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ON THE COVER:
Cindy Marina
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Story: Diana Addison Lyle

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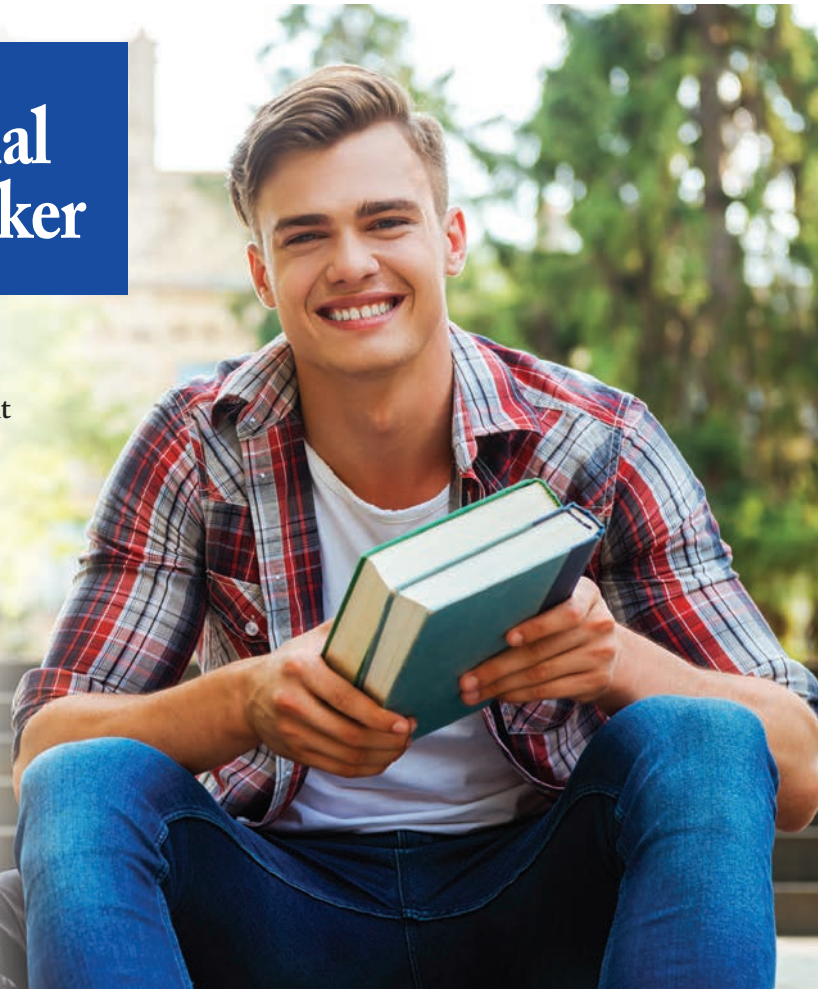
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Our Cover beauty, Cindy Marina, has achieved much in the first quadrant of her life. In her senior year at high school, she was the California nominee for 'Gatorade Player of the Year' in volleyball. In her first year at Duke University, her team was named the 'Atlantic Coast Conference All-Fresh-man Team.' In 2017, while she was only 17 years old, she was the youngest woman chosen to play for the Albanian National Women's Volleyball team. A year later, the team took 3rd place in the 'Women's European Volleyball League.' She was awarded full-ride scholarships to Duke University and USC. Somewhere in her schedule, she fitted in being crowned Miss Universe Albania, and her career as a broadcast commentator pitch side at the soccer stadiums in Italy are just a few mentions of her vast accomplishments. Clues to her success story are all in her fascinating cover story on page 68.

Football offers us plenty of entertainment this Holiday season including sightings of mega star Taylor Swift appearing at stadiums in support of Travis Kelce – Kansas City Chiefs' tight end. The NFL is certainly capitalizing on the interest, and it does add some extra sparkle to the season.

On page 82, our Fashion Editor parallels the 2024 fashion trends with what is going on in the world. Always a philosopher who looks for restorative qualities in humans, she offers this thought: "They say love conquers all. Stepping into 2024, I wonder whether that's valid for hope as well." Let's all hope so.

In our travel section on page 100, we visit the beautiful world of Royal Malewane for an unrivalled safari experience in South Africa's Greater Kruger National Park. Get thrillingly close to the Big Five with one of the most qualified guiding teams in Africa as they provide fascinating insights into the complex ecosystems of the South African bushveld.

We wish you and your families a joy-filled Holiday season. May 2024 bring new hope and extraordinary opportunities to your lives.





Diana

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SAN FRANCISCO 49ERS

Explosive Strength

Let's give it up for the San Francisco 49ers in 2023. While we know there are ardently loyal Rams and Chargers fans here in L.A., when a team is as good as the 49ers have proven to be this season, giving credit where credit is due is the sportsmanship standard of conduct. And since the 49ers are a Californian team, there's something celebratory about the standard of play in the 5th strongest economy in the world – California.

So far this season, the 49ers have far outscored their opponents while giving up the fewest points – making them, arguably, the best team in the NFL. Their 23-year-old quarterback, Brock Purdy, came onto the big stage in 2022 – making his first NFL start against the legend - Tom Brady. Purdy has continued to set the league on fire in 2023, and many similarities have been made between he and Tom Brady.

In fact, Brady has been avidly watching Purdy and has nothing but praise for him. He recently said, “he’s a really humble young man, and he wants to go out there and do great things.” Brady went on to say on his podcast, “I’ve played a lot of great teams over the years, and what did we do? We controlled the line of scrimmage, we ran the ball well, we stopped the run, they rushed the passer. The San Francisco 49ers have been playing with great leads, and I give coach Kyle Shanahan a lot of credit because he’s done a great job.”

Brock Purdy leads the NFL in passer rating, while the 49ers running back, Christian McCaffrey, leads the NFL in yards from scrimmage and touchdowns. Both are legitimate MVP candidates.

STORY BY DIANA ADDISON LYLE





San Francisco 49ers QB Brock Purdy #13 spiking the ball in the end zone after touchdown



In mid-October, the 49ers demonstrated their immense strength by annihilating the Dallas Cowboys – beating them 42 -10 on national television. In the demolition process, they managed to neutralize the best edge rusher in the NFL, Micah Parsons, and they took Dak Prescott out of the equation.

The team is averaging 33.4 points per game so far in 2023 while their defense is stifling opposing offenses - allowing just 13.6 points and 266.8 yards per contest, with both figures placing them in the top three in the league.

They've managed to only turn the ball over twice during their first five games, allowing quarterback Brock Purdy to brilliantly lead an offense buoyed by the impressive work of wide receiver Brandon Aiyuk and the awe-inspiring play from running back Christian McCaffrey. There's a ton of star power in the team including Deebo Samuel and George Kittle – and together, they form one of the most formidable groups of offensive skill players in the league. That playing strength is augmented by Kyle Shanahan, their conscientiously dedicated coach, who is a master tactician and strategist. San Francisco has overwhelmed opponents, winning by an average margin of 20 points per game.

There are three vital components in the 49ers: the talent is deep; the preparedness is intensive, and they have physical titans in their midst who inject fear into their opponents. The big boys, George Kittle, Trent Williams, Nick Bosa and Javon Hargrave pack a punch on the field, and at the line of scrimmage, their muscle power makes it a war zone. On the defensive side, linebackers Fred Warner and Dre Greenlaw, along with safety Talanoa Hufanga, invoke terror mid field into anyone unlucky enough to come up against them. Then you have the explosive capabilities of Deebo Samuels and Christian McCaffrey – all of which makes for great spectator football. This is a formidable running team that imposes their will unflinchingly on their opposition. They are so overpoweringly strong that by the 4th quarter, they've worn out any team who tries to come back. There's simply nothing left in the tank of the opposing team in the dying stages of the game.

After the Dallas Cowboys demolition game in October, George Kittle talked about the 49er's physicality at a press conference:

"We're just a very violent football team," he said. "And the hits just add up after a while. Whether it's Trent on a block, Fred and Dre on

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San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Deebo Samuel

a pass play or our safeties coming down, those things build up after a while. That's how our training camp is, and kind of how our OTA's are. We're a violent, physical football team. And that's just the standard of the 49ers." Kittle referred to games the 49ers played in 2022, saying, "even in games we lost last year, the opposing team lost the following week because of the wreckage they encountered with us on the field!"

Most importantly, San Francisco's physicality helps them to create space for big plays on offense, and it helps them take the ball away on defense.

What has transpired this football season is that the opponents who play the 49ers resort to desperate tactics against a player as strong as Christian McCaffrey. Defenders do everything in their power to slow down the might of McCaffrey. In the October game against the 49ers, the Cowboys defense received two personal foul penalties on a face mask incident involving McCaffrey. It was after a big hit where they tried to tackle him. Coach Shanahan described the intensity of that experience to reporters, saying,

"When a player like Christian McCaffrey runs that hard, guys do whatever they can to get him down, and sometimes they grab onto the facemask. The helmet to helmets, those are tight windows. Christian runs really good routes and our quarterback is putting the ball in tight areas and those guys are committed to trying to stop it. So, when you've got such a really great player like Christian who's fearless, guys are doing everything they can to try to stop him and sometimes when they do that, they get penalties for it."

With Kyle Shanahan's exceptional knowledge of the game comes an ability to capitalize on the 49ers strengths and a sense of knowing how to downplay any weaknesses – if they are existent. He knows he has an elite defense and offense. So as long as the veteran 49ers stay healthy, they're as close to having no weaknesses as an NFL team could be and that pretty much makes them an exciting possible favorite to hoist the Lombardi Trophy in Las Vegas in February. 🔥

Acknowledgements: amp.foxsports.com; NBC SportsBayArea; Sports Illustrated



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Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce



Taylor Swift & Travis Kelce
Gotham Getty Images.
Courtesy Yahoo

Upon the end of the writers' strike and the return of 'Saturday Night Live' to the airwaves in late October – audiences were thrilled to see their two favorite people, superstar Taylor Swift and Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, joining in on the explosive attention to them.

The skit was very entertaining. It starred Kenan Thompson as Fox Sports' Curt Menefee, who is host of Fox NFL Sunday. As Menefee tries to focus on football, the other studio members Howie Long (Mikey Day), Jimmy Johnson (James Austin Johnson), Michael Strahan (Devon Walker) and Terry Bradshaw (Molly Kearney) debate who is a bigger fan of Swift.

Pete Davidson later plays a sideline reporter who also is enamored with Swift.

At the end of the skit, the NFL broadcast is headed to a commercial and a frustrated Menefee says, "When we get back, we are going to speak with someone who actually wants to talk FOOTBALL!"

Despite criticisms of the public interest in the pairing of Swift and Kelce, it makes for a happy story about two highly respected people. Taylor Swift is an international superstar whose unblemished reputation speaks volumes about her talent, work ethic and her likeability as a human being. Travis Kelce's status in the NFL is equally powerful in his own right. He's rated as one of the best players in the league and has long won the respect of fellow athletes and fans. Who doesn't love to see two great superstars start a love flame?

With all the bad news invading our world weekly, seeing Taylor Swift on weekends supporting Chiefs football matches has been a welcome distraction from life's stressors. That's why they make the big bucks. They are talented and we love them. Their interest in each other also began very publicly with Travis putting out a media declaration that he was interested in the singing superstar. Swift responded equally as publicly by making it known that she was returning his interest in her.

The NFL loved every aspect of this story. Their ticket sales sky-rocketed and business spiked on NFL Sundays whenever Swift was spotted watching her new honey playing. Everyone won from this happy story. 💧

Acknowledgements: [Yahoo.com](https://www.yahoo.com)

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- **Anthony Martino**, Houlihan Lokey
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Big Vape Bust

By Diana Addison Lyle

JUUL, the electronic cigarette, represented one of the fastest-growing teenage addictions that proliferated under our noses this last decade, and Netflix recently released the documentary series, *Big Vape*, to tell the story about its public deception and its consequences.

It all started with a familiar Silicon Valley story but unlike Steve Jobs and the *Apple* success story, Juul's story ends very differently. Juul's inventors and co-founders, James Monsees and Adam Bowen, were both Stanford grad students in the early 2000s imbibing the Silicon Valley tech ether in which there was this erroneous notion that tech could do no wrong. They knew that the ills of combustible cigarettes were well documented with people dying of lung cancer, emphysema, and heart disease. So, they decided to write their senior thesis in 2005 on an alternative to combustible cigarettes. Coincidentally, Steve Jobs delivered the commencement speech at Stanford that year in which he encouraged all graduates to "Stay Hungry. Stay Foolish."

Fast forward 13 years to the JUUL e-cigarette that Monsees and Bowen invented, and Silicon Valley had another couple of young billionaires reaping the profits of their crazily popular JUUL vaporizer. But this is where it all went wrong. Their initial public mission statement about wanting to save

people from Big Tobacco and the more dangerous combustible cigarette – soon became a smoke and mirrors piece of deception. The people they were really after were teenagers who probably hadn't ever tried a combustible cigarette - and who didn't need conversion therapy. They knew that teenagers liked hip packaging and most of all – they knew that they loved the colorful and tasty flavors that JUUL introduced. Mango and Mint were the favorite flavors that had the 12 to 18-year-old Gen Zs hooked. JUUL's executives also knew that social media was going to be their biggest advertising base, and so if they could get a mega influencer to vape a JUUL online – the craze would spread exponentially. When Bella Hadid was seen glamorously vaping, they were in marketing heaven. The influencers on IG spread the trend like combustible wildfire and before parents knew it, their 10-year-olds were vaping at school – and because of the undetectable smell – it was happening everywhere – even in front of teachers in classrooms.



The JUUL executives completely downplayed the nicotine in the product and its highly addictive effects. They went so far as to come to schools and make speeches without teachers present – doing what Big Tobacco did - denying that there was anything dangerous or addictive about the product. They marketed it as a great-flavored piece of relaxing fun for young people to enjoy. Gen

James Monsees and
Adam Bowen
Courtesy Getty Images



Zs latched onto it as a stress-reducing electronic device that they could easily plug into their laptop, and then blow cool circles of smoke while impressing their friends. This already tech-addicted generation posted tens of thousands of videos online about the coolness of vaping – a respite from a crazy world of complexities.

By 2018 and within months – the vaping craze was greater than anyone could have predicted. Teens reported getting a rush from JUUL and they enjoyed the tingling sensation accompanying that rush. And unlike combustible cigarettes where, if you finish a pack, your lungs burn and you can't smoke any more, JUUL's e-cigarettes didn't burn the lungs and you could vape 24/7. That meant that vapers were ingesting considerably more nicotine than their combustible cousins – and getting addicted much more dangerously. JUUL struggled to keep up with the demand on supplies. With the scarcity came price gouging. It was a runaway epidemic.

The FDA climbed onto the health hazards way after the storm was brewing. By then the U.S. Surgeon General issued a health advisory on the dangers of vaping. The fact that Big Tobacco also climbed into the mix – wanting a share of JUUL so that they could make up for their lost profits – put the credibility of e-cigarettes into disrepute. By 2018 most sane people knew that Big Tobacco had lied to the public about the dangers of smoking for decades. When parents started noticing that their children were highly addicted to JUULING and emailed the company - asking for help to get them off the product - JUUL responded with an evasive legal letter. The inference in their response implied that maybe there was something wrong with the individual, rather than the product. One mother explained how JUUL was never an escape from nicotine hell. It was a new nicotine jail that was created for young people – with addictive propensities as strong as cocaine or heroin. With such a relatively new product on the market, it took a few years before the fright-

ening effects were starting to emerge. By the summer of 2019, teenagers were being rushed to hospital and put on life-saving machines as their lungs collapsed. They were all vapers. The crisis was now out in the open. The CDC later discovered that vitamin E acetate in the e-cigarette was the cause of all the hospitalizations.

Teenage activists started to make their voices heard. They were ex JUUL smokers who experienced the ramifications of the addiction, and they – together with PAVE (Parents Against Vaping E-Cigarettes) - began to educate the public on the dangers of vaping.

Each year there was an 80% increase in e-cigarette vaping amongst school students and JUUL was the number one brand preferred. When the experts presented these facts to the FDA's Commissioner, his response was an expletive word. In Netflix's documentary, multiple pulmonary specialists are interviewed and all of them agree that the lungs are a tender organ – and the only thing that should be entering them – is clean air.

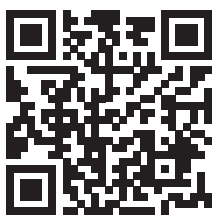
The lawsuits began with Attorney General of Minnesota, Keith Ellison, announcing that they were launching a lawsuit against JUUL. As laboratories began doing extensive testing on lab rats vaping, the results indicated that their arteries stiffened from the vaping. Other scientists argued that in their vaping tests, they found almost none of the carcinogens found in combustible cigarettes. That doesn't give them a clean bill of health. E-cigarettes are simply less dangerous from a carcinogenic perspective.

With both James Monsees and Adam Bowen in crisis and stepping away from JUUL, the Stanford grads' dream crashed. By 2022, the FDA rejected JUUL's PMTA application and ordered the product to be taken off the market. JUUL appealed the ban and remained on the market – pending an additional review. As of the end of 2023, JUUL has paid almost \$3 billion in legal settlements across the USA. 🍀

Acknowledgment: Netflix: "Big Vape: The Rise and Fall of Juul"

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European Royal Families

THE NETHERLANDS

In 2013, King Willem-Alexander succeeded his mother as monarch of the Netherlands. He is married to Queen Máxima and they have three daughters: Princess Catharina, Princess Alexia and Princess Ariane.

DENMARK

Mary Donaldson is the Crown Princess of Denmark, married to the future king, Crown Prince Frederik. But Mary's road to love began like any other romance. She first crossed paths with Fred at Sydney CBD pub the Slip Inn during the 2000 Olympics.

SWEDEN

There are three prominent children of King Carl Gustaf of Sweden. The eldest is Crown Princess Victoria who is heir to the Swedish throne. Her sister, Princess Madeleine, is married to British-American financier Christopher O'Neill. Prince Carl Philip married Sofia, a glamour model and reality television contestant.



King Willem-Alexander and Queen Máxima of the Netherlands



Princess Madeleine and Chris O'Neill ride in a carriage on the way to Riddarholmen after their wedding in Slottskyrkan. June 8, 2013, Stockholm, Sweden



Prince Christian is the grandson of Queen Margrethe of Denmark.
Photo courtesy HELLO Magazine



Crown Princess Mary and Crown Prince Frederik of Denmark.
Photo courtesy Hello Magazine



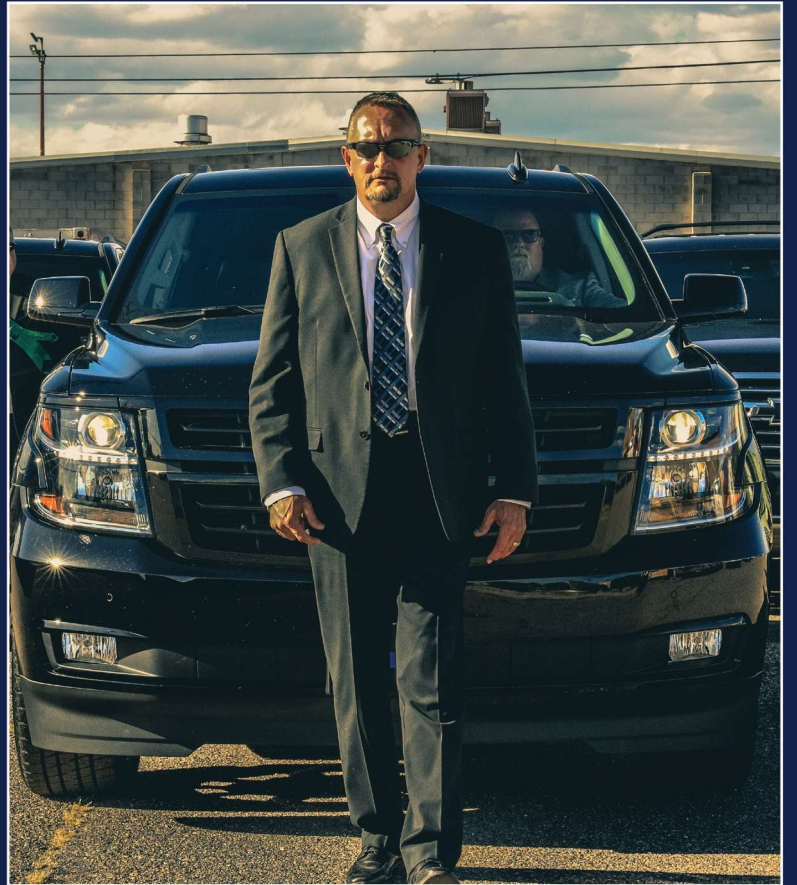
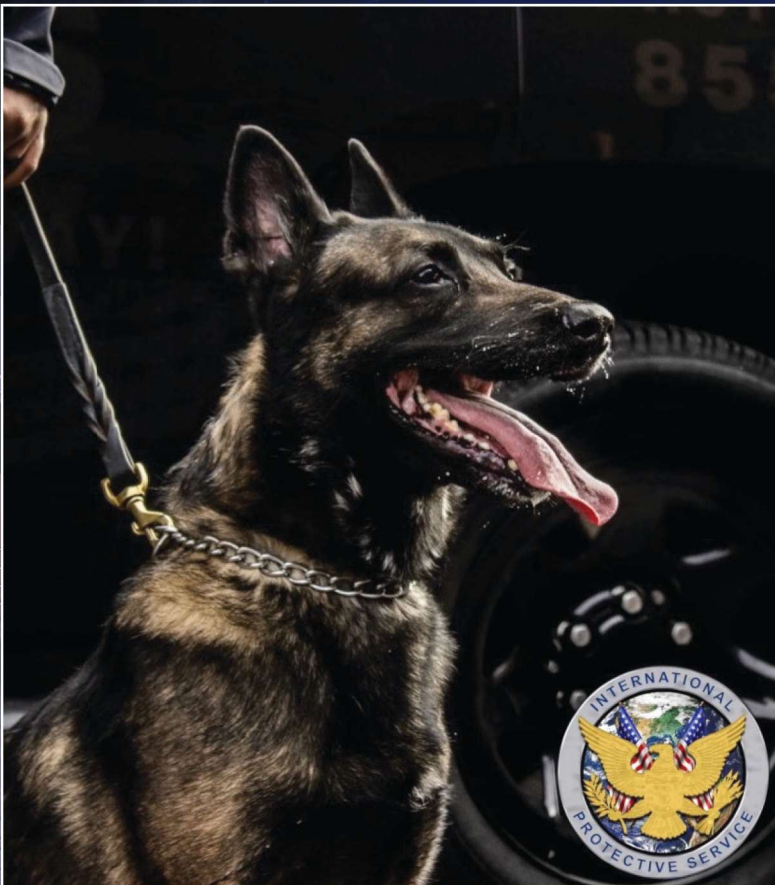
Prince Carl-Philip and Princess Sofia laughing and waving in the royal carriage after the wedding with the crowd cheering.

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Mercedes G550



Mercedes G550 SUV and AMG G 63 SUV

A Class of One

The Mercedes G550 and AMG G 63 stand out on the road with their iconic exterior design. Car and Driver describe them as the ultimate SUVs that are fit for Jurassic Park - with roomy interiors and potent 4.0L V-8 biturbo engines. They are also described as the most glamorous mode of transport for celebrities and powerful people to go on exciting offroad adventures with plenty of muddy action. The Mercedes G SUVs are a truly fancy way to get dirty. They're also a hugely eye-catching way to drive around Los Angeles with no dirt and plenty of admirable stares.

The G550 is powered by a 416-hp twin-turbo V-8 with a nine-speed automatic transmission. Four-wheel drive is standard. For more power, there's the uber smart and impressive 577-hp AMG G63. Its 9.5 inches of ground clearance and three locking differentials make it feel as if it will never get stuck.



Mercedes G550 Offroad

When it comes to detailed specifics, we're homing in on the AMG G63 for salvation purposes, and if you decide to take the plunge into purchasing either the G550 or G63, rest assured that your kids will go nuts with excitement.

AMG G 63

Two of the most renowned legacies of handcraftmanship unite in the G 63. The globe-tested endurance of the G-Class, and the track-proven performance of AMG. The G 63 reasserts that timelessness can be delivered with a true sense of urgency.

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G63 AMG



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In an old mill in 1967, two engineers with a passion for motorsports began turning Mercedes-Benz into winning race cars. Today, AMG continues to create victory on the track and desire on the streets. Every Mercedes-AMG vehicle is the product of craftsmen, designers, engineers and racers who live for a singular goal: Driving Performance.

PERFORMANCE

Everything from fuel pressure to exhaust routing is developed to quicken, heighten and intensify its response, and yours. From patented processes to cut friction to a new generation of electrified performance, AMG technology is fueled by its racing success.

TWIN-TURBO POWER

With a duet of twin-scroll turbos nested between the cylinder

heads, the handcrafted 577-hp V8 of the G 63 is the direct result of AMG's history of racing success. A closed-deck crankcase, sodium-filled valves and dynamic engine mounts are among its performance enhancements.

TORQUE

A paddle-shifted 9-speed puts a 627-lb-ft mountain of torque at your feet and fingertips. Quick-shifting, multimode AMG SPEEDSHIFT® TCT technology can also downshift multiple gears, for more immediate response. From startup growl to unleashed revs, the AMG exhaust is a symphony of high performance. Genuine sidepipes exit via four chrome outlets ahead of each rear wheel. Internal flaps can switch from subtle to assertive on demand.

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While its engine is born on the track, its permanent 4-wheel



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G63 AMG Interior

drive is at home far from the beaten path. With a 60:40 rear bias and three lockable differentials, it's engineered to match on-road precision with go-anywhere prowess.

TUNED ON THE TRACK, AND FAR FROM IT

The independent front suspension's racing-style double wishbones improve tire contact, while a strut-tower brace enhances rigidity. AMG-specific damping is driver-adjustable. Beefy 4-wheel disc brakes are engineered to rein in massive power. An AMG Trail Package raises its off-street cred.

DRIVING MODE FOR EVERY MOOD

AMG DYNAMIC SELECT lets you dial in throttle mapping, engine-mount stiffness, shifting, damping and more. One button engages preset modes from Comfort to Sport+, or configure the individual mode to your own liking.

STYLE CHOICES

There are numerous paint colors that include gloss and matte options. Wheels from 20 to 22 inches complement body accents in elegant

chrome, gloss or matte black. With MANUFAKTUR paintwork, upholstery and trim, there are a huge array of combinations. Vertical chrome grille bars evoke the Mercedes-AMG racing heritage. Large intakes feed air to the running gear. A low-profile brush guard, in matte silver, gloss or matte are your choices. The AMG Performance steering wheel features intuitive Touch Control Buttons and a 12 o'clock band. It can be hand-stitched in Nappa leather or accented with microfiber, carbon fiber or black piano lacquer. Black is an AMG exclusive.

THE G 550 SUV AND AMG G 63

Both the G 550 and AMG G 63 have a state-of-the-art cockpit, with standard and available technologies from dual 12.3-inch displays, intuitive steering-wheel Touch Controls, and voice control for the navigation, audio and numerous comfort features.

PANORAMIC COCKPIT

Change the cabin to suit your mood or start a new one: An elaborate multizone LED ambient lighting system lets you choose among 64 colors, as well as a variety of motifs featuring two, five, or even slowly changing hues.



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G63 AMG Seating

CLASSIC STYLE, CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY

Classically shaped lamps feature brilliant advances. Intelligent LED headlamps can adapt to darkness, curves and vehicles ahead. LED Daytime Running Lamps encircle each unit. Even the fender-top turn signals and taillamps employ 100% LEDs.

PROTECTIVE IN NATURE

A G-Class looks out for its occupants with a suite of safety advancements. Standard driver assists include Blind Spot Assist, Active Lane Keeping Assist, Active Distance Assist DISTRONIC cruise control, and Speed Limit Assist.

HELPFUL CONNECTIONS

Mercedes me connect makes ownership easy. Remote-start, lock or check your car, all from your phone. In-car WiFi for up to eight devices is available as well.

HAND CRAFTED TO OUTLIVE TRENDS

Crafted almost entirely by hand, the G advances without abandoning its principles. Appointments range from natural woods to 64-color LED ambient lighting. With MANUFAKTUR paint and trim options, there are over a myriad of possible combinations.

SPACIOUS INTERIOR

The cabin provides generous space for your buddies, your belongings (tons of cargo space), and even your beverages. Seating options include a range of hand-fitted leathers and a “hot stone” massage. Acoustic glass and 3-zone climate control are standard.

The Mercedes-Benz G-Class remains an impressively quick, capable, and luxurious SUV with significant off-roading capability. Because of its unique design, it really does compete in a class of one. Conceptually, its most direct rival would be a fully loaded Land Rover Defender with a V8 engine or a Land Rover Range Rover – but there’s still something distinctly eye-catching and special about this magnificent piece of German engineering. 🍃



Short Stories About Big People

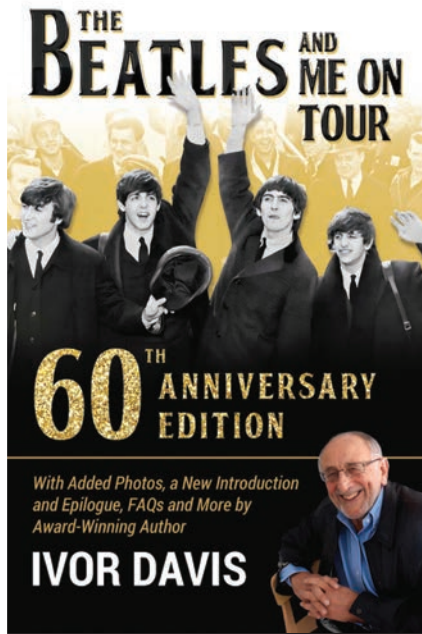
By Bob Eubanks

Hello there, it's time for more short stories about big people.

I'm sure you know that I produced a Beatles concert all three years they toured America. During that time, I met a charming man named Ivor Davis. He toured with the Fab Four as a British journalist and became a part of the Beatle family. Ivor has written a new book that will be out in February, 2024 titled *The Beatles and Me on Tour 60th Anniversary Edition*. If you're a Beatles fan like I am, this book is a must-have. Oh, by the way, Ivor is an active member of our community.

My friend Bob Byers sent me some information that I didn't know. For example, did you know it's impossible to lick your elbow? And did you know that the cost of raising a medium-sized dog to the age of eleven is \$16,400? You might want to resist the urge to buy your family a dog for Christmas!

Hey, here's one – did you know that bulletproof vests, fire escapes, windshield wipers, and laser printers have something in common? They were all invented by women.



I had the pleasure of performing my 'Backstage with the Beatles' show at the Laguna Woods Village Performing Arts Center in Orange County. It was a beautiful venue and my show featured a talented Beatle tribute band called Ticket To Ride, and of course I shared my Beatle stories. I'm proud to say they said it was the best show they've ever had.

You have probably heard that Pat Sajak is leaving Wheel of Fortune. Pat has hosted the show over forty years. I remember when Pat was a weatherman here locally. He is a really talented guy. My wife Deborah and I have dinner with Pat and his wife Leslie

every once and awhile and they are two of the nicest people you could ever meet.

This is often the time of year when we reflect on the past and feel a sense of gratitude. I'm thankful for my dear family and all the friends who have been so supportive during my career. I hope all of you have a lot to be thankful for this holiday season.

Well, there you have



it, more stories about big people. I'll see you in the New Year. (And I'll bet you're still trying to lick your elbow!) 🍷

www.bobeubanks.com
Follow Bob on Facebook!

Grow Sweet Leafy Greens This Winter!

By Model Gardener Kelly Emberg



Luckily, southern Californians can enjoy fresh produce from their backyard gardens any time of the year. Even in the coldest months, a variety of veggies can be grown. But winter is the optimum time to grow nutrient filled, leafy greens! Growing them in cool weather brings sugars out, making them taste so much better. Certain varieties should only be grown during the winter because they won't survive southern California's summer heat. Easy and fast to grow, every gardener should plant lots of leafy greens this season.

SEEDS OR SEEDLINGS?

First you need to decide if you want to plant seeds or seedlings. It depends on how

long you want to wait and what variety you would like to plant.

SEEDS

You are involved with the entire growing process, from germination to harvest, but it takes more time.

*The ideal temperature range for germinating lettuce seed is 60–70 degrees. Luckily for many in Southern California, these are common temperatures year-round. In coastal zones, lettuce can be grown year-round because of the mild weather.

Succession Planting

Enjoy an ongoing harvest throughout winter and spring. Plant a few seeds of each variety each week to significantly extend your harvest.

SEEDLINGS

Growing winter greens from seeds is easy however, if your thumb isn't that green, you may start your garden from seedlings. This head start can guarantee instant success. The cons are that you'll have fewer options of leafy green varieties to grow.

*Greens are highly nutritious, many containing trace elements and an abundance of Vitamin C and K.

RESILIENT GREENS

The best crops for winter greens are kale, collards, Mache, spinach, mustard, Swiss chard, arugula, Bibb, buttercrunch, romaine lettuces and radicchio.

HEAD LETTUCE

This type of lettuce is more similar to the



Butterhead lettuce



Dinosaur Kale



Spinach

heads of romaine you'll see at the grocery store. They form heads that you can harvest all at once. If you are a fan of crunchy lettuce, head lettuce is for you! For example, romaine is a great head lettuce, along with buttercrunch. Here are some of my favorite head lettuces.

Salanova Red Butter - Triple red heads have a round base with open leaves. Attractive red to green color transition. Delicate, buttery flavor. High resistance to downy mildew.

Parris Island Cos Romaine
Crunchy, sweet leaves, buttery-green heart, and vigorous growth. This 10"-12" upright lettuce will soon be a favorite in your garden and your kitchen, full grown or as a baby green in as little as 21 days. Ideal for lettuce wraps. Plants resist tip burn and are mosaic virus tolerant.

Little Gem
Is an English heirloom that is a small variety of romaine, but has the succulent sweetness of a butterhead. The glossy-leaved heads are a petite, 6" tall and 4" width, the perfect size for an individual dinner salad.

Buttercrunch is a vigorous grower with a creamy yellow interior, buttery flavor and melt-in-your-mouth texture. Small heads are perfect for a single-serve salad.

ASIAN GREENS

Stir fries are the ultimate Winter garden food. Some Asian greens to grow are Bok Choy, Tatsoi, Joi Choi, Pai Tsai, Mizuna, and various mustard greens. The options are endless!

KALE

A leafy brassica that is both beautiful and

edible! One of the easiest greens to grow and can be pricey when purchased at your local grocery store.

Dinosaur - Dark green heirloom kale from Tuscany that dates back to the 1700s. Sometimes called 'dinosaur kale'. It is sweet and delicious and so hardy it can be harvested under a foot of snow.

Blue Curled Scotch Kale The bright blue-green leaves are so pretty they're often used as a garnish. They're sweet and a bit nutty and crunchy, perfect for kale chips or kale soup.

SPINACH

Spinach really enjoys cooler weather. Plant it densely so it mulches and protects itself while growing.

Viroflay The big, smooth leaves of this Spin-





Bok Choy stir fry



Mixed lettuces



Grilled Romaine Salad

ach variety is a deep green color and grows up to 10 inches long. This very fast-growing plant is popular for cool weather.

Nobel The Noble Giant is an old heirloom. This spinach variety produces huge, dark green leaves with a delicious flavor. This spinach is great in salads, cooked, canned or frozen. The Noble Giant is slow to bolt.

HARVESTING GREENS

Harvest Outside In

Instead of harvesting head lettuces all at once, you can simply cut the outer leaves off the head as it grows and leave the inner growing parts alone. This way you can have bountiful baskets of greens all season long.

One & Done

Simply cut the entire head of lettuce with a knife at the base of the plant, above the soil line.

Cut & Come Again

Also known as baby lettuce, these seeds can be sown closely together to form what resembles a lawn of lettuce greens. Once the greens reach about 3-4 inches in size (or whatever is specified on the seed packet), you can simply grab a handful and cut about an inch or two above the ground to preserve the growing part of the plant.

Tip: Try to harvest your lettuce crops in the early morning when the vegetables are in peak cool and crisp condition.

GROWING LEAFY GREENS

- While kale likes nutrient-rich soil that is not high in nitrogen, many winter greens thrive with a bit of nitrogen added to the soil, so amend your soil according to the greens you are growing.
- Many leafy greens like their soil moist, which is another reason it is best to grow them during the rainy season to reduce the need for supplemental irrigation.

- Add a layer of mulch around the base of your plants to help retain moisture and protect the roots.
- Nitrogen is the best fertilizer for growing leafy crops, while phosphorus and potassium support strong root growth.

Winter is the optimum time to plant sweet, crunchy, easy to grow leafy greens. Excellent for salads, juicing, wraps and sandwiches. Add them to many dishes for a touch of rich, green color. Try growing a few different varieties. It's always empowering to grow something tasty and new. 🌱

My best,
Kelly Emberg, the model gardener

Kelly Emberg, the model gardener
For more gardening tips, follow me on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube & Twitter.
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Sophia Loren



The iconic Oscar-winning actress, Sophia Loren, who used to live in our neighborhood, now has a full-time home in Geneva, Switzerland.

She was recently hospitalized after a fall in which she suffered injuries to her femur. Despite her 89 years, Loren continues to lead a dynamic life, and according to “The Hollywood Reporter,” she was due to open a fourth restaurant bearing her name in the Italian City of Bari. She was also about to receive honorary citizenship from Bari, but these events have been postponed until her recovery. Her sons Carlo Jr. and Edoardo, have been by their mother’s side.

The Hollywood Reporter confirmed that Loren attended a recent Armani fashion show during the 80th Venice Film Festival.

In 1961, Loren won Best Actress Oscar for the war drama, “Two

Women.’ The Academy honored her again in 1991 with an honorary Oscar in which they said that she was “one of the greatest treasures of world cinema, who, in a career rich with memorable performances, has added permanent luster to our art form.”

Loren last starred in the Italian drama film, ‘The Life Ahead,’ which was directed by her son Edoardo. She also appeared in the documentary film ‘What Would Sophia Loren Do?’ in 2021.

The classically beautiful and elegant Loren was interviewed in 2020 by ‘AARP: The Magazine’ in which she said that she still felt like she was 20. She went on to say, “When I look in the mirror, I cheer for myself. I don’t ask, ‘Are you great? Or ‘Are you beautiful?’ No! It’s how I feel inside, and how secure I am, how happy I am. That’s what matters.”

Acknowledgments: The Hollywood Reporter. AARP: The Magazine. 🔥

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Ryan is a southern California native with 18 years of real estate experience and has extensive knowledge of the Ventura, Los Angeles & Santa Barbara counties. Two decades of experience in the ever-changing southern California real estate market have given Ryan a unique and innovated perspective on what it takes to successfully market properties and serve his clients best interests.

Ryan's greatest pleasure is spending quality time with his wife and two children. He is well known among friends and family for his phenomenal grilling skills. He loves creating amazing meals and enjoying them around a full table. You can find him coaching and cheering on his children's sports teams. He also enjoys traveling to favorite destinations and discovering new ones. Ryan has a passion for his industry and enjoys working with and getting to know every individual he has the pleasure of working with.

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CINDY MARTINA

Symphony of Strengths

Successful humans who've achieved much in the first 25 years of their life fascinate me, and I delve into the variables that have contributed to their flourishing lives. My investigative journey into the life of Cindy Marina began with a quick phone call to famous New York photographer, Fadil Berisha. His lightning response to me about Cindy was:

“USC star volleyball athlete. Miss Universe Albania. Top 20 finalist. Incredible parents. Dynamic L.A. woman.”

My next investigative step was to approach one of Cindy's high school volleyball teammates, Olyvia Chaltas, from Great Oak High School in Temecula. Here was Olyvia's immediate response to my question about her friend.

“Where do I even begin,” she says with a broad smile. “It's hard to put into words how and why I can adore someone so much. I think it's important to take a step back and first appreciate Cindy's parents and family because they make up a big part of who she is. Her parents, Ardian and Kristina, represent the true American dream. They immigrated to America and started not only their family, but a shipping business once they had saved up enough to invest in their first truck. Since then, they have started a successful volleyball club as well while making their home in sunny southern California. They have this innate gift of making anyone they just met feel like they are family. Cindy comes from a fiercely determined and ambitious, yet generous and kind family. All these attributes exist inside her.”

PHOTOGRAPHY: FADIL BERISHA @FADILBERISHAPHOTOGRAPHY

STORY: DIANA ADDISON LYLE



A

merica was founded on the courage and work ethic of highly adaptable, talented immigrants, and the Marina family are that quintessential representation of the fruits that emanate from taking strategically calculated risks. Effort and determination knew no bounds with this talented family. Olyvia completes the description: “Cindy is genuinely one of the most kind and caring people I have ever met, but beneath this sweet exterior is an extremely competitive and driven individual. She will achieve anything she puts her mind to, and I think that’s why she has been successful in so many different things. You can see this switch turn on once it’s game time, and that’s truly inspiring. My loyal, dependable friend is as beautiful inside as she is on the outside and she lights up any room she steps into.”

“I put my all into the Miss Universe Albania competition. When I won, I discovered that it was a very worthwhile experience. You have to be well spoken, and you are given a global platform to use your voice on topics that really matter.”





Cindy and I sit down for our chat, and within minutes, I am aware of her extensive multi-tasking capabilities. While listening to her matter-of-fact description of events, I realize that she's accumulated several 'wins' in life in record time spans. When summarizing the last few years, she says

"I played volleyball for USC until 2020. The previous year, I was crowned Miss Universe Albania 2019, and I was supposed to travel to pass on the successor's crown to the next winner of the title. Then the pandemic shut down the world in 2020, which was my graduation year from USC, and the next thing, I was offered a television broadcasting position in Europe. I decided that it was a great opportunity and accepted the position immediately."

She supplies the details of her broadcasting job:

"I work pitch side at the soccer stadiums in Italy and we broadcast live from the stadium. I'm also a co-presenter in another show in Albania, and that's an investigative journalism show."

We turn the clock back to Cindy's roots. She was born in Chicago in 1998 to two athletically gifted parents. She was also named after super model Cindy Crawford. I ask for the story surrounding that choice.

"Cindy was THE super model of the time when I was born, and my parents really admired her because she was the all-American girl. That image was part of their American dream vision. Beyond just her beauty, my mom respected the fact that Cindy was intelligent and grounded. She was much more than just a pretty face."

Cindy's mom played professional volleyball in Albania and Italy, and her dad was a collegiate soccer player. The family gene pool didn't miss a beat when it came to dispersing those athletic talents to Cindy and her two brothers. Cindy's childhood journey looked like this:

"Originally, figure skating was my big love, and I thought I would probably pursue that professionally, but then we moved to southern California where there weren't a lot of ice rinks around. I played a lot of sports but once I landed on volleyball, I fell in love with it, and mom was a huge motivator."

Although sport featured prominently in Cindy's life, she explains,

"I was also very much a girly girl. I would play dress-up at home with my mom and I loved being feminine. I guess that was one of the reasons I got into modeling so young at age 14. My first modeling campaign was with designer Ema Savahl and I loved it. I've always loved beauty and fashion because it's an art form. In fact, I took art in high school, and we learned so many art forms and how to create depth and light. That all falls within the realm of makeup."

"USC's volleyball program is also amazing, and I recognize what a privilege it was to be a part of that."





Cindy commentating



Life in Temecula was filled with healthy activity. Once she graduated from high school, Cindy obtained a full-ride scholarship to Duke University in North Carolina, but in her sophomore year, she yearned to be closer to home and transferred to a full-ride scholarship at USC.

“California really is this magical place,” she muses. “You have the diversity of the ocean and mountains, and because L.A. is such a melting pot, there are so many interesting and diverse people here. I’m very family oriented – and particularly close to my two brothers – so being back home close to the people I love was important to me. I think that being the children of immigrants also drew our family closer together because we never had an extended family around us, so we formed a very tight family unit here. Beyond that, USC’s volleyball program is also amazing, and I recognize what a privilege it was to be a part of that. I also enjoyed the sorority experience at USC (I was in the same sorority at Duke University) even though volleyball took up so much of my time that I wasn’t able to attend all the events that the sorority offered. Greek life plays a big part at USC and people really want to be a part of it. Even though I wasn’t as integrated into it at USC as some of my sorority sisters, we keep in touch with each other. Recently, one of my sorority sisters started a podcast, and I was invited to participate.”

Cindy makes no mention of her substantial volleyball achievements, so I remind her of them. In her senior year at high school, she was the California nominee for ‘Gatorade Player of the Year’. In her first year at Duke University, her team was named the ‘Atlantic Coast Conference All-Freshman Team.’ In 2017, while she was only 17 years old, she was chosen to play for the Albanian National Women’s Volleyball team. She was the youngest woman to ever make it onto that team. A year later, in 2018, the team took 3rd place in the ‘Women’s European Volleyball League’ – played in Hungary.

With such a diversely full plate, I ask Cindy how she manages her time.

“I’m organized in the sense that I’m not a procrastinator. When something needs to be done, I get it done as soon as possible. I think the reason I’m able to juggle a lot is that I enjoy everything that I do, and nothing feels like a task. If the enjoyment is there, I’m lucky to be doing it.”

We discuss the soccer fervor in Europe. That’s exactly what Cindy feeds off and she describes it.

“It is so much fun to be in this stadium of soccer fans on game day. You can feel the energy of the fans. It’s like a reli-

gion to them. The fans are so loyal to their particular team. That’s why I love my job so much. Talking to the fans before and after the game is one of the highlights.”

Naturally, Cindy is multi-lingual. She speaks English and Albanian fluently, and she’s semi-fluent in Italian.

But California still reigns supremely as far as home is concerned, and Cindy emphasizes how frequently she boards flights to return to the city of angels.

“My older brother has children,” she explains, “and I miss them so much. I always come home for the holidays, and in the summer, I have time off to spend time in California.”

I ask about the Marina family traditions during the holidays.

“As we get older, it’s harder to get all of us together as we all have so many commitments, so our family really makes the most of our time together at the holidays. On Christmas Eve, we have a long-standing tradition where we have a special dinner – and oftentimes we’ll invite friends over. We only eat fish – no other meat. The day of Christmas, we wake up, open presents, and then have a big family lunch. My mom cooks the most amazing lasagna. She is an incredible cook. New Year’s Eve is also in California.”

We discuss the serious topic of the European continent and the massive changes that have taken place there – particularly in the 1990s. The bloody Kosovo conflict with nearby Serbia occurred in 1998-99 – but Cindy’s parents left Albania before then – in 1991 – after communism – to move to Italy. Their hope was to establish a better life for themselves.

Cindy’s voice tone changes to reflect the severity of what her parents experienced.

“My parents came here from Albania with nothing but their strong work ethic, and that became their motivation to overcome all the obstacles that they faced. They have always instilled in us the importance of knowing our origins. They had lived in a communist country where there was no freedom of choice, and that has made them so grateful for the life they now have here. My brothers and I owe so much to our parents for being so courageous in giving us the life we have.”

On that same topic, Cindy describes our cover shoot photographer, Fadil Berisha.

“Fadil is like the godfather of Albania,” she concludes. “He has such a big heart, and he is always helping others. I only reached out to Fadil in 2019 when I was crowned Miss Universe Albania. He used to be the director of the pageant, and from thereon, I started to work with him. Beyond being a talented artist, he’s an amazing person.”

“I’m very connected with nature, and I’ve led a lot of ocean cleanups. I started an initiative to raise funds for one of the environmental organizations. I’ve also volunteered for the Eko Mendje organization in Shkodër, Albania, a deforestation rehabilitation program.”





Cindy wearing Ema Savahl

Beauty pageants have had to adapt in a rapidly changing world, and I'm interested to hear Cindy's perspective.

"I'm naturally competitive," she says, "and I put my all into the Miss Universe Albania competition. When I won, I discovered that it was a very worthwhile experience. You have to be well spoken, and you are given a global platform to use your voice on topics that really matter and which you are passionate about. In my case, I'm really invested in the preservation of our oceans and climate. I spread awareness and led by example."

I press in about the changes in the industry and Cindy describes what she's witnessed.

"The Miss Universe pageant was recently bought out by women and that's a healthy step. My personal opinion from what's I've encountered is that they are minimizing the sexualization of women and they are promoting diversity and greater inclusivity. I certainly never felt pressurized to do anything I wasn't comfortable doing."

Cindy has worked with 'Heal the Bay', an environmental nonprofit dedicated to making the coastal waters and watersheds in Greater Los Angeles safe, healthy and clean.

"I'm very connected with nature," she continues, "and I've led a lot of ocean cleanups. I started an initiative to raise funds for one of the environmental organizations. I've also volunteered for the Eko Mendje organization in Shkodër, Albania, a deforestation rehabilitation program. I'm confident that with all the knowledge and awareness we have on environmental issues that we will continue to make strides in a positive direction."

Beyond preserving our ecosystem, Cindy's altruism is evident in numerous directions. She has worked in an orphanage in Shkodër, Albania as well as an animal needs organization in the same town. She's also raised \$15,000 for earthquake victims in Albania after the 2019 earthquake disaster.

I ask Cindy to paint a picture of her dream scenario – career wise – in the next five years.

"I love sports television," she concludes unequivocally. "I've found my passion there, and being able to work in that industry is a blessing. I would love to continue doing sports commentary – and it would be extra special if I could come back to the USA and do it. I try not to over plan because opportunities are rarely planned."

When it comes to relaxation past-times, Cindy loves exploring Europe, and is making the most of her time working in Italy.

"When you are stationed in Europe," she explains, "it's so easy to travel around. Italy is one of my favorite countries in the world and I love it for so many reasons: the culture, the history, the food. There are so many beautiful spots in Italy. I also love to be at the beach. I've never been to Asia so that's the next destination on my bucket list. I recently visited the island of Crete in Greece and found the water to be so beautiful. I also indulged in the wonderful food, which is very similar to Albanian food – which is influenced by nearby Greece and Turkey. It consists of lots of fish and feta. I love feta cheese and Greek salads!"

Cindy's other indulgences include going to spas and experiencing a healing massage, but she's quick to point out that she's also a home body and loves spending time at home – watching movies and Netflix.

I ask her what her favorite food dish is, and she responds without a second's hesitation: "Sushi."

Since she's a great movie-watcher, I'm interested to learn what movies captivated her. She says enthusiastically,

"Interstellar'. It's set in a dystopian future where humanity is embroiled in a catastrophic blight and famine. I've always been fascinated by space, and the story was well told. I've seen it seven times!"

Cindy has achieved much in the first quarter of her life and that success is attributable to her resilience, confidence, ability to adapt and her creativity. She acknowledges that being highly adaptable has served her well in life. It's a valuable ability to roll with life's changes and embrace new environments. Challenges are turned into opportunities in which Cindy steps out of her comfort zone and grows.

"Volleyball and sport have taught me a lot," she emphasizes. "When you are playing a sport at a pressurized level, you face adversity all the time and you must figure out a solution. I have learned a lot from my parents too. By example they have shown us that adaptation needn't be stressful. Our family does not give up. Failure is part of life, and you pick yourself up and learn from failure - but you never give up."

I conclude our interview with a definitive awareness that Cindy Marina has a spectacularly impressive edge – not only because she is competitive – but because she knows how to positively seize each day with characteristics that are vital in life's journey. Combined, she possesses a symphony of strengths. 🌟

IG: @cindymarinaa

"As we get older, it's harder to get all of us together as we all have so many commitments, so our family really makes the most of our time together at the holidays. On Christmas Eve, we have a long-standing tradition where we have a special dinner – and oftentimes we'll invite friends over."







She Who Laughs, Lasts.¹ I Wonder What Happens to She Who Hopes

By Magda Pescariu

As I was getting comfortable in front of my laptop to work on the Holiday season fashion piece, I had a terrible déjà vu moment. At the same time last year, I was doing exactly the same thing, in the same quiet room. The only noise was coming from the news tickers running like crazy on the TV screen in the background, announcing the same (heart)breaking news about countries at war, overwhelming attacks, and innocent people murdered by the thousands. The same trail of terror of a world gone mad, crushing down in blood and tears. WhatsApp's nervous buzz was following the tickers closely, making my heart skip a beat with each new message lit on my cell. Last year, my friends were reaching out, worried about Russia's nuclear threat to Ukraine within miles of my native country's border. This year, some of the same friends were keeping me posted about their dire circumstances, from safe rooms and bomb shelters in Israel. How surreal was that? And how on earth could that happen? I

sat there for a while with my throat feeling tight, completely lost in the blinking white screen.

Truth was, I longed with all my heart for a time when the end of a year meant just the season of reflection, relief, and joy, the promise of rest, and the anticipation of renewal. When deciding on the Thanksgiving perfect menu (and guests list, for that matter) or planning the most entertaining New Year's Eve party and the best outfit for it were the top seasonal worries. And I resented the way everything that had happened in the world these last years was making the good old Holiday spirit look frivolous, stupid, and tone-deaf. I flipped through the styles selected for the article with the regret you have for a job well done that turns out to be pointless. Still. They spoke to me in a language I understood very well, telling stories of grace and dare, of having courage and fun, of survival, of hope.

In the grand runway of life, **2023's fashion** has navigated the increasingly demanding and demented world with undeniable intuition. On catwalks and on the streets, **sanity came before vanity, in a celebration of the**



Jenny Packham



Celia Kritharioti



Ralph Laurent

¹ Paraphrase of a line from the "Perverved Proverbs" poem by W. E. Nesom (1917) – "He who laughs lasts longest."



Kendall Jenner in Marc Jacobs



Zendaya in Louis Vuitton



Kylie Jenner in Elsa Schiaparelli

everyday and the real. Equally shaped and affected by the digital age, climate anxiety, a shifting financial landscape, and a divisive, polarized political environment, we recognized instinctively that darkness cannot drive out darkness, and **turned to the candor and brightness of 'looking good and feeling good are the same thing.'** So elementary anyone could do it, right? Well, simple - yes. Easy? Absolutely not.

From the late Jane Birkin's iconic style, whose *je ne sais quoi* made a knit sweater worn with a white blouse (the sleeves rolled just so) and a messy topknot come together into everlasting elegance; to Gwyneth Paltrow's courtroom style, of impeccable low-key neutral outfits and nondescript fashion items; and all the way to Sofia Richie's status as the face of 'stealth wealth' and *quiet luxury* flair; **2023's fashion sent out the general message that amid the world's outlashed wildness, we found an equilibrium point,** which looked chic and effortless, even though it was costly and tough.

Thank goodness, there are always ways to remove oneself from drama, in life and fashion

alike - stay truthful, be quiet, be selective, double the fun - and we checked them all. Celebrities gave us the cue, as always, sporting jaw-dropping, sassy outfits at most famed events.

Kendall Jenner attended the 2023 Met Gala, celebrating "Karl Lagerfeld: A Line of Beauty", in a cheeky Marc Jacobs onesie covered in black sequins, with an à-la-Lagerfeld collar, and dramatic floor-length sleeves, paired with lace-up platform boots, no pants in sight.

Actress and singer Zendaya stole the Louis Vuitton Spring/Summer 2024 show in Paris, during Fashion Week, wearing a floor-length white dress of Nicolas Ghesquière's design, with a double-zipper detail down the front that zipped from top to bottom. To up the ante, Zendaya wore the dress zipped down to nearly her belly button and up to her thighs, showing off a pair of white stilettos for added flair.

In the same vein of good-humored fun, Kylie Jenner showed up for Schiaparelli's Paris Couture Week show in a brand-new creation from the designer's latest couture collection, a gown adorned with a massive, incredibly life-like lion head. The style premiered on

the runway on Irina Shayk, but Kylie Jenner mirrored the dramatic look sitting regally in the front row. To mention that the tastemaker, socialite, and businesswoman is also a Leo only piled significantly on the fun.

As for **the Holiday fêtes**, this is the time of year when you feel free to go all-out in sequins, satin, metallics, Lurex, and lamé - perhaps even all thrown together. The festive looks of 2023's final season **take inspiration from essential elegance and timelessness fantasy while keeping in a perfect dose of posh** as a proper measure to ensure the Holiday spice and joy.

Therefore, rich textures and deluxe elements like **satin, velvet, tulle, and lace**; tasteful touches such as **moody floral details, oversized bows, statement boots, ballerina slippers, engulfing shawls and scarves, vintage accessories**; and **a certain fluid, liquid elegance**, given by **metallic or barely-there sheer fabrics, floor-grazing lengths, full skirts with tapered waists, dramatic pleats or peplum cuts, and ethereal cozy cashmere knits**, are all de rigueur. Legs are on show this winter as well, showcased by **patterned tights and mini styles with thigh-**

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David Koma



Tamara Ralph



Isabel Marant

skimming hems, or simply - and iconically - by the little black dress - Audrey Hepburn be blessed. Time and again, fashion proved to be an accurate societal reflection, expressing this year's need for all the light and lightness of this world to seep in, and lead us out of the shadows.

In the days before writing this article, when yet another war was about to start and drag in its tragedy people I loved dearly, I saw a movie that melted my heart with its mature tenderness.

A love story and a life story told with the unique Asian sensibility, the film had me watching - for the first time in a very long time - decent people trying their absolute best to be decent, adults living their lives with eyes wide open, and partners negotiating their most fragile emotions, and their ideas of love, chance, and fate, with the life-altering precision of a bomb squad.

It talked about the (unknown to me) Korean concept of *in-yun*, based on the Buddhist philosophies of reincarnation and rebirth, which describes the fated paths that entwine two people, throughout their past and future lives. If your knee brushes a stranger on the subway; if two people meet in a crowded place and their sleeves touch, that's *in-yun*, said to be caused by hidden reasons that had their beginnings years

and lifetimes before. It could be about lovers having known each other in their past lives, but I perceived the notion as being more about universal human connectedness.



Jenny Packham

I understood it as an ineffable suggestion that human love and the effort to be connected in harmony with the other - depend on so many more factors than just individuals' feelings and deeds, that it has to be an effort over multiple births and lifetimes. I sat teared up in the movie theatre through the credits roll, not only flooded by sadness for all the irretrievable what ifs and what could have beens of a lifetime, but also overwhelmed by hope at the infinite possibility of life itself.

What happens in the world these days is complicated and heartbreaking. Relationships and processes, as legitimate as they seem to be, grasp at harmony and truth antagonized and out of focus. Wrest apart in layers of *in-yun* and missed connections, we seem incapable of seeking accord, at least not for now, not in the current year's lifetime. But I believe in past and future lives, and I trust the endless possibility of 'no coincidence', the anchor of purpose offered us by fate.

I hope we'll keep trying. I hope we are just one lifetime shy of the wished-for mark. Or, who knows, maybe just one year.

They say love conquers all. Stepping into 2024, I wonder whether that's valid for hope as well. 🌿



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Aldik Home

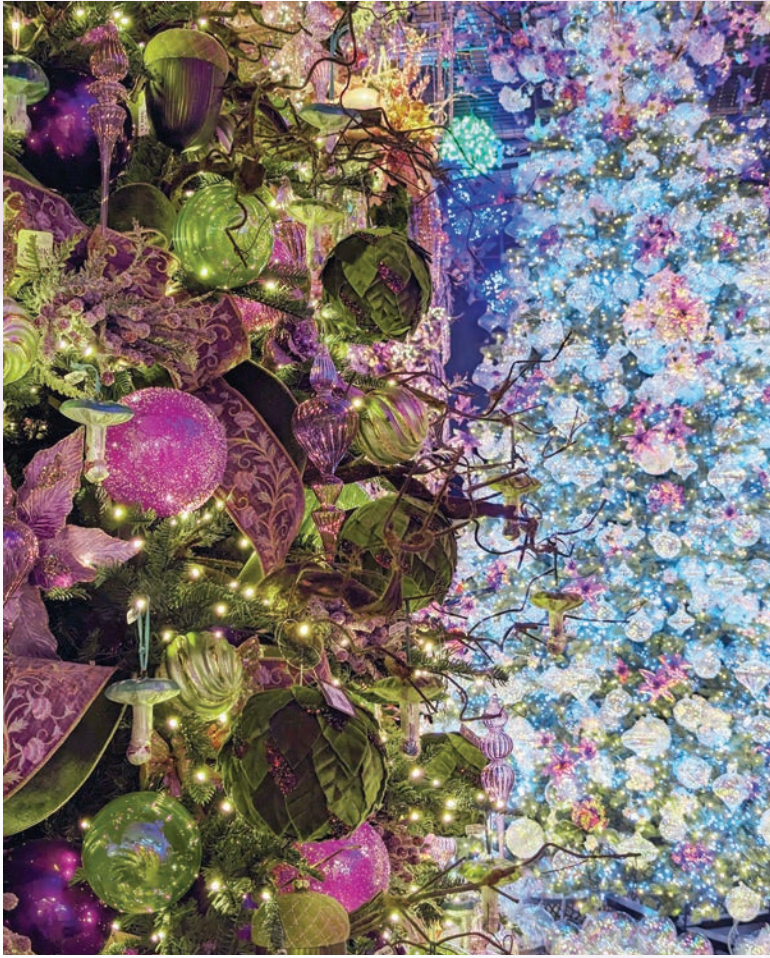
If you didn't know, there's a full-blown winter wonderland here in L.A. For more than 70 years, Aldik Home has crafted displays of the best quality Christmas décor found anywhere in the world. This year's display is the most enchanting one yet.

There are thousands of unique ornaments, sparkling lights, spools of luxurious ribbon, and so much more around every corner. There are Santas, angels, glittery stems, and even an overhead light display. People often describe Aldik Home like a Disneyland for Christmas, but without that admission fee and the throngs of people. It's impossible not to be in awe as you stroll through this enchanted forest of delightful décor. But the most breathtaking aspect from this entire display are the trees themselves. Every size of every style of artificial Christmas tree—more than 70 in total—can be found in Aldik Home's expansive, indoor Tree Lot.













The crown jewel of the Tree Lot is Aldik Home's collection of AH Gold Label Trees, which have the reputation of being the best artificial Christmas trees in the world. Custom designed and made exclusively for Aldik Home, these trees are crafted to be more realistic with the most advanced, longer-lasting lighting systems. Be sure to check out Aldik Home's Brilliant LED Trees which are stunning and mesmerizingly beautiful. Coming in and viewing the trees will save you making the mistake of buying a tree online that you may end up regretting.

Experience the magic of Christmas at one of the most incredible Christmas displays in the country. When it comes to Christmas decor, Christmas lights, and especially Christmas trees, there's no place like Aldik Home!

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The Asset Classes

By Ray DiBartolomeo

An asset class is a group of financial instruments that have similar financial characteristics and behave similarly in the marketplace. We can often break these instruments into those having to do with real assets and those having to do with financial assets. Many investment funds are composed of the two main asset classes, both of which are securities: equities (stocks) and fixed income (bonds).

In addition to stocks and bonds, we can add cash, foreign currencies, real estate, infrastructure, and commodities as well as cryptocurrencies to the list of commonly held asset classes.^[1] In general, an asset class is expected to exhibit different risk and return investment characteristics and to perform differently in certain market environments.^{[2][3]}

TYPES

Equities

- Represent shares of ownership in publicly held companies
- Historically have outperformed other investments over long periods
- Most volatile in the short term
- Returns and principal will fluctuate so that accumulations may be worth more or less than original cost

Fixed Income

- Fixed income, or bond investments, generally pay a set rate of interest over a given period, then return the investor's principal.
- Set rate of interest
- More stability than stocks
- Value fluctuates due to current interest and inflation rates
- includes "guaranteed" or "risk-free" assets
- Also includes money market funds

Cash

- Currency or medium of exchange
- Liquidity
- Ability to buy anything

Foreign Currencies

- Currency or medium of foreign exchange
- It includes all aspects of buying and selling and exchanging currencies at current or determined prices

Real Estate

- Buildings (houses, terrain lots, etc.) or investment property, plus shares of funds that invest in commercial real estate.

- Helps protect future purchasing power as property values and rental income run parallel to inflation
- Values tend to rise and fall more slowly than stock and bond prices. It is important to keep in mind that the real estate sector is subject to various risks, including fluctuation in underlying property values, expenses and income, and potential environmental liabilities.

Infrastructure

- Broad category including highways, airports, rail networks, energy generation (utilities), energy storage and distribution (gas mains, pipelines etc.)
- Provides a longer duration (facilitating cash flow matching with long-term liabilities), protection against inflation, and statistical diversification (low correlation with 'traditional' listed assets such as equity and fixed income investments), thus reducing overall portfolio volatility.^{[4][5]}

Commodities

- Physical goods such as gold, copper, crude oil, natural gas, wheat, corn, and even electricity
- Helps protect future purchasing power as values have fixed utility and thus run parallel to inflation
- Values tend to exhibit low correlations with stock and bond prices.
- Price dynamics are also unique: commodities become more volatile as prices rise.

Cryptocurrency

- Decentralized^[6]
- Accessibility; mineable and tradable^[7]
- Risk-on asset;^[8] lacks regulation
- Highly volatile^[9]
- Liquidity varies, majority are lower
- Supply varies, some are finite thus deflationary

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TRAVELSCAPES 12.23

Royal Malewane

SAFARI IN SOUTH AFRICA • BY DIANA ADDISON LYLE

Royal Malewane Game Drive with Sundowners in Bush







Royal Malewane and its three luxury lodges offer an unrivalled safari experience in South Africa's Greater Kruger National Park that exudes the romance and beauty of a bygone age while offering every modern comfort. Get thrillingly close to the Big Five with one of the most qualified guiding teams in Africa as they provide fascinating insights into the complex ecosystems of the South African bushveld.

There are three accommodation options at Royal Malewane that can accommodate up to 70 guests: Malewane Lodge, a classic and

more traditional style of safari lodge; The Farmstead, a more intimate and contemporary space; and Waterside, their new and spacious sanctuary elevated above the banks of a bustling watering hole.

Whichever style you choose, you will enjoy complete privacy, spacious suites and life-changing views across the African bushveld. Indulge in sensual spa treatments and let the passion of their chefs delight you with nightly feasts under the African stars. Malewane Lodge was voted the best safari lodge in the world by Tatler Maga-





Royal Malewane Game Drive





Royal Malewane Waterside Aloe Suite



Royal Malewane Waterside Luxury Suite (Bedroom)

zine and 3rd best hotel in the world by Travel + Leisure Magazine. Royal Malewane is involved in a number of pioneering community and conservation projects.

BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

Royal Malewane exudes an authentic sense of place in the way it both contrasts with and complements the surrounding bushveld. The combination of total seclusion and creature comforts makes for an alluring safari experience.

The safari activities (which include morning and afternoon game drives, and guided walking safaris) are led by Guides and Trackers from South Africa's most qualified guiding team, who reveal and interpret the sights and signs of the bush and ensure unforgettable wildlife encounters.

When you choose a safari destination, it's the guiding team that makes the difference to the memories you'll take home with you. By tapping into a wealth of knowledge and generations of innate wild-life experience, our guests are in the capable hands of passionate









Royal Malewane Game Drive



Waterside Coffee Stop

people whose levels of expertise makes them the best in their field.

WHY ROYAL MALEWANE IS LOVED DEARLY

Visitors experience meaningful and often life-changing encounters with wildlife replacing bustling city life with the tranquil sounds and splendor of untamed nature. Time slows down as your body adjusts to the natural rhythms of the African bush. Exceptional

wildlife experiences paired with luxurious accommodation and amazing attention to detail is what you will find.

The Kruger National Park is the largest game reserve in South Africa and one of the world's biggest wildlife sanctuaries. Approximately the same size as Israel or Wales, it covers some 19,485 square kilometres offering a rich diversity of ecosystems that support over 145 mammal species including Lions, Leopards, Buffalos, Ele-



Dining With Elephants



Farmstead Dining

phants and Black Rhinos that make up Africa's Big 5 and over 500 bird species.

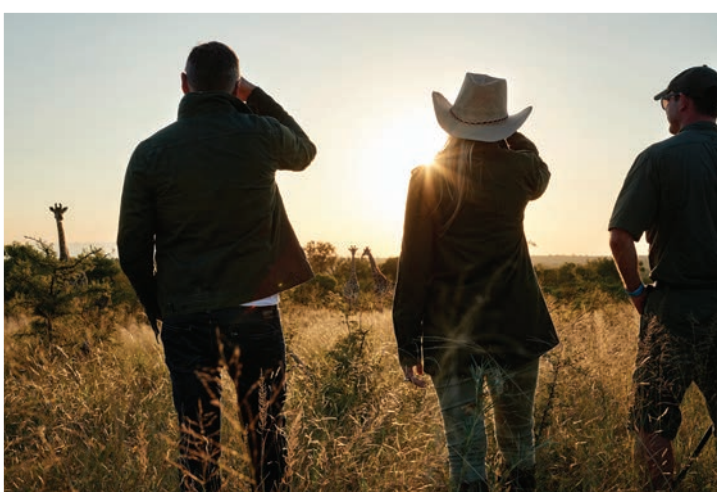
A CULINARY JOURNEY THROUGH THE SENSES

Savor a dining experience where anything is possible. Royal Malewane celebrates the creativity and joy of food and wine through inventive, personalized menus that are designed and prepared in

the kitchens at Malewane Lodge, Waterside, and The Farmstead. No matter which lodge style you choose, each of the main dining areas at Royal Malewane overlooks a different bustling waterhole, resulting in some spectacular mealtime game viewings. All meals, local beverages and wines (excluding French Champagne) are included in their accommodation rates allowing guests to completely relax and enjoy the endless temptations available.



Royal Malewane Game Drive Huge Male Lion



Royal Malewane Bush Walk



Royal Malewane Bush Dinner

STYLE & CHARACTER

Founder of The Royal Portfolio, Liz Biden, personally oversees the design and décor of each lodge and villa. Liz is known for her fearless use of color, and her genius for combining eclectic combinations of found treasures, contemporary artworks, and natural elements. The resulting look is instantly recognizable and has the authentic sense of a celebration of all that is best in Africa. 🌿



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