



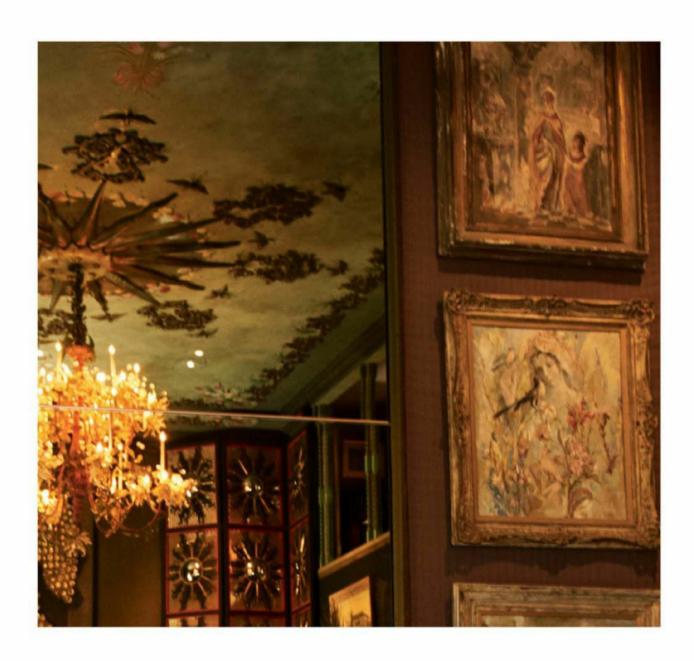
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#### **PRADA**





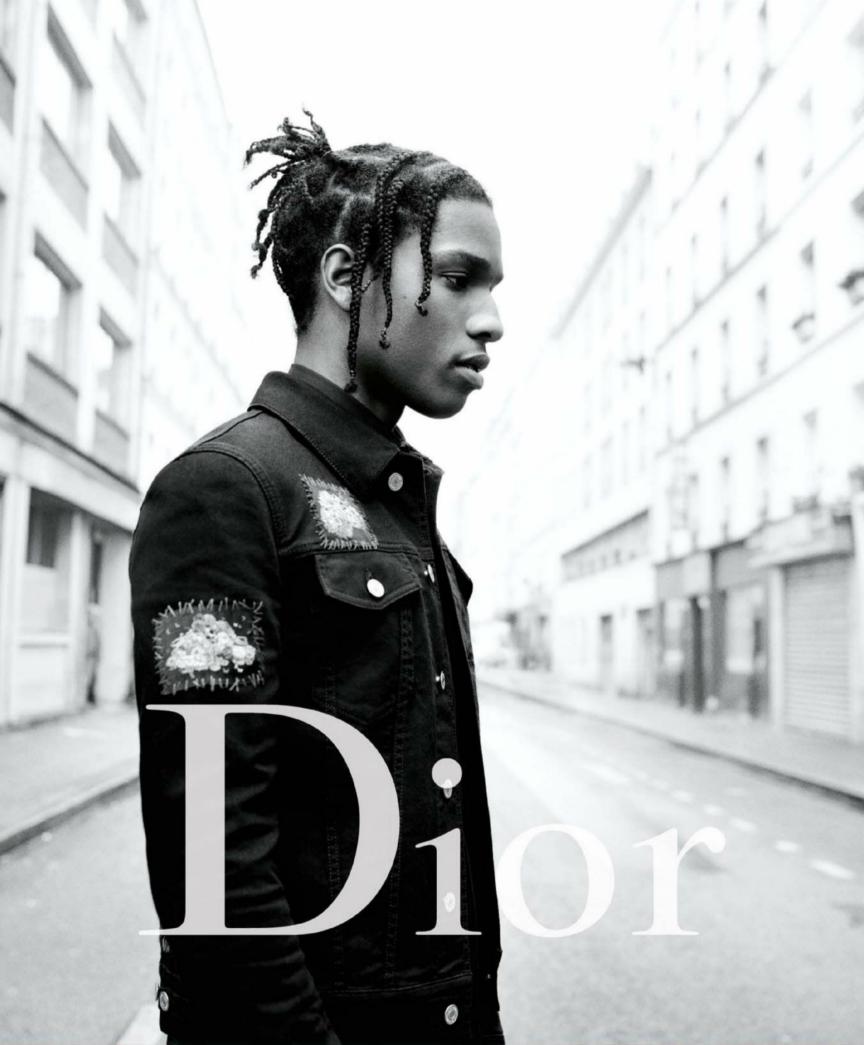


## GUCCI









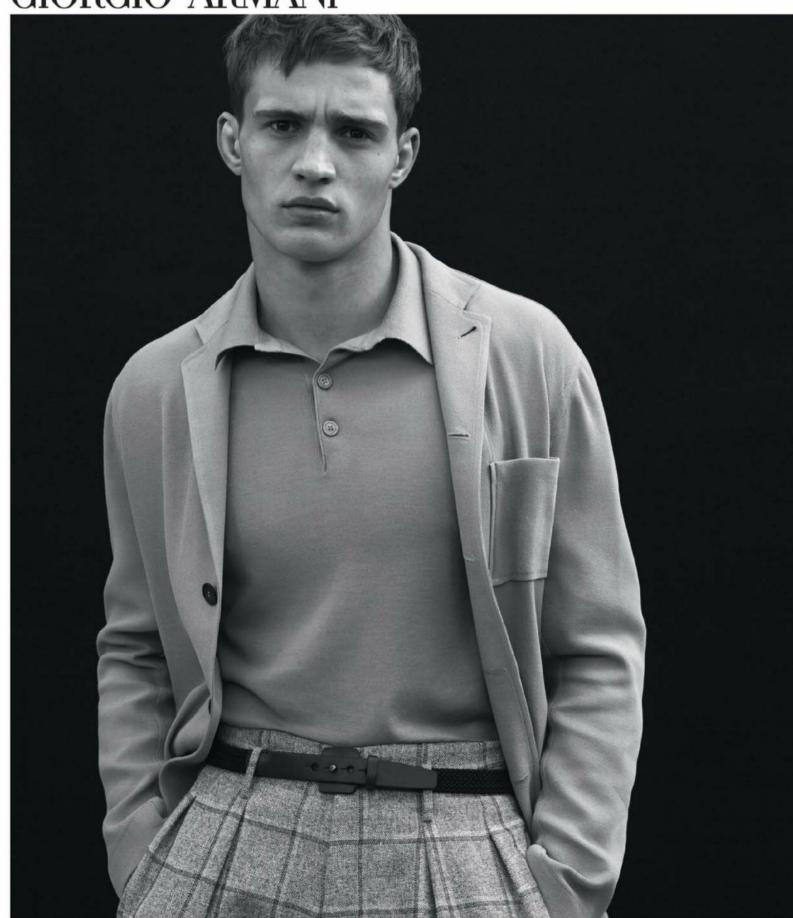
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GIORGIO ARMANI





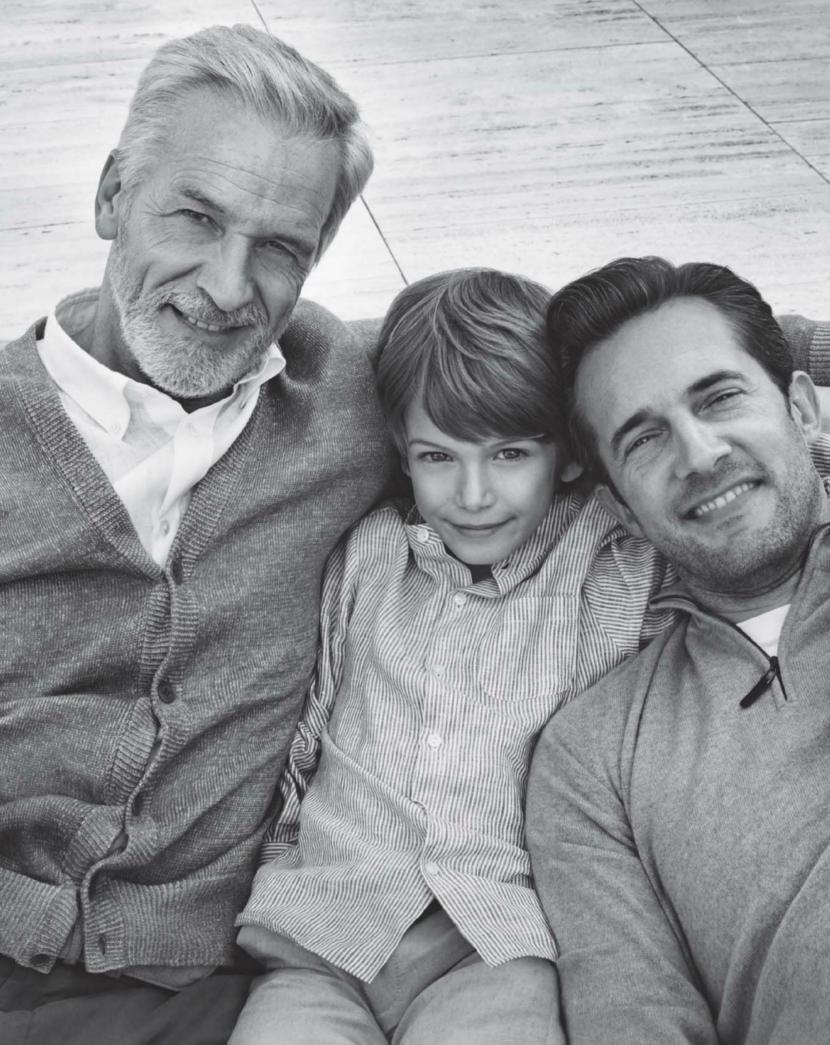
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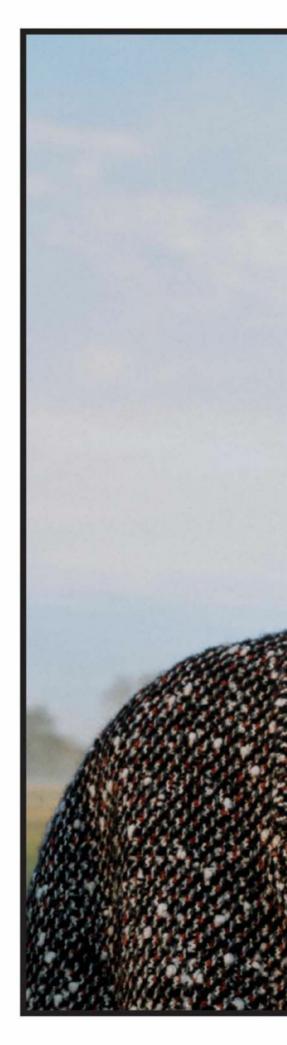
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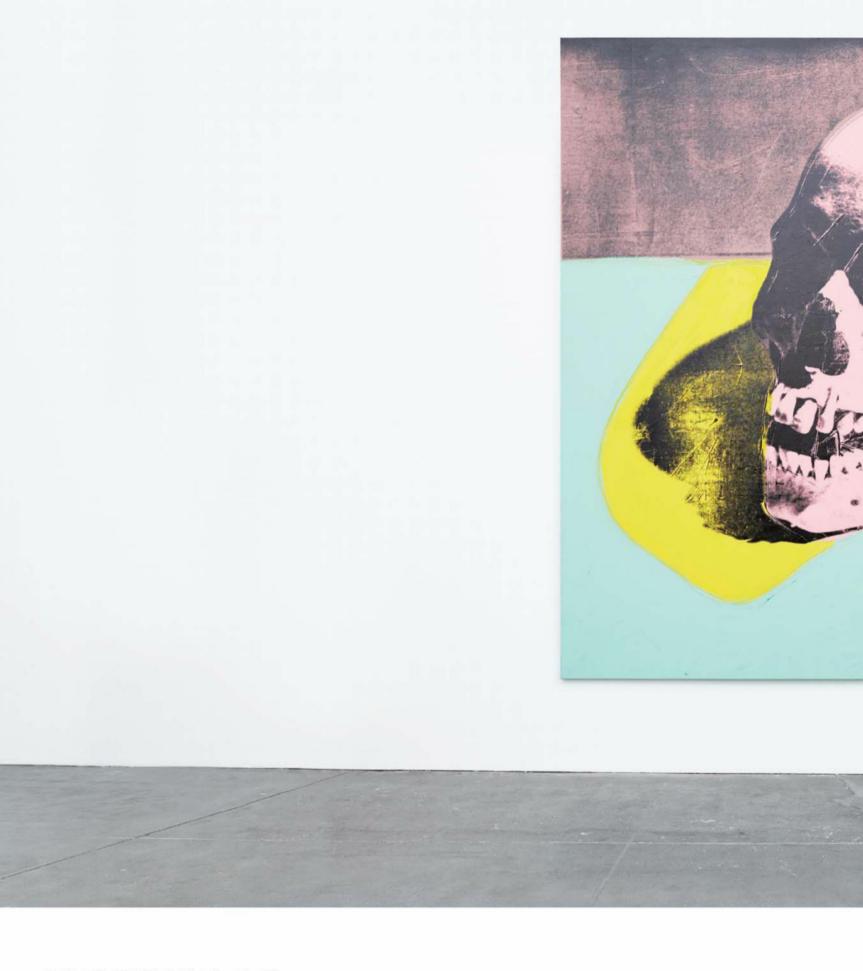
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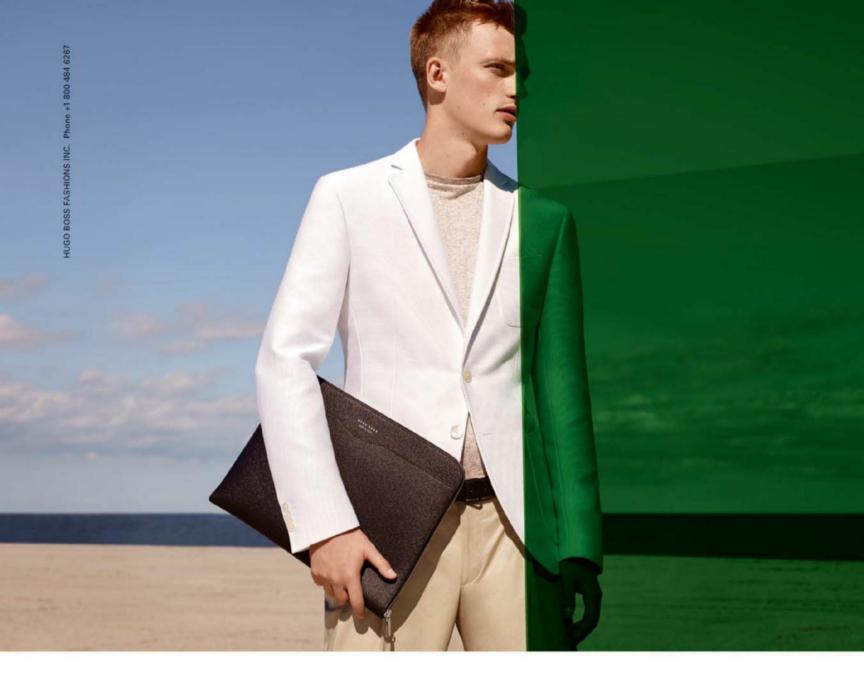






# **CALVIN KLEIN**







MEN'S STORE
BERGDORF GODDMAN

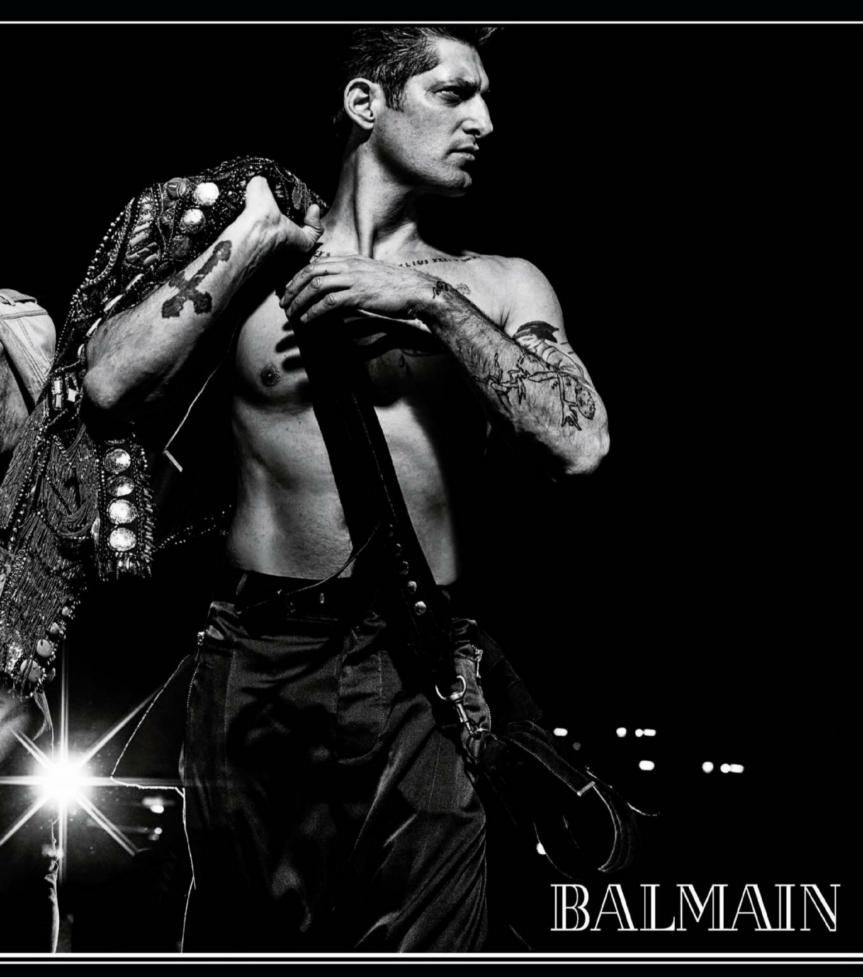








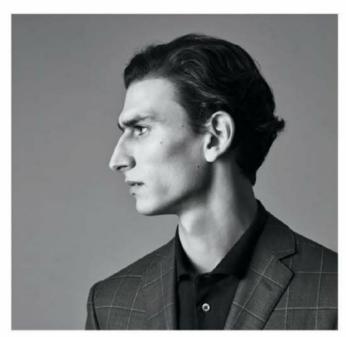


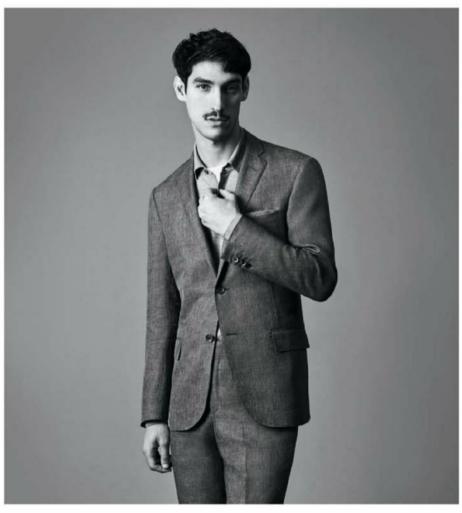














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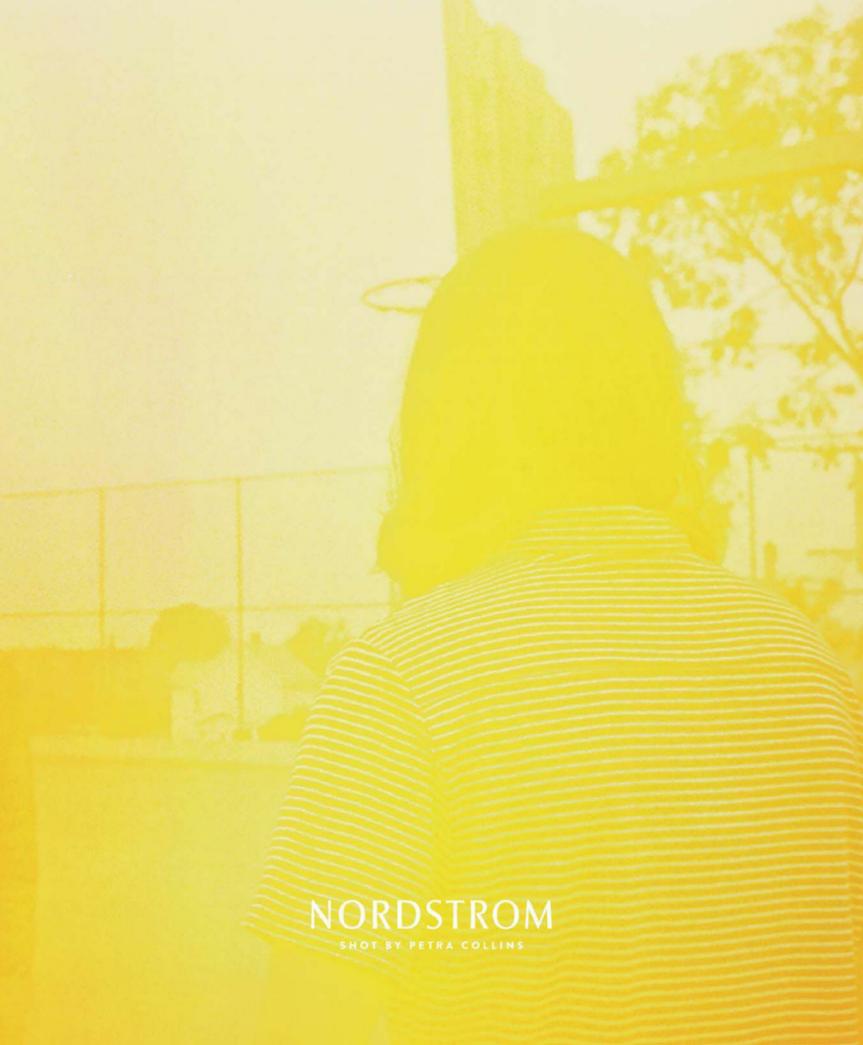
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THOMAS WHITESIDE

jacket \$2,400
Neil Barrett
t-shirt \$235
belt \$575
Dolce & Gabbana
jeans \$70 Levi's
watch Breguet

### GQ STYLE Spring 2017























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GQStyle

SPRING 2017

# Ralph Lauren



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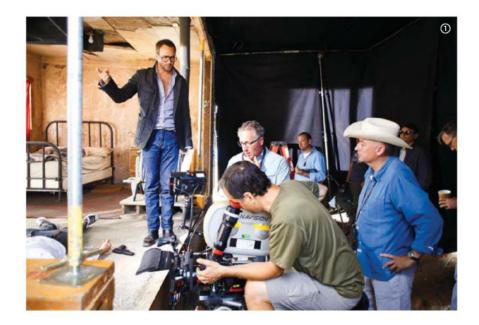
The Oscar-nominated breakout actor of the year (Mahershala Ali) wears the color of the season (yellow) on page 170.

jacket \$545
Moncler
sneakers \$90
Converse

sweater

Daniel Cremieux
jeans Levi's







#### Make It Look Easy

One day back in January, I put on my favorite suit and went to meet Tom Ford. It was during Fashion Week in Milan at his showroom—a muffled hall of plush carpet and smoked glass.

I was there to preview Ford's fall collection, and as we shook hands, he asked me what *GQ Style* is all about. I told him that we're a magazine about advanced personal style—a source of inspiration and new ideas for the kind of guy who already has style and doesn't want any hand-holding. For men who feel like the world is small and intend to run circles around it.

Speaking of running circles, Ford was in the middle of an intense Oscar campaign for the second film he's directed, Nocturnal Animals, yet here he was in full-throttle fashion mode, enthusiastically fronting his fall collection. He told me the collection is his quietest yet. He pointed to a mannequin dressed in monochrome—gray suit, gray shirt, gray tie—and explained that in a world of wild income stratification and oceanic gulfs between the haves and the have-nots, it's time for the haves to tone it down.

I gotta admit, I recoiled at the idea. Tone it down? Men are finally embodying the notion that self-expression through style is good. Isn't that why things like Tom Ford and GQ Style exist—and hasn't Ford been one of the movement's leaders? I felt as if one of the top dogs running at the front of the pack had decided to fall back.

But then I looked around the showroom and realized that Tom Ford doesn't fall back. There were still burnt-orange velvet dinner jackets and motorcycle boots cut from the supplest of calfskin. Gone were the bold plaid suits with loud shirts and gregarious ties—the kind of ensembles that scream "Men want to be me, and everyone wants to fuck me" and that have made Tom Ford rich and famous. In fact, looking around the room, I found that when Tom Ford does understated, his stuff gets even better. The new collection doesn't holler. It speaks with a quiet conviction—a new awareness of the volume in the room, just like Tom said.

And it strikes me now that quiet conviction is what the style in GQ Style is all about. Check



out the cover of this issue: It's the notoriously outlandish fighter Conor McGregor—who usually favors brash plaid suits—dressed with subtle poise. Sure, those suits helped set McGregor apart from the rest of the UFC, but when you're the double champ and a pop-cultural juggernaut, you don't have to strain so hard.

Or consider the mantra that GQ Style fashion director Mobolaji Dawodu repeats whenever he's found the perfect thing for a shoot. "It's fly," he says, "but it's eaaasy."

Or take the fact that the big fashion portfolio in this issue (page 144) is titled, simply, "Chill Suits."

That's what Ford was showing me: his newly chilled-out suits.

GQ Style is a quarterly magazine, and this is our fourth issue. Which means we've been at this for a year. I think we've found our groove. Our groove is brash. It's experimental. It's high-flying and unafraid. But it's also aware of the volume in the room. It's fly, sure—but it's also eaaasy.

Easy is not a word usually associated with Tom Ford. But we look up to him because he knows that the golden rule of the modern age is evolve or die, and he lives it all the way.

Will Welch
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

How's this for a side hustle? Tom Ford in director mode, blocking a murder scene on the set of *Nocturnal Animals*.

Even though Conor McGregor wears his usual flashy threepiece suits well, for our shoot, we wanted to help him find his inner chill. Let's just say the fight king was feelin' it.

E ADDITIONAL CREDITS

60 SPRING 2017 GQStyle



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## VERSACE

# Malat

10 ESSENTIAL
SPRING TRENDS
& 4 LABELS ON FIRE

Mear Near Now











Ralph Lauren \$2,695



**Gucci** \$880



The Elder Statesman \$1,275



Timo Weiland \$365

1 WHO'S THE **DUDE IN THE FLY** TIE-DYE?

It's smart-mouth Long Beach rapper Vince Staples. You can see him wearing spring's coolest gear throughout this section-and read about his upcoming tour, inspired by Wes Anderson's The Life Aquatic, on page 76.

Hermès \$1,525

shirt **Eton** 

jeans

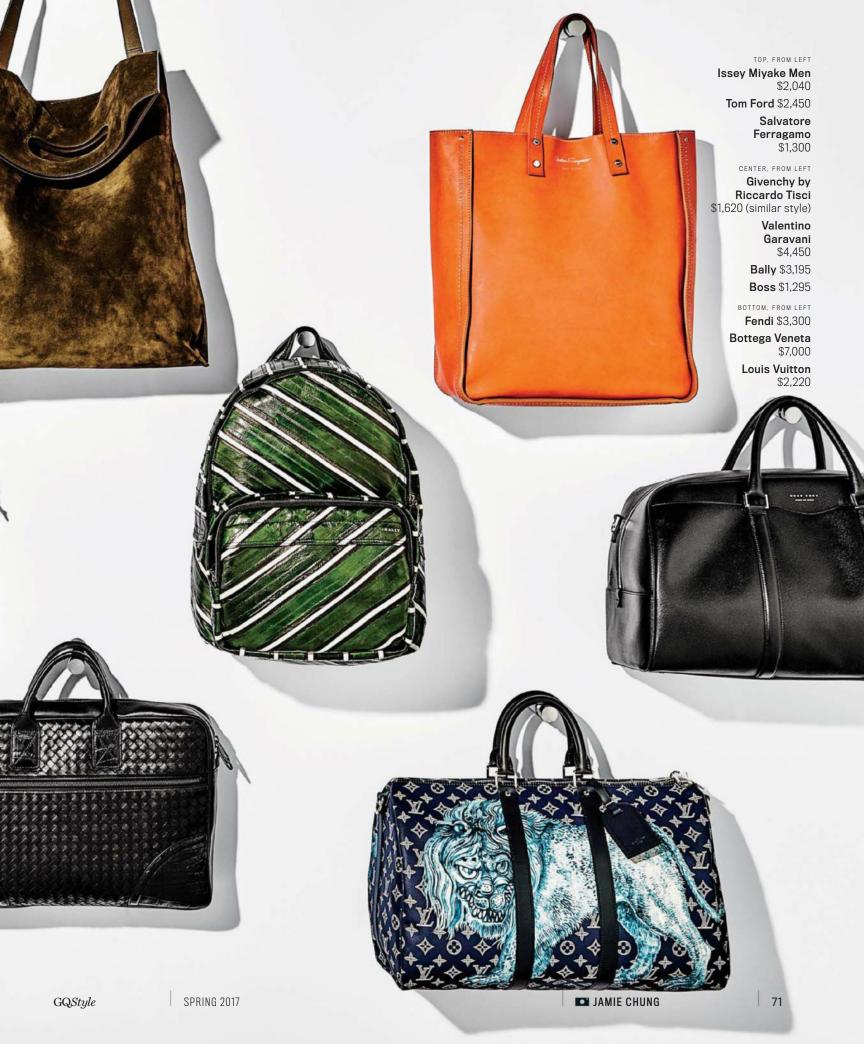
Levi's Made & Crafted

## Lightweight Cardigans

+ When most men think of sweater weather, they think of fall, but who wants to dress like most men? Not us. So we say: Get yourself a spring cardigan and don't hold back on color and pattern. When your knitwear isn't buried under a bunch of outer







Polo Ralph Lauren \$595 + shirt Alexander McQueen boots Dsquared2 cap KB Ethos



#### Mechanic Suits

+ The onesie is equal parts art-rock Devo concept and oil-stained Pep Boys uniform, a true piece of high-low retro-future fashion. And because you don't have to match it with anything, it's way easier to pull off than you might think. Just lace up your boots and go.

**WE ARE THE RHOADS** 





**Sacai** \$1,640



**Paul Smith** \$1,160

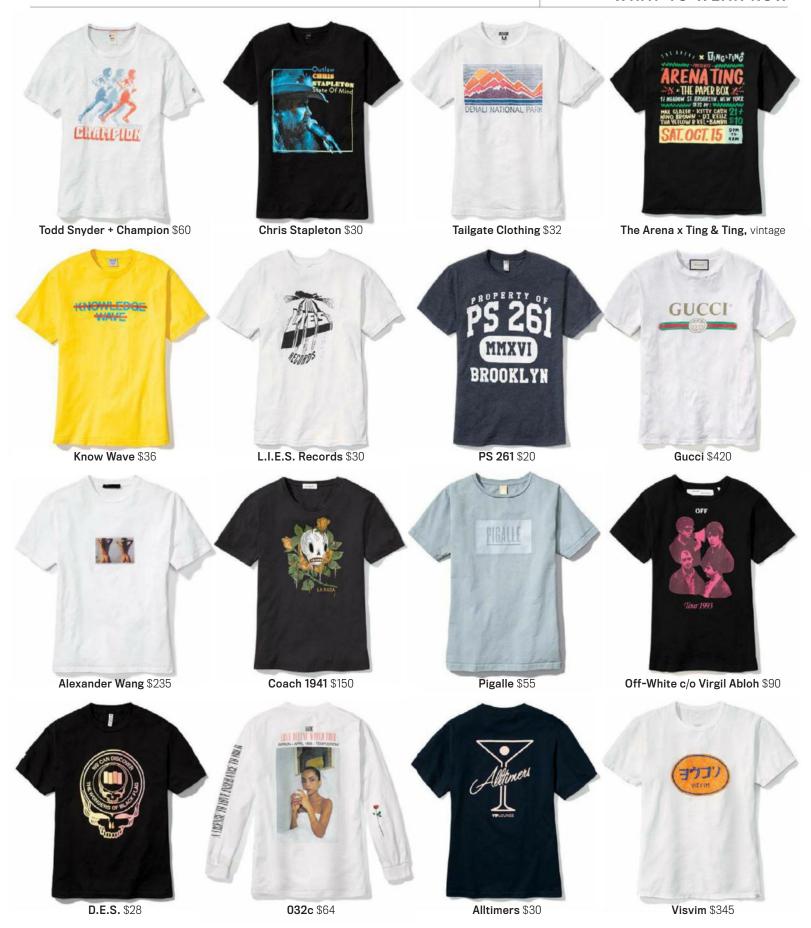


**3.1 Phillip Lim** \$895



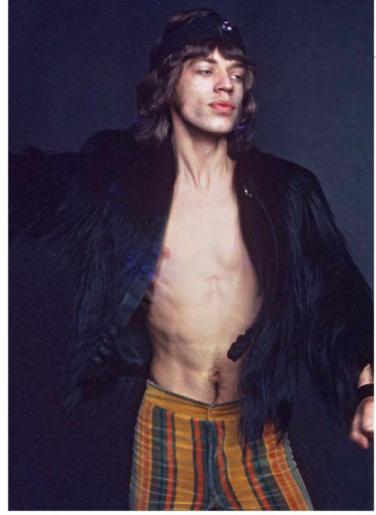
Givenchy by Riccardo Tisci \$3,340





GQStyle SPRING 2017 □ STUART TYSON 75





 $\bullet$  Mick Jagger, seen here in 1969, can wear (or not wear) whatever he wants.



Giorgio Armani \$3,095

SEE ADDITIONAL CREDITS.

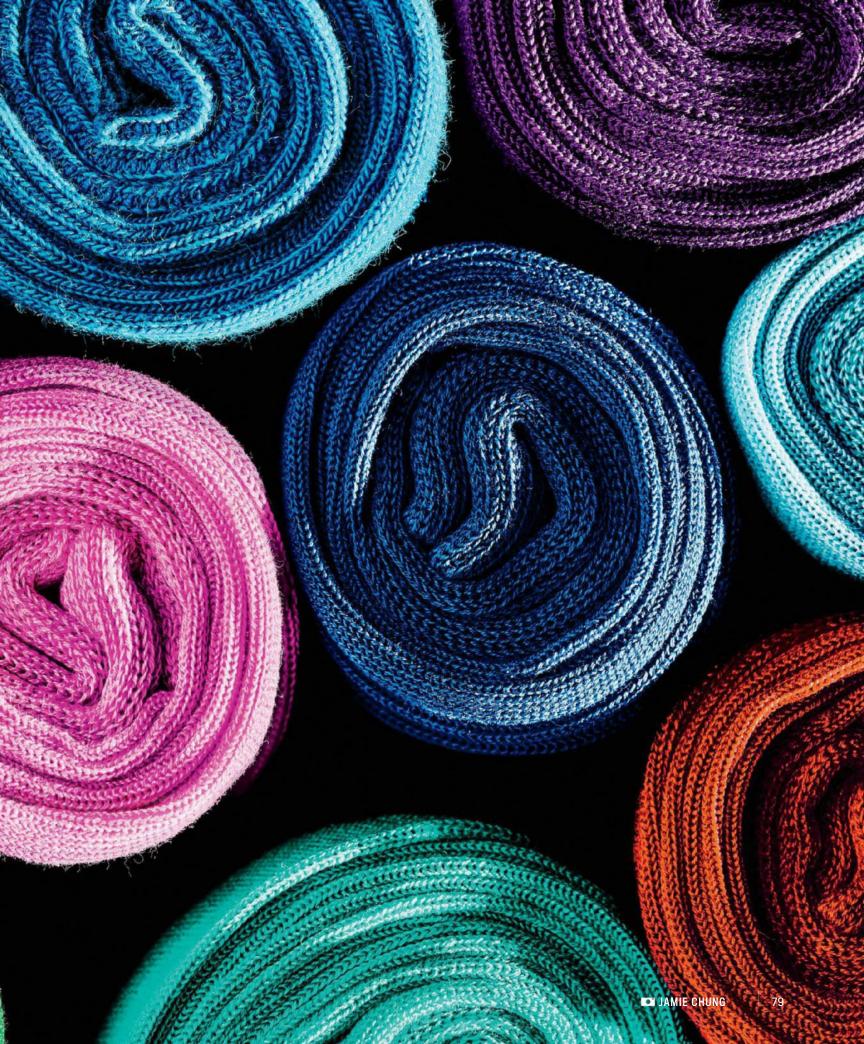


AMI Alexandre Mattiussi \$275



 $\bullet$  Don't just wear them; live with them. This Tuscan villa gets it.













Paul Smith \$625 + pants Todd Snyder



Maria McCloy \$85 (similar style) + jeans Rag & Bone • socks Pantherella



Hermès \$1,050 + socks Falke · pants Hugo



Louis Vuitton \$745 + jeans Levi's

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Pal Zileri \$4,495



Liverano & Liverano \$1,250



**Missoni** \$2,325



John Varvatos \$1,998

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# LABELS ON FIRE

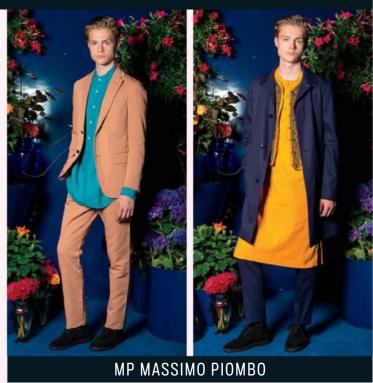




LOUIS VUITTON

▶ Spring's best brands are in full bloom. One is a French luxury house channeling BRITISH PUNK AND THE AFRICAN WILDERNESS. Next: a couple of Massimos making indelible marks on ITALIAN TAILORING. Lastly, a SoCal staple that's racking up serious fashion cred with its new lineup of KILLER SNEAKER COLLABS.



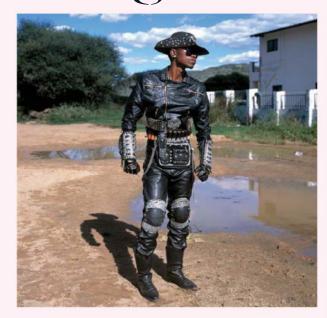




## »Fashion's Restless Nomad Touches Down in the Serengeti







hen designer Kim Jones landed at Louis Vuitton in 2011, he was already a cult figure in the men's fashion world but not a household name. Known for his elegant, street-inflected eponymous line and ahead-of-its-time collaboration with Umbro, he began his

rise to fame with a stint as creative director at the British luxury brand Dunhill, which lasted from 2008 to 2011. Then it all went turbo when LV brought him on to transform its men's ready-to-wear arm into one of the most consistently cool collections in the luxury market.

Jones was born a global explorer—few designers travel farther or more frequently for inspiration (he's got the Instagram account to prove it). Having split his childhood among London, Kenya, and Botswana, he ventures to remote parts of the globe where the rest of the fashion world doesn't dare to look. Using Vuitton's history in travel as a springboard, this season Jones brought us to the streets of London and the grasslands of Africa and proved once again to have an uncanny sense for what men actually want to wear.—JOSH PESKOWITZ

Louis Vuitton designer Kim Jones (above) says that photographer Frank Marshall's series "Renegades," about members of the heavy-metal subculture in Botswana, was an inspiration. It "depicts the fusion of two disparate aesthetics," he says.

It wasn't just Botswana metalheads. Jones says the pattern on this woven leather blouson takes inspiration from textiles made and worn by the Maasai people of the Serengeti.

The LV heritage is where Jones begins each of his collections. Here, the house's third location in London, at 149 New Bond Street, opened in 1900. THESE PAGES: SEE ADDITIONAL CREDI

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SPRING 2017

**GQStyle** 

GO STYLE: Since you joined Louis Vuitton, travel has been so important to the collection. What's your approach?

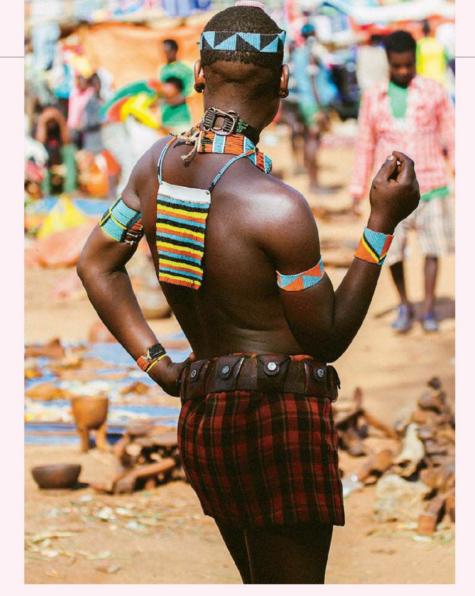
KIM JONES: With Vuitton, whenever I do something on travel, it's always something that relates to the archive. So I'll find a historic period of Vuitton and look at that as a reference point to start a collection, because essentially Vuitton is a travel house, it's a luggage house, so that's how I start.

#### How do you decide where to go with it?

I like to go and see places and do things and find stuff that other people won't be looking at. People are spending a lot of money on things like Vuitton clothing, so I try to get the most authentic thing. I like to go to the source. I'll always start research online or from a book, but then I want to go and see how a fabric's made, or see how a technique's done, and really get to the heart of it.

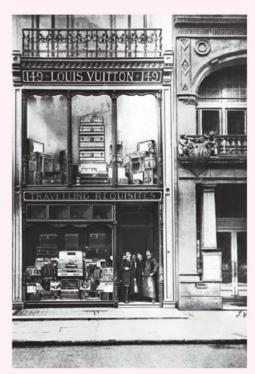
#### There's a balance between influence and authenticity without making it just cultural appropriation. Right?

That's one thing I'm very aware of, because I've grown up in



Alex Franco's photo series "Eastern Ways" celebrates the style of the people of Ethiopia's Omo Valley, which mixes local traditions with Western influences for an aesthetic reminiscent of punk.

Throughout the collection, Jones mixes references from different continents.
These zebra-print creepers and suitcases combine English staples with African graphics.





different cultures all my life. For the spring-summer collection, I was looking at these kids in South Africa that are doing really cool stuff, and they're the first kids that have grown up out of apartheid, so their way of looking at the world is very different to how we look at the world. These kids were never allowed to mix before, so now they do it in a really cool way. I would never think of what I do as cultural appropriation, because it's something that's always been with me in my life. At the end of the day, I'm looking at things and celebrating them.

Who are your hero designers? I did look at [Vivienne] Westwood and [Malcolm] McLaren, because it was so relevant for what I was doing. You think how their aesthetic must have looked in the mid-'70s and how it must have completely freaked people out on the street, because it was really shocking. You have to look at the impact that's had going forward. It's mass culture now. It's completely, like, everywhere. Something that was so full-on is now just the norm.

What's your impression of how the norms in men's clothing have changed in your career? I wouldn't say there's a massive difference in the way men dress, because we're all wearing pretty much the same clothes we wore 20 years ago, but we can appreciate things in different ways. I like seeing how one person will take one piece on the runway and make it their own. I think really good clothes make people look cool, not like fashion victims.

That's what I would say is the defining characteristic of your tenure at Louis Vuitton, just how wearable it is.

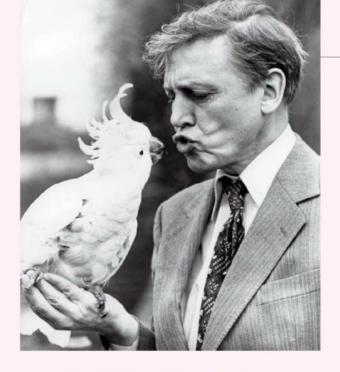
It has to be. You can't go into a house like that and become a concept; it doesn't work. The business is too big. You have to be realistic. And you have to listen. I want things to be wearable—you can make it a statement on the runway, but you break it down and you want to see real people wearing it.





Pieter Hugo's photo series of Nigeria's hyena handlers (2005–07) is as striking for the style it contains as it is for the wild beasts. This season Jones made the animals of Africa the stars of the collection.

Jones collaborated with Jake and Dinos Chapman, English artists whose drawings of African wildlife are printed over the LV monogram on various leather accessories.

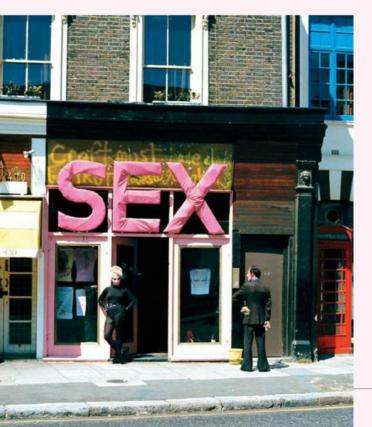


Another important inspiration for Jones: Sir David Attenborough, an English legend of broadcasting, best known for hosting nature programs on the BBC for over 50 years.



With any new Vuitton collection, always pay close attention to the bags. These woven leather wonders will surely be among the hottest-selling pieces of the season.





It wouldn't be Vuitton without a few überluxe touches, and a bit of French elegance, like this blue nubuck crocodile jacket with light flannel trousers.





#### MASSIMO ALBA

## »The Master of Italian Ease

"A really simple cashmere T-shirt can change the whole attitude of a wardrobe," says Massimo Alba. He's right. Slip into one of his cashmere tees and consider it your gateway drug into Alba's sprezzy universe of band collars, deconstructed jackets, wide-leg pants, and sun-faded knits. These are clothes you could just as easily wear to bed as you could to the beach or the theater. And that's exactly the way he wants them to be. "Nothing that I design is too loud," Alba says. "It's just a matter of feeling comfortable."

Comfort is a big reason why Alba is fond of cashmere, but the real secret to perfecting his casual-luxury formula is the wash. Every garment, from the knits to the shirts to the overcoats, is washed after being constructed (and often over-dyed or dipdyed). "Washing means the thing becomes alive," says Alba. "We

take out the stiff attitude of new things, give it a natural finish, the right hand, and the scent of good, clean things."

Alba doesn't chase trends. Season to season, the biggest change you'll notice in the collection is in the dominant colors. (For spring, dark blue, dark gray, and dark burgundy take center stage.) And his signature piece is a handkerchief. He designs new ones each season, treating them like miniature inspiration boards. "The handkerchief communicates the brand and what we really feel," Alba says. "It's a nice thing to give to someone you just met, or maybe you lose it and it becomes somebody else's." Your odds of finding a Massimo Alba hankie in the back of an Uber are slim, but if it happens, you just got blessed—so be sure to give your driver five stars.—**SAMUEL HINE** 









1

Alba's handkerchiefs serve as poetic statements for his brand; he carries one with him wherever he goes.

His shops in Rome and Milan are as relaxed and easy as his collections.

44

A look from Alba's spring collection.





"MP Massimo Piombo is about pleasure," says the Italian fashion-industry vet, who launched his new label in 2012.

Declaring that your clothes will bring pleasure is easy; what's hard is actually designing a collection that tickles the reptilian reward center in the back of the modern man's brain. But that goal is fully realized in Piombo's spring-summer 2017 line: It makes you want to jump into his jaunty, colorful, deeply pleasurable world.

The collection features relaxed repp-stripe jackets with kneelength tunics and casual suits that look just as good with ties as without—all made the way they were a century

ago. Piombo sources fabrics that reflect his extremely well-traveled life, from Scandinavia to Scotland to Belgium and beyond. Burnt orange, bright yellow, and fire-engine red are prominent. Shaken together in a "Piombo cocktail," the collection feels Italian, but with some serious new global energy.

"I design for young people or people with young minds," says Piombo. "And for beautiful people with extraordinary imaginations. Our mission is to create a club that is exultant, romantic, flamboyant. To try to create a different style, a new attitude." We say: Grab your passport.—SAMUEL HINE The perfect "Piombo cocktail" combines color, texture, and pattern in ways that most traditional Italian tailors wouldn't dare to try.

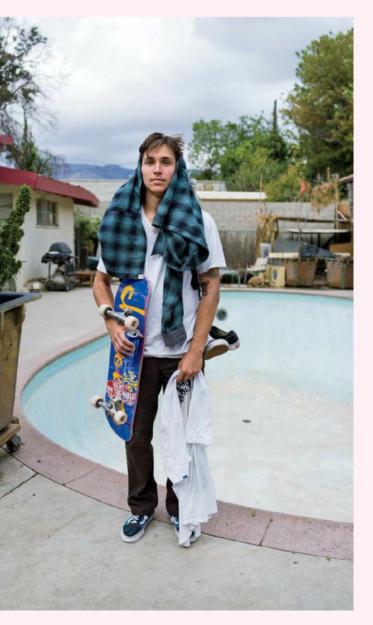
For spring '17, Piombo riffed on band-collar shirts—sometimes elongating them into tunics—and wide white trousers.





#### MP MASSIMO PIOMBO

## »The Master of Italian Quirk







Vans won't make you as gnarly as pro skater Elijah Berle, but you can try. Here, he makes this concrete monster look like a kiddie pool.

44

Good news: Vans look cool on board and off. Berle wears them both ways.

1

The very first wafflesoled Vans were made at the Van Doren Rubber Company factory in Anaheim, California.

#### VANS

### »After Five Decades of Unceasing Coolness, Vans Gets Even Cooler

Vans has been making the quintessential shoe for skaters since Jeff Spicoli wore the checkered slip-ons in Fast Times at Ridgemont High in 1982. Today it's a \$2.2 billion business with over 600 retail stores in the U.S. But even more remarkable for a brand that's been around since 1966, it's still cool. In fact, thanks to a merger of cultural streams from skate and pop, plus a grip of next-level collaborations, Vans is cooler now than it's ever been.

Vans's director of footwear design, Nathaniel lott, says that the spirit of collaboration has been there all along. The first partnership was in 1966, when Vans collaborated with legendary surfer Duke Kahanamoku on a run of floral-print sneakers. In 1996 it began an ongoing collab with Supreme and later took the concept to a high-fashion level with Marc Jacobs in 2005.

For 2017, Vans will roll out a heavy mix of collaborations with other brands, including Our Legacy, Opening Ceremony, Union, Steven Alan—and some even lott might not yet know about. "These ideas are constant and come from all over the place," he says. "When something is good, we just get it done. If we made it too strategic or too formulaic, we'd lose a lot of what makes us different."

In some cases, the design journey is complicated. The

Swedish brand Our Legacy wanted to re-create classic Vans styles to look exactly as they did when they were made in the original Anaheim, California, factory in 1992, reviving obsolete manufacturing processes. Others take a more direct approach: Opening Ceremony glitterbombed Old Skools for its spring line. "If you work with inspiring collaborators, they end up putting designs forth that nobody else would have done," lott says. "That's the most interesting thing for me—to see preconceptions about what we can and can't do break down."

Who wouldn't want to partner with a brand with that attitude and those resources? Designers choose to work with Vans for the same reason we want to wear them. Spicoli had it right all along.—NOAH JOHNSON









For this one, we kind of kept it on some K.I.S.S. shit: 'Keep it simple, stupid.' We chose my favorite silhouette—Old Skool—and went with some fun colors."—CHRIS GIBBS, UNION



We have been huge fans of Vans since our time growing up in California. I think mixing our roots with the authenticity of Vans and its heritage has been a dream come true."—HUMBERTO LEON, OPENING CEREMONY



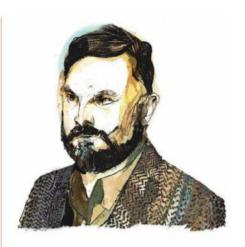
We always look to companies that are best in class. Vans owns the casual-lifestyle-footwear segment. The process has been pretty seamless, and selling has been great."—STEVEN ALAN



I grew up in Sweden in the early '90s on hardcore music, on skate, snow, and surf culture. The collection is like curated pieces from that era of my life, put into a modern context."—JOCKUM HALLIN, OUR LEGACY

# LUSTRATION: VECCHIO IMPRINTS. OPPOSITE PAGE: SEE ADDITIONAL CREDITS

# HOW TO HACK ANY WINE LIST



Whether you're out on a date, romancing clients, or just eating with friends, the most intimidating part of any meal is ordering the wine. Luckily, our chief value correspondent has developed a foolproof method for nailing it every time. Take a long sip and let the compliments roll in.

by Michael Williams

I recently took two close friends out to dinner at Mario Batali's Del Posto in Manhattan. The meal was a thank-you for some help they'd given me, so I was buying—which meant I had free rein to order a seriously good flight of wine.

I've spent the past 12 years trying to learn my way around wines, and at this point I know more than your average roast-chicken eater. So when the sommelier dropped the list, I commandeered it. When he came back to check on me, I was ready. I ordered a bottle of the Ceretto. A year earlier, I'd gone to Northwest Italy and visited that vineyard, so I knew it well. The wine was good—very bold and opened up nicely. Just before our entrées came out, the Ceretto was about kicked, so I flagged down the somm. This time I took us to Veneto, ordering a nice bottle from the much loved Giuseppe Quintarelli estate. When he came back with it, the sommelier said the five most glorious words in wine drinking: "Are you in the business?"

I was so stoked I could've given the guy a leaping Clay Matthews chest bump, but I tried to play it cool. I just said, "I wish." It was the stuff wine-nerd dreams are made of. No question about it: Ordering wine is the most intimidating part of eating out. Especially when you're in a high-pressure situation like a date or a business dinner. But get it right and you're a legend. Wine tends to perplex even the most sophisticated among us, so having a working knowledge of it can make you seem more interesting than Anthony Bourdain.

To get good at navigating wine lists, I didn't spend six months at sommelier school or thousands of dollars at my local wine shop. (Okay, maybe I spent thousands at my local wine shop.) I just developed a simple hack for sniffing out the high-value stuff on the menu. That's what really impresses people who love wine, like that sommelier at Del Posto: It's not about ordering the most expensive Barolo on the list; it's about knowing what you like (and don't like)—and finding a bottle where you max out the bang-for-buck ratio.

Here's how it's done.
First of all, figure out what
you like to drink—the regions
and grapes that ring your bell.
If you like Italian wine, focus
on Italy and drink a lot to figure
out what lights your fire.

Regarding personal preference: With all due respect to Jay Z, who once expressed his love for the young grapes at an O.G. Napa Valley vintner in a rhyme (I'm like Opus One—young, rappeth Hov), I think young wine sucks. (Especially at \$350 a bottle.) So my approach is all about finding an older bottle at a great price. The best part of this simple strategy—which, by the way, works just as well at your local bottle shop as at Eleven Madison Park—is that you don't need to know if something is "balanced," "supple," or "fruit-forward," and you won't have to pick up notes of cherry or charcoal. All you really need to know is what grape or region you like to drink.

Lately, I've been exploring wines from Tuscany, so the first thing I do is zero in on that part of the list. The next step is to identify the year of all the least expensive wines in the section. For argument's sake, let's say there are a couple of bottles on the



lowest end of the spectrum that are from 2013. To find your wine, just look for a listing that's a few years older but that doesn't blow up the price. If the cheapest wines are 2013 vintages, I try to find a 2010 or 2009 that's not too crazy pricey. Then I run the selection by the sommelier for confirmation that I've scored, and I pull the trigger.

My thought process behind this method is simple: I'm going for the most affordable bottle I can find that's still got enough age on it to have mellowed-out tannins. My wife and friends especially appreciate this approach, even if they don't know it. Because it's often the tannins in young wine that are off-putting to less experienced drinkers—and frankly, I'm on the same page. I'm not a wine snob; I just like drinking delicious wine. So buying an older bottle whose tannins have had time to drop out makes the experience better for all of us.

The other thing I pretty much always do is ask to have the wine I've just ordered decanted. "I've found most wines benefit from decanting," says Anthony Lynch, who travels the globe buying wines for Berkeley's famed Kermit Lynch Wine Merchant. "And not just big, tannic reds. If you plan on drinking the bottle the second it's been opened, then chances are decanting will help. That goes for white, redeven rosé and some champagnes." So don't be self-conscious about it. Any good sommelier is happy to oblige, regardless of the price of the bottle.

With this simple strategy, you should always be able to get a good bottle at a decent price. Worst-case scenario? You've found a region and price range so the pro on duty can help make sure you're drinking the good stuff. Best-case scenario? Your genius, high-value order blows the tastevin—that silver sippy cup that sommeliers wear right off his neck while your date, your friends, or your clients gaze upon you with wonder. Turns out it's kinda easy to be the most interesting man in the world.

MICHAEL WILLIAMS is the founder of the blog A Continuous Lean—and many other stellar menswear-related projects.

# FINDING FASHION BLISS IN JAPAN'S PARADISE

but somehow each of them feels like a LOVINGLY CRAFTED HIGH-END BOUTIQUE. And now the CEO has his eyes on WESTWARD EXPANSION. So we traveled to the company's Tokyo HQ to experience firsthand what's coming to America. (And yes, to shop up a storm.)

by Noah Johnson







Last year, United Arrows, the Japanese conglomerate of rarefied fashion boutiques, opened its 256th store, in Roppongi Hills. The new flagship occupies two sprawling floors of a massive development in one of Tokyo's most upscale districts. The 54-story tower and surrounding mega-complex are home to an art museum, a nine-screen cinema, a five-star hotel, and apartments that can be rented for about \$23,000 a month. It is United Arrows' largest store ever, and while it's a fraction of the size of a Barneys or a Bloomingdale's, it rivals any retailer in the world, big or small, at stimulating the fashion and design zones of your cerebral cortex.

On a recent trip to Tokyo, I visited many United Arrows shops—they're seemingly everywhere in the city, like Starbucks for high-end clothes—and I bought many things, including a fleece from the nearly impossible-to-find Japanese brand Mountain Research, a pair of navy pleated trousers cut from stretchy tracksuit material from Beauty & Youth (one of United Arrows' many sub-brands), some perfectly faded vintage Levi's 501s, and a bright blue crushed velvet scarf that I basically haven't taken off since. And before you judge me and my velvet scarf, just know that shopping in Japan will inspire you to take your personal style to adventurous new heights. United Arrows is precisely engineered to create opportunities for that to happen.

United Arrows is a large conglomerate of what are known in Japan as select shops—scaled-down department stores that sell brands from around the world in a boutique-like setting. Like all United Arrows shops, the new location in Roppongi Hills carries top designer brands from all over the world, along with an extensive series of in-house lines. There is also a bazaar-like section with entire rooms dedicated to umbrellas, luggage, handbags, and glasses, and a cute little nook where you can buy Kyoto-style sweets made with matcha and red-bean paste. On the second floor, next to the alteration shop, there's a small house installed. Inside is an ancient cedarwood-slab table and U.A.'s Junrian line of formal clothes made using traditional Japanese kimono fabrics.

There's also a whole wing of suits, with a larger, more interesting, and obsessively edited selection than any you'll come across on Madison Avenue. You can find everything from red corduroy peak-lapel blazers to classic three-piece suits in impossibly dark shades of navy. (Finding blues that most closely resemble black is one of Japan's many national pastimes.) The selection of shoes and ties is dizzying, with enough color and variety to entice even the staunchest T-shirt-and-jeans wearer. Indeed, suits are best-sellers at the Roppongi store and remain the backbone of United Arrows' business.

"That's why we have made our new flagship!" said United Arrows creative director Yasuto Kamoshita.

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United Arrows is a retail behemoth that looks and acts like a chain of hip shops carrying indie brands.



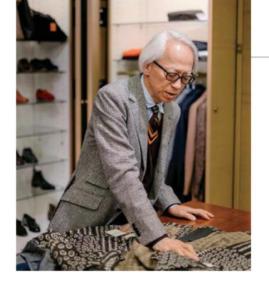
Tailored clothing is key to the company's business, but you'll find much more than the usual navy, black, and gray on the suit racks.



U.A.'s new Roppongi Hills flagship store has an in-house alteration shop so you don't have to sweat finding a tailor to get the fit you want.











From left: United Arrows' senior adviser for creative direction Hirofumi Kurino, CEO Mitsuhiro Takeda, and creative director Yasuto Kamoshita

The ancient cedarwoodslab table makes the U.A. Junrian room look (and smell) like a traditional Japanese bathhouse.

We met one day in Roppongi Hills in the fall, just a month after the store opened. Like many of United Arrows' toplevel employees, Kamoshita is known internationally as a man of exceptional style. He wore a khaki peak-lapel suit with picked stitching and a batik-print tie that he'd spread into an upside-down V from the knot to his waist—an intentionally haphazard style maneuver achievable only by the sartorially advanced. His own line of clothing, Camoshita (he swapped the very Japanese K in his name for a C, to add some Italian flair), is produced by United Arrows but is sold mostly overseas. Menswear disciples are familiar with Camoshita because, unlike most other U.A. lines, it's sold at places like Unionmade in San Francisco and online at Mr. Porter, where it can be mistaken for a tiny independent Japanese tailoring operation. The truth is that it is but one arm of the many-tentacled high-style powerhouse that is United Arrows.

U.A. has been in business for 28 years, but an accrual of factors are building a case for it to be seen as one of the most important forces in style today. Kamoshita's namesake line was just the first step in exporting that message.

"When we started Camoshita ten years ago," he told me, "I felt there was something missing from items abroad. I wanted to add the Japanese touch to them. We wanted to see how the world would respond to our taste."

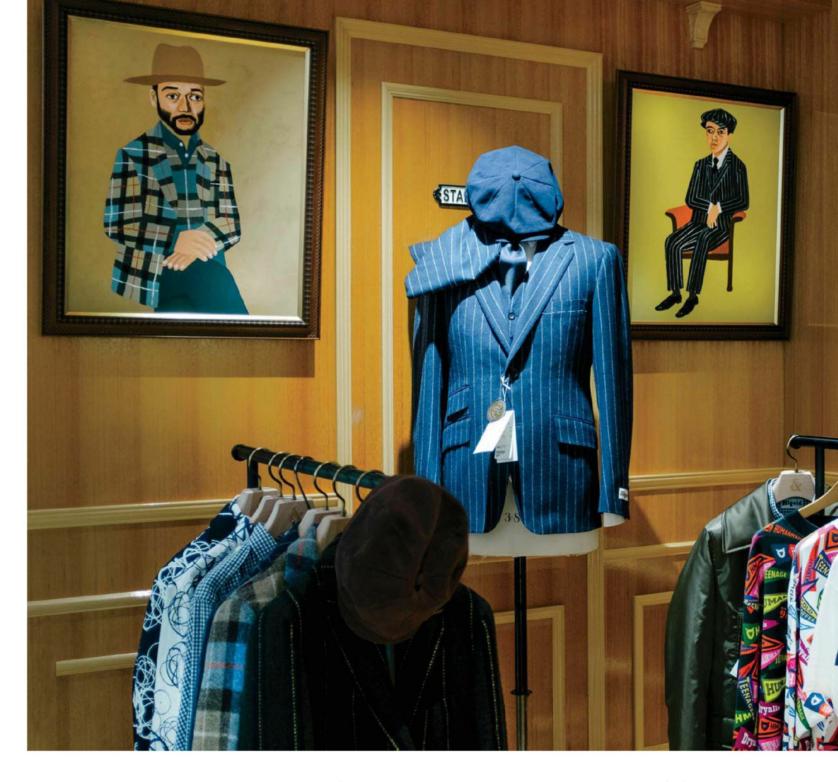
The new flagship store is almost entirely a representation of Kamoshita's taste, from his personal collection of kitschy ceramic lucky cats adorning the walls to the ancient lion-dog statues typically found guarding the entrances of Shinto shrines.

Suits may be the most important part of United Arrows' business, but traditional clothes are not what make waves in men's fashion right now. Around the world, men are dressing more casually. "But that doesn't mean we should just make more casual stuff," Kamoshita said. "Because that's not what we wanted to do. It would become meaningless." Part of U.A.'s power is that even amid fashion's constantly shifting tides, it maintains a distinct point of view. Despite the company's size, it is as tenaciously committed to a specific mission as any of America's best indie boutiques.

Camoshita may be basically the only line from United Arrows you can buy in the West, but U.A. has another secret weapon in the global fashion contest. Motofumi "Poggy" Koqi, the conspicuous, charismatic figure who also serves as the winsome mascot for the company, has become a regular in the front rows of fashion shows and the Instagram feeds of your favorite style celebrities. Within the company, Poggy has been recognized as a rising star and allowed to carve out a world of his own, just like the more senior Kamoshita. United Arrows & Sons is his domain. The shop in Harajuku is a veritable menswear playland, with installations and subsections that run the style gamut, from Poggy's in-house line (think camouflage kimonos and indigo velvet bomber jackets) to vaunted international designers like Dries Van Noten, Haider Ackermann, and Sacai. It's also the place to find rare sneaker collaborations, limited New Era caps, and streetwear essentials from Fear of God and Yeezy.

When I met Poggy at the United Arrows & Sons store, he was wearing a classic navy blue blazer with a kimono-style closure in place of buttons, a shirt with a print by the artist Futura, slim, tattered jeans, and suede Chelsea boots. He was the embodiment of East meets West, traditional meets street. The walls of the shop's bathroom are covered with handwritten tributes to Poggy, including notes of praise from Pharrell, Nigo, and Kaws—three titans of the culture who helped define his aesthetic. He calls it "sartorial street," and it has been the key to his success as a fixture on the fashion scene, mixing tailored sport coats with throwback jerseys, brimmed caps, sneakers, and hoodies. While Camoshita has already been a low-key hit with more traditional-minded menswear acolytes, United Arrows & Sons is most likely to take off in downtown New York, the east side of London, or the Marais in Paris, where streetwear reigns and shops like Supreme, Kith, and Colette have set the stage. Yet while westward expansion is





unquestionably on the agenda for United Arrows, it may not happen as soon as many of us would like. The Japanese economy has been in an extended slump, leaving many businesses cautious about growth.

I met with the CEO and president of United Arrows at the company's headquarters in a modest office building overlooking the Akasaka Estate in Tokyo, where the country's crown prince, Naruhito, lives. I expected a glorified salaryman, but Mitsuhiro Takeda clearly lives the lifestyle he sells. He wore a navy-and-gray striped suit with a leather vest, his shirt undone two buttons with a printed ascot

tied around his neck, and an abundance of Chrome Hearts jewelry adorning his hands, a large Chrome Hearts belt buckle, and Chrome Hearts eyeglasses. (U.A. holds the license for Chrome Hearts in Japan.)

In order to tell me where United Arrows is headed, Takeda began at its start. The founding members were former employees at BEAMS, the second-largest chain of select shops and United Arrows' primary competition in Japan. In 1989, Osamu Shigematsu, who now serves as chairman, Kamoshita, and others broke away from BEAMS to launch the concept of the select store—a new business model they helped invent at BEAMS. Takeda says they envisioned a place where you could find not just clothes but also "ideas for more stylish living."

United Arrows & Sons, the brainchild of Motofumi "Poggy" Kogi (opposite) is a sanctuary for tailoring, streetwear, and everything in between, including a collaboration with Nigo's

brand, Human Made.



Select shops are unique to Japan and historically have played an important role in the culture. Today it might be increasingly common to find boutiques stocking a careful edit of international fashion (see: Dover Street Market, Opening Ceremony, and online shops like Ssense), but 20 to 30 years ago they didn't exist. And in Japan, the select shop served a very specific purpose. Before magazines and the Internet made information about the latest global fashions widely available, it was where you went to discover new brands and see them edited together in a fresh way by a shop staff that understood and followed the trends. Today there are several large chains of select stores in Japan, including United Arrows and BEAMS, as well as Ships, Nano Universe, and Tomorrowland. But U.A. has advanced the concept further than any other.



Takeda explained to me that one of the goals from the start was to offer a higher quality of life for all of its employees. "One of our missions was to improve the social status of our shop staffs," he said. Of the many United Arrows employees I met on the corporate side of the business, all of them got their start with the company on one of the shops' sales floors.

"To be honest, I've rarely had a good experience shopping in the West," Takeda said. "Some shop staffs would behave as if they were looking down on me, and that's really bad."

Every United Arrows shop I visited managed to strike a perfect balance, with a sales staff that was attentive without being overeager or pushy. At one shop, a young associate helped me figure out exactly how an oversize T-shirt from the brand Unused was supposed to fit according to the styling in the brand's look book, language barrier be damned. (It was surprisingly complicated and specific—I had it all wrong in the dressing room, apparently.) "Our priority is to have customers feel good while shopping," Takeda said. "We are very careful about our language, how we treat customers at our store, and how we approach them."

That said, it takes more than a friendly sales staff to make shopping for clothes an inspiring and cathartic experience, the way United Arrows has. The best explanation comes from Hirofumi Kurino, the enigmatic senior adviser whom I met at one of the U.A. sales showrooms. Kurino is the company's

old wise man and a widely known and respected global ambassador of Japanese fashion. He sees the United Arrows customer as one who "has their own taste, and they prefer quality over trend. They can spend money for clothes in a very smart way." He explained to me that the Japanese customer is "very mature," a result of the past 40 years of Japanese retail history, going back to 1976, when BEAMS was established after he and others in the retail business began studying what was happening in the U.S., the UK, and Paris.

Kurino told me that in the early 1980s, their teacher was *GQ*. "The beautiful Bruce Weber photographs, Joe McKenna styling. Combining designer clothes together with Ralph Lauren in a very sophisticated way. We always got inspired." But, he said, American progress was thwarted by the arrival of AIDS and Ronald Reagan's presidency. "American society became very conservative against new culture." That change created the opportunity for fashion in Japan to continue to develop the abandoned American model. "The result is what you see in Japan."

Sure, that's a rather lofty way to think about shopping for clothes, but it's exactly the kind of thoughtfulness that makes Japan unique. "My creative direction is based on social tendencies," Kurino said. He views trends as the result of movements in the culture, not movements in and of themselves. "Behind the result must be deeper, wider streams."

Kurino calls the theme for spring-summer 2017 minority thinking. "The mass tendency, or mass production, or mass trend, is finished," he said. "Fashion is originally made for and stands for individual people, independent people, and we already feel this." He cites as examples Bob Dylan winning the Nobel Prize and youth culture of the late '60s—"the flower movement, anti-Vietnam War, Black Panther, hippie,

Woodstock—those kinds of things." One big push for U.A. in 2017 is the Kurino-led TÉGÊ United Arrows collection, an assortment of handcrafted fashion made by African artisans in Kenya and Burkina Faso.

There's a satisfying honesty to projects like this from United Arrows. A sense that the company isn't merely checking off ethics boxes in order to appear as if it actually cares about something other than making as much money as possible. Also refreshing: U.A. has a company-wide policy that celebrities are allowed to borrow and wear their clothes but are not encouraged to credit United Arrows publicly. "We don't have this kind of celebrity hype," Kurino said.

When I returned from my trip to Tokyo, having visited just about every cool shop from Harajuku to Aoyama and a dozen or so United Arrows stores, including Poggy's cool-guy haven and the impressive new flagship, it seemed impossible to imagine ever shopping in another city again. And if I must, as I inevitably will, I have decided to expect more, to not accept shitty attitudes and sloppy presentations, and have realized that where and how I buy something is as important to me as what I buy.

Department stores in the U.S. are struggling to keep up against Amazon and tough economic times, but westward expansion is explicitly part of United Arrows' long-term plan. "We want to offer our style that is the mixture of the West and Japan," Takeda said. "But it will be a challenge, since there have never really been select stores that have much success at a global scale." He said they still have more research to do, but when the moment is right, United Arrows will make its move.

NOAH JOHNSON is a GQ STYLE senior editor.



The selection of vintage denim and tees at United Arrows' H Beauty & Youth store is as good as any thrift shop's.





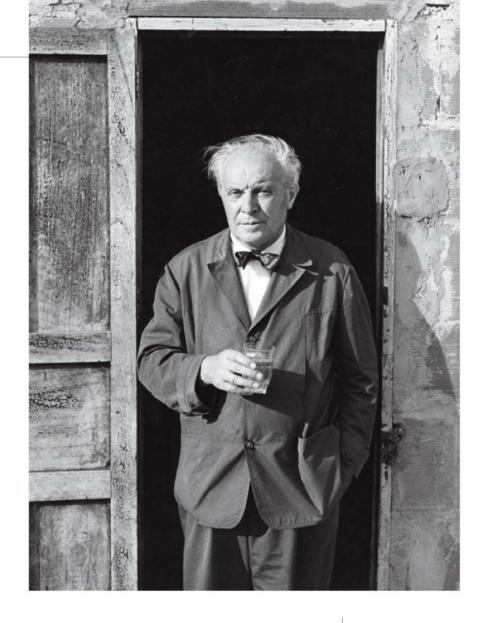






The undisputed motherland for ART-LEVEL FURNITURE? It's the same country responsible for Da Vinci's paintings, Armani's tailoring, and Sophia Loren's bodaciousness. Here, on the occasion of the Super Bowl of design—April's Salone del Mobile in Milan—we present the FIVE HEAVYWEIGHT ITALIAN DESIGNERS EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW.

by Brad Dunning



# THE LEGENDS OF ITALIAN DESIGN

The father of modern Italian design, Gio Ponti. Everything the polymath touched was blessed with originality and epitomized Italy at its most exuberant

and sophisticated.

One of Ponti's greatest creations is the brilliantly intact Villa Planchart (1955) in Caracas, Venezuela. The clients gave him full freedom and a hefty budget; he paid them back with creativity.





ach spring the world gathers in Milan for the annual Salone del Mobile, a city-spanning trade show featuring thousands of vendors that is at once the Super Bowl, Art Basel, and South by Southwest of lamps, chairs, and mind-blowing coffee tables. All the major players unveil their new lines and ideas at the Salone—which is why your favorite fashion designers, artists, and architects flock to this sprawling show for inspiration, and, of course, to furnish their homes, offices, ateliers, and showrooms. (Also snooping around are some not-so-nobly-inclined types looking to knock off the best designs ASAP.)

At the Salone, the influence and power of the Roman Empire is very much alive: In the design community, the Italians set the trends and rule the world.

Food. Fashion. Automobiles. Furniture. Interiors. Is it genetics or something in the Chianti that makes Italians such masters of all things beautiful? Not only is their rich history evident in their bold and brash creations, but we can also feel the drama and bravado of their culture and personalities. The stuff the Italians make is always sexy, gorgeous—and gorgeously made.

Why the historical high bar? Well, think about it. The people there are surrounded by unsurpassed cultural stimuli. Can you imagine growing up around Berninis, Michelangelos, the Colosseum, Gucci, Pucci, and Fiorucci? It's no wonder beauty seeps into their every pore and then gets re-contextualized in the wondrous things they make.

So while we wait for the new designs and new stars to be anointed at this year's Salone (by the way: If you can make it to Milan in April, by all means, go), let's look back at some pivotal Italian designers of the 20th century—one from each decade between the 1940s and the 1980s—the giants of modernism who carry Italy's formidable global design rep on their shoulders.

The work of the men and women in these pages feels especially relevant right now. We've methodically drained the midcentury-modern wells dry (Knoll and Herman Miller especially have been tapped out), and yet, sitting over there in the corner, coolly sipping Negronis and having a smoke, are Ponti, Aulenti, Sottsass, and more. There is a great treasure trove to be discovered.

Whereas the American stuff is staid—specifically designed to work for everyone, everywhere—the Italian creations are unique, expressive, and outrageous. The production output from these designers is minuscule compared with that of the U.S.A. and other larger producers. Having a piece of Italian design is akin to having a piece of art or sculpture in your house—at an affordable price. (Well, sometimes.)

As the world turns politically to the right, the work you'll find here is decidedly left-leaning—as radical and daring as the wild characters who created it. To own and display this work is a statement and declaration of staunch individualism.\*

\*One mea culpa: To omit from this list such heavy hitters as Franco Albini, Mario Bellini, Luigi Caccia Dominioni, Enzo Mari, Carlo Mollino, Carlo Scarpa, Marco Zanuso, and many, many others is just cause for crucifixion. I am aware of and accept all condemnations. But it is my feeling that the following designers epitomized, exploded in, or did their most memorable work in a particular decade. Thus we celebrate them.



One of Ponti's most famous designs was the legendary Superleggera ("Superlight") chair (1957), a marvel of engineering, craftsmanship, and grace. *Eleganza*. So light but so strong. Even a nattily dressed child could pick up this enduring classic with just his little finger.



#### CENTER RIGHT

For FontanaArte, Ponti summed up Italian lighting with a classic early design: the 1931 Bilia lamp.

Ponti's lounge chair (1953) for Molteni epitomizes midcentury Italian style on four sexy stiletto legs.















#### **GIO PONTI**

The giant. The all-seeing eye atop the dollar-bill pyramid. The father of modern Italian design. It's as if he found a way to mainline the personality, creativity, and culture of the Italian people into his furniture, objects, and buildings. His prolific work in every medium is sensual, expressive, playful, colorful, and well crafted.

There's little Ponti couldn't do. Trained as an architect, he made a name for himself designing ceramics, then glassware, then furniture, then buildings. In his life, he worked for over 120 different companies. He was also a great professor, writer, cultural advocate, and founder of the important and collectible design magazine Domus. Known for being one of the most charming and magnanimous of designers, feverishly curious, he welcomed all to his famous open-door studio. His 1961 Pirelli Tower (left) still looms symbolically and literally over his hometown, Milan, the style capital of the world. On the day the skyscraper was completed, Ponti was quoted as saying, "She is so beautiful that I'd love to marry her."

#### **ACHILLE CASTIGLIONI**

Highly inventive and seemingly blessed with thousands of epiphanies, he worked as a team with his brother Pier Giacomo until Pier's death in 1968.

Castiglioni loved everyday found objects and reveled in re-contextualizing them. For instance, the look and functionality of something as mundane as modern streetlights inspired one of the most popular (and most knocked off) lamps of all time—the Arco. A light source is dangled within a chrome ball almost seven feet from its heavy white marble base, creating a movable pendant, perfect for lighting coffee tables. The hole in the marble was so two people with a broomstick could move the piece. It is truly a '60s icon.

Paradox and irony were his trademarks. His Mezzadro tractor-seat chair, an early piece of Pop Art furniture that referenced Duchamp's ready-mades, was found in many a groovy living room of the time. Another great example was his Toio high-tech-style floor lamp, which utilized an automobile headlight balanced atop a telescoping pole with an exposed transformer as the base.

Paola Antonelli, who was taught by Castiglioni at Milan Polytechnic and is now senior curator of architecture and design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, once remembered him as being "like a comedian from the silent-movie era, nervous, chain-smoking, always in motion, playful, and quite mischievous."





The Snoopy table lamp (1967). Inspired by the cartoon character, this Snoopy looks unbalanced. But because the base is heavy marble and the shade is thin metal, it works on every level.

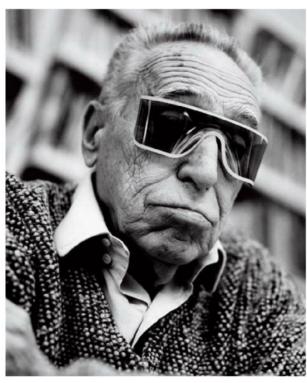
The perennial rock star of floor lamps, the Arco (1962) is instantly recognizable as a midcentury classic that transcends periods. The clever and comfortable Babela. Castiglioni could even make a stackable chair artistic.













GQStyle SPRING 2017



The Smoke glass (1964) was designed to allow the smoking of a cigarette and sipping of an adult beverage simultaneously. Life Alert necklace not included.

One of his most original statements was the Tubo (1969). You can re-arrange the "tubes," which are secured with metal clips, to form various lounging positions.

#### **JOE COLOMBO**

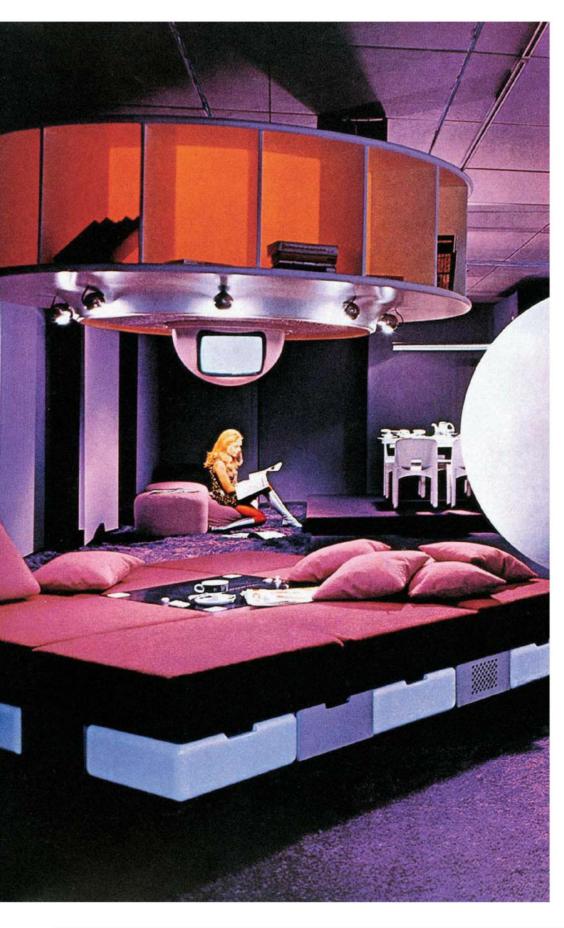
The coolest cat. If he were music, he would be the Joe Morello drum solo in "Take Five." In fact, he was so cool he once invented a cocktail glass that enabled multi-tasking lushes to hold a drink and a cigarette in the same hand. Mic drop!

As anyone who's ever seen The Graduate knows, the '60s were all about plastics, and Colombo's 4860 chair was among the first mass-produced chairs made entirely of ABS plastic. His Barbarella-looking designs still reek of their spaceage origins: The silhouette of his LEM lounge chair and the upholstery of his revered Elda chair seem to evoke a lunar-landing vehicle and a space suit, respectively.

Colombo loved portability and compact, self-contained environments. Some of his most interesting creations were futuristic Kubrickian modular living habitats that would've been at home on the 2001 set. Each was basically a big vacuum-formed plastic box with a bed, kitchen, bathroom, and closet—seemingly everything one single person needed—all cleverly fitted together with the precision of a Swiss Army knife.

Colombo died suddenly of a heart attack on his 41st birthday. Maybe that cigarette-and-cocktail glass wasn't such a good idea after all.

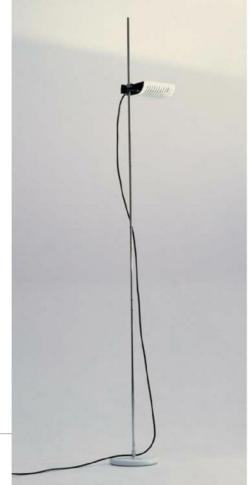




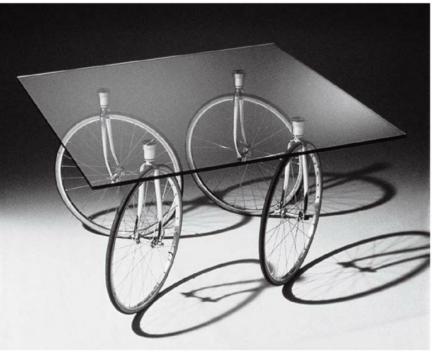
Of all the great Colombo designs, his modular living environments are the most futuristic and aspirational. (I never got one of these or my jet pack. I want my future back.) The man loved his plastic. Check out this early use of plexi. The Acrilica desk lamp (1962) transfers light from the source clear through to the work area.



Using then-new halogen bulbs, this flexible eponymous lamp could beam direct or indirect light.









Her in

Her interiors seem particularly in tune with today. Have a long look and see how you can make your own space more Aulenti.

44

The Tour table (1993), made from four bicycle wheels and a fourfoot-square piece of glass for FontanaArte, is practically a surrealist's manifesto.

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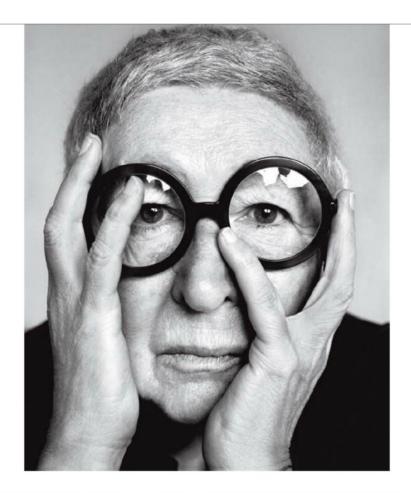
The Pileo-Mezzo (a.k.a. Pileino) lamp (1972) channels the plastic space age perfectly.

#### **GAE AULENTI**

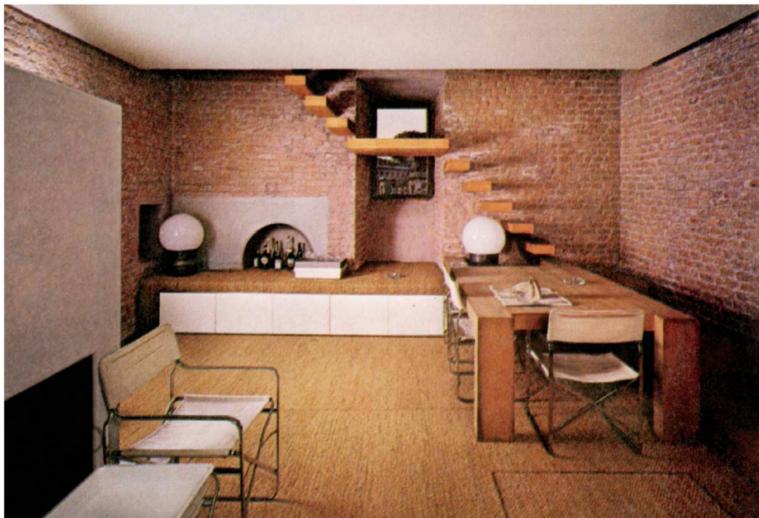
The intellectual of the group. Her product and furniture designs are astoundingly original and specific to her singular vision.

For me it's all about her lamps, each one a masterpiece. Some affordable, some not. They seem to embody, then transcend, their period of creation. Her Pileino lamp, for instance, seems unmistakably influenced by a NASA space helmet. Her lamps are high-tech and organic at the same time. Almost robotic at first glance, but surprisingly functional and practical.

A turning point in her career was her wildly successful and award-winning remodel, in which she turned a train station in Paris into the Musée d'Orsay, which showcases French Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art. She became the go-to architect in the early days of adaptive re-use, brilliantly balancing historical details with modern upgrades.



One of Aulenti's ageless interiors. Check out the custom dining table, not to mention the reveal around the perimeter of the ceiling and the way she traversed the window with chunky stairs.











His colorful and confrontational architecture embodies the '80s and still prompts arguments, derision, and critical discourse.

His Carlton shelving unit (1981) sums up the Memphis look succinctly but not quietly. David Bowie owned one.

A simple, perfect typewriter design for Olivetti thrust Sottsass into the public eye. The Valentine (1968) now resides in the archives of almost every major art museum's design collection.

#### **ETTORE SOTTSASS**

Before his design career took off (his initial fame came from his iconic red Valentine typewriter design for Olivetti), Sottsass hung out in California with Beats like Ginsberg and Ferlinghetti, then launched a publishing house in Italy to translate their writings.

He was also a photographer (he shot Dylan, Helmut Newton, and Picasso) and a legendary womanizer. For years, he photographed every hotel room and bed in which he had sex.

As an avant-garde reaction to the cool, tasteful international-style furniture and design that were popular in the later midcentury years, his idiosyncratic Memphis group, which he helped found in 1981, still shocks, divides opinions, and defines postmodernism with wild, febrile free-for-alls of color and exaggerated design. With a Pee-wee Herman gambol, they seismically shook up the design world.

Sottsass was a true agent provocateur. His stock recently rose even further when it was discovered that David Bowie had been quietly collecting his design work, one radical embracing another.



Sottsass spent a lifetime working in ceramics, with highlights like this beauty for Bitossi (1958).

Back in production is one of the great modern torchieres of all time, the Callimaco (1982). Designed by Sottsass, it's easy to move and reposition with its built-on handle. The lamp stands tall in both its striking design and its sheer height, at over 79 inches.





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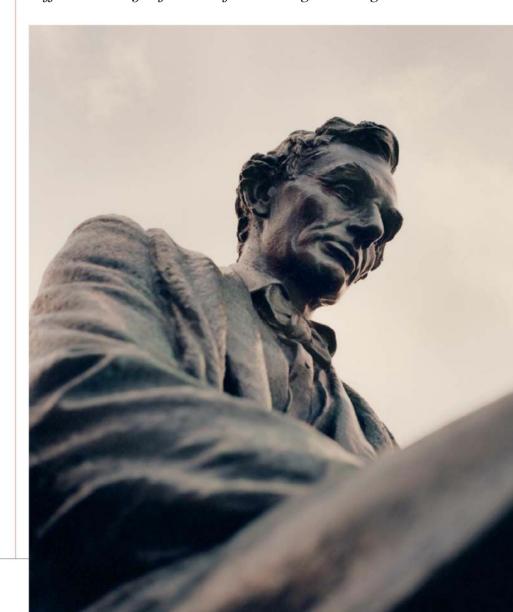


# THE STRANGE ARTIFACTS THAT INSPIRED MY NEW NOVEL

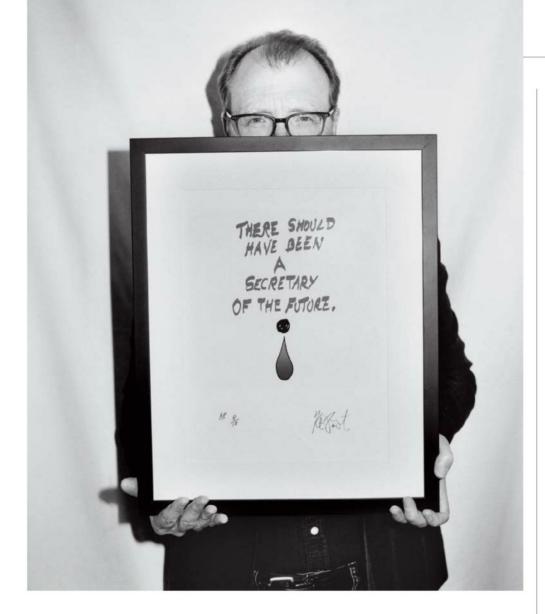
ANDREAS LASZLO KONRATH

incoln in the Bardo is George Saunders's first novel, but Saunders being Saunders, that designation is sort of useless-nothing in this book resembles any novel you've ever read before. It'll be a fun parlor game to watch critics attempt to outdo themselves describing what this thing is. Here's a shot: Lincoln in the Bardo is a fictitious (mostly) oral history of the night President Lincoln's 11-yearold son, Willie, was interred. The oral history in this case comprises the voices of over a hundred ghosts living in a liminal sort of purgatory, a pre-Judgment in-between the Buddhist tradition calls the bardo. The Lincoln in this bardo, then, is the newly departed Willie-but also Abe, who leaves the White House to visit his son's body during the night. It is a sustained chorus on life, death, and Lincoln father and son. It is also stupidly funny and philosophically transcendent. (Think about the toys in Toy Story when Andy leaves the room-that's sort of what you're getting, only with talk ranging from the bitching of winos to metaphysical inquiry.) Overall, it is one of the strangest books of mainstream fiction around, competing only with some of Saunders's own story collection for unbridled inventiveness. Call it a novel, call it whatever. We'll call it a thing you should read this spring. On the pages that follow, Saunders describes how he gets his writing done and shows us the relics and totems he surrounded himself with while making this book.—DANIEL RILEY

• He's one of the most beloved and decorated american writers. A MacArthur "genius"—and a regular genius. And the short-story master has just published his first novel. Here, George Saunders shares insights into his creative process and shows off the unlikely objects that feed his singular imagination.







#### GQ STYLE: Are there things you have to have with you when you write?

**GEORGE SAUNDERS:** Not really. I take that Raymond Pettibon postcard [on the opposite page] with me wherever I'm writing. That's my one real good-luck thing I'm a little attached to.

Do you have spots where you must write? Or are you able to pop open a laptop wherever?

It's the latter. This Lincoln book was written in probably five different locations, and I'd always make a move and go, "Oh no! I'm doomed!" But then I'd go: "Fuck that. Being doomed is for amateurs." I wrote my first book at work, and it was a job—tech writing—that just didn't permit any kind of superstition. You would be in the middle of something, and 12 or 15 minutes would present themselves to you, and you'd write. It's a mind state that you get into, and you can get into it anywhere. That's the story I tell myself, anyway. I talk about this a lot with my students. So much of what we do is a formal self-blessing, like you give yourself permission to succeed. You kind of do ritual exorcisms of your neuroses and your ideas about your needs in order to write well, and I always tell my students the

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Saunders with a print by Kurt Vonnegut that he keeps on his desk. "I met his wife, Jill Krementz, at a party, and she said, 'I think you guys would've really gotten along. Let me send you something of his."

best thing you can do for yourself is to be very generous on that score. Because you can't predict what the world is gonna give you, and if you say, "Oh, I can only write in five-hour sittings," well, all right, you've just kind of given yourself an assisted death sentence. Say: "Look, I'm in cahoots with you, self, and I'm gonna really try to make whatever situation you get in propitious for your output."

#### Those constraints can be beneficial, right?

Exactly. Somebody who wasn't me was setting the schedule. It was actually relieving, because

you had to just assume that whatever mind state you were in was gonna be fine. Actually, I heard Philip Seymour Hoffman say that one time about acting. Somebody was asking him how he does those massively long Eugene O'Neill plays. And he said when he was younger, he would really be trying before every performance to psych himself into the right mind state and would feel like a failure if he couldn't. Then, as he got more experience, he just said, "How I show up, that's who the character is today. If I'm optimistic, if I'm euphoric, if I'm grouchy, if I'm constipated... I'm gonna start off totally allowing that." And he said doing that, you would quickly find the heart of the play, because you weren't resisting anything. You were just saying, "Here I am."

#### Do you get stuck in many projects that get shelved? Are there orphans?

When I was younger, there were, and then the older I get, the fewer orphans there are. Now I feel confident enough that if something is giving me trouble, it's my problem, and I'm gonna figure it out. If something freezes up at a certain point, it's because I'm thinking of it wrong, and all I gotta do is be patient and wait, and it will give itself up. But this one I tried as a play and had such a bad time, I was really leery of it. I was so suspicious that I was really trying to move fast. It's almost like you start dating a crazy person and you go, "I'm gonna burn through this pretty quickly because I don't want to spend too much time..." So I wasn't lingering, and I wasn't indulging myself. I was like, "Okay, if that section isn't working, we're cutting it." With stories, I'll sometimes get locked up for years, and this one, I wasn't gonna allow that. I said: All the solutions have to be fairly simple, or they're stupid.

#### In that sense, was this a story that just ran a little longer, or was it a novel all along?

In the past, I've fallen into this trap of going, "Oh, this is a novel!" And at that moment, with the blessing of it being a novel, I would turn off a lot of aesthetic restrictions that I normally would have on myself about brevity and efficiency. And so I would get these books where there's just no forward momentum. I think the way my prose works is a combination of being whatever it is, funny or whatever, but also with pretty brutal forward motion. And those two things are co-enabling. So with this one, what I said was there's no way that I'm ever gonna ease the restriction on myself of "Thou must move forward quickly." That's gotta be a given, so if it turns out to be 40 pages, great. If it turns out to be 12, great. Whatever it is, I'm not gonna turn off the little display that says "Hurry up!" Now that people are reading it, it's funny—somebody said to me the other day, "I'm not sure this is a novel." I'm like, "Yeah, I don't know, either." It's over 300 pages with some help from the formatting and structure. But this book is definitely doing something weird. And I'm real comfortable with that. I love the idea of writing something that people are like, "What is that?"

#### THE GEORGE SAUNDERS SOUNDTRACK



Philip Glass SYMPHONY NO. 3



Sleater-Kinney



Yo-Yo Ma, Edgar Meyer, Mark O'Connor APPALACHIA WALTZ



Copland GREATEST HITS



Wilco

"I never, ever listen to music while I'm writing. But often, on this one, I'd start to feel my energy flagging a little bit, and I could feel myself becoming a bit of a conventional editor and writer. So I'd go have lunch and crank up something from this list here to put extra energy into my body. You just feel your artistic aspirations go up, especially that kinda music, like these really energetic genius people. It just makes me want to impress them. I feel like, 'Okay, I wanna live up to the level of Sleater-Kinney or Wilco.' Or driving around to Aaron Copland, kinda more pastoral, almost cornily pastoral. To me, it's all trickery. You try to get your mind and body into a place where they can be original, and for me to go away from  $\,$ the writing room and crank something up-like, I would sometimes listen to the same piece four or five times, and then get

on to the next thing."



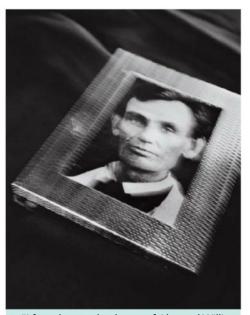
• "It's a Raymond Pettibon drawing that says: 'These excursions served to carry my roots ever deeper into the vigorous soil of truth.' I have it wherever I'm writing. That idea that I hope whatever happens here, truth is the dominant vector. It also just takes the pressure off of performance. Like, if you had a little thing that said 'Don't fuck it up!' or 'Win! Win! Win!' that wouldn't be so helpful. But to say, 'Always your allegiance is to deepen your relation to the truth,' that's the real goal."



• "You can see this statue of Lincoln from my office at Syracuse. It's been there for years, but when I started getting interested in this Lincoln project, it started looming large that he was sad. He's in a meditative posture. He's sitting with his legs spread wide and looking down. I would wander out there to kind of remind myself that, you know, he was a real person and that he was a little inclined to depression. Almost like a gut check: 'Okay, man, I'm still trying to do you justice.'"



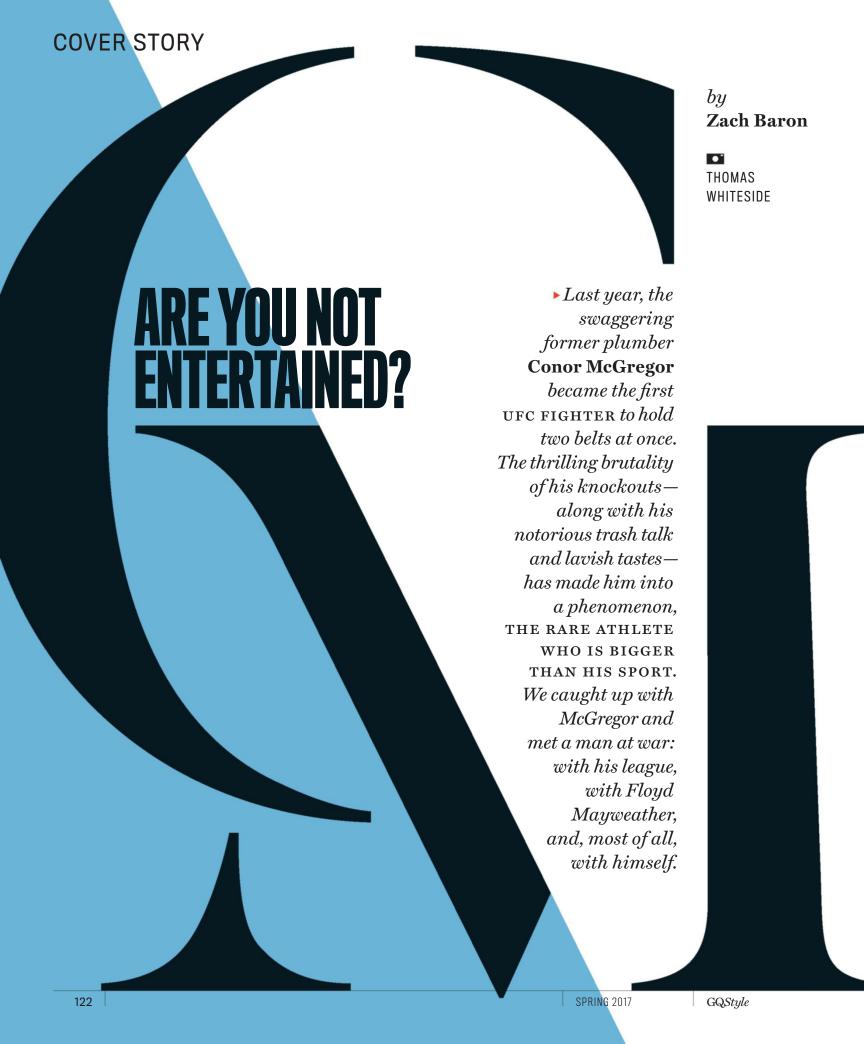
• "This is a bust of Lincoln that my daughter gave me. I like the fact that it doesn't look like him. You kinda know it's him, but you're like, 'It kinda looks like Sting a little bit.' That was part of my thing in the book, too: Let's make sure Lincoln doesn't look too much like Lincoln, otherwise he won't look like Lincoln. After a while, anything I got that was vaguely Lincolnesque I put around me."



• "I found a couple photos of Abe and Willie online and had them framed. When you're writing a story and it starts to take shape in your mind, you can sometimes jerk the characters in some way that is unkind, and you can forget that these were actual people. The pictures are really evocative of who they are. With Abe you can see the pain in his face. A reminder that they were a father and son."



I'm kind of a believer in sacred relics, you know? It makes me really happy to have that Vonnegut piece on my desk, to look at it and feel the energy he invested in it.





esterday, Conor McGregor spent \$27,000 at a Dolce & Gabbana store in Los Angeles, and then he did what he usually does after he spends \$27,000 somewhere: He went for coffee, to give the store time to pack up all the things he just bought. "That's a common occurrence for me nowadays," he says. His handlers and his friends have grown used to the waiting. Spending that much money, they've learned, requires patience.

So anyway, he's waiting, and then he gets a call from the store, and then another call, because the overwhelmed sales staff keep finding stuff in the pile that they forgot to add to the bill—a pair of shoes, a pocket square—and now they keep sheepishly calling back to ask if they can run Conor's card again. Now, I don't know Conor McGregor super well yet—we've only just met when he tells me this story—but my advice to the luxury-goods salespeople of America and Europe would be: Don't do this. McGregor's chosen method of communication does not involve the shrill international tone of disappointed privilege. He is not going to ask to speak to a manager. "I break orbital bones," he says, trying to explain to me what he's talking about, rolling the word "orbital" around in his mouth like a particularly zesty lozenge. Like it's the next county over from Crumlin, the unlovely Irish suburb he grew up in. "I'm dropping \$27,000. It's about my eighth time in the last week. And you can't drop, like, a pocket square in? Are you fucking serious?!" He's not looking for anything for free, he says. Just a measure of respect.

Conor McGregor may be rich now, but he still fights for a living. More than fights, actually; he carries his league, the UFC, on his back in the way Ronda Rousey used to do, before she got knocked out for the first time and took a year to recover from it. In her absence—a matter of months, really—McGregor became a mainstream sensation, and the UFC sold for \$4.2 billion. How much of that value is attributable to him is a question he asks himself all the time. His scant ten UFC bouts over four years (nine wins, most of them by marvelously precise knockout, and one loss, to a guy he beat in his very next fight) have awakened hundreds of thousands if not millions of people to the savage appeal of mixed martial arts. Someday he may allow himself to acquire a cuddly nouveau riche veneer and go to Aspen or Davos, but right now his civilian life as he describes it is drinking lots of tequila, wearing beautiful mustard yellow Gucci turtlenecks, and going on shopping sprees with the money he's earned from turning dangerous men into unconscious boys.

He's never alone and rarely at rest. He chooses to be surrounded—by his agent's assistant, two security guys, a cameraman, his tattooed buddy Charlie, some indistinct number of cheerful, foulmouthed Irish dudes doing nothing in particular. He can be found at the center of it all, ricocheting around like an agitated molecule. He seems to pogo a bit when he walks. His sharp chin precedes him. His beard looks soft and

downy, like something you might die trying to touch. His nose has a little scar-tissue salt flat at the bridge. He has a disproportionately huge ass, by design I guess. Like a built-in power source.

He travels by convoy. He turns parking lots into acid trips: There's a green Lamborghini, crouched low like a prayer; a dove gray Rolls-Royce, top down, leather interior as orange as a Florida swamp guide, a burly meteor at rest; a black Dodge Challenger, because muscle cars; a big black Escalade. A fleet like a man-child's dream of success. Like Michael Bay was right about the world.

Right now the sun is setting, the winter light pale and washed-out, and he's inside a big warehouse in downtown Los Angeles, getting his photo taken. It's dark by the time he and his friends pour back outside. Car keys are distributed at random, by no recognizable logic at all. Charlie ends up in the Lambo but can't even find the switch for the headlights. He keeps asking if anyone knows where it is. McGregor and I wind up in the backseat of the Rolls, a cozy little biosphere. One of the security guys, big and silent and obliging, is at the wheel. Conor fidgets, leans in, leans out, makes intense eye contact.

He shows me pictures of some favorite recent outfits on his phone. For a while he was into elaborate tailoring; now it's pristine sneakers and luxuriously casual knits, minks, brash but accommodating fabrics. He talks about how Ireland is full of mini-McGregors these days,

swarms of young men in beards and waistcoats, dressed beautifully—dressed like him—looking for ugly fights. "They all want to be me a little. That's a Drake line. All them boys want to be me a little. And it's true as fuck."

How do you feel about that?

"I mean, I don't blame them. If I wasn't me, I'd want to be me, too."

He says he's been working like a motherfucker all week. "This is a \$2 million trip for me. One week, 2 million." He's earned a break. A rest. That's why we're headed out to Malibu now, where he's rented a giant stone house by the sea. "I'm finished." His only goal is to relax. "Maybe I'll search for Khloé's big fat ass—she's been floating around Malibu. I don't give a fuck about them. I just like to see them in the flesh."

You mean...the Kardashians?

"Yeah, just see what the big fat asses on them look like."

Just to...admire them from a distance?
"Not about admiring. Admire? Never. What's
the saying? Never put the pussy on a pedestal,
my friend. I just want to see it. I want to see them."

He was tired from having his photo taken earlier, and now he's waking up again. A mischievous glint in his eye. He was out too late last night. Being out in public is fun, he says, until people get too close. "People think I'm a celebrity. I'm not a celebrity. I break people's faces for money and bounce," he says. The Rolls floats west.

He turns to me, suddenly, as if he's just realized something. "You know what? I like everything we're talking about here," he says. He's enjoying our conversation. He feels comfortable. "But I must get clearance on the article before it goes out. You understand what I'm saying?"

I do. But clearance is not something we give. GQ Style policy. I clear my throat. His face darkens. I've seen this expression before, never imagined I'd ever be on the receiving end of it.

"I'll throw you out onto the motorway right now and run this car over you," he says, looking straight at me.

I stammer. Maybe his people could talk to my people, get this cleared up?

Along pause.

"That's okay. That's okay." Menace gone from his face like it was never there. A little grin, even. "Don't worry about it. You were almost gonna get thrown out of the car there on the motorway."

jacket \$3,295
Boglioli
t-shirt \$500
Neil Barrett
jeans \$70
Levi's
watch Rolex

suit jacket \$2,370 pants \$1,000 Salvatore Ferragamo t-shirt \$390 Tom Ford loafers \$960 Santoni

watch
Patek Philippe





### I want to negotiate what I'm worth. I want to put my analytics forward, man-to-man, and be like, 'This is what I'm owed now. Pay me.'

You can watch all of Conor McGregor's fights in an afternoon. Even if you're not an MMA fan, I would encourage doing this. It's like watching a caterpillar become a butterfly become the bolt gun used by Javier Bardem in No Country for Old Men. He is a genius of timing. He finds ways to hit people when they are least prepared to be hit. He seems calmer in a cage than many of us are in the grocery store on a Tuesday afternoon. He fights with his hands up, almost in apology. His right hand tends to reach out and repeatedly grab air, like he's looking for a light switch in the dark. His left hand lowers opponents to the floor.

In his UFC debut, against a former member of the Air National Guard named Marcus Brimage, McGregor crouched down, skipped around, got loose in his vaguely simian way; the bell rang, and then: a gust of lethally compact uppercuts and Brimage down on the white canvas. Over in one minute seven seconds.

They've all pretty much been like that. In McGregor's second UFC fight, against Max Holloway, McGregor actually tore his ACL in the second round, then went back out and grappled with Holloway for five additional minutes. Another win, by unanimous decision. "Looking back, I should've just pulled my knee from my leg and hit him with it," McGregor said in the post-fight press conference.

He unified the featherweight title at the end of 2015 by knocking out a formidable fighter named José Aldo in 13 seconds. Thirteen seconds! Essentially the time it took for Aldo to come within range of his left hand.

His parents maintain he was born with his fists clenched. "I've been fighting my whole fucking life," Conor McGregor says.

•••

There is a pure wild joy in listening to him talk. He knows this. Sometimes it seems like the true mark of his generosity is how much he's giving you, how many words, what level of outrageousness. Talk is a weapon, a tool. "'This guy's a clown! He's just all talk!' I've heard that many times in my career," he tells me. "And then they're sleeping in the middle of the octagon." He talks before fights, after fights. In November, at the first-ever MMA bout to be held at Madison Square Garden, he beat Eddie Alvarez to seize the UFC's lightweight championship, and in the ring afterward he grabbed the microphone.

"I've spent a lot of time slaying everybody in the company. Backstage, I'm starting fights with everybody. I ridiculed everyone on the roster. I just want to say, from the bottom of me heart, I'd like to take this chance to apologize...to absolutely nobody," he said, full of glee. "The double champ does what the fuck he wants!"

In the Rolls, he leans forward, asking if we might pull over to find something warm for his chest, aching from travel. Aching from work. Then he leans back, tries to explain why he's so good at what he does. Consider Nate Diaz, whom McGregor unexpectedly lost to last March and then revenge-battered to a victorious decision last August:

"No one's work is *clean* like my work. My shots are clean. My shots are *precise*. Look at Nate. Nate was 200 pounds. When I hit him down, it was exactly like if a sniper took aim at someone in between their eyeballs and let the thing rip. The way he dropped, it was like a sack of shit. So that's a power I have."

Can you explain how that works, technically? He smiles, like this is the exact question he'd hoped to be asked.

"It's all in the nutsack. It's all in the *ball sack*. I just have confidence that comes from my big *ball sack*, and I know when I smack you, you're going down. And that's it."

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For a while, he says, fighting was all there was to him. But then last year he was in (yet another) Dolce & Gabbana on Fifth Avenue in New York, and he met a guy who pulled up in a Ferrari. "He had a glow, like a bronze tan—he was golden," McGregor recalls. The guy looked like a god. "There's different tans. You've got a sun-bed-shop tan. You've had, like, a California tan. You've got a Spanish tan. You've got a ski tan. Tan on the ski slopes. It's a unique tan. And then there's a yacht tan. And it's a beautiful one. It's golden." This guy had the perfect one. The Platonic tan. The richest tan Conor McGregor had ever seen.

Turned out this gentleman owned the building that the two of them were standing in, collecting millions of dollars a year for doing basically nothing. They talked for a while, he and McGregor. Finally the guy said to him: "You fighters are like dentists. If you're not pulling teeth, you're not making money." That blew Conor McGregor's mind. He'd been living a life of freedom—or so

he thought, anyway. Wake up when you want to. Train when you want to. Do what you want. Do nothing! But meeting the real estate guy fucked him up, made him realize something. Fighting was only one possibility among many. There were new avenues and investments to explore. Not just prize money—but ownership, equity, what guys with golden tans might call a controlling interest. "Structure is the key to the billions," McGregor knows now. Show up on time. Maintain focus, picture what you want, and the whole world is within reach.

So he's taking a step back from fightinghow big a step, even he doesn't know—and looking for leverage, an angle, against a bigger opponent: the UFC itself. When he won late last year, in November's lightweight bout at the Garden, he became the holder of two UFC belts, lightweight and featherweight. But the UFC knew he couldn't defend both at the same time, and didn't want to wait for him to get around to doing so, anyway. It took just two weeks from the Alvarez fight for the league to give McGregor's featherweight title to José Aldo, the fighter from whom he so easily took the belt back in 2015. Then the UFC held an interim bout between Anthony Pettis and Max Holloway, the guy McGregor had already beaten on one leg; Holloway won and will presumably fight Aldo for the title that McGregor never even defended. In other words, McGregor's featherweight belt will soon be held by one of two people who have already lost badly to Conor McGregor.

Needless to say, he does not regard this decision as legitimate. "I'm the two-way world champion. I mean, they can say what they want—"

They did. They already gave it away.
"They don't fucking nothing." This is how he
talks sometimes. Without verbs. "They don't
fucking nothing."

Is there something that you want out of UFC that you don't have right now?

"Mmm...yeah. Four point two billion dollars." What the UFC reportedly sold for this summer. "I want to negotiate what I'm worth. I want to put my analytics forward, man-to-man, and be like, 'This is what I'm owed now. Pay me.' And then we can talk."

Is that a piece of the league, or is that a check? "I mean...certainly hell of a fatter check. Maybe potentially, down the road, an equity, interest or something. I'm just letting them know I want something else."

He would like not to be a dentist anymore, in other words. He'd like to get paid for not fighting like he currently gets paid to fight. And he doesn't mind waiting until that reality arrives.

polo shirt \$950 Berluti pants \$695 Dolce & Gabbana









Anyway, he's about to be a father. He's using this time off to prepare. To figure out how to protect his child from his newly elevated circumstances, circumstances he's still learning how to navigate himself. "I'm not trying to bring a kid into that. If someone comes near me when I have my kid in my hands, like the way they come near me now, looking for pictures, someone's gonna be badly hurt."

There was a wildly endearing moment during the press conference after the Alvarez fight when he announced the pregnancy but got the child's due date wrong. March, he declared. And then a voice from the crowd—his girlfriend, Dee Devlin. A look of confusion on Conor's face. "It's not May, is it? I thought it was March!"

He shakes his head now. Like he's still a little confused about the details. "I could have sworn it was March."

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In the car he asks his security to turn up KDAY.

He borrowed his nickname, the Notorious, from the Notorious B.I.G. He is a fan of Kanye. He is a disciple of Drake. There is a Drake line he is fond of—there are multiple Drake lines he is fond of—that goes, If they don't have a story these days, they'll make one. Contrary to popular belief, and to reports in nearly every major sports publication, he has not been cast on Game of Thrones: "I haven't even spoke to nobody about Game of Thrones! So I don't know what the fuck is going on." He did not fly from Los Angeles to Texas on a private jet to eat chicken, as many inferred from a photo of him on Instagram in which he and his friends ate chicken outside a place called TFC, which was actually in the Canary Islands. (Or maybe it was some other island. McGregor no longer remembers. It doesn't matter—place is only a construct, anyway. "We're just flowing. We're on the earth. We're just traveling from place to place. I'm fucking everywhere.")

He did apply for and receive a California boxing license—that report, that McGregor has an eye toward taking on yet another sport, and maybe even that sport's biggest star, Floyd Mayweather, is true. "I'm pursuing that," he says, "and no one can stop me from pursuing that." Numbers have been floated; UFC president Dana White has offered money to make it happen. (Not enough, according to Mayweather. But he seems open to the idea.)

sports jacket \$1,550

Belvest
t-shirt \$390

Tom Ford
necklace
Dolce & Gabbana

Patek Philippe

Would you have to do anything different to be competitive in boxing? Floyd Mayweather's been fighting every day of his life for 40 years.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's great. Except you use the term 'fighting' differently, because he's not been fighting for 40 years. He's been boxing for 40 years. There's a big difference between boxing and fighting. Boxing is limited fighting with a specific rule set. Fighting is true, where you can do anything."

But we're talking about his rule set, right?
"Yeah, of course we are. We're talking about boxing. That's it. But again, age waits for no man. He's 40 years of age. He's a little...he's got a little head on him. Honestly, my fist is bigger than his head. I sleep people. I put people unconscious. I'm stating facts. If I hit that man, his head is gonna go into the bleachers. You understand that? If I crack that little head of his, it's gonna go clean off his shoulders and up into the bleachers."

So is Floyd Mayweather the guy you're hoping to fight?

"I mean, that's the one that everyone wants, that's the one that makes the most sense. But I've no problem going and slapping the head off one of his opponents that he couldn't finish. All he does is decisions. He can never stop them. So all I have to do is pick some schmuck out that he only could decision, bounce the left hand off his dome, sleep him, and then there you go: It's already done."

It's already done. He is a person who believes in the power of positive thinking. His sister gave him a book about what he calls "the laws of attraction" when he was a boy, and he's been practicing it ever since. He describes the method: "Visualize it. Speak it out loud. With confidence. Work for it. Watch it happen." There's a video of Conor McGregor at 17, "the first time a camera was ever pointed at me face." This is what he said: "I'm gonna win. I'm gonna be UFC world champion, lightweight world champion, UFC featherweight world champion. And then I'll have more money than I'll know what to do with. My family will never have to work a day in their life again." And then, he says now, "I went and done it. Every bit of that."

But before he did all that, he was just a kid, trying to visualize an empty parking space when he and his family needed one. Practicing. Trying to get things to bend toward him in some tiny but important way. "I'd always play with the traffic. I'd picture just clear roads. 'There's gonna be a clear road.' I'd play with it as small as that."

He nods toward the prow of the space pod we're in. In front of us is the Pacific Coast Highway. Eight o'clock on a Friday night, and the road is black and empty as we climb up the coast.

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Tonight he's staying in a blocky stone mansion on the water in Malibu, with a pool table and a swimming pool and the comforting low roar of the ocean. He looks over and smirks as we pull through the gate. Vast blank countertops, anonymous white orchids. Just weeks before his first UFC fight, he was still collecting social

welfare in Ireland. He was a plumber. He says he looked at some beach houses out here the other day, because why not. He owns a place in Las Vegas. Ireland is home. But he could live anywhere. Place is a state of mind. A man's destiny is what he wills it to be.

"I feel you're in charge of your own situation. When you start blaming others for your situation, like I see all these people screaming at these politicians"—he was in New York to fight Alvarez, he says, right after the election. The streets were full of anti-Trump protesters. "And I was like, 'It's the wrong mind-set!'"

Or the way his fellow UFC fighters keep trying to organize a union: "I saw this union thing they tried to do—they reminded me of the people that march about the politicians. It's you gotta do it. You're in control of yourself."

So you're saying it doesn't matter if it's Donald Trump or if it's somebody else?

"No! It doesn't. People like to blame others. I think a person should just look at their own situation, look around them, find out what they wish to do, and seek and go and do that. And that's it. I was in New York when all of that was going down, the protests in New York with the Trump thing. It's like, 'Trump, out!'

"When Obama came in, what happened to you? Like, all these fighters: 'This union is gonna save us!' What do you mean, it's gonna save you, exactly? You think just because we get a union set up, you're gonna become a multihundred-millionaire? That's not the case. You might get a hospital bill paid. I just think it's a crazy thing to spend energy on. Now, maybe there's people that get kicked out of their home, you know, things like that and all."

Right. Donald Trump might not affect my life or your life much. But I think it might be very different for other people.

"Yeah, but you think it's actually him that's gonna...? Everybody's just pointing at him, and I don't know. Rather than putting your energy into pointing the finger at somebody else, figure out what it is you need to do and do it, and do it right, and get it done, and get your situation right. And if a person does that, then their life will get better. Standing on a fucking picket...I don't know."

A decade ago he was a plumber, and now he's stalking a stone house in Malibu. He knows he's blessed. But he's manifested so much for himself he can't imagine any other way. To the point where he feels almost superhuman. God-like. Above the things that keep you or me awake at night. Like the forces that govern the rest of us don't apply to him. "I've just climbed to another level of this, that I can just reach out and get whatever I desire, at any moment," he says. "That's where I'm at right now."

Out in the darkness, past the patio, waves are crashing on the beach. Like something old and violent. Like they're bringing in something entirely new.

ZACH BARON is GQ's staff writer.

GQStyle SPRING 2017











While it's true that the Internet has given us a miracle of precision consumerism on demand, open-air markets and bazaars deliver something even more powerful: the magic of serendipity. You can't always know what you're looking for until you stumble across this or that one-ofa-kind thing. And then you suddenly can't imagine life without it. Markets are like life. Chaotic. Bewildering. Exhilarating. When you snap something up and make it yours, you feel you've somehow beaten the system. Of all the bazaars in all the world, this bronze lamp or army jacket or gilded frame found its way here, to you, in this moment. How could someone have let it go? How could you be so lucky? Here, a handful of globe-trotting friends share their inside secrets to navigating the world-class markets they know best. Spanning four continents, these places thrive as analog bastions of curiosity and eccentricity. Every rack is a potential gold mine, and every sale is still made hand to hand.—NICK MARINO

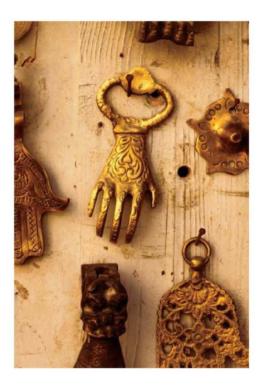
## The Marrakech Souks

OPEN: Daily
COME FOR THE: Design objects,
leather goods
YOUR GUIDE: Rosena Charmoy,
founder of Boutique Souk, a privatetour company in Marrakech

• Shopping in Marrakech, you'll spend most of your time in the old city (known as the medina), which is a complete jumble of tourists and locals. Within the medina are the various souks. Your first day, you might go with a guide and have a couple particular souks in mind. Once you've got the lay of the land, just go get lost: The medina is arranged in an unfathomable way. Google Maps is pretty useless. We rarely get lost anymore in Western life; it can actually be a spiritual experience.

In terms of atmosphere, it's hard to beat the Place des Épices, which is the spice square. It also has some really cool carpet stores, plus a rooftop lunch spot called Nomad with fantastic views over the city. The leather souks sell good belts. Good wallets. Really good weekend bags. There's also the metal souk, where they make these beautiful handmade lanterns. It's slightly Mad Max: dirty and dusty. They're heating metal and banging it with hammers, using centuries-old techniques, and you're buying direct from the artisans.

The two hippest neighborhoods are Bab Laksour and Mouassine, which are areas within the souks that have interesting little boutiques. (Bab Laksour also has a swank hotel, El Fenn, which includes a very high-end concept store.) In these areas you can find designer Norya Ayron, who does really cool men's djellabas worn by guys like Mos Def. And then there's a traditional tailor, L'Ourika, where you can get a jacket custom-made from fine velvet. If you're after more contemporary menswear, look for a store called Topolina, which does handmade loafers made with vintage French fabrics. The only catch is that at these frillier boutiques, you don't get to haggle. But when you're dealing with artisans directly, you absolutely do. People want you to haggle with them. The idea is for you to learn about each other and have a genuine cultural exchange.











#### Mercado de Otavalo

**OTAVALO, ECUADOR** 

OPEN: Daily (but go Saturdays)
COME FOR THE: Textiles
YOUR GUIDE: Michelle Higgins,
a freelance writer and the
former Practical Traveler for
'The New York Times'

• Every Saturday morning,

just as the live-animal market is winding down—now's your last chance to own a llama—hundreds of vendors transform this sleepy highland town, about 50 miles north of Quito, into a spectacle of Andean artistry. Welcome to one of South America's most impressive markets: a maze of outdoor stalls spilling over with brilliantly colored tapestries, tightly woven area rugs, thick ponchos, embroidered tablecloths, striped hammocks, wool hats, and fuzzy alpaca scarves. The atmosphere

is notably, blessedly lacking in aggressive sales tactics and pushy stall owners. Tourists, who arrive by the busload, are welcomed with smiles and polite offerings of assistance.

For help, wander up to the most stylish person you can find. Some Otavaleños still dress in traditional indigenous garb: women in embroidered white blouses, long skirts, and gold beaded necklaces; men in widebrimmed hats, white pants, navy ponchos, patterned belts, and a braid down their backs. Pretty much everything they're wearing will be available somewhere in the market. (You'll have to grow your own braid.)

Since the Ecuadorian currency is the U.S. dollar, it's easy to figure out how much you want to spend. The challenge is distinguishing between mass-produced goods and the real local stuff. A few tips: Alpaca wool tends to be softer and cooler than acrylic fibers. If the people are working on their crafts in their booths, that's a good sign. And if you see the same thing in multiple booths, skip it.











OPEN: Saturdays and Sundays
COME FOR THE: Furs and
furniture, plus tools and hardware
YOUR GUIDE: Brad Dunning,
a Los Angeles-based designer who
writes about architecture and design

• Situated along the Landwehr Canal and at the foot of the towering 1907 Charlottenburg Gate, the Trödelmarkt might be one of the pricier flea markets in Berlin, but it's my favorite: just the right size, with such a unique inventory and interesting location. The Tiergarten (the Central Park of Berlin) is right across the street for your biking, walking, and zoo-going pleasure, and very nearby is the great Hansaviertel, the legendary midcentury housing estate with apartment blocks by such notables as Oscar

Niemeyer, Alvar Aalto, and Walter Gropius. Like all the best markets, Trödelmarkt is a place to explore and hang out, stopping periodically for coffee and snacks served out of a groovy Airstreamlooking refreshment wagon.

I'm always struck by the very specific-to-Berlin things I see here. There's an entire stall of vintage furs—coats, stoles, and the like—and not a blood-spattering protester in sight. More than one vendor has a table of the most incredible lederhosen you will ever see. Many customers stroke and admire them, but seemingly no one knows what to do with them, and I've never witnessed a single purchase or inquiry. Pity the poor hosen.

Best of all are the many tables of local tools and hardware. Here the Bauhaus lives on in piles of handles and hinges and door knockers. I've probably seen dozens of Gropius door levers and Kaiser Christian Dell Bakelite scissor lamps. My move: Buy them and ship 'em back to the States. It'll keep your suitcase light. And it's still cheaper than eBay.

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#### Rose Bowl Flea Market

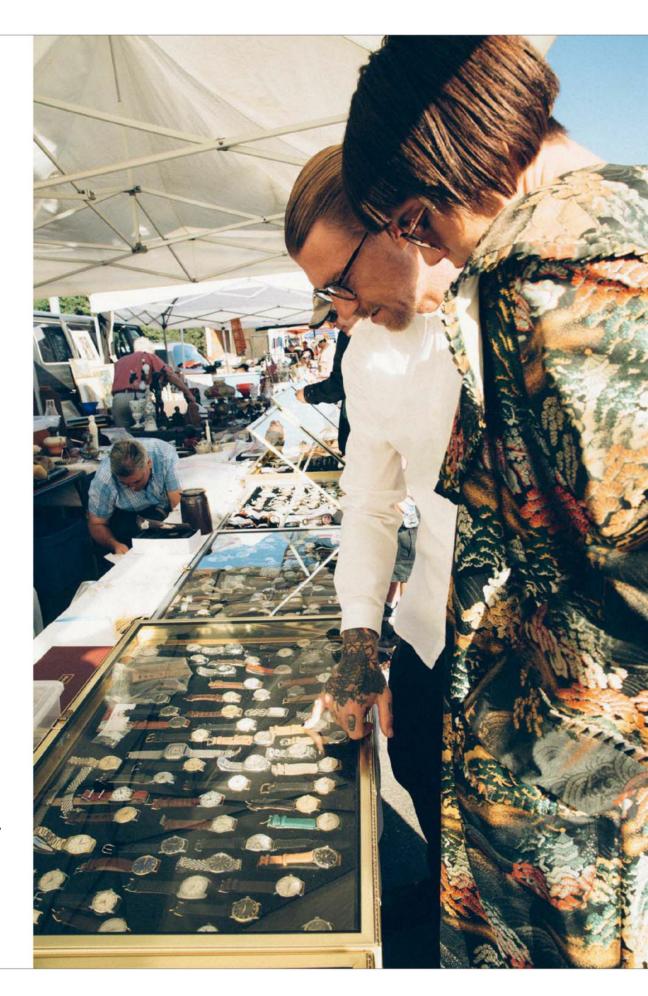
**OPEN:** The second Sunday of every month

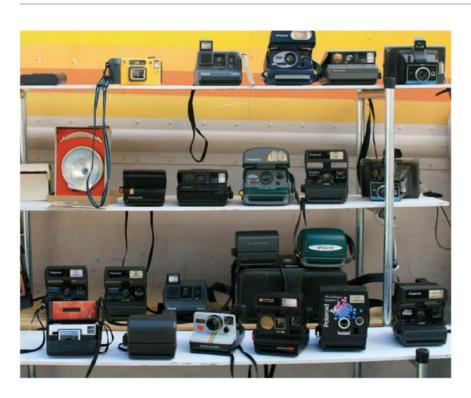
COME FOR THE: Vintage clothes YOUR GUIDE: Brad Dunning

• Wear sunscreen. Because with more than 2,500 vendors and upwards of 15,000 customers—seven friggin' miles of shopping—you'll be spending a whole day at the mother of all Southern California fleas.

The earlier you arrive, the better and more expensive it is: \$20 admission from 5 to 7 a.m. and cheaper as the morning rolls on and the pickings slim. Backpacktoting regulars know to head left upon entry for all the great vintage clothes. (To the right is mainly new stuff, and why would you come to a flea market to buy something new?) Some pricier clothes are neatly arranged on racks, but more often the bargains are just in piles on the ground. Haggling is expected, of course. Be creative for the low-cost goods. The belt may be trashed, but can you re-use the buckle? Can the shoes be re-soled? The hole in the sweater darned? The pants or jacket re-tailored? Focus less on the condition than on the style or fabric or quality.

I recently bought a Johnny Carson sports jacket at the market and wore it once, just dying for someone to ask, "Who are you wearing?" (No one did.) Last year I got a Don Loper tie, which I gave to Tom Ford, as he loves that episode of I Love Lucy when Lucy and Ethel go to a Don Loper fashion show in Hollywood. I also found a great children's Halloween costume. It was "BNIB," as they say on eBay (Brand New in Box): a plastic mask with a big handlebar mustache and a black studded leather cap, for kids who wanted to dress up like the leatherman from the Village People. That was a great find, I thought. Still have it. Still BNIB.









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#### Brimfield Antique Flea Market

**BRIMFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS** 

OPEN: Six-day stretches in May, July, and September COME FOR THE: Home goods YOUR GUIDE: Michael Williams, GQ Style "Buying for Value" columnist and founder of the menswear blog A Continuous Lean

#### • When you're browsing

your local vintage shop, do you ever wonder where all those tufted leather chairs, patinaed Louis Vuitton trunks, and burnished antique-jewelry pieces came from? Here's your answer.

True, not everything at the East Coast's tri-annual mega-flea is so refined. (I've been going since I was a child, and I've bought everything from vintage L.L. Bean to thermoses, enamelware, and old-school fishing tackle.) But because of its massive size and proud history, the market tends to attract people who buy and sell

antiques for a living. So the goods tend to have exemplary provenance and quality.

Even though Brimfield is comparable to the Rose Bowl and other regional swap meets, it's actually easier to navigate. That's because Brimfield is organized into a series of more than 20 self-contained fields, each operating as a mini-flea within the larger market. For instance, the Collins Apple Barn opens at sunrise on Tuesday. Then, at 11 a.m. that same day, a field called Dealer's Choice opens. Fields open all week long.

While (as with any flea) it's best to get there early if you want the good stuff, the system of cascading openings keeps the craziness from descending into chaos. You can negotiate on price, but don't expect too many drastic price cuts. The Brimfield vendors know exactly what they're selling and what it's worth. This is the big leagues.

One tip for first-timers: Given that the Ace Hotel (or anything comparable) hasn't yet come to the wilds of Western Mass., you're best off renting a cool house on a site like Airbnb. Make sure the place has decent parking. You'll want a big vehicle to haul away your spoils.





## Marché aux Puces de Saint-Ouen

PARIS, FRANCE

OPEN: Saturdays, Sundays, and Mondays COME FOR THE: Food, furniture, art, people-watching YOUR GUIDE: Gildas Loaëc, co-founder of the fashion house Maison Kitsuné • Saint-Ouen is, for me, a promenade. Somewhere I like to go on weekends to spend time strolling in the alleys. I don't go with a purpose or with something in particular in mind to buy. I go for its convivial ambience and highly curated offerings. There are many tourists, yes, but also lots of Parisians. It's a labyrinth full of people. When I'm there, I'm always running into friends.

Saint-Ouen is certainly the most famous flea in Paris. It's organized into 14 different markets—marchés rich in history, each with a very particular atmosphere. You'll find everything there from antiques to home decor, along the way passing by vintage clothing, contemporary art, French gastronomy. If you don't want to be overwhelmed, you can download maps of the markets. Or join a walking tour. If you'd prefer a real shopping adventure, just pick a marché to

start, then see where your curiosity and tastes lead you.

While I love finding vintage hi-fi equipment at Sounds Good gallery in Marché Dauphine, the Paul Bert Serpette antiques market, the very heart of Saint-Ouen, is my favorite marché. It has an openair part—which is great if you're with your kids—and offers a fantastic variety of types and periods. If you happen to find something you really want to buy, don't be shy. Go ahead and bargain. It's a normal practice at the marché. And try to do it in French!

There are plenty of nearby food options, but you must go to Ma Cocotte, a beautiful French bistro designed by Philippe Starck. It's perfect for a Sunday lunch. Order the leeks in vinaigrette, the parmentier de joue de boeuf (shepherd's pie made with beef), and the chocolate-mousse bowl to share.



VICTOR
DEMARCHELIER

▶ The suit ain't dead—it's just had all the stuffiness knocked out of it. To prove it, we got our hands on the best Effortless AND EASYGOING TAILORING the fashion world has to offer and asked 24 multi-talented sartorial badasses to stop by our New York photo studio.



SPRING 2017 GQStyle









## Gucci Mane & Keyshia Ka'oir

Prolific Atlanta rapper who roared back on the scene in 2016 KEYSHIA'S OCCUPATION Entrepreneur and model THE SUIT Silk with a long, lean coat and an easy fit COUPLE GOALS Besides dropping two albums and a book in 2017, Gucci is producing a movie starring him and Keyshia: "You know, this is my best friend, and a lot of what I do I share it with her. We're a team."

coat \$2,950 pants \$950 Bottega Veneta

Issey Miyake Men

scarf and shoes

**Bottega Veneta** 

his custom watch Patek Philippe

jewelry, his own

barber: marcos "reggae" smith for axe

ON KEYSHIA

dress Adam Selman

her custom watch Audemars Piguet

hair by martin-christopher harper at platform|nyc











#### Ian McShane

OCCUPATION

If you haven't seen him in Deadwood, John Wicks one and two, or that episode of *Game* of Thrones, you'll recognize his sonorous voice. Trust us.

UP NEXT

The much hyped Starz series American Gods

THE COAT

A soft-shouldered, unstructured topcoat you can flex in through summer

BLING

See the skull ring? Yep-his wife had it custom-made for him when he played Blackbeard in Pirates  $of the \ Caribbean.$ 

coat \$1,695

Emporio Armani

scarf

Bottega Veneta

sunglasses (in hand) Yohji Yamamoto

bracelet

Caputo & Co.

watch

Patek Philippe

band ring (top)

**Chrome Hearts** 

other rings, his own hair by panos at clm hair & make-up





### The Nepenthes

Crew
Angelo Urrutia,
Abdul Abasi,
Takuya Yamamoto,
Kevin Yanes THE STORE Nepenthes is home base for Engineered Garments, the influential brand of quirky, Japanese-inflected Americana.

THE SUITS

Totally structure-free and manufactured steps from the shop in N.Y.C.'s Garment District. "The way we make things can't be replicated anywhere else." says Angelo. else," says Angelo, who heads up the brand's development.

FROM LEFT ON ANGELO (SEATED) jacket \$348 pants \$336

ON ABDUL jacket \$504 pants \$336

ON TAKUYA jacket \$384 pants \$240 and hat

ON KEVIN jacket \$384 pants \$288

all by  ${\bf Engineered}$ Garments, at Nepenthes New York

shirts **Rebuild by Needles** 

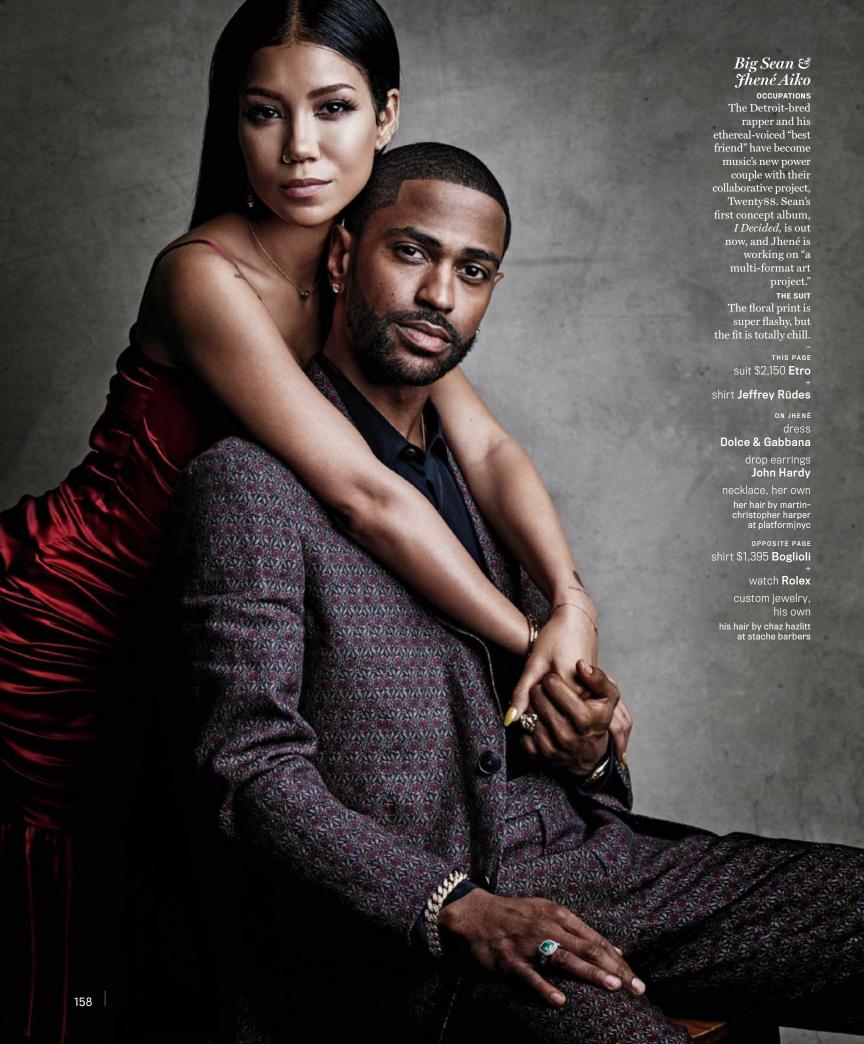
shoes

Dr. Martens for Engineered Garments

hair by david von cannon at the wall group















► Velázquez sexually harassing
Norman Rockwell—that's what
John Currin's paintings look like.
They're funny as hell, but not silly:
His 1999 piece 'Nice 'n Easy' just
sold at auction for over \$12 million.
Here, NEW YORK CITY'S TWISTED
MASTER PAINTER talks about
X-ray vision, X-rated art, knocking
off his friend Richard Prince—
and even sits for a photo shot by
Prince himself.

by Bill Powers

Atts
New Old
New Caster
Prince





rom his penthouse studio off Park Avenue, John Currin's rear windows directly face a classicalballet school, where rows of lithe dancers practice their grand battements. While the setting calls to mind the work of Edgar Degas or even Jeff Koons, this proximity to one of culture's more sophisticated (and vigorous) outlets gives Currin energy. Something about the dancers' diligence and quest for excellence resonates with him in his own undertaking, and yet he can't gaze out at them admiringly for more than 20 seconds without feeling like Quasimodo, the optics being what they are for a gray-bearded 54-year-old.

This past November, Currin's double nude Nice 'n Easy sold at

Christie's auction house in New York for over \$12 million. The accompanying auction catalog compared his paintings to those of Goya, Manet, and Otto Dix, but there remain trace elements of Norman Rockwell's America embedded in them as well. (Currin's paintings have an explicit humor more aligned with illustration, but it's often dwarfed by his Old Master virtuosity.) Sometimes the title is the giveaway. Nice 'n Easy, for instance, might be a nod to the freewheeling sexuality of easy women or the artificial hair coloring sold by Clairol or, most probably, both. In person, Currin's verbal wit is spontaneous, generously self-deprecating, and wickedly cutting. When asked

if he takes issue with bad reviews in the press, Currin's chief complaint is that the critics are usually right. He speaks—when animated—with an endearing stutter (think Jimmy Stewart in It's a Wonderful Life). At a dinner during Art Basel Miami in 2008, guests on the patio at the Delano hotel were surprised when an unexpected fireworks display erupted overhead, to which Currin raised a glass and enthusiastically shouted, "Hey, everybody, Madonna and Guy Ritchie's divorce just went through!"

After earning his M.F.A. from Yale in 1986, Currin got his professional start three years later, showing paintings of fictionalized yearbook photos at the non-profit space White Columns in N.Y.C. There was something goofy and utterly humanizing in elevating these awkward displays of teen bravado and insecurity to the realm of high art. It also established a precedent the painter still abides by in contorting pre-existing photographic material to serve his own twisted ends. Yes, yearbook pictures are funny and full of promise in a disposable way—the anonymous publicity stills of every generation—yet they can have a prophetic quality, too, one that hints at who we are and what the future may hold if we can hold on. In that tradition, it feels commensurately fitting that Currin returned to London this winter with a suite of new portraits (some of which are shown here) that were unveiled at Sadie Coles, the gallery he christened with its inaugural exhibition exactly

20 years ago.

GQ STYLE: Two decades back, did you feel like it was easier to show X-rated paintings overseas?

JOHN CURRIN: That was more about my elegy to European painting and my naive idea of European libertinism.

## So it wasn't you tiptoeing around American conservatism?

No, and I subsequently got interested in making the convex-mirror paintings, because they're less about a social reality and more a reflection of how my own ideas have changed about porn. I thought of the mirror's distortion almost like an invasive eyeball.



With Happy House Painters (2016), Currin liked the idea that you've stumbled upon a lesbian couple who broke into your house to paint it.



The file folder on Currin's computer for these new paintings, including *Pistachio* (2016), is labeled "Garbage People."

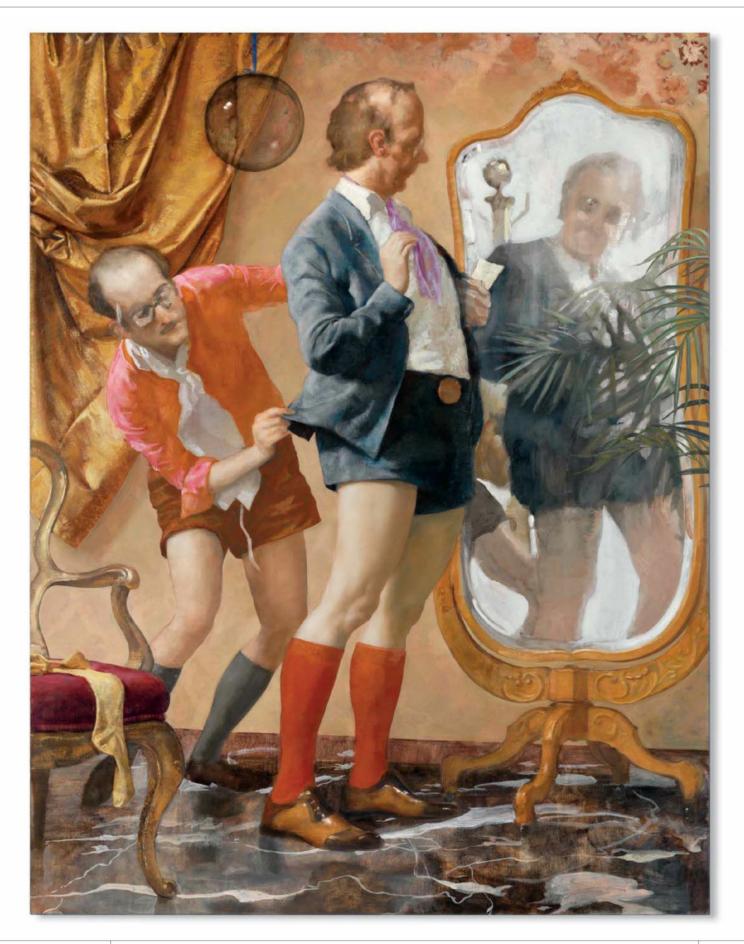


#### OPENING PAGES

Left: Nude in a Convex Mirror (2015) appears in Tom Ford's Nocturnal Animals and on the cover of the artist's 2016 Rizzoli monograph. Right: John Currin with his new work, Red Shoe (2016), photographed by Richard Prince for GQStyle.







#### Do you agree with Richard Prince that one of the foundations in learning how to paint is knowing the scale of a human figure?

When I started these new paintings, I consciously made them way bigger than I was comfortable with. I wanted the head to be out of scale.

# It definitely adds to the peculiarity. You also seem drawn to painting older couples now. In the past, I remember a lot of May-December romances.

I've always been interested in stock photography, and within that there's a whole genre showing people happy in their oldness. Maybe the images were intended for retirement advertising.

## Is it significant that your own parents are still married?

I think so. Actually, I'm a little worried what my parents will think of this new work, you know, like I'm mocking them. I would never want to make fun of anyone for looking goofy in my paintings.

## So you hope the figures maintain a certain dignity?

No, I want to convey the indignity of being covered in garbage...coupled with the formality of the painting.

## And where do you find this stock photography?

The Strand bookstore sold used catalogs that stock houses sent out to ad agencies. The setups are somehow reminiscent of anonymous 18th-century paintings. I love genre pictures. I prefer to outsource my scenarios rather than construct them.

## The big question for me is: Why cover these people in garbage?

I think of the objects on them more in the way you might depict the attributes of a saint, you know, holding a wheel or something important to their backstory.

#### I notice that the old boot in one of the paintings is the same style as the Red Wing boot you're wearing.

I got off on the Rembrandt-y quality of the old shoe. Or have you ever seen Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story by Todd Haynes? It was shot with Barbie dolls. One thing that really struck me in the movie was how her parents were rendered. He gouged wrinkles into their faces with, like, a woodcut tool, and it just seemed so crazy, the imposed age. I like that he made their aging almost a stylistic treatment. Somehow that related to the idea of the old boot.

#### I ask because someone told me that you're not a big fan of surrealism.

I'm not a fan of surrealism when I perpetrate it, but I do love Magritte. In fact, the idea for all these new paintings came from a surrealist Picasso called Seated Woman with Fish-Hat.

# Which reminds me of your painting *The Moroccan* from 2001, in which a woman has dead fish draped over her forehead.

And I made a painting of Rachel [Feinstein, Currin's wife] with a lobster on her head, but it got lost at the airport flying back from Maine. I mean, I've always had this craziness in my drawings, but translating that energy to painting



Fishermen (2002) is a self-portrait with Currin's old studiomate, fellow painter Sean Landers.



Maenads (2015). In Greek mythology, maenads were ecstatic female followers of the wine god Dionysus.



In recent years, Currin has diversified his subject matter, but *The Leg* (2016) suggests he hasn't abandoned sex entirely.



#### PREVIOUS PAGES

Left: Sexually explicit work like *Good Beer* (2012), while controversial, hasn't dampened Currin's critical acclaim—or his market. Right: "I joke," Currin has said of his painting *Hot Pants* (2010), "that the tailor was a less robust Terry Richardson."





is a totally different thing, because the humor falls away. I don't want my paintings to be too jokey.

On that note, tell me about the painting of the older woman sitting topless at her desk. I had the picture lying around my studio. I thought it would be nice if she were nude.

## The choice to make her naked isn't a reaction to the growing popularity of granny porn?

No, but if you're in your 50s, there is something weird about looking at pictures of a naked 19-year-old. I find the older I get, the less I have a physical response to them as images or even sexually.

Speaking of sex, another reoccurrence in these new paintings is your strange way of depicting a pregnant woman, where only the bottom half of her belly protrudes.

When I first did that years ago, it was to make the pregnancy look as shocking as it feels when your wife gets pregnant. I didn't want the pregnancy to

become the subject of the painting, but to seem more like an imposed condition.

## Almost like the baguette she balances on her head?

Or here's a decision: The seethrough shirt I based her top on, it actually has gold stripes in real life, which would be beautiful to paint, but I want you to look at her breasts more like you have X-ray vision. It's better that she's a Venus, unaware of her nudity in the same way she's blind to her pregnancy.

## And then she has one foot propped up on this ancient stone.

Do you know that big Artemisia Gentileschi painting at the Met of the woman fainting in front of a king? Well, it has these stone steps with paint splattered all over them. It's like a real Bob Ross moment. I guess this is my version.

Knowing that someone like Marc Jacobs is a collector of your work, do you get nervous taking on fashion in your paintings? Look at the guy in this painting with

the ice cream cone on his head.

I worry that he gets too clownlike or country-clubbish. I want these people to live in a world that could never exist socially.

Does it ever concern you that in, say, 200 years some art historian analyzing your paintings will misread the meaning of this snail crawling up a woman's shoulder or the tilted candle resting on the boot?

Any good art should encourage cockamamy interpretations and conspiracies. My work is a petri dish for that stuff, I hope. The truth is that when these things start off as jokes, over time they become something else. Even I start to read different meanings into aspects of the painting. Like the tilting candle, for instance. I started to think, How would a candle pose for a selfie? Because when you're making decisions within a painting, it helps to have a bit of a narrative. I don't think of the symbolism as "symbols," but the poetry of a disjunctive process. I like Magritte because he figured out how to make unusual paintings.

## Tell me about *Happy House Painters*.

It began as a man and a woman, but then it seemed more fun if they were a lesbian couple: One would be stern—almost indignant—and the other woman would be new to it all, you know, like she recently left her husband. I liked the idea of walking in unexpectedly on people painting. I thought it was funny if they were caught breaking into your house to paint it.

## The expressions on the lesbians' faces are priceless.

The faces got very real to me. I only want to finish the painting enough now that it doesn't come off as flashy. I'll let some looseness stay as long as it's not in a conceited way. I mean, I'd love to be able to get away with the swagger of a Sammy Davis Jr., but my fear is that I'm doing a too long guitar riff in a soft-rock song.

## Are there particular emotions you find hard to convey?

Angry I have a hard time with. I tried that once when I painted over advertisements from *Playboy*. Did you ever see those? They're basically rip-offs of Richard Prince.

Or like a frightened man—I've never been able to do that kind of face you find in a Velázquez.

## It surprises me that you have a live goldfish in your studio.

When you paint from life, there can be something spectacular about it. Also, there's the problem of certain subjects that other artists have already done so well. Can you top Matisse's goldfish? It's like two strokes of orange, and it's perfect.

#### You gave a lecture at The New School once where you said, "Wouldn't it have been a pity if Van Gogh was a video artist?"

I'm not sure video art is owed a genius like Van Gogh. I put Van Gogh in the top five of all time. He's up there with Goya, Botticelli, Picasso, Velázquez. If you press me on this, I'm pretty sure my top five artists will end up being a list of 17.

## Calvin Tomkins says that your honeymoon to Italy was a turning point for you. Have there been other moments as pivotal?

The realization that the mission is happiness. Humor, happiness, the fantasy of happiness, joy, beauty: These are the things I get energy from. I can't channel angst, for whatever reason. But then you also have to accept that happiness is not a constant state in life.

## So the collective anxiety we feel as a country right now doesn't end up in the paintings?

I'm pretty crestfallen at the state of things, but the older I get, the less political I feel. Also, who would care what I think about politics? I'm not young anymore, so there's no glamour to my opinions.

#### Your house in Gramercy Park has horse jockeys on the facade. Are those landmarked?

Yeah, I painted the faces very beautifully, but I had to do it quick.

When one of the women in your paintings stares out from the canvas, do you imagine that she looks at you, the painter, or at us, the viewer? In your painting Good Beer, for example? In that painting, I'm looking at you, only through her eyes.

BILL POWERS runs Half Gallery in New York City.





• Walk into any good menswear store right now and You'll find the usual grays, NAVIES, AND BLACKS PUNCTUATED BY A SURPRISING COLOR: YELLOW.

To show you how to wear it best, we called up Mahershala Ali, Oscar-nominated star of 'Moonlight'—and the quiet force behind Remy Danton on 'House of Cards.'

→ Minimalist Sneakers That Won't Be Forgotten

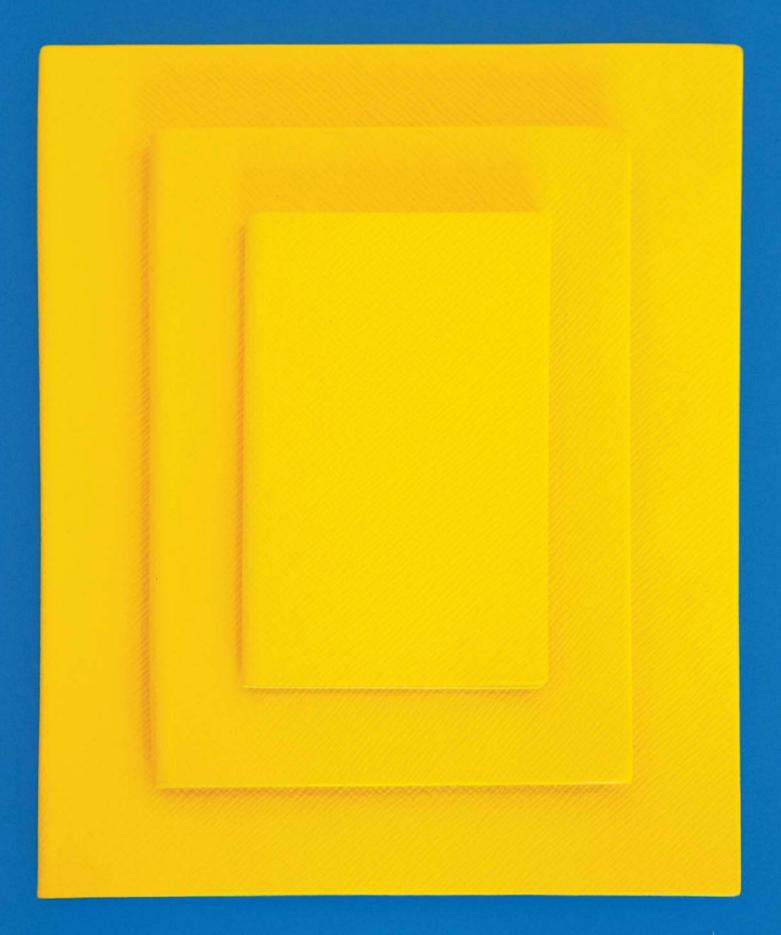
sneakers \$545 Dolce & Gabbana

A Coat That Shines, Even When the Sun Doesn't

coat \$2,830
Salvatore
Ferragamo
+
shirt and pants
Salvatore
Ferragamo









# AND THE GOES TO...

Awards seasons come and go, but exceptional work, like MAHERSHALA ALI'S performance in Moonlight, lasts forever. So we had the 43-year-old actor give us some of his all-time favorites of film.—LAUREN LARSON

#### **Best Picture**

• Nanook of the North [1922]. It's about the Inuits. We follow a family around, led by Nanook, whom we see trying to survive in those conditions. It feels like a movie to me, but it's one of the first documentary films. You gotta think how someone would approach telling that type of story as a documentary in a world that has only ever seen narratives told in the way in which we look at films right now. [Director Robert J. Flaherty] worked on it for years. He had a cut that I think he worked on for four or five years, and then he came home. Back then film was so flammable, and his studio caught fire and burned most of his film. He was able to patch together some of the story, and his wife encouraged him to go back up for a few years. He came back down and he ended up with the film that we know as Nanook of the North.

• Especially as an African-American, you need to see yourself reflected in some way. And I've looked at Denzel [Washington]. And I've looked at Forest Whitaker. He's an extraordinary actor, but he's also a character actor. And I feel similar to him. I draw inspiration from him, because in some ways, he's kind of present against all odds. You can't necessarily say what he is. I've been watching him since Fast Times at Ridgemont High, when he was a kid. I remember when he came onscreen in Fast Times, and just his presence alone made me kind of take a step back.

#### **Best Actress**

• I love Michelle Williams. I think she's extraordinary. I was such a fan of Blue Valentine, and I heard stories about how Ryan Gosling and Michelle Williams worked on that. They lived together for a period of time as rehearsal. From nine in the morning to five at night, living in a space together. The work is really awe-inspiring.

• I just love what Nicholas Britell did with Moonlight. Honestly, I would never pick something I'm involved in like this, but hearing pieces of that music, out of context even, or watching the film, it just brings up so much for me. I know it's a cheat, because I know some of the things that went into the sounds: In the music, they used two characters' hands slapping together as percussion in the score. No one would ever know that. They drew from classical music and slowed it down in order to define more of the angst in the sound and draw a deeper emotional reaction from the audience. It's such a nice mix of classical and hip-hop—a very specific kind of hip-hop—and then all the other sound elements and nuances that help make our story what it is.

#### **Best Director**

• Steven Soderbergh. As a kid, my dad would take me to see indie films when I would visit him in New York. Films that I just wouldn't see growing up in the Bay Area. Seeing Soderbergh's first movies, going to the theater to see them, in their time—the fact that Soderbergh is still around, doing really good work... I would be honored to have an opportunity to work with him.

#### Person You Most Want to Take a Selfie with at the Oscars

• Denzel Washington. That's a no-brainer for me.

#### Best Movie You've Never Seen

• I've never seen Gone with the Wind. I don't know if that's something to be embarrassed about, but I know that I should have seen that movie by now.

#### **Best Animated Film**

• Oh goodness. Oh boy. This is gonna sound... Winnie the Pooh.

## They Wear Wear Gold

Khaki, You

coat \$2,600 Bottega Veneta

shirt Eidos

sunglasses Salvatore

Ferragamo

fez from Nigeria

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Head-to-Toe Works If the Tone Is Muted

shirt \$225 **Agnès B.** boots Wolverine

vest \$1,755 jeans (sold with bandanna) \$395

→ Pebbled

Leather That Pops in Yellow

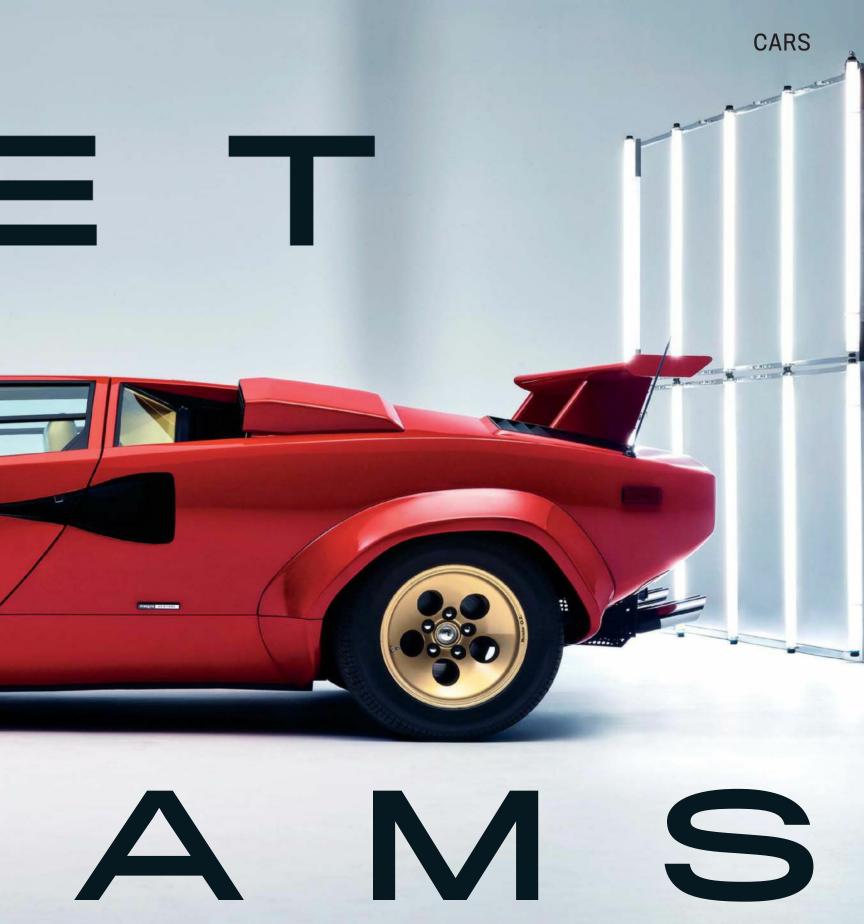
backpack \$2,200 **Thom Browne** 

Isaia





▶ When the futuristic, wedge-shaped cars we lusted after in the '80s and '90s went out of style, they Nobody laughs or calls them ugly anymore. And prices are skyrocketing. THIS IS THE STORY OF



went all the way out of style. But a new generation of auto freaks has revived these vintage beauties. Sports cars, the men who love them—and the shifting tides of value and taste.



They were the last generation of cars to be designed using primarily pencil and clay, formed out of rectangles and wedges, before modern computers came along and made pretty much any shape that can cut through air possible. And that's exactly why we love the sports cars of the '80s and early '90s: They will forever be the sports cars of the future. Just by looking at them, you can practically feel the designers crafting them by hand, straining forward into the digital age. Which, it turned out, was right around the corner.

The cars in these pages are automotive works of art—but with wild horsepower, Italian leather seats, and a rainbow of bad attitudes. Here, the experts break down exactly why there's no cooler class to drive right now.

#### **DREAMS MONEY CAN BUY**

ADOLFO ORSI (co-author, 'Classic Car Auction Yearbook'): The demographic of car collectors is changing. The buyers now are people in their mid-30s, early 40s, and the first cars they buy are the cars in their memories. They dreamed about these cars from the posters in their bedrooms.

**ALEX MANOS** (owner, The Beverly Hills Car Club): Things have changed drastically since 2010. There are a lot of people who were kids when these cars were out new. They had the posters in their bedrooms and were like, Wow, one day I could dream of having one of those. Well, now they're adults and they can afford them.

**TED GUSHUE** (editorial director, 'Petrolicious'): These cars represented power and performance and wealth and success—things that we didn't quite understand as kids. We just saw them as fast, sexy cars. Then we grew up. Some of these guys started Facebook. Some of these guys made money in finance.

BRADLEY PRICE (founder, Autodromo): I feel like there were a couple of cars that never lost their luster from that time period. But then, others were almost a joke. Some survived as the cream of the crop, and others went down and came back up, like an actor who recovers his career in his mid-40s. In any style-oriented collecting type of thing, there

are thought leaders—people who are ahead of the curve. Those people were buying these cars several years ago, and it's now more mainstream. Although I don't think it's fully hit the mainstream yet.

TIM HUNTZINGER (professor, ArtCenter College of Design): Car styling, like any kind of styling, goes in cycles. You can dig into your dad's closet and find the old skinny ties from back in the day, and now they're cool again. Car styling is similar, but it's got an extra layer of complexity because of the technology. Why now? There's two parts to it. One is that these cars are rounding 30. Right? And so they're starting to become truly classic cars. The second is because of how organic modern cars are becoming. In the '80s and early '90s, computers weren't really used to design cars yet, but they wanted them to look like they were.... These cars were all designed on paper and with clay. Made by hand. As cars increasingly started to get made by computer, there were shapes that became possible that were not possible before. I think that's why these cars fell out of favor. They weren't as different as they used to be. But I think that's exactly the same thing that brings them into the forefront now: They're different again.

JAY LENO (comedian, car collector):
When you see modern cars, they all have this sort of jelly-bean shape, and they're all halfway between a crossover and an SUV.
There's a certain practicality to them.
However, this type of vehicle [from the '80s and '90s] would serve no practical purpose of any kind. The Lamborghini Countach wasn't even aerodynamic. It was a brick. I think a Volkswagen Bug is more aerodynamic.

**PRICE:** One of the most interesting things about cars from the '80s that a lot of people don't know is that a lot of them were designed in the '70s. You think of, like, the *Magnum, P.I.* Ferrari 308, or you think of the Lamborghini Countach, or you think of the DeLorean. Many of these kinds of poster cars of the '80s were actually designed in the '70s, and they were so far ahead of their time. They were so futuristic that they were still futuristic ten years later.

**PHILLIP TOLEDANO** (photographer, car collector): People buy the stuff that they grew up looking at on TV, or they grew up admiring or lusting after, right? The other thing is that all the stuff from the '60s is just insanely expensive, so people go, What else can I buy that's really cool that doesn't cost a lot of money?

Ferrari 308 GTB <sup>1984</sup>

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**DAVID SWIG** (car specialist, RM Sotheby's): People collect things that make them nostalgic for their youth. So if you're a 40-year-old guy who's getting into cars, you're probably more interested in the 1988 BMW M3 than a 1933 Packard.

**LENO:** Twenty-something years ago, I got a letter from a kid. He's, like, 12. "Dear Mr. Leno, I told my friends that you were my uncle and that you and I go driving on weekends. I was wondering if someday you could pick me up and take me to school." I called the parents and said, "I'm happy to do it." I pick him up, we park around the corner and wait for the school buses to unload, and we pull up. The Countach doors come out, and he says, "Thanks, Uncle Jay!" and I say, "All right, Billy! So long!" That's a kid who will probably buy a Countach once he gets to a certain age.

STREET LEGAL

**ELLIOT CUKER** (director, Cooper Classics): The audience for classic cars is becoming younger and younger. They're less interested in the earlier classic cars from the '50s and '60s, because they want cars that can move. They want cars that are fast. They want cars that are much more agile.

**TOLEDANO:** I'm mostly interested in what's called homologation cars. Only if you're a super automotive nerd like me would you know what that is. Basically, in the '80s and '90s, they had special rules whereby manufacturers, if they wanted race cars, would have to build a very limited number of production cars for regular people to buy.

**PRICE:** These companies in Europe made these crazy fire-breathing homologation cars. So Group B rally cars and touring cars from the '80s, they all had to have homologation cars. Those are very, very hot right now. And that's definitely something that's a function of guys in their 40s who grew up watching races on TV as a kid, or having that poster of their rally hero in their bedroom.

**BRYAN CALVERO** (owner of the Lancia Delta Integrale seen here): Growing up, I said, Wow, we can have a road version that's the closest to the actual race car—and it has the same body lines? It was as close as you got to what the race-car drivers were driving, and that's what excited me.

**PRICE:** Giorgetto Giugiaro did a lot of the great cars from this era, including the Lancia. He's kind of the Picasso of Italian car design, because he's so prolific and he went through different phases in his design career that have different feelings about

them. Some of the great car designers, everything they did has sort of the same look. Giugiaro morphed through various phases. He did all of these wedge cars that have a very similar vibe, but then he moved on to other things in the '90s.

MANOS: A lot of people grew up watching Miami Vice, so they would think about the Ferrari Testarossa. Chris Brown recently had a Ferrari Testarossa in a music video, and I think even Lil Wayne had a Testarossa in his video. Back in 2008, they would have put a brand-new Ferrari in there.

**PRICE:** The Testarossa—that, to me, is the quintessential '80s car because it was in *Miami Vice*. It was one of those poster cars everybody wanted and dreamed of when they were a kid.

DON JOHNSON (Sonny Crockett, 'Miami Vice'): The Testarossa was not the easiest car to drive on a shifting level, because the transmission was very tight. It was also limited in its turn radius. We had a few of them on set, so I got quite proficient at driving the stunt car and had a lot of fun in it. It had a lot of top-end power, so once you started to go through the sequencing in the gears, with precision, you really could get it to do just about anything you wanted it to do. If I recall, we were the first to put fiber-optic lighting on the interior of the principal car to light the faces, because there was limited room to put any type of lights in the interior of the Ferrari. And a Ferrari is a Ferrari. For streetlegal straight racing cars, there is Ferrari and there is everything else.

**DAVID HOUSTON** (owner of the Lamborghini Countach seen here): The day the Countach came out, I knew about them.

MANOS: I really like a Lamborghini Countach. It sets you apart from everybody else. If you drive that car around wherever you live, even in a high-end area where there's other fancy cars, that car just sticks out. Even next to a brand-new Lamborghini. It might have similar traits, but it's on its own kind of spectrum. That car was in The Wolf of Wall Street.

HUNTZINGER: But that simple wedge—that's as simple as you can get and still be fast. You also have to have fairly large wheels. So that emphasis on the wheels and fender flares is pretty evident in all these cars, especially in the Countach. And so you see the Countach going from a very simple wedge to having a lot of wings and intakes and other design spiraling on the exteriors.

**TOLEDANO:** The Countach is super ugly. It's all just, like, bricks and wedges. It's all right angles. There's no curves.



## A NEW CLASS OF CLASSICS

**GUSHUE:** The Porsche 928 was interesting. It was designed to kill the 911. It was a front-engine car with a V-8. Ultimately, they were never able to achieve the sales, thank God, that would allow them to stop selling the 911. So the 928 maintained alongside the 911 for a while, and eventually it was phased out.

**PRICE:** The 928 went through a very low phase where people dismissed it as, Oh, that's a dentist's car. Because it was bought as a

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status symbol. The orthodontist who lived down the street would have had one. And, of course, it's in the movie *Risky Business*. So it's kind of like the rich kid's car. It didn't really get taken seriously by the Porsche lovers because it's front-engine and it's a V-8. To be honest with you, I think the design is really cool, but I think part of the reason they're coming back now is because 911s have gotten so expensive.

**RONALD WAHLIG, M.D.** (owner of the Porsche 928 seen here): Everyone saw the car in *Risky Business* and the posters, so I've been drawn

to it since back then. You don't see them that often, but for the past 10 or 15 years, whenever I'm driving around and see one, I'd always do a double take: What is that?

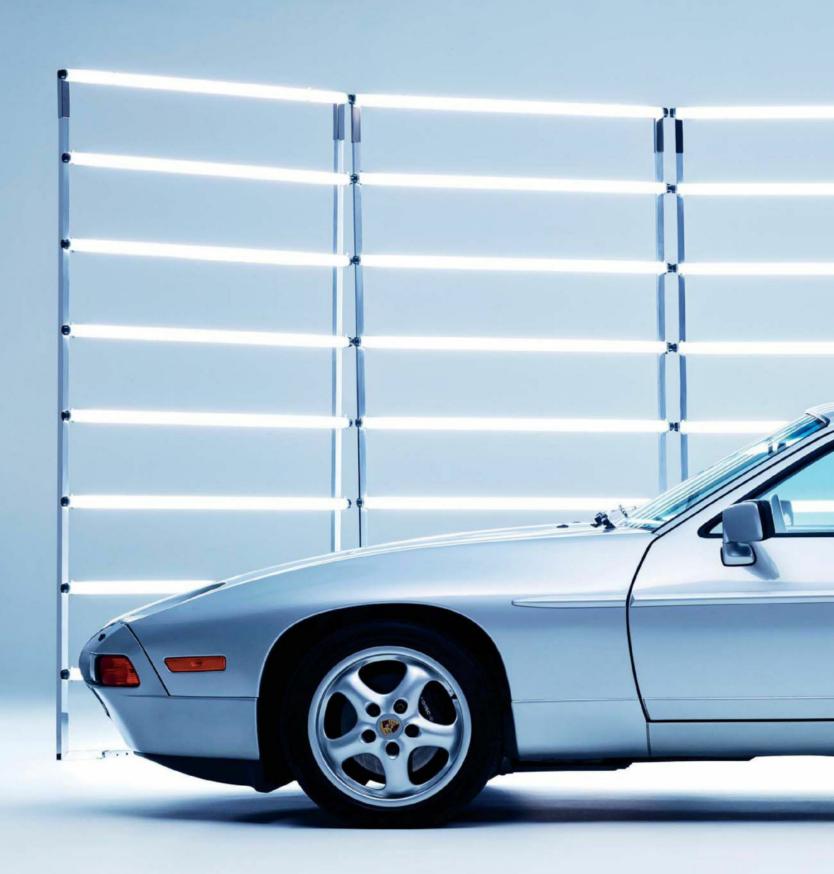
ARTHUR KAR (car dealer, L'Art de l'automobile): I love the 928. It's a crazy shape. To be truthful, most of the time when I worked at Porsche, I worked on the 911s. Because the 928 was too hard to work on. The mechanics were too big in the front. I really love the shape of the car. I really love the lights and the flat nose, but the V-8? To take care of it was a big deal.

# Mercedes-Benz 190E Cosworth Evo 2

PRICE: The BMW M3 is a cult car. It has a very strong following. That's the one particular car that even younger people are really into. Like if I were to drive up in a '60s Ferrari, and there was an E30 M3 parked next to me, a lot of guys in their teens and early 20s would be more excited to see the E30 M3, because to them it's just the coolest thing. So that car has a lot of crossover.











Lancia Delta Integrale Evo 2 1994



**TOLEDANO:** The Evo version of the M3 was the competitor of the Mercedes Evo 2. Those two cars went head-to-head in the German saloon-car racing series. So they're kind of evil competitors with each other.

**SWIG:** The generation of M3 from '86 to '91, known as the E30, is all about the flared fenders and that sort of boy-racer look.

**CALVERO:** For me, it all started with the E30 M3. I always liked the lines of that car.

MARC NORRIS (owner of the BMW M3 seen here): It's a unique car. And when you drive one, the car merges with you. Totally. You think it and the car does it. It's just a phenomenal car to drive. Very rewarding. It's the holy grail of BMWs.

PRICE: The Mercedes 190E Evo 2 is a very flamboyant car, because it's a boxy sedan but with, like, a wing on it and fender flares. There was a time when it was what you would call a boy-racer car, which means a young guy who thinks it's a hot car buys it, rather than a serious collector. I think now there's a number of more mature collectors that are interested in those cars and it's shedding that boy-racer thing. Same thing with the E30 M3. Those cars are like peas in a pod. They raced against each other.

**KAR:** I have a Ferrari 308, which is super low and large and ready to fight with the wind on the highway. It goes fast. All the proportions are large, thin, and round.

**TOLEDANO:** Oh, *Magnum*, *P.I.* It has that repeated form running up the front of the hood. The wheels with the strong triangular shape—the five-spoke thing. But that one's less extreme than a Testarossa or a Countach.

**KAR:** It's all about the line on the side. You see the air entrance between the door and the back side? That's amazing. And the black line at the center of the curve on the side—that's one of my favorite parts of the 308.

**GUSHUE:** The 308 will make you feel like you were high-flying in the cocaine '80s. That Ferrari lifestyle. It was actually a lower-performance car. It wasn't their fastest car. It was probably the slowest one they offered at that moment. But it had an iconic design, and it looked fast as hell standing still.

**PRICE:** Magnum, P.I. tainted that car. The show is why they sold so many of them, because it was very visible and it's a cultural icon. But it also turned a lot of people off, who were like, I don't want to be associated with Magnum, P.I. At some point, it becomes kind of a gold-chain car. But it's also a fantastic sports car, and it's a beautiful '70s Italian design.

### **SUPPLY AND DEMAND**

**AMY CHRISTIE** (director of public relations, RM Sotheby's): Monterey is one of the biggest auctions of the year, and the stats revealed that there were fewer '50s and '60s vehicles on offer. Modern classics represented 27 percent of total cars presented. That gives you a picture of the growing appetite for this era of car in collector circles.

**PRICE:** Well, a lot of the exotic cars in the '80s were associated with glitz and bad taste. For a long time, people thought Lamborghini Countaches and Ferrari Testarossas were kind of gauche. And now they're very strong.

that's a beautiful car. I had a white one on a poster in my bedroom as a kid. Just incredibly wedgy. There's the primary form of the wedge and then the rake down the side for the intake. Super low and really, really wide. Proportion was everything: to be able to get a wedge that wasn't just a simple triangle.

**ORSI:** The production of the Lamborghini has always been very, very limited. It was hundreds of cars a year, not thousands, so the price is much higher.

**LENO:** I remember when I first came to Los Angeles, I was broke and I had no money, and I saw a Countach parked on the street. I looked in it and there were potato chips and candy wrappers on the seat. I was like, "Wow, somebody's just using this as a *car.*" It was Rod Stewart's.

**GUSHUE:** For years and years, if you went to buy a used Lamborghini from five years ago, it would be freaking cheap. These cars lose value quickly, just like any other cars. But then they have this inverse bell curve in value, as the people who couldn't afford them when they idolized them in their teens start to have success in their careers. So that's why you now see '80s cars becoming exceptionally high-value cars at auction, because all these people who really wanted them back then can now afford them. A Lamborghini Countach was all day long a \$90,000 piece-of-shit car. All of a sudden, they've become half-million-dollar cars, 'cause there's only so many of them left.

ALEXANDER WEAVER (car specialist, RM Sotheby's): These cars are starting to really move up. The Countach. The Acura NSX. The 180E. The E30 M3. The E36 M3. The best examples of all those cars are really moving up, finding their way into good collections and bringing the most money they possibly could.

**HOUSTON:** I have a philosophy. There are two types of car guys. There's the car guy that makes a lot of money in their middle years and looks around like, Well, what am I gonna buy? I'll buy some of these cars! And those guys, by the

way, are ruining the car market for us. And then there's guys like me. I think my first words were "sports car." I don't remember a time when I wasn't aware of cars. I remember driving to the Lamborghini dealership, and I would just stand and look at the Countach. I would drive all the way across town just to stand in its presence. And I would sit there and go, I'd love to get a Countach, but how much are they? And I looked and it was \$90,000. And I thought, God, I gotta get it now. That can't last, you know? I bought it, the market turned, and they shot up.

MANOS: In 2005, if you're a music star, you're gonna have a brand-new Ferrari. Or a brand-new Rolls-Royce. Or a brand-new Aston Martin. But now it's just so much cooler and has so much more depth, value, meaning to have an '80s or a '90s car. People get nostalgic, and you're ten times cooler because it isn't brand-new. The Countach—they used to sell those cars for \$90,000, and now they're \$390,000.

**CUKER:** The '80s and '90s Porsches have gone insane. Look at the Lamborghini Countach. Back in '85, the list price was \$100,000. What if I told you that right now you would have to pay about \$650,000 for that same car in great condition? The 1991 BMW M3. You know, it's a fun car, nothing extraordinary. Back in '91, it sold for \$36,000. Just several years ago, you could have bought the best one around for \$25,000. Right now, the car, in exceptional condition, is \$125,000, and it'll continue to escalate. The Mercedes 560 SL will continue to go up in price because they retain a classic feel, but they drive like a modern car. The Ferrari F50 has gone nuts. That's a \$2 million car.

**GUSHUE:** These cars were designed by some of the world's most talented designers. Bertone. Zagato. These things are rolling works of art. They look futuristic still to this day.

**CUKER:** Cars are sculptures. Just like any art, they typify our period. The earlier cars had softer lines, they were more romantic. These are not romantic cars. These cars are in your face. Fast, sleek. These cars don't have classic lines. They're confrontational. Don't take one of these cars out if you're trying to stay anonymous.

**HOUSTON:** Oh, the wife hates the Countach. She hates it so much. It might be jealousy, 'cause she knows that I love it almost as much as I love her. ■

By Luke Zaleski with Mary Marge Locker, Kyle Paoletta, and Will Stephenson

BMW M3 1989

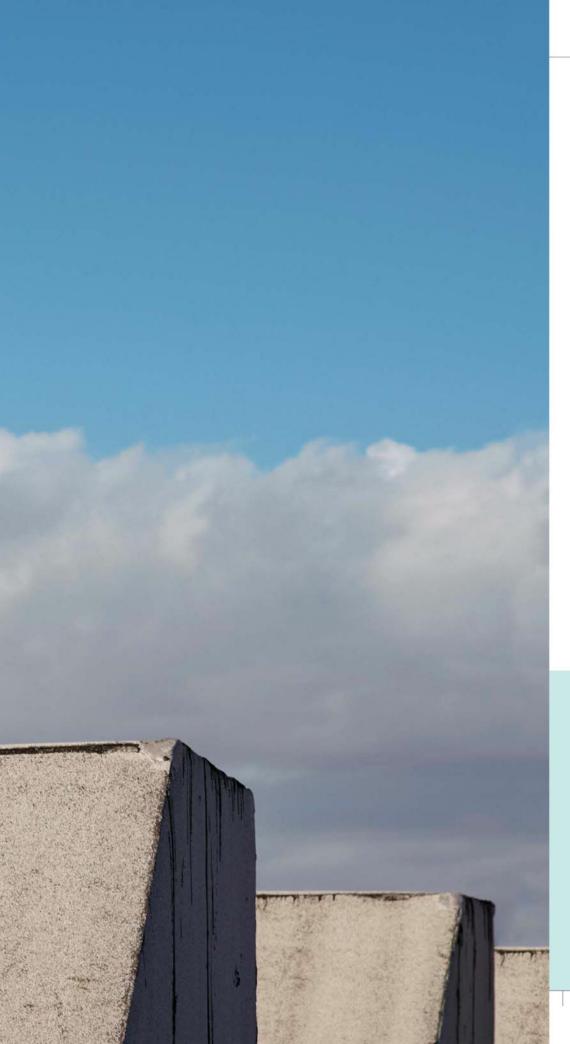
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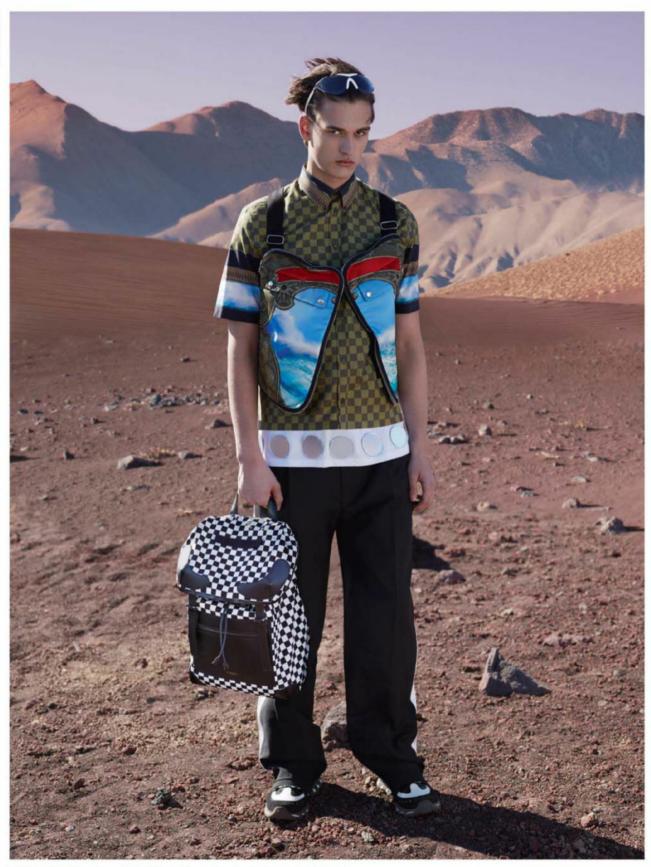
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