

MWM

MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE

STYLE & BEAUTY

VOLUME 12 | ISSUE 8 | DECEMBER 2018



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+ GIFT GUIDE
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Feeling fantastic

Most days, “fashion” and “beauty” are matters of practicality. Our hair screams out for attention, our nails suddenly look a little worse for the wear and, shoot, we really need something sharp-looking for that upcoming interview, conference or cousin’s wedding.

So we rifle through the deep recesses of our closets for something that’ll do, and we book a last-minute appointment at the salon, which we’ll squeeze between all the other necessities of our lives. In a pinch, I’ve even cut my own hair at home (I don’t recommend it. But should you ever do the same, and later find yourself explaining what you’ve done to a professional stylist who’s eyeballing your head in confused alarm, just admit it and apologize).

Sometimes, though, we get to visit a salon on purpose. And by that I mean we block out the time and headspace to really enjoy the experience—be it a haircut, really rad nail art or an entirely new look (because we’re feeling bold and on top of the world and want our outsides to reflect those glorious feelings). It’s a kindness we show ourselves. It’s time dedicated to us, to feeling worth every minute of attention, to demonstrating to ourselves that yes, we deserve to feel great in our skin. (Also: a two-minute scalp massage at the shampoo sink has a way of brightening my worldview.)

There really is something wonderful about stepping out of a salon feeling all sorts of new and fantastic. Also splendid: Many of the businesses we frequent for a new hairdo, a fresh coat of polish or help finding clothes we feel grand in are owned by women. In this issue of *Maine Women Magazine*, we spotlight a few of them.

Jessica Johnson, owner of Jessica Johnson Beauty, opened a facial spa in Portland that offers skin care treatments—including 30-minute “flash facials”—custom brow styling and makeup. An advocate of simplicity, Johnson believes in

skin care the doesn’t break the bank (or take over the bathroom cabinets), but a trip to her facial spa still feels wonderfully indulgent. Read more on page 34.

The scene at Get Nailed Beauty Lounge is often filled with conversation, irreverent humor and plenty of sarcasm—and that’s by design. Owner Nancy Nguyen, who opened the nail salon a year ago, wanted clients to feel comfortable talking about...well, anything. “When I walk in, I feel like I’m going to just catch up with some girlfriends,” says one client. Nguyen has also well known for her intricate nail art. Read more on page 28.

Antoinette “Toni” Smothers opened the doors of her beauty shop over 20 years ago, offering cuts, color and styling, along with braids, weaves, wigs and extensions. Along the way, she’s created a welcoming shop that feels like family. Clients come from all over Maine, as far away as Connecticut, and from every walk of life. “I wanted it to be a community where everyone could come,” she says. “It’s more than a salon.” Read more on page 46.

And Carrie Montgomery’s styling business was born out of her own experience dealing with chronic health issues and using clothes to cover up perceived “flaws” in her body. It was once she shifted her perspective and started thinking about creativity and well-being that she says she really started to heal. “I help women get dressed,” she says. “But it’s also about emotional and physical health, their whole being.” Read more on page 40.

This issue also features a gift guide flush with made-in-Maine wares, from lip balm and hand-embossed bangle bracelets to stylish handbags (complete with organizational inserts to make it easy to find everything you need). Check out the guide on page 16.

Thanks for reading. And amid all the gift-giving and hullabaloo of the season, show yourself some kindness, too.

ON THE COVER

Carrie Montgomery helps women discover a sense of style that sums up their personality and their soul. It’s a business born out of her own experience with chronic health issues and a struggle with her own body. Read more on page 40.

Photo by Heidi Kim



MWMM

MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE

EDITORS

Shannon Bryan

sbryan@mainewomenmagazine.com

Amy Vigeant Canfield

acanfield@mainewomenmagazine.com

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Heidi Kirn

hkirn@mainewomenmagazine.com

ADVERTISING ACCOUNT MANAGERS

**John Bamford, Cyndy Bell, Karen Bowe,
Ann Duddy, Natalie Ladd, Beth Murphy,
Kerry Rasor, Laurie Walsh**

sales@mainewomenmagazine.com

DIGITAL & SOCIAL MEDIA

Sue Miller

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

Taylor Roberge

CONTRIBUTORS | Print and Online

**Katie Bingham-Smith, Shannon
Bryan, Amy Canfield, Sarah Holman,
Candace Karu, Avery Yale Kamila,
Maggie Knowles, Jessie Lacey, Patricia
McCarthy, Amy Paradysz, Amy Power**

CONTACT

**295 Gannett Drive, South Portland
(207) 854-2577
www.mainewomenmagazine.com**

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WRITTEN BY AMY PARADYSZ



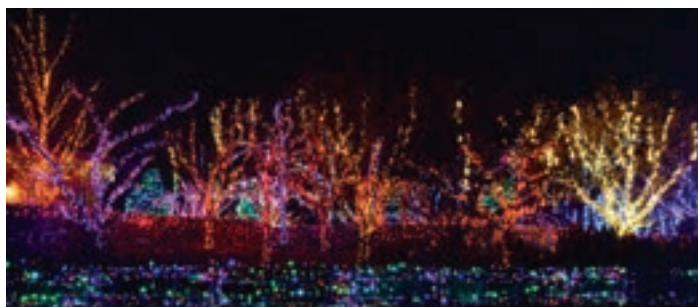
SantaCon Portland Maine. Photo courtesy of Amy Paradysz

SantaCon Portland Maine

Saturday, Dec. 1, 5 p.m. to closing time

Portland

Party with hundreds of Santas and other merry types hanging out in the Old Port during this annual event that includes drinking, dancing and reindeer games like jumping rope with holiday lights. Get creative with holiday character costuming (selfies encouraged), follow the meetup locations for SantaCon Portland Maine on Facebook or Twitter and bring a donation for Family Crisis Services. (facebook.com/SantaconPortland)



Gardens Aglow. Photo courtesy of Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens

Gardens Aglow

Thursday-Sunday through Dec. 31, 4–9 p.m.

Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens, 132 Botanical Gardens Drive, Boothbay

With hundreds of thousands of lights, the Coastal Maine Botanical Gar-

dens boasts the largest light show in Maine. To have a merry time, dress for an outdoor walking tour and buy tickets in advance. While you're there, enjoy some holiday shopping in the Gardenshop. Tickets are \$8 kids, \$12 seniors and \$14 adults. (mainegardens.org)



SheSpeaks: "Sovereign." Photo courtesy of Ginger Soule Photography

SheSpeaks: "Sovereign"

Dec. 6-7, 7 p.m. (doors open at 6 p.m.)

One Longfellow Square, 181 State St., Portland

This popular women's storytelling event hosted by Lael Couper Jepson of SheChanges is back to celebrate and honor women—our power, perspectives, voices, wisdom, stories and relevance. But this time there are two nights and 10 brave women getting personal. Storytellers are Anne Morin, Louisa Irele, Corinne Mockler, Lyn Carter and Nadine Farag (Dec. 6), and Ashley Dobbs, Rosa Slack, Molly Neuner, Robin Hodgskin and Virginia Dearani (Dec. 7). Tickets are \$20 in advance at onelongfellowsquare.com; \$25 day of show.

Merry Madness

Thursday, Dec. 6, 4–7 p.m.

U.S. Custom House, 312 Fore St., Portland

This Portland Downtown event brings thousands of 21+ revelers downtown for a unique holiday shopping event. It all starts with a glass of wine and jazz quartet The Nightcaps at the historic U.S. Custom House. And then more than 75 shops stay open until 10 p.m. Tickets are \$20. (portlandmaine.com/merry-madness)

Sparkle Weekend Celebration

Friday-Sunday, Dec. 7-9

Throughout Freeport

Freeport's three-day kickoff to Christmas includes a parade of lights down Main Street to wake up the famous Talking Christmas Tree and loads of other stuff to do, including horse-drawn carriage rides, a holiday movie marathon, festive rides on the Amtrak Downeaster, music, food and, of course, plenty of places to shop. (sparklecelebration.com)

Cirque Dream Holidaze

Thursday, Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m.

Cross Insurance Arena, 515 Main St., Bangor

This two-hour cirque adventure with 20 astonishing acts, original music and 300 costumes is just the spectacle for the holidays, celebrating Chanukah, Christmas and New Year's. Tickets are \$29 and up via ticketmaster.com.

Bahaha Humbug Holiday Comedy Show

Friday, Dec. 14, 8 p.m.

Frontier, 14 Maine St., Mill 3 Fort Andross, Brunswick

Come for dinner, stay for the laughs with some of Maine and New England's best and brightest comics. Tickets are \$12 in advance (via brownpapertickets.com), \$15 at the door. (explorefrontier.com)

Stranger in a Strange Land

Thursday, Jan. 10, 7-9 p.m.

Merrill Auditorium, 20 Myrtle St., Portland

National Geographic photographer Jodi Cobb gives a whirlwind retrospective of her career spanning four decades, illustrated by award-winning photography and video and concluding with a Q&A session. Known for breaking through barriers and going undercover to reveal hidden societies, Cobb captures fascinating glimpses of Japan's secret Geisha culture, the cloistered lives of Saudi Arabian women, a wide range of human trafficking and more. Tickets are \$35-40. (portlandinnovations.org)





Eating Disorders and Co-Occurring Addiction Treatment

Crossroads has established itself as a leader in the treatment of addiction and behavioral health since 1974, particularly in co-occurring and gender-responsive care for addiction and eating disorders.

50% of individuals struggling with eating disorders also have a substance use disorder. Enrolling in a fully integrated treatment program that addresses both disorders is imperative for preventing relapse.

Crossroads offers a 30-day residential treatment program for women by women, in a safe and serene environment where women can feel peaceful and comfortable. With 24-hour on-site care, women can rest assured that the treatment will be tailored to address their unique challenges.

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- **Medical Nutrition Therapy**
- **Yoga and Group Acupuncture**
- **Mindfulness-based Relapse Prevention**
- **Seeking Safety**
- **Healing Trauma**
- **Women's 12 Steps**
- **Equine Therapy**
- **Art & Expressive Therapy**



Remember who you wanted to be, and take the first step to seek healing. If you find yourself or a loved one struggling, contact Crossroads today.



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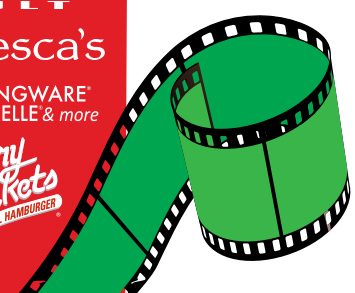
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MAINE GIFT GUIDE

WRITTEN BY AMY PARADYSZ



Dianna Pozdniakov, founder of Sofia Fima handbag company, found a unique way to balance style and day-to-day organization with The Main Squeeze Tote (featured here in navy). The stylish handbags boast organizational inserts, making it easy to find everything you need. Read more on page 24. Photo by Reggie Hodges



Shopping is inevitable. So why not support the work of other Maine women—crafters, entrepreneurs, designers and women who simply had an idea and ran with it. Dianna Pozdniakov designs stylish handbags that can make you a better—or at least, better organized—woman. Jewelry-makers Sarah Crawford, Mary-Theresa Tringale and Nichole Brown adorn, inspire and commemorate. Gabrielle Melchionda of Mad Gab's makes the yummiest smelling stocking stuffers. Alanna York, inventor of Controlled Chaos, is a heroine for curly-haired ladies. Heather Lux of True North Beauty developed a blend of wild harvested Chaga and luxury oils for healthy skin. And Ellen Okolita has delighted thousands of children by giving them wings.

ADORN



Courtesy photo

KA ORA BRACELETS

kaorabracelets.com

KA ORA bracelets, founded and designed by Audrey Lovering of West Paris, are hand-embossed bangles that reflect positive thinking to empower the dreamer, celebrate the rebel and support individuality. Each bracelet is made individually, with no two exactly alike. KA ORA's signature bangle is called The League of Extraordinary Women, symbolizing that behind every successful woman is a league of extraordinary women. There's something for every woman on your list, whether you show your affection with the XOXO bangle, remind her of home with the 207 bangle or honor her faith with the Cross bangle. Bangles are made of silver-plated jewels brass and are \$37.



Photo courtesy of Mary-Theresa Tringale

I AM AUNTIE MARY DESIGNS

etsy.com/shop/iamauntiemarydesigns

Etsy jewelry maker Mary-Theresa Tringale of Portland is inspired by the power of the two little words "I Am." She creates hand-stamped inspirational jewelry. An aluminum cuff that says, "I am strong. I am alive. I am fearless. I am unstoppable." A bangle that says, "She believed she could so she did." Or a pendant that says, simply, "I am loved." What better gift to give than affirmation?

For this custom piece, I AM STRONG is hand-stamped on a gold-filled bar hung from a gold-plated chain (\$49).

SARAH CRAWFORD HANDCRAFTED

sarahcrawfordhandcrafted.com

Native Mainer Sarah Crawford designs bohemian-style beaded necklaces with accent pendants inspired by Maine's rugged beauty: antlers, an acorn, a pine cone or tourmaline. Her necklaces, bracelets and earrings are handcrafted of Japanese glass beads that won't fade and strung on wire for durability. You can live in them! Custom orders welcome.

Sarah Crawford Handcrafted beaded necklace with pine cone pendant, \$68 per stand, \$128 per set.



Photo courtesy of Sarah Crawford

STATE PLATE DESIGNS

etsy.com/shop/stateplatedesigns

When Nichole Brown of Portland lost her father, Bruce, she turned his Maine Veteran license plate into three bracelets and a keychain for family remembrances. Nearly three years later, she's made state plate cuffs, earrings, keychains, ornaments and repurposed signs for thousands of Mainers and out-of-staters using tin snips and sanding and buffing by hand.

State Plate Design cuffs are \$28 each, a little more for harder-to-find vintage plates.



Photo courtesy of Nichole Brown

PUCKER UP



Photo by Heidi Kirn

FIVE ISLANDS BODY CARE

207-837-1044 // five-islands-body-co.myshopify.com

Margaret Morris, the midcoast mom who founded this natural skincare line, uses raw ingredients from wholesalers with certified organic, kosher and vegan facilities; natural essential oils, not lab-made perfumes; and minimal—but cute!—packaging by a Maine designer. Available online and at select gift shops from Kennebunk to Bar Harbor.

At \$9.75, the Lip Balm Trio is perfect for gift giving. Choose three from Rosemary-Mint, Grapefruit-Bergamot, Cinnamon-Tangerine, Citrus-Lavender, Caffe Latte, Carrot Cake Pumpkin Spice.



Photo courtesy of Amanda Nelson

LONG WINTER SOAP COMPANY

11 Friendship St., Waldoboro // 207-449-2394 // longwinterfarm.com

Amanda Nelson protected her daughter's super-sensitive skin by making her own soaps. Recipes were perfected and pretty soon there was an Etsy shop. More than a decade later, Long Winter Soap Co. products, from soaps to perfume oils to lip balms, are still made in small batches with skin-loving ingredients. Resist lip balms are a great stocking stuffer for liberal gift giving, with \$1 from each \$5 lip balm going to Planned Parenthood (cranberry juice flavor), American Civil Liberties Union (soda), National Park Service (waffles), Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (tea and cookies) or Transgender Equality (strawberries, vanilla and blueberries).



Courtesy photo

MAD GAB'S

1-800-547-5823 // madgabs.com

Long before the first tin of Moose Smooch was ever poured, sealed and shipped from the Mad Gab's factory in Westbrook, Gabrielle Melchionda was making lip balm in her mother's kitchen, just for the fun of it. Her company, Mad Gab's, now headquartered in Yarmouth, has been producing natural and organic body care since 1991. Kids still love those whimsical Moose Smooch lip balms, and Mad Gab's has branched out into body balms and foot balms to keep skin hydrated through the Maine winter. Pick some up at Hannaford for stocking stuffers.

Mad Gab's has expanded to include MG Signature Body Balms and Foot Balms to keep skin hydrated through the Maine winter (\$8 each).

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NATURAL BEAUTY



Photo courtesy of Abigail Carroll

NONESUCH SKINCARE

nonesuchskincare.com

Abigail Carroll needed something to treat her naturally sensitive skin, which was suffering from her new life working on the water at her oyster farm, Nonesuch Oysters, in Scarborough. Of course, she was surrounded by Maine seaweed, which is packed with antioxidants as well as vitamins and minerals essential to health, inside and out. She didn't find marine products on the market that reflected her core values: clean, natural, eco-friendly and aesthetic. So, with the help of skincare scientists, she started making them herself. So now she's an oyster farmer and the founder of a skincare company whose products contain a proprietary Maine Seaweed Serum designed to treat even the most stressed out skin.

Nonesuch Body Oil (\$40) and Nonesuch Face Oil (\$70) are fortified with locally harvested organic Maine kelp.



Courtesy photo

DULSE & RUGOSA

dulseandrugosa.com

Mother and daughter Claire and Carly Weinberg harvest seaweeds and botanicals from Gotts Island, off Acadia National Park, hand picking each flower, leaf and piece of seaweed that goes into their soaps, lotions, scrubs and oils.

Like summer in a soap, Garden Thyme is a luxurious blend of botanically infused oils and butters that will leave your skin clean and moisturized. Each bar is infused with the power of sugar kelp, a powerful moisturizer that helps protect your skin against day-to-day environmental damage—like winter!—and hand-picked petals of peony, lavender and thyme (\$10).

TRUE NORTH BEAUTY

truenorthbeauty.com

Shortly after turning 40, Heather Lux experienced unwanted changes to her once-healthy skin and set out to design something both luxurious and nature-based. Inspired by Chaga mushrooms in her backyard, Lux started making and selling products at the Portland Farmers Market. Now grown far beyond Deering Oaks Park, True North Beauty boasts a variety of products containing Chaga, which is high in antioxidants and is a natural anti-inflammatory and anti-microbial—all essential for healthy, clear, younger-looking skin

Perfect for all skin types, True North's four-piece petite collection includes travel-ready Solid Cleanser, Hydration Cream, Oil Cleanser and Face Polish, each formulated to work together to clean, exfoliate and hydrate (\$32).



Photo by Michael Harrison Photography

CONTROLLED CHAOS

**Head Games Salon for Hair & Body // 116 Free St.,
Portland // controlledchaoshair.com**

Nearly a decade ago, Head Games Salon owner Alanna York developed a hair care line for curly hair: Controlled Chaos. If you're tired of uncontrolled frizz or crunchy curls and want your curls to be soft, touchable and frizz-free, get on the Controlled Chaos website to order a 5-ounce tube for \$24.99 and view the styling tutorials. Or just stop by Head Games and pick some up.



Photo by Ruby Jea Photography

DRESSING UP



Photo courtesy of Noelle Libby

TREE & VINE

Also available at Daytrip Jr., 4 Dock Square, Kennebunkport // treeandvine.etsy.com

It all started with a little girl who wanted to dress up like a flamingo. Her mother, Ellen Okolita of Gray, soon switched the focus of her sewing business to costumes made of Eco-fi felt, which is made in New Hampshire from recycled plastic bottles. Tree & Vine costumes are inspired by nature's winged creatures, with all manner of birds, bats and butterflies. Costumes range from \$40–\$150 for the wings (baby through adult sizes) and \$60–\$225 for a full set with wings, mask and tail (again, babies through adults). Because there's nothing more stylish than strutting around like a cardinal.

BAG IT UP



Photo by Reggie Hodges

SOFIA FIMA

46 Lisbon St., Lewiston // sofiafima.com

Daughter to Russian immigrants—her father, Fima, is a master tailor and her mother, Sofia, was a consummate fashionista—Dianna Pozdniakov developed a passion for meticulous Old World construction and impeccable style at an early age. In her own career as an architect, Pozdniakov remembers the three-bag schlep: carrying a purse, a laptop bag and a bag for her lunch, change of shoes and umbrella and other random stuff. She'd walk into a design meeting and fumble around, looking for what she needed. That was her epiphany (even before she became a mom and had more than one person's stuff to carry). Pozdniakov designed Sofia Fima, a brand of stylish handbags with organizational inserts, to make it easy to find everything you need—whether you're with the kids, at work, traveling or heading to the gym—without clumsily carrying everything you own. Order online or visit the Sofia Fima storefront in the renovated Lewiston Deposit & Trust Building on Lisbon Street.

The Main Squeeze Tote (pictured on page 16) is available in navy (as shown), blush and grey (\$465).

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GRAND OPENINGS

3 NEW SHOPS IN PORTLAND



Photo courtesy of Courtesy Elisa Marie DeSigns

ELISE MARIE DESIGNS

34 Washington Ave., Portland
facebook.com/elisemariedesigns

You may have seen designer Elise DeSalvo selling her colorful Bohemian-style jewelry at craft shows and jewelry parties over the last several years. Now she's opened up her own shop on Washington Avenue. Alongside her jewelry, find clothing, home goods, accessories, giftware and artisan goods.

FIKIRIA

(inside Threads of Hope: A Catholic Charities Maine Thrift Store)

1041 Brighton Ave., Portland

Zehra Abukar and Nana Batumike have both launched clothing businesses at Threads of Hope thrift store (which recently moved to a new location on Brighton Avenue). Fikiria is a store within a store and features high-end women's clothing designed and made by Abukar (who is a student at Southern Maine Community College and president of its international student organization). Batumike's shop features high fashion clothes and accessories with a Central African flair along with makeup for African American women. In addition to recently launching her business, Batumike is also a mother of six children and works full time in mental health care services.



Photo by Shannon Bryan

METROPOLITAN

247 Congress St., Portland
facebook.com/metropolitanclothingandvice

Say hello to Metropolitan, a consignment clothing shop for men and women (and a teensy bit for stylish kids, too) on the East End. Formerly Circa Home and Vintage, the shop was relaunched in October and now features contemporary clothing, jewelry, accessories and locally made gifts like Leetie Lovendale jewelry, Tröskö bags and soy candles from East End Wax Co.

Nancy Nguyen opened Get Nailed Beauty Lounge in Portland a year ago, specializing in intricate nail art. "People love it as a way to express themselves and their personalities," she says.





GET NAILED

**Intricate nail art—and candid conversations—
at Get Nailed Beauty Lounge**

WRITTEN BY PATRICIA MCCARTHY

PHOTOGRAPHED BY HEIDI KIRN

Get Nailed Beauty Lounge, overlooking High Street in the heart of downtown Portland, is not for everyone.

If you have delicate sensibilities over things like cursing and don't appreciate sarcasm, this probably wouldn't be the nail salon for you.

But if a "let's get to be friends" atmosphere, with lots of joking and laughing and often-irreverent humor sounds like your speed, Get Nailed might be your place.

"We're not for everybody because no subject is off limits here, and not everybody is comfortable with that," acknowledges owner Nancy Nguyen, who opened the upscale salon a year ago. "We're gonna talk about our sex lives, food, eating, our periods, pooping—all the time. The people who come here like that and do feel comfortable. I may not have a filter, but I'm nice and fun and very personable!"

If some people are turned off, that's OK, she says—just as many or more people will appreciate her fresh approach. And she must be doing something right. The salon is open Tuesday through Saturday by appointment only, and Nguyen says she's booked two weeks out.

Requiring appointments provides time to get things right, she

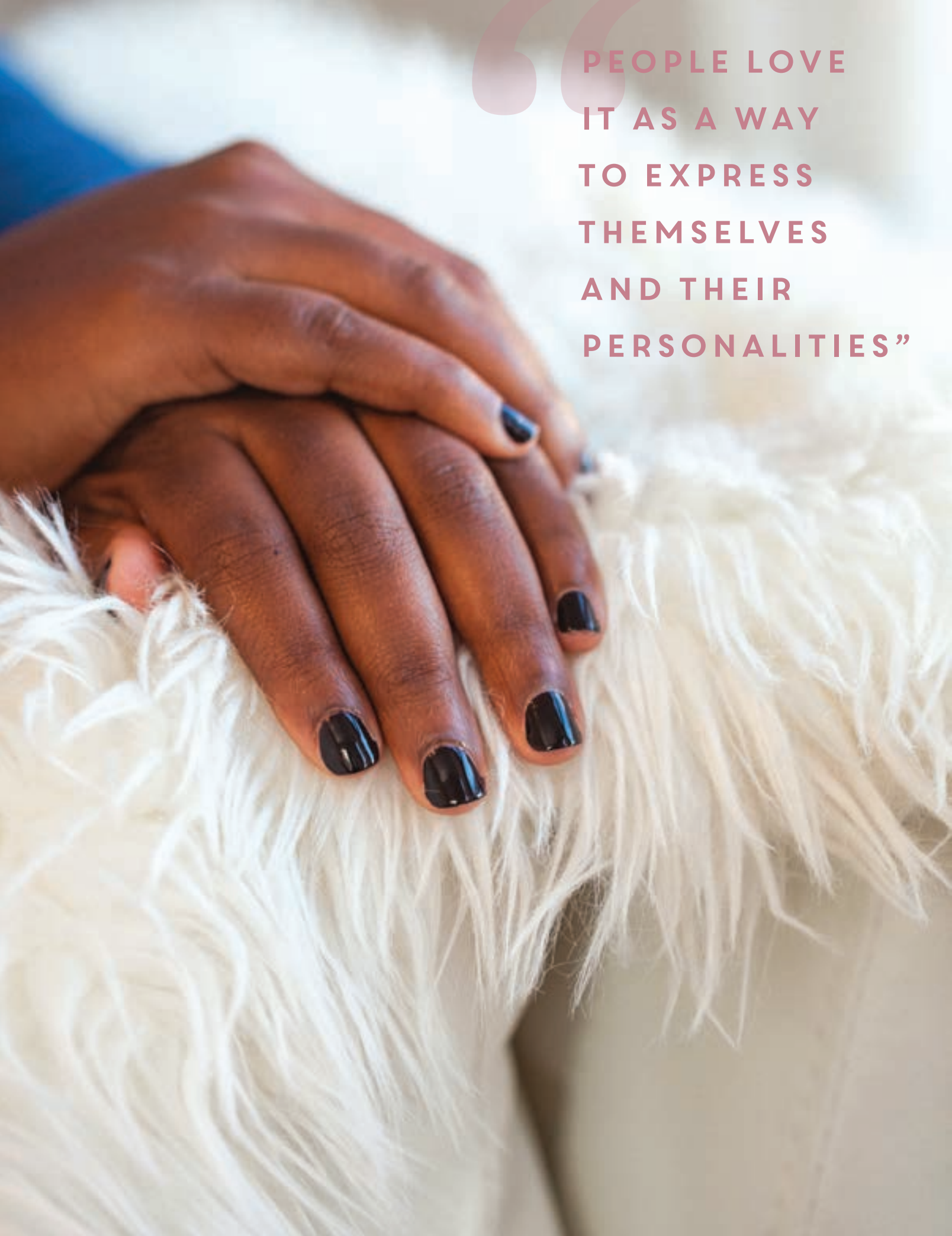
says—"I don't want anyone to feel rushed because we need to get to the next person"—and gives her the flexibility she needs as a mom to two, ages 1 1/2 and 8.

"The atmosphere she's created is like no other. When I walk in, I feel like I'm going to just catch up with some girlfriends," says Helen Gillis of Portland, a kindergarten teacher who has enjoyed Nguyen's gel manicures, acrylics, dipping powders, pedicures and nail art services for the past three years. "They know about my life and I theirs because they have such genuine conversations."

That's by design for Nguyen, 30, who was clear on precisely what she wanted for her business by the time she teamed up with a friend to share fourth-floor space at 142 High St.

It had taken time to find her niche. She graduated from Cali for Nails Academy in Boston on her 21st birthday, but she also tried going to school for biochemistry and earned an LPN license from Southern Maine Community College along her way.

She eventually returned to doing nails because it satisfies her artistic and business talents, but it wasn't a smooth path to her own business. She had hopped from salon to salon for years, experiencing good and bad bosses, service and conditions, before renting a booth in a Portland house as Nailed by Nancy—the last stop



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IT AS A WAY
TO EXPRESS
THEMSELVES
AND THEIR
PERSONALITIES”

before Get Nailed Beauty Lounge. Through those years, she's learned what works for her and what to avoid.

Like stuffy and discouraging people. And less-than-top-notch sanitary conditions. Hence, the no-subject-is-taboo atmosphere and doing some things deliberately differently, like opting for deep pedicure bowls that are not hooked up to a pump and get a fresh liner for each client. And she's also heavily focused on intricate nail art, despite naysayers telling her it would never fly in Portland, Maine.

"It's become such a big thing now, and people love it as a way to express themselves and their personalities," Nguyen says, offering photos from her phone that show elaborate examples. "I've always loved art, so it's fun. I've learned how to build nail sculptures out of acrylics," including 3D detailed skulls for one set of fingernails. "I've also done things like a Ouija board and lots of florals—not your average florals! And I love working with dipping powders, which are another form of acrylics that can strengthen and lengthen nails."

When pondering how to achieve a certain look, YouTube has been known to come to the rescue. And Instagram has been her biggest source of advertising and business.

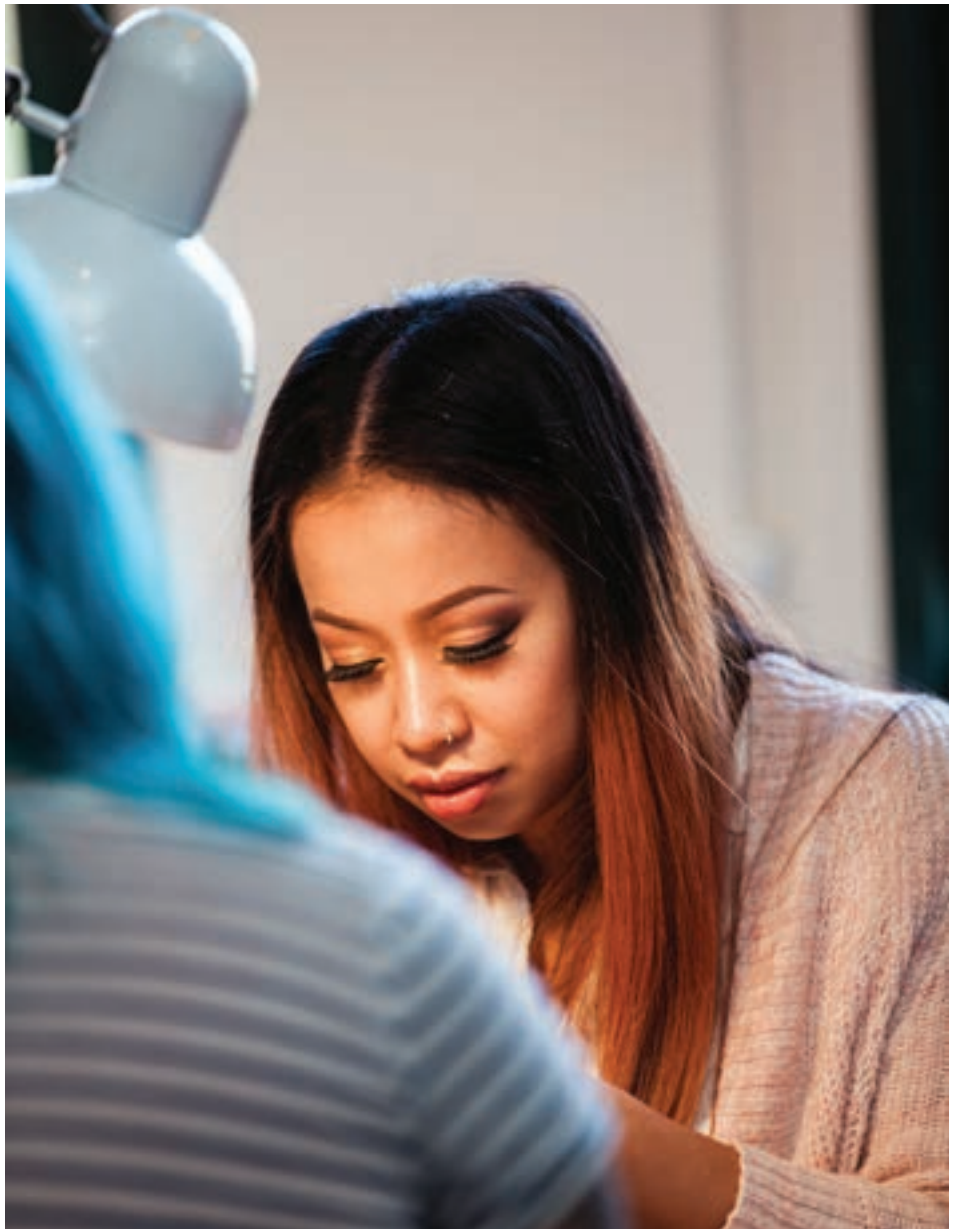
"It's amazing, and free!" Nguyen says. "And the moment I started posting pictures of nail art, people starting coming and asking for it."

High-quality work is her highest priority, she says, noting that a typical price for a regular manicure in Greater Portland is about \$25–\$27. Hers start at \$35.

"The difference is, ours last. We take our time to make sure it's done right. So you can spend \$50 a month and go every two weeks, or you can come here and get a manicure every three or four weeks, or even six, sometimes. That saves you money in the long run."

Nguyen says she appreciates a trend toward a little more flash when it comes to nails.

"Wearing bright colors and nail art at the of-



Nancy Nguyen (top right) works on a client's nails at her shop, Get Nailed Beauty Lounge, located on High Street in Portland. Nguyen says she appreciates a trend toward a little more flash when it comes to nails.

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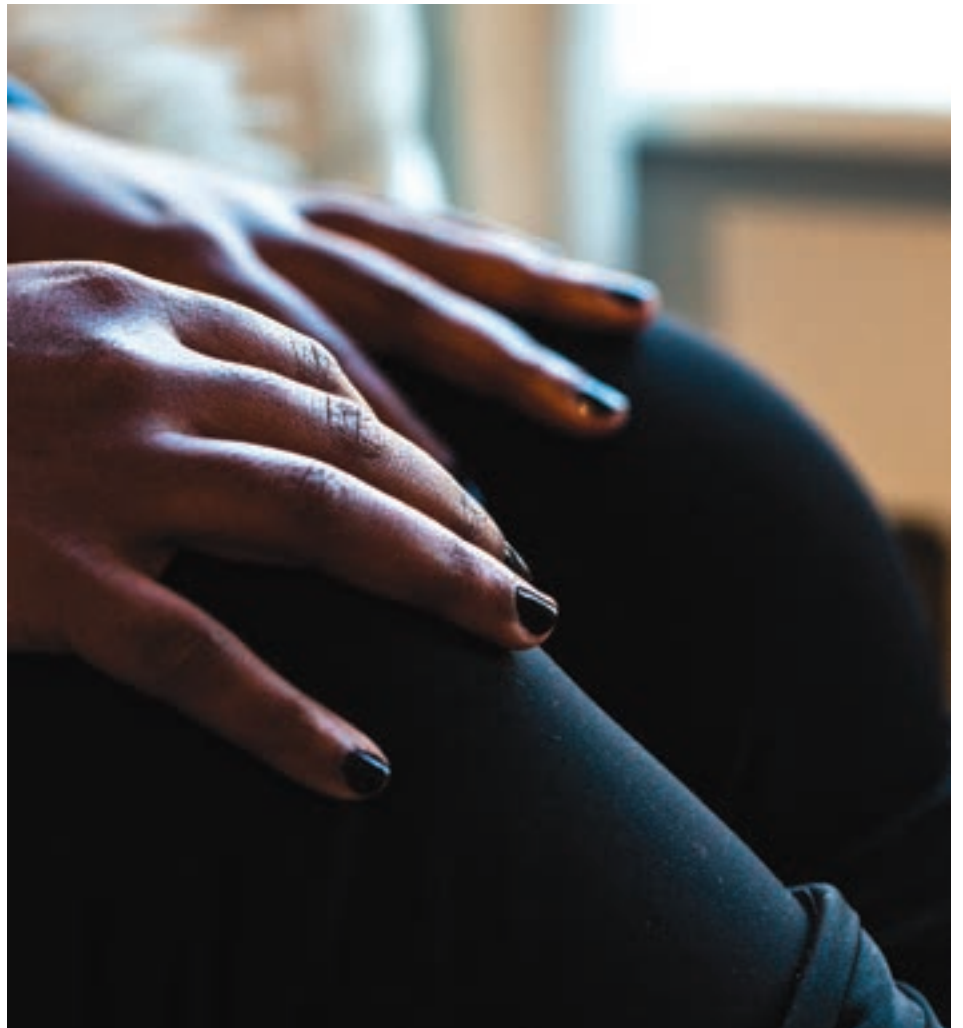
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Clients laugh during their pedicures (above) and show off their freshly painted nails (below) at Get Nailed Beauty Lounge. The atmosphere here is regularly filled with joking and laughing and often-irreverent humor.





face is, like tattoos, slowly becoming more acceptable,” she says, adding that more men are having their nails painted, too. “We have one guy who likes to try all sorts of things. Right now, he has ice cream cones (painted) on his nails.”

Nguyen says she’s happy with how the business is going, but has higher aspirations. Beyond catering to bridal parties, she’d love to host children’s parties, for one thing. And then there’s the bigger picture:

“I’d love to have a salon and a school in the same space with lots of little suites, all under one roof,” she says. “A lot of schools pump people out, but they don’t learn what they need to learn,” from trimming cuticles correctly to understanding how to avoid bacterial infections. “My students would learn some things I wish I’d learned! And they could gain clientele and then booth rent or work for the school or salon. Who knows? Maybe I’ll franchise it.”

Patricia McCarthy is a longtime writer and editor. She has three daughters, lives in Portland, and also has a photography business (patriciamccarthy.com)

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Less is more

A simple approach to skin care at Jessica Johnson Beauty in Portland

WRITTEN BY KATIE BINGHAM-SMITH
PHOTOGRAPHED BY HEIDI KIRN

“At the end of the day, you don’t really need a lot for your skin to look its best,” says Jessica Johnson, owner of Jessica Johnson Beauty in Portland. While the beauty industry has become overcrowded and noisy, Johnson advocates simplicity: wear sunscreen, keep your skin clean and hydrated, and lose the crowd of beauty products taking over your bathroom.

At her facial spa on Middle Street, Johnson offers skin care treatments—including 30-minute “flash facials”—custom brow styling and makeup. There’s no long list of frilly services; rather, her approach is meant to “liberate women from practicing a costly, time-consuming beauty routine.”

Skin care doesn’t need to break the bank—but that doesn’t mean a visit to the spa for a facial or brow styling can’t still feel totally indulgent. It’s a balance Johnson has mastered.

The decor at Jessica Johnson Beauty—modern and feminine, accented with grays and pinks—was inspired by Johnson’s love of New York City. She wanted women to walk in and get a feel for being in a big city or the side streets of Paris—without leaving the ease of Portland. “I wanted women to get the luxe feel at an affordable price,” she says. “This experience needs to be accessible to everyone.”

There are no private rooms at Jessica Johnson Beauty. Instead, clients are welcomed with its open-bar feel, which gives it a very social vibe. “We serve wine and espresso with our flash facial,” Johnson says. “You are there for a great facial that takes a half-hour and cost \$60. That’s it.”

Bringing women together and giving them a personal experience is built into Johnson’s business. “The skin care industry feels very impersonal and big-scale,” she

Jessica Johnson, owner of Jessica Johnson Beauty on Middle Street in Portland, wants to liberate women from practicing a costly, time-consuming beauty routine.





At her facial spa on Middle Street, Jessica Johnson offers skin care treatments—including 30-minute “flash facials”—custom brow styling and makeup. Johnson has also created a small line of skin care products—including the T3 Hydro Active Spray Serum and Ultra Glow Night Cream & Mask—to provide women with a “simpler, saner” skin care regimen.

“This is a place where woman can come in and feel no pressure.”

says. Having personal one-on-one contact with her customers and building her brand, one customer at a time, is essential. “This is a place where woman can come in and feel no pressure.”

And Johnson’s brand is building. The Middle Street spa has grown from its original iteration as a brow studio, which Johnson first opened in 2014. It was a venture she wasn’t sure would work in Portland.

When Johnson first moved to Maine from California, she noticed there wasn’t a place in Portland dedicated to brows—and she wasn’t sure if locals would be interested in her services. “I didn’t know if women were going to pay for that kind of treatment here,” she says. But four years and many clients later, her company is growing.

Johnson has also created a small line of skin care products—including the T3 Hydro Active Spray Serum and Ultra Glow Night Cream & Mask—to provide women with a “simpler, saner” skin care regimen. That side of the business is seeing growth, too.

“We are a Maine company and we are launching our products and expanding the company nationally from Maine,” she says. “It’s so exciting.”

Both the facial spa and the product line are a culmination of 30 years working in the skin care and beauty industry. Johnson got her start in 1986 while working as a makeup artist for Lancome to pay her way through college, earning her undergraduate degree in women’s studies and English. She then spent time in Europe, studying advanced skin care and learning about oil cleansing—using oil to cleanse the skin as opposed to most facial cleansers, which actually strip away the skin’s natural oils.



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Women often shy away from using oils on their face, believing they will clog pores and cause breakouts, but that's not the case, says Johnson. Oil cleansing takes the place of using a makeup remover, face wash and moisturizer, meaning fewer products are needed. "The less we put on our face, the more it self-regulates," she says.

She was so taken with the idea, she eventually created her own face oil—3N1 Hybrid

bottles that were just taking up space in her cabinets. The cleaned up space changed the way she felt—and looked. "I looked better because I felt better after decluttering," she says. The experience gave her the push to develop her own simplified line of skin care products.

Women don't need to be overwhelmed with feeling like they need every product on the market. "We are making this harder than it needs to be," Johnson says. Women should use a sunscreen, cleanse their skin, keep it hydrated and exfoliate. Simple.

It's the same mantra at the facial spa. "We offer a 30-minute facial and we do brows," she says. "That's all you need." Skin treatments are "quick and affordable," with a goal of having clients visit once a month so they can truly reap the benefits of getting a regular facial.

"Women are spread so thin with everything and we are over looking for a miracle in a jar," she says. "I want to help women do more with a lot less."

Katie Bingham-Smith is a writer, shoe addict and mother living in Bowdoinham. She pays her kids to rub her feet and never turns down anything with caffeine.



Face Oil—which is part of her current skin care line.

But her big lightbulb moment came while cleaning out her house after reading "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up," by Marie Kondō. The book offers guidance for simplifying and organizing your home, and Johnson put the method into practice in her own house, including the bathroom, where she tossed out all of her extra products and



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Style

from the inside out

Carrie Montgomery helps women discover a sense of style that sums up their personality and their soul

WRITTEN BY AMY PARADYSZ | PHOTOGRAPHED BY HEIDI KIRN



“We all have to put clothing on every day, but it’s also a creative expression,” says Carrie Montgomery. Her styling business was born out of her own experience dealing with chronic health issues and seeing how many women—nearly all of us, no matter how successful—struggle with body image. Now she helps women find a style that suits their personality and their soul. *Photos in this spread by Kristin Hardwick*

One of Carrie Montgomery’s earliest memories is of wanting—really, truly coveting—pixie boots and a Barbour jacket. She was 6 and was living in England.

“I would change my clothing three or four times a day,” Montgomery, now 42, says with a laugh. “I just loved trying on different outfits to see how it changed how I felt.”

The daughter of international banker Ralph Hurlbutt and interior designer Louise Hurlbutt, who bought furniture all over the world for Hurlbutt Designs, Montgomery was raised in London, New York, Philadelphia and Kennebunk.

“I had so much exposure to so many different cultures growing up, and my mom taught me to look at the world with an eye for aesthetics,” Montgomery says. “I’ve always wanted to wear what everyone was wearing, but a little bit differently. I used my eye and intuition to see what was in the market but also what felt good to me. I had to wear uniforms to school, but I always wanted to feel like it was my style, too, so I made edits and cheated the rules.”

She was an athletic teen: gymnastics, swimming and diving, field hockey and lacrosse and horseback riding on weekends. Intrigued by the possibility of a modeling career, she was also ex-

pressing her creativity on the other side of the camera.

Then, at 18, Montgomery had a riding accident—the horse fell on top of her and broke her back.

“That shifted my trajectory,” she says. “It wasn’t about what college are you going to go to. It was about ‘How are you going to live in this body that’s causing you pain?’” Even the task of getting dressed was painful.

“We all have to put clothing on every day, but it’s also a creative expression,” says Montgomery. “I turned away from the pleasure of anything—especially anything creative—because I was in chronic pain and in survival mode. I lost the pleasure of the creative process.”

For nine months, she tucked in her back brace and all her layers of clothing as if they were her armor, protecting her from the world, everything in its place. “It’s a very type A way of dressing,” she says. Fashion seemed superfluous, superficial and just plain uncomfortable.

Life went on and, despite a variety of chronic health issues, Montgomery graduated from film school and had a successful career in film production, sales and marketing, with side gigs in photo styling and lifestyle medicine consulting. She led a

“ I help women get dressed, but it’s also about emotional and physical health, their whole being, their image, how they present themselves to the world.”



fast-paced life in New York. But she also endured 10 surgeries related to her uterus and ovaries and, at 38, had an emergency hysterectomy.

“Over the years, I would deal with bloating and distended belly, and people would ask me how far along I was,” Montgomery says. “We’re taught to cover up what we see as flaws. In New York, I used style as a way to create a barrier and an edge, instead of supporting and connecting with my body. It would disconnect me from people—being super edgy, wearing black leather leggings. And, whenever I’ve gone through a traumatic event, I’ve cut my hair really short. I always made shifts in my style to change the beat in my life.”

Understanding how deeply she needed to slow down, Montgomery moved back to her lifelong place of respite, Kennebunk, where her mother continues to run Hurlbutt Designs.

“It was only once I shifted the lens and started thinking about creativity and well-being that I really started to heal,” Montgomery says.

Friends would ask her for style and branding advice, and she saw that women—nearly all of us, no matter how successful—struggle with body image. She began to synthesize her decades

of experiences with fashion, branding and lifestyle coaching, creating a technique she calls the Somatic Dressing Method to get women to see fashion from the inside out. Montgomery’s method pays close attention to “subconscious body image programming” and the Eastern energy philosophy of chakras, as opposed to an approach that focuses on simply looking stylish in the latest trends.

“This is not typical styling,” Montgomery says. “I help women get dressed, but it’s also about emotional and physical health, their whole being, their image, how they present themselves to the world. We create a visual identity around that. We take your story and infuse a fashion style with a soul archetype that sums up your style personality and your soul. Your style archetype is born out of who you are and where you desire to go.”

Her own style archetype is born out of her life’s experiences—her travels, her pain and her love of fashion as a form of creative expression.

“My style archetype is boho warrior, a bohemian vibe that’s chic and edgy,” Montgomery says. “You’re going to see me wear leather and lace, lots of buckles and design details, or mixed flowing fabric that may have gold woven through it. My friends call



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It's taken me a long time to feel confident in my body...I stopped covering up and started expressing how I felt."



Stylist Carrie Montgomery stands with her feet in the sand on a sunny day this fall. Montgomery teaches hundreds of women around the world how to get dressed in a more emotionally healthy and energizing way.

me their 'fancy friend,' but I try to rough it up a bit to not seem unapproachable. That's how I was in New York: edgy and unapproachable—and uncomfortable. I've been through a hell of a lot, and I've fought really hard to get through it. But I also have this nomadic bohemian nature that's loving, passionate and open."

Acting on that bohemian nature, Montgomery is spending time in Europe this year, some on the Spanish island of Ibeza, some in Paris, Milan, Amsterdam and Barcelona, working remotely with her 10-pound Havanese-Maltese dog Nikita at her heels. Her online personal styling courses will continue to run all year.

"It's taken me a long time to feel confident in my body," she says. "I had a lot of healing and soul work to do over the years. As I've started to do deeper healing work and have taught hundreds of women around the world how to get dressed in a more emotionally healthy and energizing way, I stopped covering up and started expressing how I felt or needed to feel."

Amy Paradysz is a freelancer from Scarborough whose style might best be described as Cozy Writer.

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MORE *than a salon*

Drawing customers from around the state, Toni's Touch in Portland is a beauty shop that feels like family

WRITTEN BY SARAH HOLMAN | PHOTOGRAPHED BY HEIDI KIRN





Antoinette “Toni” Smothers (pictured opposite page) opened the doors of Toni’s Touch over 20 years ago. The beauty shop offers cuts, color and styling, along with braids, weaves, wigs and extensions. Along the way, Smothers has created a shop that welcomes clients from all over Maine, as far away as Connecticut and from every walk of life.

It’s Monday and Toni’s Touch is closed. Antoinette “Toni” Smothers and her daughter arrive at the shop to style each other’s hair on their day off. The minute the lights turn on, people start coming in. Buying supplies, making appointments, just saying hello. “They all know we’re here,” Smothers says, laughing.

Smothers didn’t plan to open a beauty shop. “I never wanted to go to school for hair. It was just something I always did.” With seven girls in her family, she had plenty of practice; she was an accomplished braider by age 4.

Her passion, she says, is working with children. Originally from New Jersey, a nanny position brought her to Maine, and she enrolled at Pierre’s (now Empire) Beauty School. She then attended Dudley’s Beauty School in North Carolina. “They teach more ethnic styles and how to protect the hair. It wasn’t really being taught up here,” she says.

Smothers returned to Maine planning to specialize in children’s hair, but demand for skilled braiders was high, and she quickly developed a reputation as one of the best—and only—in the state. She opened a salon, now located at the top of Forest Avenue in Portland, with a barbershop next door.

“From the beginning, I wanted it to be bigger than that,” she says. “I wanted it to be a community where everyone could come. It’s more than a salon.”

Since opening her doors 20 years ago, Toni’s Touch has become a community unto itself. Her customers come from all over Maine, as far away as Connecticut, and from every walk of life. She still likes the little ones the best. “I have a sweet spot for the kids,” she says. “There are a lot of interracial couples in this area, and I specialize in that in-between texture of hair.” She’d love to start a group to support mothers of biracial children—and teach them how to do their kids hair. “That would be great,” she smiles.

Toni’s Touch offers cuts, color and styling, along with braids, weaves, wigs and extensions. Last year she opened a second shop in Biddeford with a larger product assortment, and a carefully curated online store rounds out her offerings. Customers say Toni’s has the best supply of black hair products in the state.

Shay Stewart-Bouley followed her hairdresser, Tonya, when she moved to Toni’s Touch. “Black textured hair requires a different level of care than white hair. I’ve gone to a few white stylists [in Maine], typically with not very good results,” she says with a chuckle.





“Everyone that comes in here, I want to see them grow.”

On her blog, Black Girl in Maine, Stewart-Bouley fields questions from black women coming to Maine. Toni's Touch is the salon she recommends, although it can be tough to get an appointment on short notice. Often Smothers and her team are booked out for weeks.

Smothers is busy in the community, too. She visits Long Creek Youth Development Center whenever they need someone to braid hair, and she encourages her young patrons to explore the beauty industry as a career path. "These young boys, I'd love to see them behind the chair, running their own successful business. Everyone that comes in here, I want to see them grow."

"I absolutely feel that sense of community [at Toni's]," Stewart-Bouley says. "When I'm there, it's anywhere from three to five hours, every four to six weeks. You're in a shop that long, you're going to bond with people."

An enduring sense of community and purpose has kept Smothers going through some rough economic patches. Like most small businesses, she has to stay on top of her budget and business plan. She's learning as she goes, and she's always looking for ways to improve. Smothers has plans to expand her online store and eventually open another brick-and-mortar shop. She'd even like to start a school one day. "You gotta keep steppin'," she says. "You stand still, you go backwards, so you gotta keep steppin'."

Most importantly, though, she wants Toni's Touch to always be a place where everyone feels welcome.


"People say, 'this salon is so different, it's so friendly, it's like family.' That makes me feel good, way more than what's going in the bank."

Sarah Holman is a writer living in Portland. She is enthusiastic about cheese plates, thrift shop treasures and old houses in need of saving. Find her online at storiesandsidebars.com.


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Betsy Harding opened the all-vegan Organic Roots Salon & Spa on Westbrook Street in South Portland in 2014.



Vegan beauty

Progressive Maine salons are using products free of animal testing, animal-based ingredients and harsh chemicals.

WRITTEN BY AVERY YALE KAMILA | PHOTOGRAPHED BY HEIDI KIRN

Vegan food in Maine restaurants and grocery stores surprises no one. But how about a vegan nail polish? Or a vegan hair dye? Or a full vegan salon?

Portland, South Portland and Sanford all boast one of these cutting-edge salon concepts, where stylists use cruelty-free products made without harsh chemicals or animal-based ingredients. The salons are part of a small but growing vegan beauty industry in Maine that reflects nationwide trends.

Clare Nordhus Chenea, who opened the all-vegan Maine Natural Hair & Skin on High Street in Portland in 2014, moved to Maine from Portland, Oregon, where her previous vegan salon was one of many in the city.

“It’s progressive out here, and out there it’s times 10,” Chenea says. “There is a huge push (in Portland, Oregon) for the natural, the clean, the vegan, all of it.”

No statistics exist on vegan salons in the U.S., but other data hint at a nascent industry poised for growth.

For instance, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals runs a certification program called Beauty

Without Bunnies that scrutinizes salon products, personal cosmetics and household products to determine whether all the ingredients are free from animal testing. Companies found to refrain from animal testing win the right to put PETA’s bunny logo on their products.

“We have seen a massive spike in consumer demand for cruelty-free cosmetics around the world,” says Amanda Nordstrom, an attorney who serves as the liaison for Beauty Without Bunnies. “When we started our campaign in the 1980s, there were only a handful of companies that did not test on animals, and now PETA’s list of companies that don’t test on animals includes more than 3,500 companies.”

Cruelty-free products are not automatically vegan; however, a report out of Britain earlier this year by the NPD Group found that vegan beauty product sales climbed 38 percent in the past year.

Alicia Nave owns the all-vegan Snip & Tone on Main Street in Sanford and said most of her customers aren’t vegan—and neither is she. But as a mom and longtime salon owner, she discovered the impact conventional salon products can have on our health.



“Everything you put on your body and on your hair eventually seeps in through your pores,” Nave says. “And it can really affect how you feel.”

So after opening her Sanford salon in 2013 with the popular Paul Mitchell line, she switched in 2014 to the organic, vegan All-Nutrient line, which is made in Manchester, New Hampshire.

All-Nutrient concocts its formulas using organically grown plants and avoids petroleum derivatives, propylene glycol, phthalates and parabens—all ingredients found in conventional hair care products.

“The response to our colors and our products is phenomenal,” Nave says. “But you wouldn’t be able to tell we’re a vegan salon from a consumer’s point of view.”

Vegan salons attract some vegan clients, yet most people who go to vegan hair shops are not vegan and instead seek the more natural experience vegan salons offer.

At her Portland salon in the State Theater building, Chenea, who isn’t vegan, estimated among her clients, “10 to 15 percent talk about it being vegan. Another 50 percent say, ‘I’m so relieved you have natural products. It’s so important to me because of health issues.’ The other percentage don’t say anything. They just come in.”

Betsy Harding opened the two-story, all-vegan Organic Roots Salon & Spa on Westbrook Street in South Portland in 2014 and agrees that health concerns are among her customers’ top reasons for selecting a vegan salon. Harding added that many of the spa’s clients don’t realize it’s a vegan salon. But people who drink coffee “find out when I offer them cream,” Harding says. Organic Roots serves plant-based creamers, with coconut being a favorite.

Harding and the other stylists, massage therapists and estheticians who work at the Organic Roots spa use a wide variety of products. Chenea in Portland also carries a range of products, and both salons crosscheck each product against the Environmental Working Group’s Skin Deep cosmetic database (ewg.org/skindeep). The website rates beauty products based on their toxicity.

“I love working with companies like Sevi and Mastey,” says Harding. “Everything is done in-house. It’s a safe way to produce vegan products.”

Chenea at Maine Natural favors the Loma hair care line, the Pravana color line and ISUN wildcrafted skin care line, which she says “works so well and smells amazing.”

Vegan esthetician Kayla Winchbach runs the Glow Up



Opposite page: Monica Cooper, a stylist at Organic Roots Salon and Day Spa in South Portland, works with a client. Above: All the products used here, from hair color to the nail polish, are vegan. (Same goes for the terrarium tube succulents, made by Rachelle Gagne of Gagné Life). Below: Rachelle Gagne looks out the window of her massage and Reiki room at Organic Roots.



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John Tanguay



Skincare Studio inside Organic Roots and agrees vegan products deliver results.

"My favorite product to use in my treatment room is Restore Serum by Blissoma," Winchebach says. "It's packed with omega fatty acids to help restore cells."

Since she opened her vegan salon in South Portland, Harding said she's seen the industry respond.

"Four years ago, people didn't know as much about veganism as they do today," says Harding, who is vegan herself. "I'd go to the hair shows down in Florida and say, 'I'm a vegan stylist.' And they were like, 'What's that?' Now they all know. And they're advertising it as much as they can if they are vegan."

Avery Yale Kamila is a writer who lives in Portland, where she pens the Vegan Kitchen column for the Portland Press Herald. She can be reached at avery.kamila@gmail.com or Twitter: [AveryYaleKamila](https://twitter.com/AveryYaleKamila).

Vegan cosmetics from Maine

KRUCIAL COS

Inside her Oakland home, Kaitlyn McCarthy handcrafts the Krucial Cos line of beauty products. The line includes eyeshadow, bronzers, blush, edible lip scrubs, lipsticks, nail polish, deodorant, beard care products, body care products and hair care products. In addition, more than a dozen Krucial Cos products benefit charitable causes when they sell, such as a sparkly blue Caribbean Getaway nail polish (\$8.50 a bottle with \$5 benefiting the Arthritis Foundation).

"I used to make my own all-natural products when I was a kid," McCarthy says. "After college...I started with making nail polish, and it just grew and grew from there."

Founded in 2014, Krucial Cos wasn't always a vegan cosmetic company, but McCarthy is now taking the company in that direction. "I have been transitioning my non-vegan items over to vegan formulas," McCarthy said, adding that more than 90 percent of her products are now vegan.

Learn more at krucialcos.com.



Photo courtesy of Krucial Cos



Photo courtesy of SaltyGirl Beauty

SALTYGIRL BEAUTY

The all-vegan SaltyGirl Beauty line was born out of necessity. When co-founder Sarah Kelly was diagnosed with stage three breast cancer, she turned to her sister and oncology nurse Leah Robert for support. Together the pair began asking the vexing question of "why," which led them to do "all this research into the chemicals in our food, our body care and cosmetic products," Kelly says. "And it was crazy the lack of regulation and oversight there is on ingredients that can be used in personal care products."

So the sisters decided to create their own cosmetics using vegan and organic ingredients that would make women feel beautiful without harming them. The SaltyGirl line includes lipsticks, foundations, concealers, body scrubs, bath salts and the best-selling multi-sticks, which can be used as lipsticks, rouge and eye makeup.

The company is based in Biddeford and its products are manufactured in New York.

"We wanted to create a cosmetic company that was made with good ingredients and women could feel good about using and feel beautiful using," Kelly said.

Learn more at saltygirlbeauty.com.

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DESIGNER SPOTLIGHT

Beverly (Hachey) Williams has worked as a kitchen and bath designer for over 20 years. She specializes in semi-custom and custom solutions for home and vacation properties all along the Maine coast and has designed and managed over 200 residential design and installation projects.

Beverly has a Bachelor’s degree in Business and a minor in Communication. Directly out of college she worked in the accounting and finance field and uses this knowledge to keep all projects on budget.

She has designed residential kitchens for homeowners with cabinetry from numerous major manufacturers and is currently using Plato, Mouser, Showplace amongst others. Beverly believes cabinetry should be a seamless continuation of the design style of the home. She closely collaborates with her clients to create a visually pleasing and relaxed space that is influenced by traditional, transitional, modern and New England cottage style.



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Beverly is a member of the National Kitchen & Bath Association (NKBA) and recently chaired the committee that won a national award for the most creative membership drive event in the country.


If you’re interested in working with Beverly, contact her at bwilliams@eldredgelumber.com


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5 things

5 HOT SOUPS FOR A COLD WINTER DAY

WRITTEN BY SHANNON BRYAN

Cold weather calls for layers of fleece, reliable boots and a hot bowl of something hearty and delicious. A good soup, stew or chowder fills our bellies with a warmth that lasts for hours—comfort food in the coziest sense. Here are a handful of Maine places to swing into for a warm-up.



Photo courtesy of Hurricane's Cafe & Deli

I Chicken vegetable rice soup

Hurricane's Cafe & Deli, 682 US-202, Greene

The combination of chicken, rice and vegetables in broth is a classic for a reason—it's simple but filling and reminds us of homemade soup we loved when we were kids. "Hurricane's soup is our No. 1 choice here," says Mary Seaman of The Great Outdoors wedding and events venue in Turner. "Our couples always rave about the soups and even wonder if I can get recipes for them!" (hurricanedeli.com)

Photo courtesy of
The Red Barn



Photo by Julie Moulton



Seafood stew

2

The Red Barn, 455 Riverside Drive, Augusta

The seafood stew at The Red Barn is chock full of haddock, shrimp, lobster and scallops. It could be a meal unto itself (but no shame if you tack on a side of fried mushrooms. And fries). (theredbarnmaine.org)

3

Hot & sour soup

Imperial China Chinese Restaurant, 220 Maine Mall Road, South Portland

"The only soup I go out for is the hot and sour soup from Imperial China Chinese Restaurant," says Julie Moulton of Westbrook. "Makes me feel so healthy and nourished." (facebook.com/imperialchinachineserestaurant)



Photo by
Shannon Bryan

4 | Butternut squash soup

Clayton's Cafe, 447 Route 1, Yarmouth

It's tough to choose between Clayton's daily soup offerings, which might include Hungarian mushroom, beef gumbo, Chesapeake seafood chowder, or curry chicken and chickpea, among so many others. "So many good ones," says Laurilyn Dowling of Falmouth. "But the butternut squash is my favorite!" And nothing screams "comfort on a cold day" quite like butternut squash. (claytonscafe.com)



5 | Fish with pickled greens soup

Sichuan Kitchen, 612 Congress St., Portland

Thinly sliced fish poached in broth made with chicken stock, fish stock and Sichuan pickles. "It is approved as authentic by my Chinese parents, so that's saying something," says Katherine Lee of Portland. (sichuankitchenportland.com)

Photo courtesy of
Sichuan Kitchen



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DRESSED FOR THE HOLIDAYS

*Beautiful styles at new
Bella Boutique in Freeport*

WRITTEN BY AMY POWER

PHOTOGRAPHED BY AMANDA WHITEGIVER

The holidays are upon us! It's a time for celebrating with loved ones near and far, a time for connection and a time to gather. Of course, this also means it's a time to rifle through your closet, sigh and determine that—despite it being full—you have absolutely nothing to wear to this year's festivities. Alas!

But the holidays are also a time for a little self indulgence, self care and shopping.

As we've been getting into the festive spirit—planning out our wardrobe for holiday parties and more low-key family gatherings—we were thrilled by the one-stop-shopping experience we found at Bella Boutique, located at 34 Main Street in Freeport. Opened just this September by former Rapid River proprietor Colette Wold, Bella offers a unique shopping experience that is for women and by women.



GET THE LOOK

Avalanche Bell Sleeve Ponte Dress (\$189)
Liz Prescott Round Pearl Charm Bracelet (\$89)
Giovannio New York Black Hat with Leather Stitch detail (\$79)

GET THE LOOK

Krimson Klover Maggie Alpaca Cardigan (\$169)
Jag Jeans Mid rise Skinny (\$84)
Cut Loose Layering Tank (\$45)
Bar Harbor Goldsmiths 18k Gold-fill Necklace (\$119)



Sometimes a mission just speaks to you, and this small, locally owned boutique is one such establishment. Bella brings customers a unique mix of beautiful new trends, classic investment pieces and accessories for women of all ages. They choose to feature designers not only for their style and selection, but also for their eco-friendly manufacturing, reduced chemical use and energy and water conservation practices. Although it's a small space, the carefully curated selection offers a range of colors and prices for every shopper. Wold selects fashions that work for real life, and for a range of ages, not simply trends that are dominating our social feeds. The tight curation of essential looks channel an upscale bohemian air, a love of your body, and an easy sophistication.

We immediately honed in on the Avalanche Bell Sleeve dress by Bailey 44 for our party look. Bailey 44 is known for creating fashion that works for your real life, and this piece is no exception. The thick ponte fabric is extremely forgiving, the long sleeves provide warmth for winter evenings, the cut and fabric allows for freedom of movement and the bell sleeves are, quite simply, fun. While the flowing sleeves mean this dress is not ideal for hostesses who like to fully dress before preparing party food, they are simply irresistible and will look fabulous as you mingle or dance the night away at any holiday party you're attending this season. A lovely deep shade of merlot, this easy dress provides the perfect base that can be accessorized to accommodate any sense of personal style. The Bailey website suggests sizing up for this dress, and I'm glad we did. (I typically wear a size 6, which often means I hover between small and medium sizing, and found medium to be the best-fitting size in this dress.)

You can't escape the need for sweaters through a Maine winter, but you CAN make the most of it by snuggling up in a cocoon of alpaca warmth. We are positively smitten with this Krimson Klover wrap cardigan. Not only does Krimson Klover believe in quality, sustainability and supporting women-run businesses throughout their manufacturing and sales process, but the sweater is simply a dream to wear. With plenty of classic button-up cardigans in our closets, we loved the ease of this wrap style. It could just as easily be worn open and tied loosely in the back—at least until temps drop below freezing. The heathered forest green is a subtle nod to the season, the crinkled white of the layering tank provides a crisp contrast and the gold necklace dresses it up as befits a holiday outfit. We kept things casual with a standard dark denim. This was my first time trying out Jag Jeans, and I was generally pleased. I found them to be comfortable and flattering, though they did run large. I grabbed my usual size 6, but a 4 would have provided a better fit.

Of course there is more to see at Bella this season, so if you're in need of an outfit for the holidays and beyond, be sure to stop in and check them out. Women supporting women is always a recipe for success.

Amy Power and Amanda Whitegiver are co-founders of East Coast Inspired, a fashion and lifestyle blog. Amy is a mother of two (and the model featured in this column's photos) who spends her days dreaming of the ultimate craft room and intending to go for a run. Amanda is a lifestyle family photographer who adores dark chocolate and singing with her two daughters.

4

OF AMY &
AMANDA'S
FAVORITE
APPAREL
GIFT IDEAS



1

MOOSE MAINE HOODIE

Super soft and cozy, this hoodie's vintage graphic is the perfect blend of nostalgia and style. Also available in other colors with a similar graphic, available at Lisa-Marie's Made in Maine locations in Bath and Portland and online. (\$36, lisamaries-madeinmaine.com)



2

WARM SCARF IN A FUN PATTERN!

We love the range of colors, sizes and wool/cashmere blends offered at Gingham, Bliss and Bella; all are so soft and there's a pattern and price point for everyone! Pictured scarves available at Bliss. (*Green solid*—Chan Luu, \$172; *plaid*—Mois Mont, \$162; blissboutiques.com)

3

BEAN BOOT SHEARLING INSERTS

Nearly everyone has a pair of Bean Boots these days, and winter is ALL about keeping warm. Available in three colors and a variety of sizes, the inserts fit in most styles of boots (and can also extend the life of your wicked good slippers once you wear out the existing shearling sole)! (\$29.99; llbean.com)

4

MINI MAINE EARRINGS IN SILVER

Cut from a hefty sheet with just enough detail, their mini size makes them an ideal gift for Mainers (or Maine-lovers) of any age, and you can also show your home state love with a charm necklace! Made by local metalsmith Amy Rose Goodness, available through her website and at Lisa-Marie's Made in Maine store locations. (\$85, amyrose.me)



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FORAGING FOR COCKTAILS

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY JESSIE LACEY

I love the idea of foraging, but it also scares me. I don't trust myself. Or others. When I am hiking in the woods with friends and they hand me a red berry or leaves to eat, I ask that they eat it first. If they do, I will still refuse to eat the thing they want me to try. Who are these persons who discovered what was edible and what was not? I have to assume these people were very hungry and lucky. If they were not lucky, they died.

But there is an easily identifiable and abundant flora I like to forage: wintergreen berry (or teaberry). It is a low-lying ground-covering shrub with smooth bright green leaves and bright red berries that ripen in the fall and persist through the winter.

I spent a afternoon foraging with my pup, filling three bags full of wintergreen leaves and berries, as well as juniper and some moss and plants to refresh my terrariums. (My pup later shook open the moss bags, spilling moss, soil and all the bugs that were in that soil all over the house.)

The infusion in this recipe takes a couple of days to prepare, but the time it takes is worth it. You can do so much with infusions, especially a light, tasty one like the wintergreen cordial.

Jessie Lacey resides at the heart of downtown Portland with her border collie puppy Josie, making cocktails and trouble.



MAINE WINTER-GREEN CORDIAL INFUSION

Start with a high-proof spirit. A great one to use is Twenty 2 Vodka High Proof Spirit, at 150 proof.

Add wintergreen leaves and juniper at a ratio of 3 to 1 wintergreen to juniper. I filled a 1-quart ball jar with 1 cup of foraged wintergreen, and 1/3 cup juniper berries.

Let it infuse for two to three days. I added a half cup of sugar to give it more of a root-type liquor taste.

FORAGED MAINE WINTERGREEN COCKTAIL

3 ounces Maine Wintergreen Cordial Juice from 1/2 lime
Simple syrup as needed (*start with 1/4 oz*)

Top off with club soda and garnish with a wintergreen sprig and lime

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THE BASIC BRILLIANCE OF THE BUNDT PAN

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY CANDACE KARU



My family's favorite way to celebrate a birthday is with a Bundt cake. My mom loves lemon cake—moist and dense—with a light lemon glaze. My daughter always asks for a rich root beer Bundt cake with a sweet and creamy maple frosting for her special day.

Birthday Bundt cakes are beautiful, but I refuse to let a Bundt pan sit alone in the dark until the next birthday celebration comes along. That pan works hard in my kitchen. Since moving from a big house to a tiny apartment, I have whittled my kitchen accessories down to the bare minimum. That said, my two (Yes, I have two. One is heart shaped!) Bundt pans made the cut.

This first recipe is one of my favorite “one pot” meals. Roasting a chicken in a Bundt pan is such a genius idea, I wish I had thought of it myself. It's the perfect way to cook a medium-sized bird (3–4 pounds). If you're cooking for a crowd, you can easily fit two Bundt pan chickens into your oven at a time. That way there are more drumsticks for everyone!

Here's my recipe for what has become a go-to Sunday supper in my house. And if you want to serve bread with your bird—or any other meal—try this savory monkey bread recipe. Some people call it “pull-apart bread,” but no matter what you call it, it's delicious and so much fun. My garlic and cheddar monkey bread is a tasty accompaniment to pasta, stews or chili. Or warm up a cup of marinara sauce and serve it as an appetizer. Let your guests pull and dip to their hearts' content!

◀ Bundt Pan Chicken with Roasted Root Vegetables

INGREDIENTS

- 1 whole chicken (3 1/2 to 4 pounds)
- 6 garlic cloves
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 1/2 pounds of mixed root vegetables, cut into 1-inch dice (*I use sweet potatoes, carrots and parsnips, pre-cut from Whole Foods, but don't tell.*)
- 1 lemon, sliced into rounds
- 1/4 cup white wine

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 425°. Place rack low enough to accommodate Bundt pan with chicken.

Rinse chicken and pat dry, let stand to come to room temperature.

Tuck 4 garlic cloves under the skin on the breast and thighs.

Cover Bundt pan hole with aluminum foil and butter the sides and the bottom of the pan.

Crush the remaining 2 cloves of garlic and put them in the olive oil.

Toss the root veggies in the garlic and oil and put them in the pan, and salt and pepper to taste. Place lemon rounds on top of the veggies. Pour wine over the vegetables.

Rub salt and pepper into the skin of the chicken and place the chicken cavity on the foil covered Bundt pan tube so the chicken is sitting upright on the veggies.

Roast chicken for 45–55 minutes, until the chicken skin is golden brown and crispy. (A digital thermometer placed into the thigh should read 165°.)

Remove from oven and transfer chicken to a platter to carve. Use slotted spoon to transfer veggies to serving bowl, removing lemon rounds.

Strain the remaining liquid into a small saucepan and heat. When carved chicken is ready to serve, drizzle cooking liquid on chicken and serve with the veggies.

Garlic Cheddar Monkey Bread

INGREDIENTS

- 3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (*Skip this if you don't want a bit of a kick*)
- 1/2 teaspoon oregano
- 4 cans biscuits in a tube (*I use Pillsbury Grands*)
- 1/2 cup shredded Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/2 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded
- 3/4 cup butter, melted
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic (*2 medium cloves*)

INSTRUCTIONS


- Heat oven to 350°.
- Grease 10-inch Bundt pan with cooking oil.
- In large plastic bag, mix grated Parmesan, cayenne, and oregano. Cut each biscuit into quarters. Put biscuit pieces in Parmesan mixture and shake well.
- Alternate layers of cheese-dusted biscuit pieces and shredded cheese in pan.
- Mix melted butter and garlic with whisk, then drizzle over the biscuit and cheese layers in the pan.
- Bake 35 minutes or until golden brown.
- Let stand for 10–15 minutes, then place a serving plate over the top and turn the Bundt pan over to remove the monkey bread. Serve immediately.

Candace Karu makes her living writing about food, fitness and travel. Follow her on Instagram: @candacekaru or at candacekaru.com.




BUNDT PAN PRO TIPS

- Use your Bundt pan to cut corn off the cob. Put the tip end into the hole in the tube and slice away. The kernels will fall neatly into the pan.
- For a fun and festive punch, freeze water halfway up the pan. Once frozen, layer cranberries, sprigs of rosemary or thyme, or edible flowers and fill the bundt pan to the top with more water. Once all frozen you'll have a lovely and practical way to cool your celebratory punch bowl.
- For your next lunch or brunch party, make a chicken or tuna salad, then pack it into a greased Bundt pan, level the top and chill. When you're ready to serve, unmold the salad upside down onto a pretty platter and garnish with fresh herbs.



*“Tapping
relieves my holiday
stress” — Jordan, Falmouth*



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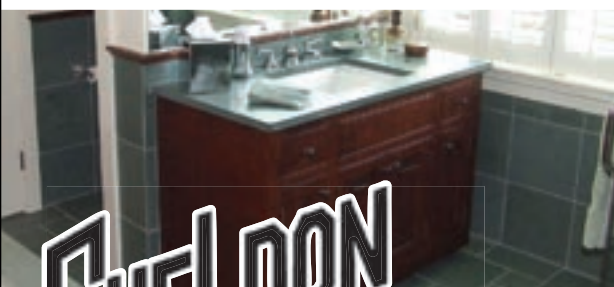
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A PACKRAT'S HOLIDAY

Incorporating nostalgic objects—in all their imperfect, off-trend glory—into modern holiday decorating

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY SARAH HOLMAN

As a child, my mother often accused me—albeit lovingly—of being a pack rat. “I’m not a pack rat,” I told her. “I’m sentimental.”

I have always been emotionally attached to nostalgic things. Items I would never choose in a store find places in my home because of their sentimental value. Floral serveware from a grandmother’s table, a manual ice chipper from a great uncle’s kitchen, a set of lead soldiers from a father’s playroom. These pieces take some work to incorporate into the simple, cohesive style I strive for in my decorating, so I use them sparingly and rearrange them often.

All that changes when December arrives. Never are these two aesthetic endeavors—simplicity and sentiment—more at odds than during the holiday season. I want my house to look like the Pottery Barn Christmas catalog, clean and coordinated and cozy. But I can’t bring myself to part with the misfit ornaments: the one-armed angels, the glue-and-glitter masterpieces, the clothespin reindeer.

Herein lies December’s decorating conundrum. How do we incorporate nostalgic objects—in all their imperfect, off-trend glory—into modern holiday decorating? The key is to be intentional about it.

A few years ago I inherited several boxes of vintage ornaments from my great uncle. While the thought of having a tree covered in these shiny orbs is appealing, it’s not in the cards... because where would I display all the other ornaments? I have three large vases (from Pottery Barn, incidentally) in my living room year-round, usually filled with beach rocks, driftwood and seasonal greenery. In December the rocks and sticks go into storage and the vases hold the vintage bulbs. Sometimes I mix all the colors together, other times I sort them into palettes. Either way, they add festivity to any room and shine beautifully at night when the window candles are glowing.

With many of my sentimental pieces, color is the biggest challenge. Traditional holiday colors—bright reds, greens, and blues—aren’t in my home and can feel garish when overdone in otherwise neutral spaces. Using these classic seasonal hues as intentional pops of color works well against the muted backdrop. I have a figure from the 1950s, a Santa with a blazing red suit and intensely blue eyes. Paired with simple green trees and a vase of modern gold bulbs, he becomes a statement piece and a conversation starter without detracting from the rest of the room.

A point of holiday contention in my home is ornament display. Again, I find myself Pottery-Barn-dreaming of a duotone scheme, all red and silver decorations and twinkly white lights. Alas, no. We put every ornament we own on the tree so we don’t hurt any of their feelings. Every. Single. One. And while it is fun to pull them all out and remember where they came from, after decades of wear and tear some aren’t exactly looking their best (and you can only fit so many on the back of the tree). A few of my personal favorites are the worst off: three birds with chipped paint, broken tail feathers and taped wings. Displaying them in an old Coke bottle crate with other painted wooden decorations is a nice way spread ornaments into another room without having another tree. And for those folks who do prefer a mono-or-duotone color scheme in their main living space, this allows the misfit trimmings to have their moment.

Giving each nostalgic item or collection space to shine makes it possible to incorporate sentimental pieces into modern holiday decorating and still achieve a balanced overall effect. My house is never going to look like the Pottery Barn catalog. And at the end of the day I’m OK with that, because if all my decorations were shiny and new, there would be no stories to tell and no nostalgia to pass down.

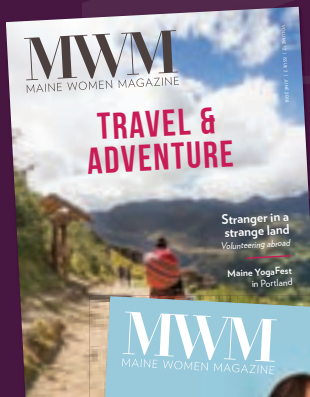
Sarah Holman is a writer living in Portland. She is enthusiastic about cheese plates, thrift shop treasures and old houses in need of saving. Find her online at storiesandsidebars.com.



Opposite page: Displaying ornaments in an old Coke bottle crate with other painted wooden decorations is a nice way to spread ornaments into another room without having another tree. Top: Vintage ornaments in vases add festivity to any room and shine beautifully at night when the window candles are glowing. Above: When paired with simple green trees and a vase of modern gold bulbs, this 1950s Santa becomes a statement piece and a conversation starter.

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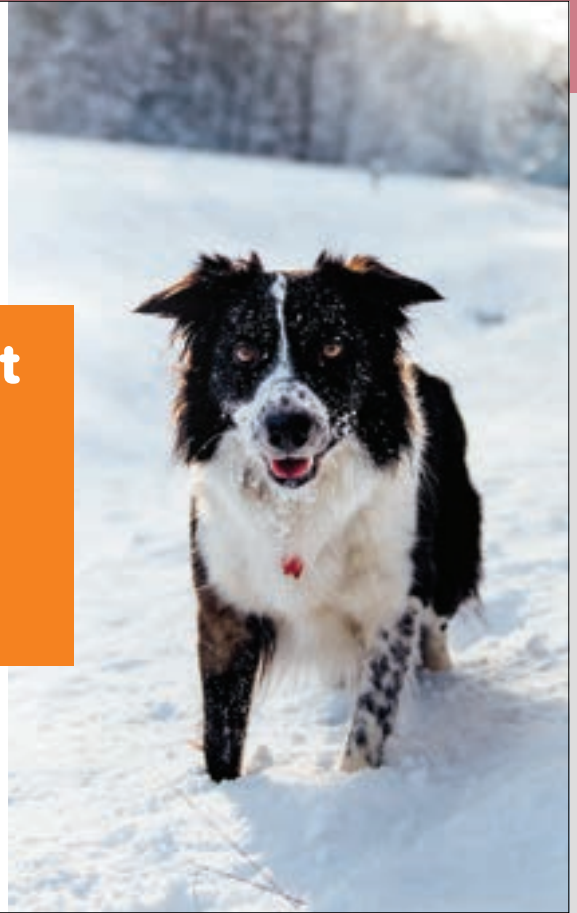


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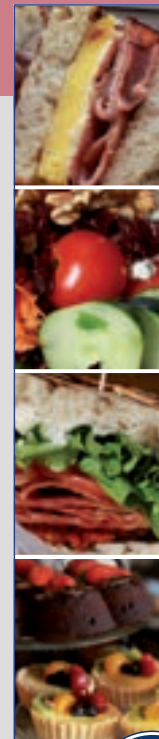




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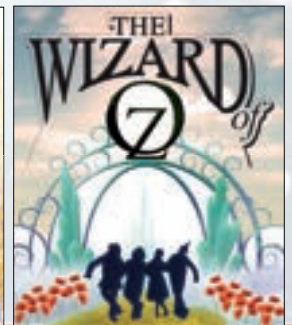
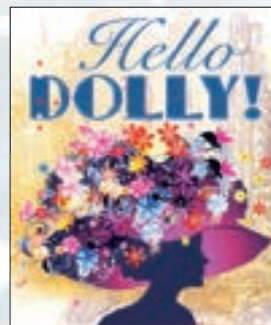
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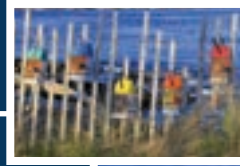
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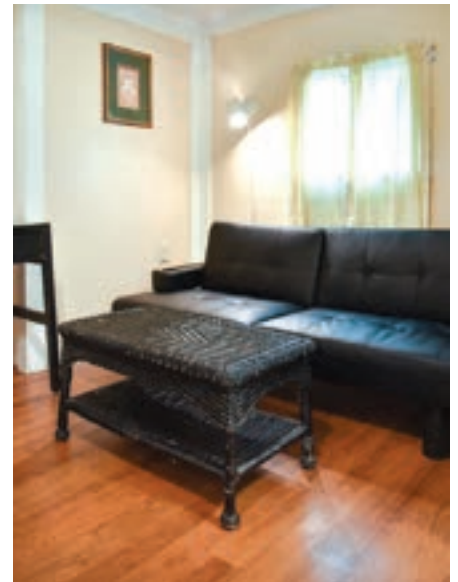
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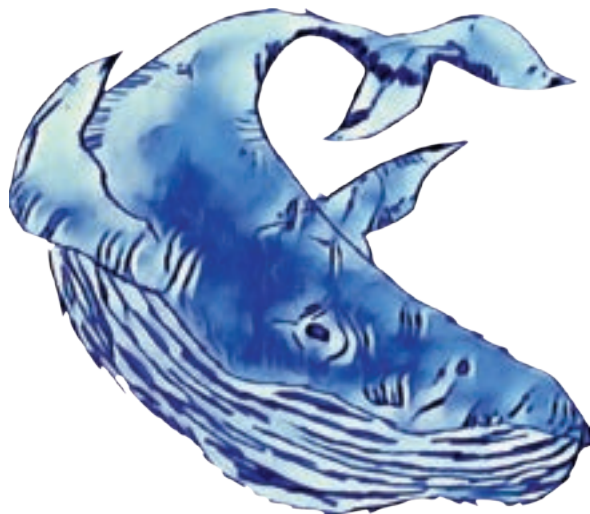
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REVIEW: 'TANGERINE'

Two estranged BFFs reunite in Tangiers with dark consequences

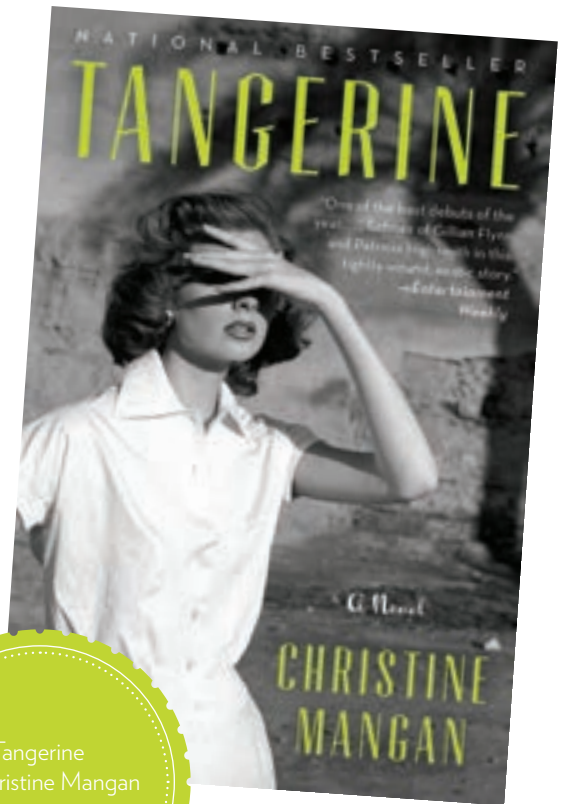
WRITTEN BY AMY CANFIELD

Here's a good one that might have been missed by fans of female-centric psychological thrillers. "Tangerine" slipped by me when it came out this year, although it's no wonder it got lost among the scads of similar page-turners that erupted on the book scene on the heels of the popular "The Girl on the Train," "The Woman in the Window" and the like. I picked it up when I noted that first-time novelist Christine Mangan has an MFA from the University of Southern Maine.

I'm a sucker for a good setting and "Tangerine," set in Tangiers, Morocco, in the 1950s before independence, is part of the mystery itself. When two estranged college friends reunite there, the city's labyrinth of buildings, languishing humidity and explosion of market-day colors provide an intriguing backdrop for the drama to play out. It's a strong contrast to the women's flashbacks of their days as roommates at Bennington College in Vermont, with its biting cold air and snow-covered Green Mountains. Mangan's gothic-esque writing style adds to the intrigue.

Alice lives in Tangiers with her husband, the smug and handsome John. Before becoming unhappily married, Alice, a privileged and emotionally fragile Brit, envisioned having maids and lounging poolside at posh clubs, but her husband, she finds, likes to live like the locals. She rarely leaves their home and has no friends. "I spent hours, long, lonely tiresome hours, exploring Tangiers from the comfort of our apartment." John, meanwhile, vanishes once a month "into his mysterious city that he loved with a fierceness I could not understand, exploring her secrets on his own, while I remained inside—my very own captor and captive."

Enter Lucy unannounced on Alice's doorstep, hoping to rekindle the relationship they had before "the terrible night" that ended it and sent Alice into a dark abyss for the second time in her life. Before that, according to Lucy, she and Alice had a unique "affinity" despite their disparate socioeconomic upbringings. "The relationship that Alice and I had formed after only a few short weeks, the partiality that we felt for each other—it went beyond any rational description." "Tangerine" is told alternately, chapter by chapter, by Alice and Lucy and their memories of their friendship differ wildly as they unravel. But whose take is



Tangerine
by Christine Mangan
Harcourt

the right take? Is either of them reliable?

John is surprised to find Lucy in his guest room because he knows nothing about her. Alice "had never told John about Bennington, about the accident—only what any of the newspapers had reported. Instead I pushed away everything to do with my former life, including Lucy."

But the secrets of her past and present collide, and the collision is complicated by Lucy's obsessive desire to resurrect the Alice she used to know, Alice's submissiveness to Lucy's pull and Lucy's and John's instant distrust and dislike of each other. Alice first plays along that she is glad to see Lucy. She harbors serious suspicions about her, but at the same time feels "the same effect she always had over me: strengthening and emboldening me, her presence serving as an armor I could never manage to affix on my own." As John parades the women to his favorite smoky jazz clubs and kif bars, Alice's resentment toward him grows and her defenses against Lucy weaken. When Alice and Lucy take trips to Moroccan sites and spend time alone, gaslighting and subterfuge emerge, leading to death and more than a few other resulting surprises.

Toxic relationships and unreliable narrators are the stuff of this genre and "Tangerine," with an exotic 1950s flair, doesn't disappoint.

Amy Canfield is an editor of Maine Women Magazine and an avid reader. She lives in South Portland.

A MOM TO BE REMEMBERED

WRITTEN BY MAGGIE KNOWLES

Growing up, did you put your friends' parents on pedestals? They way they cut crusts was so much cleaner; they knew how to French braid; they allowed cable!

My best friend's mom had a closet that I still dream about. It was full of sequins and heels and things that took my 8-year-old breath away. I would beg my friend to let me into that wonderland, and while she was bored out of her mind, I would count the years until I, too, could walk into my own ball-ready dressing room.

Other friends also had lovely (if not as glam) parents, who I placed into their own comfy categories of warmth, ease and quirkiness—all of them knitting together into the fabric of my childhood.

Recently, one of the moms from my old neighborhood passed away. When this sad news pinged my phone, I was immediately transported back in time to her kitchen as she fed us afterschool snacks and smiled at our antics. I spent endless afternoons with her eldest son (my crush from K–8) reenacting “Star Wars” and sneaking “The Joy of Sex” from the packed bookshelf to laugh at pencil drawings of the forbidden.

The drive home from her celebration of life, which was indeed a celebration of how loved she had made our kid-packed neighborhood feel, had me thinking of the impact we have on our own children's friends.

Do we as modern parents even register as part of the friendship package? It's been 30 years since I was a kid, admiring a sparkling closet. Now, there are more parents working, more babysitters in rotating aftercare roles and screens that take away from group snacks around the kitchen counter.

Because I do a fair amount of sports carpooling and volunteering, I have a fly-on-the-wall sense of what my son's group is “into,” but whereas I felt comfortable confiding in friends' parents about my own parents' divorce or even about boys, my sense is that today's generation doesn't have that same impulse.

And while I am not advocating becoming weirdly close to your kid's buds, I do think it is important to have significant and meaningful contact with them. You want to ensure your children are picking positive influences, of course, but you can also be a positive influence on them.

Growing up is challenging. The proliferation of screens, the calendar of activities and dinners on the run can leave kids feeling isolated and perhaps without a lot of guidance. But there are little things we can all do to create a sense of openness and warmth for our children's peers:

- Greet them with a smile and use their name
- Ask them about something specific you know they are involved in
- Carpool when you can and bring a fun snack for them all (who doesn't love the mom with yummy treats?)
- Volunteer in the classroom
- Host a playdate at your house when you are there and mastermind a game of Clue or laser tag or baking that you spend time doing with them
- Show off your passion or craft (I am a beekeeper and I love showing kids the hives)
- Go to recitals, sports etc. and cheer on the kids by name

Just by being attentive, caring and authentically present to your kid's friends will go a long way in building their confidence, sense of community and trust.

Even if you don't have a closet of sequins, you have a lot to be remembered for.

Maggie Knowles writes about all things kid. She and her family live in Yarmouth, where she gardens, keeps bees and refuses to get rid of her stilettos.

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