



Well, He Looks Happy
But henley tops like this are inspiring snark **D3**

OFF DUTY

Smokin' Spirits
The essence of an autumn bonfire, bottled **D9**



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FANCY PANTS Once-humble denim at the Met Gala? Given jeans' new cred, a fashion risk-taker could wear them to an extravagant event without risking ridicule.

Glamorous Denim: A Guide

From haute-couture runways to red carpets, jeans have emerged as formidable formalwear. Here, how to style them beyond basic blue.

By TYLER MCCALL

THE BIGGEST SCANDAL on the set of the latest "Real Housewives of New York" reunion taping in September wasn't a catty confessional interview or backstabbing dinner conversation. It was a pair of Levi's. Jenna Lyons, one of the franchise's new faces and the former creative director of J.Crew, broke with unspoken "Housewives" reunion protocol and eschewed frippery, instead wearing a blazer, sheer top and jeans.

"The women normally go all out with rhinestones, feathers and gowns to the floor," said Brian Moylan, author of 2021's "The Housewives." Lyons's outfit triggered fan furor on social media. As Moylan explained, "For Jenna to wear jeans seemed like [she was] disrespecting the level of effort it takes to be a Housewife."

Lyons's look stood out. And it aligned with a growing trend among fashion risk-takers: sporting jeans in formal scenarios. Actress Taylor Russell paired Levi's with a fuzzy Gucci top for the 2022 Gotham Awards; Dakota Johnson dripped in a three-piece denim outfit at the 2023 Sundance Film Festival; and at Ralph Lauren's September show, which demanded "cocktail attire," actress Sasha Calle turned up in medium-wash jeans and a black, satin-lapel dress coat.

Tastemakers like these no longer relegate humble jeans to errand-running and backyard barbecues. Thank (or blame) the pandemic. "Most of us [are wearing] much more casual things, and I think that was spurred by Covid," said Patricia Mears, deputy director of the Museum at FIT in New York. "Dress codes mean nothing anymore, and denim is being reinvented."

Designers are aiding that metamorphosis with clever design choices and upscale fabrics. Jeans came elabo-

rately embroidered on Valentino's fall haute-couture runway. Schiaparelli adorns denim with surrealist gilded buttons. At its fall show, Versace paired jeans with bustiers, billowy blouses and opera gloves. And Loro Piana sells CashDenim, a blend of 40% cashmere and 60% denim. Its new spring version swaps cashmere for silk.

Italian brand Blazé Milano, known for its boardroom-ready blazers, debuted denim in 2020. "When styling our first lookbooks, we used vintage jeans," said co-founder Sole Torlonia. "At a certain point, we said, 'OK, we need to design our [own].' It went really, really well."

Torlonia has since upped the brand's focus on denim. Jeans needn't bear a designer label—or price tag—to excel in fancy settings, provided the fit is right and the styling is purposeful, like the examples on the next page.

Turn to D2 for expert tips

Inside



ON-THE-JOB PLAYING

Slides instead of stairs, wardrobe refreshes and other nouveau corporate perks **D11**



ALONE, AGAIN, AQUATICALLY

Next vacation, rent a private island. Not just for Bond villains anymore. **D6**



EVOKE A SUNNY DAY IN MEXICO

Smoked trout tostadas with avocado crema. Don't forget the lime. **D10**



WANT TO ESCAPE...

...life, stress, winter? Interior designers prescribe cozy nooks. **D7**

DESIGN & DECORATING



PIETER ESTERSON/ART DEPT NY (CAY); CARMEL BRANTLEY PHOTOGRAPHY (STAIRCASE)

SUNDOWNER CHIC Theatrical palm murals and an unexpected mix of traditional and tropical pieces keep the drawing room at the Lyford Cay Club in the Bahamas from veering into 'resort' clichés.

MY FAVORITE ROOM

Island Timeless

The eclectic elegance of a famously exclusive Caribbean resort makes this space a standout for designer Paloma Contreras

BY CHRISTINA POLETTO

IN THE LATE 1950s, Canadian tycoon, investor and philanthropist E.P. Taylor set out to conjure a resort from the mangrove swamps and dirt roads along the coast of New Providence island in the Bahamas. His vision: an exclusive island playground where well-heeled elites could swing irons, yacht-hop and hobnob the night away. The plan worked. The Lyford Cay Club, as he christened it, quickly cemented itself as one of the Caribbean's toniest refuges, with a discretion-obsessed membership ranging from industry barons like Henry Ford II to showbiz luminaries like Sean Connery.

At the compound's closely-guarded heart sits a ballroom-sized drawing room, where one-percenters mingle over cards and cocktails. For decades this space leaned, regrettably, to a preppy, "ladies who lunch" vibe—until, in 2008, celebrated

designer Tom Scheerer overhauled it dramatically. Now that the room is dressed in subtle, equatorial shades of pink and citron, its 18-foot walls robed in a chocolate-hued mural of silhouetted palms, the effect is more Golden Age chic than Golden Girls.

Houston designer Paloma Contreras, known for her own fresh take on heritage styling, as seen in her latest book "The New Classic Home: Modern Meets Traditional Style" (Abrams), cites the space as a longtime inspirational compass. "It's iconic and emblematic of a type of tropical glamour that feels as if it could belong to a bygone era," she explains. "It's cozy, but [Scheerer] hasn't done that at the expense of drama."

Scheerer's success, Contreras says, lies in how beautifully the disparate elements and styles—high and low, rough and luxe—hang together. Here, she offers ways to assert a similarly elegant island aesthetic, pretty much anywhere.



READ PALMS

The design on a vintage Indian textile inspired Scheerer's most ambitious overhaul—a hand-painted palm-motif mural that rings the room and climbs nearly two stories to the lip of the trayed ceilings. "It really draws the eye up and creates volume," Contreras explained. "And I love that he chose chocolate brown—it's rich and warm and truly neutral." For a dupe in your own home, try this handmade wallpaper designed by Aqualille and Palm Beach designer Kiki Shilling in homage to Lyford Cay. Clifton wallpaper, retails from \$1,300 per 3-foot by 8-foot panel, Aqualille.com

BUILD A SANDY CASTLE

To ensure the room withstands foot traffic from outdoor patios, Scheerer took cues from nearby beaches: He blanketed floors with sandy sisal rugs punctuated by hand-stenciled diamonds. Contreras says the rhombus pattern adds an essential "tension," elevating the utilitarian style. This take by Dash & Albert offers the same vibe. Diamond Sisal Rug, \$1,298 for 8-feet-by-10-feet, AnnieSelke.com



GO THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS

"With walls this dramatic, you need something equally bold on top," Contreras explained. Scheerer's fix: Hanging oversized baroque gilt mirrors that heap on Hollywood élan and amplify the space's island glow. Look to the Imonie Arch by House of Hampton for a more subtle—and affordable—rendition. \$546, Wayfair.com



BIO IN BRIEF / PALOMA CONTRERAS

They say everything's bigger in Texas—but a respect for "just enough" guides designer Paloma Contreras' tailored, traditional-modern aesthetic. Fueled by a passion for travel and a predilection for European antiquities, Contreras' stylings can be found in the pages of two coffee table books as well as an online store and an eponymous brick and mortar retail shop in the River



Oaks neighborhood of Houston. Other projects include a lighting collaboration with Visual Comfort and a curated line of natural stone for Aria Stone Gallery. Contreras has traipsed a delightfully winding road; the designer began her career as a Spanish teacher before making her way into interiors. This fall, her namesake firm celebrates its 10th anniversary.



SUSPEND GLAMOUR

Even at the beach, billionaires demand a certain degree of bling for keeping up appearances. Contreras cites this Hollywood Regency double-tiered chandelier as a glittering statement piece that plays well with other humbler components throughout the drawing

room. "It's very effective in the sense of theatricality—but can easily be modernized when paired with more contemporary, casual elements," she explained. This Neoclassical gilt-tole and crystal chandelier would hang with comparable sway. \$7,900, 1stDibs.com.

WEAVE IN NATURE

Nothing says "tropical" like rattan furnishings—especially when transplanted from the lanai to the living room. Here, Contreras says, Scheerer uses braided-back thrones strategically, a foil to stiffer elements like Ming-style coffee tables and sleek slipper chairs. The result is a balancing note of rusticity amid the grandiosity. Arched seats by Mainly Baskets offer a similar appeal. Chatham Natural Rattan Living Room Chairs, \$2,194, KathyKuoHome.com



PROVIDE COCKTAIL CONVENIENCE

At the club, where members expect their gin and tonics to be within arm's reach at all times, simple floor lamps outfitted with trays maximize tabletop real estate. Contreras sees these accents as yet another example of Scheerer's ability to find functionality in unobtrusive forms. With a classic trumpet silhouette, the Paxton Tray Floor Lamp can perform the same trick in your home. \$579, BallardDesigns.com



LOUNGE IN LIVABLE LUXURY

Resort furniture often suffers from either a surfeit of casualness or WASP-y stiffness. Scheerer's happy medium: A rolled-arm sofa, which presents as traditional, but has the coziness of a papasan.

Covered in shell-pink block print fabric similar to this Mistrale Blush (\$241 per yard, RobertKime.com), it lends bohemian softness and a sense of craftsmanship. PB Comfort Roll Arm Slipcovered Sofa, from \$1,699, PotteryBarn.com