visitors, but Forés, with Bettina Fernandez and Trickie Lopa, called James and said, “He has no choice; we are going there now”. They found Albert watching Fashion TV, so they just sat and watched with him. “We just opened a bubbly to toast with him, even if he did not drink anything,” she remembers.

The ceramic cross from Portugal that Forés wanted for Albert was bought and brought to him by Lizzie Zobel. It now nestles by Albert’s urn in his house.

His muses still feel this emptiness in the passing of their favourite designer. Santos shares a vivid memory of them hanging out, and whenever Albert hears that she has been named on the Best Dressed List somewhere, he’d quip, “Why would anyone choose you to be best-dressed? No one can be best-dressed under 40. You only come to your own when you’re 40.”

Tinga has a message for him: “What will I do without you, my dear friend? We’ve shared so much of our lives for so long. In my best and worst moments, you were always there for me. I know you are watching out for me wherever you are. I will miss you so much.”

In the meantime, Rodriguez declares, “I can say for a fact that Pepito was my only designer.”



Black Eyed Peas  
member J Rey Soul





# Star in the Making

Twenty-five-year-old singing sensation J Rey Soul tells us her journey on how she made it to become the lead singer of the international pop group, Black Eyed Peas *By Jove Moya*

She has the charm, talent and determination needed to complete the recipe for stardom. Born in Hong Kong, J Rey Soul was adopted and raised by Filipino parents in the province of Laguna. At the tender age of nine, she joined a local singing show where she realised she wanted to sing and make music forever. The rest, as they say, is history.

She is fondly called Jessica Joy Seria Reynoso in her hometown, but the singer prefers J Rey Soul on stage. “I’ve always had J Rey in the back of my head for a very long time, but I never committed to it until that one-time American rapper Will.I.am asked me what my last name was,” she recalls. “I said ‘Reynoso,’ and he said ‘Rey no so, sounds like Rey no Soul [but] you have this amazing voice and so much soul, I think you should take out the no and just make it Rey Soul’ then there’s J Rey Soul”.

Born to a family bonded by music, it was no surprise for J Rey Soul to tread the familiar path. She discloses that her family found her singing Whitney Houston’s classic *The Greatest Love of All* at two years old. “They were in shock, and that’s when they realised I had a gift. My

family is musically inclined. My aunt in Hong Kong was a singer too. On the other hand, my mum always plays a lot of Mariah Carey and Barbara Streisand in the house. They have always nurtured and supported my dreams,” she says.

In 2006, J Rey Soul was on the stage of *Pop Star Kids*, a reality TV show for aspiring young singers. “I was on TV, and in that way, I felt I was able to give back to my family a bit; I made them very proud,” she says.

Finally, in 2013, the artist joined *The Voice Philippines*, where she met her mentor Apl de Ap. Although she did not win, J Rey Soul says that her stint at the show opened many opportunities for her. “It’s true what they say, when one door closes, God opens another with bigger and greater things,” she says.

It was in 2014 when Jey Rey Soul signed under Apl de ap’s label, BMBX. The singer says that she would never refuse such an offer, mainly because the latter is someone she looks up to. “He is an artist, producer and philanthropist; he is also part of the Grammy-award-winning group Black Eyed Peas. Who could say no to that?” she says. The artist also shares that she feels a deep connection with Apl de

ap as they are both black, Filipino and adopted as kids. “We were both put in the right place at the right time”.

In 2018, J Rey Soul officially joined the Black Eyed Peas. Today, she takes every lesson she can from touring the world with the band. “I am blessed to be of service and to be able to create with such legends,” she says. “They’re like my big brothers! We have fun, and I can talk to them about anything. They also taught me a lot about the importance of work ethic”.

J Rey Soul, the band’s first female vocal artist since its hiatus in 2011, shares that comparison and critiques from the group’s loyal fans are inevitable, but she refuses to cave in and keeps her head in the game. “It’s important for me to showcase my voice and style. I worked hard in doing things that felt authentic to me,” she says.

When asked what she feels grateful for as an artist, J Rey Soul says that sharing her talent with the world is a gift. Currently, the singer is working on solo music, which she plans to release in the upcoming months. “I am excited! We also have a world tour this summer and a few singles coming out with the Black Eyed Peas,” she says. “Exciting days ahead for me!”





# ART & SEOUL

Here are the exhibitions to check out in Seoul during Frieze week beyond the fair, and which of the city's 17 private museums—the highest number in any city in the world—to visit *By Aaina Bhargava*

One of last year's most buzzy events, Frieze Seoul is back for its second edition this month. A host of other art events, ranging from exhibition openings to art fair parties, is set to sweep the city. These are *Tatler's* top picks.

## THE EMBODIED SPIRIT

### *White Cube*

Joining the legion of international galleries that opened spaces in Seoul last year, White Cube will inaugurate its newly opened Seoul gallery in the city's Gangnam district this autumn with *The Embodied Spirit*, an exhibition featuring the works of seven female artists. The show includes White Cube stalwarts, including Indonesian artist Christine Ay Tjoe, known for her abstract sublime paintings; Marguerite Humeau, whose surreal minimal sculptures were seen at last year's Venice Biennale; and, of course, the most familiar name on the







roster, Tracey Emin, who's most recognised these days for her neon light phrases. The show will also include sculptures by Belgian artist Berlinde de Bruyckere and German artist Katharina Fritsch, paintings by Louise Giovanelli, who started working with the gallery last year, and works by Korean artist Jinju Lee, known for her paintings on fabric, the content of which is often inspired by the nature of memory and our subconscious.

## ZADIE XA, NINE TAILED TALL TALES: TRICKSTER, MONGREL, BEAST

### *Space K*

London-based Korean Canadian artist Zadie Xa's colourful artworks will take over Space K, a non-profit art space established in 2011 in an effort to foster cultural awareness within the local community. Titled *Nine Tailed Tall Tales: Trickster, Mongrel, Beast*, the exhibition came about from the artist's interest in the anthromorphised, hybrid and mythical creatures found in folklore. The words "Trickster", "Mongrel" and "Beast" have negative connotations and allude to marginalised figures in society, discriminated against for their "otherness". In the exhibition, Xa celebrates such beings in an expansive, site-specific installation consisting of 33 new paintings and sculptures.



**Clockwise, from top left:** Installation view of Zadie Xa's exhibition at Space K; Katharina Fritsch's *Hand* (*Menetekel*) (2022) on

view at White Cube; Xa's *Dream Deep* (2023); Tracey Emin's *I Have to Keep Living* (2022) at *Embodied Spirit* at White Cube



**Clockwise, from below:** Goyoson's *Crack* (2023); Hayne Park's *The Fossils of Hexameron* (2022); installation view of Park's *Heterochronie* (2023); Donald Judd's *Untitled* sculpture (1985)



## HAYNE PARK AND GOYOSON; RONDIPARK

### *White Noise*

White Noise is a non-profit, experimental, community-driven art space known for boundary-pushing shows. An exhibition featuring work by artists Hayne Park and Goyoson will be on view during Frieze week, and the space's booth at Frieze Seoul will feature a selection of works with a similar curatorial theme. The two presentations are based on the premise of challenging the idea of capitalism (at Frieze) and language (at the art space). At White Noise, Park's glass sculptures and Goyoson's ephemeral, delicate, near-invisible installations challenge perception, and in doing so reflect the contradictory nature of communication and language. Meanwhile, at its Frieze Seoul booth, White Noise will present the work of Rondi Park, whose paintings and performance will question how aesthetic values combine with the desire to find and maintain sincere relationships, which are often transactional in a capitalist world. Together, the three artists examine the contentious and often problematic nature of money and language in the art world.





IMAGES COURTESY OF HAYNE PARK AND GOYOSON (WHITE NOISE); COURTESY OF TIMOTHY DOYON, THADDEUS ROPAC GALLERY OF LONDON, PARIS, SALZBURG AND SEOUL, DONALD JUDD ART, JUDD FOUNDATION/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY OF NEW YORK (THADDEUS ROPAC); COURTESY OF SAN MUSEUM (PRIVATE MUSEUM)

## DONALD JUDD & JOSEPH BEUYS

### *Thaddeus Ropac*

After opening a Seoul gallery in 2021, Thaddeus Ropac has expanded and is set to open a new space on the ground floor of the same building. He will inaugurate the space with a special exhibition of works on paper by Joseph Beuys, the hugely influential German artist who was known for his “social sculptures” and for expanding the ideas and impact of what contemporary art could be and accomplish. The works are from the collection of Beuys’s family. Concurrently, another exhibition will open in the upstairs space, showcasing works by the eminent American sculptor Donald Judd. Curated by Flavin Judd, the artist’s son and artistic director of the Judd Foundation, the exhibition will feature Judd’s minimalistic 3D creations, which invite visitors to rethink their relationship with space. Both artists had special ties to South Korea: Beuys through his friendship with the celebrated artist Nam June Paik, and Judd through the year he was stationed in Korea with the US army in 1947. ┘

## PRIVATE MUSEUM

*A report published this June by Larry’s List—the collector-facing art platform providing data and insider access founded by Christoph Noe—concluded that South Korea has the third highest number of private museums in the world, and, with a total of 17, Seoul has more than any other city. These are our favourites:*



### THE SAN MUSEUM

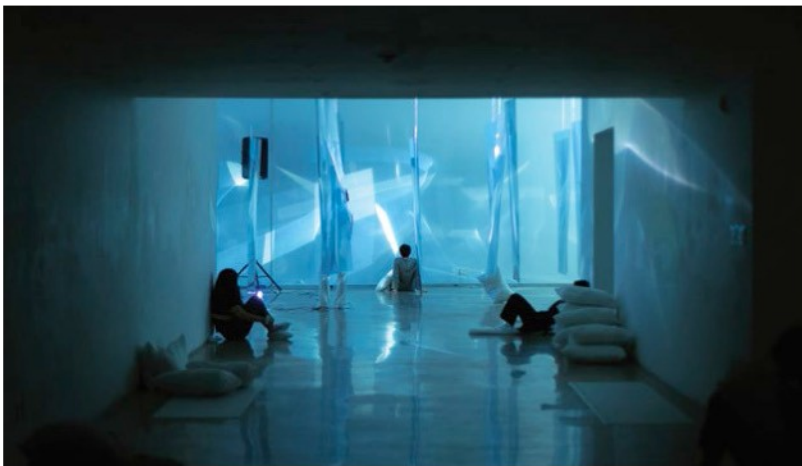
Standing for “space, art, nature”, the SAN Museum (above), founded in 2013, was designed by Tadao Ando. Located around 100km from Seoul in Oak Valley, the museum is set amid greenery; in true Ando form, the museum’s structure merges with its natural surroundings, highlighting the interaction between art, humans and nature through features such as multiple gardens and a meditation hall. The collection includes works by renowned artists including James Turrell and Nam June Paik.

### THE LEEUM ART MUSEUM

Founded in 2004 by the Lee family, which owns Samsung, the Leeum is one of the country’s better-known private museums, and houses more than 15,000 works of art. The structure was designed by renowned architects Rem Koolhaas and Jean Nouvel; the latter created the section which houses 80 contemporary artworks by Korean and international artists. Numerous big names have had special exhibitions at the space, the most recent being Maurizio Cattelan, best known for duct-taping a banana to a wall.

### THE HANMI MUSEUM

This lesser-known venue is a hidden gem for photography lovers in particular. It was founded in 2003 and in honour of its 20th anniversary has moved to a larger space, in Seoul’s Samcheong-dong district. The new structure was designed by architect Min Hyun Sik of the Kiohun Architecture firm, and includes a cold-storage space which better ensures the survival of vintage photographic prints. More than 20,000 prints and film rolls are stored in this facility. While the museum’s original curatorial focus was largely predicated around the development of Korean and international photography, it has now expanded to encompass new media arts.





Here are five female Korean artists to look out for at Frieze Seoul  
By Aaina Bhargava

# FEMALE POWERED



**Clockwise, from above:**  
Sinae Yoo's *Penpal* (2023);  
Rhee Seundja's *A Mother I Remember* (1962); Jung Soojung's *Natant* (2023);  
Hannah Woo's *Milk and Honey-4* (2023); Yun Suknam's *Chair* (1992)

**F**rom Haegue Yang to Lee Bul, some of Korea's most recognised contemporary art superstars are female, and this year's Frieze Seoul is celebrating a number of them. From those who were trailblazers in their time to those who are just starting out and worth watching, here are five to make time for at the fair.

## SINAE YOO (b. 1985)

Part of a new series of works titled *Post Truth*, Sinae Yoo's graphics-like paintings challenge our perception of reality, truth and fiction. Video games and advertising influence her distinctive aesthetic, which reflects her interest in exploring how our understanding of the world can be potentially

manipulated and shaped. Yoo's works will be on view at Cylinder gallery's booth in Frieze's Focus Asia section.

## RHEE SEUNDJA (1918-2009)

Little known during her lifetime, Rhee Seundja's abstract works were hauled into the spotlight in April 2022 after K-pop supergroup BTS member

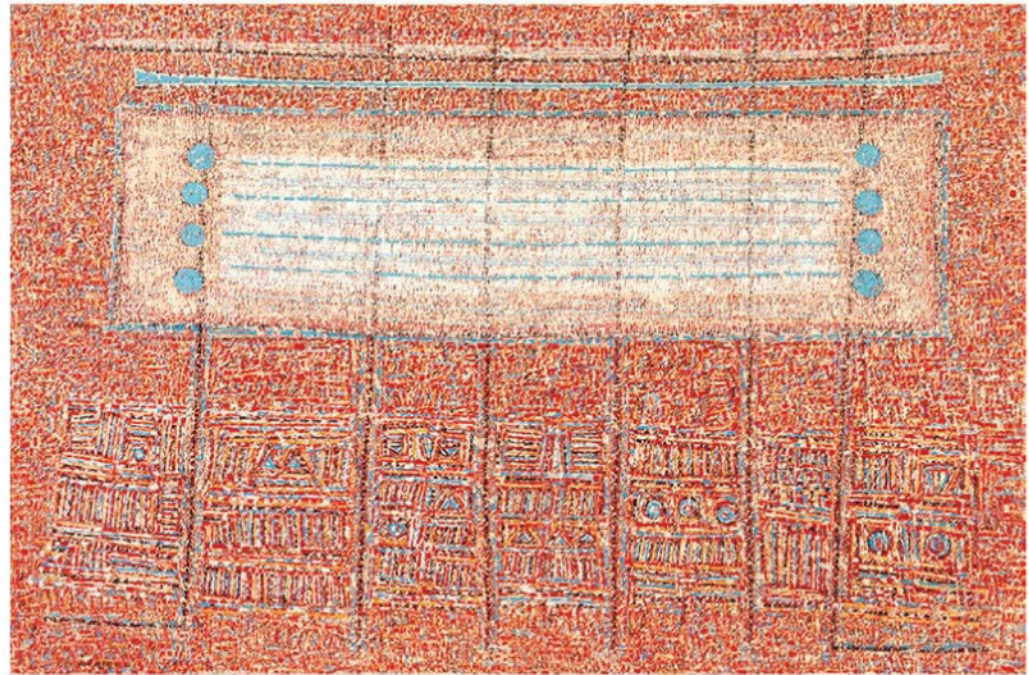


RM revealed on Instagram that he owned one of her works. Her work *Subitement la Loi (A Sudden Law)* (1961) also sold for a record price of HKD 5.67 million (US\$722,000) at Christie's Spring 2022 auction in Hong Kong. The artist practised in the early 20th century, at a time when better-known Korean male painters were developing their careers after studying in Japan; Rhee studied in France after the Second World War and drew on influences she found there. Characterised by geometric symbols and patterns that form a universal aesthetic—one not defined by a singular cultural tradition—her works will be on view at Gallery Hyundai's booth in the Frieze Masters section.

## HANNAH WOO

(b. 1988)

Hannah Woo is the winner of the inaugural Artist Award at Frieze Seoul, supported by Bulgari. Her winning commission, *The Great Ballroom*, is a large installation which will be suspended from the ceiling at the fair. In line with the flourishing trend in contemporary art that sees young artists drawing on world-building and mythology to render their own visual narratives, Woo's works are centred



around a myth she created herself. She uses fabric as a tactile invitation to viewers to enter her world and explore ideas of ageing and female bodies. Her works will also be on view at G Gallery's booth in Frieze's Focus Asia section.

## YUN SUKNAM

(b. 1939)

Yun Suknam is a pioneering figure in Korean feminist art. She only started making art at the age of 40, prompted by the desire to be defined by more than her roles as "wife" and "mother". Her husband encouraged her to study, including for a year in New York. Yun integrates drawing, sculpture, painting and crafting into her

works—often wooden sculptures and portraits—which simultaneously evoke domestic themes and challenge women's established roles in society. Her work will be on view at Hakgojae Gallery's booth in the Frieze Masters section.

## JUNG SOOJUNG

(b. 1990)

Jung Soojung's vibrantly coloured paintings will be on view at contemporary art space A-Lounge's booth. The

Seoul-based artist connects disparate events and forges her own surreal narratives; points of departure for her work include unexplained phenomena, such as whale mass-mortality, spontaneous combustion of humans and the (rumoured) existence of Bigfoot's footprints. Recently the artist has been incorporating historical moments in her work which question human nature, power, authority class, and inequality.



IMAGES COURTESY OF SEUNDIA RHEE FOUNDATION (SEUNDIA); HAKGOJAE GALLERY (SUKNAM); A-LOUNGE (SOOJUNG); G GALLERY (WOO)



Tatler+

# Power and Precision

Born and bred at the Shimoyama Technical Center Test Track, the all-new Lexus IS exudes an exhilarating style and performance



Perfecting an automotive marvel demands extensive and rigorous testing at private proving grounds. Here, road courses duplicate every possible on-road scenario –with every type of corner radius, conceivable bank angles and elevation changes encountered when behind the steering wheel. A vehicle's stability and handling are tested, granting the world's automakers the means to fine-tune their creations under exacting driving environments.

One famed test track is the Nürburgring Nordschleife in Germany, an automotive mecca known for its gruelling driving conditions. Lexus is no stranger to the

historic complex, having developed a number of its iconic models at the course and having raced there, too. Gleaning from its racing experience and in-depth testing on the German track, the Japanese carmaker has built its proving grounds right at home, where the all-new Lexus IS was made.

The Shimoyama Technical Centre Test Track in Japan's Aichi Prefecture uses local topography to deliver a challenging test course. It features a roughly 75-metre change in elevation between its highest and lowest points, as well as a wide range of curves and corners to replicate a variety of roads and several of the harshest driving conditions.

The first car to emerge from the test track is the new Lexus IS, which further proves the company's unfettered passion for performance. From its precise engineering to its suave design, this sport sedan epitomises the joy and rush of driving a Lexus vehicle in every way possible.

Under the hood, the F Sport variant of the IS boasts a beastly 312hp, 380Nm naturally-aspirated V6 engine paired with an eight-speed automatic transmission. The IS 300h, on the other hand, ensures an equally smooth ride with its 2.5-litre inline four-cylinder hybrid power plant and Lexus E-CVT intelligent transmission for optimal efficiency.





# Lexus is set to continue pushing the boundaries of performance and precision in its relentless pursuit of automotive perfection



For a truly elevated driving experience, the IS puts safety front and centre with the LSS+2, a suite of all the latest Active Safety features such as Dynamic Radar Cruise Control, Lane Tracing Assist and the Automatic High Beam. The F Sport model also has an upgraded Pre-Collision system, detecting oncoming vehicles and pedestrians even when turning at intersections. It's like having an extra set of eyes on the road, keeping you and your loved ones secure on all types of land travel.

With its excellent power and safety features, the IS is designed to inspire confidence in every driver, giving them complete control on straight paths and total precision through the

sharpest turns. This commitment to excellence likewise reflects the essence of Lexus and how it embodies the Japanese spirit of omotenashi, which means anticipating customers' needs and desires even before they realise them.

This undoubtedly led the automaker to create the Shimoyama Technical Centre Test Track in the first place and turn, the all-new IS. With this exacting and state-of-the-art road course at its disposal, Lexus is set to continue pushing the boundaries of performance and precision in its relentless pursuit of automotive perfection.

*Learn more on [lexus.com.ph](https://www.lexus.com.ph).*

The all-new IS has a unique ground-hugging form and coupe-like silhouette, complemented by a lustrous coating and Lexus's signature spindle grille





# Refined Living

As the embodiment of elegance, impeccable service and sustainable design, Eluria redefines luxury within the heart of Makati

Luxury living is often perceived as an exclusive realm where the extraordinary becomes a part of everyday life. In a world where access to true indulgence is a privilege, Eluria sets itself apart as a sanctuary where every resident is embraced by a level of service and attention that goes beyond the ordinary.

Arthaland, renowned for its green initiatives, collaborates with ARCH Capital for Eluria, an unrivalled masterpiece of 37 limited-edition residences. Eluria is a portmanteau inspired by the words elan, flourish and allure. Situated in Legazpi Village and conceptualised by the renowned Australia-based architect Michael

Banak of FMB Architects, this project redefines city living at the heart of the Philippines' business district.

Eluria notably takes on the design and feel of a contemporary tree house but with utmost style and extravagance, blending verticality and nature. As a true testament to efficiency, the structure's light-coloured precast concrete façade is adorned with the warmth of wood and bronze accents, confidently standing amidst Makati's urban landscape. The unique design allows residents to bask in natural daylight from multiple angles and experience the refreshing cross ventilation, while lush gardens

and balconies evoke a serene lanai-like atmosphere.

At Eluria, lavish living isn't just about aesthetics but elevating the living experience. With a commitment to unparalleled comfort and convenience, Eluria introduces a white-glove service that's truly personalised. Hospitality Directors, meticulously selected for their professionalism, attention to detail and exceptional interpersonal skills, will undergo rigorous training at The International Butler Academy (TIBA) in the Netherlands. This commitment to service ensures that residents' needs are met with unparalleled care and sophistication.

Personalised hospitality is taken to an artful level. Your





**From far left:** The Eluria show suite kitchen and dining space; White glove test; Exclusive champagne service as prepared by Eluria's Hospitality Directors



PHOTOGRAPHY: SONNY THAKUR PRODUCTION | ISABEL FRANCISCO AND MICHELLE SORIANO LOCATION: ELURIA SHOW SUITE, BGC

dedicated Hospitality Director is your point of contact, accommodating inquiries, addressing building-related concerns, and assisting with amenity and facility reservations. The seamless orchestration of your daily life is their forte—from coordinating maintenance requests and facilitating work permits to overseeing specialised services and guest arrivals. Whether you're seeking in-residence spa and salon services, need assistance with food and beverage orders, or are planning an event, the Hospitality Director is your guide.

"Eluria's Prestige White-glove Service ensures that residents' every need is met, from unpacking their belongings to arranging transportation. This

enhances the property's appeal by offering a dedicated concierge, 24/7 support, and anticipatory assistance, ensuring residents' needs are met with unparalleled attention and care, setting it apart as the pinnacle of premium and sustainable living," states Oliver L Chan, senior vice president of Arthaland.

Eluria takes the concept of exclusivity to new heights with only one to two units per floor. These residences redefine grandeur, ranging from 287 square metres to an expansive 578 square metres for the five-bedroom penthouse suite. Private lifts with state-of-the-art RFID technology provide direct and secure access, while a separate service elevator ensures seamless functionality.

Investing in this visionary project goes beyond ownership but a promise to leave a lasting legacy for loved ones while positively impacting the planet. Already pre-certified LEED Gold, Eluria is set to achieve WELL, EDGE, and BERDE green certifications. Since breaking ground in November 2022, the development is poised for completion in the second quarter of 2026.

Ultimately, Eluria isn't just a residential development; it embodies lavishness, sustainability and an unwavering dedication to excellence. As the epitome of contemporary living, it sets the stage for an unprecedented lifestyle where exclusivity seamlessly intertwines with the beauty of nature and the grace of personalised service.





# From Seed to Plate

Premium kitchen brands Sub-Zero and Wolf are collaborating with Good Food Community to provide better livelihoods and brighter futures for Philippine farmers

Home to rich agriculture and lush landscapes, the Philippines owes a significant part of its identity to the unsung heroes who toil day in and day out to provide food for the nation. Though often recognised as the backbone of the country's economy, small-scale farmers continue to face tremendous challenges with limited institutional support.

This is a prevailing reality for the women farmers of the Chico River Organic Practitioners Organisation (CROPO) based in Bauko, Mountain Province. Passionate about their craft despite the odds, they endure arduous journeys through

treacherous terrains, dense forests and unpredictable weather conditions, carrying over 20 kilograms of produce on their backs each time.

Recognising their heavy plight, kitchen brands Sub-Zero and Wolf have joined forces with Good Food Community (GFC), a social enterprise that has worked with and supported CROPO for years now. GFC's primary purpose is bridging consumers directly to small-scale farmers by providing an easily accessible and sustainable market for seasonal, organically grown produce. It has, in ways, emerged as a lifeline especially for those like CROPO, who find themselves in remote and difficult-to-access locations.

As an acclaimed food preservation expert, Sub-Zero understands that its innovative refrigeration solutions can play a part in honouring fresh produce and the farmers' hard work, keeping vibrant, natural flavours and nutritional goodness intact for extended periods. Wolf, on the other hand, complements Sub-Zero's mission by celebrating the essence of each ingredient. Through an extensive lineup of sleek, modern appliances, the brand helps end consumers capture and elevate the rich tastes of what they are cooking with, ensuring that each dish perfected in one's kitchen is a delectable, memorable experience.

Showcasing how they wholeheartedly embrace and support the incredible journey of food from seed to plate, these exceptional brands along with GFC have sought to build and rehabilitate over 20 crop rain





**Clockwise, from top left:** Fresh produce in Sub-Zero refrigeration; Roasted vegetables prepared with Wolf appliances; Charlene Tan of GFC (centre) with CROPO; A dedicated farmer under the canopy of a crop rain shelter **Opposite page:** An abundant harvest



shelters to protect precious farmland in Bauko from pests and inclement weather. With these in place, more than 700 square metres of farmland will help the CROPO farmers yield over 30,000kg of produce, with the long-term goal of providing consistent livelihood for the community for at least the next five years.

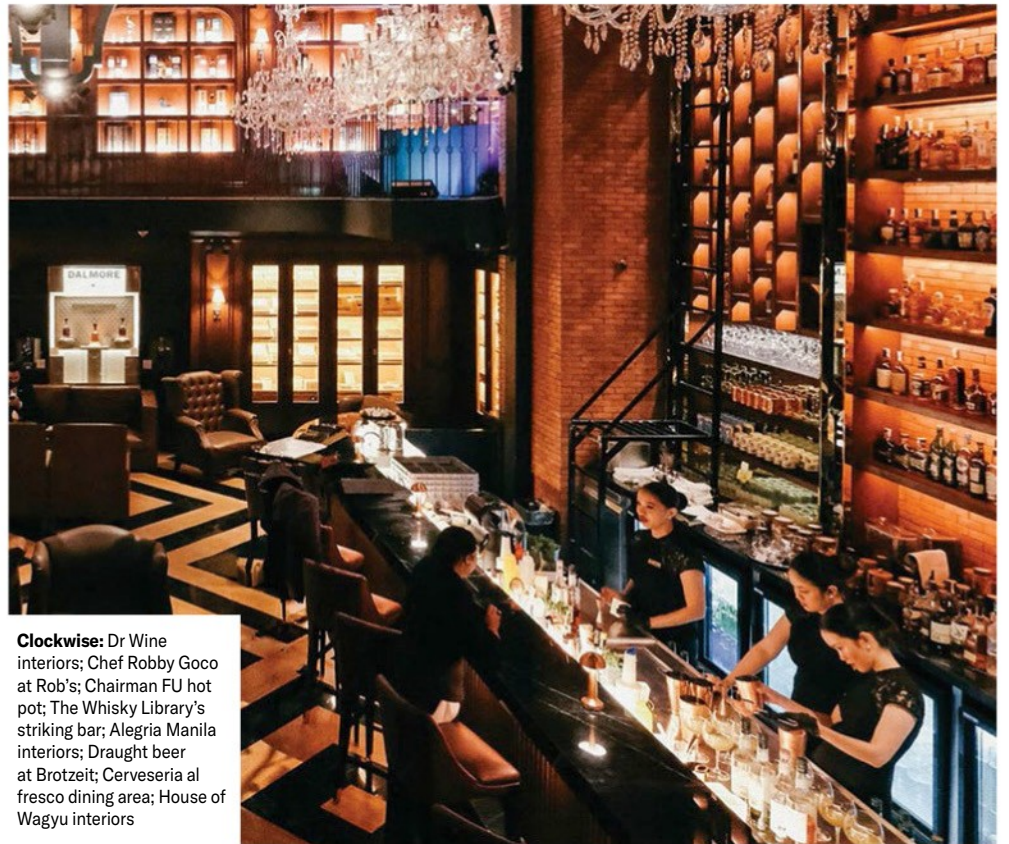
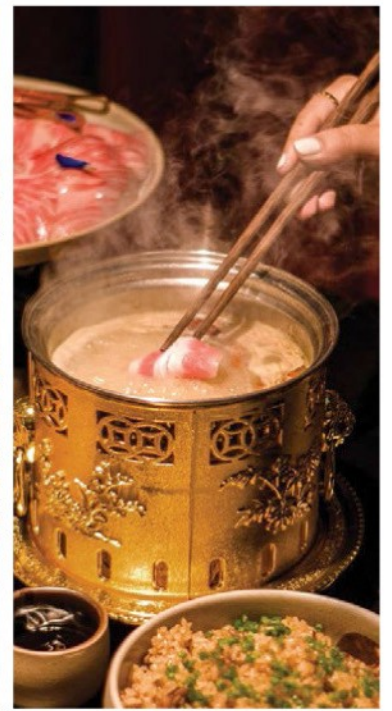
Through this collaboration, Sub-Zero and Wolf with GFC have undoubtedly left an indelible mark on the lives of these farmers and many more. Improved market access will continue to enhance the livelihoods of Filipinos in remote regions, as consumers at a wider scale develop a deeper

appreciation for food's long journey. Hopefully, it will also serve as further inspiration for those raising advocacy and awareness regarding sustainable farming practices, ultimately fostering a brighter future for the heart and backbone of the country.



*Scan the code to witness the fascinating journey from seed to plate, and learn about Sub-Zero and Wolf's advocacy at [seedtoplate.subzero-wolf.com.ph](http://seedtoplate.subzero-wolf.com.ph)*





**Clockwise:** Dr Wine interiors; Chef Robby Goco at Robb's; Chairman FU hot pot; The Whisky Library's striking bar; Alegria Manila interiors; Draught beer at Brotzeit; Cerveseria al fresco dining area; House of Wagyu interiors





# Epicurean Escapade

At Megaworld Lifestyle Malls, all are invited to a journey of exploration and indulgence, one plate at a time

**A** curious palate opens up a world of sensory delight, sparking meaningful connections and memories over rich, distinct flavours. Megaworld Lifestyle Malls renders this experience well within reach. Already known to bring friends and family together on several occasions, these upscale malls host an array of distinguished restaurants at its destinations in the metro. For your next epicurean adventure, don't miss these world-class offerings:

## ALEGRIA MANILA AT UPTOWN PARADE

Immediately captivating guests with its blue and black backdrop, this sophisticated dining concept impresses in the fine dining territory with its Filipino-Latin American tasting menu. Prepared in an open fire kitchen, their dishes blend the finest ingredients from Mexico with local flavours.  
*G/F Uptown Parade, +63956.834.8677*

## BROTZEIT AT ALABANG WEST PARADE

This renowned chain establishment brings German gastronomy to the Philippines through its wide selection of authentic Bavarian fare and drinks. Treat your family and friends to a true European-style feast, complete with a platter of Brotzeit Wurstplatte Zum Teilen.  
*G/F Alabang West Parade, +63968.880.9577*

## CHAIRMAN FU AT NEWPORT MALL AT NEWPORT WORLD RESORTS

Revel in the comforts of an authentic Chinese spread and hot pot at this stately yet modern address. Made with premium ingredients that unlock flavours in every sip or bite, Chairman FU's immaculate dishes are perfect for sharing among an epicurean group.  
*2/F Garden Wing, Newport Mall at Newport World Resorts, +63917.319.5656*

## CERVESERIA AT FORBES TOWN

Poised on an ever-bustling street, this upscale restaurant is a treasure trove of authentic Spanish delights, from delectable tapas and paella to cocktails and sangria. Its sumptuous classics include a flavour-packed Paella Cerveseria, an aromatic Mushroom Truffle Paella, a tender Salmon Al Horno and many more.  
*Forbes Town Road, +63967.400.3390*

## DR WINE AT FORBES TOWN

Toddle along to Dr Wine's rustic outlet in Forbes Town, where the selections of fine wine and French brasserie fare are bound to keep you well into the night. To start you off, get the cheese boards and charcuterie platters, as well as the buttery Escargot à la Bourguignonne.  
*Forbes Town Road, +63917.715.2807*

## GREYHOUND CAFÉ AT EASTWOOD CITY

This casual, contemporary establishment perfectly captures the richness and complexity of Thai flavours. Signature dishes like Pad Thai, Tom Yum Goong, Green Curry and more are each prepared with the finest ingredients, sourced locally and internationally, to ensure authenticity in every bite.  
*G/F Eastwood Mall Open Park, +63917.816.2025*

## HOUSE OF WAGYU AT EASTWOOD CITY

Wine and dine amidst the arresting interiors of House of Wagyu, where servings of premium, marbled steaks and sumptuous sides will surely take your breath away. With an exquisite selection on offer, the refined venue sets the stage for occasions that are elevated to perfection.  
*G/F Eastwood Mall, +63917.823.1248*

## ROB'S AT NEWPORT MALL AT NEWPORT WORLD RESORTS

Indulge in succulent ribs and oysters while sipping fine bourbon at this casual all-day restaurant by esteemed chef Robby Goco. Amidst elegant, upscale interiors, guests enjoy a well-equipped cocktail bar and a wide-ranging international menu that caters to every palate.  
*2/F Garden Wing, Newport Mall at Newport World Resorts, +63945.726.9984*

## THE WHISKY LIBRARY AT NEWPORT MALL AT NEWPORT WORLD RESORTS

Come for a drink; stay for the ambience that elicits evenings without inhibitions. Behind its russet brick-and-mortar facade, this newly opened bar and lounge proudly houses the largest whisky collection in Manila, along with some of the finest cosmopolitan liquors from all over the globe.  
*2/F Grand Wing, Newport Mall at Newport World Resorts, +632.7908.8888*

*For more enquiries, you may call the Megaworld Lifestyle Malls hotline at +632.8462.8888.*



# Tatler Homes

## THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO LUXURY LIVING



Now available at digital magazine newsstands Zinio and Magzter. Also available at selected newsstands and the city's best bookstores.





**From left:** Rolex Jean-Claude Killy Ref 6036; Richard Mille Collection: RM11-01 AN RG Roberto Mancini, RM65-01 CA RG, RM11-03 McLaren Automatic Flyback Chronograph, RM11-02 Jet Black Limited Edition and RM30 RG TI



# The Art of Timekeeping

Since it opened its doors five years ago, Vintage Grail has helped watch connoisseurs find singularly exquisite timepieces for their collections

Those who appreciate the importance of time in their lives also appreciate the time and effort that go into the crafting of truly great timepieces. Aficionados are drawn towards exceptionally fine pieces, some of which were only produced in limited numbers or were part of milestone collections released during a specific period.

Rightfully called grails due to their rarity and the challenge of discovery, these timepieces proved themselves elusive for many local and regional collectors until Vintage Grail began offering its services in 2018.

Founded by friends Paolo Martel, Jesse Maxwell and Franco Varona, who share a lively interest in the finest of watches, Vintage Grail prides itself on its ability to select, locate, acquire and curate a diverse range of timepieces that appeal to an equally diverse range of collectors.

“Each item in our collection

is chosen with the intention of enabling collectors to create their own unique narrative through the art of collecting,” Martel explains. “Our selection boasts numerous highly sought-after pieces.”

Varona adds that timepieces are a tangible treasure that many collectors take pride in showing off. “Watches are one of the few investments that one can wear and enjoy, without hiding it away or staring at it untouched,” he says. “The best part of it all is that it appreciates in value thanks to the growing demand and interest. In fact, watches have outperformed many asset classes over years.”

In the past, Vintage Grail sold several rarities, including the Richard Mille Blue Sapphire Skull, a sapphire-cased tourbillon of which only three pieces have been produced, a number of Rolex Paul Newmans, along

with creations from independent ateliers like FP Journe and stunning collectibles from the likes of Audemars Piguet, Patek Philippe and Vacheron Constantin. Today, Vintage Grail remains a haven for those seeking particularly fine vintage and modern finds.

As Maxwell puts it, “We wanted to give watch enthusiasts access to very special time pieces that used to not be available locally. We wanted to make the most sought after and rare vintage and modern watches more accessible so people could learn more, discover and ultimately find their own ‘grails’ through a trustworthy professional experience.”

For the founders, authenticity and the ability to offer truly unique finds are the most vital aspect of Vintage Grail, and it is what has drawn a growing number of watch lovers both here and abroad to the firm.

*To know more about Vintage Grail, visit the website at [vintagegrail.com](http://vintagegrail.com), Instagram at [@vintagegrail](https://www.instagram.com/vintagegrail) or come to the boutique at the Shopping Arcade of The Peninsula Manila.*



# SEPTEMBER

Music, theatre and dance take centre stage this month with this lineup of performances you should not miss



**1** **ODETTE QUESADA**  
 After her successful homecoming concert last January 2020, Filipina singer-songwriter Odette Quesada returns to celebrate her 40th anniversary in the music industry. Through her straightforward and heartfelt hits like *Till I Met You*, *Friend of Mine* and *To Love Again*, to name a few, Quesada chronicles the lives of hopelessly romantic Filipinos. *Newport Performing Arts Theater, Parañaque City*

{9-10}

**ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK**  
 Quintessential balladeer, known as the “King of Romance”, Engelbert Humperdinck, serenades Filipino audiences in a two-night concert titled *The Legend Continues*. For 50 years, the status in the music scene of the legendary British crooner has been undisputed. To this day, he consistently showcases his legacy and wins the hearts of listeners across the globe. *Newport Performing Arts Theater, Parañaque City*



{15-16;  
22-23}

**RAMAHARI**  
 This award-winning ballet musical retells the story of the Asian epic *Ramayana*. Crafted by five National Artists: Ryan Cayabyab, Bienvenido Lumbera, Rolando Tinio, Salvador Bernal and Alice Reyes, *Rama Hari* is a musical and dance spectacle to be noticed. *Metropolitan Theater, Manila and Samsung Performing Arts Theater, Makati City*



{17-  
Nov  
26}

**HAMILTON**  
 Critically-acclaimed Broadway musical by Lin-Manuel Miranda premieres its latest international tour in Metro Manila. Featuring West End production's original cast member Rachelle Ann Go, this global touring production chose 34 performers from all over the world helmed by producer Michael Cassel. *The Theatre at Solaire, Parañaque City*

IMAGES ALICE REYES DANCE PHILIPPINES (RAMA HARI); GMG PRODUCTIONS (HAMILTON)



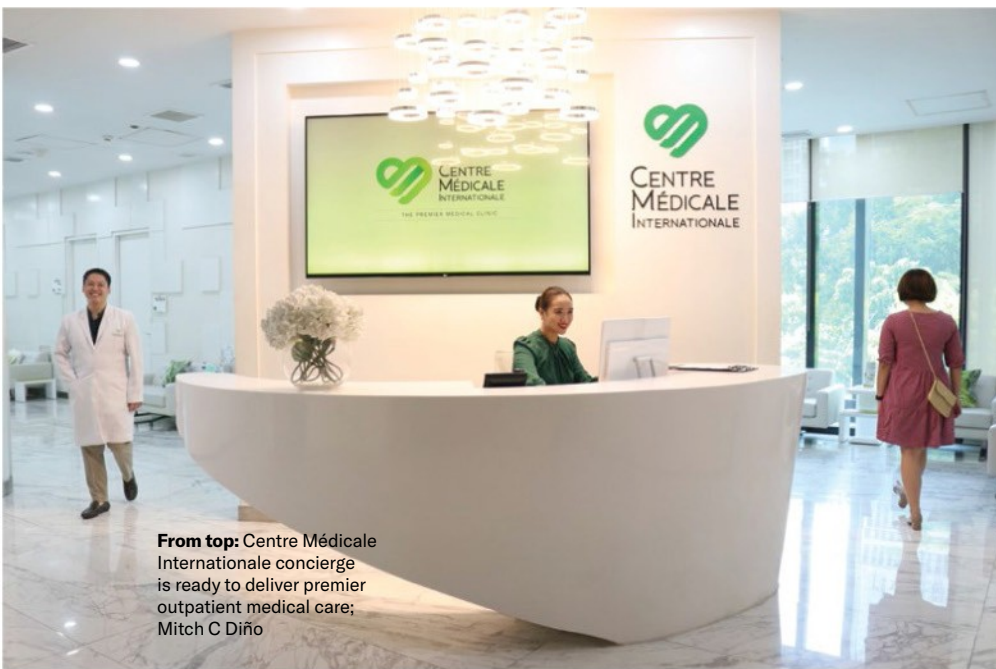
# Bespoke Health Solutions

A trusted provider of premier medical services, Centre Médicale Internationale has become a bright star in the Philippine healthcare industry

They prefer to use their time wisely in order to be more productive,” says Diño. The company’s emphasis on exclusivity and privacy ensures that patients receive the care they need in a timely manner while feeling valued and prioritised. CMI’s board-certified specialists and dedicated patient care team ensure that patients receive exceptional attention consistently.

Known for her hands-on and caring approach, Diño talks about the importance of employee welfare in providing top-notch healthcare. “I empathise and try to put myself in others’ shoes. CMI is patient-centric and employee-centric. We believe that if we take care of our employees well, they can take better care of our patients,” she says.

As CMI moves forward, focusing on concierge services and personalised healthcare, it aims to remain at the forefront of the industry, “We will always listen to the needs of our patients and adjust accordingly. With emerging competitors around us, we continue to do things better to provide our patients with our distinct quality of premier outpatient medical care that we have always committed to them,” adds Diño.



**From top:** Centre Médicale Internationale concierge is ready to deliver premier outpatient medical care; Mitch C Diño

Centre Médicale Internationale (CMI) was founded with the aim of reimagining how healthcare services are delivered to a distinct and discriminating clientele. Establishing itself as a leader in top-tier outpatient care services, CMI is distinguished for its commitment to exclusivity, privacy and safety, catering to its niche market with great efficiency and success.

Embracing a personalised approach to health services, the clinic aims to fulfil each individual’s varying medical needs. Bespoke executive check-ups, for example, are designed to incorporate a person’s age, gender, family history, risk factors, lifestyle, level of stress and other individual preferences. Based on a client’s convenience,

the CMI team can assemble a group of medical specialists or arrange multiple diagnostic procedures in a single visit. The clinic staff go the extra mile to provide efficient and comprehensive medical solutions. “A value for time that is highly appreciated by our clientele,” says Mitch C Diño, CMI’s president.

Unlike traditional healthcare facilities, CMI offers a unique experience that caters to clients with busy lifestyles. “CMI’s clientele are high net-worth individuals who have a lot of things on their plate. They do not have the luxury of time to wait in line in crowded healthcare facilities to get a blood extraction, x-ray, specialist consultations, or even avail themselves of an overnight stay to have their ECU.



*Centre Médicale Internationale is located at 2/F Ore Central Building, 31st corner 9th Avenue, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City. To book a consultation, call +632.8812.1264 or +632.8816.1035 to 36, or visit [cmi.care](http://cmi.care).*







# Tatler

# ASIA'S MOST

# STYLISH

Every year, *Tatler Philippines* pays tribute to some of the country's best dressed. Espousing the virtues of their own unique styles, these exemplary men and women are staples in society events; they hold everyone in anticipation at what they will wear and are trendsetters by their own right. Though they come from a variety of backgrounds, they manage to share a few things in common: confidence and creativity. They carry these traits well and manage to catch the eye of almost everyone they come across. Not one to follow fads, each of Asia's Most Stylish has curated his or her own look that is theirs to own. This month, *Tatler Philippines* explores their unique sartorial choices—from the relaxed to the classic, to the feminine and gender-bending—that make them truly stand out

*By RYANNE STEPHANIE CHENG CO. PHOTOGRAPHY BY WESLEY VILLARICA AND PATRICK DIOKNO.  
CREATIVE DIRECTION BY ANTON SAN DIEGO*







# A CUT ABOVE

Superstar actress and fashion icon Anne Curtis' journey through style is widely followed by an adoring international audience—here's how she's managed to keep things interesting by staying versatile

*By Rynne Stephanie Cheng Co. Photography by BJ Pascual. Creative Direction by Vince Uy. Styling by Liz Uy with Joy Bernardo, Patrick Perez and Jolo Bartolo of Stylized*



# W

ith her sweet smile and kind eyes, Anne Curtis has been wooing audiences worldwide for the past two decades. In that time, the Filipino-Australian multihyphenate has appeared in film and on

TV, released three studio albums, and has gained the recognition of international brands. She's also been invited to the most important fashion shows and events around the world, and has appeared on the cover of countless magazines. This month, she graces ours as an honouree of this year's Tatler's Asia's Most Stylish list.

Curtis grew up in the spotlight—her first on-screen role was in 1997 at the tender age of 12, when she appeared in the Peque Gallaga and Lore Reyes fantasy film *Magic Kingdom*—so it is natural that she is no stranger to the fashion industry. She was a mainstay on the cover of women's and fitness magazines early in her career, posing boldly in daring bikinis and audacious outfits. Who can forget that mesmerising Marc Nicdao photo, where Curtis poses coyly on a Paris balcony, dress slipped off her shoulders, eyes smouldering at the camera.

The actor has also proved that she is high-fashion, and can strut her stuff with the best of them, whether clad in Gucci or Schiaparelli, as well as sustainable fashion brand Moire. "I've never really had a specific style," says Curtis about her apparent versatility. "I like to dress depending on my mood. But I think what's changed over the years is that I've started choosing timeless pieces that can be passed on to my daughter."

Now that she and her husband Erwan Heussaff are parents to a baby girl, Curtis has been planning ahead. Doubtless, her closet will be a future treasure trove for young Dahlia, but Curtis wants her daughter to discover her style for herself. "I'd want her to dress as she feels," she says. "I believe style shouldn't be defined by a trend but more of an expression of who you are." When asked if her style has changed since becoming a mum, Curtis jokes, "Nothing has changed. Just the size, I guess."

Curtis has made plenty of friends during her multifaceted career—and met plenty of designers and worked with a plethora of design houses. She's a huge fan of Alaïa—she the late designer's pieces—and wore multiple pieces from the maison during her *Tatler* cover shoot, including a complete look from the summer-fall 2023 collection. "Being a huge lover and fan of the house, it brought me so much happiness when they lent me this runway piece specially for this shoot. The leather jacket and caged boots fit perfectly with the story I wanted to tell of how my style is almost like a chameleon: it can transform from classic to fun and edgy." She also has a strong relationship with Louis Vuitton and has worked with the brand since adulthood—"since I was 19, I think," she says.

Locally, one of her favourite creators is Carl Jan (CJ) Cruz. "Everyone knows that CJ is one of my favourite Filipino designers," she says. "I love having a personal relationship with him—it makes the pieces extra special when it's a collaboration [between us]." Other local designers that have managed to gain Curtis' admiration are Michael Leyva and Vania Romoff. While Curtis can often be seen wearing the works of international designers, she's also an avid supporter of local. "I love supporting local and



Curtis wears **Schiaparelli**  
red ensemble and belt,  
and **Tiffany & Co** ring







**This page:** Curtis wears  
**Givenchy** dress and  
**Tiffany & Co** jewellery  
**Opposite page:** Curtis  
wears **Dior** beret







**“I believe style  
shouldn't be defined  
by a trend but more  
of an expression of  
who you are”**





Curtis wears  
**Carl Jan Cruz** dress











**This page:** Curtis wears  
**Louis Vuitton** ensemble  
**Opposite page:** Curtis  
wears **Alaïa** jacket  
and boots



Curtis wears **Alaia** body suit, **Dior** belt as collar, **Schiaparelli** earring





“What’s nice about the things I’ve purchased now is that they are timeless pieces I can repeat. This is a key thought in my mind nowadays”

collaborating with them for each piece I have made,” she muses. She’s not one to shy away from butterfly sleeves or a full Filipiniana look.

Her ultimate style secret, however? An elegant black dress, which she sees as her best weapon. “Do always have an LBD [little black dress] in your closet,” she says, smiling. “I can never have enough black outfits; I’d say about 60 per cent of my closet is black.”

Her penchant for black dresses in particular can be pinned to her admiration of one specific actress. “Audrey Hepburn has been a huge part of my inspiration when collecting classic pieces,” Curtis says. A recently purchased Givenchy dress, for instance, “was giving a modern-day Audrey Hepburn vibe. I knew it would be an instant favourite in my closet. For fashion inspiration, however, I love looking at fashion shows and couture collections during their presentations. Reading fashion magazines and browsing through Instagram have also been great sources of inspiration.”

Curtis acknowledges one of her favourite recent looks as the one she wore to the Tiffany & Co landmark opening in New York a few months ago. “I wore a cream Christian Dior dress and coat. I fell in love with the dress the moment I saw it,” she reminisces. The elegant look featured a low back, a tailored A-line skirt with subtle pleats and a bit of lace trim. She paired this with iconic Dior slingback

pumps. Conservative but striking, it made quite an impression against the Tiffany blue of the landmark edifice.”

Despite her affinity for the more luxurious things in life, Curtis, who runs her own brand of athleisure-wear, Recess, she also knows how to relax. “Don’t get me wrong, I still have that simple surfer chick in me,” she says. “You can still catch me in denim, tees, sneakers or sandals on some days.”

This love of eclectic and wide-ranging fashion makes it impossible to define what Curtis’s style is; she refuses to be put in a box simply because she doesn’t live in one. “[My closet has such a] wide variety because of my work and personal life. You can catch me in my Recess [outfits] for school drop-offs and workouts. But I also get all glammed up for big events.” But as she gets older and more experienced, she is also increasingly aware of the need not to follow trends for the sake of it, but to ensure that the items she buys are, and remain, true to her personal brand. “What’s nice about the things I’ve purchased now is that they are timeless pieces I can repeat. This is a key thought in my mind nowadays.”

After all, she believes there is no such thing as a fashion mistake, as long as you are authentic. “Don’t follow a trend just for the hell of it,” she says. “If you love and feel comfortable in it, go for it. But if it’s not you, don’t force it.” Wise words indeed.



### JERICHO ROSALES

Jericho Rosales doesn't care much for fashion. "It's there; it's in the backseat of my mind," he mentions casually. His statement is a surprise when one remembers the plethora of magazine covers he's been on and the movies he's starred in. But in many ways, it only proves that for Rosales, style is effortless. "Fashion makes me feel, at times, awkward. But it's also fun. It's a challenge for me to express myself."

Rather than allowing himself to conform to a style or silhouette, Rosales ensures that what he wears reflects his daily activities. An avid rider and driver, the actor jokes about how the shape of his clothes demonstrates how he chooses to get around that day. "When I'm driving, I like my clothes to be loose. When riding bikes, it has to be tight; it can't be billowing. So many of my clothing choices reflect what I drive. But overall, as long as I feel like myself [in what I wear], I'm good with that."

**This page:** Rosales wears a **Craig Green** jacket, **Simone Rocha** twill kilt and stylist's own shoes and shirt **Opposite page:** Rosales wears **Vetements** shirt, **Craig Green** jeans, and **Bottega Veneta** boots





# THE ICONS





## KATHY YAP-HUANG

"I don't think I developed an aesthetic per se," muses Kathy Yap-Huang. "I just picked things that appealed to me." A mother and wife, Yap Huang is as versatile in her style as she is with her responsibilities. Though she's usually spotted in white tops—"T-shirt or *sando* [tank top]", she jokes—and Birkenstocks, Yap-Huang knows how to transform herself when the occasion calls for it.

From deduction, it's easy to guess that Yap-Huang revels in adventure. She's not one to shy away from fashion choices or unconventional activities. For her photoshoot with Asia's Most Stylish, Yap-Huang, she gamely wrapped a ball python around her neck, an easy and striking way to accentuate the Damiani snake earrings she'd chosen to wear.

**This page:** Yap-Huang wears **Paco Rabanne** top, **Rick Owens** leather pants, **Calvin Klein** shoes, and **Alexander McQueen** jewellery **Opposite page:** Yap-Huang wears **Alexandre Vauthier** dress, **Damiani** earrings, and **Rodarte** ring













## EMMELINE “EM” AGLIPAY VILLAR

A strong sense of patriotism emanates in Emmeline Aglipay Villar’s tone whenever she speaks about style. The lawyer and former Department of Justice Undersecretary have much to say about how she dresses; unsurprisingly, she marries that with her passion for serving our country.

Often seen dressed in bright, tailored clothing, Aglipay Villar has found her style evolving through time. “My style features Filipino culture and promotes our local weaves and textiles,” she says. “Elements of our traditional Filipino attire have found their way into my more modern work, casual and evening wear—like the butterfly sleeves, the exaggerated puffed sleeves of the *traje de mestiza* as well as the delicate embroidery of the *barong* Tagalog. It has evolved into a tailored feminine aesthetic celebrating our Philippine culture and heritage.”

**This page:** Aglipay Villar wears **Rajo Laurel** abaca weave dress, **Riqueza** jewellery, and **Giuseppe Zanotti** heels **Opposite page:** Aglipay Villar wears **Randy Ortiz** piña silk bow top, **Puey Quiñones** cut-out gown, **Carolina Herrera** shoes, and **Riqueza** jewellery





# THE CREATIVES

## MAICA SALUD TADY

As the co-owner of the fashion rental studio, Vestido, Maica Salud Tady is a passionate advocate of re-wear. Her two biggest fashion regrets are being wasteful and shopping mindlessly. "I love that everyone is beginning to embrace the concept of re-wearing and restyling the same pieces," she says now.

For herself, Salud Tady embodies a quirky sense of style that is also somehow polished, classic and simultaneously feminine. "My style always evolves depending on the season of my life," she shares.

But of course, her staples are always a no-fail. On those days when she has to rely on wardrobe essentials, one can spot her sporting chic black leggings or white jeans paired with a crisp white button-down and signature Chanel flats.

**This page:** Salud Tady wears **Valentino** dress and **Nicholas Kirkwood** shoes **Opposite page:** Tady wears **Jacquemus** coat, **Acne Studios** dress, and her own vintage boots



HAIR PATTY INOJALES MAKE-UP JOHNSON ESTRELLA













## PATTY ANG

Unsurprisingly, Patty Ang's ethos as a fashion designer is also reflected in how she dresses. "Simplicity is beauty," she states plainly. "I think you should wear the clothes; the clothes shouldn't wear you." A cursory glance at her wardrobe reveals plenty of classic pieces: bodysuits from her eponymous label, Patton Studio, mixed in with oversized blazers and elegant off-the-shoulder or plunging tops. Now and then, Ang throws in something whimsical: floral-shaped tops, a touch of fringe, and electric colours such as neon green. "I like playing around with different cuts and textures. I also like mixing pieces with my [own] brands," she muses. "I love to mix and match with pieces I already have. It depends on what I want to express on that certain occasion."

**This page:** Ang wears **Patty Ang** dress, **Amina** shoes, and **Tiffany & Co** jewellery **Opposite page:** Ang wears **Patton** bodysuit, **Saint Laurent** blazer, **Louboutin** shoes, and **Tiffany & Co.** jewellery



ASIA'S MOST STYLISH

# THE INGENUES







## LA AGUINALDO

Modern street style aesthetic has largely influenced LA Aguinaldo's modelling career. Relaxed yet calm, Aguinaldo's sartorial choices were initially inspired by his favourite artists.

An avid dresser of Louis Vuitton classics, Aguinaldo reminisces on the recent milestone of the luxury house at Paris Fashion Week. "I attended Pharell's first show [for Louis Vuitton] wearing a suit top and shorts with holes on the side. I love how it was both conventional and unconventional at the same time. Many people at the show loved my look," he reminisces.

Ultimately though, it's not the name brand that makes one stylish. For Aguinaldo, it's confidence. "[That] is everything," the model insists.

**This page:** Aguinaldo wears **Louis Vuitton**  
**Opposite page:** Aguinaldo wears **Fortune**  
**WWD** shirt, blazer, and trousers, **Louis Vuitton**  
loafers, rings, bracelet, and necklace, and **Yohji**  
**Yamamoto** tie







## KIFU AUGOSTI

With a background in dance, Kifu Augusti unites her passion for art with her style. “Fashion is a form of self-love; it’s my outlet to feel good at the end of the day. To me, fashion is also a form of art.”

Doubtless, Augusti has no qualms in making distinctive sartorial choices. She loves to be daring and pulls it off quite well. “My wardrobe centres around pieces that are not seasonal and can go from day to night. I have endless variations of Olivier Theyskens corset tops that are always my go-to. Leather motorcycle jackets are also a must in any closet to add edge to any look.” For her birthday this year, Augusti wore a bold white lace see-through Nensi Dojaka gown paired with a vintage Demaret butterfly necklace.

**This page:** Augusti wears **Dior** dress, **Demaret** watch, and **Versace** necklace **Opposite page:** Augusti wears **Olivier Theyskens** dress, **Gianvito Rossi** shoes, **Samuel Francois** necklace, and **Demaret** earrings





ASIA'S MOST STYLISH

# THE GALANISTAS







## RISSA MANANQUIL TRILLO

Rissa Mananquil Trillo has an exciting new word for an up-and-coming trend she's happy to see. "Fashion and nationalism, 'factionalism,'" she laughs. "Our beautiful local weaves, *ternos* and *barongs* are no longer reserved for special occasions or themed events. They are now part of the style, especially for the next generation."

A model in her younger years, Mananquil Trillo, has seen many trends' advent—and demise. Now, she's realised that while styles come and go, sustainability is what matters in her wardrobe. "My best fashion moments are when I would re-wear or restyle an old item from my closet, and people from the fashion industry would compliment it like they were seeing it for the first time."

**This page:** Mananquil Trillo wears **Lulu Tan Gan** vintage dress, **Alexander Wang** heels, and **Jewelmer** jewellery **Opposite page:** Mananquil Trillo wears **Rhett Eala** fringed suit and **Casadei** heels







## MOND GUTIERREZ

He's ubiquitous at social gatherings and parties all around Metro Manila. A creative director who's worked with brands such as Magnum and Belo, Mond Gutierrez is best known for his media appearances and fashion sense.

Coming from a famous family, he finds inspiration from his father, the former matinee idol Eddie Gutierrez. Now, armed with his own sense of self and a keen directive for his sartorial choices, Gutierrez shares how important fashion is for his self-expression. "I'm definitely a mood dresser," he declares. "Fashion is a tool that empowers me to live my authentic self." Not one to focus too much on brand names, Gutierrez calls himself a proud "outfit repeater", one who looks beyond logos to cultivate a wardrobe that reflects who he has grown to become.

**This page:** Gutierrez wears **Yohji Yamamoto Homme** suit, **Rick Owens** shirt, **Gentle Monster** glasses, and **Thom Browne** shoes. **Opposite page:** Gutierrez wears **Marni x Carhartt** jacket, **Dries Van Noten** pants, **Dr Martens x Neighborhood** shoes, and **Gucci** rings







**From left:** Haeun wears **Shiatzy Chen** dress; Sin Yan wears **Shiatzy Chen** outfit, **Giuseppe Zanotti** shoes; Karin wears **Shiatzy Chen** outfit; Fedi wears **Shiatzy Chen** outfit; Kemmei wears **Shiatzy Chen** outfit, **Giuseppe Zanotti** shoes





# LIVING CULTURES

Celebrate fashion not just for its appearance but also the cultures it's inspired by and lives in; delight in the most versatile and vibrant pieces of the new season *Photography by Zed Leets. Styling by Wan Jansco*

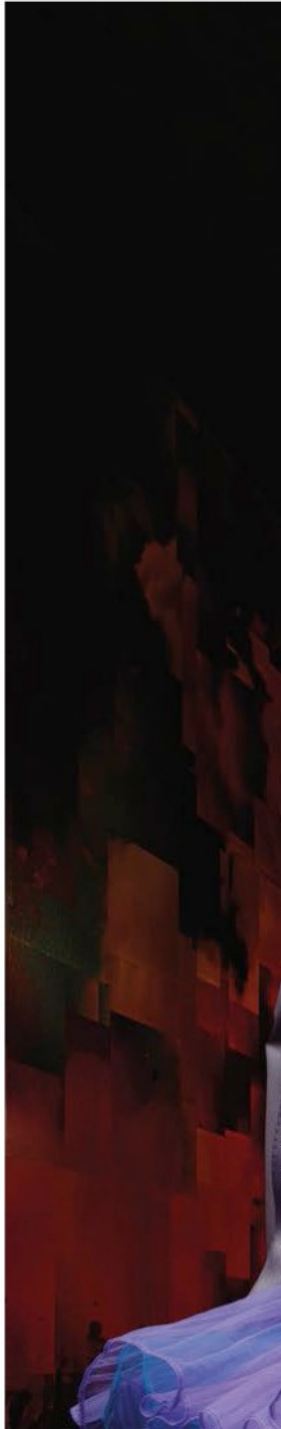














**From left:** Fedi wears **Kei Yiu** dress, **Gucci** blazer; Kemmei wears **Kei Yiu** dress, **Gucci** blazer **Opposite page:** **Gucci** outfits







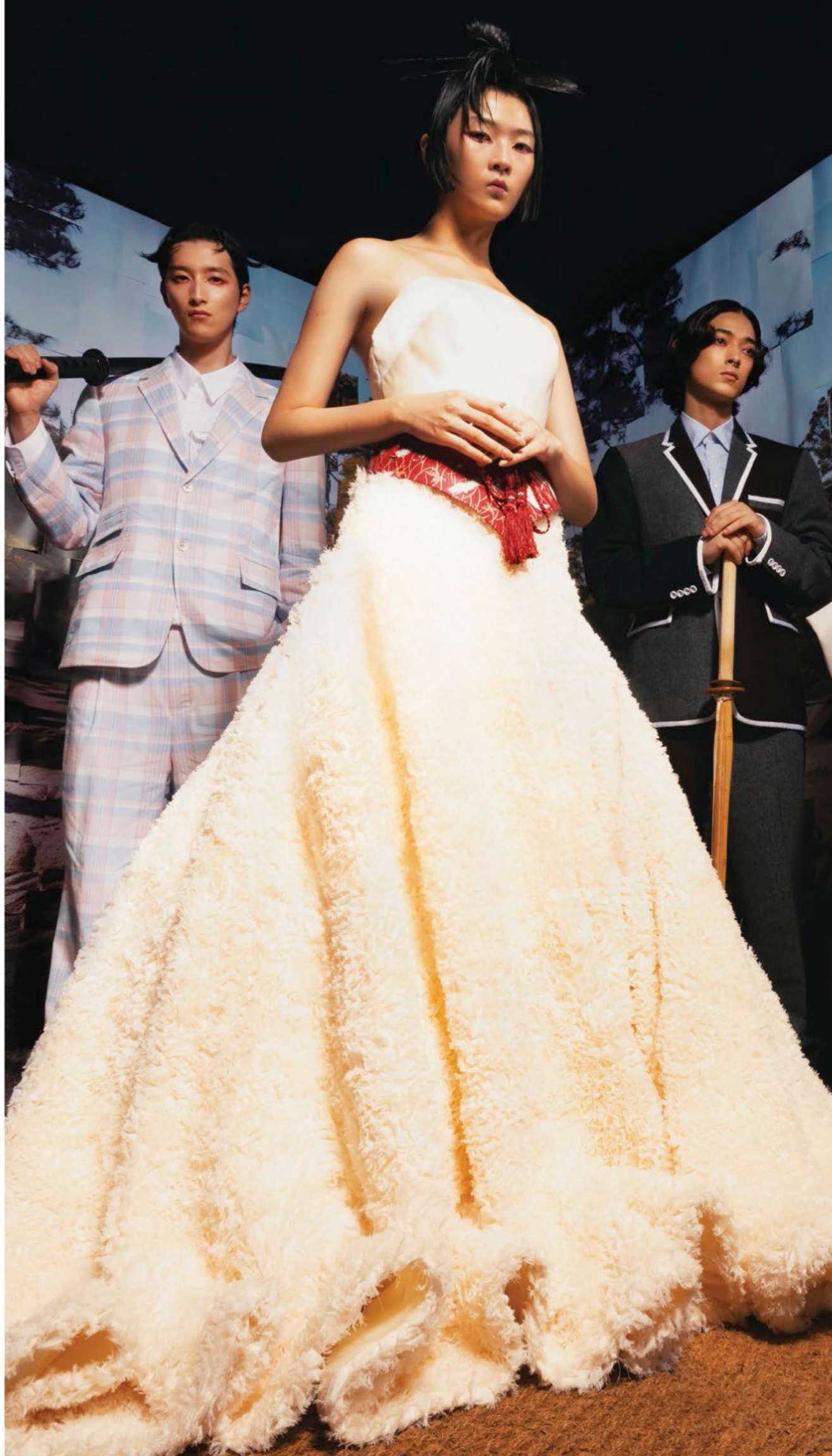
HAIR: HAIR DICKSON CHAN AND RUTH LAM; MAKE-UP: KIT LI AND SHEILA KO; MODELS: FEDI AT QUEST, KEMMEI AND KARIN AT PRIMO MANAGEMENT LTD., HAIJUN LEE AND SIN YAN AT SELF MANAGEMENT HONG KONG; SET DESIGN: ZED LEETS; PRODUCER: EMILY LAU; PHOTOGRAPHY ASSISTANT: CARLOS HUI; Gaffer: ERNEST LAW; STYLING ASSISTANTS: AMEN SAELEE, ADRIAN WONG, CHRISTY WONG; SET DESIGN ASSISTANTS: AUDREY TAM, RACHEL SUEN, VANESSA SO; PRODUCTION ASSISTANTS: DANIL RUSANOV, HOI TO WONG; DIGITAL TECHNICIAN: TSIN LI





**Fendi** dress, **Bulgari** necklace, earring, bracelet **Opposite page:** **Gucci** outfits, **Bulgari** necklaces, rings









**Cartier** watch  
**Opposite, from left:**  
Kemmei wears **Thom  
Browne** suit, **Simone  
Rocha** shirt; Sin Yan  
wears **Kev Yiu** dress;  
Fedi wears **Thom  
Browne** blazer, **MM6  
Maison Margiela**  
skirt; Karin wears  
**Kev Yiu** dress





# THE WISH LIST

Everything  
you need to  
look your  
best this  
month

*By Cherry Mui*



## ART COLLECTORS

Both men's and women's looks are embracing artsy prints—or giant paintings that could be art pieces of their own. A statement piece could be perfect for your coming gallery visits or art fair trips.

**Clockwise, from right:** Rabanne dress; Louis Vuitton shirt; Dries Van Noten trousers; Christian Louboutin heel; Dior belt. Opposite page: Loewe outfits











## POWER DRESSING

Did designers predict the release of Apple TV+ docu-series *The Supermodels* with their September plans? This season sees the 1980s and early 1990s being brought back in a big way, with a particular focus on remixed power suits, oversized proportions and gorgeous hourglass frames. Keep the momentum going with bold accessories: think belts and chunky jewellery. **Saint Laurent** outfit **Opposite, clockwise from top left: Chanel** necklace; **Magda Butrym** dress; **Gianvito Rossi** boot; **Jimmy Choo** earrings; **Roger Vivier** clutch





## SEEING RED

Get the memo: the colour of the season is no longer pink but fiery red. We saw it everywhere, be it on bold, head-to-toe looks or accessories; and we are particularly loving the splash of scarlet on handbags. Available in all shapes from slouchy pouches to sleek top handles, a bag in this vibrant shade is guaranteed to boost your serotonin levels. **Clockwise, from top left: Ferragamo bag; Schiaparelli bag; Alexander McQueen bag** **Opposite page: Gucci outfit**

Alexander McQUEEN









## MAKE A POINT

Power dressing is one of the major trends this season, so it comes as little surprise that polished, pointed heels and flats have emerged as the key shoe silhouettes. Almost every major designer showed their version of the classic pump; go for something extra decorative as seen at Prada or a worker's favourite court shoe, according to Saint Laurent.

**From top:** Moschino pump; Givenchy pump  
**Opposite, clockwise from top left:** Versace pump; Prada outfit; Saint Laurent pump; Bottega Veneta pump













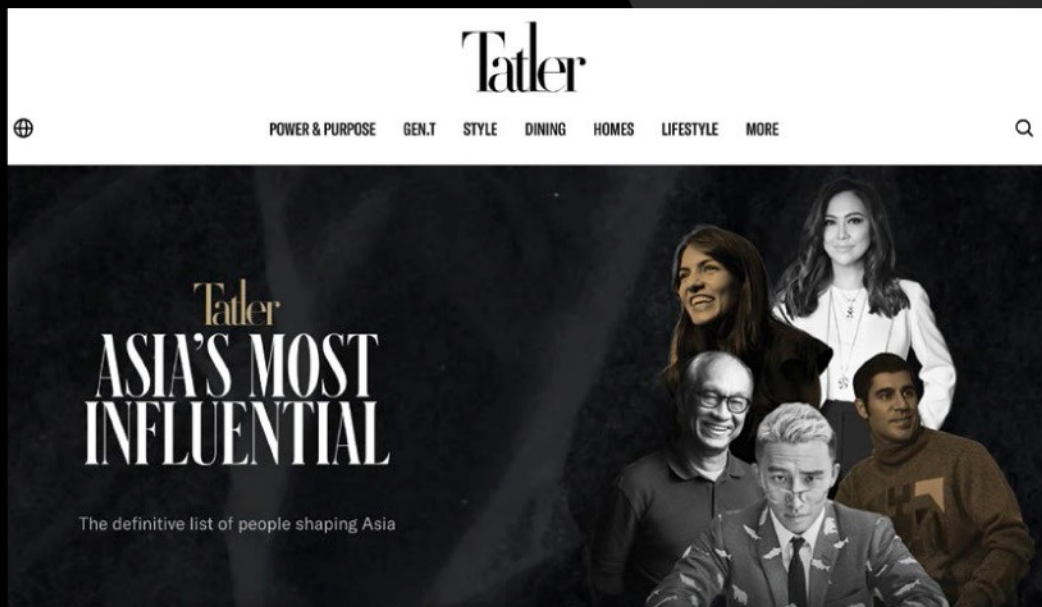
# BALENCIAGA

Ground Level, Greenbelt 5, Legazpi St., Ayala Center, Makati City  
Level 1, Shangri-La Plaza East Wing, ESDA corner Shaw Boulevard, Mandaluyong City



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# Dare to Captivate

Free from convention, Carolina Herrera's fall-winter collection ignites the senses with a captivating fusion of colour, vivacity and design

As the days grow shorter and the air takes on a crisp chill, fashion enthusiasts have come to expect a familiar sight of fall attire—a sea of dark colours, sombre tones and predictable layers that often lack excitement. However, this year, Carolina Herrera boldly shatters these conventional norms, presenting a selection that dares to be different and elevates autumnal wear to an extraordinary level.

The beauty of fall meets the vibrancy of life with the unveiling of a groundbreaking collection that embraces the spirit of *Alegría de Vivir*, the joy of living.

At the heart of this lineup are new and exclusive prints artfully designed by the House's illustrators. These prints playfully blend the classic polka dots, Carolina's initials, and an array of delightful flowers ingeniously woven into rich fabrics such as crêpes, brocades, taffetas, chiffons, neoprene and even opulent ostrich feathers.

The colour palette is a mesmerising dance of jewel tones, showcasing shades of regal purple, lush green and passionate red without missing the timeless elegance of classic black and white. Each ensemble takes on unique shapes, be it in complete looks or exquisite separates. The volumes are skillfully balanced and either relaxed or cinched at the waist with ribbons or sashes. The skirts boast delightful ruffles, while the dresses allure their daring, low-cut backs. The lengths gracefully fall to a midi or floor-skimming silhouette that is perfect for pairing with high or flat sandals.

As we venture into the realm of accessories, a treasure trove of



**Clockwise:** Accessories from the fall-winter collection with the Patent leather sandals detailed with a tonal grosgrain bow; Initials Insignia bag in white; Shirt dress in taffeta with a fitted bodice and a flared skirt; Necklace from fall-winter 2023



splendour awaits. A new arrival to the clutch family, the Insignia Soft, gracefully commands attention in opulent black, gold and silver satin. It is worth noting that all these pieces were lovingly handmade in the House's renowned Leather Atelier in Spain, a testament to their commitment to quality craftsmanship. These ready-to-wear pieces are perfect to enchant guests at a holiday party, or simply out on the town—wherever it may be, one is sure to be the highlight of the night.

Carefully curated, this inspiring collection truly empowers individuals to embrace their most special moments with elegance and flair. It is a tribute to the vivacity of life, beckoning wearers to revel in the joy of existence and to radiate their inner light.

*CH Carolina Herrera is available at G/F Greenbelt 5. You may contact +63927.874.1463 or +632.7728.7714, and visit [hcarolinaherrera.com](http://hcarolinaherrera.com) for more.*





**This page:** Entrepreneurs Nikki Tang and Charles Mandy have built a formidable beauty empire  
**Opposite page, from top:** DMark Group of Companies CEO Nikki Tang; DermAsia managing director Charles Mandy

# Dynamic Synergy

Nikki Tang and Charles Mandy, the entrepreneurs behind DMark Beauty and DermAsia, illustrate their shared vision of driving impact in the beauty and medical aesthetics realm

Beauty begets confidence and empowerment. Beauty entrepreneurs Nikki Tang and Charles Mandy know this well, so they've focused their incredible sibling synergy on creating a synchronous legacy of excellence, innovation and customer satisfaction.

Tang founded DMark Beauty which offers a curated range of internationally renowned skincare, beauty and wellness brands for diverse needs. Then in 2004, she founded DermAsia, a distributor of the latest medical aesthetic devices. Closely witnessing his sister's dedication and vision for the business, Mandy saw further potential for innovation in the medical aesthetics field. He joined DermAsia as managing director a few years after its inception, embarking on a mutual effort to expand their groundbreaking line.





PHOTOGRAPHY: JY RABANO HAIR: PATTY INOJALES MAKEUP: JOHNSON ESTRELLA LOCATION: RAFFLES MAKATI PRODUCTION: ISABEL FRANCISCO, MICHELLE SORIANO, JOHANNAH REGLOS, GERYLL PANGILINAN, DON CALOPEZ

“Our collaboration is built on the foundation of trust and reliability as we strive to empower our clients with the knowledge and tools they need to look and feel their best,” relays Tang. Mandy affirms this: “We aspire to be pioneers in the industry, always staying ahead of the curve with cutting-edge technologies and medical aesthetic devices. You could say that our clients’ and partners’ trust is paramount, and we go the extra mile to ensure their satisfaction.”

This drive for excellence runs in the family. Raised by parents who were trailblazing entrepreneurs, Tang and Mandy credit such a background for instilling the values of perseverance and courage in their leadership and their purposeful view on success. “Our parents’ legacies have inspired us to have a higher purpose: to make a genuine difference in people’s lives,” shares Mandy. Tang adds, “Being grateful for what we have and maintaining humility while staying competitive in the market has been a guiding principle in our approach to leadership.”

Through this lens, Tang highlights their journey of continuous and collective learning. She explains, “We understand that the only way to stay ahead in this dynamic industry is to learn and adapt continuously, so we’ve ingrained a culture of curiosity within our teams, emphasising the pursuit of knowledge as a key driver for success. We invest in their growth, not only to enhance customer experience but also to nurture their creativity and problem-solving capabilities.”

Mandy says: “Our team members understand that innovation knows no bounds. We firmly believe that the intersection of beauty and technology is where the magic happens, and it’s a realm we will continuously explore together.”

Knowing a thing or two about how strong partnerships are built on mutual respect and shared values, Tang and Mandy also take pride in the rapport they’ve organically established with doctors, clinics and other brands in the industry, as well as with their very own customers. Attuned to their ever-changing needs, DMark Beauty and DermAsia are resolute in remaining at the forefront of beauty trends and advancements in our rapidly changing world.

“We continuously invest in research and development to pioneer groundbreaking advancements in medical aesthetics. Including artificial intelligence is also underway,” Mandy highlights. “Our focus on sustainability will also play a significant role, as we aim to contribute to a more environmentally conscious industry. Embracing green practices and eco-friendly solutions will be crucial in our journey toward a greener, more sustainable future.”

Calling their vision for the future “ambitious yet grounded in our core values of innovation, empowerment, and inclusivity”, Tang reiterates their influence as leaders in the field. “We recognise the evolving role of beauty in people’s lives, as it extends beyond aesthetics to encompass essential self-care. We aim to be a reliable source of guidance, helping individuals make informed choices about their skincare and beauty routines, and empower individuals to feel beautiful inside and out.”





## POT OF GOLD

Diminish visible ageing signs by promoting skin renewal and amplifying its glow with Chanel Sublimage La Crème, redefining the anti-ageing concept. Enriched with the potent benefits of Vanilla Planifolia, the skin receives deep hydration, appearing smoother with reduced wrinkles. Shielded from damaging free radicals, the skin tone becomes more even, exuding a vibrant luminosity. Day by day, the reflection in the mirror showcases a face of exquisite beauty with sharper contours.



## THE A CLASS

Murad's Retinal ReSculpt Overnight Treatment (yes, that's with an "a" not an "o") is a unique serum that dramatically lifts and improves the appearance of sagging skin and deep-set wrinkles, as well as increases skin elasticity. The potent serum contains encapsulated retinal, one of the most efficacious forms of vitamin A, Kangaroo paw flower extract that sculpts skin, and olive, oat and alpha glucan to boost moisture and restore the skin's barrier.



## SUNNY DAYS

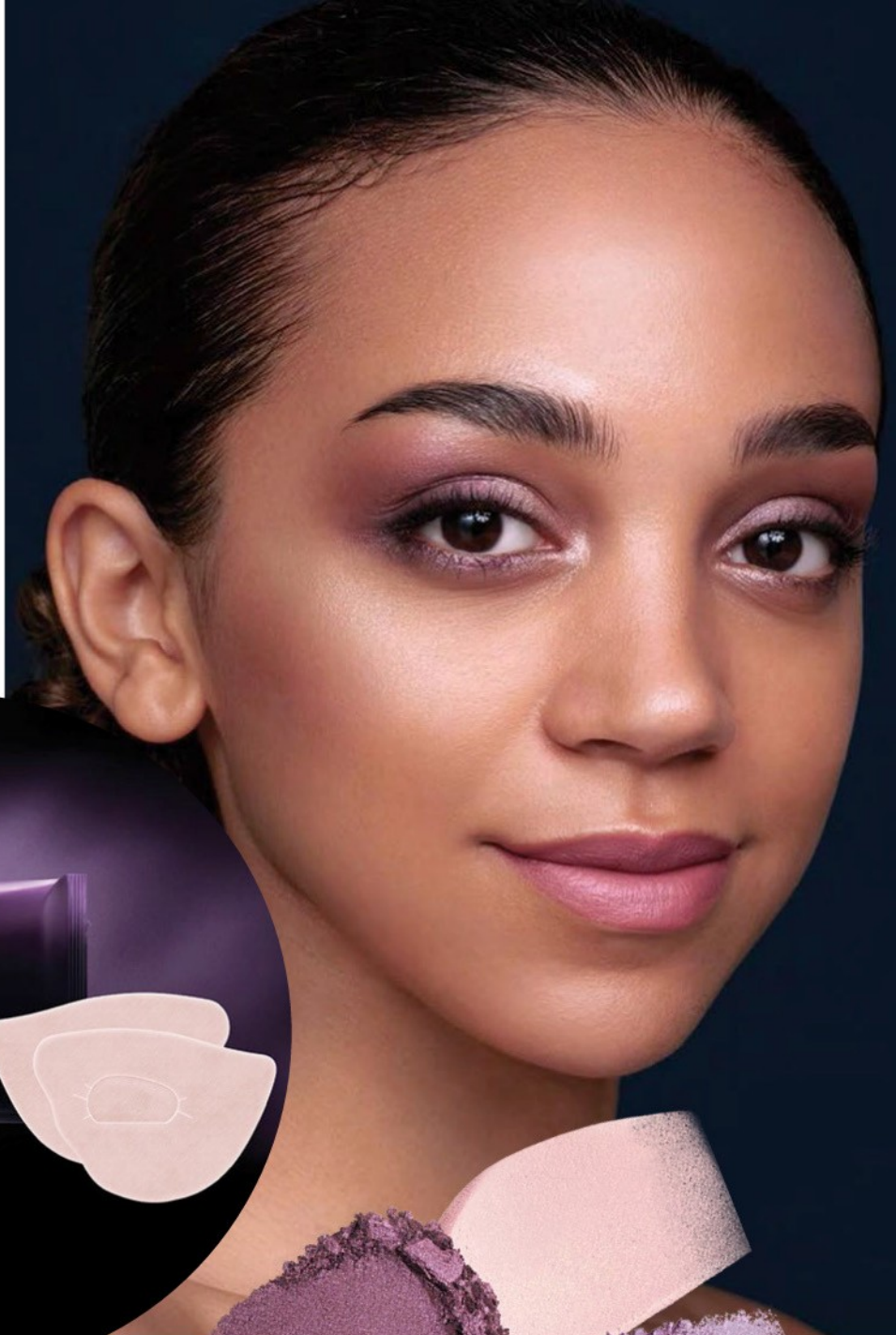
With its stunning cases covered in raffia-inspired fabric and palettes of a marine-inspired pattern engraved with its iconic logo, Christian Dior's summer 2023 collection evokes endless sun-filled days, emphasising the contrasts between golden brown, intense coral and deep blue. Included in the collection are new colours of Dior Vernis: Jasmine (an opaline white from the Côte d'Azur gardens, Rivage, a dynamic coral, Solar Bronze, and Eden-Roc (a blue that echoes the azure depths of the sea). Infused with peony and pistachio tree extracts, the Dior Vernis helps strengthen the nail's surface. Also not to be missed is the Dior Forever Couture Luminizer, a powder that beautifully blends with the skin and illuminates the complexion in two warm shades: Coral Cruise and Golden Cruise.





## ALL EYES ON YOU

Inspired by detoxifying spa treatments and backed by extensive research, Clé de Peau Beauté Synactif Skincare supports the skin's self-beautifying systems for better facial definition. This line includes the Synactif Eye Mask, which counters densely-clustered fine lines with re-energising Golden Oyster Mushroom Extract while also targeting the loss of firmness. With a single ten-minute application, the entire eye area looks re-energised, giving the face a youthful look. Another eye-loving product from the revered beauty brand is the New Eye Color Quad, which merges luxurious skincare with light-empowered eyeshadows. It has a moisturising primer that lays an even base, lending longevity and giving the eyes that lit-from-within radiance.



## GREENTHUMB

As with all of his Aqua fragrances, Francis Kurkdjian chose a Latin name for this fourth chapter: Aqua Media. And as with each Cologne forte, he assigned it one particular colour: green, the centre of the rainbow, a wonderful phenomenon born of water and sunlight. Maison Francis Kurkdjian's Aqua Media Cologne forte encapsulates balance and harmony, opening a window to an infinite, boundlessly fresh, idyllic landscape, where the wind in the wild grass seems to engage in a dialog with the murmuring of serene waters.



Louis Vuitton Tambour  
watch 2023

# EDITOR'S PICK

The new, slimmer Tambour watch elevates Louis Vuitton's design through exceptional finishing and sculpting. The 40mm model features the calibre LFT023, a mechanical movement with automatic winding. Contrasting brushed and polished surfaces enhance the look and feel of the bracelet, while golden appliqué markers pop against a micro-blasted dial emblazoned with "Louis Vuitton Paris". Created by La Fabrique du Temps in Switzerland, this neo-vintage watch elevates the Tambour's 21-year-old design by combining the maison's blend of Parisian elegance and technical Swiss watchmaking prowess, scaled for a new generation.





Digging up skeletons: openworked timepieces are making hearts race



Clockwise, from right: Maurice Lacroix Only Watch 2023; Zenith Defy Skyline Skeleton Boutique Edition; Ulysse Nardin Diver Skeleton



### DUAL TIME

This iteration of the Rolex Oyster Perpetual Sky-Dweller introduces aesthetic and technical enhancements. A watch made for world-travellers features the reference time in 24-hour format, shown via an off-centre disc, and the local time is read using conventional centre hands. The annual calendar, named Saros, automatically differentiates between 30- and 31-day months. This timepiece is offered in three variants including one fashioned in 18ct Everose gold and endowed with a blue-green dial. The Sky-Dweller is now equipped with calibre 9002, an evolution of calibre 9001, which features some of the major innovations that Rolex has brought to its movements, including the Chronergy escapement.

Rolex Oyster Perpetual Sky-Dweller



### PRETTY IN PLATINUM

The Lange 1 Time Zone in platinum displays at a glance both home time and a second time zone using two subdials. Day and night ring indicators and a daylight savings marker provide maximum legibility, while the supple calibre L141.1 offers 72 hours of power reserve. The new platinum case and rhodium face featuring the signature off-centre dial architecture lend elegance to the complications.

A Lange & Söhne Lange 1 Time Zone in platinum

### STYLE WITH PURPOSE

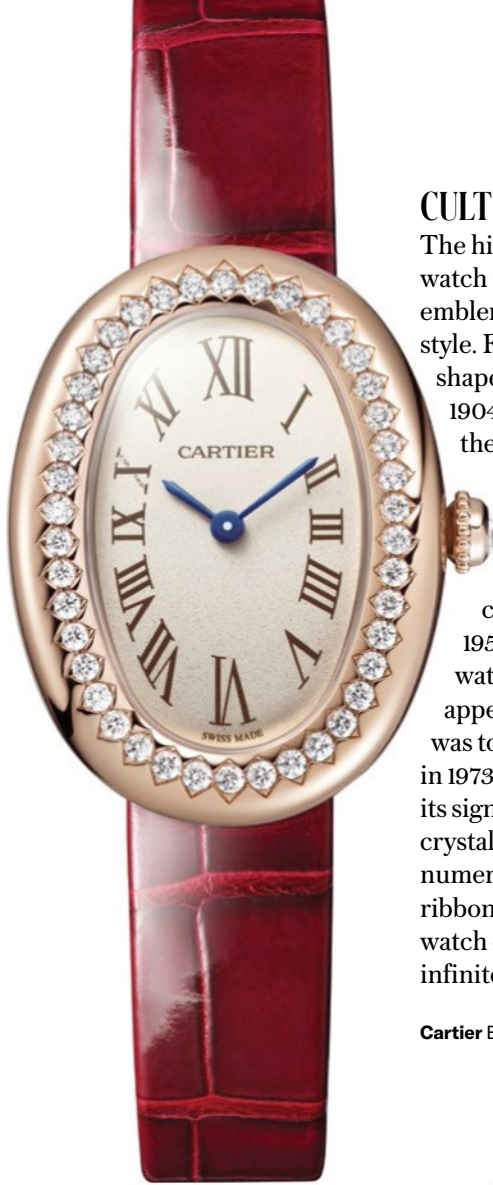
Since 2009, Chanel has supported the biennial Only Watch charity auction benefiting Duchenne muscular dystrophy research by creating exclusive timepieces. For the 10th edition in November this year, Chanel is offering a duo of J12 La Pausa watches in black and white ceramic. Designed in Chanel's distinctive minimalist style, the

black-and-white ceramic cases, bracelets and dials reflect a delicate balance of elegance and function, and a cartoon portrait of the maison's founder. Before being auctioned in Geneva, the watches will be exhibited in cities including Hong Kong, New York, and Dubai.

Chanel J12 La Pausa watch duo in black and white ceramic







## CULT CLASSIC

The history of the Baignoire watch is at the heart of Cartier's emblematic watchmaking style. Following the square shape of the Santos watch in 1904 and the bold design of the Tortue in 1906, Cartier created a watch in 1912 with a rectangular case rounded at the ends. The concept continued to evolve until 1958, with a curved oval watch. This was the first appearance of the watch that was to be named the Baignoire in 1973. Impossible to miss are its signature details: a domed crystal, a dial with Roman numerals and a smooth gold ribbon. Since then, this iconic watch continues to take on an infinite number of variations.

Cartier Baignoire small model



## SMALL TALK

# NICHOLAS RUDAZ

*The Franck Muller CEO discusses the whimsical stories behind the brand's iconic models, and his personal journey in the world of horology*

## IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE

The Panerai Submersible eTitanio PAM01403 continues the luxury brand's partnership with the world's largest supercar tuner, Brabus. The innovative 47mm DMLS titanium case is light and 3D-printed. It features a titanium crown protection device and sapphire caseback revealing the P.4001/S calibre that boasts a three-day power reserve. Red details and a secondary time zone reference the collaboration, while a patented polarised date function appears only in the window, showcasing Panerai's technical creativity. Available exclusively at boutiques, this reference is a limited edition of 177 pieces.

Panerai Submersible eTitanio PAM01403



### How did the crazy idea for the Crazy Hours model come about?

The Crazy Hours watch I'm wearing [is] celebrating the 20th anniversary of the craziness this year. The reason why it was born is because Franck was celebrating New Year's Eve in the Maldives and it was a very proper event—people didn't know one another, and the atmosphere was a bit stiff. Franck was enjoying his time and he wanted people to go crazy in the pool because it was very hot. And nobody did, except for Franck. The next day when he woke up, he had an idea [inspired by his solo dip]: ah, I must do something crazy, something different.

### Which watch from your own collection do you most cherish?

That's like asking me [to name] my favourite son. I like different watches for different occasions. [If I had to pick just one,] maybe the watch given to me by my mother when I graduated from school: an Omega Seamaster; it was the James Bond watch. But, of course, people have different tastes at different times of their lives. Right now, my favourite watch from the WPHH 2023 [World Presentation of Haute Horlogerie, Franck Muller's own watch fair] collection is the Franck Muller Grand Central Tourbillon

Flash. With the signature Cintrée Curvex CX case, it has all the DNA of Franck Muller with the tourbillon complication in the centre of the dial, which is incredibly difficult to do. It's also very fun, with young, bright colours.

### If you could resurrect an era of vintage watchmaking, which would it be?

I would go back to the art deco era, because a lot of our watches and Franck's original inspiration came from that time. He has resurrected some aspects from that era, but he added a lot more complications that were not active in a wristwatch at the time. [A watch inspired by the art deco era] would be a nice mixture of times, complications and designs.

### Why do you have so much faith in Franck himself?

When Franck was only 15 years old and in watchmaking school, he won the prize for being the best student in the class. The prize was a Rolex watch. Most 15- or 16-year-old kids who receive a Rolex will [treasure] it for the rest of their life. My friend dismantled the watch, added another complication inside, and sold it for a higher price. That shows what kind of genius he has always been.



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# Horological Marvels

Patek Philippe unveils a masterpiece collection of 17 new timepieces at the Watches and Wonders Geneva 2023 *By Dweyane Yra Dinglasan*

The esteemed Swiss watchmaking house has once again captivated the world of horology with its spectacular display at Watches and Wonders 2023 in Geneva. With its rich legacy of craftsmanship and innovation, Patek Philippe presented 17 new timekeepers, each a testament to technical mastery and artistic creativity, enriching its vast array of covetable pieces.

At the heart of this year's assemblage is a celebration of individuality and diversity, echoing Patek Philippe's belief that each assembly of watches has its signature characteristics. Thierry Stern, the president of the family-owned company, has guided Patek Philippe's journey in offering an extensive selection for men and women across every luxury market.

Among the notable introductions was the Self-winding Flyback Chronograph with Annual Calendar Ref 5905R-010. Endowed with a radiant rose gold case and adorned with a blue sunburst dial, it ushers in a fresh alliance between two sought-after Patek Philippe complications. The perfect merge of form and function exemplifies the label's commitment to pushing the boundaries of design.

Among the highlights are the fascinating new complications in the Calatrava and Aquanaut lines. Embracing the spirit of aviators from the Thirties, the Calatrava Pilot collection has been a testament to the original model since its debut in 2015. This year, the brand introduced the Calatrava Pilot Travel Time Chronograph Ref 5924G-001 and Calatrava Pilot Travel Time Chronograph Ref 5924G-010.



**Clockwise, from right:** The Ref 5924G-010 Calatrava Pilot Travel Time Chronograph, Ref 5905-010 Flyback Chronograph Annual Calendar and Ref 5968R-001 Aquanaut Chronograph

IMAGES COURTESY OF PATEK PHILIPPE



The Ref 5924 is the first chronograph model in Patek Philippe's Pilot style watch line. Ref 5924G comes in two colours; Ref 5924-001 with a sunburst blue-gray dial and grained navy blue calfskin strap, and Ref 5924G-010 with a lacquered khaki green dial and matching grained khaki green calfskin strap. Both models boast practical and user-friendly complications, including a fly-back chronograph, a Travel Time dual time zone function and day/night indicators for local time and home time. These models promise to be a stunning addition to any enthusiast's accumulation.

Not to be outshined, the Aquanaut collection received elegant upgrades. The self-winding Aquanaut Chronograph for men enters a new realm of luxury with the Aquanaut Chronograph Ref 5968R-001, featuring a rose gold case, a stunning sunburst dial in a gradient of brown to black, and a matching composite strap.

As the Watches and Wonders 2023 event concluded, Patek Philippe reaffirmed its position as a pioneer in haute horlogerie. With each new introduction, the brand continues to shape the future of horology by combining technical ingenuity with an enduring style.



# EDITOR'S PICK

Harry Winston's Duchess Necklace celebrates The King of Diamonds' mastery of rare yellow diamonds and royal jewels. With a flawless 40-carat fancy intense yellow radiant-cut diamond at its centre, and with even colour distribution across all its golden-hued stones, the necklace is inspired by the Duchess of Windsor Wallis Simpson's passion for yellow diamonds. It recalls the brand's history of creating bespoke jewels for royalty, including the famed Duchess of Windsor Heart diamond.





Treasures  
of  
the sea:  
Corals and  
Pearls



**Clockwise, from top:**  
**Jacque Aiche** Graduated  
Freshwater Pearl Beaded  
Necklace; **Austy Lee**  
Coral Onyx and Diamond  
Bangle; **Ashley Zhang**  
Giverny Pearl Ring; **Cartier**  
Tressage Ring pink gold,  
coral and diamonds;  
**Mikimoto** V Code earrings

IMAGES: CAMILLE BLANCHET/CARTIER; LAURA LAYERA  
(JACQUE AICHE)



## NATURE'S LOVERS

A gala at Lake Como's Villa Erba provided a glittering occasion for the unveiling of Dior's haute joaillerie collection Les Jardins de la Couture. A total of 170 jewelled pieces from Victoire de Castellane's collection

made their debut alongside Maria Grazia Chiuri's haute couture silhouettes in the villa's gardens. Floral motifs appear throughout, crafted from delicate layers of gold, mother of pearl, gems and diamonds.

**Dior** Les Jardins de la Couture



## DRIPPING IN DIAMONDS

Snakes may not seem like a particularly bridal choice, but British model Anna Cleveland didn't let that bother her. In July, Cleveland married fashion authority Jefferson Hack wearing a diamond-studded Bulgari necklace from the house's Serpenti high jewellery collection. The 18-carat white-gold piece enhanced with 81 carats of pavé and pear-shaped brilliant-cut diamonds wrapped around her neck and cascaded down her spine. She paired it with diamond earrings set in platinum from the Bulgari high jewellery collection.

**Bulgari** Serpenti High Jewellery collection necklace in white gold and white diamonds



## LASTING LEGACY

Gucci's new jewellery line shines a spotlight on the modern evolution of the house's signature motifs. The classic Gucci logo has been reimagined for a new generation in yellow and white gold with pavé diamonds, the familiar

G glyphs woven together in necklaces, earrings and rings. We particularly love the open bangle bracelets designed in a pared-back style yet retaining the codes that define the Gucci identity.

**Gucci** Iconic Lines collection





## A NEW ERA

Global luxury jeweller Tiffany & Co releases a new campaign and welcomes its new ambassadors Rosé of Blackpink, Jimin of BTS, singer Nancy Ajram and actress Florence Pugh. Alexandre Arnault, sEVP for product and communication Tiffany & Co, announces the launch of Tiffany Lock motif that pays homage to the brand's illustrious heritage. The pieces are available in 18c white, yellow and rose gold, featuring options with full pavé diamonds, half pavé diamonds or an all-metal design. The House will introduce a new Lock bracelet in 18c white gold, adorned with half pavé diamonds and half baguette diamonds.

**Tiffany & Co** Tiffany Lock rings

## ODE TO WOMANHOOD

You can never go wrong with pearls. This year, Jeweler delves deeper into the wonders of Mother Nature through its Divine Feminine campaign, making history with the world's first South Sea pearl bath. It features the Guimard necklace, Sequins earrings and Les Classiques ring made of golden South Sea Pearls. Embodied by French-Filipina actress Solenn Heussaff, the latest campaign evokes a luminous and sensual appeal. An icon of exquisite beauty and profound strength, the South Sea pearl is akin to the power of women throughout history, from ancient goddesses to the trailblazing women of today.

**Jeweler** Guimard necklace, Sequins earrings and Les Classiques ring



IMAGE DARREN GERRISH (BULGARI)





# What A Gem

Step inside the recently opened Cartier boutique, where a myriad of vibrant, local inspirations find accord with the Maison's pedigree of elegance

By Mac Fabella

**A** captivating allure runs through the boutiques of Cartier. No matter where you are in the world or how distinct they appear, you'll find that these commercial outlets are transformed into gracious destinations that offer much more than the typical sales experience. Free to peruse displays of luxury jewellery, timepieces, leather goods, fragrances and home decor, clients are invited to delight further in the ornate nuances of the space itself, meticulously created and pieced together by distinguished masters of art.

The French Maison brings this same experience to its new flagship store in the Philippines, spanning 321 square metres in Greenbelt 3, Makati City. Exhibiting a refreshed design direction from its predecessor in the neighbouring Greenbelt 4, the boutique is a sight to behold, weaving Cartier's storied legacy and the country's distinctive look and feel.

The redesign was entrusted to Moinard Betaille, a Parisian interior design agency that has worked alongside Cartier for over two decades. Deeply attuned to the aesthetic codes and identity







**Clockwise:** Boutique facade; A bespoke De Gournay wall in the VIP Lounge; Feature wall at the centre of the store



of the luxury house, the architects of Moinard Bétaille masterfully crafted a space that feels fresh and familiar—one of the newest additions to Cartier's 275 boutiques worldwide.

Drawing the eyes to the centre of the space is a resplendent feature wall of vibrant orange and yellow hues, portraying Cartier's emblematic panther surrounded by delicate Sampaguita. This unmissable masterpiece is entirely patchwork, echoing the traditional handwoven pattern of the *banig*, a local woven mat.

Inspiration from Filipino craft is similarly represented on the



**This page:** Different areas inside the boutique  
**Opposite page:** The VIP Lounge, a cosy alcove for discerning clients







store's flooring, with an elegant stone design paying tribute to the art of basketry. As a further homage to the nation's identity as an archipelago of islands, maritime motifs are reflected across the flagship, from the columns up to the ceiling.

Towards the left of the boutique, the enveloping warmth of the space is evinced in straw marquetry and a mother-of-pearl-inspired colour palette, capturing the country's tropical diversity. Complemented by earth-toned fabrics within the same area, the beauty of fauna and flora is highlighted in a bespoke De Gournay focus wall.

Vibrant imagery inspired by nature continues into the VIP Lounge, a private alcove for the Philippine flagship's most discerning guests. Another De Gournay wall is featured in the cosy and colourful space, this time depicting lush vegetation as an ode to local agriculture. On the other hand, the opposite wall is embellished with branches of leaves with wave-like movements, underlined by a patina graded from pink to white.

A romantic aura finally sets apart the store's bridal area, where French plaster artist Del Boca has done a gorgeous backdrop in bas-relief

technique with gold inserts. The captivating work illustrates the country's mesmerising tropical landscape with two majestic birds arcing through the sky.

Spread around this stunning home for Cartier's finest offerings, the beautiful tributes to the Philippines are palpable and moving, giving every patron who steps into its glass doors many reasons to return. Indeed in a league of its own, this new flagship address proves how the Maison's hallowed boutiques are never just commercial outlets but works of living art that unveil a world of timeless, sweeping beauty.





Quotes on Emilio Pucci are written on mirrors **Inset:** A modern terno design by Paul Cabral

Meet the four emerging Asian designers you need to know now, the heartwrenching fate of the iconic Manila Central Post Office, and step into Yves Saint Laurent's stunning Moroccan home



*"The environment he lived in gave him so much. There was so much to look at!"*  
Audrey Hepburn

# Tales







# FOR

PHOTOGRAPHY: GIULIA VEZZOSI (SPREAD); PATRICK DIOKNO (INSET)




FEATURES | CULTURE



# MANILA





A huge fire engulfs the Manila Central Post Office building on May 22

# FIRES

Engulfed in flames, the historic Manila Central Post Office met its tragic fate last May, but a beacon of hope shines on the horizon awaiting its return

*By Franz Sorilla IV*



**T**he city arose in the dead of the night as a massive inferno swallowed the Manila Central Post Office (MCPO) building on May 22.

It first broke out at 11:41pm the night before in the southern part of the basement, which was the Mega Manila Storage Room inside the General Services department, according to the Bureau of Fire Protection. Purely accidental in nature, the fire was believed to be caused by the self-discharging of the car batteries, which were near a pile of combustible office supplies, thinners and paint cans.

Seeing fiery flames fuming his workplace over the news, Noel Dacasin was distraught—along with about 200 employees of the MCPO and approximately 800 people holding offices in the building.

Dacasin joined the Central Mail Exchange Center, one of the Philippine Postal Corporation's (PHLPost) distributors near the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in 1985. With almost four decades of experience in the industry, he remembers the MCPO not only as his office and second home but as a venue for him and his colleagues to rally the people for the improvement of the postmen's welfare and the mail delivery system in the country. Now as MCPO's postmaster, he has to rally his colleagues towards a new chapter with a heavy heart.

The fire tore through the building, spreading quickly as it was a confined space with heat build-up. At 5:54am, the blaze reached the general alarm, torching the MCPO in a flaming scene reminiscent of the Second World War, which also heavily destroyed this iconic landmark of Manila sitting on the bank of the Pasig River.

## MORE THAN AN EDIFICE

Manila was once coined by Nick Joaquin as “the city of our affections” in his acclaimed play and seminal work, *A Portrait of the Artist as Filipino*. Somehow, it alludes to the colonial charm that its city architecture has evoked throughout the centuries. There is Intramuros, with its cobblestone streets lined by Hispanic mansions, towering churches, and neoclassical buildings. There is Escolta, with its art deco edifices and motifs, theatres, and thriving contemporary art scene. There is Binondo, the oldest Chinatown in the world that continues to uphold its rich commercial heritage. And a lot more districts, streets and alleys that showcase the Philippines' connection to the rest of the world. It is these affections of ours—for our past, nations across the globe, and our diverse culture as Filipinos—that inspired many great men in our history to build landmarks distinctive of Manila.





A statue of national hero, Andres Bonifacio stands proud in front of the Manila Post Office







Every day, millions of Filipinos pass through MacArthur Bridge from Ermita to Padre Burgos Avenue, seeing a glimpse of the Pasig River. One landmark that catches the eye is the Central Post Office building, an Important Cultural Property declared by the National Museum in 2018. It was rebuilt after the war using its original design, making it one of the last intact American regime-period buildings in the city.

“Manila’s greatest [period] will always be remembered with the existence of compelling structures that speak of progress and development [which at that time had an efficient and modern postal system]. The Central Post Office building is a city landmark like the Manila City Hall Clock Tower,” says Ronald Flores, the chief tourism operations officer of the Department of Tourism, Culture, and the Arts of Manila (DTCAM).

Tourists flock to either Liwasang Bonifacio in Lawton or along Escolta Street to take a photo of this towering neoclassical building, designed and built in 1926 by Filipino architects Juan Arellano and Tomas Mapua and the American Ralph Doane. With access to Binondo, Sta Cruz, Quiapo, and Intramuros, the Central Post Office

has always been a starting point for newcomers who want to roam around Manila. For almost a century, it has been a treasure trove of communication and a silent eyewitness to the Filipino nation’s storied past.

“The building’s neoclassical and beaux-arts architecture captures the splendour of a time when important public structures were built to signify development and modernisation,” Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) Undersecretary David Almirol, Jr says.

But that cherished identity has been relegated to the people’s memory by the devastating fire.

Smoke billowed over the city on the morning of May 22, as the firefighters controlled the situation and declared fire out a day later. The intensity of the MCPO’s fire left 18 casualties, 16 of whom were firefighters. The fire razed a multi-million peso worth of interiors and about Php300 million worth of assets.

The horrific accident left historians, art and architecture patrons and enthusiasts alike in despair and broke the hearts of many of its workers and retirees. Dacasin relays that newly appointed postmaster general





From left: During the Liberation of Manila, the building suffered severe damage; President Manuel A Roxas delivering a speech in front of the architectural gem in 1946

and CEO of PHLPost Luis Carlos believes restoring the structure would take three to five years. Temporarily, the MCPO employees are scattered across Metro Manila: the Central Mail Exchange Center along Domestic Road, the Quezon City Central Post Office, and the Surface Mail Exchange in the Delpan Port Area for mail and parcel transactions.

In a statement, Carlos clarified that only the mail service in Manila was affected by the fire; the rest of their national operations continue. Separately, Philippine Statistics Authority Undersecretary Dennis Mapa assured the public that the fire had damaged only the national IDs for delivery in Manila. They've already started reprinting in June. With the goal of digital transformation, however, Filipinos can also access their Digital Philippine ID in the eGov PH Super App of the DICT.

"It is with great despair seeing letters, documents and national ID cards ravaged by fire; but more so the actual loss of a Philippine cultural heritage, which is almost a century-year-old," Almirol says.

Flores laments, "Knowing very well the symbol the structure represents, not only its function as the

core of the country's postal operations but the icon that it embodies, the accident is a sad state in Manila's culture and heritage scene. This Western-influenced architecture is one of the few remaining Greco-Roman-style buildings in the metropolis. Its burning poses a serious challenge to the national government financially and structurally."

## OF RESILIENCE AND HOPE

Through the years, the country's mail delivery system has been no stranger to criticism. This—and not only the structure itself—is what Dacasin and his colleagues aim to address in this next chapter for the MCPO.

"With existing and emerging technologies, we are not only pushing for digital transformation but also ensuring cultural value that will endure for future generations," Almirol says. "Researchers can draw inspiration from historical data, yielding to developing game-changing technologies, ideas and even products."

Dacasin reports the restoration of PHLPost's partnerships with international and domestic couriers. To add, MCPO plans to bring back its domestic express



The Manila Central Post Office building is one of the most notable landmarks of the city and its restoration is foremost on every Filipino's mind



mail service, allowing their employees to go on night shifts again dedicated to processing. This enables delivery of mail within Metro Manila the next day.

With the proliferation of digital apps catering to same-day courier services and others that allow delivery of packages to particular key cities, Dacasin strongly believes that PHLPPost will remain relevant and reputable in comparison. “We have postmen who willingly brave the mountains and seas to deliver mail. In times of natural disasters, telecommunications and digital connections fail us, but never our postmen,” Dacasin says.

The recent burning of the MCPO also sheds light on the plight of its employees, particularly its postmen, who have been servicing the Filipino people throughout the decades. Durable and weather-resistant satchel bags and shoes of our postmen have all been turned to dust and ashes by the massive fire. And yet Dacasin shares with

*Tatler* that their passion for connecting families, friends, colleagues and lovers continues to blaze in their hearts.

“Many people happily receive their mail, packages, even their national ID, but they are unaware of the difficulty our postmen endure just to deliver them,” Dacasin says. The risks of being attacked by guard dogs, stuck in traffic, misunderstood and penalised by traffic enforcers and mail recipients, or worse, getting killed in an accident may seem mundane. Still, they show the risks of a postman’s job—on top of a low salary and government benefits subject only to availability.

Despite these, Dacasin and his colleagues find value in their work and what it contributes to society. Tomorrow is another day for mail.

## FROM THE ASHES

The restoration now rests in the hands of the national





“The significance of preserving, maintaining and promoting Manila’s cultural treasures is essential in inculcating to the minds of our citizens the identity we have”

— RONALD FLORES

government through the Inter-Agency Task Force on Cultural Heritage, composed of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, the National Museum and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, all in partnership with PHLPost.

“It is too early to say when the restoration will start, but it will surely happen,” assures NCCA Chairman Victorino Manalo. “Heritage buildings hold the memories of many of our people. They often document design innovations that our ancestors devised in answer to the challenges of our environment. Heritage structures are also economic resources when developed as tourism assets,” Manalo says.

DICT defers the architectural restoration to those who are more than capable, says Almirol. However, he assures that the department “shall be of assistance when it comes to ICT infrastructure and systems

planning, through PHLPost’s Information Systems Strategic Plan (ISSP)”.

ISSP is a strategic plan of PHLPost to direct ICT application towards mission-critical, public service sensitive, development management supportive and revenue-generating government areas. It is a three-year framework that serves as the agency’s roadmap for using ICT as a strategic resource to support attaining its goals, mission and vision.

PHLPost has also called for support from the private sector in this restoration plan. The local government of Manila, through DTCAM, has already expressed its support for this endeavour.

“The significance of preserving, maintaining and promoting Manila’s cultural treasures is essential in inculcating to the minds of our citizens the identity we have,” says Flores.



# THE HOUSE



**This page:** Laudomia Pucci, at the family's palazzo **Opposite page:** A photo of Laudomia's parents Emilio and Cristina Pucci



# OF PUCCI

Keeping the family history alive, Laudomia Pucci turns Palazzo Pucci into a hub of her father's legacy

*By Chit L Lijauco.*

*Photography by Giulia Vezzosi,*

*Lapo Quagli and Inutopia*

*Photolab Firenze*





**This page:** One of the quotes on mirrors, this by Andre Leon Talley

**Opposite page:** Emilio Pucci revolutionised Italian design with his bold prints and bright colours

In 1947, the Marquis Emilio Pucci established his headquarters inside his family's palazzo in Florence, Italy. He was just entering the world of fashion after photographs of his designs of vibrant ski uniforms for himself and his girlfriend landed on the desk of legendary fashion editor at *Harper's Bazaar*; Diana Vreeland.

At the Palazzo Pucci, models and sewers brought the Neapolitan aristocrat's designs to life. Here, too, Pucci's daughter Laudomia received her early immersion in fashion. "To grow up with my father having models around the house, who were actually photographed on the roof next to my playroom, in incredible clothes and hairdos, was totally normal," she said in the website of the Emilio Pucci Heritage Hub. "To know that we had fashion shows in the house and that I could hear clapping from two floors lower was normal."

Fast forward to 2017. The Pucci headquarters had moved to Milan after 70 years in the palazzo in Florence. By this time, the family had already partnered with LVMH who, in five years' time, would totally take over the brand. "As the Pucci HQ moved to Milano, I started working on an education



project involving the archives and the heritage of the brand, asking young talents to create a new narrative through events, presentations and products," Laudomia tells *Tatler*. "This led to a collaboration with Bonaveri [the mannequin company] and a publication with Rizzoli called *Unexpected Pucci*."

It also led to the transformation of the 13th-century Palazzo Pucci into the Heritage Hub, a centre dedicated to perpetuate the brand's history and create an archive for the future, as well as carrying out Pucci's legacy of collaborations.

"During Covid all that [activity] obviously came to an end," Laudomia continues her emailed interview. "Last year, after having exited the Pucci brand and sold the remaining stake to LVMH, I decided to concentrate my efforts on the archives and combine it with this unique space that I call home, Palazzo N6." Laudomia shares the palazzo with a cousin and the church.

The heiress has been busy setting up the Heritage Hub. She has restored the frescoes by 19th-century masters Bezzouli and Adams on the ground floor; organised an industrial kitchen to allow private dining; set up a few bathrooms decorating the walls with coloured mosaic of historic Pucci images, sketches and prints. She asked photographer friend Massimo Listri to shoot a few pictures of the 1st floor, "where a beautiful set-up of only solid [not print] looks are displayed at the Sala Bianca".

"The large pictures are now hanging in the Palazzo as a testimony of the vision we have brought by wrapping the two floors in fuchsia and turquoise, the favourite colours of my father. By the way, he also covered the closets of his boutique in a fabric





PHOTOGRAPHY JOHN ADRIAN (THE TIMES-LONDRA)





**Clockwise:** At the Archivio Sala Muse, mannequins in iconic Pucci patterns; Seating in Pucci prints; The Lounge Living Room bathed in Pucci's signature fuchsia; Inside the Salone Balcone









The historic Sala Bianca, where fashion shows were once held, now houses various collections

of these two colours to enhance the collections,” Laudomia adds.

A definite attention-getter are the quotes on mirrors in acid colours explaining Emilio’s vision of colours as his way of bringing joy through his work. “I think this remains a valid point to date,” the daughter declares.

Other rooms tell the story of who worked in the various spaces. At the couture room where fittings used to take place, a large picture on a mirror of Emilio smiling creates that feeling of the action still going on. From the main Sala Bianca where fashion shows were once held, to the celebrity room and the boutique where the original fitting rooms used to be, the most charming green, turquoise and magenta hues dominate. “And at the political office that holds my father’s memorabilia you can find his chair and his portable tv as well as other Brionvega items,” she wraps up. She then lays down her vision. “We are trying to be a living space where history and yesterday’s creativity will not compete with the museums in town [as there are already 69] but become a contemporary conversation on culture, fashion and design...We have provided a space to privately enjoy a drink, a moment with friends in a lunch or a meeting, while immersed in a unique environment far from the tourist crowds, enjoying











**This page:** Laudomia on Via de Pucci **Opposite page:** Bonaveri mannequins share archival art





the new way of living luxury: experiential luxury.”

She adds that the Hub is becoming to be what she calls a “closed concept store”. Open only to guests, it offers iconic items that can be ordered such as the Cappellini Pucci chairs, the Kartell chairs, the Pucci rugs and the Bisazza mosaics; a selection of Taschen books on fashion, art, travel, design; vintage Pucci pieces; multiples of Massimo Listri’s pictures in different sizes; artisanal products such as silverware, Murano glasses and a variety of other gift items. She says she is also working on the possibility of inviting artisans to present their products and work on personalising them for the guests, if so requested.

A tour of what Laudomia calls “my wonderland” can be virtually taken at [Emilio Pucci heritage.com](http://EmilioPucciheritage.com) or can be booked for actual visits at [emiliopucciheritage@lpstudio.eu](mailto:emiliopucciheritage@lpstudio.eu).

Laudomia says their guests come for different reasons. “Some are fashion fans and love everything about Pucci. Others do not know the

family history that it goes back to the Renaissance, and love every single story. Others are curious about the Palazzo’s architecture and art. Some are happy with our lunches and dinners of seasonal local ingredients and the chef’s specialities. And some just want to spend a different day in Florence.” One thing she notices however, is that everyone is “attracted to the privacy of the location and its modernity, as well as to the privilege of entering the family’s residence and learning of the family’s involvement in the project”.

Collaborations are important to Emilio Pucci and along this line, Laudomia has embarked on her latest venture, just inaugurated in fact last March. This is the extension of the family’s private residence Palazzo Pucci N6 to host the Istituto Europeo di Design (IED). The collaboration will allow young designers to study and design amid the history and heritage of Pucci’s creativity and craftsmanship. “We are happy to welcome IED students to Palazzo Pucci N6, in the very rooms that once

housed the company that my father founded. In fact, I believe that these spaces have an intrinsic value as he himself used to say, ‘You can only create something beautiful in here,’ she said in an interview.

On a more personal note, she tells *Tatler*, “I am delighted to have students and sewing machines back in the Palazzo. It reminds me of when I was growing up and we had ateliers on the ground floor.”

And so, Palazzo Pucci is abuzz again with activities centred on the rich history and culture not only of the Pucci family, but of Italy itself as the brand has always proudly stood for the iconic Made in Italy stamp. All thanks to a young girl who grew up amid threads and fabrics, and who took over the reins of the business when her father died in 1992. Laudomia has kept the Puccimania alive for years but now, it is time to focus on the preservation of the family’s legacy, richly stored in one hub, at the Palazzo Pucci where she lives and breathes fashion, design, culture and heritage.



# M ASTER OF THE GAME

For Paul Cabral, it took a long time to get to the point where he is, but it was all worth it as he lays claim to the title of the country's Fashion King

*By Angela Nicole Guiral. Photography by Patrick Diokno.  
Creative Direction by Anton San Diego. Styling by Michael Salientes.  
Make-up Patrick Rosas*





The fashion designer Paul Cabral in his atelier







**P**aul Cabral's journey towards success wasn't entirely sunshine and rainbows. At first, he took Accounting as a programme in his university years, then shifted career paths. "I wanted to be a make-up artist after graduation. I applied for a job but my previous employers told me there's only an opening for a fashion designer," he says. This started his foray into doing window displays. Then, under an apprenticeship with fashion designer Aureo Alonzo, he learnt the craft's basics. "I think I have learnt from the best one can ask for," he shares. "I studied the quality of workmanship, colour and fabric manipulation and intricate designs, among others." Along the way, he got to work and collaborate with fellow masters like Joe Salazar.

He recalls fondly that the first piece of clothing he was obsessed with was one of Salazar's creations: a modern Filipiniana—a "Maria Clara", as he describes. The designer Inno Sotto also helped ignite the creative side of Cabral, especially his tailored works with three-dimensional tailoring. "I want something different, something you don't normally see outside or anywhere else," he says. "These designers' craftsmanship were honed by time, which translates to their unique works."

There were many hits and misses in the beginning, but everything led him to where he is today. "I am so blessed," Cabral says. "It's beyond what I deserve." His atelier is now one of the most sought-after design houses in the Philippines. From dressing up former President Joseph "Erap" Estrada—whom he holds dearly to his heart, always encouraging him to do something different—and now the First Lady Louise "Liza" Araneta-Marcos, who graced the cover of the August issue of *Tatler* this year in the designer's very own creations, he is a go-to designer of presidents and first ladies. He even remembers how the first lady's encouragement in

using Filipino fabrics like piña inspired him. It led him to think, "Why can't we make something very Filipino but also affordable and current?"

Cabral was also tapped to design for heads of state during the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Economic Leaders' meeting in 2015, for which he is grateful. He immediately started working on the designs as soon as he was notified that his entry won the bidding. "Not everyone is allowed to trust you with this kind of privilege," he says. "Working up an outfit relevant to every country they represent takes so much thought and creativity." He recalls finding influence in the famous cherry blossoms of Japan or the different window designs from the old houses in the Philippines and incorporating them in embroideries. "It took a lot of effort," he says.

He did not let success go to his head. In 2014, a few days before the State of the Nation Address of then President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, media reporters were camping outside his atelier to hear from the designer himself. It was curious to know how he'll dress up the former leader and his sisters. However, he refused to answer unless he got the family's permission and encouraged everyone to focus on what the President said in his address rather than what he wore.

Again and again, he showed the strength of his character—his humble and hardworking ways. But he isn't perfect. Like many others, he didn't immediately reach greater heights. "I started at square one. I learnt that way. Back then, I was running around the public market for materials. I was sourcing fabric and linen. I was cleaning the shop. I was doing everything," he recalls. This is also why he is keen on doing whatever it takes when other team members deem the impossible—he worked his way up through everything.

As admirable as his resilience may be, Cabral thinks the Philippine fashion scene still needs work. "The government needs to support fashion designers, as well as put the weaving industry into the spotlight,"



Cabral is known for his barong designs and his use of vibrant colours















Models Vince Marcelo and Amaliya Shakirova wear Paul Cabral's tailored creations—which are proof of his painstaking attention to detail and refined aesthetics



he suggests. “Our fabrics are so beautiful. We should encourage other designers to use local fabrics.” But he thinks they are expensive and takes too long to make. “Sometimes, for example, when we order in January, they arrive around April and May. The quality is good—but we can still improve.”

The government, in collaboration with Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines, the marketing and promotions arm of the Department of Tourism (DOT), launched *Likha* earlier this year. By having 57 weavers from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao showcase their handloom textiles and intricate beading works, the week-long event connected traditional textile communities, designers, brands and manufacturers to innovate and co-create a sustainable pathway of Philippine textiles for the local and international market. This is a start.

He addresses the need for more resources and equipment in line with this. “We also lack machines. Normally, you can make long electric pleats around 60m wide abroad. Here in the Philippines, you can’t—just

limited, around 45m. So, we make do with what we have here.” He adds that sometimes, he wants to “make electric pleats for long items of clothing like the empire cut, for example. But you can’t do anything because the pleats are short. So, if the client is tall, you just cut it on the waist or hips”, he explains, further stressing the need to invest in technology and garments.

It helps that the current government is starting to focus its eyes on the industry—as Filipino fashion designers were the highlight of the *Vin D’Honneur Independence Day* celebration this year and had taken centre stage at the *Goldenberg Mansion* series. “[And] it’s all thanks to the first lady,” says Cabral. The talent and skills of several top designers were acknowledged for their contribution to the industry that day, marking the beginning of a fashion-centric culture in the Philippines.

In the fashion world, you can only say you’ve finally made it when a client gives you 100 per cent of their trust, according to Cabral. His clients would only inform him of the needed details: the theme, the grandness of





Cabral remains one of the most sought-after fashion designers in the country



“I check how the fabric should fall, I check the length. Every single thing is personal for me... I want to do it as perfectly as possible”

the event, and the time it will occur. Some would request to work around the jewellery or accessories they want to use. “Then, they will grant you the freedom to do what you like,” he says. “That’s the best compliment a designer can ever receive.”

This month he presents his first-ever 60-piece collection at the Goldenberg Mansion. Cabral shared that he is making sure he is pulling all the stops to make sure that this one will be exciting and memorable. During the shoot for this article, we were privy to some of his designs and marvelled at his creations; clean lines, gorgeous fabrics and Filipino couture at its finest. We also witnessed Cabral in his element. Like every designer committed to their work, he was quick to assist his models. As they posed for the camera, he stood by, always just a second or two away to fix their outfits. Despite the busy atmosphere, the designer holds himself with an air of professionalism that was obviously honed by experience and time.

“Here in my work, I do almost everything,” Cabral shares. “I’m very OC [obsessive-compulsive]. I check the buttons, I check the beadings, I check the quality, I check the fitting, I check how the fabric should fall, I check the length. Every single thing is personal for me.” Sometimes, when he leaves it to other people, it doesn’t come out the way he wanted. “I want to do it as perfectly as possible,” he stresses.

He works best under pressure but appreciates it when he has enough window time. “You can still change your mind and make changes when needed,” he explains. “There are times that no matter what I do, despite being in front of all the fabrics and materials, I couldn’t think of anything.” There are also times where he can just sketch as much as 50 designs in one sitting. Still, he insists he can

pour his mind and heart more into projects when given enough time. “I just want to make people happy with my clothes. At this point in life, I want to share happiness.”

The designer has a deep appreciation for all things unique and different. “I’m a lover of beautiful things,” he says. When he is not in his office chair doing some sketches, he’s walking around his home or atelier fixing the interior. “I love decorating spaces inside homes.” For the designer, it’s a change of avenue—and what better way to squeeze some creativity than pursuing a hobby that’s in the design field as well?

This quick cure to his creative blocks doesn’t always work. Sometimes, he reaches the stage of frustration and is lost at what to do. “I’m so exhausted, so overwhelmed with everything,” Paul shares. “There are times I have to decline clients and people would say that I am selective or particular. They don’t understand that we have to refuse sometimes.” There are clients that would insist, but he says that if you can’t really do everything, if the requests aren’t feasible in the amount of time given, “then you should really learn how to say no”. Still, even with a lot on his plate, Cabral does his best with all the grace he could muster and lift everything to Him. And that’s what he tells his fellow design enthusiasts, too: “[Just] do your very best and offer everything to God.”

Cabral isn’t the first to encourage aspiring designers to be innovative, and he certainly won’t be the last. Do research. Go out more. Be inspired. But there will be limitations. “You can always get inspired by foreign designers and the like,” he says. “But, for a local designer, your identity should be the one that stands out in your work the most.” Identity and fashion, after all, are intrinsically connected.



# PART OF THE HER WORLD

Meet the emerging Asian designers who are championing accessibility, inclusivity and femininity, and looking to make positive change through fashion *By Cherry Mui, Zue Wei Leong, Ethan Kan, Rynanne Stephanie Cheng Co*



Miss Universe 2015 Pia Wurtzbach in a **Mark Bumgarner** gown **Opposite, from top:** Miss Universe 2022 R'Bonney Gabriel and Miss International 2016 Kylie Versoza in **Mark Bumgarner** gowns; Designer Mark Bumgarner



## MARK BUMGARNER

### *Philippines*

Mark Bumgarner loves to showcase femininity. The Filipino fashion designer—who's dressed the likes of Miss Universe 2015 Pia Wurtzbach-Jauncy and Bollywood superstar Aishwarya Rai—is best known for his meticulous detailing and love of drapery. In fact, he calls it his signature look. “It’s an age-old technique in fashion design that continuously evolves,” Bumgarner says. “Understanding the nature and movement of a fabric, as well as how it complements the body, is a crucial aspect of the art of draping.”

In many of his designs—whether for bridal or evening wear—Bumgarner makes the female form the focus, emphasising the waist and elongating the body with flowing elements. Take, for example, the looks he designed for Wurtzbach-Jauncy and Filipino actress Kylie Versoza’s recent looks at the 2023 Cannes Film Festival, regarded by Bumgarner as some of his proudest achievements to date: the former’s elegant black corset dress with balloon sleeves and the latter’s dramatic black balloon skirt adorned with feathers. Bumgarner likes to play with proportions, and his fans are here for it.

He takes inspiration, too, from his experiences of the world. “I draw inspiration primarily from my travels,” he tells *Tatler*. “It’s exciting to see the distinct trends and perceptions of beauty [that come] from each place I get to visit. Travelling not only opens my eyes to the world’s vast beauty and style, but it also fuels my passion to explore and create.”

When he’s not seeing the sights or showing his collections at Paris Fashion Week—he first showed in the French capital in 2018—Bumgarner can be found innovating in his studio. He’s currently experimenting with UV-sensitive dyes, trialling an exciting technique that can cause fabrics to change colour under varying lighting conditions. “This innovative concept is interesting to me for its practical applications,” he says. Of course, it will also give his wearers a truly unique piece of



clothing, something of a rarity in a world where trends come as quickly as they go.

“My fashion philosophy has always revolved around timeless beauty, and elegance with a modern

take,” Bumgarner says. “While my fundamental philosophy has remained unchanged over the years, I have evolved my techniques, which in turn has influenced my approach to design. Embracing and learning new techniques and pushing the boundaries of creativity are constant challenges creative individuals face to push forward and stay relevant in their field.”

As a proud Filipino designer, Bumgarner believes that incorporating new techniques should go hand in hand with preserving local legacies. “I believe the revitalisation of our shared interest in local weaves and fabrics is an exciting moment in our industry,” he says. “Embracing our heritage through incorporating these textiles into our collections not only fosters a sense of national identity but also generates employment opportunities for indigenous communities.” That’s not to say that he believes in letting design stagnate; for him, it’s all about evolving. “What keeps the industry interesting to me is its never-ending evolution of style,” he says. “While fashion may follow cyclical patterns, it is the infusion of innovation that truly makes it exciting and challenging.”





## CELINE KWAN

### Hong Kong

"If you don't feel beautiful, how are you supposed to create beautiful things?" asks Celine Kwan, the Hong Kong-born, London-based designer who graduated from Central Saint Martins, customised pieces for singer Lizzo and staged her work in the *Love of Couture: Artisanry In Fashion Beyond Time* exhibition in Hong Kong—all within the past two years. You can feel the infectious enthusiasm emanating from the young designer when she



**This page:** Designer Celine Kwan  
**Opposite page:** Celine Kwan autumn-winter 2022 collection

speaks and also of course, from her energetic, made-to-be-seen, often dramatically floral designs.

Her work is the result of her upbringing in both the east and the west. Kwan left Hong Kong to attend a boarding school in the UK when she was 12, and there found her passion for fine arts and design. "Humour is a very continuous theme of my work—I don't take

things really seriously," she says. "The humour from all the Hong Kong films, [especially] Stephen Chow, that I used to watch, and the tongue-in-cheek [quality] of English jokes and their dryness: I think I've brought that [into] my work." But inspiration alone does not create success, and Kwan, who always knew what she wanted, invested time in forging a precise direction and developing the necessary skills. "I'm super grateful for all the opportunities that have happened, but I've definitely worked very hard," she tells *Tatler*. While studying fashion design and print at Central Saint Martins, Kwan enthusiastically sought outside opportunities. Instead of spending one year interning as the course requested, Kwan spent two years cutting her teeth at Roksanda, Viktor & Rolf, and Shrimps; each played a part in directing her own design vision, and in teaching her what fashion design work is like in the real world.

"I saw how a female lead, Roksanda herself—her choice of colours, how she carried herself as the creative lead—was so inspiring to see," says Kwan. The precision and craftsmanship that a garment-maker needs were nurtured at Viktor & Rolf. "I remember [on] my first day, the head of the atelier told me to sew something and he took up a ruler to measure the seam allowance." Later at Shrimps, where she was hired as a design assistant, Kwan got to see the commercial side of the industry. "It's important to get experience from different parts of the industry; [there were] so many definitive moments," she reflects. "That made a tremendous difference to my work ethic, and how I handle things—nothing beats learning from the world, the real real world, you know?"

Her eponymous brand stays true to her identity. Kwan's creative

process often starts with gathering concepts and ideas from personal experiences, researching her own pictures, and collaging her drawings. "How I get through my prints and my silhouettes is just sitting down and drawing, experimenting with colours and different materials," she explains, "and then actually draping on the body; then that's how the collection organically happened." While Kwan's last collection paid tribute to her mother's always glamorous, and deliberate style, the sneak peek she gives *Tatler* of the drawings for her upcoming spring-summer 2024 collection to be presented at Paris Fashion Week in a few weeks' have a very different muse. "[The collection] 'Bitch Stole My Look' is my love letter to dogs," she says. "It's basically a collection that celebrates the loving relationship between a woman and her pet dog. It's inspired by memories from living with dogs all my life and the happiness that they have brought me."

While dogs inspire the aesthetic of the collection, there's a practicality, too. "I want to question why these clothes for women can't be functional and fun at the same time, by imagining that they are tailored for dog walkers," she explains, the excitement palpable in her voice. "So this could mean a pocket to put your puppy in, or a skirt that can help you hold your dog—something really tongue-in-cheek like that." To top off the playfulness, Kwan discusses having dogs instead of human models as the faces of the campaign, and pairing each dog look with a complementary human outfit. A new take on Cruella fashion, perhaps?

Back in real life, Kwan is also looking to partner with an animal charity in the UK and use her collection as a platform to support homeless dogs. "Making a change with fashion is definitely a core belief of mine," she says. She is very







aware of the power of different platforms: for example, she has been exploring Web 3 collections for the past year, and believes the metaverse will continue to be relevant and prevalent in the future, particularly as it allows her to reach customers who might not come across her in the real world. “It was amazing to connect with people that could never [physically] try on my clothes; [they could even try some of] my more outrageous pieces,” Kwan says. “People that maybe have disabilities could also try them. I think it is a very exciting part of fashion ... that it’s another way for a designer to connect with their consumers.” In the end, though, she says, “It’s definitely [better] having someone wanting to physically [own] a piece of yours,” she says.

Her work ethic, commitment to her craft, and belief that fashion is art are what led her to being selected as one of the five emerging East Asia couturiers to show their work the the *Love of Couture* exhibition. “People in general don’t know the dedication and the artistry, and the amount of trial and error that comes with making a beautiful couture piece,” she says. “But the generation now with social media can see the behind-the-scenes [reality] and know how much time goes into the handcraft. It is an artistry that I’ve always admired.”

“Working really hard” is one of Kwan’s main driving forces: she mentions it several times during our conversation, and she cites fellow classmate and current Nina Ricci creative director Harris Reed as an example of how important it is. “It’s a great time period for young designers to be on the rise. But I think it’s also important to value the traditions of just working hard and focusing,” Kwan says. “It really doesn’t mean much until you’re making a change physically in the world.”





**CLAUDIA POH**  
*Singapore*

On all of Claudia Poh's designs, fabric cascades elegantly over the wearer's body, cutting both classic silhouettes and stylishly placed asymmetrical drapes. Look more closely and you'll find a magnetic belt there, or a ring-shaped zipper here—unusual touches that are less ornamental and more purposeful.

In 2020, Poh founded Werable, a Singaporean adaptive fashion brand that creates clothes designed to accommodate the needs of people with

**From top:** Celine Kwan spring-summer 2022 collection; work-in-progress collage for spring-summer 2024 designs **Opposite, from top:** Initial drawings of spring-summer 2024 collection; Autumn-winter 2022 collection

various physical disabilities.. The brand's name is a play on the phrase "we are able", which encapsulates its mission to marry wearability and agency for its target customer. At the heart of the enterprise is inclusivity, which, according to Poh, "isn't binary; it's a circle that expands". "Every effort we make to create accessible products expands our circle to more people." Expand that circle she has, working with occupational therapists to address dressing challenges for those with disabilities. She counts Stroke Support Station among her collaborators—a community organisation dedicated to supporting stroke survivors' rehabilitation—and has worked with them to produce shirts designed to be put on with one hand.

Poh started her fashion career at Parsons School of Design in New York. It was there that she was challenged to create a winter coat for a friend with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), an effect of which was paralysis in her arms. The request set in motion an exciting career in adaptive fashion with a brand that, in Poh's words, "innovates a future where we may live with grace and





*Very initial drawings*



“It’s a great time period for young designers to be on the rise. It’s also important to value the traditions of just working hard and focusing”

— CELINE KWAN





Clockwise, from left: Werable outfits, Designer Claudia Poh



dignity". Today, the brand offers ready-to-wear pieces and custom garments which are painstakingly designed with a universal matrix, prioritising, among other things, identity and grace, stability and safety, and comfort.

One of Poh's more exciting collections include a collaboration with Paralympic swimmer Yip Pin Xiu earlier this year. Designed for a competition organised by the Singapore Fashion Council called "Singapore Stories", the collection, *It's Only in Water I Can Move Freely*, is named after a quote by Yip in an interview, and inspired by the fluidity of the water in which Yip has built her career. Conventional zippers are absent, as Yip struggles to unzip them; instead, Poh designed wrap dresses with magnetic fasteners, making them especially easy to put on. The collection includes a pleated, baby blue top with puffy sleeves that mimic the movement of the water, centring accessibility, inclusivity and dignity without sacrificing effortless chic.

While Poh has cornered the luxury adaptive fashion market, she is now working towards making

her clothes more affordable as part of her drive towards accessibility. It's why she has been testing out an alterations service, where her design team modifies clients' existing garments to accommodate their conditions. The clothes are then sent to local seamstresses to execute the changes, which ends up costing much less than buying specially designed garments—making inroads into sustainability while casting Werable's net to a wider audience.

"Everyone deserves to own beautiful things," she says. Indeed, Poh's clothes are not just for people with disabilities or even those with mobility issues, but for anyone who wants to wear elegant clothes with accessibility built into its design. It is this focus on inclusivity and continuous innovation that makes Poh such an exciting designer to watch, as she seamlessly melds today's discourse around accessibility with the unique expression and beauty that fashion can bring.

## DICKSON LIM

### Malaysia

Since launching his eponymous brand in 2020, Dickson Lim's innovative, unconventional and forward-thinking creations have been spotted on red carpets and award shows around the world. His highly sought-after creations have been worn by celebrities including *The Sandman* actor Mason Alexander Park, Taiwanese star Kuan-Ting Liu, American rapper 24kGoldn, influencer Bretman Rock and, most recently, TikTok



personality and film correspondent Reece Feldman on the Oscars 2023 red carpet.

But until five years ago, Lim had no desire to work in fashion. His parents are tailors and, growing up, he had helped them out, and found the craft dull and repetitive. What changed his mind in 2018 was the global rise of fashion visionaries such as the late Virgil Abloh. "They were elevating streetwear and revolutionising luxury brands. I was fascinated by their fresh, young takes on traditional tailored silhouettes," he says. "I couldn't afford these designer items so I had to create them for myself."

In 2020, the Sarawak-born designer was offered an opportunity to design a 30-piece collection for Kuala Lumpur Fashion Week



(KLFW). "It was surreal. I didn't go to fashion school. I didn't really know how to sketch, but I still said yes," he says. Later that year, at the age of 19, he made history as the youngest fashion designer to debut at KLFW.

Building on that momentum, Lim founded his eponymous fashion label—a bold creative and commercial move as the entire fashion industry was reeling from the shock of the pandemic. "It was a steep learning curve because there was no reference point. At the time,



no one was doing what I was doing. I had to learn everything myself,” he says, recounting endless hours watching YouTube videos and poring over books for beginners. “To this day, I’m a one-man team. I’m still figuring out everything through trial and error, from designs to pricing and marketing strategy.”

Lim’s reimagination of the classic tailored suit, with playful cut-outs, exaggerated proportions and edgy streetwear elements, has resonated with a wide audience online, particularly in the menswear space, where a generation of young, fashion-forward men—like Lim—are looking to express themselves and their interests in a unique way.

Reflecting on his journey so far, he says, “It has been a dream come true for me, especially to see my designs at one of the most prestigious red carpets in the world. I was just a kid from a small city in East Malaysia where people didn’t believe in me when I first started out. I’m very proud of my younger self for not letting the imposed limitations from others get to me and for continuing to pursue my ambition against all odds.

“My ultimate goal for [my brand] is straightforward,” he says. “I don’t want to be just a fashion brand that sells clothes; I want to be a brand with purpose, that creates a positive change in the world. I want my brand to serve as a reminder to the world to dream without limits.”



With his latest spring-summer 2024 collection Heatwave, he once again pushes the limits of the conventional suit, playing with more daring cuts, prints and more traditionally feminine materials. He is also taking the opportunity to lean into his newfound reputation as a role model and inspiration for fellow young designers, announcing a new video series released last month. It documents the creation

of his latest collection. “I have been filming my daily process from start to finish, from how I begin sketching new designs down to the creation of the garments. Larger fashion brands work in secret with outsourced manufacturers. At [Dickson Lim], we’re going the opposite direction to promote transparency. I want people to see the passion and care that I’ve poured into everything I create.”



**From top clockwise:**  
Dickson Lim spring-summer 2024 runway; spring-summer 2024 collection; Designer Dickson Lim at Mercedes-Benz Fashion Week in Kuala Lumpur

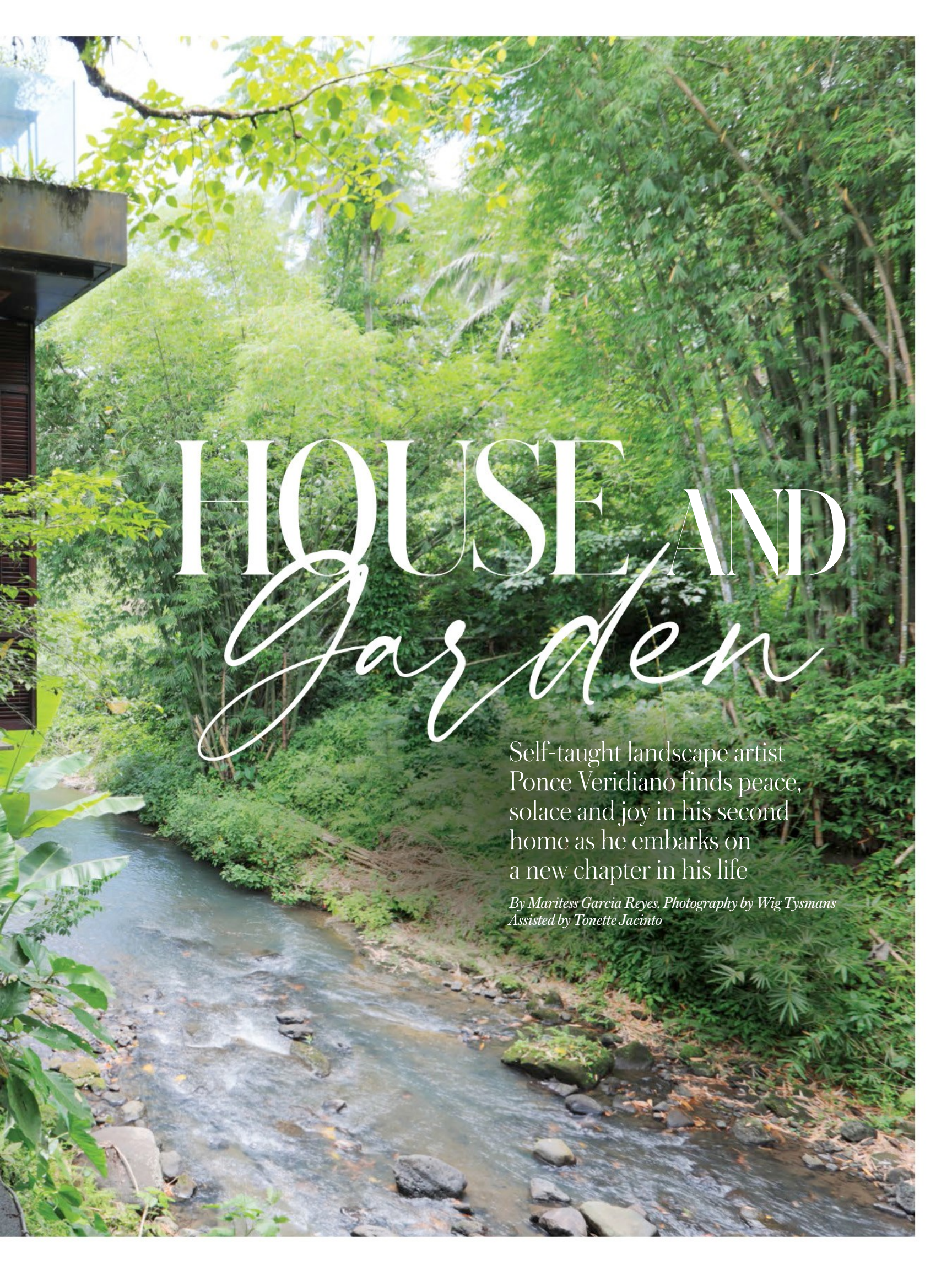






Ponce Veridiano's riverside home is enveloped in a lush Zen-inspired greenery





# HOUSE AND *Garden*

Self-taught landscape artist  
Ponce Veridiano finds peace,  
solace and joy in his second  
home as he embarks on  
a new chapter in his life

*By Maritess Garcia Reyes. Photography by Wig Tysmans  
Assisted by Tonette Jacinto*





**I**t took ten years for the Nagcarlan-born landscapist to build his second home in Laguna; a breathtaking three-level sanctuary which he initially planned to keep private. “I was building this house at my own pace,” says Ponce Veridiano, talking about the imposing structure made of wood, glass and concrete that follows the natural contours of the riverside. “Anyway, I have my first home just a few metres away from here where I could always stay. So there was no need to rush this,” he adds. Little did he know that the new house he was creating would eventually have its own purpose other being a weekend home: as a gallery to showcase his new-found love for painting, and a studio that can also serve as a training and exhibition venue for other young artists in the area. “I am 63 years old now and have been landscaping gardens for decades. This is my next chapter. I see myself painting when I retire...painting for leisure. Plus, it also dawned on me that I would like to help less fortunate artists. That would be my legacy,” he declares. With this new vision came the need to finish the decades-old project sooner than planned. To date, Veridiano converted parts of the home into a by-appointment gallery and studio aptly named Studio 88, and began welcoming guests to view his works early this year.

The gates of Studio 88 open to a long foyer sandwiched by riprap walls painstakingly built over the years by a group of artisans from the Mountain Province. To the end of the foyer, the lush foliage peeks through, drawing the eye even further to the other side of the river.

200 “I have always wanted a house by the water so when this

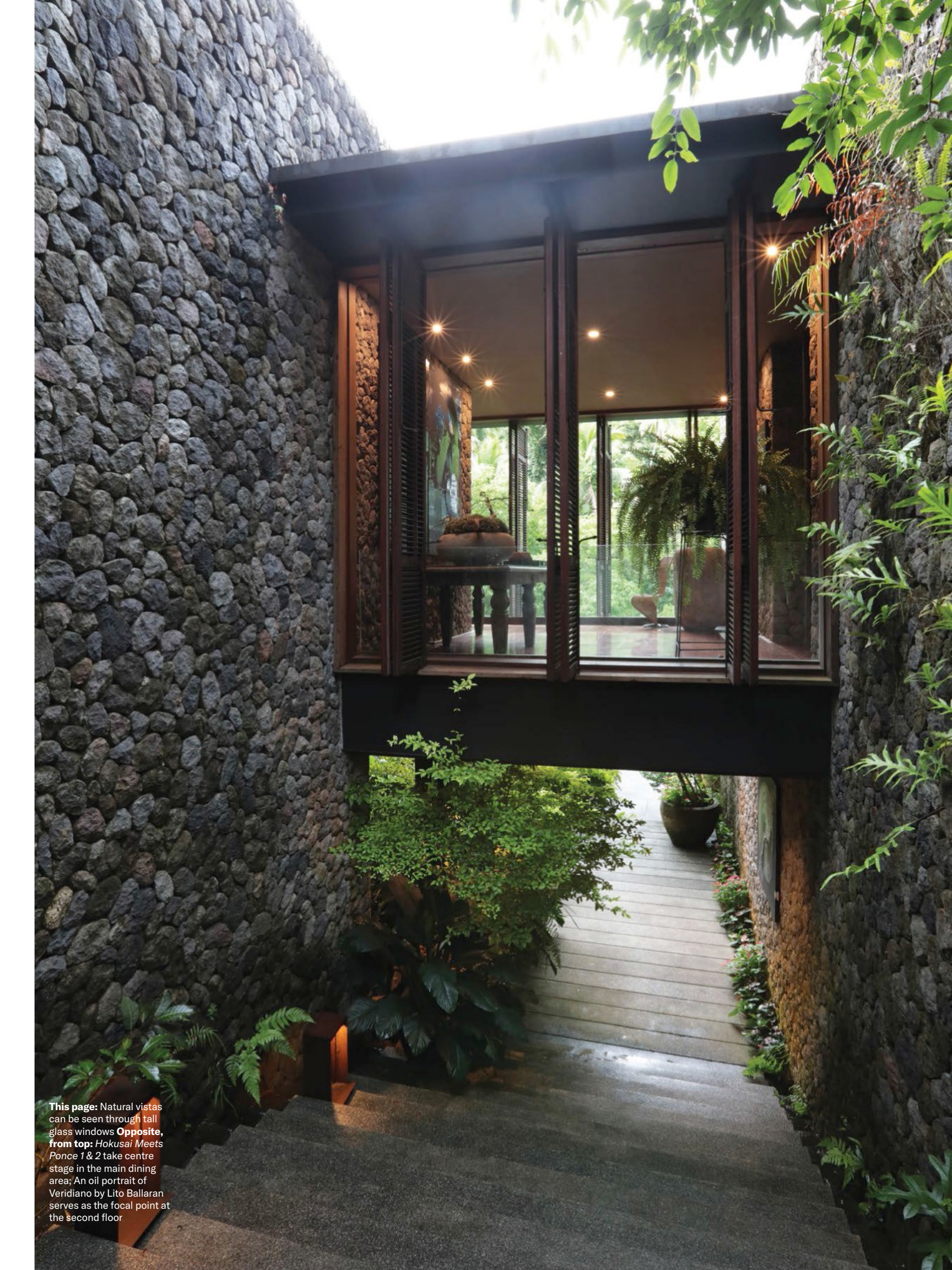






**This page:** Pocket koi ponds line the second tier of the three-storey residence **Opposite, from top:** It took a village to finish the riprap walls; Tall louvres allow natural light and ventilation





**This page:** Natural vistas can be seen through tall glass windows **Opposite, from top:** *Hokusai Meets Ponce 1 & 2* take centre stage in the main dining area; An oil portrait of Veridiano by Lito Ballaran serves as the focal point at the second floor





property was offered to me, I felt it was meant to be,” he tells *Tatler* in an interview, with the natural sounds of the river and the chirping of birds playing in the background.

To the right of the foyer a room is peppered with some of his artworks including his early sketches drawn in pencil. On the other side of the foyer is the main gallery, which houses most of his paintings. “I don’t want to be stuck in one concept or style. I just go with whatever I feel like painting. No rules. No one can dictate me. As an artist, I need to evolve. I like challenges. I love experimenting. I love them all—figurative, abstract, landscape,” Veridiano says. The entire level is wrapped with floor-to ceiling louvres made of ipil wood, which open widely, allowing unhampered views as far as the eyes can see. The louvres are matched with ipil wood flooring, which ties together the warm and cosy vibe the owner aimed to achieve.

The gallery continues to the primary bedroom, which can be found towards the end of this level. Here, a huge floating bed backdropped by *My Geisha 1* catches the eye. The open layout allows natural light and air to flow fluidly into the room without the use of air conditioning. What made this spot even more interesting is the absence of elements that separate the bedroom from the bathroom. “I was supposed to enclose the bathroom with glass partitions but I would like to observe it first. I may just retain this as is because I love the fact that light and breeze flow freely here,” he explains. Behind the freestanding tub is a vignette composed of a trio of male nude paintings interspersed with towering indoor plants.

Going one level down brings you to a spacious lanai fringed by pocket man-made ponds that also lead to the main dining area and an adjacent spa room and powder





room. On the other side of the lanai is the guest room where Veridiano would usually spend the night now that the master bedroom has become part of the gallery upstairs.

The studio can be found at the lowest level of the house, facing the river. It is also in this area where he invites young, less fortunate painters for workshops under the mentorship of experienced artists. "I want to have someone to teach them how to paint professionally. I will also take charge of the materials. I have five artists under this programme now. They can also sell their paintings or hold an exhibit here," he says. The studio exudes this feeling of guiltless excess: beautiful splashes of colours everywhere, large abstract paintings on the walls, and a smorgasbord of furniture pieces collected over the years from the different corners of the world. "I want this place to be inspiring... to evoke joy," he says.

While Veridiano has been a long-time art enthusiast himself, he just started getting personally involved in the art sphere only in 2019 when he met with some of his old friends from Laguna. "We were thinking of ways to promote our province and then they said why







**Anticlockwise:** The vivid colours of Veridiano's artworks strike a balance with hardwood elements; The openness of the space lends the home lots of breathing room; *Petrified Wood 2* hangs at lounge



not promote the local artists. When I was introduced to some of their works including those of Lito Ballaran, I was in awe and I got inspired," he says. Hailing from San Pablo City, Ballaran, a painter whose works echo impressionism and realism, would later on play a role in Veridiano's artful journey.

The group had plans in the drawing board already about this initiative to help promote homegrown artists who lack resources and exposure, however, everything got halted by the pandemic. "I rushed from Nagcarlan to Manila before the lockdown because I thought it would be more convenient to get stuck in the city," Veridiano says, since everything was on a pause including his landscape projects. It is in isolation that Veridiano rediscovered his talent for drawing, and later, in painting. "I tried to draw on paper and I even used a red pen because that was what I had around. I drew the face of my mother and to my delight the result was not disappointing. I told myself, *'Aba, maganda!'* [Wow, it's beautiful," he says, happy with the outcome of his first

work. From pen and paper, he then tried using pencil, and when the lockdown was gradually lifted, he bought more artist-grade materials. "Without me realising it, I would wake up at 2am sometimes to paint. I would get in the zone and would not stop until I finished what I was doing. If I mix a colour that I like, I would perfect it and repeat it on my other works. Before I knew it, I amassed a lot of finished artworks already," he says, some he would even give away as gifts.

As a frustrated architect, Veridiano knew early on when he was younger that he liked to draw and paint but it was only recently that he allowed himself to dive deep into it. "It came at the right time because I can now afford buying professional grade materials. Had I started in my youth, I would not be able to buy these things and that might have discouraged me," he explains.

The landscape artist grew up in poverty, up in the hills of Nagcarlan where he would walk long hours going to school every day. "When I was seven, every time I would walk down the hills going to school, I would pass by a





**Anticlockwise:** In the gallery hangs a 7ft-tall *Geisha 1* and a trio of nude painting titled *Rafael, Diego and Sebastian*, all by Veridiano; The second level is enveloped by a lush foliage; The leaf-shaped steps leading to the main dining

huge anubing tree along the way. I remember I would pray in front of that tree begging to lift me out of poverty. I was so tired walking up and down the hills everyday to the point that I promised myself I would work hard elsewhere and never return here,” Veridiano narrates. “But guess what? When I bought this property, to my surprise, that very tree was inside the lot I now own,” he adds, as if fate was teasing him. The irony of it all is that he now feels more at home and at peace when he stays in Nagcarlan, away from the urban jungle.

The self-taught landscape artist declares he is also a self-taught painter. “I do not have any formal art education. I would just watch Youtube videos and see





how they use this and that, how they combine colours, etc. And then I would try the techniques on my own, sometimes modifying them. There are times I would send photos of my works to Lito Ballaran and he would guide me,” he shares, adding that it was Ballaran who encouraged him to try using acrylic and canvas, which he willingly did. The result is a huge collection of oversized paintings that continues to grow to this day.

As Veridiano carried on with her new-found love for painting, he started to visit major art fairs in different countries. “I visit art fairs in order for me to gauge where I am at now in my craft. Are my works at par with other artists? I want to check out the current trends as well.

Additionally, I am very interested to learn more about how to run a gallery, that is, without exploiting young and promising artists. I want to uplift them,” he says. “I prayed to God to give me an outlet or work that I can do on my own when I retire; a work that does not require me to depend on others. In landscaping, I had to depend on many people, on my team. But with painting, it’s all me. It’s my creative freedom,” the artist continues.

While Veridiano admits he does not consider this second home as his dream home just yet because to say so already means he will stop building—which is not the case. “I still want to build more,” he declares.



# RETURN TO PARADISE

Known to provide guests with “barefoot luxury”, Siargao’s Nay Palad Hideaway returns refreshed and recharged this year

*By Maritess Garcia Reyes. Images courtesy of Nay Palad Hideaway*







**This page:** One of resort's many chillout lounges  
**Opposite page:** The Del Carmen Mangrove Reserve is a Wetland of International Importance





“Eighty per cent was destroyed,” recalls Herve Lampert, one of the founders of Nay Palad Hideaway, a breathtaking resort tucked in picturesque General Luna in Siargao. Imagine the chaos and the ordeal Herve and his brother Vince had to go through before arriving at an important decision for the property: to start anew, as if taking a blank piece of paper and drawing everything from scratch. “Instead of just rebuilding what was there before, what we did was we started to reimagine the whole concept of ‘barefoot luxury’ and try to bring it to a new level,” he adds, speaking of the signature concept the resort is known for since it opened in 2012. “In the first months post-typhoon, we focused on our people and the community to help as much as possible. The first three to four months [we spent] re-building homes, finishing about 50 of them before anything else,” shares Vince, general manager of Nay Palad Hideaway.

In March 2022, Herve together with another co-founder, Bobby Dekeyser, flew to Siargao for the first time after the typhoon. They saw the massive devastation at the resort, one that could easily drive anyone to walk away and never look back. “It was a paradise before, and now it’s like hell,” Herve describes what unfolded before their eyes the moment they set foot in Siargao after the typhoon. While they all felt it was impossible to fix the resort and that they had limited funds to rebuild, one thing changed their decision. “We went around the

island and saw the new houses that we built for our staff. We saw their smiles and we looked at their eyes. Then we realised, we cannot just leave it like that. We cannot give up. It’s impossible. They’re a part of us... a part of our family. They’ve been with us for so many years. We have to find a way to get back,” Herve recalls. With this, they decided to reconstruct the resort and get back on their feet. “We want to build [the resort] back no matter what happens and leave an impact to the community,” Herve says, emphasising that, for someone who fell in love with Siargao and for someone impressed by the resilience of the Filipinos, the least they can do was to rebuild and reopen the resort to help the community. This goes without saying that reopening the resort also means creating more job opportunities for the locals. “While typhoon Odette heavily devastated the resort and affected thousands of families around the island, our very first priority was to support our beloved community,” says Dekeyser.

So, in April 2022, the renovation of the resort started. Together with the seasoned architect and designer Daniel Pouzet, Bobby Dekeyser and the Lampert brothers revamped the resort and relaunched Nay Palad 2.0 in June this year.

Some of the most apparent changes in the resort are the five new villas and the addition of the Hideaway Village on top of six renovated existing villas. “The typhoon destroyed all the garden villas. So we knocked down the remnants and then constructed five new villas,” Herve explains. Guests can relax in the villa’s luxurious main and attic bedrooms after



**From left:** A Dedon Nestrest hang by a coconut tree; The villas highlight Filipino materials that are calamity-proof





**Anticlockwise:** The views from the Sea Pagoda allows one to de-stress; *Hilot* is a traditional Filipino healing massage; Filipino fare to indulge in; The tree lounge is the best spot to unwind; The Garden View Villa echoes a tropical feel



a day at the beach. The outdoor deck, covered by an Ibiza-style roof, beckons everyone to lounge on the cosy daybeds. The new and exclusive Coral Villa has a private pool, a secluded garden, a generous outdoor lounge and a dining pavilion—a peaceful spot to recharge in complete privacy.

The Hideaway Village, on the other hand, which comprises the common areas surrounding the pool, highlights two new restaurants, a kitchen, beautiful lounges, a game pavilion, an enchanting pool pagoda, a vibrant pool bar and floating loungers. The ocean-view restaurant in this area is perfect for breakfast while taking in the morning sea breeze or dinner on one of its balconies that command unhampered ocean vistas. There is an outdoor terrace where you can dine under the open sky. Meanwhile, the new Dansuli Lounge floats amidst water ponds on the way to the restaurant. It is the perfect spot to get together for pre-dinner cocktails under the beautiful handwoven chimney lit by thousands of little pin lights. “There’s a tree lounge. There are a lot of new and different lounges that are all interconnected with nipa-covered bridges. So we’re giving the feel of being in a village:





you can still walk barefoot, but you're inside a village where you can go to one place to have a drink, walk to another place to swim, or move upstairs to the panoramic restaurant, which commands 360-degree views. You can see the entire resort [from there]. Downstairs, you can enjoy coffee and watch the children playing in the park," Herve explains the never-been-seen features of the resort. At dusk, the Tree Lounge will stimulate your senses with hanging loungers on 300-year-old tree logs waiting for you to hop on while enjoying the stunning seascapes. Guests can also practise yoga, have a tea break at the tree-top terrace, or have a romantic dinner under the stars or surrounded by fireflies. "We created a village where the guests can spend the day and relax," he adds.

Since the resort experienced the worst one could ever imagine with supertyphoon Odette, it just follows that the team ensured that the structures were more resilient and calamity-proof. "We have nipa roofs everywhere, and nipa will always fly away with the typhoon. We realised we needed a cement foundation and steel bars to reinforce the ceiling and the roof. All the new buildings are built with this new 'technology'.





“We want to build [the resort] back no matter what happens and leave an impact to the community”

— HERVE LAMPERT

We’re going to lose the nipa for sure with the strong winds. Still, the nipa is part of the signature of Nay Palad Hideaway,” he continues, explaining their decision to keep this material, which is very sustainable.

Nay Palad Hideaway also showcases Filipino craftsmanship in every corner. Besides the nipa roofs, local artisans were also employed for woodwork. “We worked with woodcarvers to do the details like the headboards of the beds. We also worked with weavers from Cebu,” he says, enumerating the many handwoven pieces in the resort, including wall panels, ceilings, furniture and lamps, among many others. “I think most of the weavers have been working with us for 25 years,” Herve shares, as some of these artisans used to work in their furniture business in Cebu.

With the revitalised Nay Palad Hideaway, Dekeyser and the Lampert brothers hope to give guests a renewed ‘barefoot luxury’ experience. “If you look at the people living in Siargao, [almost] everybody’s barefoot. It’s the perfect laidback lifestyle. What is luxury nowadays? Luxury is not about things; it’s not about a beautiful car. We define luxury as having a good time, spending quality moments with family and friends and enjoying the simple moments in life. [This], of course [should be experienced] in a quality environment. Everything must be perfect,” Herve explains further. Adding to the beautiful, cosy villas and ambience, the resort also ensures exquisite dining experiences, with the Spanish chef Père Massana preparing a fantastic menu for guests to enjoy. “Life in Siargao is great and very peaceful with an amazing vibe and spirit,” says Vincent, and everyone who has been to the world-class surfing destination would agree. And Nay Palad 2.0 beckons everyone to experience this.







**This page:** A giant bed at the beach for guests to enjoy  
**Opposite page:** The mangroves helped save the island during typhoon Odette; Chef Père Massana combines the freshest ingredients; A panoramic view of the mangroves from the pagoda





# HAUTE HISTORY

Villa Mabrouka, the last private home of Yves Saint Laurent in Tangier, Morocco, is now an intimate hotel evoking 1930s charm *By Coco Marett*

For British designer Jasper Conran, chancing upon Villa Mabrouka was love at first sight.

“I will never forget that first sensation of coming off the narrow Tangier streets and into the villa’s green and shady courtyard, full of banana and palm trees,” he says, “before emerging into an oasis of big, sweeping lawns and an incredible garden looking out to sea, filled with hollyhocks, nasturtiums, roses, agapanthus, bougainvillea, jasmine and orange blossom, as well as ancient pavilions.”

When *Tatler* caught up with Conran over the phone, he was sitting on a terrace looking over those













Original features such as the decorative window frames and landscaped gardens have been restored throughout the property, complemented by contemporary design elements



exact gardens—only this time, he’s the owner of the property, which he has spent four years transforming into a charming 12-suite hotel with views of the Strait of Gibraltar and the North Atlantic.

The opening of the hotel took place in June this year, with a low-key but lavish garden party for just 60 guests, who flew in from all corners of the world. “There was a moment when I’d planned for all the waiters to come down with desserts—big trays of jellies, cakes and ice creams. They all came down from above to the pool carrying these great big trays of wonderful sweets,” Conran recalls fondly. “It was a spectacularly beautiful vision, and everyone clapped. That was a moment. A very happy moment.”

In 2019, Conran travelled to Tangier in search of a tent to use for excursions for guests staying at his first hotel, L’Hotel in Marrakesh. His antiques dealer revealed that Villa Mabrouka, the last residence of legendary fashion designer and couturier Yves Saint Laurent and his partner Pierre Bergé, was up for sale.

“The rest, as they say, is history,” says Conran.

And when it comes to history, Villa Mabrouka—*mabrouk* is an expression of luck or congratulations in Arabic—is rich with it. Saint Laurent and Bergé first bought the villa in 1990, entrusting its interior design to Jacques Grange, the French designer whose A-list clients included the likes of Princess Caroline of Hannover, Alain Ducasse and Paloma Picasso.

“The theme was an eccentric Fifties Englishman who had come to live in Tangier. Yves wanted chintz and one

colour per room: a blue room, a yellow room and so on. It was like decorating a house for characters out of a play by Tennessee Williams,” Grange wrote in his book *Les Paradis Secrets d’Yves Saint Laurent et Pierre Bergé*, or *Yves Saint Laurent and Pierre Bergé’s Secret Paradises*. The enchanting gardens, which put many—including Conran—under the villa’s spell, is the work of landscaper Madison Cox, who married Bergé shortly before his death and is now president of the not-for-profit Fondation Jardin Majorelle and the Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent in Paris.

Saint Laurent was born in Algeria in 1936; 30 years later, on his first visit to Marrakesh, the spirit of North Africa awakened a creative blind spot for the designer. He once famously said, “Before Marrakesh, everything was black. This city taught me colour, and I embraced its light, its insolent mixes, and ardent inventions.” He went on to visit the city twice a year, in June and December, to source inspiration for his collections, and he and Bergé would go on to own several properties there, and finally Villa Mabrouka in Tangier.

When Conran bought the property in 2019, proceeds from the sale went towards the Fondation Jardin Marjorelle, as per Bergé’s instructions before his passing in 2017. “I want to keep the air of Yves Saint Laurent alive around the villa,” says Conran. “Ever since I can remember, Saint Laurent has meant an immense amount to me—where some children worshipped footballers, I admired Saint Laurent. He was a genius: a





Colourful parasols, rattan and an elegant collection of curios—when designing Villa Mabrouka, Conran envisioned a 1930s hotel on the Riviera

man who loved his craft and was so brilliantly articulate at putting his finger right on the pulse, at the right time, in the right way. So, for me, becoming custodian of Villa Mabrouka is purely serendipitous and accidental but a very romantic story.”

The designer-turned-hotelier’s approach to Villa Mabrouka’s transformation was somewhat meditative. Conran “sat with the house for about nine months”, during which, he says, he “let the rooms tell me what they wanted to be”. There followed a colossal infrastructure project, one in which the main house and garden were taken apart and put back together again. “The whole garden needed to be taken up, but I put it back in the way Madison had laid it out,” says Conran, who added more than 6,500 new plants, shrubs and trees in a replanting programme. “If something is so beautiful, why would you want to change it?”

Other elements preserved from the villa’s “Yves era” are the stunning carved wooden doors and floor-to-ceiling window frames in hues of blue and green, and one of the original pavilions designed by American architect Stuart Church. Conran was also a fan of the bedroom Grange had designed for Saint Laurent, which he lovingly restored during the renovation.

But Villa Mabrouka isn’t all homages to its famous former owners, with Conran adding contemporary



IMAGES ANDREW MONTGOMERY



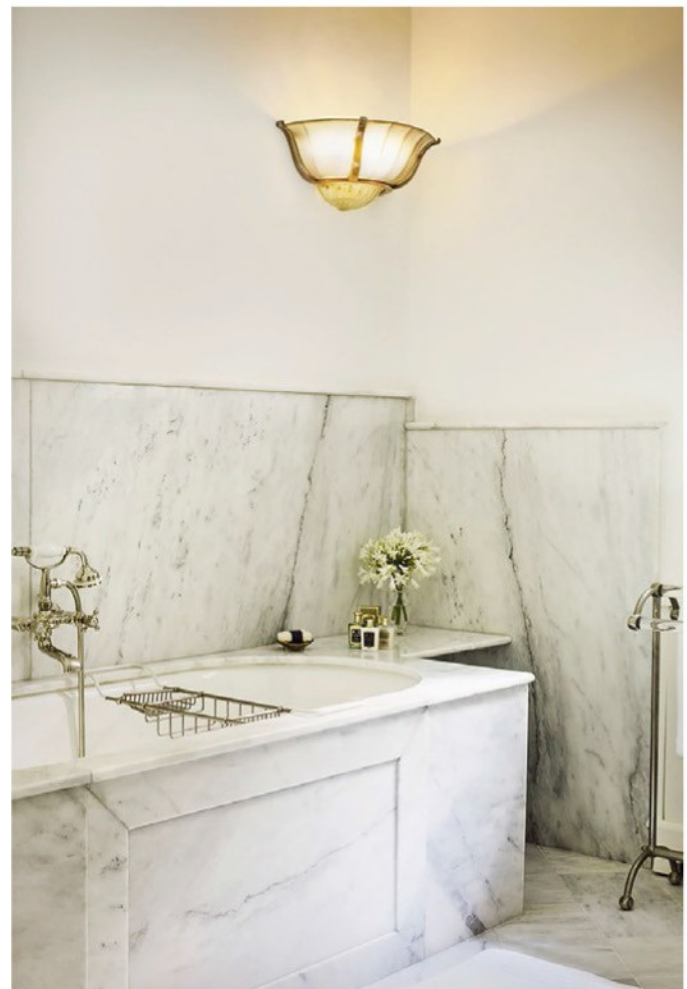


touches throughout the heritage property. For example, crisp white walls and tonal textiles have replaced the audacious patterns that previously adorned the sitting room—which is one of the Conran’s favourite spaces within Villa Mabrouka. “I like it very much because it has a lovely sense of calmness to it,” he says. “It’s whites and greens, so it takes the outside in and it works with the exterior and the garden. It’s got Roman busts and mosaics and Murano glass for lights.”

Other elegant details include Mauritanian rugs, handmade clay tiles crafted using the ancient traditions of *bejmat* and *zellige*, velvet slipper chairs, cascading voile curtains, mother-of-pearl inlaid mirrors and side tables, and antique embroidery.

It’s a well-curated collection that is decidedly not specific to Morocco, but one that fulfils Conran’s vision of creating a hotel that evokes an era of understated opulence.

“Here, you are not walking into a Moroccan palace; it is like a house you might have once found in the south of France. It’s a Mediterranean house with the gentle nuances of Morocco,” says Conran. “I want it to feel like a classic: like a hotel of the 1930s—with that level of service and detail. A hotel on the Riviera.”





# LAST WORD

We ask our cover star a round of quickfire questions to give our readers a little more insight into their personalities. This month, it's Anne Curtis.

*By Ryanne Stephanie Cheng Co. Photography by BJ Pascual*



**Currently reading, watching and listening to?**  
*The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo*, Jack Ryan and Taylor Swift's *Midnights* [respectively].

**Favourite place in the Philippines?**

222 Amanpulo.

**Favourite travel destination?**  
Africa.

**Favourite scent?**  
Another 13 by Le Labo.

**Who is someone you admire?**  
Audrey Hepburn.

**Favourite memory as a child?**  
Visiting the Philippines for the first time.

**What's your life mantra?**  
Dream big. Then work hard and have the courage and patience to make them happen.

**Best advice your parents taught you?**  
Never get tired of giving a smile to someone as you don't know how that might brighten up his or her day.

**What keeps you going?**  
My love for family and my passion for my career.





Peak-a-Book desk designed by Roberto Lazzeroni - Downtown armchair designed by Jean-Marie Massaud

# Made of Stories

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