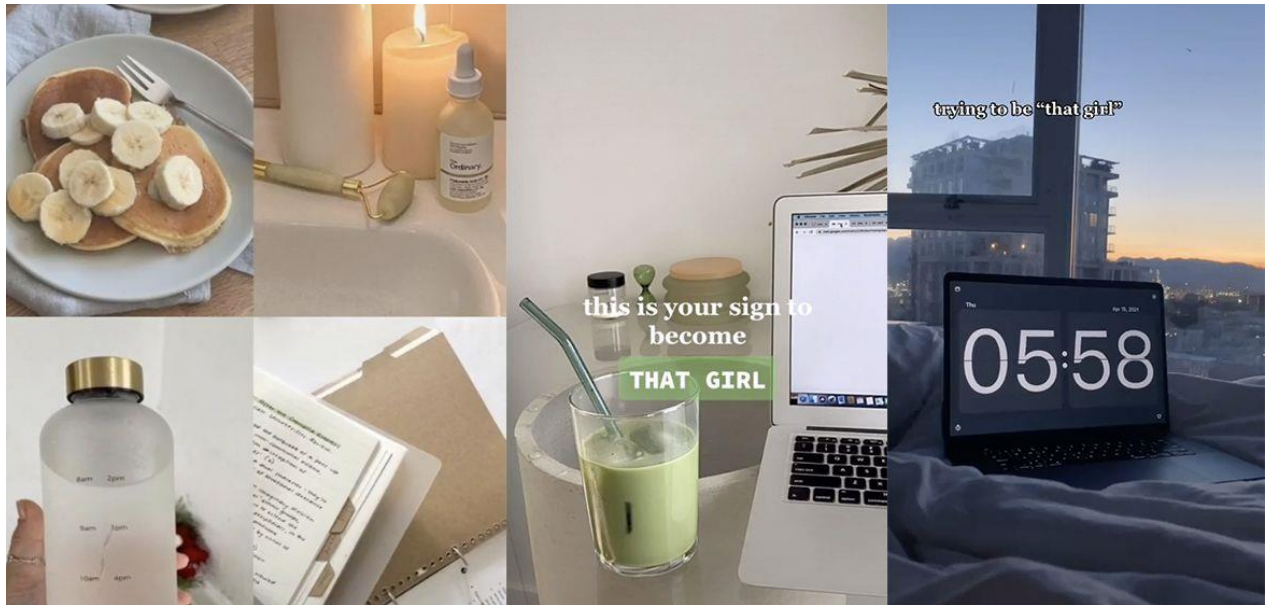


# Night-Luxe is the antidote to #ThatGirl aesthetic

**In the age of kale smoothies, five-minute journals and five am alarms, an army of Gen-Zers are exploring alternative wellness trends**



It's unlikely that you haven't heard of *That Girl*. Yes, the one who wakes up at 5 am, drinks lemon water, puts on a pair of Lululemon leggings, does Yoga followed by meditation, prepares a mermaid blue spirulina smoothie bowl, and writes her daily affirmations in the five-minute journal with a lit Diptyque Baies candle on the side – all before the day has even started for many of us.



Countering this put-together vibe is the night luxe aesthetic, a new wellness trend which encourages staying out late and living your best life. Think NYC, clubbing, bottles of champagne, black slip dresses and flash photography. With over 29.7 million views on TikTok, night luxe is the 2022 embodiment of an epicurean spirit of the Roaring Twenties, and a testament to the fact that we're tired of miserably chasing That Girl's lifestyle.

To no one's surprise, a trend loses its appeal if it feels unattainable in the long run. Nottingham-based, 21-year-old Ife Oyedepi agrees. "I understand why more people are rejecting #thatgirl aesthetic. It makes you feel like you don't have your life together if you're not following a specific archetype of journaling or eating healthy", she explains. Through a series of discussion on #ThatGirl, Ife's sister, who has ADHD and is on the autism spectrum, rightly pointed out that the people who fit into this stereotype are the ones who rely on structured living to function in their everyday life. Yet, the sisters also find that by referring to these wellness lifestyles as aesthetics and trends, social media has trivialised why certain people choose to live a certain way. "When you open Instagram or TikTok, you get plagued by all this curated content (#thatgirl) by influencers, with no real explanation behind how they have built this structure or why they need it in the first place. It can be so damaging because you see these unrealistic living standards being promoted online that lead to a toxic culture of productivity and perfectionism," says Ife.

Night luxe, on the other hand, opposes That Girl's lifestyle by boldly rejecting the glamorisation of burnout culture. It encourages all things opulent, fun and indulgent. Earlier this year, The Cut predicted the rise of micro-trends, suggesting that these could be inspired by the resurgence of "early-aughts indie sleaze", and coined this phenomenon as a 'vibe shift'. And when the

conversation turns to vibes, fashion can never be too far behind. Using night luxe as an inspiration for her graduate collection, which is heavily influenced by lingerie, fashion designing student Poppy Grundy notes that the rise of loungewear during the pandemic has now translated into outerwear. Citing symmetry and reflection as the chosen concepts for her project, she describes her collection as “having a slightly sexy vibe, created in the colours of skin tone and black” – which is what night-luxe fashion endorses.



Figure 1. Graduate collection. Image courtesy of Poppy Grundy

The trend is now also seeping into the beauty industry, where brands are marketing their products to appeal to this vibe shift. 4 A.M. – a skincare business, is built on the ethos of the guilty pleasures associated with urban nightlife clubs.

Dr Dawnn Karen, fashion psychologist and author of *Dress Your Best Life*, finds that the rising influence of night luxe aesthetic is largely driven by decision fatigue. “With so much going around in the world, it is natural to feel overwhelmed by several decisions that you have to make throughout the day, so people just need a break from it all. They are moving away from #thatgirl because the last thing you want to do is concern yourself with what to wear, which smoothie to make and to constantly work on deadlines – it puts too much pressure. This is also known as the paradox of choice. It occurs when you are faced with too many purchasing options, which can often result in feeling overwhelmed and paralysed, and inevitably making decisions that you’ll later regret,” she says.

Dr Dawnn finds that night luxe is a hedonistic response to life during the pandemic – “we all had this anxiety of being isolated and had our lives dictated by lockdown restrictions – whether it was about being told to wear a mask or to not wear it - post-pandemic, people are at their wit’s end. By rejecting conventional ideas of what wellness looks like and turning to night luxe, they are moving from dopamine dressing to serotonin dressing.” Also known as mood illustration dressing, this allows its wearer to express their current emotional state through the medium of clothes.

“It was advantageous to be #thatgirl during the pandemic when you felt the need to take up self-care hobbies with all the newfound time but this recent shift suggests a fashion situational code, which is when you alternate between different styles depending on your cultural and social situation. If you think about it, moving to night luxe from #thatgirl is still being a part of a group. You’re still conforming to the expectations of another style aesthetic,” she explains.

Ultimately, #thatgirl and night luxe are just the latest trends to rise from and driven by TikTok and Insta, that identified new forms of self-care. “I think That Girl kind of prioritises productivity, whereas night luxe prioritises the aesthetic – the physical aesthetic that makes it seem like you’re having a good life, rather than to live a life that brings you joy,” Ife drives home. “I believe it all comes down to balance – some days, I wake up early and go to the gym, fail miserably and give up. But I am also the kind of person who likes staying out late, go for clubbing and serve a good look on a good night-out.”