



AMARENA

BLOSSOM
ISSUE

ENGLISH

EDITORIAL
JOSE FORTEZA
A LIFE IN FASHION

FASHION
DIOR
FW 2026

FDLA NYFW
THE LATIN FASHION CELEBRATION

SPRING GALA
EL PALACIO DE HIERRO

MAYEH
FINE MEXICAN JEWELRY

BEAUTY
24K
NAZ BEAUTY

LIFESTYLE: WENDELL'S WORLD
BASSANO DEL GRAPPA
MEMORY, FRIENDSHIP, AND THE PASSAGE OF TIME

POP CULTURE
BRUNO MARS
THE ROMANTIC

WORLD & CULTURE
THE IDES OF MARCH
THE FALL OF CAESAR

CREEDS
ESTHER
A SACRED STORY OF ANCIENT PERSIA

*Radiant by
nature*

**SOFIA
MILOS**

WRITTEN BY
WENDELL FIGUEROA RUIZ

PHOTOS BY
DANIEL SINOCA



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#12 MARCH 2026

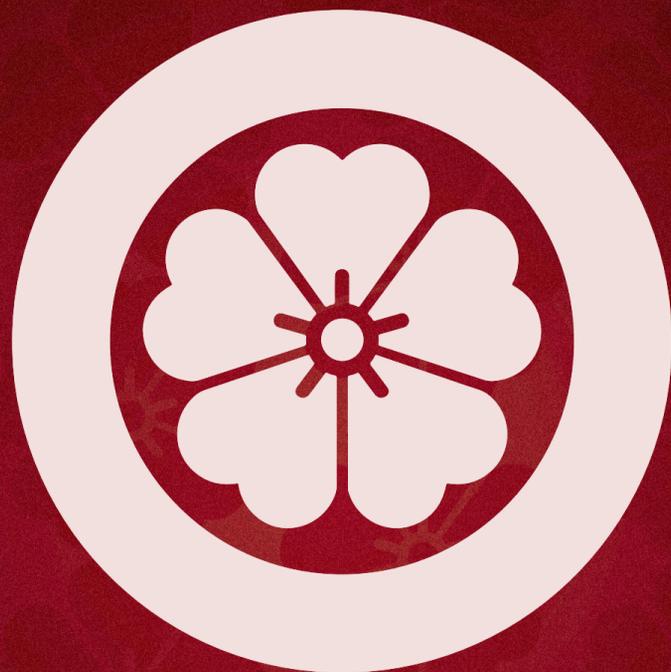




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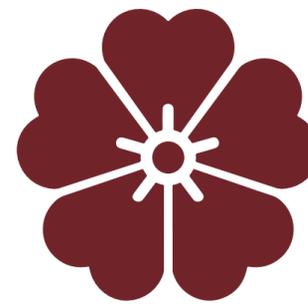
More meaningful
than jewelry

NASHIRA ARNÓ



AMARENA

*More than a magazine.
A look at the shallows and the deep.*



AMARENA

ENGLISH

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COVER
A radiant woman
Sofia Milos

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*Our first year:
Celebrating by expressing ourselves
in a new language*

Nature moves to an infallible rhythm—a silent wisdom teaching us that every cycle of introspection precedes an explosion of life. As we look out the window of this new season, we encounter the ultimate symbol of vernal rebirth: that precise moment when a seed breaks its dormancy to transform into a flower. Spring is more than a change in temperature; it is the promise of renewal, the triumph of light over shadow, and a reminder that it is always possible to begin again with greater strength and beauty. Amidst this vitality, we are proud to celebrate a fundamental milestone for our community: **AMARENA**'s first anniversary as a digital magazine.

Twelve months ago, **AMARENA** was born as a sprout full of ambition and hope. We emerged with a vision to create a space where aesthetics, intellect, and culture converge in an innovative format. Today, looking back, we see a year of constant growth, overcome challenges, and, above all, a deep connection with each of you. Reaching our first year is not the finish line, but the starting point for a deeper evolution. Therefore, we take this anniversary to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to excellence. In a world saturated with ephemeral information, **AMARENA** bets on content that endures. We are committed to continuing to curate articles, reports, and visual pieces that do not just

inform, but inspire and bring real value to your lives. Our promise for this second year is clear: to elevate our standards, diversify our voices, and maintain the editorial rigor that has defined us from day one.

We want every visit to our platform to evoke the same freshness and wonder gifted by the first morning of spring. What better way to begin this new phase of our budding history than by answering the call of the global **AMARENA** community? We are thrilled to announce that **AMARENA** is debuting in English.

Our magazine now proudly speaks not only in Spanish—the language of Cervantes, spoken by 475 million people—but also in the lingua franca of our time, the language of Shakespeare. This expands our potential reach to 400 million native English speakers and another billion who use it as a second language. All of this is made possible by the success of our resident team in New York. Stay tuned for our content on fashion, beauty, lifestyle, global culture, pop culture, and spirituality—now in English!

Thank you for being the fertile soil where **AMARENA** has been able to grow. Thank you for joining us on this digital journey. The best, much like the fields in bloom, is yet to come.

With gratitude and enthusiasm,

Marco Guerrero
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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EDITORIAL
10. Jose Forteza

BY Martha Phillips

ICONS
12. Anne, the Princess Royal

STAFF

FASHION
16. Dior FW26

BY Martha Phillips

26. Spring Gala: El Palacio de Hierro Monterrey

BY Marco Guerrero

32. Mayeh: Exquisite Mexican High Jewelry

BY Martha Phillips

36. FDLA NYFW

BY Martha Phillips PHOTOGRAPHY BY Hideki Aono

COVER
44. Sofia Milos: radiant by nature

BY Wendell Figueroa Ruiz PHOTOGRAPHY BY Daniel Sinoca

BEAUTY
56. 24K skin care by Naz Beauty

REDACCIÓN

WENDELL'S WORLD
60. Bassano del Grappa

BY Wendell Figueroa Ruiz

68. Gifts for the Lunar Year of the Horse

SHOPPING GUIDE BY Wendell Figueroa Ruiz

POP CULTURE
84. Bruno Mars: The Romantic

STAFF

WORLD & CULTURE
86. Ides of March

BY Marco Guerrero

90. Hamnet by Maggie O'Farrell

BY The Phoenix

CREEDS
92. Esther

BY Marco Guerrero

100. Between Ashes & Sprouts

BY Rosa Pelegrina

RSVP
106. FDLA NYFW (Socials)

STAFF

108. Ivy Fashion Affair

STAFF



16



44

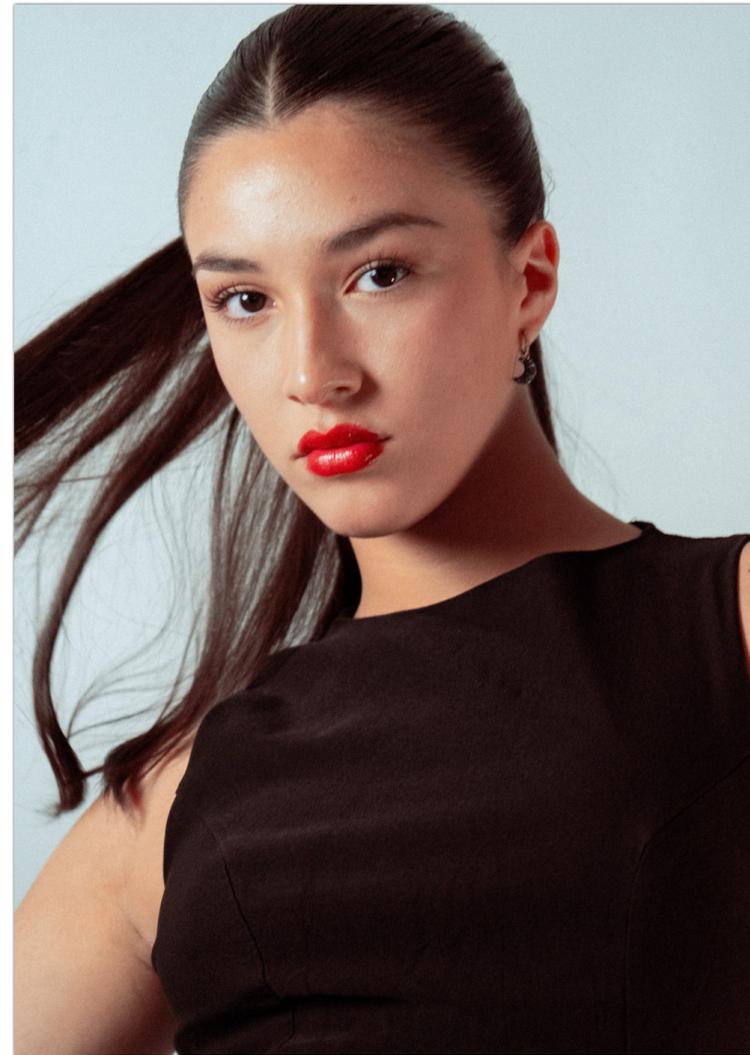


60



98

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MARCO GUERRERO



JOSE FORTEZA

A Lifelong Vision for Hispanic Fashion

BY Martha Phillips @girlдумonde

The career of Jose Forteza has solidified into one of the most respected and enduring pillars of the Ibero-American fashion landscape. His vision, intellectual rigor, and aesthetic sensitivity have positioned him as a pivotal figure in the development and global projection of our region's talent.

Over the years, he has built a career rooted in a profound knowledge of the industry, critical analysis, and a comprehensive understanding of the cultural contexts that shape contemporary design. His work does not chase fleeting trends; rather, it stems from a clear conviction: to strengthen Latin American narratives through authenticity and excellence.

One of Forteza's most distinguish-

ing traits is his profound character. His approachable, respectful, and accessible nature makes him a trusted confidant for both established designers and emerging generations. In a highly competitive environment, his openness to dialogue and readiness to provide guidance make a significant impact.

His academic background and international experience have allowed him to develop a holistic view of fashion as a creative industry, a cultural phenomenon, and a platform for economic growth. From this perspective, he has successfully articulated coherent discourses that bridge identity, innovation, and global reach.

His ability to interpret trends, evaluate proposals, and contextualize creative processes has made

him an authoritative voice within the sector. Rather than imposing criteria, he builds consensus. More than pointing the way, he guides the journey. Within Fashion Designers of Latin America (FDLA), José Forteza plays a fundamental role in the platform's institutional and strategic consolidation. His participation brings conceptual clarity, editorial weight, and an international vision that strengthens the presence of Latin American designers on the world's most demanding stages. His influence ensures that every project is presented with coherence, identity, and professionalism.

Beyond titles, his value lies in his ability to inspire trust, build bridges, and foster lasting relationships between creators, media, and institu-

tions. Behind the renowned professional is a person committed to respect, ethics, and collaborative work. His interactions across the industry reflect a genuine vocation for dialogue and collective growth.

The consistency between his thought and action reinforces his credibility and solidifies his leadership. At a time of expansion and visibility for Latin American fashion, figures like José Forteza are indispensable in sustaining this growth with depth, discernment, and responsibility.

His legacy continues to be built through every project he champions and every space he helps strengthen. Today, José Forteza represents one of the most lucid and essential voices for understanding and projecting the present and future of design in our region.

ANNE

THE PRINCESS ROYAL: A LEGACY OF SERVICE AND STYLE



Anne Elizabeth Alice Louise, born in London on August 15, 1950, has established herself as one of the most prominent, respected, and authentic figures of the British Royal Family. As the only daughter of Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, she has forged a distinct identity defined by an unwavering work ethic and an absolute commitment to duty. Over the decades, her dedication to public service, her success in elite sports, and her patronage of hundreds of charities have consistently positioned her as the hardest-working member of the monarchy—earning the lasting affection of a nation that prizes her pragmatism and discretion.

STAFF @amarenamag

The Princess's life began at Clarence House as the second of the Sovereign's four children. Although she was third in the line of succession at birth—a position that has since shifted to eighteenth—her institutional relevance has never wavered. Following her early education at Buckingham Palace under the tutelage of Catherine Peebles and completing her schooling at Benenden, Anne began undertaking official engagements at the age of 18. From her earliest appearances, she displayed a decisive character and a maturity that would come to define her public career.

Beyond her protocol-driven obligations, the Princess's passion for the equestrian world has been a cornerstone of her life. Her involvement went far beyond a mere hobby; she achieved professional success by winning a gold medal in 1971 and two silver medals in 1975 at the European Eventing Championships. In 1976, she made history as the first member of the Royal Family to compete in the Olympic Games during the Montreal edition. This lifelong bond with the sport led her to preside over the International Equestrian Federation from 1986 to 1994 and to join the International Olympic Committee in 1988, where her voice remains deeply respected.

In her personal life, Princess Anne has navigated the public eye with admirable discretion, even in moments of great tension. From her first marriage to Mark Phillips in 1973, she had two children, Peter Phillips and Zara Tindall. In a forward-thinking gesture of modernity, it

was decided that neither would hold royal titles, allowing them more independent lives. Following her divorce in 1992, she married Sir Timothy Laurence in a private ceremony in Scotland. It is impossible to forget her bravery in 1974, when she faced an attempted kidnapping near the Palace with astounding steadfastness—an event that underscored her unfazed strength of character in the face of danger.

Since receiving the title of Princess Royal in 1987—a dignity granted for life to the Sovereign's eldest daughter—her schedule has only intensified. She is currently a patron or president of over 300 organizations, most notably her 50-year commitment to Save the Children. Additionally, she holds key institutional roles as Chancellor of the University of Edinburgh and Chief Commandant of Women in the Royal Navy. Her residence at Gatcombe Park serves as the hub of an active life where she balances her duties with her role as a mother and grandmother to five.

Intriguingly, in recent years, Anne has become an accidental style icon. Despite describing herself as «anti-fashion» and consistently prioritizing functionality, her commitment to sustainability—frequently re-wearing pieces from her wardrobe dating back to the 1970s—has captured the attention of younger generations. Her «country-casual» aesthetic and military precision have served as inspiration for luxury houses like Fendi, while social media celebrates her vintage looks. Thus, the Lady of the Garter and the Thistle continues to prove that authenticity and sobriety are values that never go out of style.



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DIOR

FALL-WINTER 26



The Spirit of a New Chapter

BY Martha Phillips @girlumonde

Breathing new life into a house with the historical weight of Dior—without losing its essence—is a challenge few can master. However, the Fall-Winter 2026 collection, under the vision of Jonathan Anderson, has proven that innovation is possible through an absolute reverence for the archives. What we witnessed on the runway was an ode to modern femininity: a series of pieces where impeccable craftsmanship and artistic intent merge to project the brand's future.



There are moments in fashion that are unrepeatable—instants where a collection does more than just present clothes; it marks a definitive “before and after” in a heritage house’s history. That is exactly what I felt witnessing the Fall-Winter 2026 showcase from Dior, under the creative direction of Jonathan Anderson. This collection did not arrive to overwhelm with excess, but to seduce through intelligence, sensitivity, and a profound grasp of the Maison’s legacy.

The show took place in the iconic Jardin des Tuileries, in the heart of Paris. It is a space that, on its own, breathes history, art, and elegance. For this occasion, the garden was transformed into a near-oniric environment of transparent structures and water reflections—an atmosphere that invited one to slow down, observe, and linger. It wasn’t just a runway; it was an immersive experience, a reminder that fashion is lived through the senses.

Since his arrival at the house, Jonathan Anderson has proven a deep understanding of what Dior represents. He does not seek to erase the past, but to engage in a dialogue with it. In this collection, his focus was clear: reinterpreting classical elegance through a contemporary lens without sacrificing sophistication or emotion. Every look felt intentional. Anderson bet on silhouettes that were strong yet sensitive—garments speaking to a woman who is confident, modern, and conscious of her own style.

Among so many memorable pieces, several designs stood out. One was a long, soft-layered dress

with delicate ruffles that danced with every step; the lightness of the fabric contrasted beautifully with a structured corset, creating a perfect equilibrium between strength and romanticism. Another was an ethereal organza gown in pale tones, featuring a wide, pleated skirt that captured the light with subtle grace—a piece that seemed to float. Then there was the minimalist gown adorned with shimmering applications inspired by natural forms; these tiny details seemed to sprout from the fabric, adding texture and depth without feeling obvious. Each design showcased the meticulous craftsmanship and sensitivity defining the collection.

What I value most about this proposal is how it keeps the spirit of Christian Dior alive without becoming trapped in nostalgia. The references to classic silhouettes—the cinched waists and structured elegance—are all there, but adapted for our time. It is a collection that honors the past, inhabits the present, and looks toward the future.

Beyond the trends and the photography, this collection conveys something rare: intention. It is clear that every piece was designed to be worn, lived in, and remembered. Dior Fall-Winter 2026 does not seek to impose; it seeks to connect. It speaks to a woman who appreciates beauty, understands fashion as a form of expression, and knows that true luxury lies in the details.

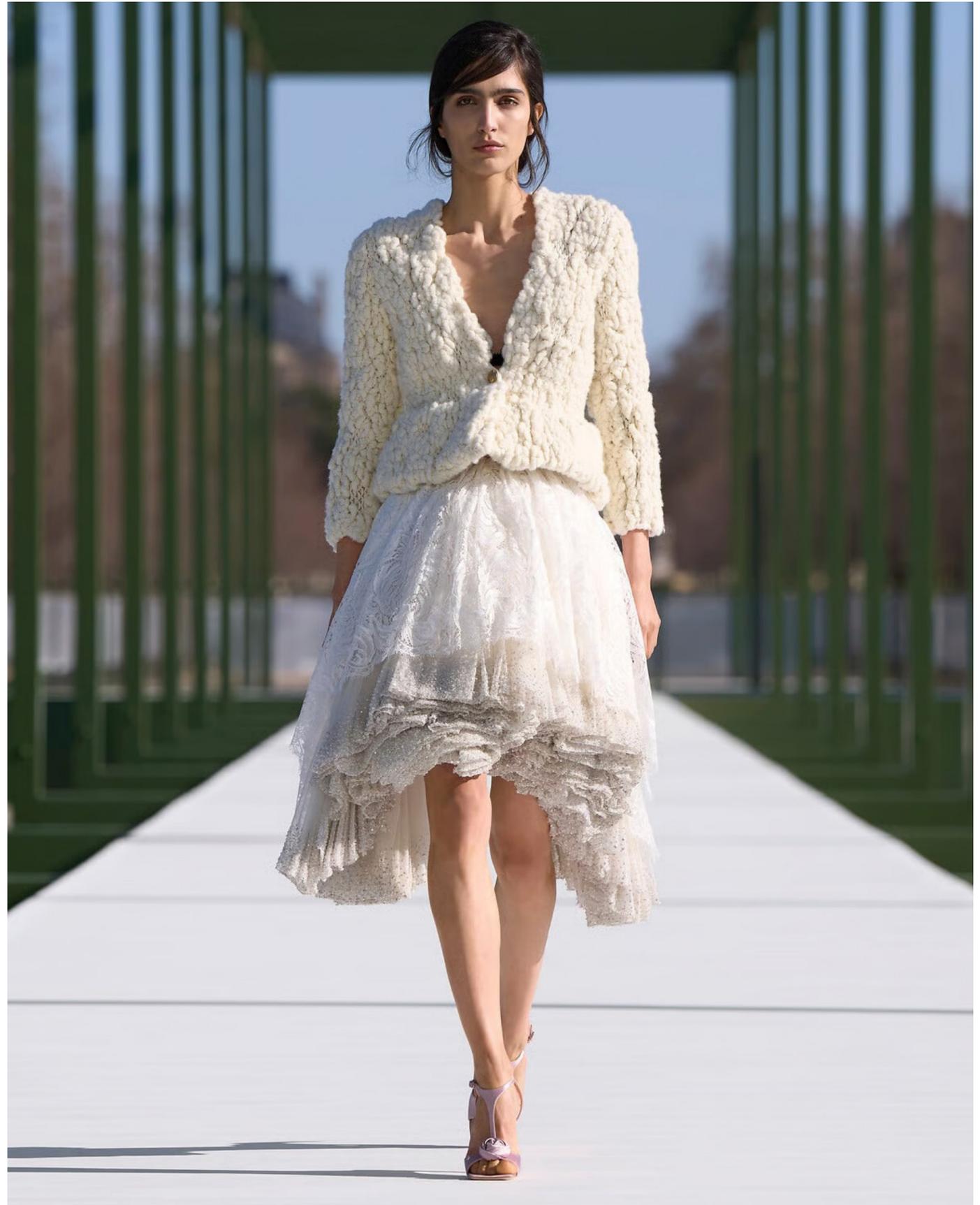
For me, this show confirmed that Jonathan Anderson has found his place within Dior’s storied history, bringing freshness without losing depth. In a world where everything moves so fast, that is truly invaluable.



ANDERSON: LEGACY AND THE AVANT-GARDE

Since his appointment, Jonathan Anderson has redefined the concept of modernity within the Maison. Renowned for his ability to merge contemporary art with traditional craftsmanship, the Northern Irish designer has achieved what once seemed impossible: injecting a dose of intellectual avant-garde into Christian Dior’s historical codes. His work goes beyond designing garments; Anderson constructs visual narratives that respect the architecture of the “New Look” while proposing a fluid, conscious femininity—one deeply connected to the 21st century.

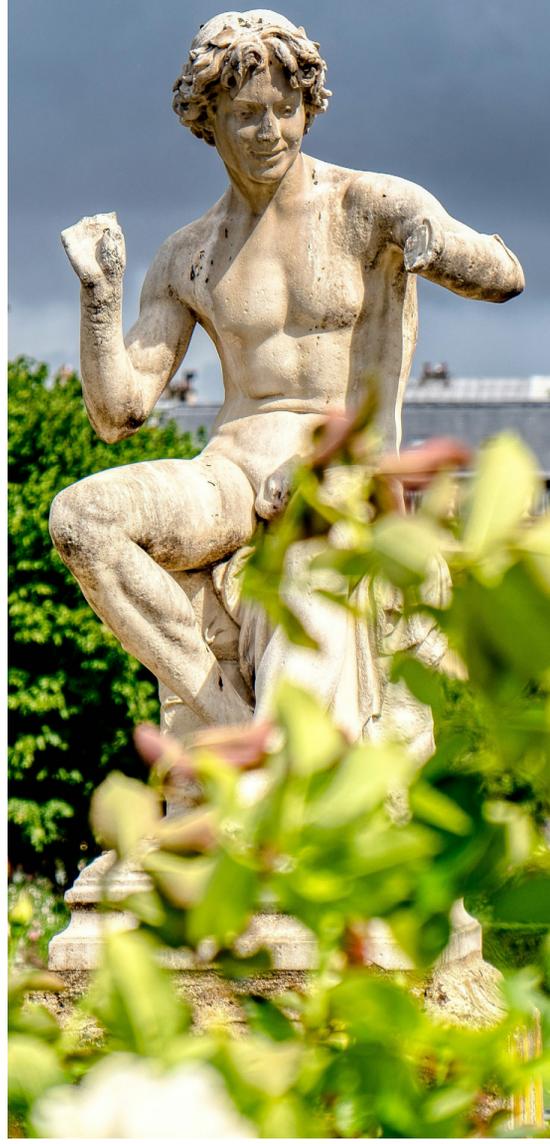






DES TUILERIES THE GARDEN OF QUEENS

Situated between the Louvre Museum and the Place de la Concorde, the Tuileries Garden is much more than a park; it is Paris's first public garden, originally designed by Catherine de' Medici in 1564. For centuries, its symmetrical layout and iconic chestnut-lined avenues have served as the natural runway for the French aristocracy and high society. Today, within the framework of Paris Fashion Week, its fountains and sculptures by Maillol and Giacometti become the stage where history and the vanguard of fashion meet.





ROSÉ

 @rosejoyeria_

MONTERREY TOTALMENTE PALACIO

THE SPRING GALA
EL PALACIO DE HIERRO

El Palacio de Hierro reaffirms its standing as the undisputed epicenter of luxury lifestyle and retail in Mexico, solidifying its presence in our city with unstoppable momentum. The runway came to life with twenty-six models from the Rafael Zuniga agency, who showcased the season's most cutting-edge trends with grace and distinction. Iconic brands from El Palacio's curated portfolio—including Simorra, Bimba y Lola, Michael Kors, Maje, and Mango, among others—presented looks that captured the very essence of spring: a sophisticated blend of freshness, elegance, and audacity.

We present a visual curation of the most standout outfits from the Spring Gala in Monterrey, captured exclusively through the lens of our Editor-in-Chief.

BY **Marco Guerrero** @marcoguerreroleon







MAYEH

EXQUISITE MEXICAN HIGH JEWELRY Art, Culture, and the Elegance of Puebla



BY Martha Phillips © @girdumonde

From an early age, Ivon Fuentes Tellez discovered that her fascination with detail was no mere coincidence, but the prelude to a vocation that would define her life. A native of Puebla—a city of Baroque splendor and inexhaustible artistic heritage—Ivon grew up immersed in an environment of history and beauty, elements that now beat at the heart of every piece she creates. This backdrop served as the catalyst for her profound aesthetic vision, where every form, texture, and symbol carries a transcendental meaning.

Her journey in jewelry began at the age of seventeen, hand-weaving stones and silver with artisanal care. During her formative years at the Universidad de las Américas Puebla (UDLAP), Ivón did more than just excel academically; she began offering her designs to a select circle of clients, taking her first steps as an entrepreneur. From the start, she understood that creativity is limited without the support of rigorous preparation, consistency, and strategic foresight.

Driven by a quest for excellence, Ivón moved to Europe to professionalize her craft. She specialized in jewelry design at the prestigious Istituto Europeo di Design (IED) and later strengthened her executive profile at IE Business School in Madrid, immersing herself in luxury brand management. Her trajectory was further enriched by fashion branding programs in Milan, the world's fashion capital. This triad of design, business acumen, and global projection became the cornerstone of her career.

Sixteen years ago, Mayeh Alta Joyería Mexicana was born—a brand that synthesizes artisanal luxury, cultural identity, and sophistication. Designed with international reach from its inception, the brand was registered in Mexico, the United States, and the European Union. Mayeh emerged with an uncompromising purpose: to project Mexican talent onto the global stage through pieces imbued with soul, history, and deep symbolic value.

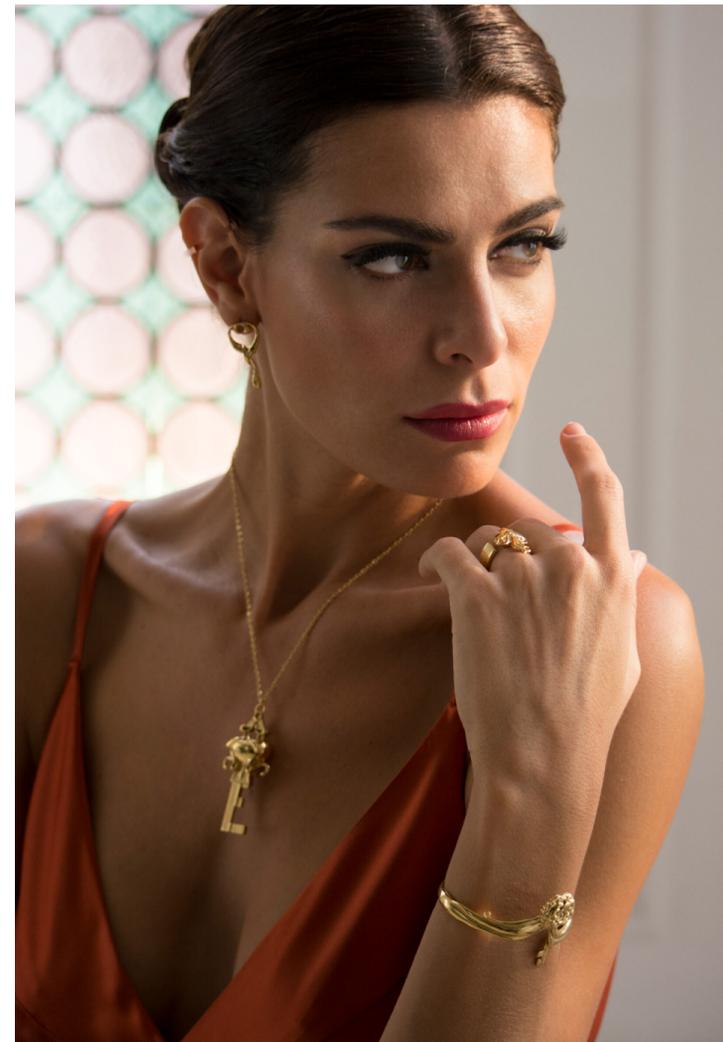
Under Ivon's leadership, Mayeh has conquered key platforms in global design and luxury. Her collections have been featured at international high-jewelry fairs in Singapore, avant-garde design showcases in Milan, and high-level creative forums such as Premium Berlin.

One of the brand's most significant milestones is its close link with elite cultural institutions. Mayeh is the only jewelry house integrated into the International Museum of the Baroque and has developed exclusive collections for the boutiques of iconic landmarks, including the Museo del Prado and the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum in Madrid. These collaborations recognize the exceptional narrative and quality of her work, positioning Mayeh as a bridge between contemporary jewelry and historical heritage.

For Ivon, entrepreneurship is a process of constant evolution. In her quest to solidify a sustainable business model, she has trained with world-class mentors such as Tony Robbins, Robert Kiyosaki, and T. Harv Eker, whose teachings on leadership and financial strategy have been vital to her company's structure.

Mexico remains Mayeh's permanent muse. Her designs reinterpret Talavera pottery, Mayan legends, Barro Negro (black clay), and various ancestral symbols. Each piece is hand-finished by master artisans who pour technique, magic, and national pride into every detail. From the agave to the natural richness of the landscape, Ivón's work is a fusion of tradition and modernity—jewelry that is, in essence, wearable art. *"Let your jewelry be your voice. Let your jewelry be your purpose. Let your jewelry speak for you."*

As a mother of three, entrepreneur, and designer, Ivon balances discipline with passion. Her current focus is consolidating her bespoke design services and leaving an indelible emotional mark. Her legacy aspires to transcend the physical object, turning jewelry into a universal language of love, memory, and belonging.



THE SIX PRINCIPLES OF THE MAYEH PHILOSOPHY

- Strength of Character:** An absolute conviction in one's own vision
- Focus:** Energy directed toward high-impact objectives
- The Brand is Everything:** Identity, consistency, and prestige above all
- Value-Driven Relationships:** Strategic alliances that propel growth
- The Power of Detail:** The very source of true excellence
- Inner Connection:** Creating from the essence of the soul



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FDLA

NEW YORK FASHION WEEK

*The Hispanic Fashion Gala
in the Capital of the World*

Under the strategic leadership of its founder and CEO, Albania Rosario, Fashion Designers of Latin America (FDLA) has established itself as the preeminent bridge between our region's creative talent and the world's most influential stage: New York Fashion Week. More than just a runway, FDLA is a global launchpad that transforms cultural heritage into a narrative of contemporary luxury, connecting visionary designers with the world's most discerning markets.

BY **Martha Phillips** @girlдумonde PHOTOGRAPY **Hideki Aono** @hideki.aono.media



Within the perpetually dynamic framework of New York Fashion Week, one platform continues to fortify the Latin presence on the international calendar: Fashion Designers of Latin America (FDLA). Behind this initiative is its founder and CEO, Albania Rosario, whose vision and steadfastness have successfully positioned this space as a premier showcase for Latin American talent within the New York fashion industry.

This season, FDLA once again demonstrated that Latin American creativity possesses its own unique narrative within the global circuit. The runways brought together a spectrum

of contemporary design—ranging from playful, expressive universes to collections exploring a more structured and sophisticated aesthetic.

Among the most talked-about moments was the participation of the unmistakable Ágatha Ruiz de la Prada, whose vibrant and optimistic aesthetic remains a definitive celebration of color and creative freedom. Alongside her, designers such as Alejandro Barzaga, Victoria Maluff, and Jorge Duque presented collections reflecting the sartorial diversity that defines Latin American fashion today.

The runway also shone with the presence of brands like C'emadier, Más Cincuenta y Siete, Legado, Alanna Colombia, and A Modo Mío. Each ex-

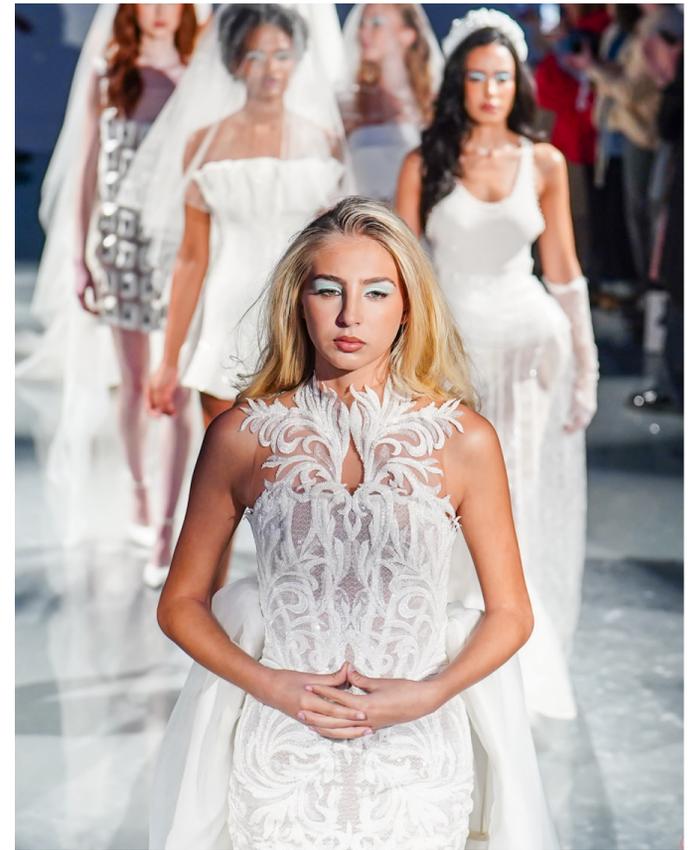
plored new aesthetic and cultural narratives, proving that Latin American fashion extends far beyond apparel to include luxury accessories and innovative proposals rooted in artisanal heritage.

Notably, this edition received the esteemed backing of the Bogotá Chamber of Commerce, whose presence underscores the vital importance of building bridges between institutional support, creative talent, and international markets. Such strategic synergies strengthen the visibility of Latin American designers and open new doors for the region's fashion on the global stage.

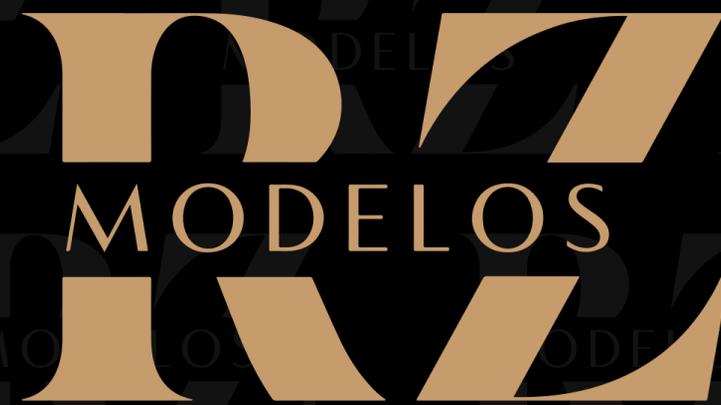
Beyond the catwalks, FDLA has established itself as a pivotal mee-

ting point where designers, specialized press, buyers, and industry influencers converge. This creative and professional exchange is an essential component of the platform's growing relevance within the international fashion calendar.

With each passing season, FDLA reaffirms that Latin American fashion does not merely have a presence in New York—it possesses a clear identity and an increasingly powerful voice within the global landscape. Under the direction of Albania Rosario, this platform continues to serve as a vital conduit between our region's talent and one of the world's most influential fashion arenas.







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SOFIA MILOS

RADIANT *by* NATURE

I first met Sofia Milos when she had already established herself as a compelling presence in Hollywood. What struck me immediately, beyond her striking beauty, was a quiet authority—a stillness that suggested she was in command of her own trajectory. There was no flurry, no need for approval, only clarity. She knew, even then, who she was, and the life she wanted to create. Over the years, our friendship has allowed me to witness how that early clarity matured into a life guided by intention, culture, and a graceful, unshakable confidence.



BY **Wendell Figueroa Ruiz** @wendellfr PHOTOGRAPHY **Daniel Sinoca** @daniel_sinoca_photo_art

“

HAPPINESS IS HEIGHTENED
AWARENESS — BEING FULLY PRESENT
IN THE RICHNESS OF GOD’S GIFTS
AND GRACE.

- SOFIA MILOS

Born in Switzerland to a Greek mother and Italian father, Sofia's identity is a mosaic of languages, traditions, and geographies.

She grew up between Zurich and Rome before moving to America at nineteen, navigating continents with the ease of someone for whom mobility was second nature. This multicultural upbringing did more than make her fluent in seven languages; it shaped the way she perceives the world, reads a room, and moves through it with quiet sophistication. Sofia's presence is a blend of cosmopolitan intelligence and grounded humanity—a duality she inhabits effortlessly.

Art entered her life before anything else. As a child, she drew and painted obsessively, captivated by composition, color, and light. By fifteen, she was modeling professionally, gracing magazine covers around the globe—from a Vogue shoot with Hero in New York to a Marie Claire cover with Demarchelier, among more than twenty others, plus campaigns including Kenzo in Jamaica and shoots with masters like Fabrizio Ferri in Milan. By twenty, fashion design became another channel of expression; by twenty-three, acting emerged naturally, completing the triangle of her artistic life. “Art chose me,” she once told me, and her life has been a continuous dialogue with creation ever since. Even today, her skincare line RADIANT by

Sofia Milos, handcrafted in Florence, Italy, is an extension of this ethos: the canvas may have shifted, but the devotion to artistry remains.

Her body of work is remarkable, yet understated. Audiences recognize her from acclaimed series such as *CSI: Miami*, *The Sopranos*, *ER*, *NCIS*, and *Friends*, where she further demonstrated her versatility as an actress, as well as from her recurring role on *Curb Your Enthusiasm*. And yet, what distinguishes her is not quantity but presence: the subtle power of inhabiting a character fully, of conveying authority and emotional nuance without spectacle. Her role as Donna Annalisa Zucca in *The Sopranos* remains a touchstone for strong female characters in television—a woman commanding space in a world dominated by men, played with an economy of gesture that was magnetic precisely because it was understated.

Sofia's inspirations echo her meticulous approach to her craft. She admires the intelligence and sensuality of Sophia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, and Monica Vitti; the transformative precision of Meryl Streep; the intensity and truth-seeking of Al Pacino and Robert De Niro; and the relentless drive of Tom Cruise. These figures are unified not by fame but by uncompromising commitment. Sofia has mirrored that same ethos in her own journey: no shortcuts, no compromise, just continuous refinement.

Beauty, for her, has never been an accessory. It is structural, embedded in routine, ritual, and intention. Her mornings begin with prayer or gratitude meditation, a deliberate setting of intentions, and a strict adherence to order, even in small acts like making her bed—a habit she says frames her clarity for the day. Movement is ritual: power walks along the ocean, yoga, Pilates, swimming in summer. Sleep, too, is sacred. She speaks of youth not as chronology but as energy: vitality expressed through care for mind, body, and spirit. Nothing is missing, she insists, though horizons remain open and dreams abound—whether returning to *NCIS* sets, exploring new acting roles, or expanding her creative ventures.

This philosophy crystallizes in her work with RADIANT by Sofia Milos. Born from a personal need for purity and nourishment, it is more than a line—it is a daily ritual, a tangible translation of her belief that beauty evolves through consistency and intelligence rather than gimmick. The *Fountain of Youth* cream, light yet potent, nourishes, restores, and enhances, reflecting her own ethos: luxurious yet restrained, effective yet refined, a quiet luxury accessible to those who understand the language of care.

Travel, too, is a lens through which Sofia reads the world. Italy is oxygen for her soul: Rome's cobblestone streets, the Trevi Fountain, the

Pantheon, the Sistine Chapel; Florence, poetry in stone and light; Venice, a city suspended in dream. Greece connects her to her maternal roots; New York to her professional genesis; Miami to unforgettable experiences on *CSI* sets. To Sofia, travel is never merely geography—it is atmosphere, architecture, flavor, movement, and memory, interwoven in the tapestry of lived experience.

Her joys are equally refined: Mediterranean cuisine bright with olive oil and lemon, music by Andrea Bocelli, dark chocolate, roses and sunflowers, the laughter of children, unexpected acts of kindness. Rituals like daily video calls with her mother in Rome anchor her life—a reminder of the sacred in continuity. These small practices, she believes, are the architecture of happiness.

Multicultural. Resilient. Determined. Strong yet romantic, independent yet deeply empathetic. Sofia Milos has built a life with coherence, not contrivance. There are no reinventions imposed by circumstance, only evolution crafted with intention. Obstacles are never destinations; they are passages. The conversation that follows — my signature ten-question interview — allows readers to hear her voice directly, offering intimate insight into a woman whose life is as considered and radiant as the legacy she continues to build.



1. You seem to have it all: beauty, talent, youth... What's missing? Do you feel you still need something more? That's very gracious of you—I believe youth is energy, not a number. What I do believe in is honoring what we're given and maximizing it from the inside out. I take care of my health, my mind, my spirit — and yes, my skin. That philosophy led me to create my own skincare line, born from a desire for purity and true nourishment. I first created it for myself. Sharing it now feels like sharing a personal ritual. As for what's missing? Nothing is missing — but I do still have many dreams and Goals I'd love to fulfill. As long as we are dreaming, we are alive. I recently finished shooting an episode of *NCIS*, and I just love being on set with great talents and professionals in the industry, I definitely want to continue acting, telling powerful stories, entertaining and inspiring globally. I want to comfortably travel, help where needed, create more, expand with global success and add value to millions of people while enjoying the process and create unforgettable memories.

2. When did you know what you wanted to be in life, or which career path you wanted to pursue? Art chose me very early. As a child, I was constantly drawing and painting. I won many competitions at school and was fascinated by composition and color co-ordination's. By fifteen, I was already modeling professionally. I fell in love with photography — the silent power of a single frame. It can be Pure poetry. Ironically, I once imagined myself behind the camera. Instead, I became the subject within it. But I've always loved both worlds — the creation and the embodiment of art. From international modeling — including a prestigious Vogue cover, shot by world renowned photographer Hero in NYC, a Marie Claire cover shot by Demarchelier, among 23 other Editorial covers and multiple campaigns, including a huge Kenzo campaign shot in Jamaica, and memorable shoots with photographers Xavier Vallonrat for VOGUE Italia and Fabrizio Ferri or Sofia Riva in Milan to mention a few among the greats and memories over the course of those 10 years in that world of fashion and beauty in print. Then I added fashion design to my resume' by twenty, I still have those portfolios... and acting by twenty-three, my path evolved naturally I've lived in America and been a SAG member for almost 33 years! The American dream for an Italian immigrant girl. Every chapter has been about expression through Art. Even today, with my skincare line handcrafted in Florence, it's still Art — just applied to skin instead of canvas.

3. Who—or what—inspires you? I am inspired by presence. In cinema, I admire women like Sophia Loren, Gina Lollobrigida, and Monica Vitti —Italian icons who embodied strength and sensual intelligence. Internationally, I deeply respect and admire Meryl Streep for her precision, extraordinary talent and transformation. I also admire the magnetic intensity of actors like Al Pacino and Robert De Niro — that raw commitment to truth beyond the written words. Films that shaped my affinity to films, range from Cinema Paradiso and Il Postino to The Godfather, Goodfellas. In yet a different genre; I loved Atomic Blonde among many other films —ans well as the very imaginative creative detailed work that went into films like Avatar. Extraordinary pieces of Art. What unites them all no matter the genre; is impact. I am drawn to strong female characters. Playing Mafia boss Donna Annalisa Zucca in *The Sopranos* opposite an extraordinary cast was powerful — a woman commanding space and power in a world dominated by men. Today, things have improved much in women roles but when I was cast for this role by David Chase many years ago, it inspired many for years to come. I also love action films. Costarring as female lead opposite Jean-Claude Van Damme in *The Order* was fun. I'd like to do more action films. I admire Tom Cruise for what he has built with Mission: Impossible — true relentless dedication, talent and pure Adrenalin driven entertainment. Inspiration, to me, is commitment without compromise.

4. If you weren't who you are today, who or what would you have liked to be? Still an artist. Perhaps a fashion designer. Or an interior designer shaping elevated spaces. Possibly a film producer or director. Creation is my language. In many ways, entrepreneurship fulfilled that instinct in a new form. Creating RADIANT by Sofia Milos skin care is a dream realized. My first product now launched and available on RADIANT by SofiaMilos.com is the amazing *Fountain of Youth* cream, born from personal need — a chemical-free, farm-sourced, natural skincare that works, hand crafted formulations made in Florence, Italy. It's light and fresh - yet potent, nourishing — designed to visibly smooth, plump, and restore glow. I created what I couldn't find. Art, simply evolved into skin deep Beauty. Makes me happy.

5. What do you enjoy doing when you're not immersed in your professional life? Movement. The ocean. Silence. Andrea Boccelli and dark chocolate. I love power walks along the beach, yoga, Pilates, swimming in the summer. I love drawing, cooking, Art and I love traveling — especially Italy. Rome is magical. I never tire visiting everything in my city when I'm at my mom's. It carries so much history in the air and on every cobble stone you step on to, the Trevi Fountain, Pantheon, the churches, the Sistine chapel, everything is magical and emotional every time. Florence is poetry too. Venice is a dream. Being born in Switzerland exposed me to multiple cultures early, and that shaped my worldview profoundly. Language connects hearts. I speak seven languages. I love dancing and specifically salsa dancing — though now I prefer balance over late nights. I need my beauty sleep. Beauty, art, music and sacred spaces inspire me deeply.

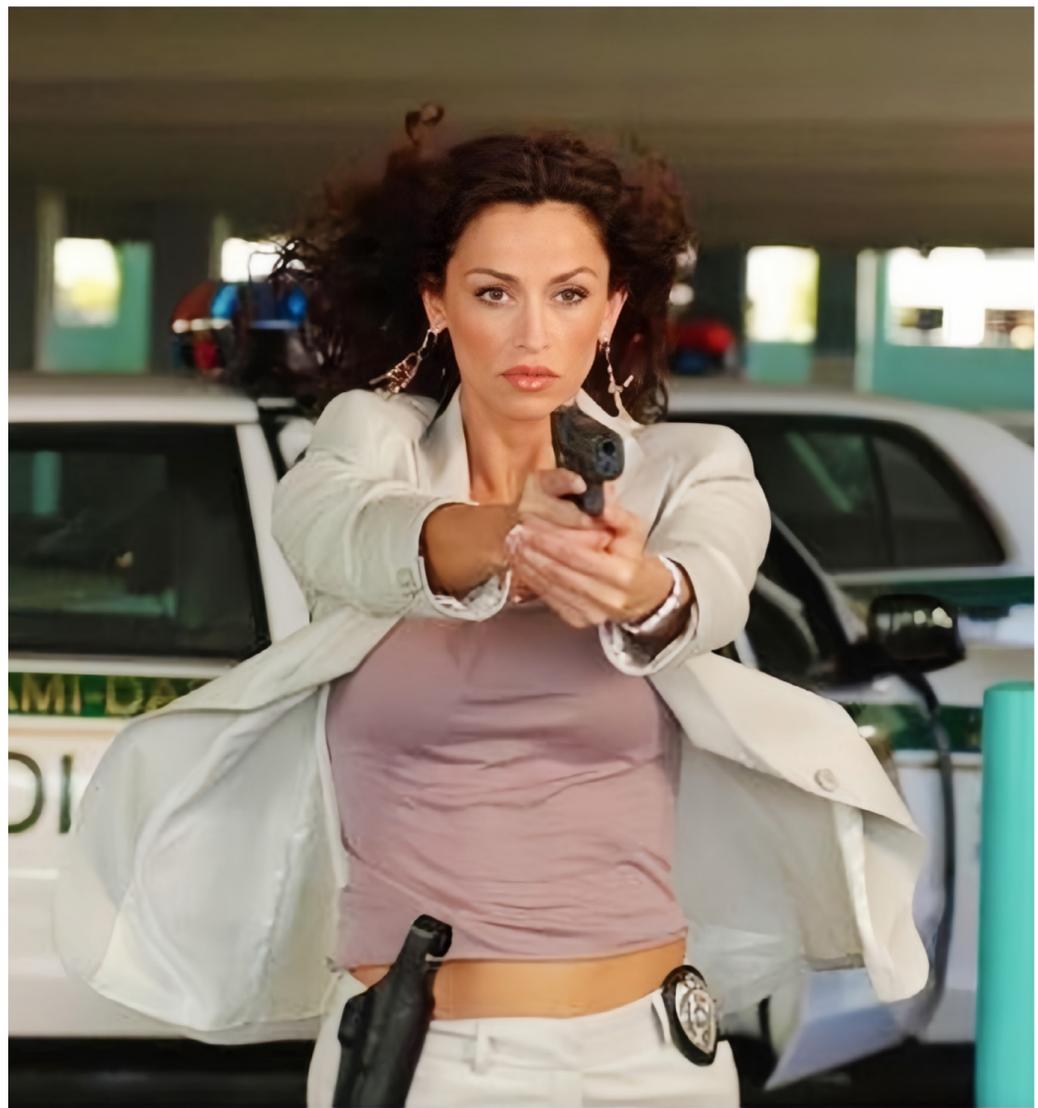




CSI: Miami



Sofia Milos as Annalisa Zucca in The Sopranos



6. What is your favorite destination, and why? Italy will always feel like food for my soul. From Tuscany to Abruzzo, from Rome to small hidden villages throughout Italy, like Spoleto, San Vito Chietino and many more — every corner carries history, culture and of course incredible mediterranean cuisine. Greece touches another side of my heritage — Santorini is breathtaking, Barcelona's architecture fascinates me. I've loved Vienna, Paris, Japan, Australia, New Zealand. I have beautiful memories of Jamaica, Antigua and Bora Bora as well. In America, New York welcomed me when I was only 19 years old and a fashion model. So many great memories. I love Miami, it also holds great memories of shooting some of the best episodes of CSI: Miami over the years. Chicago is a beautiful city too. I shot Dick Wolf's Chicago Justice there with Carl Weathers, Jon Seda, Michal Rispoli Monica among an impressive cast — travel, to me, is about a feeling through its culture, architecture, its food, people and aesthetics — not geography.

7. What is your favorite cuisine? Mediterranean. Clean, simple, balanced. Extra-virgin Olive oil, savory lemon, fresh herbs. Grilled Wild-caught fish. Farm sourced vegetables. Grass-fed pasture raised meats and eggs, Kalamata olives (where my mom is from), fresh mozzarella and the smell of simple basil and tomato sauce ...mamma mia! It's not only one of the healthiest diets in the world — but it's delicious, flavorful, elegant in its simplicity. Flavor without heaviness. Nourishment without excess. Like my skin care line RADIANT by Sofia Milos!

8. What is a day in the life of Sofia Milos like? My ideal is to get 8 hours of sleep — start with my Morning prayer or gratitude meditation. Set my intentions for the day. Make my bed — order creates clarity and sets a high standard. After my morning routine including lemon water and more... I work out. Then creation — whether I'm on set filming or co-developing skincare formulas with my amazing chemist in Florence, or reviewing packaging, or doing interviews, photoshoots or podcasts or in meetings or conference calls. But One ritual never changes: I video call my mother every lunch and evening for her in Rome before she goes to sleep. Thirty minutes of virtual company checking on her or getting a new recipe. That connection is sacred. It's my way of letting her know that I'm here for her and close to her every day. I'm grateful I get to have that. A try to get my steps in every day when I can. Social life, networking and red carpets yes but not to excess. I truly have great friends I love spending time with like sisters, and I'm very grateful. I strive to pay that forth.

9. What makes you happy? Small or big doses of daily beauty. A sunrise. A walk by the ocean. A meaningful conversation. A beautiful film. Acting makes me deeply happy — bringing a story to life through emotion, action and words on a page is magic. Creating brings joy. Makes me feel on purpose. Beautiful Flowers. Like Roses and Sunflowers. Children's laughter. Unexpected kindness moves me deeply. And good chocolate. Happiness is heightened awareness — being fully present in the richness of God's gifts and grace.

10. How would you define yourself? Multicultural. Resilient. Determined. Born in Switzerland to a Greek mother and Italian father, raised with a french family in Zurich where my immigrant parents worked, before moving back to Rome. I moved to America at nineteen —my life has always been ...layered. Not easy, never boring. It taught me adaptability, resilience, determination that built character, earned me my own values, faith, appreciation and respect. I value integrity above status. Ethics above convenience. You can't buy class. The greatest luxury is character and integrity. I am strong and independent —yet still romantic, empathetic, and feminine at heart. Strength does not eliminate softness. And I respect men who allow a woman to be a woman, by being a man who protects and cares without suppressing her great value, intelligence and power. If I commit to a vision, I see it through. I don't believe obstacles are a destination. And I intend to continue evolving — creating, serving, inspiring.



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NOTHING IS MISSING — BUT I DO STILL HAVE MANY DREAMS AND GOALS I'D LOVE TO FULFILL. AS LONG AS WE ARE DREAMING, WE ARE ALIVE.

- SOFIA MILOS



The FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH
cream
Now available at
[RADIANTbySofiaMilos.com](https://www.RADIANTbySofiaMilos.com)

24k

THE MOST
PRECIOUS
METAL IN YOUR
skin care
ROUTINE

PRESENTED BY **NAZ BEAUTY**

Caring for the skin is a ritual of self-love, deserving of the finest ingredients the world has to offer. Gold—revered as the noblest of metals—enters the realm of wellness to elevate our daily routine to an unprecedented level of sophistication. It is not merely about applying a product, but about understanding the alchemy behind skin regeneration. From its millennial history to the innovations of Naz Cosmetics, we explore why gold is the ultimate tool for those seeking a beauty that radiates from within.

STAFF @amarenamag



From the earliest civilizations to today's most avant-garde beauty laboratories, gold has been revered—not merely for its material value, but for its exceptional revitalizing properties. In contemporary cosmetics, this precious metal has established itself as a star ingredient in forms such as 24K gold, colloidal gold, and nanoparticles, acting primarily as a potent antioxidant and a catalyst for cellular regeneration.

Its ability to combat free radicals and reduce inflammation makes it an indispensable ally for those seeking to stall premature aging, improve skin firmness, and reactivate microcirculation for a visibly younger, healthier complexion.

The allure of gold in personal care lies in its multifunctionality, offering benefits that reach from the surface down to the deepest dermal layers. Upon application, it provides immediate luminosity, restoring the face's natural radiance. In the long term, it stimulates the production of collagen and elastin, combating sagging and smoothing fine lines. Furthermore, its anti-inflammatory nature makes it ideal for soothing sensitive or redness-prone skin.

Today, this ingredient is found in a wide variety of formats: from deeply nourishing daily serums and creams to intensive treatment masks and the exclusive gold leaf used in the world's most sophisticated luxury facials. However, for gold to be truly effective rather than just an aesthetic

ornament, the quality and formulation technology are fundamental. As a high-cost component, it is crucial to choose products that guarantee genuine concentrations and proper bioavailability.

In this regard, Naz Cosmetics elevates the standard of skincare with its 24K Gold Serum, designed to transform your routine following your daily cleanse. By utilizing undiluted pure gold, this serum does more than just hydrate; it maximizes nutrient delivery for radiant, rich skin.

Understanding the science behind ingredients allows for conscious beauty decisions. Integrating the 24K Gold Serum by Naz Cosmetics is a choice for authentic luxury that actively works for the health and beauty of your skin.



Wendell's WORLD

*Exploring the art of living
— in all its expressions*



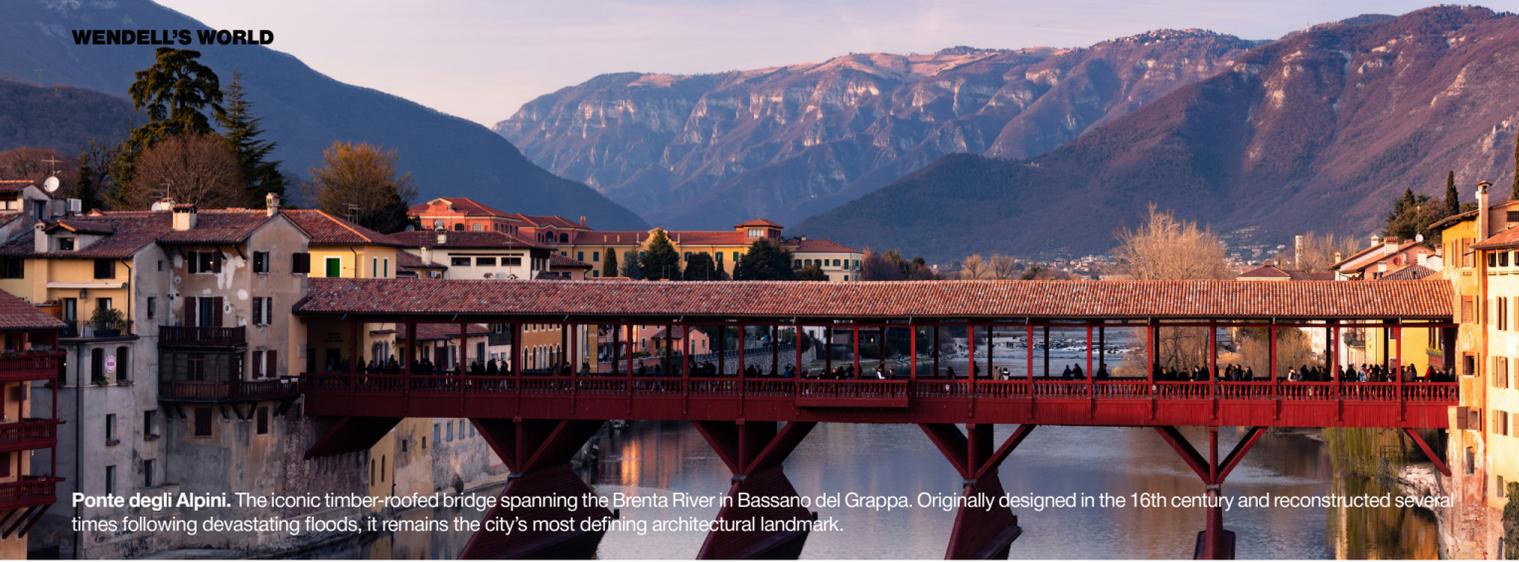
BASSANO DEL GRAPPA

Memory, Friendship,
and the Passage of Time

There are cities we visit, and there are cities that become part of who we are. For me, Bassano del Grappa is interwoven with my youth and my sense of belonging. For years on end, I returned there—not as a visitor, but as someone who knew they were expected, welcomed, and recognized. Some of my happiest memories were born beneath its arcades and beside the constant flow of the Brenta. Returning after eleven years for the wedding of my dear friend Valentina felt like coming back to a place that still feels like home.

BY Wendell Figueroa Ruiz ©@wendellfr

Panoramic view of Bassano del Grappa, Vicenza, Veneto, Italy. Photo: Edoardo Bortoli via Unsplash



Ponte degli Alpini. The iconic timber-roofed bridge spanning the Brenta River in Bassano del Grappa. Originally designed in the 16th century and reconstructed several times following devastating floods, it remains the city's most defining architectural landmark.

Piazza Libertà



There are cities we visit, and there are cities that become part of who we are. For me, Bassano del Grappa is woven into the fabric of my youth and my sense of belonging. For years and years, I returned there — not as a tourist, but as someone who felt expected, welcomed, known. Some of my happiest memories were shaped along its arcaded streets and beside the steady current of the Brenta River. Returning after eleven years, for my dear friend Valentina's wedding, was not merely a journey back. It was stepping once again into a place that still feels like home.

Arriving in Bassano, I experienced something rare: familiarity without distance. The sound of footsteps on stone beneath the porticos, the quiet hum of conversation in the piazza, the measured rhythm of daily life — it all returned instantly. Within hours of reconnecting with some of my closest friends, it felt as though no time had passed at all. There was a small gathering the day before the wedding, an evening of shared laughter and long conversations, and with it came a flood of memories. There were also absences — friends from another chapter of my life whom I did not see, entirely separate from the circle celebrating the wedding — and that absence was unmistakable. But life evolves, and paths diverge. The friendships that endure speak more clearly than the ones that quietly fall away.

The city itself remains as compelling as ever. The wooden *Ponte degli Alpini*, originally conceived in the 16th century by Andrea Palladio and rebuilt over time after floods, continues to define Bassano's identity. Crossing it at sunset, when the light settles softly over the water and Monte Grappa rises in the distance, is one of those distinctly Italian experiences that requires nothing more than presence. Its elegance lies in its restraint.

Beyond the bridge, the historic center unfolds with Renaissance façades, intimate piazzas, and porticoed walkways that invite deliberate exploration. Bassano's position at the foothills of the Venetian Prealps gave it strategic importance, particularly during the First World War, when nearby Monte Grappa became the site of decisive battles that shaped Italy's modern history.

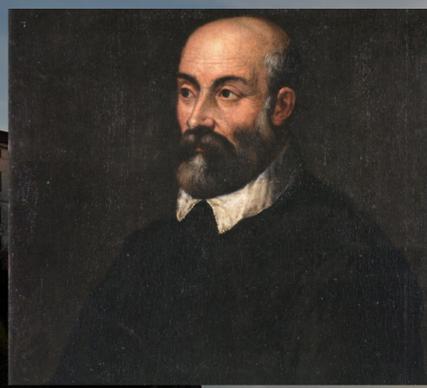
During this return, I visited once again the *Ossario* — a monumental former church that now serves as the resting place of thousands of soldiers who perished in the First World War. Standing beneath its solemn vaults, surrounded by ordered rows of memory, one feels history not as abstraction but as weight. Among those interred is H.R.H. Umberto di Savoia-Aosta, Count of Salemi, underscoring the national significance of the site. It is not dramatic; it is dignified. And it leaves an impression that lingers.



Ossario. A monumental historic church in Bassano del Grappa, today serving as a Military Ossuary. It houses the remains of Italian soldiers fallen during the First World War and is the final resting place of H.R.H. Umberto of Savoy-Aosta, Count of Salemi.



LOCAL VISIONARIES



Andrea Palladio. The 16th-century architect whose classical designs profoundly shaped European and American architecture. His work in the Veneto region — including villas, churches, and bridges — remains a cornerstone of Renaissance architectural heritage.



Giorgione. A Renaissance painter born in Castelfranco Veneto around 1477. Known for his poetic, atmospheric compositions, he was one of the most influential artists of the Venetian school despite his short life.



Baccalà alla Vicentina. A traditional Venetian dish made from salt cod, slowly braised with milk, olive oil, onions, and anchovies. Usually served with polenta, it is one of Northern Italy's most iconic and cherished specialties.



Grappa. Served traditionally in a tall, slender glass, the crystal-clear spirit catches the natural light, highlighting its pristine purity. With its intense aroma and nuanced flavor, Grappa is the quintessential conclusion to a hearty meal—a moment of pure indulgence to be slowly savored.

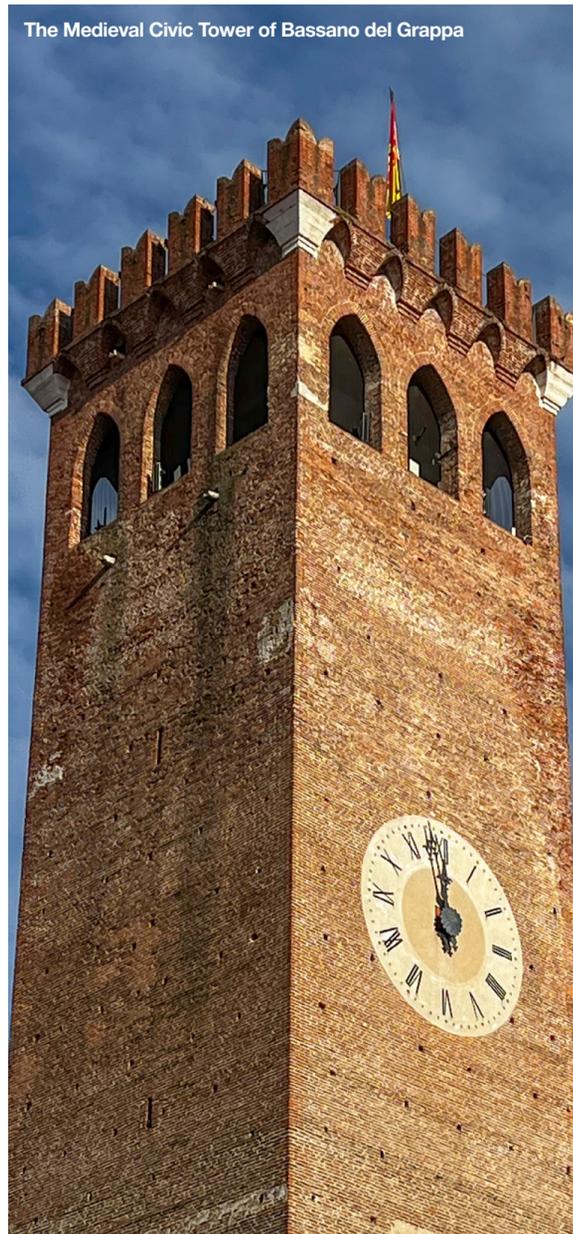


Bigoli al Ragù. A traditional Venetian pasta—thick and elongated—typically crafted from whole-wheat flour and pressed through bronze dies. This bronze-extrusion process creates a porous texture, ideal for clinging to savory sauces. It is traditionally served with simple, flavorful preparations that highlight its rustic yet refined character.



Artisanship as a Family Legacy.

Beyond mere aesthetics, the traditional ceramics of Bassano are defined by meticulousness and integrity. In these workshops, technique does not seek fleeting applause, but rather the endurance of a craft shared by hands that carry the weight of their own history.



The Medieval Civic Tower of Bassano del Grappa

The landscape surrounding Bassano contributes significantly to its appeal, but what elevates the experience further is its proximity to some of the Veneto's most refined small towns. Within a short drive, one can enjoy an afternoon of understated discovery. Marostica, framed by medieval walls that climb toward its upper castle, is known for its iconic chessboard *piazza* — yet beyond the spectacle lies a town of elegant calm, ideal for a late afternoon espresso or a measured stroll along its ramparts.

Castelfranco Veneto, birthplace of Giorgione, offers a perfectly preserved walled center and harmonious arcades that reflect a cultivated Renaissance sensibility. And then there is Asolo, long favored by artists, writers, and discerning travelers, whose panoramic terraces and refined cafés lend it a quiet sophistication without sacrificing authenticity.

Taken together, these neighboring towns transform a stay in Bassano into something broader:

a thoughtfully composed exploration of northern Italy — free from excess, rich in character.

Cuisine here is rooted firmly in Veneto tradition. *Baccalà alla Vicentina*, handmade *bigoli*, seasonal vegetables, local cheeses — this is food anchored in place rather than fashion. Meals unfold without urgency, often accompanied by the region's celebrated *grappa*. Bassano's distillation heritage remains integral to its identity, and visiting one of its historic distilleries reveals a craft refined through generations of discipline and pride.

Equally enduring is the town's ceramics tradition. Family-run workshops continue to produce hand-painted pieces whose techniques have been preserved with admirable consistency. In these ateliers, craftsmanship is neither performance nor nostalgia — it is continuity.

What moved me most during this visit was the ease with which the city received me.



VENETO
HEART OF THE
ADRIATIC &
AN ITALIAN
TREASURE

The Veneto region, situated in Northeastern Italy with its capital in the iconic city of Venice, stands as one of Europe's most dynamic and most-visited destinations. Geographically, the region is defined by its remarkable topographical diversity, stretching from the majestic peaks of the Dolomites and the Prealps in the north to the sprawling plains of the Po Valley and the Adriatic coastline in the south, further encompassing the eastern shores of Lake Garda. With a population of nearly five million residents across seven provinces, Veneto possesses an incalculable historical heritage shaped by centuries of dominance under the Republic of Venice. Its illustrious "cities of art" attract millions of visitors annually: Verona, famed for its Roman Arena and the setting of *Romeo and Juliet*; Padua, home to one of the world's oldest universities; and Vicenza, renowned for the architectural masterpieces and villas of Andrea Palladio. Economically, Veneto serves as a fundamental engine for Italy, excelling in both the industrial and artisanal sectors, as well as in the production of internationally acclaimed wines.

Eleven years had passed, yet I felt as though I had never truly left. Being present for Valentina was reason enough to return. But the greater gift was confirming how deeply this place remains embedded in my life.

Bassano may not command international headlines, and perhaps that is precisely its strength. It offers authenticity without spectacle, beauty without excess, and history without crowds. It is a place to walk slowly, to sit comfortably, to reconnect — with others and with oneself.

I recommend it wholeheartedly. Not as a destination to check off, but as a city to experience deliberately. Returning reminded me that some places do not fade with time — they root themselves more deeply within you. I left again with gratitude; certain I will be back soon. There are cities we visit, and there are cities that live within us.

For me, Bassano will always be the latter.



The Brenta and the Venetian Alps



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GIFT GUIDE Lunar year of THE HORSE

The indomable spirit of the horse arrives at Wendell's World. In this edition, we present an exclusive curation of twenty pieces that capture the freedom, courage, and elegance of the new Lunar Season. From artisanal treasures to fragrances evoking distant journeys, each selection is a tribute to movement and refinement—designed for those who understand that true luxury resides in the intention and the story behind every object.

As the Lunar New Year gallops into our calendars, the Year of the Horse inspires a collection of gifts that celebrate vitality, movement, and the adventurous spirit. In this edition of Wendell's World, I have curated a selection that speaks to the cosmopolitan, sophisticated, and worldly individual—whether for him, her, or those who embrace a unisex sensibility. From artisanal objects to rare fragrances, each piece is chosen to evoke energy, refinement, and the joy of discovery.

This guide is for everyone who seeks to honor the season with thoughtful gestures. It includes items for collectors, connoisseurs, and travelers who cherish craftsmanship, design, and storytelling in their objects. Each gift resonates with the symbolic qualities of the horse: courage, freedom, forward motion, and elegance—ideals that transcend geography and culture. In curating this selection, I've journeyed through ateliers, boutiques, and ateliers worldwide to bring you offerings that are both meaningful and wearable, functional and exquisite.

From luminous crystal sculptures to fragrances that linger like whispered memories, from sartorial accessories to innovative modern luxuries,

every item in this guide has been chosen to capture both the tangible and intangible essence of the season. These are not merely objects; they are companions to moments of celebration, inspiration, and reflection. They embody an elevated lifestyle, the one I have explored as a world traveler and storyteller, and now offer you to delight your senses and the senses of those you gift.

Luxury, in my experience, is not simply about rarity or price, but about intention and resonance. This guide invites you to experience gifts that convey thoughtfulness, individuality, and vitality. It is a collection that harmonizes aesthetics and meaning, where each object tells a story and opens a doorway to a world of refinement and curiosity.

In Wendell's World, the Lunar Year of the Horse is a reminder that life is in motion, and the gifts we choose reflect the energy we wish to share. Whether you are exploring new horizons, honoring tradition, or celebrating relationships dear to you, these twenty selections embody elegance, freedom, and the spirit of forward movement—a tribute to the horse and to a life lived with grace and intentionality.

BY Wendell Figueroa Ruiz @wendellfr



SWATCH www.swatch.com

Riding the Clouds Watch

The Riding the Clouds watch by Swatch, realized with artist Yu Wenjie, is an unabashedly cheerful ode to the Year of the Horse: two galloping steeds—one light, one dark—flow across the dial and strap amid stylized clouds and flames, a modern riff on traditional scroll painting that reads as both talisman and plaything. Raised print lends a palpable sense of motion to the composition; gold-tone hands and small crown add a touch of horological glint to an otherwise joyous, wearable canvas. Affordable, immediate, and unmistakably of the moment, Riding the Clouds translates zodiac symbolism into everyday optimism: yin and yang, luck and audacity, the Fire Horse's forward energy rendered in color and pattern rather than complication. Priced at US \$ 105 and offered across Swatch boutiques and online, it is the kind of object that belongs in a packed carryall or on the wrist of a traveler who favours story over status—a small, spirited inheritance for the year ahead. \$2150 MXN.

JEWELRY IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE HORSE

The equestrian world has long been associated with discipline, heritage, and controlled strength — qualities that naturally translate into the language of high jewelry. The clean arc of a stirrup, the structure of a bridle, the symmetry of polished tack — these elements offer designers a vocabulary rooted in balance and precision. The horse, as symbol, represents partnership, confidence, and forward momentum — themes that resonate strongly within fine craftsmanship.

In the ateliers of Oscar Heyman and Verragio, equestrian inspiration is interpreted through distinct design philosophies. Oscar Heyman, renowned since 1912 for its platinum mastery and exceptional gemstone sourcing, approaches the motif with architectural restraint and impeccable proportion. Verragio, celebrated for its intricate settings and sculptural detailing, brings a more ornamental dimension, echoing the refined embellishment found in traditional equestrian regalia. Each house reflects the spirit of the horse through its own aesthetic lens.

The pieces that follow are not literal tributes, but sophisticated interpretations. They capture strength through structure, elegance through line, and heritage through craftsmanship. In doing so, they affirm that equestrian influence in jewelry is not a trend, but an enduring design language grounded in refinement and purpose.

VERRAGIO www.verragio.com



Signature Ring
18 Kt. white gold, .80 cts. of diamonds
\$6300 USD



Belle bracelet
18 Kt. yellow gold and 1.95 cts. of diamonds
\$23650 USD



Reverie pearl necklace
18 Kt. white gold, pearls and .55 cts. of diamonds
\$7400 USD

Signature bangle
18 Kt. rose gold and 2.70 cts. of diamonds
\$22300 USD

OSCAR HEYMAN www.oscarheyman.com



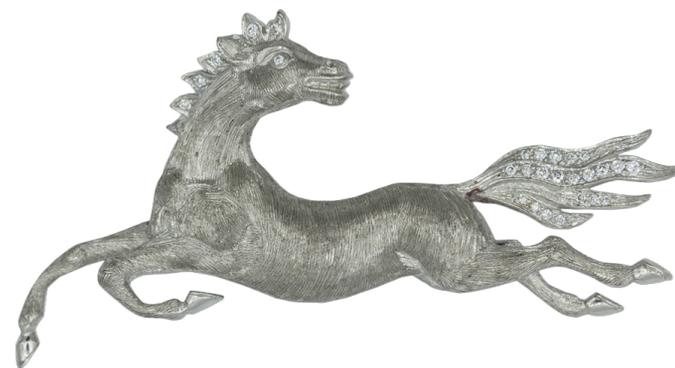
Diamond horse head brooch
Price on request
Platinum, 18 kt. yellow gold, a .12 cts. sapphire cabochon, 1.77 cts. of diamond baguettes, 2.88 cts. of sapphires, a .04 cts. round fancy color diamond, 2.29 cts. of round diamonds and 4.29 cts. of tapered baguette diamonds



18 kt. yellow gold, platinum and .60 cts. of diamonds



Horseshoe cufflinks
Platinum, .62 cts. of diamonds and .84 cts. of sapphires
\$12500 USD



Horse brooch
Platinum and a .12 cts. fancy diamond
Price on request



Race horse brooch
Platinum, .08 cts. of sapphires, .02 cts. of rubies and 1.24 cts. of diamonds
Price on request

LEGACY COLLECTION BY LIONHEART

Within the world of fine jewelry, few motifs carry the emotional resonance of the horse — and with the Legacy Collection, Lionheart transforms that symbolism into wearable heirlooms. Conceived as a love letter to connection, the collection draws inspiration from the enduring bond between horses and humans — a relationship defined by trust, strength, gentleness, and unspoken understanding. Each sculpted silhouette captures not merely physical beauty, but the quiet intelligence and emotional depth that make these creatures so profoundly moving.

The four pieces featured here — from the diamond-intense Legacy Majestic Horse Pin and Pendant in 18-karat yellow gold (3.80 carats of white and fancy diamonds accented by black diamonds), to the extraordinary Majestic Horse Brooch and Pendant adorned with 6.82 carats of fancy diamonds, mother-of-pearl, and tiger's eye — express both artistic virtuosity and symbolic weight. The Legacy Majestic Satin Horse Pin and Pendant and the Satin Mother of Pearl Horse Brooch and Pendant, rendered in yellow gold with refined diamond pavé and luminous nacre, offer a softer yet equally powerful interpretation of equestrian grace. Each piece is sculptural, dimensional, and designed to transcend seasons — jewels intended not merely to adorn, but to endure.

Beyond their aesthetic splendor, the Legacy Collection carries meaningful purpose: a portion of proceeds supports a horse rescue sanctuary in upstate New York. In honoring the horse as muse, Lionheart extends its reverence into tangible care and protection — ensuring that beauty is matched by compassion. For the Year of the Horse, these jewels become more than exquisite statements; they are symbols of loyalty, connection, and legacy itself — reminders that true luxury lies not only in rarity, but in heart.

LIONHEART www.lionheartjewelry.com



Legacy Majestic Horse brooch and pendant
18 Kt. yellow and white gold, .43 cts. of diamonds, .08 cts. of brown diamonds, 6.82 cts. of fancy diamonds, Mother of Pearl and Tiger's Eye.
\$44500 USD



Legacy Satin Mother of Pearl Horse Brooch & Pendant
18 Kt. yellow gold and .60 cts. of mixed fancy colored and white diamonds, and mother of pearl
\$28500 USD



Legacy Majestic Horse diamond pin and pendant
18 Kt. yellow gold, 3.80 cts. of white and fancy diamonds and .34 cts. of black diamonds
\$24000 USD



Legacy Majestic Satin Horse Pin & Pendant
18 Kt. yellow gold and .68 cts. of diamonds
\$23500 USD

GOLDEN RADIANCE IN MOTION

Few houses have elevated the Golden South Sea pearl to the realm of high jewelry quite like Jeweler. Cultivated in the pristine waters of the Philippines, these rare pearls are celebrated for their natural golden luster — a hue formed not by treatment, but by nature itself. For the Year of the Horse, two distinct pieces from the maison reflect both refinement and spontaneity: Petits Bonheurs and Toccata. The Petits Bonheurs pendant captures the quiet

elegance of everyday joy. Set in 18 Kt. yellow gold and accented with delicate diamonds, the 11 mm. semi-baroque Golden South Sea pearl radiates warmth with subtle individuality. Its softly irregular silhouette ensures that no two are ever identical — a reminder that beauty often lies in nuance. It's a graceful expression of lightness and sentiment, perfect for those who understand that luxury is found as much in simplicity as in grandeur.

If Petits Bonheurs whispers, the Toccata brooch speaks with confident artistry. Inspired by the improvisational brilliance of the Renaissance musical form from which it takes its name, the piece centers on an 18 mm. light champagne Keshi pearl — baroque in form, dramatic in presence. Set in 18 Kt. yellow gold and illuminated with 0.345 carats of diamonds, it celebrates movement, unpredictability, and natural asymmetry. Price upon request,

Toccata is not merely adornment; it is a conversation between nature and craftsmanship, echoing the spirited freedom that defines both the baroque pearl and the Year of the Horse.

Together, these creations affirm Jeweler's mastery in transforming the rare Golden South Sea pearl into contemporary heirlooms — jewels that balance discipline with spontaneity, structure with expressive form.



Petits Bonheurs Pendant
18 Kt. yellow gold, an 11 mm. Semi-Baroque Shape, Gold South Sea pearl and .024 cts. of diamonds
\$1080 USD



Toccata Brooch
18 Kt. yellow gold, an 18 mm. Baroque Shape, Light Champagne Keshi pearl and .345 cts. of diamonds
Price upon request

JEWELMER CONTACTO @girl Dumonde

FLEUR D'PINS www.fleurdpins.com



Red Pony Hair Budded Starflower Brooch
 Handcrafted in New York City, this exquisite brooch from Fleur'd Pins captures the energy and elegance of the Year of the Horse. Each petal is meticulously shaped from rich red pony hair, accented by a subtle gold lamé lining that catches the light in a whisper of opulence. The Budded Starflower silhouette itself evokes celestial harmony, nodding to astrology and the guiding constellations, making it both a fashion statement and a talisman for good fortune. The versatility of its leather-affixed pin backing allows this creation to adorn jackets, scarves, or handbags, making it a wearable piece of art. Every brooch is unique, reflecting the brand's devotion to craftsmanship, individuality, and tactile luxury. The red color, auspicious in Chinese tradition, symbolizes vitality, prosperity, and forward movement, perfectly aligning with the spirit of the Lunar New Year.

\$258 USD

RIEDEL www.nachtmann.com

Riedel Horse Decanter

The Horse Decanter by RIEDEL translates equestrian strength into sculptural crystal, pressing a concave horse profile into its luminous surface as both tribute and design statement. The silhouette is subtle yet commanding — a quiet embossing that transforms a functional wine vessel into a centerpiece of intention. Its elongated, flowing neck encourages graceful movement during service, turning each pour into a gesture rather than a routine. Handcrafted by RIEDEL's master glassmakers, the decanter balances artistry with performance. A sleek black stripe — created by introducing a rod of black crystal into molten glass — lends graphic precision and modern contrast. Designed to hold a standard 750 ml bottle, it allows wine the space to breathe, softening tannins and amplifying aromatics. Presented in a signature gift box and intended for careful handwashing, it is both ritual object and refined indulgence — a fitting homage to the elegance and forward momentum of the horse. \$399 USD



FRESHBOX DE CIGARBROS www.freshboxcigars.com



CigarBros® FreshBox® Humidor

The FreshBox® by CigarBros® elevates the art of cigar collecting for both novice enthusiasts and seasoned connoisseurs. Its lightweight, impact-resistant design houses a patent-pending Max Flow™ interior that ensures consistent humidity and optimal temperature for up to 50 cigars. The dual-layer system, moderated by Boveda® humidity packs, preserves every cigar's aroma and taste, creating a ritual as refined as the cigars themselves. Beyond functionality, FreshBox is a statement of modern luxury. Its modular exterior allows multiple units to stack via rare-earth magnets, while six sophisticated colors and exclusive collaborations with iconic brands like Romeo y Julieta, Cohiba, and Oliva offer a curated introduction to the world of premium cigars. Each Collector Series includes carefully selected three-packs, making it a thoughtful gift that blends craftsmanship, aesthetics, and indulgence.

\$99 - 199 USD

MONTBLANC



Meisterstück Le Grand Fountain Pen

Writing becomes a luxurious ritual with Montblanc's Meisterstück Le Grand Fountain Pen. Its precious resin body, platinum-coated fittings, and perfectly balanced nib make every signature and note a moment of ceremony. The pen's design evokes timeless craftsmanship, echoing the grace and precision of equine form in motion. For collectors and executives alike, this pen offers more than functionality: it is a tool for articulation, creativity, and expression. Owning a Montblanc is a statement of intention and distinction, mirroring the strength and elegance the horse represents in Chinese culture. \$940 USD

www.montblanc.com

DAUM www.daum.fr

Cavalcade Vase

The Cavalcade vase by Daum captures the proud spirit of the purebred Arab horse — one of the world's most ancient and revered breeds, whose origins trace back more than 4,500 years to Mesopotamia. Recognizable by its expressive head, arched neck, and raised tail, the Arab embodies resilience, bravery, and refined nobility. In this luminous composition, the horse's distinctive bearing is sculpted in crystal, transforming the vase into a tribute to strength and elegance in motion. Handcrafted in Nancy, France, using Daum's signature pâte de cristal technique, the piece reveals a velvety translucency and remarkable sculptural depth that animate light in subtle tonal variations. Each vase is individually handmade and signed "Daum France" — affirming its authenticity and artisanal mastery. Both collectible and functional, Cavalcade elevates floral arrangements into artful statements while honoring the enduring poetry of the equestrian world.

€18000



HERMÈS



Hermès Silk Scarf "Harnais de Cœur"

The Harnais de Cœur (harness of the heart) scarf reinterprets Hermès' equestrian heritage through a romantic and historically rooted lens. Inspired by a decorative plate from 1804 preserved in the Émile Hermès collection, the design transforms harness elements into a poetic composition where straps, buckles, and ornamental details converge into subtle heart motifs. Conceived by Daiske Nomura, the carré balances structure and sentiment, celebrating the Maison's saddle-making origins while infusing them with charm and expressive warmth. Crafted in France from luminous silk twill with hand-rolled edges, the 90 x 90 cm scarf embodies both technical precision and artistic refinement. Its rich colorways and intricate detailing allow it to shift effortlessly from classic necktie to headscarf or handbag accent. More than an accessory, Harnais de Cœur is a study in heritage and emotion — a piece that honors craftsmanship while inviting personal interpretation and modern elegance.

\$600 USD



Twilly d'Hermès Eau Poivrée
Twilly d'Hermès Eau Poivrée is a playful yet sophisticated fragrance inspired by the youthful energy and independent spirit of Hermès' modern woman. Notes of ginger, tuberose, and sandalwood create a subtle warmth, evoking motion and vivacity, a perfect ode to the horse's vitality in Chinese symbolism. The slender, colorful bottle, reminiscent of Hermès' signature silk twilly scarves, transforms the fragrance into a fashion accessory. Its unpretentious yet confident personality makes it ideal for those who wish to celebrate movement, elegance, and individuality — qualities synonymous with both the Lunar New Year and contemporary femininity.

\$115 USD

Galop d'Hermès Eau de Parfum

Created in 2016 by Christine Nagel for the House of Hermès, Galop d'Hermès is a study in movement — a fragrance that captures the spirit of the stable translated into feminine strength. Conceived as a composition painted with two emblematic materials of the Maison — leather and rose — it reveals the supple sensuality of saddle-worn hide entwined with the velvety flesh of blooming petals. A touch of saffron lends warmth and quiet intensity, creating a scent that feels both intimate and resolutely modern. The sculptural bottle, curved like a stirrup suspended in motion, transforms the daily ritual into an object of design. For the Year of the Horse, Galop speaks with clarity: freedom, vitality, courage — not as spectacle, but as cultivated elegance. It is movement distilled into refinement, a fragrance that advances with confidence and grace.

\$279 USD



POLO BY RALPH LAUREN www.fragancenet.com

Three Expressions of Motion

Few American houses translate equestrian heritage into modern vitality quite like Ralph Lauren. Within the Polo universe, movement becomes identity — athletic, confident, and aspirational. For the Year of the Horse, three fragrances — Polo Red, Big Pony #2, and Polo Earth — interpret momentum through fire, romance, and grounded freedom. Polo Red is pure propulsion. Grapefruit and cranberry ignite the senses before red saffron and red sage introduce warmth and intensity, settling into a smoldering amber base. It is bold yet controlled — urban energy harnessed with purpose. Big Pony #2, for women, offers a spirited counterpoint: tart cranberry softened by creamy tonka mousse creates a playful yet assured femininity, reflecting a stride that is light, romantic, and forward-looking. With Polo Earth, the narrative turns expansive. Radiant citrus and aromatic herbs unfold into musk, cedar, and Haitian vetiver, producing a fresh yet grounded composition. Together, these three scents capture different tempos of strength — dynamic, optimistic, and free — echoing the enduring symbolism of the horse: power guided by elegance.



Big Pony #2
\$46.99 USD



Polo Red Eau de Parfum
\$106.99 USD



Polo Earth
\$100.99 USD

GUERLAIN www.guerlain.com

Shalimar Souffle de Parfum

Guerlain's iconic Shalimar reinvents itself in the Souffle de Parfum, a luminous fragrance that marries citrus top notes with the sensuality of vanilla and soft white musk. This modern iteration retains the legendary essence of the original while offering a lighter, airier veil that dances delicately on the skin — perfect for the refined woman who values heritage and innovation. Its elegant bottle, reminiscent of Art Deco refinement, makes it an ornamental treasure in addition to a sensory delight. Shalimar Souffle de Parfum embodies sophistication, a celebration of femininity, and the spirit of forward motion — resonant with the vitality and courage symbolized by the Year of the Horse.

\$99.89 USD



\$135 USD

L'Heure Bleue Eau de Toilette

Few fragrances carry the quiet authority of time as gracefully as L'Heure Bleue, composed in 1912 by Jacques Guerlain. Inspired by that suspended moment between sunset and nightfall — when “the night has not yet found its star” — it captures a fleeting harmony between light and shadow. Powdered iris, heliotrope, and soft vanilla unfold with intimate sensuality, enveloping the skin in a tender, timeless aura. Encased in Raymond Guerlain's iconic “inverted heart” bottle, adorned with Art Nouveau scrollwork and crowned by its delicate hollowed heart stopper, the fragrance stands as an olfactive heirloom. For the Year of the Horse, it evokes not movement, but poise — a reminder that true elegance resides in restraint, in depth, and in the luminous pause before the night begins.

PARFUMS DE MARLY www.fragancenet.com

A Modern Equestrian Symphony

Within the world of Parfums de Marly, the horse is not merely emblem — it is origin, spirit, and narrative. Inspired by the grandeur of the 18th-century Château de Marly and the aristocratic passion for pure-bred steeds, the maison composes fragrances that move with power and precision. For the Year of the Horse, five distinct creations — Pegasus, Perseus, Percival, Kalan, and Palatine — form a compelling olfactive collection that captures strength, radiance, charisma, sensuality, and grace. Pegasus remains a house signature: warm almond, heliotrope, and lavender unfurl over amber and sandalwood in a composition that feels both enveloping and commanding. It is polished yet magnetic — a fragrance that suggests tailored evening elegance and controlled intensity. Perseus, by contrast, greets the day with luminous citrus and refined vetiver, its ambergris and dry woods leaving a radiant trail reminiscent of sunlight touching stone façades and manicured gardens. Together, they represent dusk and dawn — two expressions of masculine refinement in motion. With Percival, freshness acquires aristocratic clarity. Bergamot, mandarin, and lavender create an immediate impression of vitality, while amber wood and musk anchor the scent in confident sophistication. Kalan introduces contrast: blood orange and black pepper spark against lavender and orange blossom, settling into a textured base of tonka, sandalwood, and moss. It is bold, modern, and slightly provocative — a unisex composition that mirrors the spirited unpredictability of a thoroughbred at full stride. Completing the quintet, Palatine offers a contemporary feminine interpretation of the house's equestrian ethos. Bergamot and pink pepper shimmer at the opening before soft florals and woods lend depth and poise. Elegant without fragility, luminous without excess, it embodies cultivated confidence. As a collective, these five fragrances do not merely reference the horse — they channel its vitality, discipline, and forward momentum. In each bottle, movement becomes memory, and heritage becomes modern expression.



Palatine
\$506.99 USD



Pegasus
\$379.99 USD



Kalan
\$408.99 USD



Percival
\$429.99 USD



Perseus
\$414.99 USD

JO MALONE LONDON www.jomalone.com



Red Roses Cologne
Jo Malone's Red Roses Cologne celebrates vibrancy and refined simplicity. Carefully blended extracts from seven of the world's most exquisite roses create a fragrance that is fresh, elegant, and timeless. It captures the romantic and uplifting energy associated with renewal and forward motion, echoing the horse's symbolism in the Lunar Year. Its understated bottle is an object of refinement, transforming a daily gesture into an experience of luxury. Ideal for both gifting and personal indulgence, Red Roses offers an olfactory celebration of beauty, vitality, and presence. \$142 USD

ROJA PARFUMS www.rojaparfums.com



Elysium Parfum pour Homme

Roja Parfums' Elysium for men is a fragrance that transcends mere scent to become a declaration of refinement. Fresh citrus and aromatic green notes open to a rich, textured base of woods and musk, capturing strength, elegance, and the adventurous spirit of the modern gentleman. Each spray offers a subtle yet enduring presence, ideal for a man who moves through the world with confidence and curiosity. Crafted with an obsessive attention to quality and composition, Elysium balances boldness and sophistication, mirroring the poise of a stallion in motion. Its bottle, a study in transparency and light, communicates a restrained luxury that elevates everyday rituals into moments of reflection and pleasure. \$495 USD

BYREDO www.byredo.com

Bal d'Afrique Eau de Parfum

More than a fragrance, Bal d'Afrique is a love letter to multiculturalism — inspired by Ben Gorham's memories of Africa and the emotional landscapes shaped by travel. It opens with luminous bergamot and African marigold, bright and effervescent, before unfolding into a heart of violet and cyclamen that evokes both elegance and untamed beauty. A base of vetiver, musk, and tonka bean lingers with warmth and depth, creating a composition that feels vibrant yet grounded, sophisticated yet alive. For the Year of the Horse, Bal d'Afrique resonates with energy, curiosity, and forward motion. It is a scent for those who move through the world with openness and refinement — whether crossing continents or navigating the rhythm of the city. Subtle yet magnetic, it leaves behind not just a trail, but a story of exploration and cultivated joie de vivre. €240



DIPTYQUE www.diptyqueparis.com

Eau Rose Eau de Parfum

Diptyque's Eau Rose balances elegance and freshness with naturalistic complexity. Its interplay of dewy petals, hints of lychee, and subtle musk conjures a sensation of blossoming energy, resonating with the optimism and vitality celebrated in the Year of the Horse. The minimalist, glass-encased bottle speaks to refined taste, while the fragrance itself embodies understated luxury. Eau Rose is ideal for those who appreciate craftsmanship, subtlety, and the capacity of scent to transform everyday moments into something extraordinary. \$125 USD



STYLISH EQUESTRIAN www.thestylishesquestrian.com

Reins Wool Throw and Pillow

There is something quietly reassuring about equestrian motifs in a home — they evoke discipline, heritage, and a life attuned to both movement and stillness. The Reins wool throw and matching pillow channel that sensibility with understated elegance. Woven from 100% New Zealand lambswool, both pieces offer enveloping softness and natural warmth, while the refined reins motif carries the graphic authority of the riding world. A neutral palette allows them to settle effortlessly into a city study, a countryside retreat, or a well-traveled salon. The throw, generously sized at 51 by 75 inches with reversible design and laced edges, balances form and function with cultivated ease. The coordinating 22 x 22-inch pillow — insert included — adds structure and visual depth, completing the composition with quiet polish. Decorative yet deeply practical, they transform everyday comfort into an expression of timeless equestrian refinement.

\$238 USD each



BACCARAT www.baccarat.com

Marengo Horse Crystal Sculpture

Baccarat's horse figurine embodies the spirit of equine elegance in midnight blue crystal. Its contours capture strength, movement, and poise, offering a collectible that is as visually striking as it is symbolically rich. The piece reflects light in a way that imbues any room with a sense of vitality, perfect for commemorating the Lunar Year. The craftsmanship ensures every detail is precise and evocative, making it not merely a decorative object, but a talisman of energy and good fortune. As with every Baccarat creation, tradition meets contemporary artistry, making the figurine an ideal gift for discerning collectors and admirers of fine design. \$5500 USD



LALIQUE www.us.lalique.com



Kazak Horse Sculpture

With Kazak, Lalique pays homage to one of nature's most majestic creatures — an enduring symbol of strength, speed, and untamed grace. Sculpted in clear satin-finished crystal, the horse is captured mid-motion, its mane swept back as though carried by an invisible wind. Light glides across the surface, animating the form and revealing Lalique's mastery in transforming stillness into movement. More than a decorative object, Kazak embodies freedom and independence — qualities deeply resonant with the Year of the Horse. It is a study in power refined by craftsmanship, where crystal becomes both sculpture and statement. Placed in a private study, atop a console, or within a curated collection, it evokes momentum held in suspension — a moment of strength crystallized in time. \$875 USD



LALIQUE www.us.lalique.com

Horse Crystal Sculpture

Lalique's Equus captures the essence of the horse in crystal form, where light and transparency meet refined artistry. The sculpture's flowing lines evoke motion, energy, and grace, while the weight and presence of the piece make it an enduring object of desire and contemplation for collectors of fine art. Handcrafted by master artisans, each curve and detail is carefully executed, making every sculpture unique. As a symbol of strength, freedom, and vitality, it embodies the very qualities celebrated during the Year of the Horse, transforming any interior into a gallery of elegance and movement. \$6100 USD

BRUNO MARS: “THE ROMANTIC” THE 9-TRACK REVIEW

In this new chapter of his career, Bruno Mars steps away from the high-octane revelry that defined *24K Magic* to embrace the sophisticated persona of a modern crooner, prioritizing elegance over spectacle. While its critical reception on Metacritic has held at a modest 66, this suggests that *The Romantic* is, above all, a “comfort record”—crafted for genre purists rather than those seeking disruptive innovation. However, the true potential of these tracks will be revealed on stage; with *The Romantic* Tour kicking off this April in Las Vegas, the album feels specifically composed to showcase the power of a live band and to resonate across the global stadium circuit.

REDACCIÓN @amarenamag

1. Risk It All

The album's second single and opening track. This high-impact emotional ballad sets the tone for the entire record: sacrifice in the name of love. Its impeccable production justifies why Mars is willing to trade his typical hit-making streak for a more organic, authentic soundscape.

2. Cha Cha Cha

Likely the most rhythmic moment of the album's opening act. Following the trail of his recent collaborations (such as with Rosé), this track injects that retro-Latin flair that Bruno has mastered—perfectly tailored for the modern ballroom dance floor.

3. I Just Might

The lead single. Clocking in at 3:33, this is the official introduction to the “new” Bruno: mellifluous, confident, and showcasing a falsetto that recalls the golden era of Motown. It serves as the perfect bridge between the Silk Sonic era and his evolving solo career.

4. God Was Showing Off

A bold title for what is shaping up to be an anthem dedicated to his partner's beauty. This is likely where *The Guardian's* critics see the “unabashed homages,” potentially referencing the gospel-infused soul of the 1960s.

5. Why You Wanna Fight

The album's turning point. After the idealized romance comes the conflict. Musically, this serves as Bruno's experimental playground for Pop-Rock, featuring more prominent, guitar-driven arrangements than the previous tracks.

6. On My Soul

A pledge of loyalty and the true heart of the record. Here, Mars's vocals shine unadorned—likely a minimalist production where the piano and voice carry the full emotional weight.

7. Something Serious

At just 2:46, this is the album's shortest track. It is a direct, concise piece that captures the urgency of a genuine connection. A true “less is more” moment, focusing on a taut, bass-driven groove signature of producer D'Mile.

8. Nothing Left

A moment of heartbreak and total vulnerability. At 3:35, this is the space for pure melancholy. It is the kind of track *AllMusic* describes as “meticulously crafted,” where every string arrangement serves a specific, poignant purpose.

9. Dance With Me

The perfect finale. Mars traditionally closes his albums on a high note or with a clear invitation. At 3:39, he leaves the listener on an optimistic, romantic beat, beautifully closing the loop on the album's concept.



THE IDES OF MARCH, 44 B.C.

Chronicle of a Sacrilege Foretold

Few dates remain as deeply scarred by the stigma of betrayal as the Ides of March, 44 B.C. In a Rome asphyxiated by the weight of its own glory and the specter of tyranny, a group of senators decreed that only the blood of Julius Caesar could clear the path back to ancestral Republican liberty.

This is the chronicle of a high-profile assassination conceived in the shadows of the Senate—where the steel of daggers sought to save a motherland, only to ironically bury it beneath the ashes of civil war and the birth of an empire that would redefine humanity forever.

BY Marco Guerrero @marcoguerreroleon

Rome, 44 B.C. The air in the capital of the world is thick, heavy with a tension that oscillates between the adoration of a man and the dread of a tyrant. Julius Caesar—*Dictator Perpetuo*, the man who expanded the frontiers of the known world beyond imagination—seems to be marching toward a crown that Roman tradition abhors. This is not merely politics; for the old aristocracy, it is a matter of survival.

The conspiracy was not born of a single sentiment. Within the shadows of the Senate, sixty men were united by motives as heterogeneous as human nature itself. Some, like Gaius Cassius Longinus, watched with horror as Rome transformed into a cosmopolitan empire that might one day be ruled from Alexandria. Others were driven by pure envy, the resentment of being eclipsed, or the ambition to seize the magistracies that Caesar had monopolized.

However, the plot required a moral face. Cassius, aware that his own image did not inspire the necessary trust, sought out Marcus Junius Brutus. The choice was no accident: Brutus claimed descent from the man who, in 509 B.C., expelled Tarquin the Proud, the last King of Rome. After intense debate—during which Brutus initially proposed a “passive protest”—Cassius’s eloquence prevailed. The duty was not to die for liberty, but to kill for it.

Even Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus, a close kinsman in whom Caesar placed absolute trust, joined the fray. The plan was as bold as it was brutal: to assassinate him in the heart of the Senate, ensuring the act appeared not as a common ambush, but as a rite of national salvation in the eyes of the Republic.

Omens attempted to thwart the course of history. It is said that Calpurnia, Caesar’s wife, pleaded with him not to leave after dreaming of tragedy. Caesar, with that signature blend of arrogance and stoicism, countered: *“Fear is the only thing to be feared.”* On the steps, he even crossed paths with the seer who had warned him of the Ides of March. *“They have arrived,”* Caesar remarked playfully. *“Yes, but they are not yet over,”* the seer replied.

Mark Antony, Caesar’s lieutenant, had caught wind of the plot and attempted to intercept the Dictator before he entered the Theater of Pompey (where the Curia was then

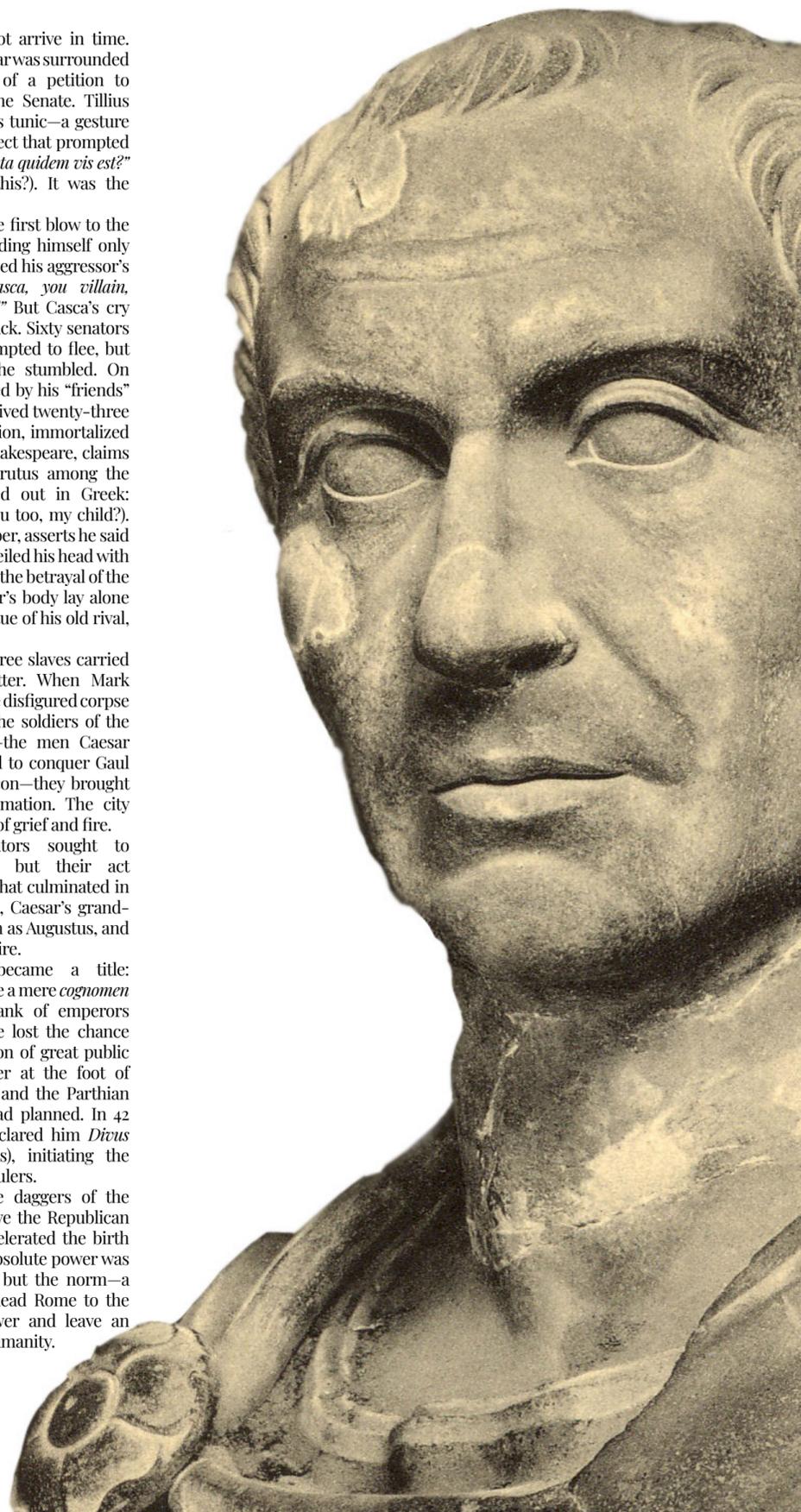
meeting). He did not arrive in time. Upon entering, Caesar was surrounded under the pretext of a petition to restore power to the Senate. Tillius Cimber pulled at his tunic—a gesture of profound disrespect that prompted Caesar to cry out: *“Ista quidem vis est?”* (What violence is this?). It was the signal.

Casca dealt the first blow to the neck. Caesar, defending himself only with his stylus, pierced his aggressor’s arm, shouting: *“Casca, you villain, what are you doing?”* But Casca’s cry for help drew the pack. Sixty senators lunged. Caesar attempted to flee, but blinded by blood, he stumbled. On the floor, surrounded by his “friends” and *protégés*, he received twenty-three stab wounds. Tradition, immortalized by Suetonius and Shakespeare, claims that upon seeing Brutus among the murderers, he cried out in Greek: *“Kai sy, teknon?”* (You too, my child?). Plutarch, more somber, asserts he said nothing; he simply veiled his head with his toga upon seeing the betrayal of the one he loved. Caesar’s body lay alone at the feet of the statue of his old rival, Pompey.

Hours later, three slaves carried him home in a litter. When Mark Antony displayed the disfigured corpse to the people and the soldiers of the Thirteenth Legion—the men Caesar himself commanded to conquer Gaul and cross the Rubicon—they brought torches for his cremation. The city erupted in a tumult of grief and fire. The conspirators sought to prevent autocracy, but their act sparked a civil war that culminated in the rise of Octavian, Caesar’s grand-nephew, later known as Augustus, and the birth of the Empire.

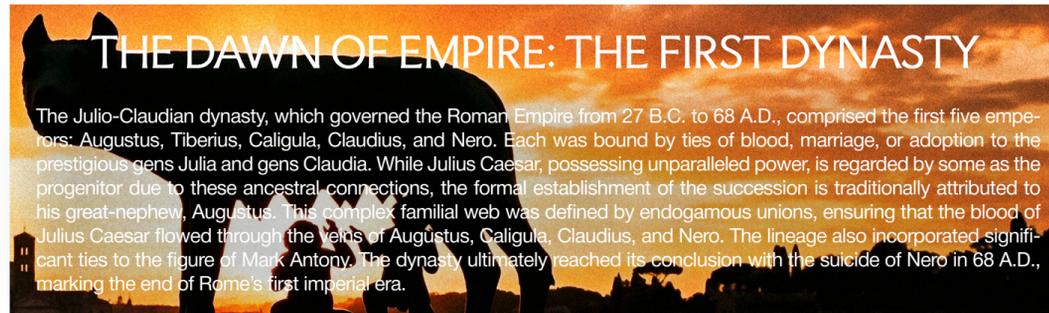
The name became a title: “Caesar” ceased to be a mere *cognomen* and became the rank of emperors (Kaiser, Tsar). Rome lost the chance to see the completion of great public libraries, the theater at the foot of the Tarpeian Rock, and the Parthian campaign Caesar had planned. In 42 B.C., the Senate declared him *Divus Iulius* (Divine Julius), initiating the custom of deifying rulers.

Ultimately, the daggers of the senators did not save the Republican ideal; they only accelerated the birth of a system where absolute power was no longer a threat, but the norm—a system that would lead Rome to the pinnacle of its power and leave an indelible mark on humanity.



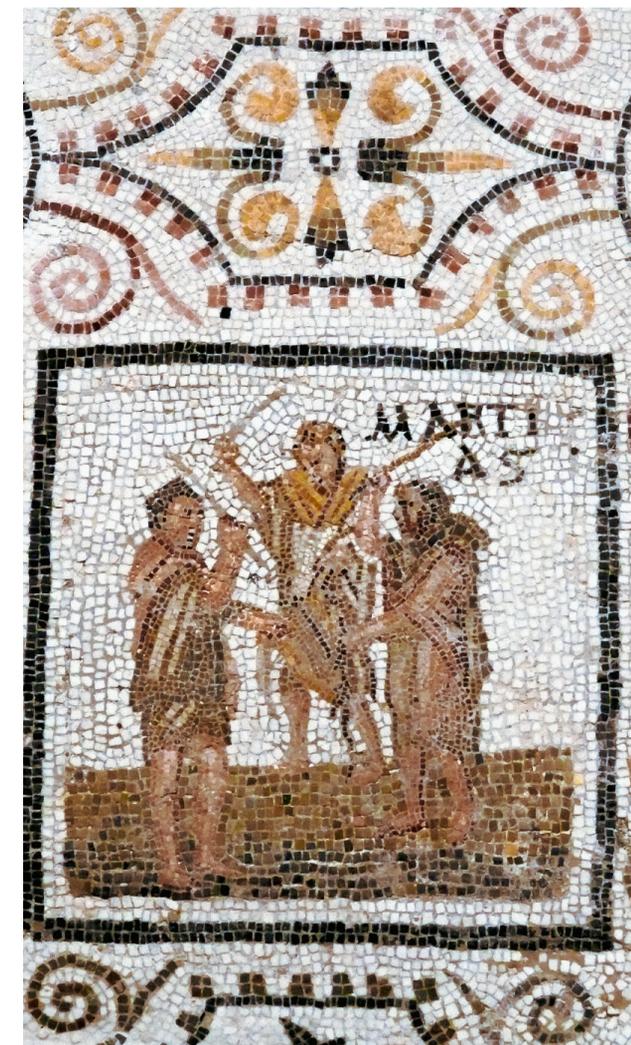
CAESAR AND CLEOPATRA

The relationship between Julius Caesar and Cleopatra transcended mere romance, evolving into a high-stakes geopolitical stratagem. By consolidating their respective powers, it ultimately acted as a decisive catalyst for the Dictator’s assassination. The union began in 48 B.C., when Caesar arrived in an Egypt embroiled in civil war. In an audacious political maneuver, Cleopatra secured his military support to reclaim her throne—an alliance that bore not only political fruit but also the birth of Caesarion, Caesar’s only biological son. This child posed a direct challenge to Roman succession customs. The Queen’s subsequent residency in Rome between 46 and 44 B.C. was perceived by the senatorial aristocracy as a profound affront and a confirmation of Caesar’s monarchical ambitions. It fueled a deep-seated discontent rooted in the fear that he intended to import the Hellenistic “Queen-Goddess” model to replace the Republic with an autocracy. Gestures such as the placement of a golden statue of Cleopatra within the Temple of Venus Genetrix were viewed as both blasphemy and an excess of hubris. Coupled with the dynastic threat represented by Caesarion, these actions convinced conspirators like Brutus and Cassius that Caesar had become a tyrant under the influence of a foreign sovereign. Ultimately, the terror that the Dictator might formally proclaim himself King or move the capital to Alexandria accelerated the plot for his murder on the Ides of March. Ironically, an act intended to save the Republic from monarchical influence only served to precipitate the chaos that would give rise to the Empire.



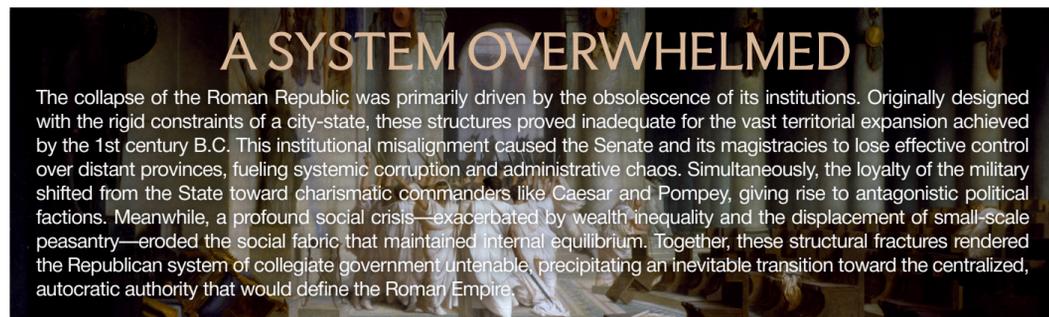
THE DAWN OF EMPIRE: THE FIRST DYNASTY

The Julio-Claudian dynasty, which governed the Roman Empire from 27 B.C. to 68 A.D., comprised the first five emperors: Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. Each was bound by ties of blood, marriage, or adoption to the prestigious gens Julia and gens Claudia. While Julius Caesar, possessing unparalleled power, is regarded by some as the progenitor due to these ancestral connections, the formal establishment of the succession is traditionally attributed to his great-nephew, Augustus. This complex familial web was defined by endogamous unions, ensuring that the blood of Julius Caesar flowed through the veins of Augustus, Caligula, Claudius, and Nero. The lineage also incorporated significant ties to the figure of Mark Antony. The dynasty ultimately reached its conclusion with the suicide of Nero in 68 A.D., marking the end of Rome’s first imperial era.



IDUS MARTIAE

The Ides of March, corresponding to March 15th in our modern calendar, were regarded in Ancient Rome as days of auspicious omens. Originally marking the start of the New Year, they were synchronized with the first full moon of the earliest Roman lunar calendar. While every month possessed its own “Ides” sacred to Jupiter, those of March remain the most storied as the date of Julius Caesar’s assassination in 44 B.C. This historic event served as a fundamental turning point, catalyzing the transition from the Roman Republic to the Empire. The famous warning, “Beware the Ides of March!” from Shakespeare’s “Julius Caesar”, immortalized the harbinger offered to the Dictator by the seer Spurinna (as recorded by Plutarch). Beyond their grim historical weight, the Ides were vibrant with religious festivities celebrating the new year, such as the Feast of Anna Perenna and the *Mamuralia*—rituals symbolizing the expulsion of the old year. In the Late Imperial period, the date also initiated a “Holy Week” of festivals dedicated to the deities Cybele and Attis, culminating in the celebration of Attis’s rebirth to coincide with the Spring Equinox.



A SYSTEM OVERWHELMED

The collapse of the Roman Republic was primarily driven by the obsolescence of its institutions. Originally designed with the rigid constraints of a city-state, these structures proved inadequate for the vast territorial expansion achieved by the 1st century B.C. This institutional misalignment caused the Senate and its magistracies to lose effective control over distant provinces, fueling systemic corruption and administrative chaos. Simultaneously, the loyalty of the military shifted from the State toward charismatic commanders like Caesar and Pompey, giving rise to antagonistic political factions. Meanwhile, a profound social crisis—exacerbated by wealth inequality and the displacement of small-scale peasantry—eroded the social fabric that maintained internal equilibrium. Together, these structural fractures rendered the Republican system of collegiate government untenable, precipitating an inevitable transition toward the centralized, autocratic authority that would define the Roman Empire.

Hamnet

A NOVEL OF LUMINOUS SIMPLICITY



BY The Phoenix © @ave_fenix

This is a magnificent novel that creates a space where reading implies a deep immersion into a thicket—a place where a true transformation of the reader occurs. O'Farrell's poetic narrative enchants and moves us; it is impossible to remain unscathed after the final page. As a reader, I felt I had participated in a rite of renewal, descending into cavernous darkness only to reach the luminosity of the surface. It shakes the soul and stirs the emotions, leading us through the singular experiences of a woman who does not fear looking death in the eye—having stood before the body of her mother, who died in childbirth.

Agnes herself stood at death's threshold while giving birth to her twin daughter and, heartbreakingly, looked directly into the face of her twin son, Hamnet, as he departed this world at age eleven after a brief, violent battle with the plague. Agnes is the valiant, steady force who sustains the home, allowing her spouse to cultivate the creativity that would make him the immortal creator of Hamlet, King Lear, Othello, and the sonnets that remain jewels of world literature.

Hamnet gazes at a poignantly human question: the grief of loss—the loss of a mother's most beloved being, her child—and the pain of a marital separation when paths can no longer harmoniously converge. O'Farrell intensely explores the gravity of mourning; the silent solitude, the wearing malaise, and the long journey through numbness that eventually settles into understanding, creativity, and redemption. Indeed, forgiveness illuminates and heals.

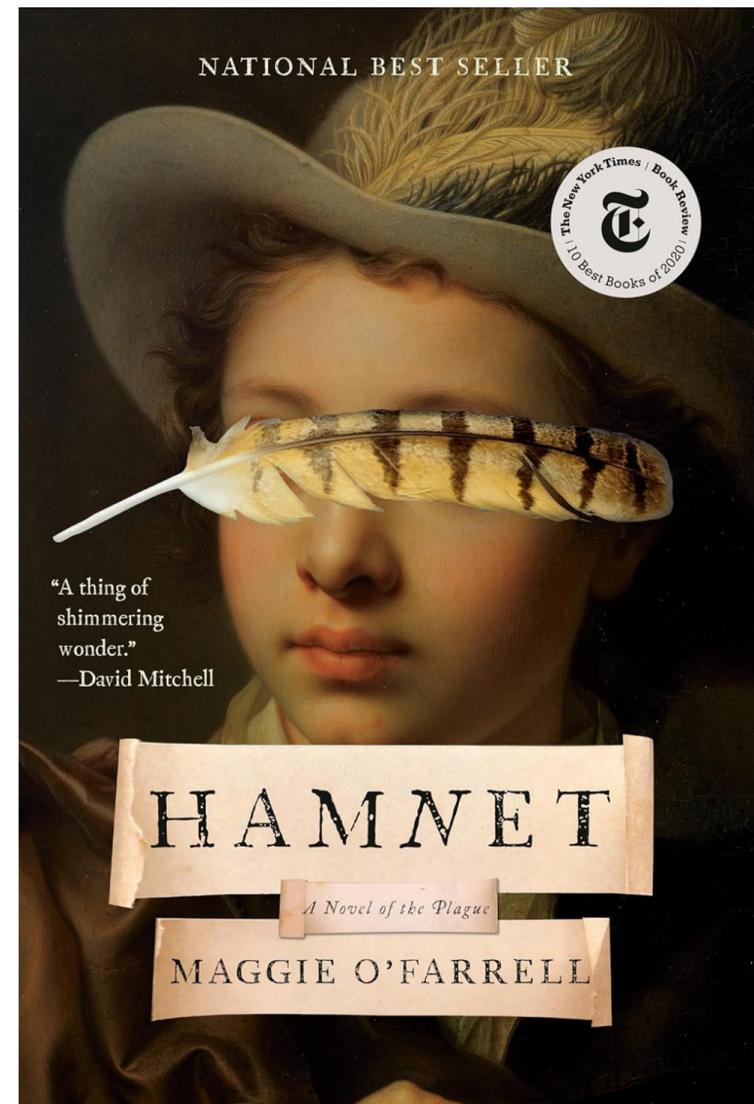
This novel “opens the seams” of history, inviting us behind the scenes to focus on Agnes—a woman of profound empathy and wisdom connected to the earthly, the ancestral, and the primal. She skillfully reads the signs of the times in the elements: the air, the clouds, the behavior of bees. She is as versed in herbalism to heal the soul

and body as she is in the destinies of others, which she perceives through touch. A visionary with premonitions, she is misunderstood and feared by the community of Stratford; she knows their rejection stems from a fear of the unknown.

To read Hamnet is to reconnect with humanism and art. It is to reconcile with what makes us essentially human in an age of immediacy, technological saturation, and an intoxicating excess of information—the hallmarks of our multi-dystopian reality. The narrative allows us to recognize ourselves in characters who face their fears, fill their existential voids creatively, and follow their intuitions to live in harmony with nature. In the face of the delirious uncertainty of existence, suffering, and death, art performs a vital role: it approximates, nuances, and dissects our challenges.

Finally, while the cinematic adaptation directed by Chloé Zhao is an excellent proposal—boasting impeccable photography and a score that serves as a meditation—I strongly recommend not forgoing the text. The translation by Concha Cardenoso for Libros del Asteroide is exemplary, providing the historical context and psychological depth of Agnes and Shakespeare that only prose can capture.

Zhao's direction, which earned her a Golden Globe, beautifully recreates 16th-century Stratford and London's Globe Theatre. The scene where the audience connects with the actor playing Hamlet as he utters “*The rest is silence*” is shattering. Jessie Buckley's performance as Agnes is extraordinarily poetic; her illuminated face reflects a total comprehension of what Shakespeare sought to transmit. As Zhao recently stated, producing Hamnet gave her the “*faith to realize it is okay to experience the discomfort the film generates*.” I couldn't agree more. It is precisely this discomfort—this heartache that finds release in a torrent of tears—that makes us feel a kinship in our shared fragility.



MAGGIE O'FARRELL: A DEFINING VOICE OF OUR TIME

Born in Northern Ireland in 1972, Maggie O'Farrell's writing is defined by an extraordinary sensitivity in exploring familial bonds, grief, and the secrets of the past. She rose to international acclaim with Hamnet (2020), a masterful reimagining of Shakespeare's domestic life that earned her the Women's Prize for Fiction. O'Farrell possesses a unique literary prowess, navigating between historical fiction and contemporary narrative with prose that is both lyrical and surgically precise. Her most celebrated works include: Instructions for a Heatwave: A sharp, suffocating family portrait. I Am, I Am, I Am: An unconventional memoir recounting her seventeen brushes with death. The Marriage Portrait: Her most recent foray into Renaissance Italy. Currently residing in Edinburgh, she is regarded as a master of dissecting the emotional complexity of the human experience, elevating the everyday into the transcendental.





ESTHER

The Hallowed Chronicle of an Ancient Persian Queen

BY **Marco Guerrero** @marcoguerreroleon

Between the opulence of the Achaemenid Persian court—the largest and most formidable empire of its age—and the shadow of imminent extermination, the Book of Esther emerges as one of the most compelling and singular narratives in Judeo-Christian scripture.

As a cornerstone of the Ketuvim in the Jewish Tanakh and the Old Testament of the Christian Bible, this book weaves a drama of palatial intrigue through evocative characters and powerful symbolism, where human courage becomes the very engine of survival. For the Jewish people, this story—celebrated during the festival of Purim—identifies the figure of Haman as the first of many tyrants who sought their destruction, recounting how the people of Israel emerged resilient and triumphant.

Conversely, within Christianity, Esther stands as an icon of absolute fidelity and sacrificial devotion to save her people. The protagonists, Esther and Mordecai, embody this ideal of loyalty: with a vigorous faith fortified by prayer, they confronted extreme adversity with unwavering fortitude, serving as an enduring testament of trust and commitment for those seeking to remain faithful to God amidst the trials of life.

TIMELINE

The Chronicle of Esther



IMPERIAL PERSIA: THE ACHAEMENID ERA, 5TH CENTURY B.C.

BETWEEN THE THIRD AND TWELFTH YEARS OF XERXES I (THE AHASUERUS OF THE BIBLICAL ACCOUNT)

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
<p>THE BANQUET AND THE FALL OF VASHTI</p> <p>King Ahasuerus hosts a massive 180-day banquet in Susa for his nobles, followed by a seven-day feast for all the people. Simultaneously, Queen Vashti holds her own banquet for the women.</p> <p>THE SEVENTH DAY OF THE FEAST Inebriated, Ahasuerus commands Vashti to appear before the men to display her beauty. Vashti refuses.</p> <p>THE DEPOSITION Infuriated and advised by his sages, Ahasuerus issues a royal decree deposing Vashti as queen, declaring that “her royal estate be given to another better than she,” thus setting a precedent for marital obedience throughout the empire.</p>	<p>THE SEARCH AND CORONATION OF ESTHER</p> <p>Once the King’s anger has subsided, a search is launched throughout the empire for the most beautiful young women to find a new queen. Esther (Hadassah), a Jewish orphan raised by her cousin Mordecai, is taken to the palace in Susa.</p> <p>THE PERIOD OF PREPARATION The young women undergo a year of beauty treatments before being presented to the King. Esther wins the favor of Hegai, the keeper of the women. Following Mordecai’s counsel, Esther keeps her Jewish identity a secret.</p> <p>Year 7 of the Reign of Ahasuerus/ Xerxes I, 479 B.C.</p>	<p>HAMAN’S RISE AND THE DECREE OF DEATH</p> <p>Mordecai, who frequents the King’s Gate, uncovers a plot by two guards (Bigthan and Teresh) to assassinate Ahasuerus. He informs Esther, who alerts the King in Mordecai’s name.</p> <p>The plot is foiled, and the event is recorded in the Book of the Royal Chronicles, yet Mordecai remains unrewarded. Sometime later, Ahasuerus promotes Haman (an Amalekite) to the position of Grand Vizier. By royal command, all servants bow before Haman—except Mordecai, who refuses, for as a Jew, he bows only before the God of Israel.</p> <p>Year 12 of the Reign of Ahasuerus/ Xerxes I, 474 B.C.</p>	<p>QUEEN ESTHER’S INTERVENTION</p> <p>Mordecai learns of the decree and clothes himself in sackcloth and ashes, mourning publicly. Upon hearing this, Esther is deeply distressed. They communicate through a messenger (Hatach). Mordecai informs Esther of everything and urges her to intercede before the King.</p> <p>THE CHALLENGE OF ESTHER Esther hesitates, for to appear before the King without being summoned carries the penalty of death, unless he extends his golden scepter. Mordecai delivers the famous words: “And who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?” Esther resolves to take the risk and asks the Jews of Susa to fast for her for three days.</p>	<p>THE PLOT TWIST AND THE TRIUMPH OF ISRAEL</p> <p>On the third day, Esther dressed in her royal robes and stood in the inner court of the palace, facing the throne. When King Ahasuerus saw her, he extended his golden scepter toward her. Esther invited the King and Haman to a banquet she had prepared for that same day. During the feast, the King asked Esther what her petition was. She replied by inviting them to a second banquet the following day, promising to reveal her request then.</p> <p>HAMAN’S ARROGANCE Haman left the banquet in high spirits, but his joy turned to rage when he saw Mordecai at the King’s gate. Following the advice of his wife and friends, he ordered the construction of a gallows fifty cubits high, intending to ask the King to hang Mordecai on it the next morning.</p> <p>THE KING’S SLEEPLESS NIGHT That same night, King Ahasuerus could not sleep and ordered the Book of Chronicles (the record of his reign) to be read to him. He heard the account of how Mordecai had uncovered an assassination plot years earlier and realized that Mordecai had never been rewarded for his loyalty.</p> <p>THE HUMILIATION OF HAMAN The next morning, Haman entered the court to ask permission to hang Mordecai. Before he could speak, Ahasuerus asked him, “What should be done for the man the King delights to honor?” Thinking the King was referring to him, Haman suggested a grand triumphal procession involving royal robes and a royal horse. To Haman’s horror, the King ordered him to do exactly that for Mordecai. Humiliated, Haman had to lead the Israelite through the city, proclaiming Mordecai’s honor.</p>	<p>CLIMAX AND RETRIBUTION</p> <p>Haman is hurried away to the second banquet with Esther and Ahasuerus. Once again, the King asks Esther to name her petition.</p> <p>THE REVELATION Esther finally reveals her Jewish identity and pleads for her life and the lives of her people, declaring that they have been “sold” to be destroyed. Ahasuerus, enraged, demands to know who is responsible for such a thing. Esther responds: “The adversary and enemy is this wicked Haman!” The King rises in a fury. A servant then informs him of the gallows that Haman had built for Mordecai.</p> <p>THE DEATH OF HAMAN Ahasuerus orders: “Hang him on it.” Haman is hanged on the very same gallows he had prepared for Mordecai—the Jewish man who was the cousin and father figure to Queen Esther.</p>	<p>NEW DECREE AND DELIVERANCE</p> <p>Ahasuerus gives Esther the estate of Haman and promotes Mordecai to the position of Vizier, entrusting him with the royal signet ring.</p> <p>THE PROBLEM OF THE IRREVOCABLE DECREE Although Haman is dead, his original decree for the 13th of Adar remains in effect; according to the laws of the Medes and Persians, a royal decree cannot be revoked. Esther pleads with the King once more to avert the coming tragedy.</p> <p>THE COUNTER-DECREE (THIRD MONTH, SIVAN) Ahasuerus authorizes Mordecai and Esther to draft a new decree to counteract Haman’s. This new edict, sealed with the royal ring, grants Jews throughout the empire the right to assemble and defend their lives, and to destroy and plunder anyone who attacks them on the 13th day of Adar. The letters are dispatched swiftly to every satrapy in the empire.</p> <p>MONTH 12 (ADAR), DAY 13 (THE DAY OF DESTRUCTION) On the very day the enemies of the Jews expected to overpower them, the situation is reversed. The Jews unite and defeat those who sought to destroy them throughout the empire (including Haman’s ten sons). Notably, they do not touch the plunder. Meanwhile, Mordecai continues to grow in power and influence.</p>	<p>DAYS 14 AND 15 OF ADAR The Jews in the provinces celebrated their victory on the 14th day. However, the Jews in the walled city of Susa fought for an additional day and celebrated on the 15th.</p> <p>THE DECREE OF PURIM Mordecai and Esther issued official letters establishing the 14th and 15th of Adar as a perpetual annual holiday called “Purim” (named after the Pur, or lot, cast by Haman). This festival is characterized by joy, feasting, sending gifts of food to friends (Mishloach Manot), and giving charity to the poor (Matanot La’evyonim), commemorating the month their sorrow was turned into gladness. The book concludes by highlighting the greatness of Ahasuerus and the high honor bestowed upon Mordecai.</p>

In the heart of Susa, the capital of the Achaemenid Persian Empire, a story unfolded more than two millennia ago that remains alive today in collective memory and Judeo-Christian spirituality. The Book of Esther (תּוֹרַת אֶסְתֵּר – Megillat Ester) is not merely a religious record steeped in symbolism; it is a masterful literary work that combines the tension of a political thriller with the depth of an identitarian legacy. It is a narrative capable of strengthening the faith of the believer while simultaneously fascinating the skeptic.

Unlike other books in the biblical canon, Esther possesses a peculiarity that has intrigued theologians for centuries: God is never explicitly mentioned. However, for believers, His presence is an “invisible thread” moving the gears of causality—Esther’s beauty, a king’s insomnia, the fall of a vizier—coordinating a series of events to transform a forecasted tragedy into an epic victory.

The plot is ignited by an act of rebellion: Queen Vashti refuses to be exhibited as a trophy before the nobles of King Ahasuerus (frequently identified as Xerxes I). Her deposition clears the way for an “imperial pageant” where Esther, an orphaned Jewish girl under the tutelage of her cousin Mordecai—a loyal official—captivates the monarch with her beauty, grace, and intelligence.

This royal idyll is soon overshadowed by Haman the Amalekite. Elevated to Grand Vizier, Haman embodies the delusion of the newly promoted bureaucrat. Wounded in his pride by Mordecai’s refusal to bow before him—for, as a member of the people of Israel, he kneels only before the Most High God—Haman decides to orchestrate a disproportionate revenge. After being forced to pay public honor to Mordecai (who had previously saved the king from a conspiracy), Haman convinces the monarch to issue a decree of extermination against all Jews.

At this juncture, the story takes a decisive turn: Esther must choose between the protective silence of the palace or risking her life by interceding for her people before the king. Haman is unaware that the Queen is the cousin—and essentially the daughter—of his enemy, Mordecai the Jew, and is therefore part of the very people he seeks to annihilate. When Esther reveals the plot in the presence of the vizier, he falls from grace and is executed.

Beyond being identified as a precursor to antisemitism, Haman—a descendant of Agag, the king of the Amalekites executed by the prophet Samuel in the time of Saul—represents

an ancestral enemy. His origin underscores a reality that resonates powerfully today: it is not the Persian people who hate the Jewish people, as both are joined by an ancient brotherhood dating back to the time of Cyrus the Great. Rather, it is a ruling elite—alien to the essence of indigenous Persian identity—which, shielded by power, attempts to eradicate a people they despise due to ethnic and religious prejudice, or simply a failure to understand them.

This distinction is reflected today in the streets, where Iranian protesters—the modern Persians—wave the imperial flag of the Shah alongside the Star of David, the national emblem of the modern State of Israel, while living under a theocratic dictatorship whose primary goal is the destruction of the Jewish nation. Any resemblance is perhaps pure coincidence or a confirmation of the Scriptures; that remains for each reader to decide.

The debate over the historicity of Esther remains open. While some academics consider it a “historical novel” using the real framework of Xerxes to convey moral teachings and explain the origin of the Feast of Purim, others defend the accuracy of the details regarding Persian architecture and customs.

The Book of Esther is preserved today in two substantially different forms: a Hebrew text—the shorter version, considered by most researchers to be the original—and a Koine Greek text. The latter features two divergent variants: the Septuagint and the version by Lucian of Antioch, both of which are free translations that add six extensive sections known as the deuterocanonical additions. After centuries of debate and theological analysis by both Jewish and Christian scholars, the book enjoys full canonical acceptance by both religions across their various denominations and branches.

Whatever its origin, historical accuracy, or philosophical purpose, the message of the Book of Esther has transcended the centuries. For Judaism, it represents the resilience of Israel and the struggle against systemic intolerance and the oppression faced over millennia. For Christianity, it constitutes a prefiguration of the vocation of service and the sacrifice for salvation attributed to Jesus. Finally, for those who do not profess a religion, the text is appreciated for its literary richness and its profound philosophical weight.

As Mordecai poignantly warned Esther at the most critical moment: *“And who knows but that you have come to the royal position for such a time as this?”*



Image of an Italian Megillat Esther (Scroll of Esther) from 1616, an illuminated Hebrew manuscript held at the National Library of Israel.



Esther and Mordecai writing the letters to the Jews. Oil painting by Aert de Gelder, 1675. The work, which evokes events from the 5th century BC, belongs to the Hirsch Collection, Argentina.



Purim Costumes. Among the most popular costumes for young Jews during Purim are T-shirts that combine the IDF (Tzahal) emblem with the phrase ‘Queen Esther Security.’ This choice goes beyond festive fashion: the biblical account from the Book of Esther—specifically the episode in which the Jews defeat the sons of Haman under a royal edict of self-defense—is considered a religious and symbolic pillar that underpins the doctrine of legitimate self-defense for the modern State of Israel.



A bite of Purim. Hamantaschen—the most iconic treat of the holiday—remind us of the victory of Esther and Mordecai. Their triangular shape evokes Haman’s hat, and their hidden filling invites us to discover the sweetness that lies behind life’s challenges.

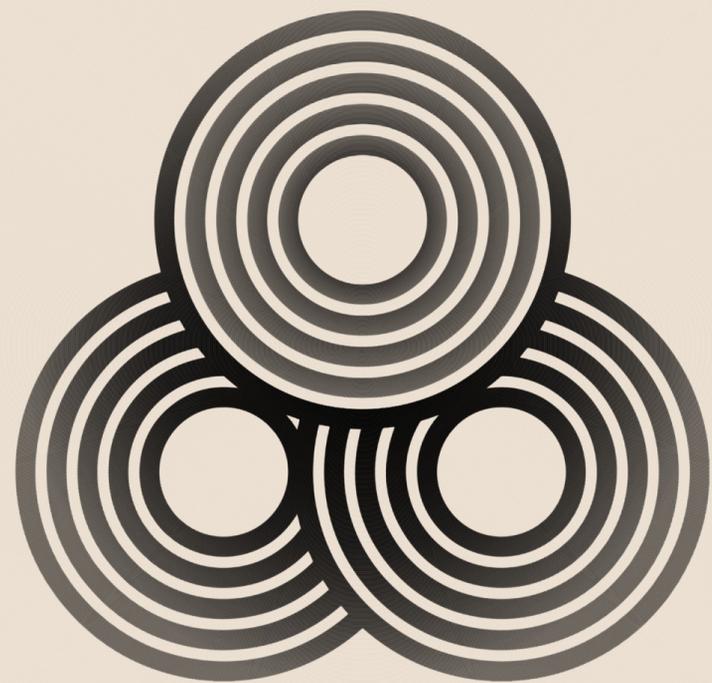
PURIM: THE MOST VIBRANT DAY IN THE HEBREW CALENDAR

The festival of Purim—whose name derives from the word *pur*, referring to the lots or “dice” that the wicked Haman cast to fix the date of extermination—is the most vibrant and uninhibited celebration in the Hebrew calendar. Although other dates, such as Simchat Torah or Sukkot, overflow with joy, Purim holds the title of the greatest revelry due to its transformative nature. The heart of this holiday lies in the concept of *Venahafoch hu* (“and the opposite occurred”), commemorating a 180-degree turn from a decree of death to a miraculous victory. This total reversal of destiny justifies

the carnival atmosphere and the wearing of costumes, symbolizing that beneath outward appearances and masks, the hand of Providence is at work. This celebration is articulated through rituals that defy standard formality, such as the reading of the Megillat Esther, where attendees use noisemakers (*graggers*) to create a deafening sound to symbolically “blot out” the name of Haman. There is also the fulfillment of *Ad lo yada* (“until one does not know”), a mandate for physical joy that invites one to celebrate with such enthusiasm that the distinction between the villain and the hero fades away.

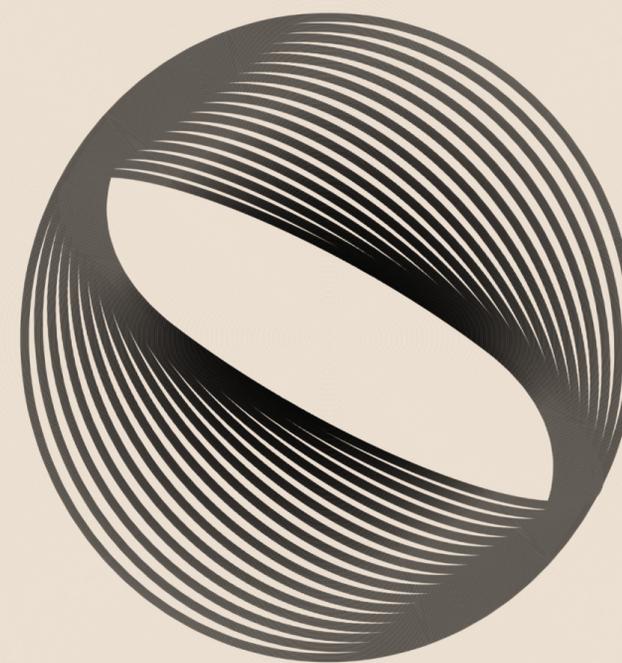
This atmosphere, complemented by the parades and parodies of the Purim Shpil, also maintains a deep sense of social cohesion through *Mishloach Manot* (sending gifts of food) and *Matanot La’evyonim* (charity to the poor), serving as a reminder that true joy is multiplied by sharing food and donations with those in need. For all these reasons, a popular teaching claims that even if in the distant future all other festivals cease to be observed, Purim will remain forever as an unshakable symbol of resilience and identity.

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BETWEEN *ashes & sprouts*

BY Rosa Pelegrina @venusenlodoce

THE BEGINNING OF THE ASTROLOGICAL *New Year*

The mist is not a loss of direction; it is the sacred moment before the fire remembers who you are. March is the bridge between what is dissolving and what is being born—a ‘territory of transition’ where the soul lets go of what was and courage learns to be born. Even if immediate clarity is absent, we know we are closing a cycle. Our external direction is not yet fully defined, but we are overcome by a powerful intuition that, in hindsight, will clear the path for us.

The Stellium in Pisces and the eclipse season are causing certainties to blur. We will find ourselves questioning obsolete mental structures, accumulated exhaustion will be revealed, and the need for control will begin to fall away. The energy of Pisces is dissolving; these are confusing moments where the path may appear hazy. However, uncertainty is not emptiness—it is a cleansing. We do not yet know what form the new will take, but we are already clear on what no longer fits. With the arrival of the Equinox and the Sun entering Aries, we will feel that impulsive fire leading us to reclaim our desire. We won’t have the “complete plan,” but we will be able to take that first step—that direct action—that cuts through uncertainty and places us on the path. The current collective discomfort is part of this closing cycle and the start of a new one, unknown to all. Every authentic beginning matures in silence before revealing itself with strength. We have moved through an intense February, with planetary alignments that modify “everything,” the consequences of which we will glimpse over time. It seems destiny is pushing us toward something more authentic, more compassionate, and more aligned with our inner truth. Let’s look at the astrological transits March brings us.

We begin the month with Mercury retrograde in Pisces, provoking a more emotional, perhaps confusing, form of communication. It is an excellent period for introspection, meditation, or returning to artistic projects. One must be careful with unclear promises, mental confusion, evasion, or forgetfulness. The first week of March opens with Mars entering Pisces, making action inspired rather than impulsive. This is a fluctuating energy that seeks to avoid frontal conflict. Perhaps true strength lies in knowing when to flow and when to set boundaries with firmness and compassion.

On March 3rd, a Lunar Eclipse in Virgo occurs—an intensified Full Moon marking revelations and emotional closures. Something is seen with clarity so it can be readjusted. Tiring routines or control patterns that are no longer sustainable may be exposed. Where are you overextending yourself? What needs to be simplified?

What is your body asking for? You may be trying to control what needs to flow. The eclipse asks you to bring order to your life so your soul can breathe. This energy does not demand perfection; it demands coherence.

On the 5th, the Sun and Jupiter will form a trine, a deeply harmonious and nourishing aspect: the union of soul and home. It can activate that internal sensation of being supported. This is an energy that flows effortlessly, where gentle synchronicities and unexpected help may appear. Cancer connects with memory and roots; Pisces with compassion and forgiveness. Therefore, it is a time that favors internal reconciliations—ancient wounds are understood, and faith in one’s own path is recovered. Two days later, Mercury sits at the heart of the Sun: Mercury Kazimi, producing a moment of powerful mental clarity. An inner revelation, an inspired decision, an important message, or a key conversation may reach us. Not all thoughts are born in the brain; some are born in the heart.

Meanwhile, Venus, already transiting Aries, is immersed in a search for authenticity, brave and spontaneous affection, and immediate desire. It will first conjunct Neptune, idealizing that burning desire, and subsequently Saturn, giving form to emotional commitment. It is not just about feeling or understanding, but about consciously desiring and committing to what is true. Does your desire spring from emptiness or from your authenticity? If it is born of authenticity, Saturn will not stop it; it will consolidate it. These aspects will show us which part of our affective impulse is viable and which needs readjustment. The Venus/Pluto sextile will add intensity to this transit, bringing a need to deepen bonds through internal honesty.

Later, Jupiter turns direct in Cancer, reactivating themes of home, family, and protection; what was stagnant begins to move forward. In mid-March, the Mercury/Mars conjunction in Pisces causes what was diluted to become intense, as if calm waters revealed a strong current beneath. Spontaneous declarations, sensitive conversations, or quick decisions may surface. The key is not to repress the emotion but to give it conscious shape.

On March 19th, we have the New Moon in Pisces, supported by Uranus

in the final degrees of Taurus. It is time to conclude dynamics that no longer progress and decide what to leave behind before the Equinox. It is time to awaken to a new relationship with the tangible: “Trust what you feel; the material will reconfigure itself accordingly.” There is a great deal of creativity in the air, with a real possibility of materialization. It is not just about dreaming, but about dreaming bravely. When you let go of the fear of losing stability, you find your true freedom.

On the 20th, we inaugurate the Astrological New Year, leaving behind the Piscean ocean and entering the initial fire of Aries, thus recovering clarity, decision, and movement. A “conscious rebirth” occurs. We have already cleaned, integrated, and chosen. Now life returns our desire to us—that “I want”—and our vital energy ignites once more. We are filled with courage, initiative, authenticity, and renewed goals. The key is to act from the clarity that March built, not from haste. What you understood in silence now demands bravery. It is not about starting from zero, but about starting from yourself.

On this same day, Mercury ends its retrograde and moves direct; it is as if the sky were saying: “Now, move forward.” After weeks of review, the mind moves ahead again. Information is ordered, doubts are cleared, and blocked conversations are recovered. What was a review now becomes a direction. The Sun, in the first degrees of Aries, will conjunct Neptune, elevating emotional sensitivity, followed by Saturn, which will ask us to adjust our direction so that the Arian impulse does not disperse. Old identities dissolve, and a new vision appears. We do not want to move forward without meaning; we want to start something with a soul. We must build this new identity with responsibility, truth, and maturity. Pluto sextile Saturn at the end of the month will help us discern what has a real structure and what does not—what we can sustain and what we must let fall.

As you can see, we are moving through a period of cleansing, containment, compression, and finally, decision—a decision that is not impulsive, but the consequence of having walked the process. March not only cleanses and reveals; it prepares the ground for a conscious choice.

ASTROLOGICAL FORECASTS BY RISING SIGN

Aries Rising: Interior Closure and Personal Rebirth. Pisces activates your twelfth house, triggering a cleansing of the unconscious. With the eclipse season, you can finally close the chapter on a specific habit or professional burnout. The Sun entering your sign marks a major vital reset, bringing new responsibilities regarding your identity. You are leaving behind an old version of yourself to make way for one that is more grounded and authentic.

Taurus Rising: A redefinition of your social circle, friendships, or projects may occur. Uranus, in the final degrees of your sign, has led you toward inevitable personal change, though the deep-seated transformation has taken place in your professional sphere. You are detaching from groups that no longer resonate with your vibration.

Gemini Rising: There may be a vocational review leading to a reassessment of your home life. This closure releases energy for your professional path—ask yourself: What foundation do I need to sustain my ambition? There is an opportunity to improve your income by aligning your work with your values. You may also gain greater confidence in your talents. When you bring order to your roots, your vocation finds its direction.

Cancer Rising: With Jupiter exalted in your sign, you are experiencing significant emotional growth. March prepares you for a visible leap: a way of thinking or communicating reaches its culmination, you enter new social circles, and a strong professional impulse emerges. Your perspective is changing, your identity is expanding, and your vocational path is being redefined; new doors are opening.

Leo Rising: You are breaking free from old emotional dependencies. You may need to review shared resources and navigate intense bonds. Becoming aware of where you are projecting your power could benefit you when building more balanced relationships.

Virgo Rising: A personal turning point is approaching, leading to a readjustment and redefinition of the Self. You may have to let go of an outdated version of yourself—shedding the “efficient persona.” This season might feel slightly destabilizing, but it is deeply liberating. Remember: “When you change, everything changes.”

Libra Rising: This season may have led you to make adjustments to your routine, work, and daily life. Aries in your seventh house will activate your relationship axis, potentially triggering a need for serious commitment or a redefinition of your partnership. You are learning to balance desire with responsibility.

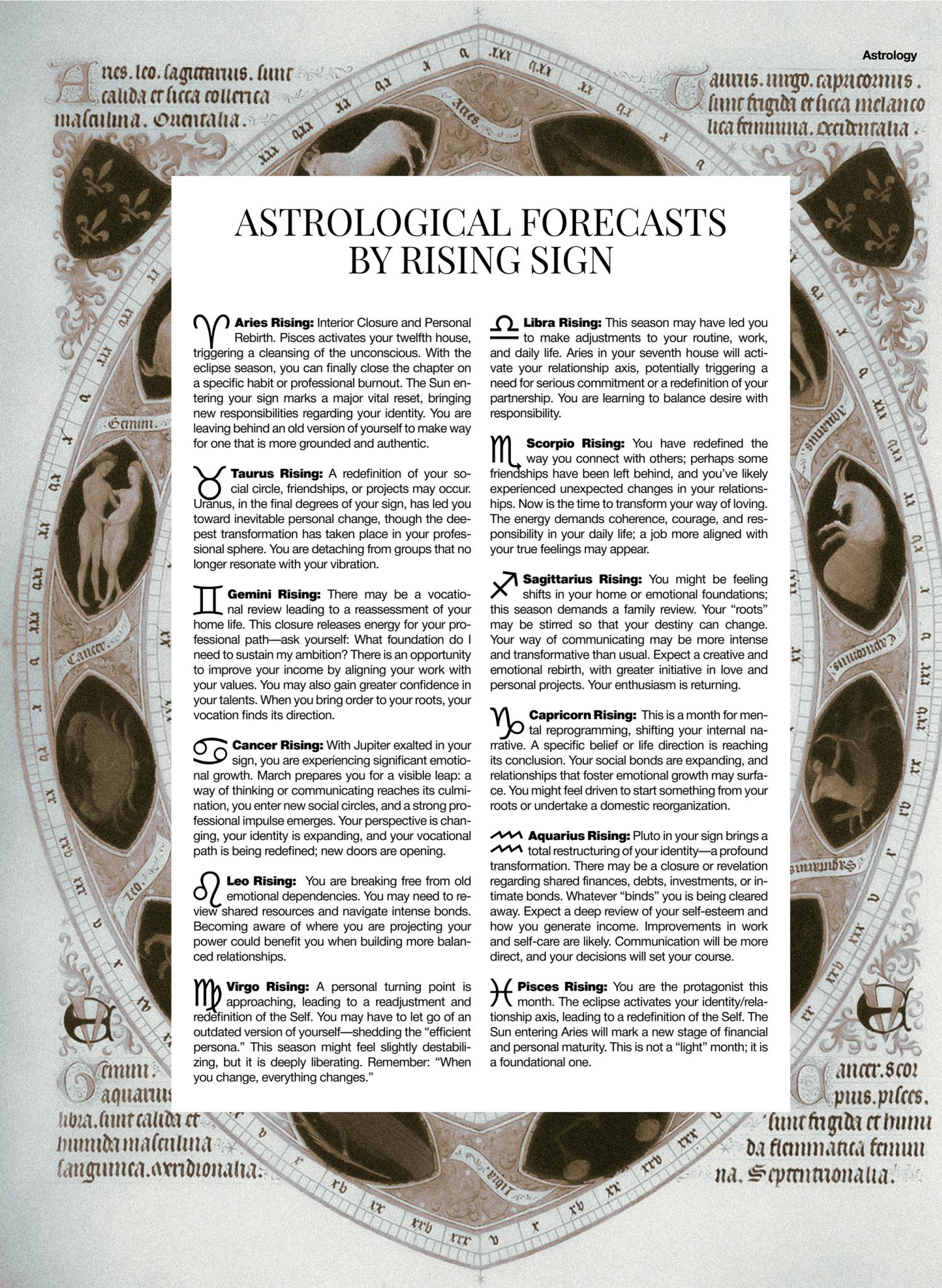
Scorpio Rising: You have redefined the way you connect with others; perhaps some friendships have been left behind, and you’ve likely experienced unexpected changes in your relationships. Now is the time to transform your way of loving. The energy demands coherence, courage, and responsibility in your daily life; a job more aligned with your true feelings may appear.

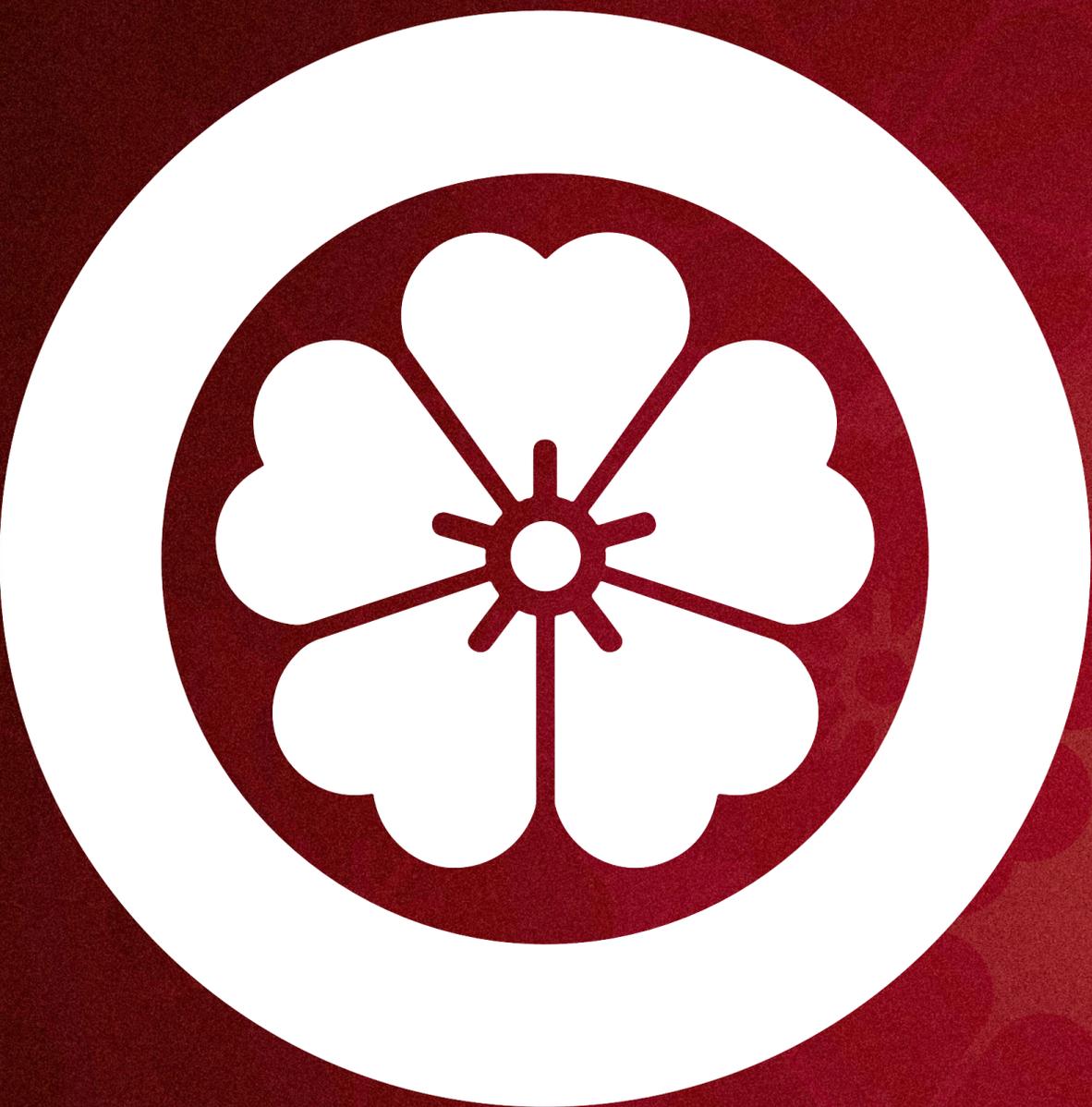
Sagittarius Rising: You might be feeling shifts in your home or emotional foundations; this season demands a family review. Your “roots” may be stirred so that your destiny can change. Your way of communicating may be more intense and transformative than usual. Expect a creative and emotional rebirth, with greater initiative in love and personal projects. Your enthusiasm is returning.

Capricorn Rising: This is a month for mental reprogramming, shifting your internal narrative. A specific belief or life direction is reaching its conclusion. Your social bonds are expanding, and relationships that foster emotional growth may surface. You might feel driven to start something from your roots or undertake a domestic reorganization.

Aquarius Rising: Pluto in your sign brings a total restructuring of your identity—a profound transformation. There may be a closure or revelation regarding shared finances, debts, investments, or intimate bonds. Whatever “binds” you is being cleared away. Expect a deep review of your self-esteem and how you generate income. Improvements in work and self-care are likely. Communication will be more direct, and your decisions will set your course.

Pisces Rising: You are the protagonist this month. The eclipse activates your identity/relationship axis, leading to a redefinition of the Self. The Sun entering Aries will mark a new stage of financial and personal maturity. This is not a “light” month; it is a foundational one.





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FDLA FASHION WEEK: A CELEBRATION OF STYLE AND IDENTITY

FDLA Fashion Week has established itself as more than just a fashion platform; it is a true social epicenter and a vital gathering point that celebrates Hispanic identity and its undeniable influence on creativity, style, and sophistication. Its most recent edition in the Big Apple, as with every season, once again marked a milestone as one of the most important events on the New York social calendar, merging glamour with a profound sense of community and cultural pride.

STAFF @amarenamag

The FDLA runway once again served as a canvas for both innovation and heritage. Designers from across Latin America and the United States presented collections that, moving beyond mere trends, told stories of resilience and cultural richness. The true magic of FDLA Fashion Week lies in its ability to convene the most elite circles of the Hispanic and global communities.

The atmosphere vibrated with a palpable energy—a blend of excitement for discovering new collections and pride in a shared heritage. Parallel events, such as exclusive brunches and gala parties, complemented the experience, offering a relaxed yet elegant space for interaction and enjoyment.

As this edition comes to a close, the impact of FDLA Fashion Week continues to resonate. It is not just a week-long event; it is a global engine of visibility for both emerging and established talents who represent the diversity and vigor of Latin fashion. By placing these collections in the heart of New York, FDLA opens doors to international markets, challenges stereotypes, and ensures that the voice of Hispanic fashion is heard with strength and clarity.



Wendell Figueroa Ruiz and Martha Phillips, Editorial Advisors for AMARENA



Jose Forteza



Alejandro Barzaga and his models



Victoria Maluff



Elizabeth Loaiza



Diana Seo and Wendy Rose



Albania Rosario, Agatha Ruiz de la Prada, Kika Rocha and Jose Forteza

IVY FASHION AFFAIR: TURNING STYLE INTO HOPE

Under the vision of entrepreneur and editor Veronica Batiz, this event transcended aesthetics and style to fulfill a greater purpose: strengthening the work of the Mexican Red Cross.

STAFF @amarenamag

On the night of February 14th, the JW Marriott Arboleda in San Pedro Garza García, Nuevo León, was transformed into the epicenter of design. Under the coordination of Rafael Zúñiga Models, the evening unfolded as a narrative of talent and elegance

Alejandro Carlin—the star designer—captivated attendees with 'NEGRO,' a minimalist, dark, and timeless collection paying tribute to his 25-year career in the industry. The runway vibrated with the sophisticated gala designs of Ana de la Fuente, the brilliance of Rosé Joyería, the distinctive style of MAC by María Alejandra, footwear by Queen Victoria, and the impeccable bridal vision of Sí Quiero! Brides. The atmosphere came to life through the notes of pianist Paulo Villarreal Escobar, who performed pieces from his album After Knowledge. This auditory delight, combined with the ambiance created by Ceci Soriano and the drapery by Angora, provided the perfect backdrop for a magical night.

Beyond the trends, the soul of the event was social responsibility. Thanks to the strategic alliance and sponsorship of Banco Bancrea, SwissLab, SwissHospital, and Academia Acentos Gayol, a vital fundraising goal was achieved for the Mexican Red Cross's medical assistance and disaster relief programs, proving that in the world of fashion, the most valuable accessory will always be solidarity.



Alejandro Carlin's Finale



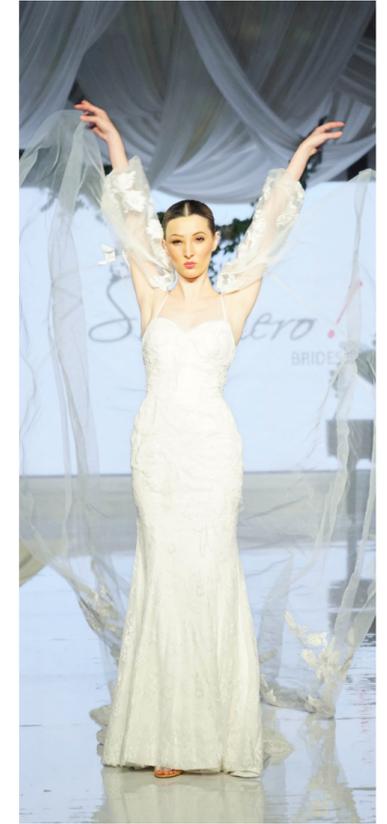
Maria Paez for Ana De la Fuente



Sofia Gonzalez for Alejandro Carlin



Alejandro Carlin



Lorraine Ciudadela for Sí Quiero! Brides



Alejandra Carranza, Director of the Monterrey Red Cross; Verónica Batiz de Samar, Director of Ivy Fashion Affair and Editorial InTrend; and Patty Arizpe, the event's host.



Paulo Escobar



Finale of Sí Quiero! Brides



Valery Gonzalez for Rosé



Angel Cano, Sofia Elizondo and Daniel Guerra



Yessenia Vazquez for Ana De la Fuente



Rafael Zúñiga and Abby Nino de Rivera

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