

Paul: Hi, I'm Paul Zahra and welcome to a special Christmas episode of retail therapy brought to you by American Express. While the holidays are upon us, retailers are in deep preparation mode for the Christmas shopping rush. It's going to be an unpredictable holiday season that will be full of challenges. As we manage a retail reopening in Sydney, Melbourne, and Canberra. So what's in store for retailers. What can we expect in terms of sales? How is consumer sentiment shaping up and what goes on behind the scenes for a tailor managing this incredibly important time of year? Joining me for some retail therapy in the Amex lounge today is Edwina McCann, editor in chief in Vogue, Australia, a position she has held since 2012. Edwina is responsible for the Vogue brand across print digital and social media platforms. As we all know, Vogue is synonymous with style and beauty and internationally recognized name with its publications, read by millions across the globe. And I'm delighted to have Edwina with me today to chat all things fashion, how Christmas is shaping up and the fashion trends will be talking about this season. Edwina welcome.

Edwina: Thank you for having me, Paul. It's lovely to see you.

Paul: You too. And look, first of all, keen to get your thoughts on where fashion and consumer spending is going at the moment. A lot of us have been obviously in lockdowns and over the past 20 months, not going out as much, not going to any balls or events, things have been pretty boring actually, and things are starting to now, we're getting a bit of hope with roadmaps and opening up. So now there's a there's certainly brighter days ahead, and we're seeing a lot of pent up demand now with people rushing to buy that new dress on new outfit and the hope that there might be a few Christmas parties and other events to look forward to. So what, what are you hearing and seeing currently in the fashion world?

Edwina: Well, it's very much the tale of two sectors really because surprisingly luxury has really boomed through this period, all these wealthiest Australians or locked up at home without travel, to spend their money on. Many of whom may have been luxury clients of the likes of Tiffany and Co and Louis Vuitton in London regularly, or, if they were on a boat in July, they've been spending up big locally. So we've seen extraordinary sales in particular, in fine jewelry. And luxury watches for example, have really boomed and had fantastic years. And Cartier has had one of its best years ever in Australia. So whilst I know that that is not necessarily true of mainstream retail. If, you know, if we are sort of talking about, I guess you know, it's been very difficult, particularly I think for Australian fashion designers. Yes. And also more mainstream houses, because people just simply haven't had anywhere to go surprisingly for luxury. It's actually been, been quite a good period.

Paul: So really what we are seeing is people that have not been able to go, and travel have actually spent that money locally. And I guess, you know, that's a good news, I guess, for the Australian retail economy.

Edwina: Absolutely. And I think a lot of the, I guess a lot of the trends really surprised us. It was not what we were thinking in March, 2020. We were a bit doom and gloom about everything, but particularly the luxury sector, I think without the Chinese tourism in particular and with the Chinese expat students, many of whom were, you know, really big spenders without with our luxury partners not being here. I really doubted whether they would be, I guess, supplemented by the Australians who remained in the country, but I think they, they really have been. And some however, you know, when I speak to Australian designers, I'm chair of the Australian fashion council that's been really, really tough. I mean, everything from obviously, you know, those who manufacture still in Australia have obviously been unable to manufacture as well. So we've got a real supply chain issue happening there. Which I think is going to take quite a while to, to see through, to getting things really up and running back to normal.

But, you know, again we hosted American express online shopping night the other night. And it was one of our most successful ever people were shopping. I don't know where they're wearing it, maybe just in the lounge room, but people really are shopping. I think they're excited to get back out there. They're really taking advantage of special offers. I know a lot of retailers have been very proactive and really getting their online offering in order through this period really getting their databases clean up, using a lot of email marketing, very clever, I think I think some big powerhouse like Amex have really got behind those retailers as well to make sure they're constantly communicating with the Australian consumer. So there's been a lot of positives as we come out of this. Yes. You know, I would say Australian fashion designers in particular, those we've made it through this period are in better shape than they've ever been to take advantage of international clients now as well because they're online offering is so much more sophisticated than it perhaps was going into this.

Paul: You raised some great points then, look we know that Australians spend about 60 billion on overseas trips. I'm just going to come to the luxuries sector for a second. What, so what are Australians buying from the luxury stores? Are they buying for themselves they're buying for their partners or what actually do you, how are they going about like, what are they spending their money on?

Edwina: Well, one of, one of the stories from cart was a couple coming in and they had planned on going on a cruise and they had delayed that cruise, I think three times. And eventually they just gave up and said, oh, well, we'll buy, buy one another, a watch instead so I think there's been a lot of those sort of those occasional pieces, you know, I want to reward myself and we can see that really driving up, fine jewelry purchase and watches in particular, but it's been true of, you know, leather goods as well. I mean, handbags have sold really well. I know, I know that I'm guilty of effectively buying a pair of Louis Vuitton boots during this period a night on our boots, but list. So I think it's been, it's been quite varied actually. Yes. And Aleia wear, you know, we've seen a lot of clever Australian designers like Rebecca, Lance and Illa and mark really refine that Aleia wear offering. I think we know brown site PE nation have had a fabulous time through this period, but interestingly, because obviously they are, you know, they're a global retailer, but Australia is still their most important market and it's been, you know, a varied story of, you know, stores will be open now in New York doing really well. And a lot of stores are not open in Australia. And so I think it depended on how exposed you were. Yes. And to which markets, how, how you've done and being able to, if you were able to move around stock, which a lot of the luxuries did as well, as long as they could get the stock to a city where they were able to fulfill the orders. You know, I think they've fed reasonably well. It will be, there is an issue though coming with supply that, you know, even, even if we look at the Italian luxury sector, you know, there were long periods where things would just shut down. So there is limited stock, but oddly I think we've seen this luxury cars actually as well. That limited supply has only filled greater demand. We've seen it in luxury boats, I think as well. You can't get a boat take about five years if you want one of those Palm beach boats to get. So I think that's that's probably just made consumers even more desperate if you like to get their hands on that item.

Paul: Maybe just a little bit about Australian designs, cause they've always sort of really have done it tough unless they've sort of got a global market. I guess they've had everything thrown at them now, including supply chain, how are they navigating their way through the current sort of COVID climate? I think given your role with the Australian fashion council, how are you seeing them reinvent themselves I guess through this period?

Edwina: So I guess the key to that would be their digital marketing and also this a lot of them who I've spoken to have really looked internationally. They're treating all customers as equal now because they

may have been reliant for example, a brand like age a quite, you know, had a reasonable footprint in terms of retail in Australia. Obviously a lot of that retail has been closed down. So really getting that online, offering refined and also focusing on international markets, which may have been open and and more up for shopping and I guess being a little bit more responsive to market conditions yes. And being able to get, you know, product when they could to the market where there was the most demand. So again, I think it's just been about refinement, really looking at fulfillment and where that was, where that's been happening and a refocusing on, on the American and the UK consumer as being just as valuable or you know, the Asian consumer being just as the Australian. And that's basically what I've been hearing, but for those who were sitting sort of under 2 million turnover or even under five, I think it's been really, really tough. Yeah. Just because obviously, you know, a lot of, a lot of those businesses are working on very fine margins as it is. Yes. And they just don't have as much flex you, their ability to switch on markets and switch on, you know, wind down others. So I think sadly we will coming out of this, we'll probably have fewer designers. But those who are left will be more resilient and, and better place to take advantage. The Australian government has just backed the Australian fashion come to work on brand Australian fashion. Like how do we, how do we present internationally as, as an Australian fashion brand. And I'm hopeful that as we come outta this, those players who will be able to contribute to that and really sit and benefit under that umbrella will be well placed to service those markets as well, reliant on big wholesale orders or big department stores taking them on consignment and more B2C with their approach. You know, it's all about this direct B2C kind of customer journey at the moment. And I think a lot of our designers have really got that right now.

Paul: How complex do you think it is for an Australian designer to actually manufacture in Australia and actually, you know bring that manufacturing to be much more local and I guess there's been some many brands have stuck with Australian manufacturing, but in fact, most don't now though, do though they actually manufacture overseas. How complex is that for Australian designer, do you think?

Edwina: I think this is something that we were actually looking at the AFC in association with a number of designers, but also a few different bodies really working on a, a better database in terms of what we have here in Australia now, which we've just improved online. There is probably more manufacturing capability than we actually for, or was here. Yes. But as we, as we, again, start to look at you know, what we want sovereign capacity to do. I think it was quite interesting that we were unable, even if we wanted to, to manufacture, you know, even uniforms, for example, in really, really large quantities. In fact, one of the biggest manufacturers is actually Perth of, of uniforms is the owners actually on the AXC board. And we do have limited capacity just in terms of scale. However, the machines from what I have heard that are now operating which require more of a tech background to operate. Yes. If you imagine more in terms of, you know, you basically putting in a raw material and getting outta finished garment from what I've been told at the other end. Yeah. I think that, you know, were we to clever invest in the right manufacturing, even if you look at the element of sustainability here and the consumer demand for a more transparent supply chain. I think it's an area that Australia potentially could compete because there's less there's less people required in that manufacturing process. So I don't think the, it would be true of all garments, but being able to certainly sample in this country, that's something the AFC, you know, collected this database to try to make it easier for designers to sample here. If they wanted to, especially if they don't have a, a large capacity themselves in terms of the sampling room. And then it is something that we would love to, to see a certain amount of manufacturing return to Australia, especially when you consider that we produce, obviously in terms of the rule, good such fine rule. For example, of course we would love to see, you know, that, that garment, all that value added in this country before potentially it's exported as a garment.

Paul: Now we're gonna talk, move to discuss a little bit about mental health. And I guess you would agree there's a strong link between fashion and mental health isn't there and that new outfit or accessory can instantly change how you feel and provide the lift that so many of us need right now. What's your thoughts around the importance now coming outta lockdown and, you know, the impact of, you know, dressing and you know, mental health,

Edwina: I think it's incredibly important. And I think people underestimate how much just, you know, getting up in the morning and getting dressed, you know, putting on your armor, if you like to go to work or putting on that beautiful dress, that makes you feel special and, you know, going out to lunch or, you know, the way this whole country dresses up for the Melbourne cup to celebrate, you know, everything that we do in life that celebratory involves has an important fashion element to it. Yes. Whether it be getting married or, you know, graduating or whatever. Yes. There's always some fashion element. And I do think that that's why we saw such great sales. The other night with that online shopping night that it almost is just a kind of automatic reaction for people to go and buy themselves something nice that they feel will make themselves feel better. And I think once we can get out of these lockdowns, it's gonna be really important for us to go and, you know, go for a shop and get out there and, and get, and get dressed again. Yeah. I think we kinda underestimate as well, the impact that that color that color has that our unique light in Australia yeah. Really does have a lot of people you know, wear, wear quite strong colors, I think globally, except of course, in Melbourne. So I mean, whilst I understand that mental health is very complex issue and there are so many different contributing factors and I'm not suggesting that, you know, the solution to all of those problems is just shopping in fashion. I do think it does play an important role in allowing us to see ourselves and present ourselves differently and to think of ourselves differently. I think so many of us have been so trapped in our own, our own little world through this with really only a screen as a link to, to any beyond our lounge. And so fashion is that, that, that link you know, to one another to a designer to creativity, but also to, to good times. So I think we're very much looking forward to it interestingly though. And I think, look, when you saw the met gala the other day, and just how dressed up that was the hugest day of traffic you, we ever had story ever. And I think that was an indication of how much people are looking forward to yes, to being able to dress up again, we're happy to experience that vicariously celebrities on the red carpet. You know, we must see AMAs were, was similar, which were, I think just like two days later. So there is this yearning for getting dressed up again, that fascinatingly there's also this sort of teenage grunge movement that's happening, which I would say is probably been heavily influenced by the likes of Billie Eilish, who I know, you know, was dressed up in Oscar at the met gala the other day. Totally total transformation, but there definitely this resurgence of, of grunge, which is, which is coming as well. And I find that fascinating because that movement, if you like, was really born out of the, the recession of the, of the nineties. Yes. and of course, Seattle, you know, Seattle garage, you knows as well, but it's that the teenage reaction to a huge shift in, you know, in the economy or Indeeds, we've seen COVID through the world, is this, this almost retreat into grunge? I think it's gonna be quite hard to get some of our...

Paul: Do you think it's sort of a rebellious approach to fashion right now, given what we've all been through?

Edwina: A little bit. Yeah, definitely. And I think it's for, for teenagers, it's a bit of a, you know, we don't give a damn. It's and again, that's probably linked back to the mental health issue that we, that we talked about. I mean, if you look at where people were in the nineties, where, where that sort of movement, you know, came from, it was, it was gen X and we don't give a, you know, you can, you can all get dressed up and like an 80 super model, but we're gonna, we're gonna wear a flower, that shirt

sort thing. So, yes, I think you always get that. I mean, that's the great thing about fashion it's cyclical and for every generation there's an, you know, equal and opposite, you know, reaction by the next generation to what's gone before them. So it's not surprising that, you know, grunge is coming back. It's just interesting that it's happening at the same time as we, you know, the runways shows on at the moment in Milan and we've seen such wonderful color and exuberance and, you know, the fashion world saying come out, get dress up the wonderful color and the...

Paul: Well, it's interesting, interesting trend to watch. We, we ignoring that trend for a little while, I think, to make sure it just passes.

Edwina: Exactly.

Paul: And I guess when you think about it and you reflect about the, through the lockdowns, what and you'd be used to it when, you know, getting front row seats to fashion parades and around the world. And I guess, you know, in the, in the sort of lockdown world where everything went virtual, it sort of made, I guess, the fast access to the runway a bit more accessible. Do you think there are some designers that will continue with that digital sort of availability versus in live events, which are clearly costly to run? Of course. So what's your perspective around just communication in around fashion moving forward?

Edwina: I think there will be a hybrid approach. I mean, I really feel, you know, I've been in this job for 10 years and edited for a few years before that. So, you know, I've had a great, I've had a great run that added I've, you know, and I think, you know, for me, it's been quite nice to be able as much as I love being part of that creativity. It's been quite nice to be able to observe things as a whole and really have time to take in the, the shows. So I'm often the shows are off and on their live streaming at one or two in the morning. So I'll often wait and look at them the next day or the day after. And to be able to kind of reflect from afar on that and say, well, how is that relevant? Which of these trends, you know, how's the Australian customer gonna relate to, you know, what we're seeing in the runway? How does our reader want these clothes presented has been you know, I've found that not only probably easier, but I think from a business point of view, it's been easier to run and always on digital business at, at home, you know, without all of that travel. And I would've said, look, you know, the luxuries in particular had started doing a lot of these traveling shows, so they would do a [inaudible] and they were not the seasonal shows. They, , they were actually the, the shelf collections, if you like, so [inaudible]. And so there was a lot of travel involved in that. Yeah. And I would've said, I doubt that's gonna come back, but there's just been a show in Venice. There's been, I mean, it looks to me like it is coming back and its coming back with a vengeance. And so, you know, the shows are on at the moment, Vogue is using local editors wherever they are, but we have office in Paris, London New York. So we don't have a lot of editors from other regions traveling to those host cities. But we're able to cover the shows regardless because of the, the strength, the network. So I do wonder what will happen to that when we go back, like we'll, you know, the six shows take, is a very long time out of day to day work, especially when you consider, you're not putting your magazine, you're running a very different type of business, you know? Yes. Like buyers have learn to buy virtually, although I'm not sure that it ever really does replace the difference. I think designers have become very sophisticated in there in the means of you know, communicating visually and the way they're filming and, you know, it's very, very clever, but I do wonder whether it, it really does compensate for that, you know, being able to touch and look and feel.

Paul: Well, maybe as you just said, it might end up being a hybrid model of a bit of both. And you sort of get the best of both worlds I guess.

Edwina: Yeah. I mean, look, I do think that that, you know, big end of fashion is going to have an accountability, you know, question regarding sustainability it's, you know, sustainability is becoming the key really concern for a lot of very young consumers. Yeah. And it's very hard to claim it sustainable when 400 people are going to your show who are flying from all over the world and yeah. You know, you find, I don't, I'm not quite sure how we reconcile that.

Paul: Well, let's talk about sustainability. I guess, you know, there is a greater focus on sustainability and reducing textile waste, of course, in the industry. How is that shaping the priorities? Do you think for brands, designers and consumers?

Edwina: I think it is on all fronts and dramatically. I think we're seeing a lot of up cycling now in terms of garment production. And I think this is an area where Australia could really lead the way. Yes. But we look at that really high tech manufacturing of how are we addressing things like up cycling. Because I think the consumer's gonna care about that. We can almost leap from the manufacturing that was and become the manufacturing of the future potentially in Australia. Certainly I mean, you know, we have articulated in our both values that, you know, sustainability is a key value. We have a global sustainability directory as well. It's something that both business takes very seriously and reports on regularly the sustainable credentials or the moves of the various big players in terms of sustainability. I, you know, I think that if you're not addressing it and discussing it, you you're gonna, if you don't have problems already, you're gonna have them in sort of five years in terms of yes. Brand perception in particular. And, and again, it's interesting because you know, I know that it's very, you know, in one breath you say, oh, young, you know, Jen said on TikTok really, really care about sustainability. But on the other hand, you know, if said, TikTok says by this and you know, is there a question around how sustainable they telling you by or not like, where's that line, does it, how much does it actually influence purchase? Well, it's hard to, it's hard to really demonstrate, however, from all the research we've done, if you ask consumers, they will tell you that it's very important to them, especially young consumers and that they would pay more for something, they believed that it had been age more sustainably. So I mean, whether they will or not, when it really comes to it. Yes. Who knows. But certainly that is what they're saying. And I think all of us have learned a little bit through COVID to, you know, that less can be more and I, yes, wonder again, how that will change that, you know, is it had that, you know, very expensive coat that you will pick for years cause it's really good quality and it's made of, you know, Australian fun or in a rule, like, is that gonna be more important than having the latest color of the season in terms of the coat, like is a coat, something that we think of now as more precious? I do think that there is that value kind of question being asked by consumers now well

Paul: Becomes more of an investment piece, doesn't it that, you know, you're gonna have for, you know, in many cases, a lifetime, if you look after that.

Edwina: Absolutely. Yeah. If you look after it and I, and I think that's true of of a lot of things. I think it's true now of shoes. I mean, even if you look at, you know, Nike in terms of sustainable credentials are some of their, their runners that are completely recycled. I mean, its quite, everyone's taking it very seriously, so there must be consumer dollars in it because you know, we know otherwise that wouldn't necessarily be happening across the board.

Paul: Now tell me how are things like diversity, equality and inclusion becoming a greater focus at Vogue. I noticed had a stunning cover profiling indigenous model and designer. Tell us about the, that and the growth of indigenous fashion. Absolutely. So Magnolia who was on that cover had been featured in Vogue in 2019 for our 60th anniversary. And we've been looking for an excuse cause she's

from a very remote part of the Northern territory. And we were looking for an excuse to kind of shoot her again. And in the intermediate time she'd actually had a, a baby. And so we were able to actually photograph her her baby on a beach, which was absolutely beautiful. That was a global directive from Edward who was the editor of British folk who came up with the concept of us all shooting with a sunrise behind us globally. So every vogue in the world featuring a sunrise to signify new beginnings and we just thought, well, what, what is newer? What is a better way to, to communicate new beginnings then Magnolia and her baby. And then when we asked her, we found out that she came, the land she comes from is Nolan colloquially as some country. Oh wow. So it was all obviously just meant to be, but we I mean Vogue has very clearly articulated values, which you know, I mean we state that we're the brand is about being more inclusive and is about supporting diversity in all its forms, that was publicly stated and, and signed onto breach of editors in January, 2020. But prior to that, through Vogue 60th. And, and a lot of the research that we were doing, working through our archives, we, it became pretty apparent to me that we were pretty poor. We had a pretty poor history in indigenous storytelling in particular. And that it wasn't enough just to have we we'd had we'd had, you know, photographed, obviously indigenous Australians and we'd had indigenous models on the cover, but we hadn't been very good at the storytelling really beyond that. It felt a little bit sort of tokenistic to be, to be honest. And so we committed then which was, you know, prior to the values actually being articulated that we would do a better job at indigenous storytelling in particular that we were both Australia, that that was an area that we had a responsibility to do better in. And so that's extended to obviously supporting indigenous fashion designers. And I have to say the moment which grace, William and Lee, you know, really curated and, and put together at Australian fashion league in may was just mind blowing the runway show that which was curated by indigenous designers modeled by indigenous models where they felt that they, if they couldn't find indigenous expertise in a certain area, they made sure that they hired the very best and then shadowed them with young, you know, indigenous, you know, want to be sort of makeup on this, for example. So they were always passing that on and that was the most emotionally moving show I've ever seen. And I've seen some pretty amazing shows in my, in my career, but this one just meant so much more. I mean, the filmmaking, the cinematography, like everything was so beautifully done, the music, everything. And when you think about it, you know, as the, you know, longest living continuous, you know continuous story tellers, it's not really surprising that they would be so, so apt at telling their own story. And I think that that's where in fashion, we've got it wrong for so long. We kept interpreting indigenous people or indigenous fashion through our lives. And that runway was the first time when I saw it not being interpreted by anyone. It was, it was, they were telling their own story and they were empowered to do so. And that's why it worked. And it showed you the diversity of design within the indigenous fashion community as well. I mean, it's an incredibly diverse range of people coming from very different points of view. And again, you know, I think while Australia has been, you know, always so quick to sort of say, oh, okay, well we get indigenous art and then we match it with, you know, Australian fashion designer and that's indigenous, you know, it's all, we've such a quite often sort of bland approach to it, to be honest. Yeah. Without realizing that you know, I mean like indigenous, you know, rap music is a, is really influential. And so you can see that in some of the designers and that influence and the culture and the urban indigenous design, and they may have a very different approach to, you know, another designer from a completely different so that runway gave you a little snapshot at just how complex, but how uniquely diverse yes. You know, indigenous culture is, and fashion is a great way to express that, that culture and it's, and it's complexity and it in, in a way that you, you get it immediately, you see it, you get it. Yeah. Whereas it's quite a difficult thing to explain. I think other I'm sure indigenous Australians have found it a very difficult thing to explain and, and potentially have felt typecast by the fashion industry before. Yeah.

Paul: Amazing. It sounds like to me, so it was like the experience was a fusion between music, fashion and art, and it sort of came together in such a magical way that it resonated for everybody that attended

Edwina: It really. It really did. I mean, great fashion shows always are, but they really are a great storytelling if you like, but this felt that I think because as well, it wasn't one designer's point of view. It was a group of designers with a group of models and a group of musicians. And so it was a completely different way of working potentially as well. Yeah. Where it was true collaboration. Not just a dominant view being passed down and then interpreted through a number of creatives to kinda be fed up to the dominant designers, you know, for their approval or not. Which is the way a fashion show is normally, you know, normally organized. Yeah. So that just the mere organization of it felt, felt really different. It was a really exciting time. I really, I I'm so pleased that we've, it feels late. It feels like why weren't we doing? Why wasn't this happening 10 years ago, but was 30 years ago, but at least it is it is happening now. It really does feel like things have shifted. Yeah.

Paul: Well, it's, it's so, so nice to hear all that I think, look at, at the end of the day as a mini would say better, late than never. And it sounds like there's this significant opportunities that are being now presented and you know, it's so lovely to see the indigenous community rise to the top. And that's a, you know, an amazing story you just told. Now you mentioned Edwin that you've been editor in chief at Vogue Australia for nearly 10 years now. That's amazing. Cause I remember what you getting appointed. That's flowed very quickly. Congratulations actually. That's right. It was so 2011, obviously. So how would you reflect on your time there so far things that you're proud of and the direction you want to take the Vogue brand into the future?

Edwina: I think that the thing that I'm most proud of would be the number of jobs we've created to be frank, probably the very different profile of the people who are in those jobs as well. You know, the backgrounds, they come from both educational, but also, you know, their own personal backgrounds as well. It's a very different environment to when I first had my first job at my twenties. And that's, and that's a good thing. That's a sign of the evolution of the brand. The fact that it has also kept kept with the times. I'd like to think led in, in some ways, certainly in the publishing space, but also evolved in the digital space. So the job creation has all been in digital that we now have more young digital journalists working for us. We have more editorial people than we've ever, ever had, but you know, they, they might come with a data analytics background or the, my latest hire is an SEO content specialist. Wow. So just being able to evolve a brand as power with the [inaudible] is able to, to have. Yeah. I would've, you know, probably seven years ago, I would've wondered whether we could create something called Vogue codes to really talk about diversity in the tech industry and yes, you know, topics like AI, that we would be able to do that under the Vogue brand, but the Australian consumer and, and customer was very, is very comfortable with Vogue talking about those types of, of issues. Yes. I think being able to also, you know, women's magazines traditionally played a, a role in speaking two and for women in Australia and as we've seen fewer of them within the marketplace, I think Vogue has a responsibility again there to do that and do that, do that well. And I think that we are committed to that. But then when I start to at things like you know, a content commerce, which is just starting to boom at the moment, so, you know, editorializing affiliate links, marketing, for example, which is well, was really affiliate links, marketing, but it's editorial. I mean, I couldn't have even really imagined, you know, that, that direct connection with the path to purchase. Yeah. And connecting the, a brand with the customer in that way, which is very different to putting it on a page in a magazine, you know, next to an ad. So it's been a really great time to be in media and I'm sure not many people say that it perhaps, you know, they've like grew up before the internet, but I think it's been a really exciting time and I think we've all changed. Certainly. I

think we've changed to the better. Yes. I mean the 20 year olds, I think we have 75% of our staff are under the age of 32 in editorial, which is pretty remarkable when you think about it. So being lucky enough to actually work in and around young people like that is a real privilege. And I've gotta say they're a whole lot smarter than me and better at it. You can really only bring to experience. I think and embrace change has been the other positive of it as well, looking for the, you know, constantly looking for the opportunity and lamenting, you know, the areas of decline has been, I think the best thing and being in, I mean here, the huddles are published by news and news is good at harnessing that entrepreneurial spirit. They'll really let you be take entrepreneurial approach to, you know, to campaign. They're a great campaign you know, company. And so when you take something like the codes and you present it as a campaign, this is its purpose. This is what we're trying to do. Or indeed American express that's that's campaign to help retail. That's what it was started as you, they get that. I go, yeah, this is good. It's good for retail. It's good for the Australian economy, let's all get behind it. So being able to have that power and reach of the, of the broader company backing, some of the big ideas has been has been a privilege for me, but also probably something that has helped us propel ourselves forward and, and given us enough scale to take advantage of of new ideas.

Paul: Now, look, we are leading up as you know, to the all important Christmas period, and I'll be very keen. I've got a couple of questions, asked you just some, some quick responses from you. So what's the perfect Christmas day look like for you?

Edwina: A swim on the beach. No don't wanna do any cooking at all think. I think must have been last Christmas didn't we, we had a limit of 20 or something and I think I was like under it by one with all my extended family on two tables. And I remember thinking, oh, maybe restrictions, good. Once you getting up to those numbers, maybe you want restrictions. But yeah, it's my husband loves to cook and we've got Brazilian children, so, and various cousins and everything. So yeah. Having everybody home for Christmas is...

Paul: So we're all sort of, most of us have been wearing, you know, we'd say zoom dressing, half dressing dressing only for our tops while the bottoms are in track or shorts. What's your quick sort of tips for dressing for Christmas or just for the summer holidays, I guess. What are the sort of the essentials.

Edwina: It's gonna be all about the dress for women. I think the dress is the item of the season, just because we just simply have a you know, having warm the so long, but also, I mean, I, even though that this morning getting we've, we've lost that ability to match the bottom with the top. Yeah so rather than put ourselves potentially embarrassing situation, I would just recommend buying a great dress. And then you can just zip it up little bit harder for men. Of course. So I think, look, I do, I think there's a real sort of casualization in, in men's fashion where some beautiful fabrications come through a lot of really natural fibers. Yeah. Well linens and cottons and, we surely see that every so much to some extent, but I do think, again, it comes back to this value proposition that people are gonna want that really, you know, beautiful shirt and they'll be willing to treat themselves this Christmas. I actually think we're gonna have a good, a really good strong Christmas. I think if there are headwinds, they're okay. Once we're open and the traveling starts, what happens then? Where are people spending their money? But I think the lead up to Christmas is gonna be really strong.

Paul: And maybe you message in Melbournians who may not want to take on the idea of lots of color this Christmas, what's your message to them?

Edwina: Well, I think they're gonna have to start with the cup, which I had, you know, chats with the BRC. Nobody's quite sure we'll be on track or off track or whatever, but, you know, last time the Melbourne cup was that real coming up moment of from Melbourne, right. From Melbourne outta that long lockdown. So I think we're gonna see a similar thing again, obviously. It'll be a little earlier, I think for, for Melbourne to be completely you know, restrictions, but Melbourne love getting dressed up. Like they love it and they love a picnic. I mean, they're the world. I mean, Sydney's picking love right now, but more about margaritas. I think picnics, but Melbourne I think are really great at picnics. So I think you see people getting dressed up. I hope, I hope we will, because if, if there's a city in the world that really needs that lift and that pick me up, it is Melbourne. Yes. So I'm hopeful that, you know, a great summer dress and some, you know, really good quality, beautiful line shorts and a shirt will do the trick.

Paul: Absolutely some clear advice there for Edwina. And lastly, any, any gift what's, what's the gift that's on the top of your Christmas wishlist this year?

Edwina: I've kinda probably got a few, to be honest. I I'm obsessed, you know, with the, you know, sandals that I know they, they become, they sell out in Australia all the time. They'd really hard to get your hands on, but, but I seriously feel like I, I need these shoes in every single color. Cause you can wear them all through summer. You can, they look dressed up enough to get away with, but you can also wear 'em to the beach. And you can, you know, even wear them into the office and you still look respectable. So if I get another pair of those, I'd be pretty happy, which is probably not the most exciting thing. But since I've got a few already, but they're the most used item I'd say in my wardrobe.

Paul: Fantastic. It sounds like to me, your husband knows you've got expensive taste and he is working hard to give you everything you want, but I shouldn't say you're buying probably what you want yourself. So I didn't mean that way, but more as a gift. So when we can thank you so much for joining us today on retail therapy, congrats on all your success at Vogue Australia, all the best for the future. And most of all, Merry Christmas,

Edwina: Merry Christmas. Paul, thank you for having me.