

THE WORLD'S BEST SELLING HOMES MAGAZINE

# ELLE DECORATION

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A BEDROOM  
MAKEOVER  
WORTH  
R82 000**

SOUTH AFRICA

**LAGOS:**  
AFRICA'S  
NEXT  
FASHION  
CAPITAL

CELEBRITY STYLE

*Jessica  
Alba  
+  
Stella  
Jean*

**SOUTH  
AFRICA**

AUG/SEP 2013

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## THE NEW LUXURY

**FASHION FORWARD:** A SEDUCTIVE MIX OF DECOR, FOOD AND SHOPPING

**WHAT THE EXPERTS KNOW:** THE FUTURE OF PROPERTY AND LIFESTYLE TRENDS



## LOLA AKINMADE ÅKERSTRÖM

*Award-winning writer and photographer; Lola made our Lagos travel story come alive*

**What's the connection between your closet and your home?** Since moving to Sweden, the Nordic minimalist mentality has grown on me. My closet is filled with base monotonies to mix, match and assemble, like a 50-part Ikea cabinet. This same style flows through my home decor, which is simple and basic. **Favourite Instagrammer:**

@SymmetryBreakfast for beautifully strong shapes, patterns and some daily culinary inspiration. **Tracksuit pants are:** Not cute when they have words like "sexy" and "juicy" scribbled across you know what. Support, support and adequate support has always been my mantra! **Which fashion era best describes your style?** I still rock 1970s bell-bottoms every day. The bo-ho chic prints, afros and flowers are my style to the core. A style that says I'm an idealist and an optimist – I truly believe world peace will be achieved tomorrow morning!

🐦 @LolaAkinmade | akinmade.com

## DIMEJI ALARA

*Based in Lagos, Nigeria, Dimeji is a freelance fashion editor and writer*

**What has been this season's biggest fashion breakthrough?** There's been an influx of talented young designers from around the globe – a welcome development for fashion in Africa and beyond. Things were starting to get a bit repetitive, so it's refreshing to see young designers creating original ideas. **What would you take from the catwalk to the couch?** I find the floral prints of the 70s, prominent on the menswear international runways for Spring/Summer 2015, very inspiring. I would splash a few green floral prints around my living areas. **Your decor dream consists of:** A huge tree in the middle of my living room, with lots of plants in every corner! **Most interesting Instagrammer:** The Ritz Paris (@ritzparis) has been posting daily updates of the new renovations and gorgeous interior design under way. **Top South African designer:** I love MaXhosa by Laduma at the moment. I find his pieces very original, modern and true to their roots.

🐦 @dimejialara | dimejialara.blogspot.com



## TONY GUM

*South African artist Tony Gum has a strong presence in the fashion and photography world*

**How does your home decor take its cue from your closet?** Clothing is a reflection of who you are. My closet is very eclectic and quite indecisive, so to help me think clearly I have an all-white room to contrast this – it's like a blank canvas for me. **What would you take from the catwalk to the couch?** The Mami Capsule Fall/Winter 2015 collection caught my eye – the colour palette is so tasteful. **Tracksuit pants are:** Perfect for a sports-luxe look with a simple blazer, a good pair of heels and topped off with a peak cap. **Who should we follow?** @ferrarisheppard, @thesartists, @okayafrica, @petitenoirkvlt, @xavierzulu, @kisuaonline and @amaalsaid. **Your decor dream consists of:** A brightly lit urban loft overlooking the city skyline, with Persian carpets gracing wooden floors. A Chesterfield three-seater leather sofa, two Caprice occasional chairs and a mid-century coffee table. And many family portraits and African art will hang among pendant lights.

🐦 @tony\_gum | tonygumonline.tumblr.com



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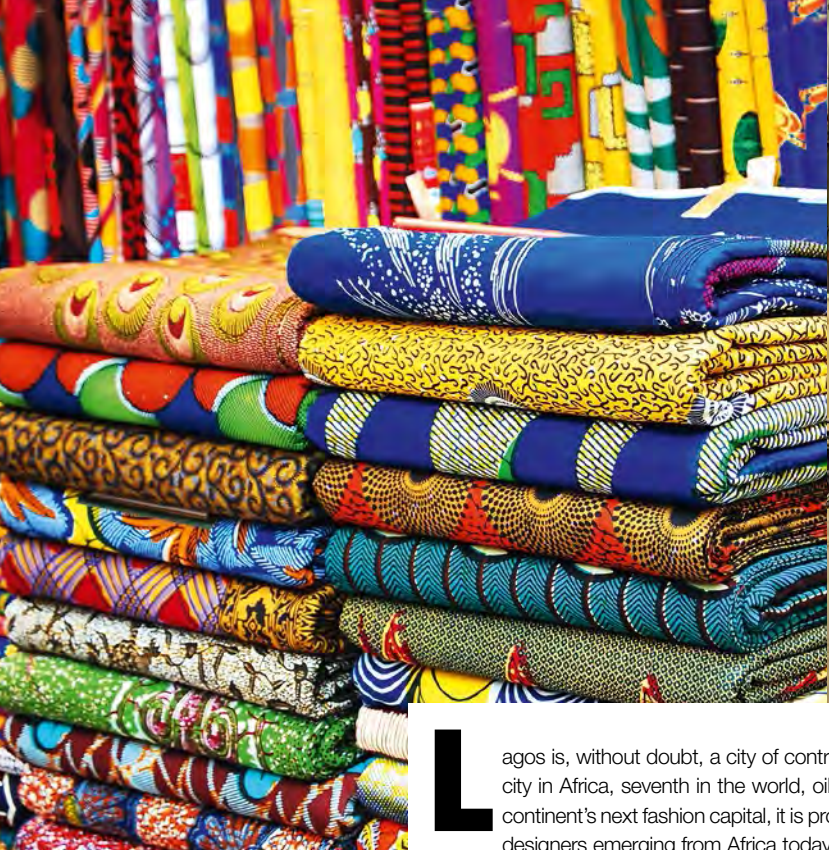
# CRAZY BEAUTIFUL LAGOS

*Humid, vibrant and unapologetically chaotic, Africa's next fashion capital is a whirlwind of contrasts. DECO sought out the street style of creative locals in a quest to discover the real Lagos*

PHOTOGRAPHS **LOLA AKINMADE ÅKERSTRÖM** COMPILED BY **LUCIE BARTLETT**







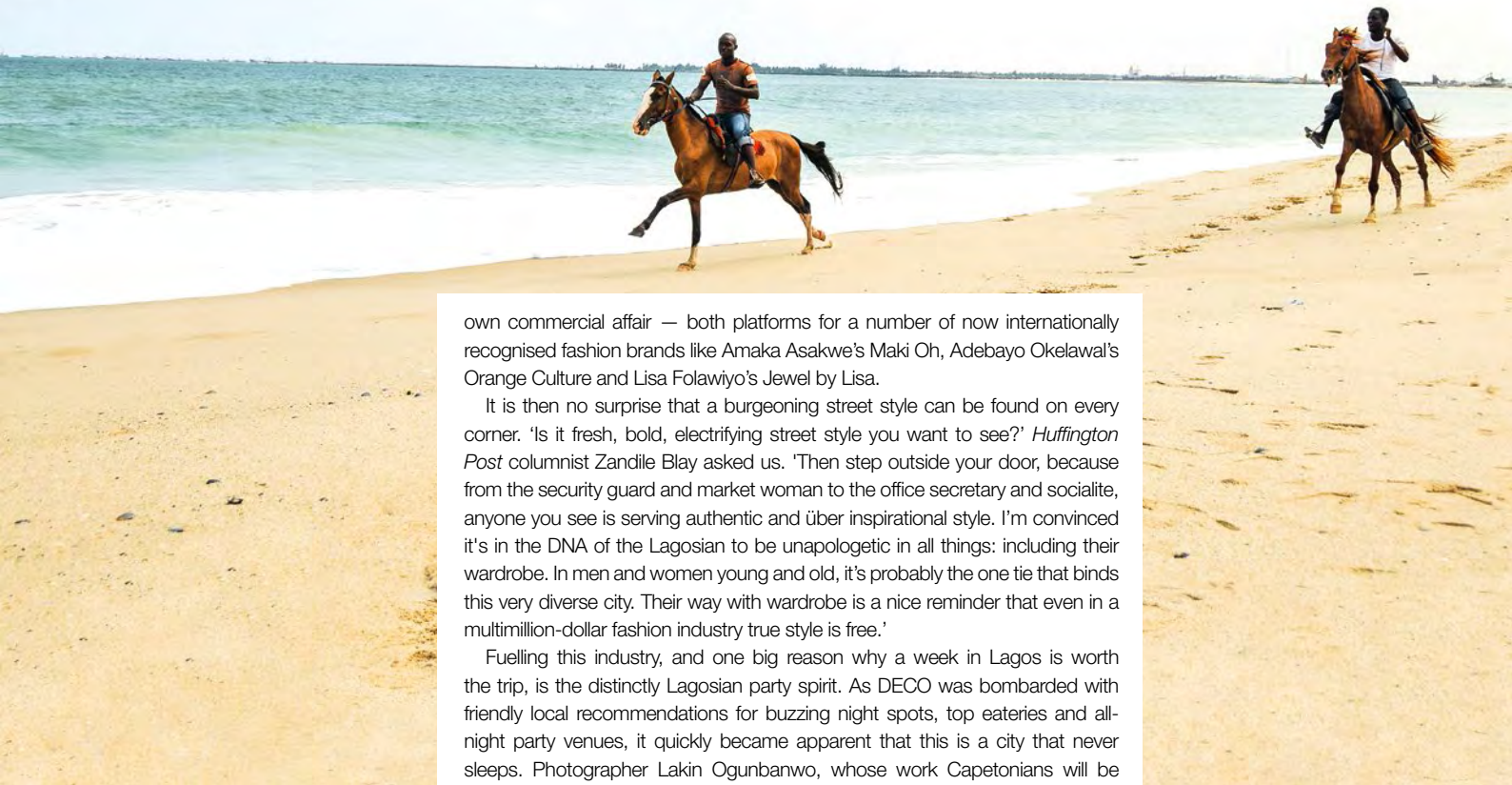
Lagos is, without doubt, a city of contrasts. The second-fastest growing city in Africa, seventh in the world, oil-rich and lauded by some as our continent's next fashion capital, it is producing some of the most exciting designers emerging from Africa today. Three years ago, Nigeria's GDP surpassed South Africa's to become Africa's largest economy. As Robert Draper reported for *National Geographic* earlier this year, 'In Lagos, Nigeria's commercial centre, "Be Very Rich" has all but become the city's motto... About 15 700 millionaires and a handful of billionaires live in Nigeria, more than 60% of them in Lagos.' Yet it must be acknowledged that travellers embracing a trip to the former Nigerian capital will face reports of poverty-stricken locals, security concerns, dirty streets and even dirtier money. So what is the real Lagos?

Amidst the blaring horns and shouting crowds dominating the chaotic yellow taxi-packed roads is an entirely authentic, home-grown street style that is gritty, vibrant and quite beautiful. A hunger for novelty and economic growth within a context of vibrancy and colourful tradition has given birth to a number of designers and trend-setters leading Lagos into a fashion-forward position on the continent; displaying, as designer/entrepreneur Atim Oton coined at her recent Ted X talk, 'hybrid modernity', where Western cuts, styles and lines are merging with prints, patterns and materials from a traditional Lagosian heritage.

Thus, in Lagos you'll find not one but two significant Fashion Week events on the calendar — Lagos Fashion & Design Week and ARISE Magazine's



'IT IS A NICE REMINDER THAT EVEN IN A MULTIMILLION-DOLLAR FASHION INDUSTRY **TRUE STYLE IS FREE**'



own commercial affair — both platforms for a number of now internationally recognised fashion brands like Amaka Asakwe's Maki Oh, Adebayo Okelawal's Orange Culture and Lisa Folawiyo's Jewel by Lisa.

It is then no surprise that a burgeoning street style can be found on every corner. 'Is it fresh, bold, electrifying street style you want to see?' *Huffington Post* columnist Zandile Blay asked us. 'Then step outside your door, because from the security guard and market woman to the office secretary and socialite, anyone you see is serving authentic and über inspirational style. I'm convinced it's in the DNA of the Lagosian to be unapologetic in all things: including their wardrobe. In men and women young and old, it's probably the one tie that binds this very diverse city. Their way with wardrobe is a nice reminder that even in a multimillion-dollar fashion industry true style is free.'

Fuelling this industry, and one big reason why a week in Lagos is worth the trip, is the distinctly Lagosian party spirit. As DECO was bombarded with friendly local recommendations for buzzing night spots, top eateries and all-night party venues, it quickly became apparent that this is a city that never sleeps. Photographer Lakin Ogunbanwo, whose work *Capetonians* will be familiar with from the Whatiftheworld Gallery, was adamant that we couldn't leave Lagos without experiencing an Owambe party, a Nigerian tradition. Olamide Udo-Udoma of Future Lagos agreed: 'People work hard and play even harder. We love to party; you can find something every evening, seven days a week; weddings, parties, funerals, music launch nights, christenings,







everything becomes a celebration.' It is at such events, Lakin advised, that you're most likely to catch the most impressive exhibitions of home-grown Lagos style.

Dimeji Alara, fashion writer and current Editor of Lagosian *Genevieve* magazine, encouraged us to look beyond its conflicted reputation: 'Lagos has had its share of bad press, but you need to visit to know that it's not as bad as it's always painted to be...The most appealing part of Lagos life is that there's always something to do, and the country is continually growing; it's a city that never sleeps, a city with a pulse.' Olamide also recognises that the pace of change is dramatic. 'Lagos is a city made by the people, as [Dutch architect and urbanist] Koolhaas said, it is "organised chaos"'. The energy and vibrancy of this ever-changing city cannot be found anywhere else in the world. Lagos is not a place you should visit just once, because the next time you come, you will see a completely different city within just a few months. Your senses are stimulated constantly, from taste to smell to noise; always being bombarded with something.'

Inherent within every Lagosian we encountered was a tremendous optimism about Lagos, presenting it as a must-see on the DECO travel itinerary. Not only more than willing to share with us the hidden gems of their own unique travelogues, but amidst the troubles, conflict and relative squalor plaguing much of the surrounding country, they showed a powerfully consistent affection for the bright lights and sophisticated, style-setting ambitions of their home town. ■







## LAGOS PACKING LIST FROM THE LOCALS:

**Music** to keep you going while you're stuck in traffic, a bottle of water for the heat and **a second outfit** because there's always more than one event to go to. | Adebayo Okelawal

**My Moleskine** for meetings, my **camera** for leisure and classical music for my sanity! In terms of wardrobe, **fluid, easy pieces which cover the body well** are now a must. | Zandile Blay

**Protection from the sun:** hat, sunglasses, sunscreen. Plus a pair of jeans, T-shirts, comfortable shoes, preferably sneakers, sandals and maybe one or two long-sleeved shirts. | Dimeji Alara

**Business cards**, because you never know who you're going to meet, and an SLR Camera or even just your camera phone — Lagos streets are full of colour and great finds. | Olamide Udo-Udoma

Swimwear, sunglasses, **mosquito repellent** and **lots of fashionable clothes** for day and night. Lagos is filled with stylish people, you want to look the part! | Lisa Folawiyo



## DECO'S LAGOS LITTLE BLACK BOOK:

**FLY** direct from Johannesburg to Lagos from R7 000 return with South African Airways | skyscanner.net

**STAY** at the Wheatbaker Hotel from R6 000 per room, per night | wheatbaker.com

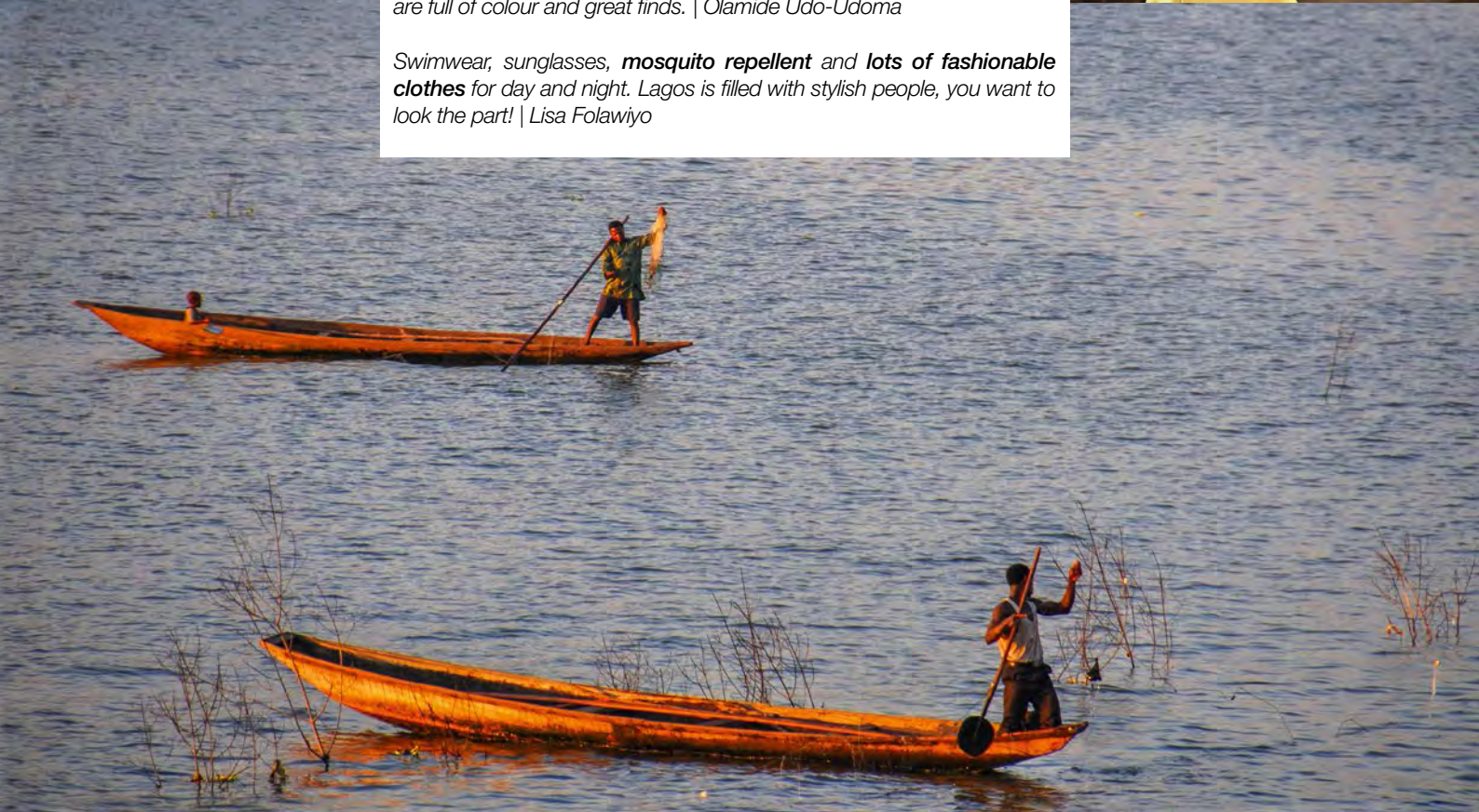
**EAT** the local, meaty delicacy Suya at Glover Court in Ikoyi | ask the locals to find it!

**SHOP** at ALARA and Temple Muse | alaralagos.com, temple-muse.com

**RELAX** at Ilashe Private Beach Club from R300 per person or R3 000 for boat hire | casailashe.com

**PARTY** at mega club Quilox on Victoria Island | clubquilox.com

**VISIT** the Lekki Conservation Centre, Rele and Nike Art Galleries | ncfnigeria.org, rele.co, nikeart.com



**LAGOS IS...** 'CHAOTIC, FAST-PACED, EMERGING, ABRASIVE, EXPENSIVE, DISTINCTIVE, INTENSE, UNPREDICTABLE AND HUMID' – Dimeji Alara, editor