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The STYLE Issue

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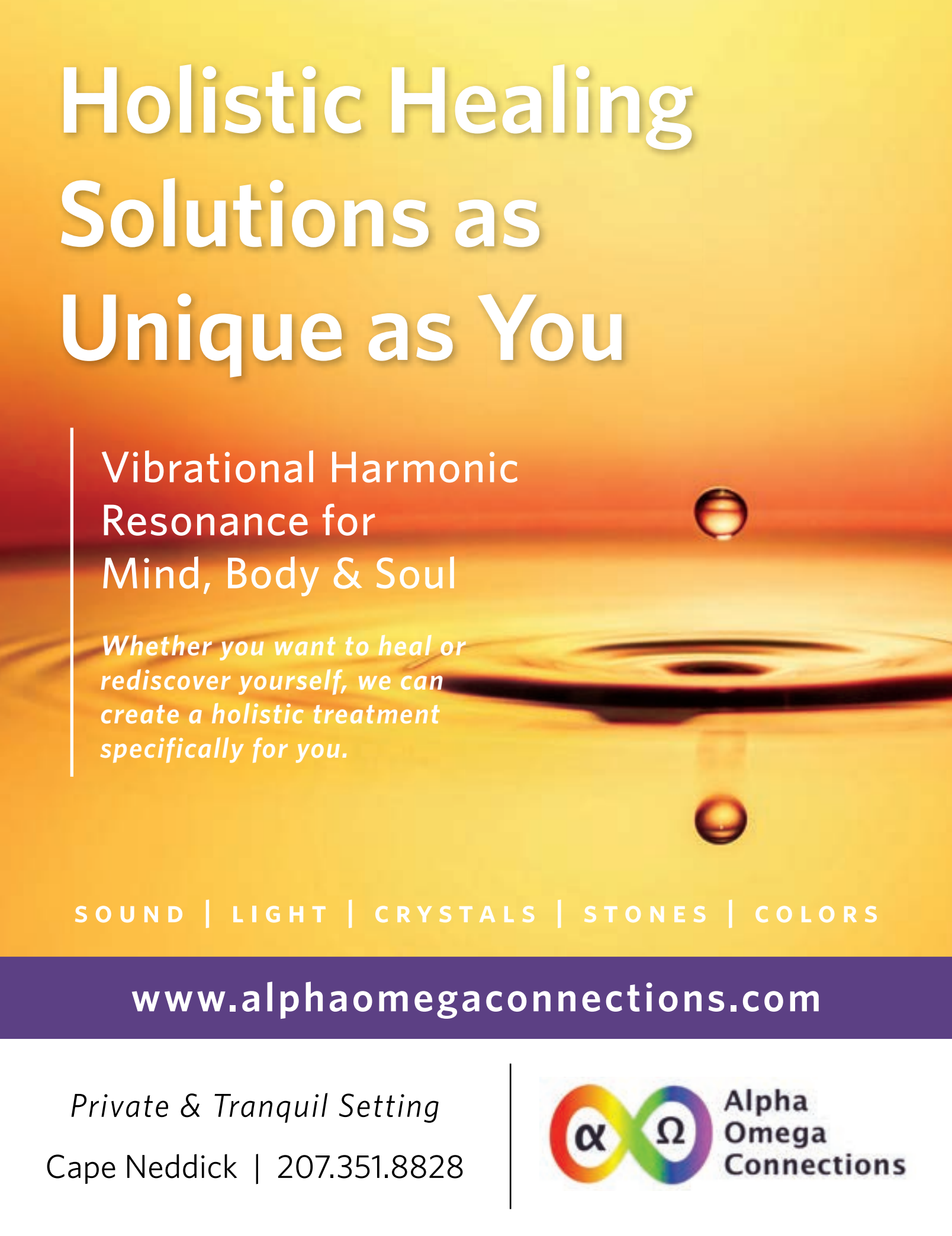

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CONTENT

MORE FEATURES

IN EVERY ISSUE

It's Maine Women Magazine's Style issue. Move over Anna Wintour.

Kidding.

In the mid-aughts I wanted someone to nominate me for *What Not to Wear*. I wanted Stacy London and Clinton Kelly's fashion tips, definitely, but I mostly lusted after the free wardrobe they'd pick out for me. I was truly moved by that show; the women were so changed by what the fashion duo had done to get them into clothing that suited (and fit) them so well. I also learned a lot about shopping smartly from *What Not to Wear*.

I don't know that it taught me much about style though. It's not that I believe style to be entirely innate—even for its most notable practitioners, like Carolyn Bessette Kennedy, revered for her style even 20 years after her death. Early in her relationship with John F. Kennedy Jr. you'd sometimes see photographs of her in sweatpants, big parkas and even chinos. But as she became a target of the paparazzi and the world's judgment, she ditched them in favor of a red-lipstick-black-dress minimalism she wore like armor. She had an undeniable gift, but she also evolved. Style that the world recognizes as such typically combines an instinct for what suits you and a willingness to take risks. If others don't initially like the risk, they may eventually because you wear it well.

All this depends on what you care about. As time goes on, I grow less afraid of making mistakes, fashionwise. Dressing uniform style for convenience on workdays makes sense, but for fun occasions, I want to wear items I inherited from my stylish mother. I have dabbled in the prairie dress revival. I study Marimekko sales as if preparing for a test. Ditto for bargains from Maine designers like Rough & Tumble's Natasha Durham and Jill McGowan.

But these days I'm mostly avoiding that ultimate fashion don't: waste. I'm helping to ease stress on the environment by taking advantage of the growing opportunities to shop secondhand, including seeking out upscale resale items (here's to that $15 pair of wide-legged linen pants from Portland's icon of thrift, Material Objects, which I am currently wearing to death).

We've curated this issue in the manner of many of the Maine retailers of secondhand fashion featured in these pages. Something for everyone, including some glitz (stories about stunning tiles made in Morocco and a makeup artist to Hollywood stars, both with a distinct Maine connection) as well as a recognition of the growing significance of slow fashion, from local knitwear designers with national reputations to mending so beautiful it's practically art.

Speaking of mistakes, I wrongly identified Stephanie Pilk in my August Editor's Note as the subject of our A Room of Her Own column and more egregiously in our Table of Contents, under a photo of her mother Jean Pilk, a 95-year-old artist. Stephanie, 57 and the creative director at Snug Harbor Farm, suggested this for a correction: "She is a devoted daughter, wife and sister but has no idea how or why these mistakes made it to print!" I'm so sorry they did.

Mary Pols
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ON THE COVER

Knitwear designer Elizabeth Smith of Elizabeth Smith Knits on Munjoy Hill, in front of KnitWit Yarn Shop, wearing one of her own designs.

Photo by Heidi Kirn

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THE CHEESE TOUCH

This September brings woman-focused performances, talks on suffrage and celebrations of starry nights.

Menopause the Musical

Sept. 4–14

Ogunquit Playhouse, 10 Main St., Ogunquit

Four women at a lingerie sale, fighting over a black bra. They're all menopausal. What could go wrong? The off-Broadway musical parody comes to the Ogunquit Playhouse this month, with a guest star who knows the production inside and out, Cindy Williams, the star of the 1970s and 80s sitcom *Laverne & Shirley. (ogunquitplayhouse.org)*

A season for women

Sept. 6–9

Russell Hall, USM, Gorham

The University of Southern Maine Department of Theatre is devoting its 2019–2020 season to the work of women playwrights and directors, starting with *Fortune*, Deborah Zoe Laufer's romantic comedy about a storefront psychic who has given up on love. "Our idea for this season began from a series of relevant events and conversations: the #metoo movement, the divisive political climate, and the approaching centenary of the 19th Amendment guaranteeing equal voting rights to both women and men," says Sara Valentine, assistant professor. Other works being staged later this academic year include *The Women Who Mapped the Stars*, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide/When the Rainbow is Enuf* and *Crimes of the Heart*. There will be three performances of *Fortune*: Sept. 6–7 at 7:30 p.m. and Sept. 8 at 2 p.m. *Donations at the door. (207–780–5151)*

Climate change author talk

Sept. 11, 7–8 p.m.

Print: A Bookstore, 273 Congress St., Portland

Acclaimed Maine writer Jane Brox in conversation with former New York Times science writer Tatiana Schlossberg about her new book *Inconspicuous Consumption: The Environmental Impact You Don't Know You Have*. Schlossberg, the daughter of Caroline Kennedy (and granddaughter of John and Jackie Kennedy), will discuss the impact of the things we use, buy, eat and wear in contributing to climate change and environmental pollution. Spoiler alert: the book is pitched as empowering, rather than a downer.

Maine Cheese Festival

Sept. 8, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Manson Park, Pittsfield

If you're looking forward to the 4th annual Maine Cheese Festival along the Sebasticook River in Pittsfield, you and cheesemaker Amy Rowbottom of Crooked Face Creamery have something in common. "It's inspiring for us and it is also a celebration," Rowbottom says of the one-day event, which brings together dozens of cheesemakers as well as brewers, wineries and cideries. It's a much needed celebration; the overall picture for dairy in Maine is gloomy, with the number of farms steadily declining. But the artisanal cheese movement is only growing. And it's a woman's business, predominantly, with only a handful of men represented in the 70-plus membership of the Maine Cheese Guild.

The event is inspiring for Rowbottom because she gets a chance to mingle with other cheesemakers from around the state, most of them tucked into far-flung rural areas, like Garden Side Dairy in Jonesboro. "I never get over there," Rowbottom says. But she and Garden Side Dairy's cheesemaker Kim Roos were side by side at last year's festival. "She was making this spruce chevre and it was the most beautiful delicious cheese," Rowbottom says. "She has such an interesting spin on it."

Rowbottom grew up on a farm in Norridgewock, started a creamery and

Left, Cold Smoked Ricotta from Crooked Face Creamery, one of the participants in the Maine Cheese Festival. Above, cheesemaker Amy Rowbottom uses the festival to introduce customers to her products and to gain inspiration herself. *Photos by Gary Pearl, courtesy of Amy Rowbottom*

then took a break after her daughter was born. She returned to the family farm to make cheese a little more than four years ago and uses milk from another woman-owned operation, Springdale Creamery in Waldo. Business has been very good, especially in the smoked cheese department. Her smoked gouda was a particular customer favorite. "I could never seem to make enough," she says. So she began experimenting, including with a quick smoked fresh ricotta, and found herself with another hit on her hands. "Sales continue to double every year for the smoked ricotta," Rowbottom says. "I have out-of-state distributors who want to buy it." This year she outgrew her old creamery and in late August, was moving into new leased space in the Maine Grain Alliance building in Skowhegan. "It really felt like the right fit," she says. She feels a sense of rebirth in the community, families moving back to town and the positive economic ripple effect from Maine Grain's milling operation. "This is the first time I have made a decision and haven't second guessed it."

Look for Rowbottom (and samples of that smoked ricotta) at the Maine Cheese Festival, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Manson Park in Pittsfield. General admission is $20, gets you a cheese plate, a festival bag and off-site parking with shuttle. *(mainecheeseguild.org)*

—M.P.

Sara Bard Field, left, Maria Kindberg and Ingeborg Kindstedt took a road trip in 1915 to gather signatures on behalf of womens' right to vote. *Photo courtesy of the Library of Congress*

Suffrage talk

Sept. 17 & 27

Anne Gass, a historian descended from one of the leaders of the suffrage movement in Maine, Florence Brooks Whitehouse, is giving two talks this month about a coast-to-coast road trip a group of women took in 1915 to deliver a petition demanding President Woodrow Wilson and Congress give women the right to vote. They gathered signatures as they drove all over America and delivered 500,000 to Wilson. Gass retraced the trip herself, in its centennial year, and uses historic slides to tell their story. The talks. which are part of the Maine Suffrage Centennial, are at 10:30 on Sept. 17 at the West Paris Library and at 6 p.m. Sept. 27 at the Kebo Valley Golf Club, 136 Eagle Lake Road, Bar Harbor. *(mainesuffragecentennial.org)*

Acadia Night Sky Festival

Sept. 25–29

Did you know that Maine is one of the only states on the Eastern seaboard with great swaths of land free of light pollution? Since 2009 Acadia National Park has been the site for this festival celebrating the state's dark skies through education, art and viewing parties. Speakers include astrophysicist Dr. Margaret J. Geller, a pioneer in mapping the universe, and Dr. Jackie Faherty, a senior scientist at the American Museum of Natural History, who will give the keynote presentation, *The Milky Way as You've Never Seen it Before*. Also, are three star gazing parties, at Sand Beach, Seal Cove and the top of Cadillac. *(acadianightskyfestival.org)*

Career success panel

Sept. 26, 4–6 p.m

Woodlands Club, 39 Woods Road, Falmouth

Learn about the route to success from powerful Maine women during the *Secrets to Success at Different Stages in Your Career* panel discussion hosted by the Institute for Family Owned Business. Panelists include Mary Allen Lindemann, Coffee By Design co-founder and community builder; Quincy Hentzel, CEO of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce; Adele Ngoy, owner of Antoine's Tailor Shop and founder of Women United Around the World; and Stacey Bsullak, co-owner and operator of Gathering Winds Farm and Orchard. Light hors d'oeuvres, wine and time to network. *($35, IFOB members free; fambusiness.org)*

SWEET & SAVORY SUMMER SOUPS

A few minutes in the blender and a light dinner is ready to serve

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY CANDACE KARU

Like many women of her generation, my mother worshipped at the altar of Julia Child. Her copy of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking* was worn and spattered with layers of ingredients from meals gone by. Mom's attempts at mastering the recipes met with varying degrees of success. While my mother was and is a painter of some renown, her culinary skills missed as often as they hit.

There was never a question of her ability; she had that in spades. The reality was that my mother always preferred her studio to her kitchen. She would sometimes abandon a dish mid-preparation to run back to a painting she was working on. The result could be meals that were under-cooked, burned beyond recognition, or simply a collection of ingredients left on the kitchen counter.

One of the recipes she did perfect was vichyssoise, a chilled potato and leek soup. She would double or triple the recipe and there would be cold soup for days, a tasty solution to the problem of stolen studio time.

But while Julia's vichyssoise recipe is velvety, rich, and simply elegant, it still requires actual cooking. There are some days when it's just too hot to turn on the stove—welcome to climate change—and given both the current heat and worries about future heat, it often feels better not to. Some days, I just don't feel like cooking. Those days cry out for simple, chilled soups that can be ready with a minute or two in a food processor or blender.

These two chilled soups—one sweet, one savory—are ridiculously easy to prepare. They're light and refreshing, just the thing for the waning days of summer. They pack easily for a trip to the beach or a family picnic. Both are great to have on hand for a quick lunch on the go. And they're loaded with fresh, healthy ingredients. What more could you ask for as summer comes to a close?

WATERMELON MINT SOUP

This delightfully refreshing soup, served ice cold, is the perfect antidote for the sultry days of September. Serve it with a wedge of Brie and a crusty baguette or a simple green salad.

INGREDIENTS

6 cups seedless watermelon, cut into large dice
Juice of one medium lemon or lime
1 tablespoon chopped fresh mint
1 tablespoon honey
1/4 teaspoon fresh grated ginger
Assorted berries, diced cantaloupe, sliced kiwi *(for garnish)*
Plain Greek yogurt
Fresh mint leaves

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine watermelon, lemon or lime juice, chopped mint, honey and ginger in a food processor or blender. Cover and process until smooth. Store soup in an airtight container and refrigerate for at least two hours.

To serve, garnish with fresh fruit, a dollop of Greek yogurt and a mint leaf.

GREEN GODDESS GAZPACHO

The bold taste and bright flavors of this nutritious, delicious soup have made it a staple at my house. I like to serve it garnished with fresh shrimp and a round of pita or naan to soak up every last drop.

INGREDIENTS

1 lb tomatillos *(remove husks, rinse thoroughly, quartered and seeded)*
1 English cucumber, seeded and diced
1/2 cup diced yellow onion
1 small jalapeño pepper, seeded and diced
1 garlic clove, minced
1/4 cup olive oil
1/4 cup white wine vinegar
1 cup baby spinach
1 tablespoon chopped cilantro
Cilantro leaves for garnish
Ground pepper and flaked salt for seasoning
Cooked shrimp or lobster *(optional)*

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine tomatillos, cucumber, onion, jalapeño, garlic, olive oil, vinegar, spinach and chopped cilantro in a food processor or blender. Cover and process until smooth. Store soup in an airtight container and refrigerate for at least two hours. Soup will keep two to three days.

To serve, garnish with cilantro leaves and a drizzle of olive oil. Add cooked shrimp or even lobster if you're feeling extra festive.

PLANTERS AND PEACE

Sometimes the most prime real estate is your outside space, like Brenda Garrand's divine deck

BY ANGIE BRYAN // PHOTOS BY HEIDI KIRN

Brenda Garrand has lived in her home in the Stroudwater area of Portland for 15 years, but initially didn't do much with the deck other than purchase some Pottery Barn furniture. She put together a few flower boxes and "grew one perfect tomato." Then, three years ago she enlisted the help of friend and designer Michael Zimmerman in turning her deck into an urban oasis.

It speaks to her past. Garrand's family owned a house in the Cornish Artists' Colony that had once belonged to artist Stephen Parrish (Maxfield Parrish's father). That house, called Northcote, was well-known for its gardens and Garrand wanted to capture something of its look and feel in her deck garden. Zimmerman introduced an architectural dimension through mixing shapes, colors and textures. Garrand credits Zimmerman's earlier career as a fashion designer for the resulting effect. "It comes from someone who knows how to drape clothes," she says.

Although the gardens at Northcote were formal and part of the landscape, she appreciates the flexibility of a container garden, filled with plants from the Falmouth nursery Allen, Sterling & Lothrop. She can move things around when she entertains and it is easy to change things up from year to year, even for a busy woman in the midst of a career shift. Garrand recently retired from her advertising and marketing firm (although she continues to serve as chairman of its board) and is studying maritime law with an emphasis on Arctic issues. Her choice was inspired by her work over the years with the Maine International Trade Center and the Institute for North Atlantic Studies of the University of New England, as well as her interest in working with the Climate Change Institute at the University of Maine.

But there are still opportunities to relax. "I love living outside," says Garrand, working on a knitting project (a Norwegian poncho) on the deck sofa while explaining what makes this her space. Her favorite time in the garden is the morning, when she sits in one of the armchairs drinking coffee, listening to public radio and "the lovely little buzz of nature." Nonetheless, she allows, in the evenings, "there's a lot to be said for jazz, a cocktail and a mosquito repeller."

Angie Bryan moved to Portland in 2018 when she retired from the diplomatic service. Her writing has also appeared in The Foreign Service Journal and Maine Today.

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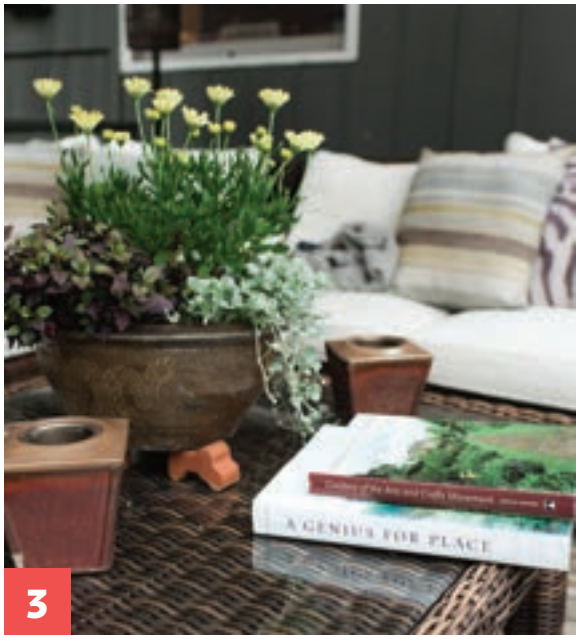

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1 HIGH ON HIBISCUS
Garrand credits Zimmerman with introducing her to all sorts of treats for the eyes, such as plants with multicolored leaves and this hibiscus tree, complete with a different plant growing beneath it. "I never would have thought of that," said Garrand. In the background is the outdoor dining table where she and her family (attorney husband David Pierson and, whenever he's visiting from Canada, their son Charles) eat dinner on summer nights.

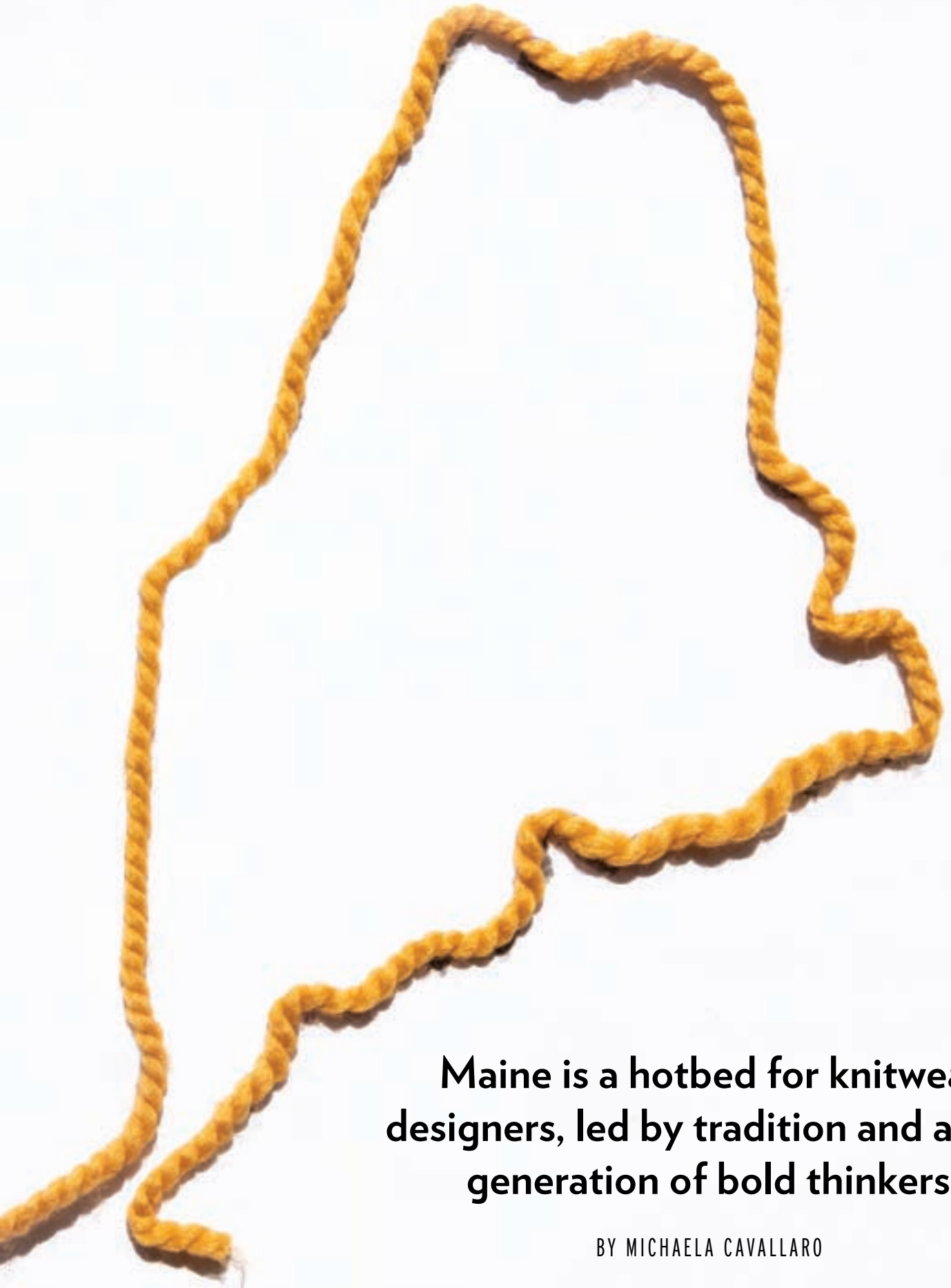
2 BOOMING BASIL
Basil apparently loves this deck garden as much as Garrand does. She also grows chives and oregano.

3 THRILL FILL & SPILL
The books contain photos of the Northcote gardens, Garrand's childhood home. Almost every pot in her garden contains multiple plants, including one that trails over the edge. Gardeners call this the "thrill, fill, and spill" effect, and Zimmerman helped Garrand achieve it.

4 YARD CAT
Whimsical touches such as this Buddha cat appear throughout the garden.

5 PEONIES ON POINT
Garrand likens peonies to Scarlett O'Hara, "throwing themselves into the world all large and slutty and then fading—they don't last." The first flowers to bloom in her garden, she loves how "they're full of ants and smell fantastic."

The State of KNITTING



Maine is a hotbed for knitwear designers, led by tradition and a new generation of bold thinkers.

BY MICHAELA CAVALLARO

If you haven't paid much attention to knitting in recent years, you might be surprised to see photos of Andrea Mowry's designs: funky, colorful sweaters, shawls and accessories that are full of intriguing textures—a rippled edge here, a honeycomb pattern there. They're wearable, modern and distinctive—a far cry from the stiff, overstyled knitwear designs of decades past. And the pattern photos are modeled by Mowry herself, a 30-something blonde with a nose ring and copious tattoos.

A recent transplant to Portland from her hometown of East Lansing, Michigan, Mowry joins an impressive array of Maine women who are designing fashionable, contemporary garments that you'd buy right off the rack if not for the fact that you have to actually knit them yourself first. These designers are inspired by the rocky coast and wooded acres, by the way the sun slants on a harsh winter day, by the sheer fact that life above the 43rd parallel provides opportunities to wear handknits 12 months of the year.

On a sunny morning at Tandem Coffee, Mowry was knitting one of the first designs she's created since moving to Maine last spring. For the sweater in progress, she combined a rustic wool with fuzzy mohair—warm, cozy and a bit of a departure from the color-shifting "fades" for which she became known. "I imagine this as my coastal Maine sweater," Mowry said. "I'm excited to be in a place where I'm going to be newly inspired."

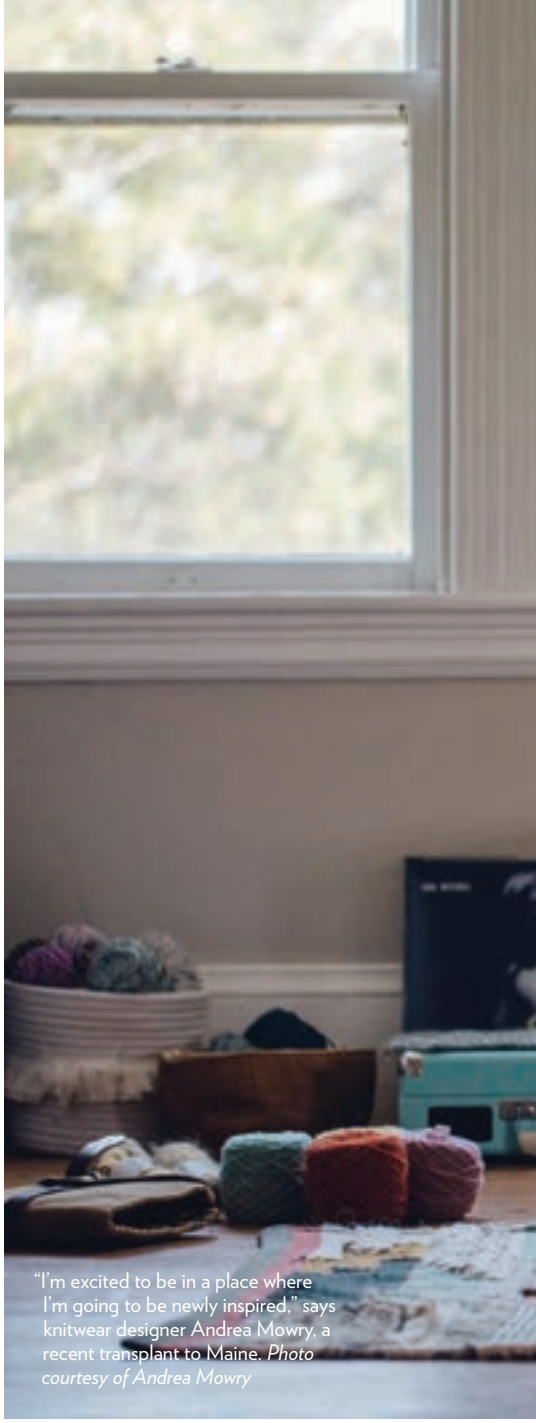
Knitting designers face a unique challenge: They must design a garment that looks good, that suits their customers' desires and that fits in with their own overall aesthetic. And then they have to explain—carefully and in great detail—how others can make it themselves. Along the way, the designers, and the knitters who follow their patterns, are also literally creating the fabric from which the garment is constructed. It's a mind-boggling challenge: the combination of yarn types (thick, thin, smooth, textured), needle sizes (tiny to enormous) and stitch combinations means the possibilities are essentially limitless.

Portland-based Bristol Ivy is known for her innovative designs. (Full disclosure: Ivy is a friend.) Often conceptually based, they use surprising construction methods and lean heavily on knitting's math-based origins. For instance, her Recursive shawl is a wide, flattering garment that alternates open, lacy sections with solid triangles. Sounds straightforward, right?

But Ivy's pattern has something more complex going on: It's based on a formula where each triangle is twice the area of the previous one. "We come to knitting with all of these preconceived ideas about what it has to be based on what people have done in the past," Ivy says. "But that's not necessary. We can take it beyond the bounds of that history really easily. The most important thing for me is that knitting doesn't have rules—it has traditions. It has ways things have been done, but that's not how they *have* to be done moving forward. It's been a lot of fun for me to see where the balance is between wearability, knitability and tradition."

For instance, her Niska design is a cropped poncho with the addition of three-quarter-length sleeves. That description may sound a bit like a fashion don't, but in person it's a funky layering piece that instantly landed on many to-knit lists since Ivy released it in January. Niska's combination of complexity and utility is the sweet spot Ivy aims for when she's designing. "I want to have as much fun as possible coming up with ideas, but if the end product isn't something that's useful and wearable, then maybe I need to rethink it a little," she says.

Other designers start from a less conceptual place, instead looking to create a garment that fits the aesthetic of the brand they've established or, even more simply, their own style.



"I'm excited to be in a place where I'm going to be newly inspired," says knitwear designer Andrea Mowry, a recent transplant to Maine. *Photo courtesy of Andrea Mowry*

That's Mowry's way: "I only design for myself—what I'd like to have in my wardrobe, or what I would like to wear that I haven't seen out there," she says.

Elizabeth Smith takes a similar approach. A designer for the last decade, she specializes in simple, modern garments—a bit like what Eileen Fisher would produce were she a hand knitter. "I'm always layering," Smith says. "So I'll think about things like, what would be easy to throw on over a black dress?"

Smith, who lives in Freeport, works at the Portland yarn store KnitWit a few days a week, which gives her valuable insight into what her typical customers value—and what frustrates

them. For instance, layering pieces generally use less yarn than a more substantial garment, such as a pullover sweater, which makes them more affordable; many of her customers let her know they appreciate that. Likewise, the clean lines of her designs make them easy to knit—something ready-to-wear designers never have to consider. "I like a really clean and simple and modern silhouette," Smith says. "And I always try to pair that with designing and writing the pattern in a way that even beginning knitters can do. I want to create wearable and timeless pieces, and then design them in a way that it can be a relaxing knit."

Ivy factors knitting difficulty into her designs as well, noting that very few knitters want to be doing two complicated things simultaneously. So, for instance, if a particular design uses an unusual or complex method of construction, she'll be sure to keep the stitch patterns simple and straightforward—and vice versa.

THE QUINCE EFFECT

Observers of the knitting world agree that Maine seems to have a higher-than-average number of successful, well known designers focusing on contemporary knitwear. Carrie Bostick Hoge designs deceptively simple garments—often loose and a bit boxy—that receive great acclaim on Ravelry, the knitters' equivalent of Reddit. Hoge also produces *Making*, a bi-annual craft magazine that often includes designs by Mainers, photographed in stunning locations.

Meanwhile, Portland-based Mary Jane Mucklestone focuses on traditional colorwork—think of the Scandinavian sweaters that incorporate intricate patterns in multiple colors—but adds modern flair in the silhouettes she designs and the way she combines colors.

So why the heavy concentration of talent in Maine? For one, there's the DIY ethos that just seems to come naturally to Mainers. "It feels

"I'm always layering. So I'll think about things like, what would be easy to throw on over a black dress?"
—Elizabeth Smith

Left: Elizabeth Smith's sketchbook of ideas for new patterns. *Photo courtesy of Elizabeth Smith*

Right: Elizabeth Smith, photographed in front of KnitWit, the Portland store where she works a few days a week and gains insights from customers. That yarn she's holding is made by Maine company Quince & Co. *Photo by Heidi Kirn*

like that goes a little deeper here," says Mowry, the Michigan transplant.

"There are more makers in Maine, and specifically in the Portland area," adds Pam Allen, who has played a significant role in the expansion of Maine's knitting businesses. "People with creative interests come to small cities where they can afford to live and work."

Allen founded Quince & Co., which specializes in American wool spun in the United States, a rarity in 2010 when she started the Saco-based company. As a past editor of *Interweave Knits* and former creative director of *Classic Elite Yarns*, Allen had the skills and connections to jumpstart her business. While offering American-made yarn was her primary motivation for starting Quince, Allen also wanted to entice former knitters back to the craft. She'd encountered too many women who knew how to knit, but struggled with complex patterns.

It helped that Allen herself favored a clean, modern aesthetic, which can lend itself to relatively straightforward pattern writing. When she and Hoge, who helped Allen start Quince, photographed new patterns featuring their yarns, they used serious-looking models on simple, well-lit sets—no actorly poses or extravagant styling. And they carried that look and feel—one that has influenced many a Maine designer—over to their pattern and website design. "The rise of the Internet meant that you could do everything yourself," Allen explains, referring to publishing patterns and marketing and selling yarn. "So because we didn't have a lot of experience with the design software, we kept things very minimal."

Over time, as part of the regular process by which yarn companies build their business, Quince began publishing patterns by other designers—many of them new to the business. Kennebunk designer Hannah Fettig published several books of her Knitbot patterns in collaboration with Quince as she was getting established. Like Smith, she worked at KnitWit, and that's where she decided to make a career from a hobby. A pair of alluring cardigans helped make her famous in knitting circles (she has over 49,000 followers on Instagram). Smith, Ivy and Beatrice Perron Dahlen, a Freeport designer whose business is called Thread and Ladle, all published patterns with Quince early in their careers. "The first pieces of mine that were accepted were with Quince & Co.," Dahlen says. "They're really great about working with local designers."

Dahlen, who has an art degree, taught herself to design through trial and error, then conquered the steep learning curve of writing patterns. (Grading, the process of developing patterns for multiple sizes, involves geometry, proportion, a bit of anatomy and tons of math. It's definitely not as simple as, say, adding a few stitches to every row to go from small to medium.) Her designs seem appealingly uncomplicated at first glance, though when you look more closely you spot intricate lace details or some well-placed cables—design features that have become her calling card. "When I put out a design that's really simple, it's far less successful than something that's full of lace or cables," Dahlen says. "I don't know exactly how that happened, but at this point I've figured out that's the sweet spot for my customers."

As Dahlen's designing career began to take off, she became intrigued by what she was learning about the vitality of the Maine knitting scene. "As I was learning about the individuals behind the designs I liked, I thought, 'They're in Maine, too?'" she says. Her discovery led to *MAINE Knits*, a Kickstarter-funded book she published in 2017, featuring patterns by Hoge, Ivy, Mucklestone, Smith and others. The designs share a certain direct simplicity

Designer Andrea Mowry is never without a project she's developing. *Photo courtesy of Andrea Mowry*

that seems particular to the Pine Tree State.

"The pieces herein—sweaters, shawls, cowls, a hat and a pair of mittens—catch the eye in an inviting, 'of course,' kind of way," Allen writes in the introduction to *MAINE Knits*, in perhaps the best recent evocation of the stylish Mainer's fashion sense. "They're lovely and wearable, inviting you to stop what you're doing, drop your concerns and cast on. They provide an opening in the structure of a busy day to notice, to shift, to appreciate—they provide something to look forward to."

While Allen, and through her, Quince, have had a major influence on many Maine designers' aesthetics, there is another inspiration these artists share: the physical space around them. "All our photos have a similar feel," says Ivy with a chuckle. "The landscape in Maine is very particular—there are very strong elements and very clean elements. And we all get to take photos of our designs in all of these gorgeous places."

Michaela Cavallaro lives in Portland's West End with her teenage daughter and two ridiculous small dogs. She spends a lot of time knitting on conference calls.

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THE NEW

Above: This rack of high-end jeans at Amy Redfern's store Amelia in Boothbay might not look it, but they're secondhand. Left and right: Guru Vintage + Modern in Bath just opened a bricks and mortar shop, filled with carefully curated collections by shop owner Kristan Green.

BY KERRY EIELSON // PHOTOS BY HEIDI KIRN

OLD THING

Thrift stores are starting to look more like boutiques. How (and why) Maine's market for upscale resale is growing.

Amy Redfern, owner of Amelia in Boothbay Harbor, looks over her racks of gently used secondhand garments,

It's a hot, hot day in Boothbay. Two women are seated on the front porch of the boutique Amelia enjoying the shade and a glass of rosé. Amy Redfern, owner, looks fresh in an loose-fitting cadmium yellow cotton dress that floats all the way down to her rose-gold Birkenstocks. She breezes back into her store, a spacious boutique fronted almost entirely by windows. An expansive selection of very tempting clothing is organized by color on racks throughout the store. Pre-styled ensembles complete with bags and shoes (including Prada and Manolo Blahnik) are displayed on mannequins. A basket of lush lavender wreaths at the checkout and a selection of cosmetics, some by Boothbay's Crow Point Apothecary, are the only items in the store that are not secondhand.

Amelia is not your average thrift store. It is one of a growing number of upscale resale shops in Maine where the goal isn't just to save money. These boutiques offer efficiency and a clear conscience in the secondhand shopping experience to a style-minded, eco-conscious consumer. In the case of Amelia, with its white wood panel walls, wide floorboards and antique beams, the luxury is not just about designer labels; it's about atmosphere and experience.

Fashion resale, made up of both bricks and mortar and online venues, is an emerging market slated to double over the next five years, according to the industry's *Resale Report*. It is a market fed by symbiosis. On one hand, people are said to buy twice as much new clothing and use it for half as long. On the other hand, a growing number of consumers are increasingly aware of one big downside of fast fashion. By 2050, projections are that 25% of the planet's global carbon emissions will come from textile production. On top of environmental concerns, many shoppers are turned off by how much stock is wasted (the 2010 revelation that H&M was dumping unpurchased clothing in trash bags on a New York street was an eye-opener for many). Then there is how some brands treat garment workers, including paying them poverty wages and having them work in unsafe conditions, demonstrated perhaps most vividly in 2013 when the collapse of an eight-story factory in Bangladesh killed more than 1,100 people, many of them women.

> "This is not a thrift store, it's a boutique."

The industry has responded, but with mixed results. According to the United Nations' *Climate Change News*, between 2017 and 2018 there was a 6% increase in general sustainability efforts within the entire garment industry. Zara recently announced it would use only sustainable fabrics and created a secondhand clothing collection system. But that's problematic as well; so much used clothing stock is sent to African nations (at least 70% of it worldwide, Oxfam has said) that their own textile industries have been devalued. A half dozen East African nations are trying to ban further incoming shipments of secondhand clothing. France and the United Kingdom recently banned the destruction of unsold merchandise and the Norwegian Consumer Authority called out H&M for greenwashing by inaccurately calling a line "sustainable."

Redfern and other owners of Maine resale retailers are responding with a focus on high quality fabrics, natural fibers, ethically produced, sustainable brands in a well-organized, intentional and supportive space, be it through social media or storefronts.. Their owners are creative but practical people, often women with academic and career successes under their belts, looking for meaningful work and a better life/work balance. Redfern has an MFA in Creative Writing, a degree in biology with a focus on ecology, and a background as a marketing and branding strategist. The kind that led to her children calling her "Phone Mommy" before she went into the conscious clothing movement.

Redfern places the frosty rosé on the coffee table in the sitting area, next to a fanned stack of magazines about Maine. She then consid-

ers a flight of dresses. "We're seeing a shift in the seasons. Summer is later, hotter and longer now." She pulls out a lightweight woven sleeveless grey dress *(Boden, $36)*. "We can't wear traditional fall looks until much later. You need to be able to layer." Redfern grabs an oversized cashmere sweater *(Pure, $48)* , picks up a corset-style leather belt *($24)* and holds the outfit above a pair of leather Frye boots at the foot of the rack. "There."

Buying an item secondhand is said to lower its carbon imprint by about 82%. "If you need something you can find it used, and that helps reduce total consumption but also keeps stuff with value out of the waste stream," says Cindy Isenhour, associate professor of anthropology and climate change at the University of Maine. Which is "another huge and literally growing problem," she adds.

The KonMari Method, which dictates that things that don't spark joy be expunged from one's wardrobe, has been credited with drawing attention to Americans' excessive consumption. At the same time, this approach has its critics in sustainability circles. From their perspective, the goal is non-accumulation: Buy things you need that you will keep forever, and stop shopping. Using "joy" as a criteria for what's in your closet may actually motivate people to start over and buy, buy again.

Either way, these boutique resale shop owners agree that a fast-fashion mindset has contributed to a glut of available resale goods. While Maine doesn't have any, there are nationwide chains that sell old and new clothes, like Buffalo Exchange (founded in 1974 and now in 50 locations). The number of online resellers like ThredUp, The Real Real, ASOS and 1stDibs, is also growing rapidly.

"These huge companies are doing consignment on a massive scale, just cranking out hundreds of items every day," says Sarah Cellier, owner of the Georgetown-based online venue, Rice & Beans Vintage. She has carved a niche specializing in authenticated designer accessories. (Think: Chanel handbags and boots by Christian Louboutin.) "They have their place in making resale available to people on a large scale, but these online places are turning out so much product, the quality is not really reliable. I can go on any of these sites and point out things that aren't authentic." To boot, even in Cellier's high-end selections, she notes that things made 20 to 30 years ago were better quality. Bags had leather lining. Zippers and hardware were gold-plated. Those items are much harder to find now.

> "I see a big part of my job is to educate my customers. You can't get an unconscious consumer to recognize the issue of sustainability."

If it took time to find that special thing in the funky thrift shop of yesteryear, today's used clothing superstores are even more time-consuming. "I would gladly spend one to three hours in Goodwill so women will feel they have another option," says Kristan Green, whose boutique Guru Vintage + Modern curates chic looks to sell on Instagram and in her new store in Bath. She goes over every piece with a commercial grade steamer ("it kills bacteria") and has an arsenal of hands-on stain-removal techniques. "There's a whole process. It's tedious." If an item is not in great condition after Green's had her way with it, it doesn't make it to the rack. "This is not a thrift store, it's a boutique."

As resale boutiques respond to a saturated market with harder-to-find categories like menswear (men don't throw clothes out), children's (post-toddlerhood, kids tend to destroy their clothes), or plus sizes, they also offer personalized services like closet detox and style consultations. Their aim: to make a strong people-to-people connection. "I see a big part of my job is to educate my customers," says Redfern, who was also a yoga teacher for 12 years. "You can't get an unconscious consumer to recognize the issue of sustainability."

In light of helping in this environmental emergency, "We all just have to pick one area where we make a difference," says Green. "Maybe I can't do everything, but I can do this. Look at this piece!" With satisfaction, she holds up a cream, raw silk, unstructured pantsuit embellished by abstract gold metallic block printing. "I would never resell fast fashion. It has done so much damage to the planet and the way we see ourselves, our thought process about shopping. I am changing the way people think about clothing and what they're spending money on."

"When we started out in 2012, we had a lot of vintage, cheap clothing," says Jenny Davis, owner of Portland's Haberdashery Resale Clothing Co. It's evolved. "We are all in a minimalist mindset now, but I still want people to buy my stuff. So we sell better quality—fewer things for more money. That's what people want." Haberdashery also photographs its new arrivals daily to sell them online, and even has its own influencers, a duo named Loretta Bryant and Grace Gregory, who present the collections like an online magazine spread. She and her team look in consignment and resale

Kristan Green of Guru Vintage + Modern, her new bricks and mortar store in Bath. Until now, most of her sales had been online, with Instagram serving as a storefront.

Bottom left: Name brands, including some big designers, show up on Amelia's racks.

Bottom right: At Guru Vintage + Modern, sleek shelves and racks built by Green's boyfriend hold carefully selected secondhand clothing.

shops all over the state and on the Internet (as well as from resellers who bring pieces to the store). "I love flipping, knowing the value of something and turning around and selling it. Finding vintage is treasure hunting."

High-end resale shop owners work hard to retain their secondhand shopper. Haberdashery needed a brick-and-mortar makeover to keep up with its online image and a higher price tag. The shop went from a "rustic looking" space with cafe lights, old carpeting and fitting rooms made out of old barn boards to a bright, clean, white and well-organized space. The style is for the hip, young, creative professional. "We couldn't ask people to spend $70 on a dress when it felt like they were in a junk shop," says Davis.

Green's storefront for Guru in Bath is new. The shelves and racks in the shop were handmade by her boyfriend, Johnny Lomba, using steel and reclaimed wood from a salvage yard in Hollis. Green grew up watching Cindy Crawford on The Style Network and attended Fashion Institute of Technology. She worked for a tailor and started selling secondhand clothing on Etsy about 10 years ago. In the works for Guru: custom-fit used jeans, and a small rack of new, ethically produced brands. The physical store is a way to build a physical community, and to offer potential for hand-tailoring.

The shared goal of these upscale resalers is to make be-woke resale the new normal. How realistic is that for most people, or for the working single mother shopping for three kids and their multiple needs? "Folks who try this sort of thing rarely stick with it in the long term, in part because it is socially non-normative," says Isenhour at UMaine. As she points out, as long as we try to match the reflection we see in a consumer society's mirror, movements toward non-accumulation won't work.

That's why for Redfern sustainable fashion starts in the fitting room—incidentally, hers are luxuriously large and well lit, sectioned by thick linen drapes. Redfern offers complimentary styling inspired by her body-positive activism, in-store and sometimes at customers' homes. She's been known to talk customers out of clothes if they don't fit perfectly. If women can feel comfortable in their own skin, Redfern believes, they will stop seeking self satisfaction in each fad diet, dress size and fast fashion. "I love that quote from Galway Kinnell's poem *St. Francis and the Sow*: 'Sometimes you have to reteach a thing its loveliness.' We have to do that for ourselves. I can't make that happen for someone else. All I can do is hold the space."

Emily Seymour, co-owner with her husband Benjamin Dorr of Curator Consignment in Rockland, has one rule. "That is that it should fit you. You should love it when you put it on. You never reach for that thing that kind of fits." Curator Consignment originally was exclusively menswear but has added a women's department. Seymour and Dorr are newlyweds; both wore resale to their big event: For him, a linen suit he found on eBay, and for her, a 1950s silk organza dress she scored in New York City.

An encouragement on the way into Amelia in Boothbay. The store's owner, Amy Redfern, has been known to talk customers out of a purchase if the fit isn't perfect.

The more of these purveyors of high quality used garments the merrier, because the consensus in the scientific community is that the world needs to come together if there is to be any chance of truly fighting climate change. As Isenhour points out, collective action is the key. "Individual efforts fail to send a signal to the folks who need to hear it most," she says. For places like Amelia's and Guru Vintage + Modern and like-minded upscale resellers (Maine is rich enough in upscale rescale that it would be a challenge to present a complete list) it's all about bringing people into the fold, and keeping them there. "I want people to feel confident and good going home with something that will last the next 20 years because it's already lasted 20," says Green. "I want it to be like I've done something good."

Kerry Eielson and her husband own and ran La Muse Retreat, a writers residency in France, from 2001 until recently, when they relocated to Maine with their three children. She has worked in magazine publishing and written for The New York Times, among other publications.

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A TILE TALE

Popham Designs; the connection between Maine and a high-end tile company in Marrakesh.

BY CHRISTINE BURNS RUDALEVIGE

When Caitlin Dowe-Sandes and her husband Sam, shown here in Morocco, went into the tile business, they decided to name the company after the beach in Maine where they got married. *Photo courtesy of Popham Design*

When Caitlin Dowe-Sandes and her husband Samuel were deciding on a name for the bespoke tile company they were starting in Marrakesh, Morocco, they pulled out a name from their own past. They decided to call their fledgling company Popham Design, a nod to the iconic Maine beach where they'd gotten married.

There was sentiment involved in their branding decision, and a sense of roots, since Dowe-Sandes grew up in Bath, but another motivation as well. While the process for making Moroccan tiles is age-old, the couple was adding a modern flare to the finished product and the name had to help set them apart from other Moroccan tile companies. "The Maine coast is about as different to the Marrakesh landscape as you can get," says Dowe-Sandes.

Since its founding in 2007, the company has earned accolades for its fusion of traditional Moroccan craftsmanship, modern color palette and contemporary patterning. They've been covered in *The New York Times* and applauded in design magazines like *Architectural Digest*. Their tiles "add a dose of optimism to any interior," according to *Elle Decor*. Jade Jagger, Mick's famous daughter, has them in her beach house in Spain.

A statuesque blonde in her mid-40s who sports thick, statement-making, black-framed glasses, Dowe-Sandes exudes a cool demeanor, but even in a video phone call comes across as welcoming and warm. She lived in the Bangor area and in Auburn when she was young but considers herself to be from Bath. "Because that is where I learned to drive." After graduating from Morse High School, she went on to earn an art history degree from Harvard.

She and her husband moved to northern Africa in 2006 for what was supposed to be a year-long sabbatical from their frenzied lives in Los Angeles, where she had been working in public relations and he had been in film. Neither had spent much time in Africa before moving to the city known for its bustling souks, Berber carpets, bedazzled babouches, leather pouffes and pierced sheet metal lanterns. But they both spoke French, enjoyed Moroccan food and appreciated the region's rich artistic aesthetic. Those were as good as any reasons to settle on Marrakesh, Dowe-Sandes recollects.

Within three weeks of landing in the city, they'd purchased an 18th century riad—a traditional multi-story Moroccan house with an interior, open-air courtyard. The three-bedroom dwelling is inside a mosque complex in the Medina, Marrakesh's bustling old city center, its boundaries marked by ancient dusty red walls. And it represented a blank canvas, one that would lead them to unexpected entrepreneurship.

The prospect of renovating their Marrakesh find was more exciting than daunting, Dowe-Sandes says, even if they had to incur the hassle of installing modern plumbing. They'd brought nothing with them from Los Angeles. But both of them were used to adapting. She had lived through her parents refurbishing a couple of old houses in Maine. Her husband had grown up in Vermont with a pair of artists for parents. The goal was to create a peaceful refuge from the dizzying stimuli of the Medina. They'd fill it with hand-crafted furniture and art.

It was always part of the plan to incorporate Moroccan tilework, to soothe their souls, cool their heels and accommodate radiant heat when required. As any Moroccan travel brochure is likely to illustrate, tiles, often running from floor to ceiling, are an intricate part of the cultural and artistic heritage of the kingdom.

> "I CAN'T HAVE TOO MANY PATTERNS OR HANDCRAFTED THINGS IN MY LIFE."

During the renovation of their riad, the couple located several ateliers within walking distance with whom they worked to design the tiles to line most of the floors and many of the walls of their new home. Born from that collaborative experience was the business plan for Popham Design, which specializes in what are commonly described as cement tiles in the marketplace, although technically, they're concrete.

While concrete tiles and ceramic tiles look similar, they're made very differently. The base for ceramic tiles is red, brown or white clay. They can hold their natural hue or be painted,

Left: Popham Design makes its concrete tiles by mixing cement and marble powder as well as rich pigments such as this blue, which are poured or piped into brass molds. The tiles are compressed with hydraulics, cured and air dried for three weeks. Below: A floor made from the company's tiles. *Photo courtesy of Popham Design*

be glazed or left naturally dull. But all ceramic tiles are fired in a kiln to set the color and establish their durability.

Concrete tiles are typically a mixture of cement, with varying levels of sand and marble powder—Popham Design uses only the latter, mined from the Atlas Mountains—and color pigment poured or piped into brass molds. Some of these molds are simple, others more intricate, but their function is to keep the colors distinctly separate. The tiles are compressed with hydraulics, cured and air dried for three weeks, a process that makes them durable and sometimes frustrating for customers who want a rush order, says Dowe-Sandes.

"We were drawn to the age-old process," says Dowe-Sandes. "But we also believed there was a market for traditionally crafted tiles produced with a more contemporary flare."

Their instinct was good; between 2006–2016, sales increased 40% annually. Growth since 2017 has tapered somewhat but is still increasing about 20% a year, Dowe-Sandes says.

Popham Design's workshop sits in a more southerly Marrakesh neighborhood than their refurbished Medina digs. The Dowe-Sandes recently moved into a 1950s home in the city's Gueliz neighborhood to be nearer to the shop, but they maintain the riad as a sort of creative laboratory and showcase for new Popham Design creations. The company is going beyond tile and expanding into home goods.

Its signature palette comprises over 150 colors from which customers can choose to have their tiles created. The whimsical names concretely denote their hue, but encourage the mind to wander. Deep indigos (called lapis and denim), dusty pinks (raspberry and conch shell) and vibrant saffrons (yolk and limoncello) are traditional Moroccan tile colors. But many others, like sea glass and lawn or oyster and fog, Dowe-Sandes says, reflect her Maine coast roots. Popham Design's tile shapes—basic squares, off-kilter pentagons, scalene trian-

Left, top and bottom: Popham Designs specializes in unusual patterns, devised by owners Caitlin Dowe-Sandes and her husband Samuel. *Photo courtesy of Popham Design*

Right: Hallie Flint Gilman, a friend of Dowe-Sandes from college, has Popham Design tiles in the mudroom of her home in Portland. *Photo by Heidi Kirn*

gles, quirky bow ties and Red Cross-like plus signs—are available in any single color. And the company's evolving book of patterns—ones resembling backgammon boards (which she eventually claimed as her favorite when pressed), spiky artichokes, glimmering stars, spindly scarabs or whimsical bubbles—are available in any color combination.

Both husband and wife have a hand in designing new patterns. They start with a sketch and then experiment with the many ways the repeat could play out. "When we are convinced the pattern will flow well, we work with the guys in our workshop to produce a sample mold," says Dowe-Sandes.

In the world of decorative tile, a "repeat" denotes how individual tiles are placed to create an overall design. The patterns, colors and rate of recurrence can be switched up to give any bathroom floor, bedroom wall, kitchen backsplash or fireplace surround a look all its own even if similar tiles are in play. Repeats don't translate into repetitiveness, if used well. "I can't have too many patterns or handcrafted things my life," Dowe-Sandes says.

The couple, particularly Samuel, is well-versed in the process of making tile. "But we agree it's wiser to work with experts who have been making tiles for 20 years," she says. "You can tap their depth of knowledge about what works and what doesn't." The company's all-male production line reflects the lack of history of women making tiles in Morocco. That is not to say women can't do so, says Dowe-Sandes. "I'd love to employ more women," she says, pointing to the long history of women making concrete tiles in Vietnam. "But we will have to move respectfully in that direction, feeling for a way to make that work culturally here."

In 2016, the Dowe-Sandes opened a showroom in Paris. They sell their products through exclusive suppliers in countries worldwide. In the United States that partner is high-end tile distributor, Ann Sacks, an arm of Kohler Co. Their tiles are installed all over the world, from Stockholm to Spain to France. And in Portland, featured in both the mudroom and master bath of Hallie Flint Gilman's Park Street 19th century brick townhouse. Flint Gilman is an

"WE WERE DRAWN TO THE AGE-OLD PROCESS. BUT WE ALSO BELIEVED THERE WAS A MARKET FOR TRADITIONALLY CRAFTED TILES PRODUCED WITH A MORE CONTEMPORARY FLARE."

"THE MAINE COAST IS ABOUT AS DIFFERENT TO THE MARRAKESH LANDSCAPE AS YOU CAN GET."

environmental lawyer and a friend of Dowe-Sandes since college. She was an early fan of Popham Designs.

"I've always wanted to be braver about with my decorating style and Caitlin's tiles gave me that opportunity. The designs are inspirational. You look at them and know you could put them in places you'd not previously imagined," says Flint Gilman. She wanted Loop de Loop patterned tiles in aubergine and milk for her mudroom and Ando patterned ones in milk and coal in her bathroom. To do that before the company had signed a distributor in America, she registered to become an importer. Currently there is an unopened box of the Hex Knot tiles in saffron waiting to be installed in her 14-year-old daughter's bathroom.

"I have this dream of building a cabin and it will have a green porcelain Jotul wood stove as its centerpiece," explains Flint Gilman. "And I just know Popham [Design] will have the tiles to make the place as warm and wonderful as I imagine it will be."

Christine Burns Rudalevige is a Brunswick-based writer and cookbook author who tackles any topic that can be linked to the kitchen.

Popham Designs makes tiles in 150 colors and many shapes. The patterns options include stars, spiky artichokes and the pentagons above and trapezoids at left. *Photos courtesy of Popham Design*

Women's Work: Senior Living

Courtney Freeman on 'full circle' women as caregivers and leaders

The notion of women as predominant family caregivers is echoed loudly in the senior living industry. According to Argentum, "compared to U.S. labor force, the senior living workforce is disproportionately female. Four out of five people in the senior living workforce are women."[1] At Northbridge senior living communities, where our Women's Work trailblazer, Courtney Freeman leads the way, those statistics match up. 85% of Northbridge's associates are women.

Courtney joined Northbridge in 2012, when the Massachusetts-based senior living provider broke ground on its first venture in Maine; a memory care specific senior living community, Avita of Stroudwater. Seven years later, Courtney oversees Northbridge's five communities in Maine as the Regional Director of Operations. Courtney's passion for working in this industry began as many of our associates' stories do: with her family. For Courtney, her Nana was diagnosed with Alzheimer's and needed to move to an assisted living community - this sparked her dedication to serving others in the same situation. "Nana taught me to be a very strong resident and family advocate, I hope to bring the lessons I learned with her to all Northbridge residents."

> *"if we all are truly lucky enough, success will be measured by making a difference in someone's life*

Noting the high percentage of women working in her industry, Courtney believes there's reason behind the trend. She cites the Diane Mariechild quote, "A woman is the full circle. Within her is the power to ***create, nurture and transform***." Courtney continues, "every day we work with people with different personalities, different struggles and different backgrounds." She says it's an adaptable, helpful, and progressive person who can care for their residents in three parts. First to "**create** a foundation, to ensure that we provide the very best home," second to "continue to **nurture** not only our residents but their families too, through support, listening and the gift of time," and most importantly "women have the ability to **transform** their creativity and nurturing personality into success for others."

Thirteen of Northbridge's seventeen senior living communities are led by women, and when asked why, Courtney says, "women are multifaceted, which, in my opinion, makes for the best type of leader. They don't have to be the loudest in the room to have the strongest voice. They are unapologetic and fearless; not afraid of failing." Just as she said: each day, each resident and each family is different. There is no one solution when serving the healthcare needs of families. Because of this, Courtney makes sure to mention "strong women leaders know that failing is just a teaching moment, an obstacle if you will, to bigger and better successes."

For the future, Courtney strives to continue spreading that foundation towards success; success for her fellow business leaders, her associates, and most importantly for the residents and families in which they all serve. She states, "if we all are truly lucky enough, success will be measured by making a difference in someone's life; and I truly believe the majority of people who work in Senior Living are in it to do just that."

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BEAUTY Business

Makeup artist and entrepreneur Jillian Dempsey talks about her career, personal style and what she likes best about her Maine life.

BY MARY POLS

If you ever sit next to Jillian Dempsey on an airplane, feel free to ask her for makeup tips. "I can talk beauty to you until you tell me to stop," Dempsey says. "I will talk to anyone." The makeup artist and owner of her own beauty line might even be departing from the Portland jetport; she and her husband, actor Patrick Dempsey, have a house in Southern Maine.

Dempsey, 53, has been working in the beauty business for her entire career. "I've been very attracted to the beauty business since I was very small," she says. She's calling from Los Angeles, having already gotten in her summer visit to Maine. "I started out with crayons and drawing little pictures of dolls." By the time she was a senior in high school, Dempsey was selling makeup from a private line to her classmates in Los Angeles. "Everybody wanted me to cut their hair and do their makeup," she says. She went on to beauty school in Los Angeles and was cutting hair when she met her future husband in the mid-1990s (he came in for a trim, she told *Good Housekeeping*).

But neither her curiosity or excitement about her career has abated. "I still go out makeup shopping," she says. "It's the word artist that makes me get up every day and explore options." She sculpts in her spare time and makes rose gold jewelry as well. Julia Roberts wears her necklaces, as does Kristen Stewart. Both actresses have also been clients of her work as make-up artist for years—that smokey eye on the Stewart's dramatic cover of *Vanity Fair* this month? Dempsey created it. She's worked with a fleet of other well-known names, from Jennifer Lawrence to Kirsten Dunst to Rachel Weisz. Not to mention her husband, who she works with regularly on advertising campaigns, including one for Tag Heuer that debuted this spring.

"Milla Jovovich I met when she was 16 years old," Dempsey says. "I have been fortunate to work with the loveliest of women."

But when Dempsey started her eponymous makeup line in 2015 she intended to reach far

Items from Jillian Dempsey's beauty line include this gold bar massager (left) meant to sculpt and rejuvenate the skin and this cheek tint cream blush (right). *Photos courtesy of Jillian Dempsey (pictured left)*

beyond the movie star community. "I am really interested in serving and providing makeup tips to everyone," she says. "I don't think of anyone in terms of their celebrity and fame."Her ideal client might be someone a lot like her, a busy mother (she and Patrick have three children, Tallula, 17, and twins Darby and Sullivan, 12) who wants to use organic products on her skin, loves to get made up for special events, but is equally happy not made up. "I love being makeup free," she says. She feels most beautiful "when I'm looking at my kids and laughing at my kids. At the way they are super silly and natural." As busy as she is in her career, she aims to give her family her focus. "I would hate for them to remember me as 'in a mirror doing your makeup.'" That's part of her motivation to make the products she does. "I think that is why I like to do everything on the vanity front as condensed and fast as possible. I call it 'lazy girl makeup.'"

"I do my makeup in five minutes in my car," she says. "I am using two hands to drive but at the stop signs, I am putting on my lip balm (a must). To me it is all about your skin."

Her first products were an eyeliner and a line of lid tints in five colors, organically made and intended to be finger friendly. "I wanted to do something that was like a balm for my eyes." Then she brought out a cheek tint and after that, what she calls a "hero product," a mini-fan brush that can be washed and is cruelty free (Dempsey advocates for animals and has a small "farm" of her own in Los Angeles, with pets ranging from dogs to donkeys.)

She's been regularly debuting new products in the line, the most recent of which, the 24 karat Gold Bar, has attracted a lot of Internet attention since it came out in December 2018. (It doesn't hurt to have online demos from Patrick Dempsey himself, or shots of someone like Stewart getting sculpted by the Japanese-made device.) It's a $195 gizmo that uses a battery to massage and contour the face. Or the neck. As she puts it bluntly: "If you feel like you have a gobbler under your chin," this can help. "I flew to Tokyo multiple times to meet with them," she said of the Japanese manufacturer, who used one of her rose gold bracelets as they refined their choice of metals. "I use it before every appearance," she says. "I use it on all my clients." It's a preparatory step before beginning to paint a face, and is useful for integrating moisturizer into the skin. "It's like going to a gym for your face," she says.

Wife and husband are both athletic. She surfs, he drives race cars and has been known to do some boxing. She's a beachy sort used to a warmer ocean experience and Maine doesn't always deliver on that. "I have to say, I was impressed the last time I was in Maine," she says. "I actually went swimming in the ocean." It was at Goose Rocks Beach, she says, and for once, the temperatures were refreshing rather than freezing. "I gravitate toward the summer months," she says, laughing. "But it is all so beautiful. And my husband loves it so much."

Her husband makes more regular trips to the state, because of his work with the Dempsey Center for cancer patients and their loved ones. He and his sisters established the center in their native Lewiston in 2008 in honor of his mother Amanda, who died in 2014 after fighting cancer for nearly two decades. "Patrick is on his way there now," Dempsey says. The couple and all of their children had just attended the premiere of a movie the former *Grey's Anatomy* star executive produced, *The Art of Racing in the Rain*, and he'd arranged a special screening of the film in Boston to benefit the Dempsey Center.

But they'll both be back to Maine together this month, for the annual Dempsey Challenge, the run, walk, cycle fundraiser for the Dempsey Center (Sept. 28–29). "I am very proud of him," she says. "Aside from being the eye candy for a lot of women—and I am fine with that—it is deeper than just that with Patrick." He loved his mother so much, she says, and what he and his family have done to honor her memory continues to impress her. "It is designed not for cancer, it is designed for people, people that are in need, who need guidance and advice and are scared," she says. "What he has done has just been mind blowing." Is she going to ride in the Dempsey Challenge? "Absolutely," she says. "It's a real mission for us."

So is her mission of raising children who feel like they can express themselves creatively, and feel comfortable in their own skin (and, she says, "have nice manners"). "We are in this time and space where the new generation, they are growing up in a much faster-paced world with a lot of social media." And carefully curated images. She considers it essential to make the difference between image and reality clear to this generation. "Really, internally, if you feel good about yourself, it reflects through the radiance of your smile," she says. And while it's fun to play with different images, "you have to take the makeup off at the end of the day."

Mary Pols is the editor of Maine Women Magazine. She interviewed Patrick Dempsey for Maine Voices Live in 2018.

Photos by Whitney J. Fox Photography

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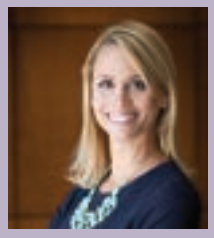

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DARN IT

This art of beautiful (and visible) mending turns clothes into works of art. Or at minimum, keeps them ready to wear.

BY HANNAH JOHNSTON

Photo: Courtesy of Maya Critchfield

The tools of the mending trade. All it takes is needle, thread and some patience to mend the clothes that matter.

When Maya Critchfield caught her favorite black cashmere sweater on a garden fence she assumed she'd ruined it. Then an image on Pinterest of a well-darned sweater inspired her to pull out needle and thread. With each maraschino red patch she adds to that old black sweater, she falls a little more in love with it. "I feel like there's going to be a time when it is completely patches," Critchfield says. "It makes me excited not just about the past and present of clothes but the future of my clothes."

Her deliberately visible mending represents a new-old approach to fashion that embraces and even enhances flaws. That sweater, which she thrifted in Boston four years ago, along with a pair of well mended jeans, are the garments she keeps coming back to. "I can wear them in any situation and I feel so at home in them because I have worn them so much."

For many who practice the art of visible mending, the inspiration comes from Japan. Sashiko or boro, is a Japanese practice of turning a tear or worn patch into a decorated highlight. Visible mending is a trend—mainstream enough that *Martha Stewart Living* has covered it. Critchfield stumbled across it when she saw how artist Celia Pym had completely re-knit and re-darned a garment. "I was like, 'this is art!' It was the first time I thought of mending [that way], so her work kind of launched me into using it in my art practice and explore darning in general."

Critchfield learned to sew from her mother when she was very young. Her mother had learned from her own grandmother, Agnes (which is Critchfield's middle name). So she already had the skills to make her mending beautiful. She also had the background to be attracted to it for more than aesthetic reasons. She went to the College of the Atlantic, where everyone has the same major— human ecology—and she's embraced it as descriptor for herself in her post-graduation life. As a human ecologist she's happily mending and living within the parameters of Slow Fashion, the term for the conscientious fashion movement that started more than a decade ago in response to the wasteful practices of the fast fashion industry.

The movement has grown as the news about climate change becomes more dire. It includes thrift store shopping and shopping from ethically sourced new lines, like those made by Patagonia, Everlane and The Toad Store (with its outlet in Freeport). But it doesn't get any more basic than picking up needle and thread to fix what you've already got. "Even if your clothes are from H&M or whatever," Critchfield says. "If you're mending them and making them last longer, that is sustainable; that is Slow Fashion." And mending might be the most financially accessible entry point into Slow Fashion for most, she adds. "There are so many YouTube videos, diagrams, tutorials online that are free. If you can get to a craft store, you can start darning or sewing on patches."

But if you want to take it to the next level, Critchfield teaches darning classes around Maine, including at Smith's General in Yarmouth. Her next session is this month at the annual Fiber College of Maine (Sept. 4–8) in Searsport. And she's not alone. Rewild Maine regularly offers mending classes (upcoming ones will be announced on its Facebook page; act fast, they sell out). Biddeford-based Samantha Lindgren runs an annual retreat called "A Gathering of Stitches: Slow Fashion." She regularly brings in guest teachers, like Katrina Rodabaugh, author of *Mending Matters: Stitch, Patch & Repair Your Favorite Denim and More* and Slow Fashion journalist and expert Amy Default.

Lindgren isn't a professional mender or weaver but she does make (and mend) most of her own clothes, even jeans and bathing suits. She also quilts and knits, but garments remain her first love. "I was a clothes horse when I was

"I weave and remake, bent over in low light to infuse you with this red wool. Like blood, it gives you new life."

a kid." And she relishes the opportunity to teach, including about the accessibility of sustainable fashion. "Slow Fashion often gets tarred with the same elitist brush that Slow Food did," Lindgren says. When she first became aware of the mending movement it made sense to her, an extension of the concepts that Slow Food had instilled in her. "Why throw away a beloved garment because it had a hole?" she says. "Why not find a way to fix it, even embellish and celebrate it with the fix, in a way that prolonged the garment's life, and allowed me to live my values beautifully, creatively, visibly." That's why her Slow Fashion retreat includes three lessons from professionals—one on pattern making, one on natural dye processes and a third on visible mending. "It is a cornerstone of the movement, an incredibly useful skill, and an important message to spread."

Casey Ryder, owner and proprietor of Portfiber, a shop in the East Bayside neighborhood of Portland, also believes in spreading that message. Portfiber is dedicated to ethically sourced and produced textiles and tools for sewing your own clothes, so mending was a natural fit with her mission as a maker. Ryder teaches spinning and weaving and often brings in outside professionals to teach sustainable methods of garment construction and maintenance. Recently she asked Critchfield to teach a darning class. She also applauds the breadth of free tutorials available on the internet. "The thing that blocks us the most is our own selves getting in the

way," explains Ryder, "that little voice in your head that's like, 'why do you want to do that? That's dumb.'"

For Critchfield and Ryder, their projects in mending and making have value beyond mere practicality. Critchfield's current project is to restore and mend very old, antique garments in hopes of someday displaying them in a museum. The garments "are completely destroyed" and beyond wearability. But they represent history and maybe something more. "We don't normally think of clothes as art," Critchfield says. But why not? "I like putting clothes on a white wall and being like, 'Hey, look at this, this is art. Someone made this, someone mended this, what does that make you feel?"

Hannah Johnston graduated from Connecticut College and completed an honors thesis in creative writing. She is from South Portland and wrote about the barista life for MWM in June.

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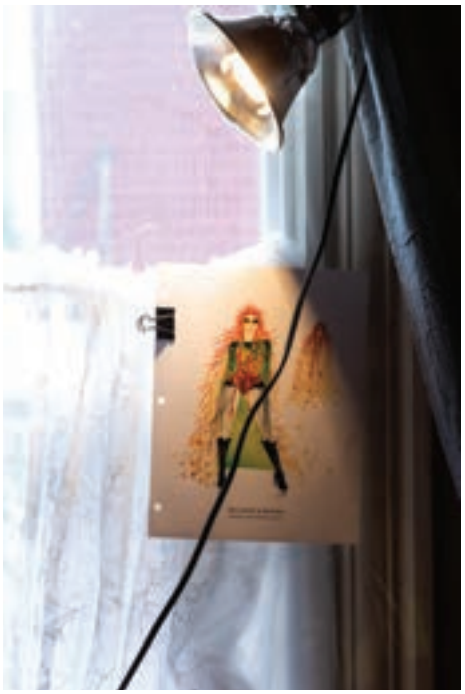
FASHION FORWARD

Donna Decontie Brown works on one of her fashion designs in her Bangor studio.

Inspired by a childhood on Indian Island and the social work she does today, Donna Decontie Brown uses Wabanaki traditions to create contemporary fashion.

BY AMY PARADYSZ // PHOTOS BY HEIDI KIRN


Donna Decontie Brown in her Bangor studio. Some of her work in fashion references the work she does with sexual assault survivors, attaching components to a garment in areas where men typically touch women without permission. "The message is, just because I'm beautiful doesn't mean that you have permission to touch."

"My hands are never idle," says Donna Decontie Brown of Bangor, cutting and tying fringe on a teal-and-purple ribbon skirt, a modern twist on traditional Wabanaki regalia. "I'm always doing, working, creating."

Besides being a maker of unique fashion inspired by indigenous peoples, Decontie Brown is a full-time outreach coordinator with the Wabanaki Women's Coalition, which advocates for women experiencing domestic violence or sexual assault. Plus, consulting with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and Department of Justice, she leads other tribes as they work toward establishing culturally specific drug courts, as the Penobscots have. The role has earned her respect in and out of the state.

"She not only has worked with Wellness Courts here in Maine but also across the country with the Hopi in Arizona and the Lac Courte Oreilles Tribe in Wisconsin," says Hon. Eric M. Mehnert, chief judge for the Penobscot Nation Tribal Court.

"Everything she does is to empower," says Jason Brown, her husband and creative partner. "She deals with heavy and difficult subjects. But tapping into creativity and our culture keeps her grounded."

His metalwork and stonework was the foundation of J. Brown Designs, which in 2015 was renamed Decontie & Brown to reflect Donna's increasing involvement. Together they were expanding into custom-made high-end fashion, each ensemble incorporating Wabanaki influences and modern sensibilities. A regal but prickly-looking dress called "Armored Beauty" was inspired by Decontie Brown's work with sexual assault survivors.

"Jason and I attached components to the gown in areas where men typically touch women without permission in a club or a setting like that," she says. "The message is, just because I'm beautiful doesn't mean that you have permission to touch."

The "components" look fierce, like porcupine quills (an element of traditional Native apparel) but are in fact zip ties.

For Decontie Brown, the threads of social justice, feminism, traditional art and contemporary creativity are woven together as if of one purpose, one spirit. The origin of Decontie & Brown, fashion designers, as well as the couple's love story, goes back nearly four decades to two children learning the traditional art of beadwork on side-by-side looms.

She had spent her early childhood among her father's people, the Algonquin of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation of Kitigan Zibi, near Maniwaki, Quebec. Her mother, both Italian and Penobscot, was from Maine's Indian Island, near Old Town. There's a 1979 photo of Decontie Brown celebrating her fifth birthday—the first time she visited the reservation—beside her future husband, both wearing paper party hats.

"I remember when she moved back in first grade and what she looked like," he says, adding that she wore a purple-and-turquoise striped polo shirt. "It's a mental picture that stuck with me."

Growing up on Indian Island in the 1980s, they were taught to weave baskets, forage for fiddleheads, paddle canoes, make snowshoes and dance and sing to Native music.

"The Universe, the Creator guided us to be together at such a young age," she says. "We were childhood sweethearts. He was my first boyfriend, and I was his

Donna Decontie Brown's work includes headdresses inspired by traditional artwork.

first girlfriend. Our friends even had a mock wedding for us back in the sixth grade."

Her first job was beading for one of the tribe's elders, making necklaces, porcupine quill chokers and earrings. Meanwhile, Jason discovered sudden, pop culture-inspired, demand for traditional arts: single strands of seed beads made trendy by Val Kilmer playing Jim Morrison in 1991's *The Doors* and chunky beaded chokers made trendy by Janet Jackson not long after. This sort of contemporary improvisation on traditional arts—with more maturity and originality—would become a mainstay of the Decontie & Brown style. But that was years off.

She studied psychology at the University of Ottawa, while he attended the Institute of American Indian Arts in Santa Fe, New Mexico. And then, the Christmas they were 27, they again crossed paths on Indian Island. A long-distance romance re-kindled and, within months, they knew. They have been married 15 years.

"Our talents, our skills, our energy—we just feed off each other so well," she says. "I could not achieve creatively, artistically without him, and he says the same about me. We truly complement each other."

> "Everything she does is to empower. She deals with heavy and difficult subjects. But tapping into creativity and our culture keeps her grounded."

Decontie & Brown wearable art is modeled after fishing spears and nets, flora and fauna, jellyfish and "star people" (the Wabanaki term for aliens). Their inspiration is the Maine woodlands and coast where the Wabanaki have lived for thousands of years—the vines and fiddleheads, blue jays and cardinals—and items of cultural significance—wampum, gingham and handwoven baskets. And nothing is rushed: On a wedding gown patterned on trillium petals, she sewed 150,000 seed beads in trillium swirls.

"While their cutting-edge fashion might not scream 'Native American,' it is certainly based in Wabanaki culture and is inspired by traditional artwork, like the designs on beadwork and baskets—which are mostly abstractions of forms found in nature," said Tilly Laskey, curator of *Holding Up the Sky: Wabanaki People, Culture, History & Art*, an exhibition at Maine Historical Society up through Feb. 1, 2020. "They confront the stereotypes many people have about Native artwork and the expectation that Wabanaki artwork automatically means basketry." Decontie & Brown creations have also been purchased by the Maine State Museum in Augusta, the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, and the Historic New England Museum in Haverhill, Massachusetts.

"When we started to make that transition to the modern, it was all about, 'What's marketable? How could we bring a more modern style to the pieces?'," Decontie Brown says. Now they've developed a following from the Native American markets they travel to, as far flung as Santa Fe and Juneau, and knowing they have a market frees them up creatively. "If it's something totally elaborate, we may not have an immediate buyer. But we know there's an owner for it; it just hasn't found its home yet."

Amy Paradysz is a freelance writer and photographer from Scarborough who was dazzled by a Decontie & Brown fashion show at a Maine Historical Society fundraiser.

Emma Thieme, 30, at her studio (and store) in Cherryfield. She used to work only out of her home and sell at craft fairs, but she fell hard for this space and saw its potential as studio and storefront.

PERFECTLY IMPERFECT

Emma Thieme is the maven behind Cherryfield's Maven Leather

BY JESSICA HALL
PHOTOS BY AMANDA WHITEGIVER

Emma Thieme, the owner-operator of Maven Leather in Cherryfield, deliberately looks for imperfections in leather. When she chooses leather to make a handbag, she sees a scar as a sign of the life of an animal and a scratch as part of the process; signs of a transformation well worth incorporating into her designs. "The imperfections tell a story and that story shouldn't be discarded or hidden away," Thieme says.

Her customers tend to feel about leather as she does, that these stories are meant to be passed on. "Yes, they want something stylish," she says. "But they also need it to be rugged and functional and they're happy to embrace how leather changes and transforms over time."

Thieme (pronounced Thee-me) is a fourth-generation Mainer from Waldo County. She splits her time between making bags for part of the year, traveling to craft fairs and in the winter months, making custom motorcycle seats. The motorcycle seats were her entrée into the leather working business. Thieme rides motorcycles herself—a 2009 BMW twin engine for multi-day trips, but these days she's mostly riding a 1975 Honda, smaller and good for riding close to home—and couldn't find a seat she liked.

Building her own seat wasn't an enormous stretch. She's been telling stories with fabric and stitches since she was 5 and received her first sewing machine from her mom. "It's easier to say that I don't remember not knowing how to sew," says Thieme, 30, who lugged a sewing machine to the University of Maine at Orono, where she studied journalism. An unexpected gift of a garbage bag full of leather scraps from a friend introduced her to working with leather, fashioning leather earrings for friends.

After school she wrote for a travel website and did some editing, but never found

Mostly self-taught, Thieme got started in the leather business making motorcycle seats. She spends her winter months working on those and focuses on bags in warmer months.

journalism fulfilling. Her professional life clicked in 2015 when she studied professional auto trimming—the art of constructing upholstery for cars, boats and motorcycles—at Mobile Technical Training in Hackensack, New Jersey.

She began using the upholstery remnants to make bags, ranging from backpacks to handbags to clutches. While working in leather is physically exhausting, she said, she likes the sculptural aspects of creating seats and designing bags. Every motorcycle seat job is highly customized, as the cyclists send her their "plate" as well as their opinions and ideas. She adds the foam, fits and stitches each plate per their agreement. Now clients seek her out for a unique design they can't find elsewhere.

"Some people have been working on restoring or building a motorcycle for years or even decades and the seat is usually one of the last steps before the bike is complete," Thieme says. "Last year I made a seat for a man who had been waiting 40 years to finish an antique Harley Davidson. He was just working on it piece by piece and hadn't been able to find a seat made in the style he was looking for."

> "Imperfections tell a story and that story shouldn't be discarded or hidden away."

The majority of the leather she uses is tanned in Maine. She dyes some of it herself (in the red leather bag in the accompanying photos, that deep red comes from beetles) and has taken classes in dye processes. Thieme favors bison for the strength of its hide. She's also working with some local hunters Down East to incorporate Maine buckskins into her designs.

Thieme has been collecting sewing machines since she was a teenager, but works on an early 1960s-era Durkopp Adler that she found on Craigslist. It's the oldest machine she owns, but the most dependable. "Sometimes

Left, Thieme made the dye for the red bag she's holding using beetles. She's studying dye processes and using as many of her own dyes as possible. Right, her store, painted a clean white, is decorated with finds from friends and some items she picked up at the dump.

I'm curious about what it would be like to sew on a more modern machine, but this one has so much heart I don't think I'll ever be able to switch," Thieme says.

What's her personal style, bag wise? She typically carries the same one for years. Right now that's a poppy-red Luna backpack from her collection. She wears it as a cross-body bag, giving her freedom to use her hands or ride her bike.

Her bag designs are rooted in her own history.

"I grew up sewing with my mom and so many of those old sewing patterns we had from Vogue and McCalls are permanently burned into my brain. I'll never forget the shapes of the clothing and purses and those silhouettes," Thieme says. "Every design that I create probably has some root in the time spent flipping through pattern books with my mom."

While most of her motorcycle seat customers find her online, her bags can be bought both online and in some Maine retail stores, as well as fine craft shows.

Until recently, she worked in a studio on her 12-acre property. She credits the freedom and solitude of life Down East in shaping her designs.

"I wanted to live independently and in a way that keeps me on the fringes," Thieme says. "It wasn't unusual to go a few days or a week without seeing or talking to anyone. That time in solitude, just devoted to my leather work, allowed me to develop a style that's truly my own. My own edge."

But then last year, she noticed a space in Cherryfield for rent. She hadn't planned on having a studio outside her home, but this one fell into place. After months spent cleaning the place up, she realized it could serve as both studio space and storefront. She painted it a clean white and added simple furnishings found at the local dump and collected from friends. The result is a space that fits her aesthetic, highlights her creations, and gives her room to spread out while cutting, punching holes and sewing. And to keep developing that edge.

Jessica Hall has been a business reporter in New York, Philadelphia and Portland. She's from South Jersey but now lives in Nobleboro with her husband and their two kids.

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THE CASE FOR SLIPPERS

Scuffs, House Shoes, Fuzzies, Mocs, whatever you call them, they're back and quite possibly, keeping us healthier.

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY SARAH HOLMAN

When arriving at the door of a home, many visitors ask—either by observation or by direct question—"Shoes on or off?" Families usually have a protocol: Maybe dressy shoes are OK but muddy cleats are not. Perhaps shoes are allowed in the summer but not during the winter. I once visited a home where shoes were removed in the mudroom and the host presented a basket of slippers in various sizes to guests.

Wearing versus removing shoes differs greatly among countries and cultures. The custom of removing shoes inside the home (and sometimes school, religious house or workplace) is common among most Asian countries and throughout the Middle East. Reasons for this practice range from cultural norms to religion. In the United States, removing shoes is much more common in wetter climates, like the Northeast and Northwest.

Alison Henrie learned that when she moved from Las Vegas to Portland. In Nevada it was common for people to leave their shoes on wherever they go, she says. "You might kick your sandals off inside," she says, "but if you're wearing sneakers or anything with laces, buckles or zippers, they stay on." The dry Las Vegas climate keeps soles cleaner—there's no mud season and not a lot of rain. "When I moved here and saw my first winter, the shoes-off thing made so much sense," Henrie says.

Bethany Record, also of Portland, feels the same. "In Maine with winter, and in Portland with the city, there's nothing on the bottom of a shoe that I want tracked through my house." Removing shoes is also a way for Record's two young children to participate in taking care of their home.

> "When I moved here and saw my first winter, the shoes-off thing made so much sense."

At her condo in the West End, Record keeps a shoe rack outside the interior front door, in a place her kids can easily access. It helps manage expectations for visitors, too. Most will instinctively remove their shoes when they encounter the rack, but if they don't, she doesn't push the issue. "Guests should feel comfortable," Record says. "I usually don't say anything if their shoes appear clean(ish)."

It turns out there is some gray area between appearing clean and actually being clean. In 2008, University of Arizona microbiologist Charles Gerba was commissioned by the Rockport shoe company to study what we drag indoors on our shoes. The report was released in collaboration with the Cleaning Industry Research Institute, an industry group. Gerba told the Today show: "93 percent [of shoes] have fecal bacteria on the bottom of them." According to his findings, the gross stuff originates from public restrooms and animal waste on the ground outside. And to make matters worse, Gerber found the transfer rate of bacteria to clean floor was somewhere between 90–95%.

Not only can slippers help you transition into a "I'm home" mood, experts say they help keep the house cleaner.

Eww.

Even bigger eww if you have small children at home; crawling babies have their hands all over the floor and in their mouths. Shoes also bring in pollen, mold and other allergens, which can add to the problem, especially for anyone with a compromised immune system.

Besides immediately initiating a hard-line no-shoe policy, there are a few things you can do to tackle the germs. An easy place to start is an antimicrobial doormat (although some health experts say antimicrobial products are overkill). Several on the market claim to remove 90% of debris. Consider a no-shoes-on-the-rugs rule, because fibrous surfaces are tougher to deep clean than hard surfaces like tile and wood. If your shoes can be washed, wash them. Leather shoes obviously can't go in the washing machine, but an antibacterial wipe or a spritz of disinfectant can't hurt.

"My aunt washes the bottoms of her shoes every day with a dedicated scrub brush," says Jennifer Foy of Kennebunk. In her household of five (plus two dogs), Foy doesn't take the time to wash soles, and her love of slippers is more about comfort then a sparkling floor.

"It started when I was pregnant," Foy says. "My feet hurt so much, and I always wanted something on them." She received a gift of L.L.Bean shearling-lined booties and was immediately hooked on the concept of slippers. In her collection, Foy has a moccasin-style with a rubber sole

From the elaborate to the sleek and simple, there is a slipper out there for every season and mood.

that she wears most because, "I can run to the mailbox with them on, and I've definitely driven the kids to school in them." She leaves a second pair at the office, and for the summer months she has fuzzy flip-flop slippers. She brings slipper socks with her when she visits friends' homes. That way she knows she'll be comfortable wherever she goes, regardless of rules or variable home temperatures.

Her habit of bringing slippers to social engagements at private homes is a throwback to Victorian aristocracy. The Prince Albert Slipper—named after Queen Elizabeth's husband and eventually known as a "smoking shoe"—made its debut in the homes of aristocrats in the 1840s. Initially created to be worn when moving between rooms (those houses had a lot of rooms) it wasn't uncommon for the upper class to wear fancy, fashionable slippers to formal, at-home dinners.

Like so many trends, the house shoe is coming back around. Slippers have become serious business for many apparel and footwear companies, with stylish options available for every occasion and in every price range. For those who aren't comfortable in bare feet or socks alone the plethora of stylish choices makes it easy to complement, not detract from, any outfit. Plus, those cute new kicks will help reduce the amount of bacteria sneaking into your home.

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.

YOGA PANTS UNTIL DEATH

BY MAGGIE KNOWLES

Fashion captivated me from a young age. But rather than the sleek glam of Europe, from the effortlessly chic of Paris to the mysteriously sexiness of Milan, I was like a magnet to the pizzazz of new money New York. I used to wear boas and fedoras to middle school with giant CZ earrings. (If you didn't grow up in the '80s, that's cubic zirconia.)

With my frizzy, feathered hair and velvet tracksuits, I was the poster child for Watched-too-Many-Soap-Operas-With-Mom. I would sneak into the quiet halls during class just so I could hear the click-click of my shoes echoing through the halls, as if I was sauntering into a masquerade ball. I wore full flapper regalia to my prom.

And God bless my denim-clad peers, no one ever punched me.

Luckily, my lack of self-awareness when it came to clothes diminished and I hit the evolving river of outfits: The Girl's Night; Dating; In-Love; Engaged; Married and finally, Pregnant/Post Pregnant/Caring-for-Toddler outfits, which will be eternally lumped as The Gray Period.

And we all know what comes next...Yoga Pants Until Death.

Maine mom fashion boils down to two things: comfort and preparedness. We are Eagle Scouts in stretchy pants. We must be ready at a moment's notice to spring into action with sunscreen, snacks, mittens, wipes, juice, books and hugs at any time, place, in any contortionist position and always while sacrificing our own outfit for the greater good. Silken dresses, lacy shirts and cashmere shawls don't really scream "Machine Washable."

Yoga pants are the capes of #momlife.

A few Thanksgivings ago we were traveling, actually on Thanksgiving Day—put an extra serving of stress gravy on those potatoes—and I had dressed in a new pink and gray wool Burberry trench coat (over yoga pants, natch) that I definitely couldn't afford. It had been purchased on a whim one rosé-fueled night. You know the kind, when boxes arrive and you have no recollection? The compliments I received walking around the airport alone soothed the irritation of the endless curve balls thrown during holiday travel. Look at meeeee! I am a productive mom who also manages to pull off gorgeous, stylish things!

My kiddo and I were killing yet another delay with yet another stale bagel when it happened. The look in his wide green eyes warned me of the impending situation. But not quite soon enough. No way could we dodge through the suitcases and sprawled travelers to the bathroom.

An awful spray of too many bites of starchy dough mingled with possibly warm single-serving cream cheese hit the air. Mom reflexes took over. Wanting to spare the other irked travelers, I grabbed his body and pulled him into my lap where several heaves of Logan Airport breakfast ended up all over my beautiful Burberry. Frozen in embarrassment, shock and stench, I just rocked his small, sobbing body as the remnants continued to soak into the luxurious plaid material. Tears welled in my eyes too as I tried to figure out how to handle the havoc.

And then, blurred through my tears, I saw them approaching. Several legs, all armored in yoga pants, surrounded us. This heroic black-panted pod took over. One gently wiped my son's face. Another started mopping up the table and chairs. One rubbed my back as another tried to clean my coat, although through a clicked-tongue she said, "Not sure this one is going to make it."

I sat in grateful silence as this uniformed Mom Tribe completed their disgusting duty for this stranger in a destroyed jacket. Then, as gracefully as they appeared, they all melted back into their own tables, soothing their own wide-eyed children with juice and books.

Yoga Pants are the universally approved mom look we have succumbed to. And while they are far from fancy, usually sitting above casual, flat footwear and below efficient tops, it is what they stand for—kindness, generosity, kinship, love—that makes a lasting impression. I know my 17 year-old flapper-loving self would be horrified, but I happily accept them as my fate.

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.

DEAR EVANGELINE

Who is Evangeline? She's wise and warm. She's been through some major stuff. She's a mother and a sister. She knocks on doors to get out the vote. Even your kid will listen to her. And she listens back. Evangeline can't fix your car for you, but she can help with family and relationship advice. She also knows a lot about astrology if that's your thing. Send your questions to evangeline@mainewomenmagazine.com.

Dear Evangeline,
My boyfriend lives nine hours (by car) from me and I see him once a month. I am fine with this. Does this mean I have a fear of commitment or can only stand men in small doses?

–Alice, Gorham

Dear Alice,

I love to get questions like this because I think you already secretly know the answer. However, you don't mention your boyfriend's feelings here so I am going to assume he is "fine" with it, too. If not, I imagine that car ride alone would be enough to break up over if one of you isn't happy.

The long and short of it is, if your monthly love-fest feels healthy and good to both of you, you absolutely DO NOT have a problem with men or commitment, since you are enjoying both and it actually takes MORE attachment and loyalty to stay together over long distances. You actually don't have a problem at all. But perhaps what you are really asking is: is it normal for me to be incandescently happy and fulfilled in my life with so little face-time with my significant other?

My answer to this is YES. You are normal and you are good, and you are, in fact, perfect in your romantic state. Resist the impulse to judge your relationship from other people's perspectives and remember the words of Deepak Chopra who says, "What other people think about you (in your case, your relationship) is none of your business." If you and your boyfriend understand one another and the "rules" of your long-distance relationship; if you both feel energized in one another's presence and confident and alive in your absences, then I congratulate you both on having a truly adult, non-co-dependent relationship. Revel in it and crank some love songs on those monthly road trips. Shut off the doubt and be grateful you have found someone who empowers your independence—and if your feelings change, be grateful for your solid bond that will allow your current relationship parameters to change, too.

Tenderly, E

Dear Evangeline,
I am a single professional woman living in Portland. Where should I look to meet intelligent, interesting single men?"

–Cordelia, Munjoy Hill

Hey, C.,

I'm going to crack this question wide open, since what you are really asking is "how can I find love?" Meeting men is easy. They are, literally, everywhere (being 50% of the population). They might be married, boring and totally inappropriate for you as a boyfriend, but they are not hard to meet (at work, at the grocery line, at friends' dinner parties, online, etc.) and most are pretty open to friendship. How do I meet a man who will love and make love to me in all my multitudes is what you are really asking, and the answer is easier and more obvious than you might think, because, believe it or not, you already contain all the love you will ever find in somebody else. Be vulnerable in the face of all the love you contain, because you now are truly ready to share it. Greet the world with open arms, and it will hug you back. It's how the universe (and Cupid) works. Why? Because once you claim the wonderful in yourself, you will find it more easily in the men you meet. And that is the path to true love.

This sounds corny (I know, I know), but clichés are what they are for a reason. So, here is the plan. Take yourself out on a date. Wash your hair, put on something you think is attractive, shave your legs (if you do that kind of thing) dab on some essential oils. Treat yourself to dinner and drinks, an art exhibit, a dance club, a movie, alone (no friends). Then go home, light some candles, put on some music and have sex with yourself. If you have a vibrator, great, if not, get to where you need to go however you best can. Allow yourself to feel pleasure with NO judgment. Turn yourself on. And then do it again next week. And the next. Pick a new place each time, challenge yourself to branch out.

After a month of this, hopefully you will have done a few new things, chatted with some strangers—and had more than a few orgasms to light the way. You are now ready to say "yes" to as many social invitations as you can without draining your bank account or sleep account or threatening your health and work balance. Cultivate enthusiasm for outings or online social groups that gather people who are interested in the same things you are. Let it be known that you are open to dating. Don't be shy. Tell your friends. Join an online dating site. Be vulnerable in the face of all the love you contain, because you now are truly ready to share it. It's like the saying on the mug goes: Greet the world with open arms, and it will hug you back. It's how the universe works. And if you don't believe me, go Google how John Lennon met Yoko Ono.

Tenderly, E

Maine Women Magazine welcomes reader submitted poems and images. Please send them to verse_view@mainewomenmagazine.com.

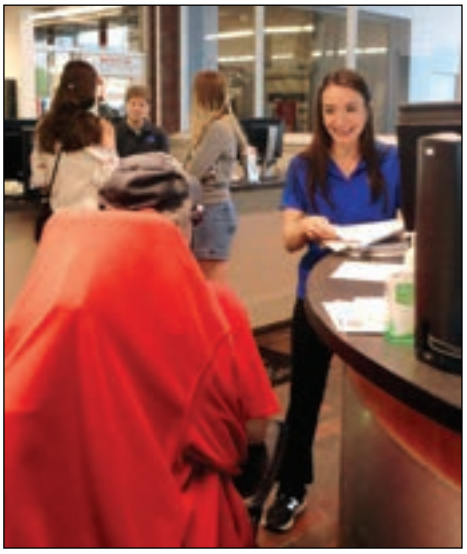
Photo by Eliza Dorsey, North Yarmouth

Vacationland

By Myah Garrison, New Gloucester

A postcard kind of pretty.
Arching green, breeching rocks...
'Miami eat your heart out'.
Kind of pretty.
I'm used to the anorexic pine,
feet shredding grey of Maine.
I expect the sea to be cold,
the birds to sound repeating
red buttons.
But this?
Finger-painted blue over a coast
of honey sand and Christmas trees.
It's too close to my fourth grade imaginations,
too much of a frosted apology,
that it keeps my boat
in the black-green of frigid sea..
Behind the white-plate serving
of swaying seaweed, the water looks
like a Crayola melted, warm.

Dad gave me his love for cars and fixing them.



Holly Lebel
Team Service Manager
Lee Chrysler Jeep Dodge Ram Auburn

What excites me most about working at Lee is learning something new every day. I like people, and I like cars. But cars break down eventually and that's where I can help. At the end of the day it is my goal for customers to leave with smiles on their faces.

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COFFEE BY DESIGN'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
Photo: Sarah Beard Buckley
Floral design: Broadturn Farm
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