

# Home and away

Grit, ingenuity and an unbridled fearlessness: these uniquely Australian qualities are what set up our most innovative talents in the worlds of fashion, film, food and design for success on a global stage. By Divya Bala.

Australia: a land of king tides, extreme trade winds, and unparalleled tectonic movement. Fearless, unbridled kinesis is in our DNA. It is perhaps why so many Australians have set out from this wild, whirring island to seek out new momentum overseas.

For Canberra-born, Brisbane-raised chef James Henry, co-founder of the celebrated Le Doyenné restaurant, farm and guesthouse just outside of Paris, life abroad is a path well-trodden. His father's career in the Department of Foreign Affairs saw Henry and his family bounce between cities in Australia, Saudi Arabia, Asia, the US and the UK throughout his childhood. "This is the longest I've lived anywhere since high school," Henry, 40, admits of his almost 15-year tenure in France.

Henry cut his teeth as a "dishy" at a bistro on Brisbane's James Street then relocated to Byron Bay and a position at Raes on Wategos, before heading to Melbourne to work at the city's legendary Cumulus Inc. Following a move to Paris in 2009, Henry quickly made an impression on the French culinary scene as the inaugural chef at the acclaimed eatery Au Passage. In 2013, Au Passage's owners offered him the chance to run his own restaurant, Bones, and there he stayed for three years, where the first seeds of a future farm-to-table enterprise began to take root. In 2016, Henry and his co-founder, fellow Australian chef – alumnus of London's St. John Bread and Wine – Shaun Kelly, happened on the idyllic Château de Saint-Vrain, a historic location that was once the country retreat of the Countess du Barry and Borghese family, as well as the site where sculptors Niki de Saint Phalle and Tinguely created their gargantuan works in the 1970s. The pair began to set out plans for an ambitious dining destination, a sprawling 2,500-square-metre property that includes regenerative farming and livestock, cheese and charcuterie making facilities and an expertly appointed kitchen garden. Before the doors of the restaurant first opened in late 2022, the farm was already supplying Paris's best restaurants, including Septime, Mokonuts and Le Chateaubriand, with a bounty of fresh fruit and vegetables.

The philosophy of Le Doyenné revolves around this close proximity to produce. "The menu is formed around what's available and what's at our fingertips throughout the seasons. [There's] a real start-to-finish approach to the way we work," Henry explains. "You have a farm just out front, which you can see from the kitchen. If you're missing something you can go out and pick it." →

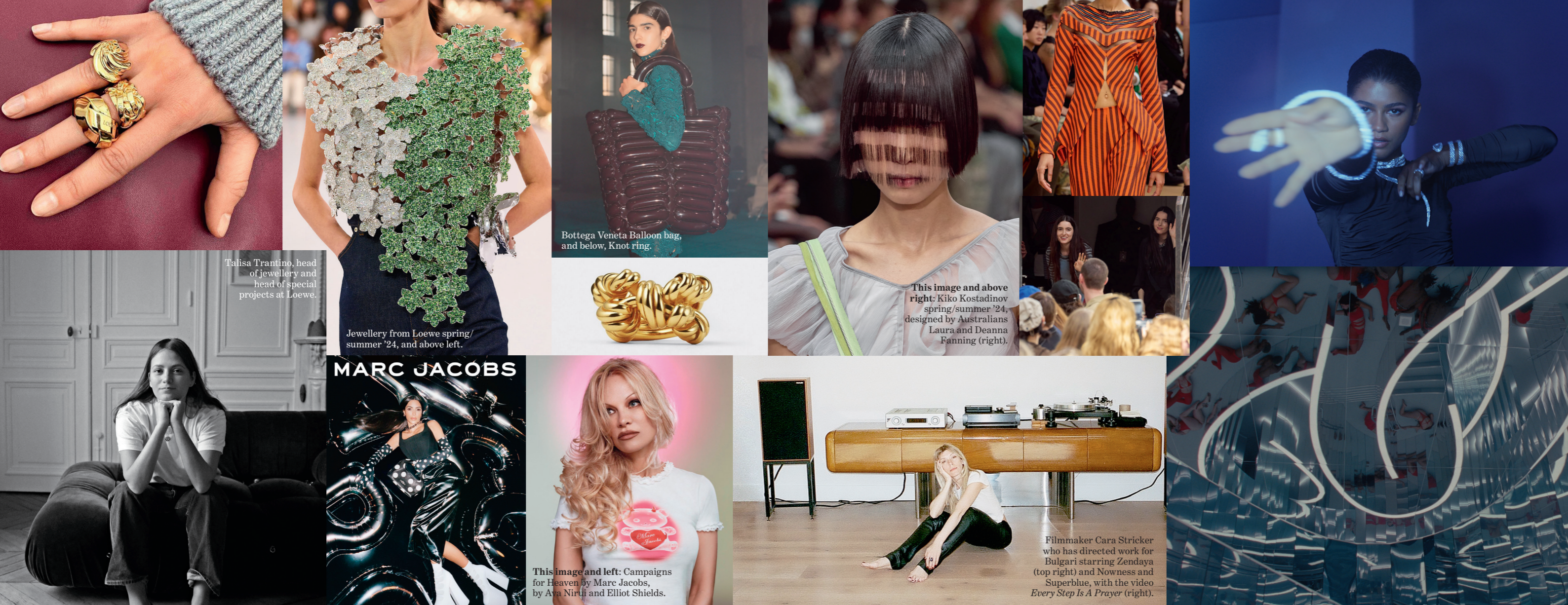


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Shaun Kelly (left) and James Henry (right), co-founders of Le Doyenné restaurant, guesthouse and farm, pictured on this page.





Talisa Trantino, head of jewellery and head of special projects at Loewe.

Jewellery from Loewe spring/summer '24, and above left.

Bottega Veneta Balloon bag, and below, Knot ring.

This image and above right: Kiko Kostadinov spring/summer '24, designed by Australians Laura and Deanna Fanning (right).

MARC JACOBS

This image and left: Campaigns for Heaven by Marc Jacobs, by Ava Nirui and Elliot Shields.

Filmmaker Cara Stricker who has directed work for Bulgari starring Zendaya (top right) and Nowness and Superblue, with the video *Every Step Is A Prayer* (right).

“When you live far away, everything has to be worth you being away. I’ve always approached every role like that” *Talisa Trantino*

Henry is proud of the mixed cultural heritage of his team, and when asked what it is that he thinks sets Australians apart, he points to our ability to integrate multiculturally as well as our remoteness from the rest of the world. “Growing up in Australia, we’re exposed to different culinary experiences,” notes Henry. “[Australians] in general are quite sociable. I feel like because we’re a bit more isolated, we have to be more creative. And there’s a drive to compete on an international level, but with our own unique identity.”

It’s a similar sentiment for Melbourne-born freelance designer, Talisa Trantino. Having lived between London, Milan and Paris, Trantino has consulted for both major fashion houses and emerging designers for the past decade, working under the likes of Phoebe Philo at Celine, Daniel Lee at Bottega Veneta and Sarah Burton at Alexander McQueen. “When you live far away, everything has to be worth you being away. I’ve always approached every role like that,” muses Trantino. “You have to make it work, you can never be complacent. So I think [expat Australians] have this very optimistic energy, [and are] hardworking.”

Trantino won the Australian Fashion Foundation (AFF) Award in 2013 for her graduating collection in Fashion at RMIT.

Through the awards scheme, she was offered a scholarship to undertake an internship overseas, choosing the London-based ateliers of Alexander McQueen. After McQueen came a brief stint at Celine with Philo’s team in the designer’s London studio. “I was a sponge in that studio. The thing I really loved was [Philo’s] approach to research, which I’ve kept with me throughout my career,” Trantino describes.

The designer then moved to Paris to work for another Australian fashion export, Kym Ellery, before being headhunted to design jewellery for Bottega Veneta, an offer based entirely on her portfolio of ready-to-wear. “I never thought I’d design jewellery, I wear it minimally,” she laughs. “Daniel Lee was incredibly receptive to research ideas. For example, we once worked with a balloon artist to explore a story that became ‘inflatable’ bags and jackets for the Salon 02 show in Berlin. I’ve always gravitated to those creative directors who think outside of the box.” This year, she was appointed head of jewellery and head of special projects for Loewe, under artistic director Jonathan Anderson, making the move to Paris full-time; she speaks to *Vogue Australia* on her lunchbreak at Cafe Kitsuné, not far from Loewe’s Paris head office.

BEC ADAMS, GORUNWAY.COM, LOEWE, VOGUE RUNWAY

“There’s something in the water here [in Australia], I always get asked in interviews what it is ... I won’t tell them if you guys don’t” *Dom Dolla*

Trantino’s fellow AFF-winning alumnus, Melbourne-born Alexander Oscar Kelvy, is also based in Paris, having used the opportunity of the award to intern at Louis Vuitton, where he designed leathers and men’s footwear under both Kim Jones and the late Virgil Abloh’s tenures as creative directors for men’s ready-to-wear. Kelvy is now a senior designer at Givenchy, working on men’s footwear and women’s sneakers. “I think [for me], it was a curiosity to see what the world of fashion was like elsewhere,” explains Kelvy of his decision to leave Australia. “Winning the scholarship really pushed me to get over as well as the money to support the process. I also was a bit afraid, I didn’t know what I’d do if I didn’t leave. I’d always imagined going overseas.”

In every field, from food and fashion to design, culture and the arts, Australians have proven themselves to be dominant forces internationally. This year, *Vogue Australia* cover star Tarlisa Gaykamangu made history as the first Indigenous Australian woman to appear at Milan fashion week, walking the runway for Bottega Veneta. Designers Ava Nirui and Elliot Shields of Heaven by Marc Jacobs, and the Melbourne-born twin sisters Laura and Deanna Fanning of Kiko Kostadinov are making

waves on the global fashion scene. Rising stars Troye Sivan and Jacob Elordi both went stratospheric in 2023. Filmmaker Kitty Green collaborated for the second time with Julia Garner, this time on *The Royal Hotel*, which premiered to critical acclaim at the Telluride Film Festival. Sydney-born, Los Angeles-based director, Cara Stricker, whose CV includes music videos for Alicia Keys and Bulgari shorts starring Zendaya, is currently developing a feature script with Australian model-turned-actor Abbey Lee, soon to take the lead in Kevin Costner’s daring historical epic *Horizon*. There’s Grammy-nominated producer Dom Dolla, who honed his craft at pub discos and friends’ parties in Melbourne, and is now producing remixes for the likes of the Gorillaz featuring Tame Impala, Dua Lipa, Calvin Harris and Nelly Furtado.

Thai Australian playwright and screenwriter Anchuli Felicia King lived between Thailand and the Philippines before moving with her family to Melbourne at the age of eight, where she went on to study arts at the University of Melbourne. “Around that time, I started being very interested in theatre [but the scene in Melbourne] was pretty Eurocentric. There also just weren’t a lot of job opportunities and I was really excited by the theatre →



Above: Director Kitty Green on the set of *Royal Hotel* starring Julia Garner (below).



Anchuli Felicia King, playwright of *American Signs* with Catherine Van-Davies (below right) and screenwriter of *Mary & George*, starring Julianne Moore (pictured above on set).



Music producer Dom Dolla performs.



Stella McCartney spring/summer '24, by Andy Moller's (right) Studio Boum, which also worked on installations for Jonathan Anderson (below) and Hermès (below right).



Magazine editor Dan Thawley.



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that was happening in New York,” she explains. So, she emigrated to the US, undertaking a Masters in Dramaturgy at Columbia, where a compulsory playwriting class unlocked her love of the craft. Her first play, 2019’s *White Pearl*, was programmed across theatres in Australia, the UK and the US. In 2020, she began her first screenwriting job, now her full-time pursuit. This year, her work will appear across global screens in HBO’s much anticipated series *The Sympathizer* starring Sandra Oh and Robert Downey Jnr, airing in Australia on Binge and *Mary & George*, a subversive period drama led by Julianne Moore. King’s play *American Signs* will also be staged at the Sydney Theatre Company in June.

“But the moment I’m proudest of has nothing to do with commercial success. It [has been] getting to see the kind of cultural impact of my work, [of seeing] Asian actors who have been in my plays go on to get bigger and better roles as a result of having a chance to showcase what they can do,” King continues. “Seeing conversations shift around race, particularly the way that my playwriting has become part of cultural conversation in Australia, I’m part of a very small, amazing canon of Asian Australian playwrights working in

Australia and I’ve seen a tangible cultural shift in work that we do as a result of being part of that cultural conversation. So I think that’s the thing that I’m proudest of in my career, shifting the conversation around diversity and representation in theatre in Australia.”

Architect and co-founder of London-based experience firm, Studio Boum, Andy Moller was born and raised in Sydney, completing a Masters of Architecture at RMIT and working under the Barton brothers, founders of Sydney’s Golden Age Cinema and Bar, before moving to London in 2012. There he began working for designer Roksanda Ilincic as a freelance producer for her London fashion week presentations, where he met his now Studio Boum partners, Mary-Jane Forster and Olivia Herrtage. With an intention to use their design, architecture and production skills to create thoughtful, emotive experiences for guests, the 15-person agency has collaborated with the likes of Hermès and Alexander McQueen on intimate *dinatoire* launches, Jonathan Anderson for his *On Foot* exhibition at Offer Waterman Gallery and Stella McCartney on her Paris runway shows. In 2024, Studio Boum will celebrate its 10th anniversary.

CSQUARE MEDIA, ADAM KATZ SINDING, RENE VAILE. SEE SAW FILMS. INSTAGRAM: @DONSLENS

“I do think that [Australians] have a really strong work ethic. I think that hustle also comes with ... an ability to find humour in adversity” *Andy Moller*

“I do think that [Australians] have a really strong work ethic. I think that hustle also comes with a certain lightheartedness, an ability to find humour in adversity. It allows us to stay calm and controlled,” Moller explains via Zoom from London. “When I’ve worked with other Australians, I do feel a sense of mateship, that you can rely on them to get shit done. That’s the type of person you need when you’re organising big, complex events; you need people who will jump between roles, who are happy to do anything, to help one another out. Growing up in Australia, I didn’t realise until now how unique those qualities were.”

Paris-based creative director Dan Thawley grew up on Sydney’s Northern Beaches, leaving Australia for London in 2009 with a suitcase and plans to model. Within a matter of months, and at just 20 years old, he was recruited as editor-in-chief of *A Magazine Curated By*, the cult print publication that invites a designer to guest-edit each issue, (previous guest editors include Martin Margiela, Yohji Yamamoto and Pierpaolo Piccioli of Valentino). Thawley’s first, *A Magazine #10*, was realised in collaboration with Italian couturier Giambattista Valli. His last saw him work closely with Chitose Abe of Sacai. In 2023 Thawley announced his departure from the title, having

been invited to be creative director of Matter and Shape, a new design salon that will launch during Paris fashion week in March.

With a career driven by an innate ability to work across disciplines and cultures, Thawley muses on the benefits of an antipodean disposition. “It’s not uncommon to encounter successful and inspiring Australians in their fields. I think the Australians that leave and decide to make a life elsewhere do so with quite open minds and often a very positive demeanour,” says Thawley, who continues to work with Australian institutions such as the National Gallery of Victoria and the Sydney Biennale. “[This work] allows me to recognise how forward thinking, professional and truly innovative and agile Australian institutions can be and how different that might be from some of the spaces that I operate in, in France and in Europe.”

At any one time, the Australian diaspora is estimated to sit over the one million mark. Whether it is a collective spirit or something more profound that enables us to thrive far from home, Dom Dolla wonders if it might be best left unsaid. “There’s something in the water here [in Australia]. I always get asked in interviews what it is,” said the producer, as he collected one of the six ARIAs he was nominated for in 2023. “I won’t tell them if you guys don’t.” ■