

The Happiness Project

After six seasons on *Parenthood* and the launch of a clothing line, Joy Bryant is settling down for some well-deserved domestic bliss

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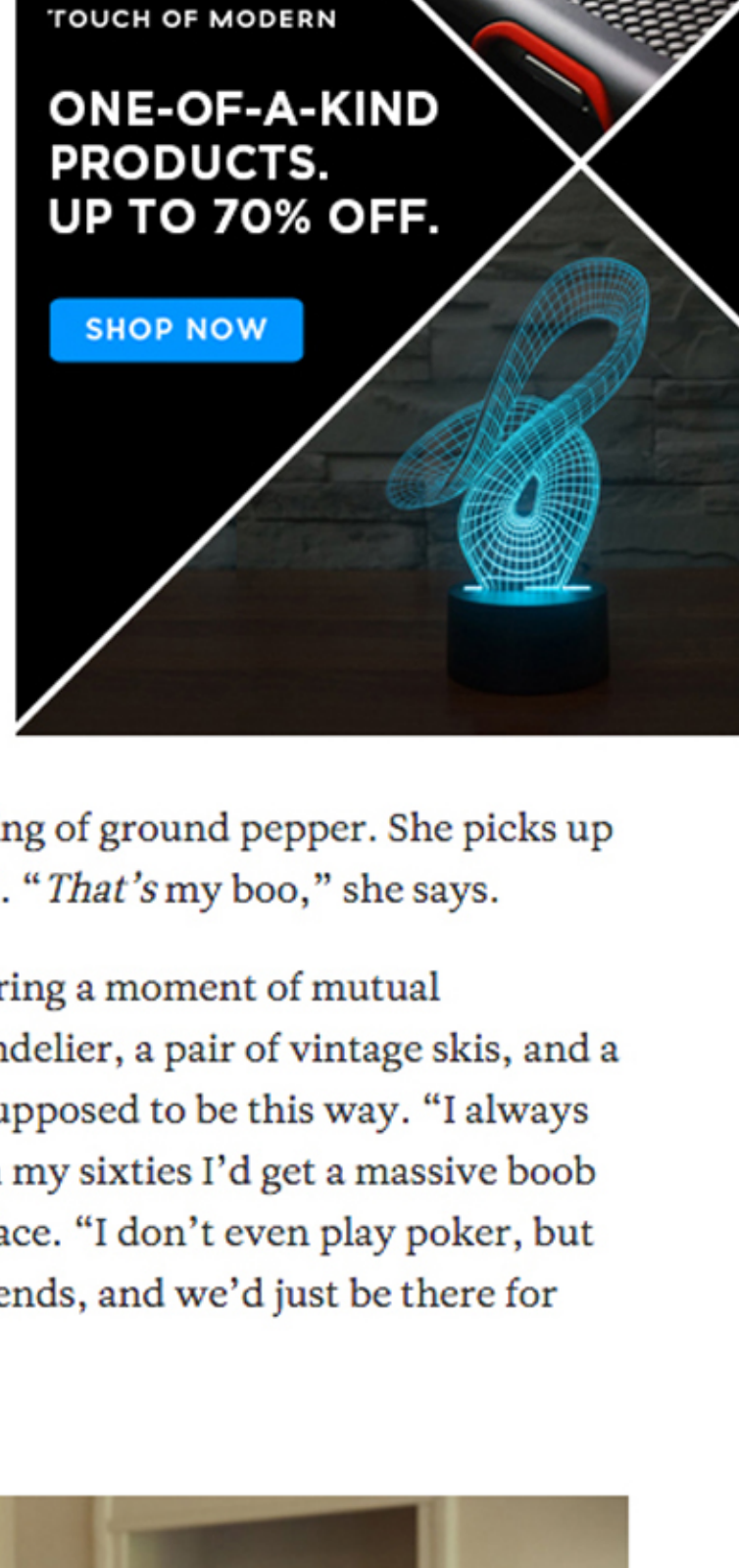


Actress Joy Bryant near her home in Glendale, California. [Tibi sweater](#) and [Elisabeta Franchi pants](#); [shoes](#) by Greymier. Fashion styling by Jessie Cohan. Hair by Clariss Rubenstein at the Wall Group. Makeup by Gregory Arts at Exclusive Artists Management. Prop styling by Joni Noe.

Joy Bryant is refusing to lower her hand. The actress is sitting in her dining room attempting to convey the wonder that is Donut Friend, the cult vegan bakery in Highland Park, Los Angeles, and in doing so has raised her arm to its fullest extension—as though reaching for the invisible bar where supreme deliciousness dwells.

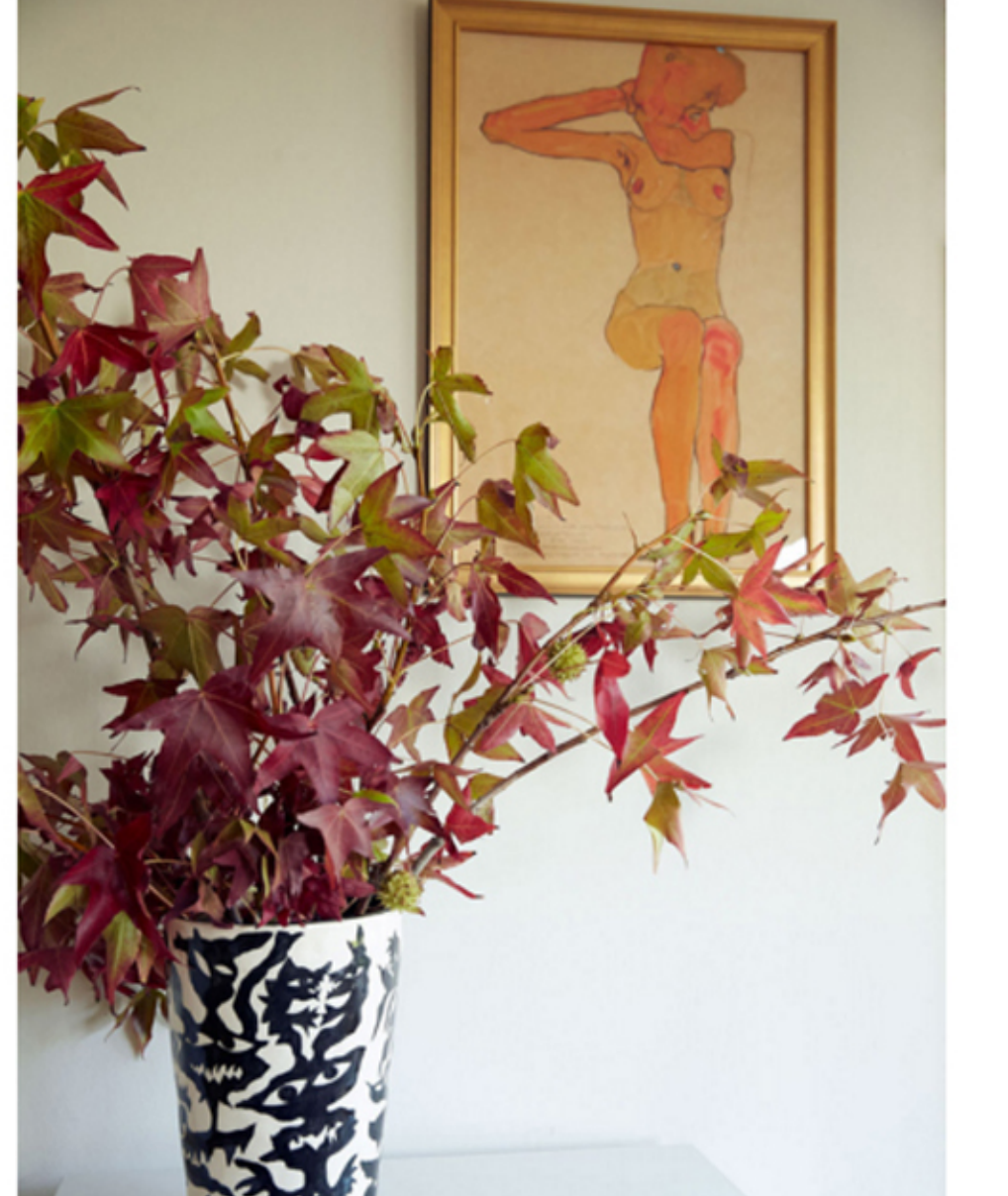
“THE GOAL IS THAT, INDOORS OR OUT, WE HAVE SPOTS THAT ARE COMFORTABLE AND PEACEFUL.”

—JOY BRYANT



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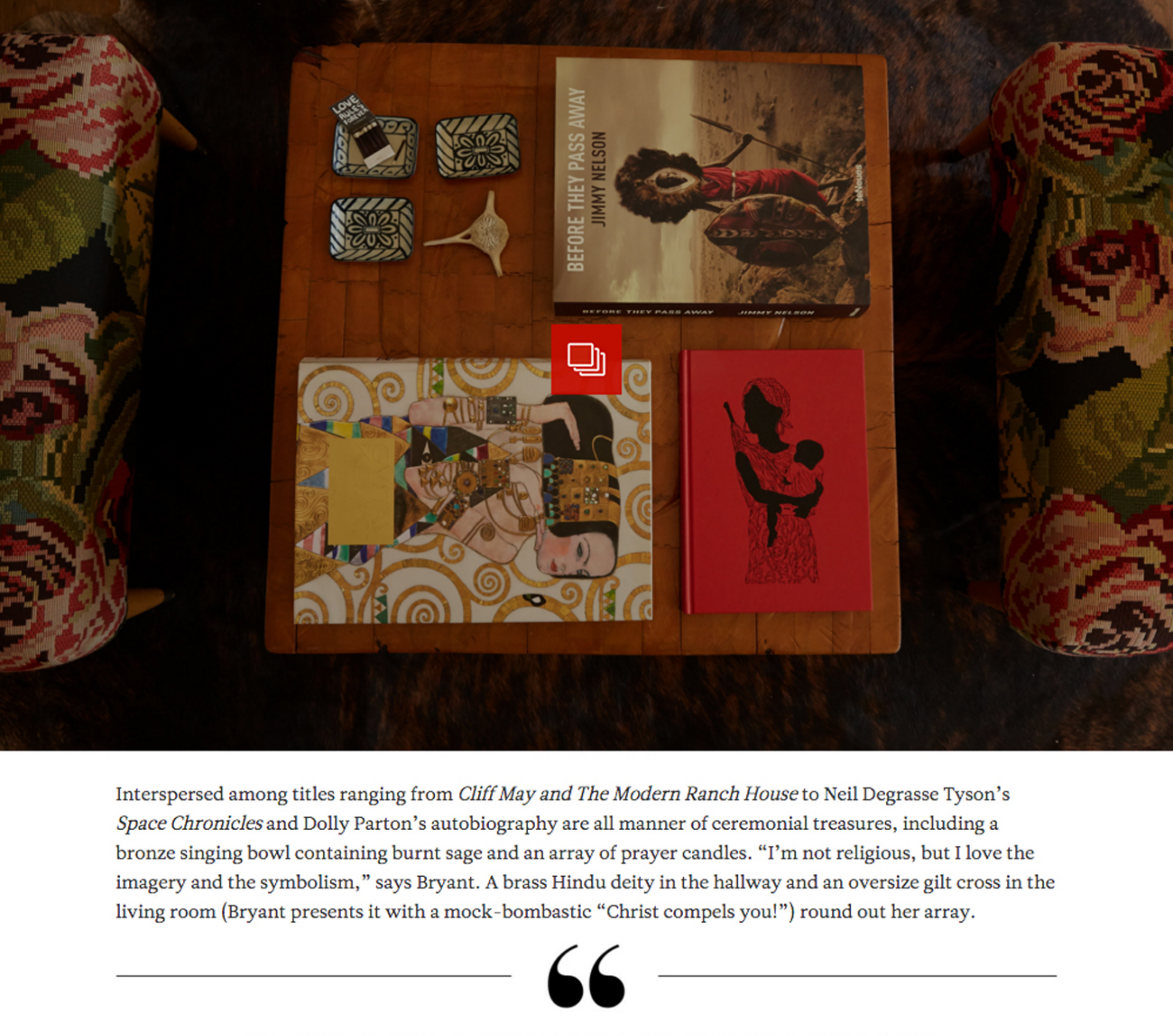
A nude by Egon Schiele complements the earthy palette of a leafy arrangement in an [En Soie](#) vase.



On the table: [candlesticks](#) by Stephen Antonson from [Nathan Turner](#) and an [Aslier de Villatte bowl](#) from [Nickey Kehoe](#).

She has never been one to stick to the road map. The South Bronx-bred Bryant attended Yale on an academic scholarship, then dropped out to model—winning contracts with the likes of Victoria's Secret and Tommy Hilf—eventually making the jump to acting, appearing in such films as *Antwone Fisher*, *The Skeleton Key*, *Bobby*, and most recently *About Last Night*. It was on the set of the 2008 Martin Lawrence movie *Welcome Home Roscoe Jenkins* that she met Pope, a professional stuntman. Both skateboarding enthusiasts, they spent their first date taking turns on Bryant's long board in the parking lot of a Mexican restaurant in Shreveport, Louisiana, and were engaged seven months later. “She just kept getting cooler and cooler,” Pope says.

Finding their California ranch-style house in Glendale was a similarly charmed event. “It's like when you meet somebody you dig,” says Bryant. “You know when you know.” The couple, who at the time had been married two and a half years and were living in Pope's self-proclaimed “frat house” in Glendora, saw the place on a Saturday and put in an offer that Monday. Once it was theirs, they enlisted decorator Erika Montes to help shape the globally tinged interiors. “I didn't know what I wanted except that I had to be able to take a nap in every room,” Bryant says. The living room more than meets this requirement with several lounge-friendly spots, including a pair of low-to-the-ground leather-and-rosewood safari-style chairs; midcentury seats reupholstered in a rose-patterned granny-chic textile; and a deep Dellarobia sectional atop a Moroccan rug Pope bought in Africa while filming *Prince of Persia*. A diptych of black-and-white drawings by French provocateur Jean André graces the wall, but it's the floor-to-ceiling bookshelves that display Bryant's pride and joy—a collection she meticulously categorizes by genre.



Interspersed among titles ranging from *Cliff May* and *The Modern Ranch House* to Neil Degrasse Tyson's *Space Chronicles* and Dolly Parton's autobiography are all manner of ceremonial treasures, including a bronze singing bowl containing burnt sage and an array of prayer candles. “I'm not religious, but I love the imagery and the symbolism,” says Bryant. A brass Hindu deity in the hallway and an oversize gilt cross in the living room (Bryant presents it with a mock-bombastic “Christ compels you!”) round out her array.

“WHEN WE FIRST MOVED IN, WE DIDN'T HAVE HEAT. FRIENDS WOULD COME OVER AND WE'D DRINK WINE TO STAY WARM.”

—JOY BRYANT

Outside, a hammock set by Pope from army-surplus lounge-cloth canvas offers yet another location to unwind. It also happens to be the catalyst for Bryant and Pope's new project: their clothing line, Basic Terrain. “Joy wanted to spend an ungodly amount of money on a hammock, so I went out and got a \$60 Hello Kitty sewing machine from Target to make one myself,” says Pope. Upon discovering her husband's hidden talent, Bryant commissioned him to replicate a pair of fisherman's pants she'd picked up in Cambodia. “After I made the 30th pair for one of our friends, I thought, we should start a company,” says Pope. “It also helps me with an exit strategy from stunts. [Once I'm] 50, I don't need to prove how tough I am—I don't want to get kicked down the stairs or hit by a car.” The 42-year-old pauses before adding, “I'd maybe still get set on fire.”



The original fireplace received a crisp makeover courtesy of a coat of off-white paint.



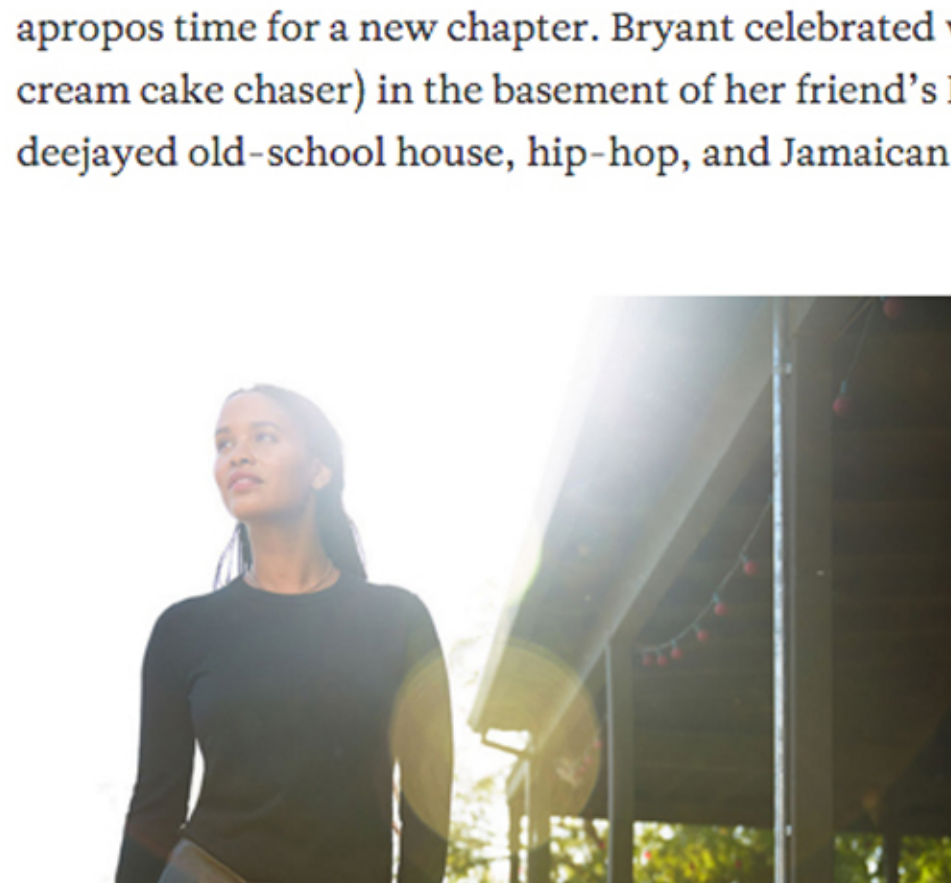
A muted striped pillow and saffron throw from West Elm add contrast and texture to the neutral sofa.

The label, which launched this past spring and is manufactured in downtown Los Angeles, currently features the slouchy, fold-at-the-waist Eden pant in short and long lengths and four washes, and there are plans to expand the range to separates, accessories, and, eventually, luggage. “We want to have pieces where you could wear the denim version on the street or get the Gore-Tex version and go snowboarding in it. The concept blends Joy's taste and sensibility with my functionality,” says Pope, who grew up in Chehalis, Washington, with a style for the outdoors. “So while I'm trying to figure out pocket placement for an avalanche beacon—and a pocket for your cell phone that's far enough away so it doesn't interfere with your avalanche beacon—Joy will remind me that I'm one of a handful of people who needs that.”

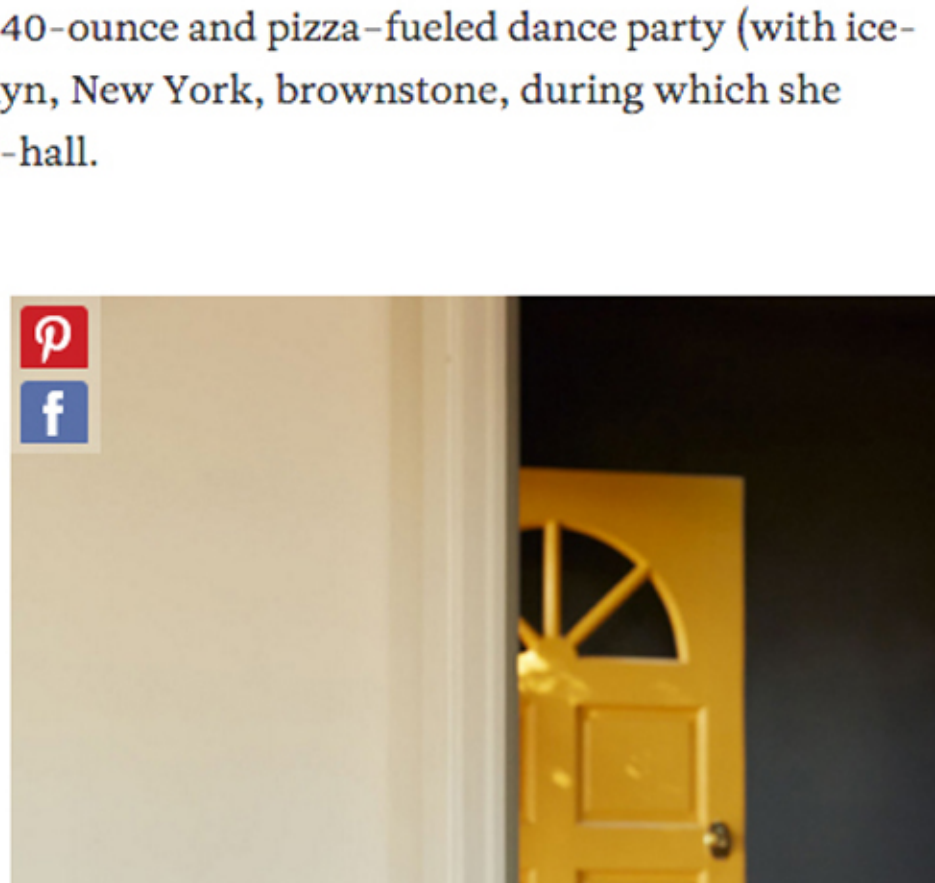


Sitting prettily on a [Dellarobia seat](#) by a mirrored coffee table in the living room. Sweater by [Pendleton](#); silk pants from [Basic Terrain](#).

Run as dancer and mother-of-two Jasmine Trussell on the NBC drama *Parenthood*. “It's the best job I've ever had, and on one hand, it sucks to let go of that,” she says. “But I'm excited for the possibilities. I'll be able to pursue things I may not have been able to before.” Given the fact that she turned 40 in October, it's an apropos time for a new chapter. Bryant celebrated with a 40-ounce and pizza-fueled dance party (with ice-cream cake chaser) in the basement of her friend's Brooklyn, New York, brownstone, during which she deejayed old-school house, hip-hop, and Jamaican dance-hall.



In the backyard, wearing a military-green cropped Eden Pant from [Basic Terrain](#), a [Tibi shirt](#), and [green heels](#).



A vintage midcentury chair was reupholstered in an eye-catching floral fabric.

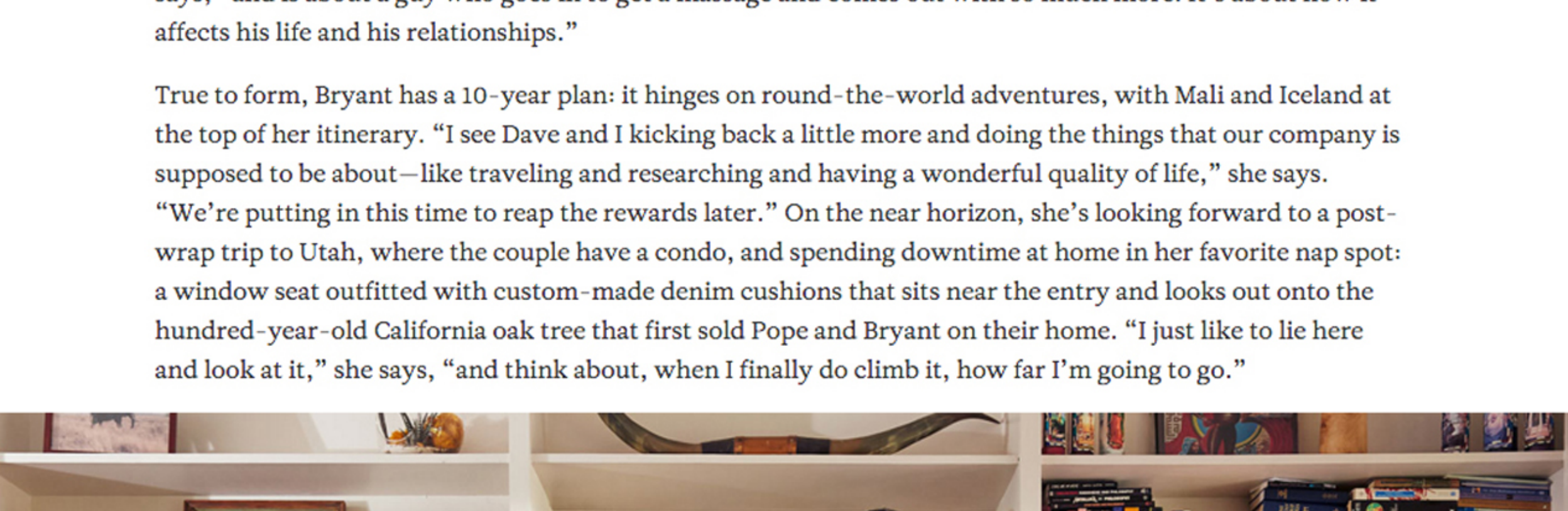
“I'm a 40-year-old black actress in Hollywood, so on paper that sounds like, wow, your days are numbered,” she says. “But I'm not tripping on it. I look in the mirror and I feel older, but...” She doesn't finish, but we'll say it—like certainly doesn't look 40, and in light of the dainty collection of stick ‘n' poke tattoos that meanders upward from her wrist—including the recently acquired words “Soul Rebel,” which she and her friends applied under the influence of several glasses of wine—she doesn't act it either. (Bryant also has tattoos of her and Pope's astrological signs, Libra and Aquarius; the latter, denoted by a pair of parallel zigzags, inspired Basic Terrain's logo.) “Women have all these expectations [put on them] in this business, but what are you going to do?” she says. “I can't control any of that—I can just control what I'm doing.”

“MY FAVORITE THING TO DO IS TO PUT THE BOOKSHELF BACK IN ORDER.”

—JOY BRYANT

Right now that's a not-insignificant list. In addition to Basic Terrain, whose spring collection is “gets to a gogo happy ending,” Bryant recently cowrote a short about a man who, in Bryant's words, “is definitely remain nameless,” she says, “and is about a guy who goes in to get a massage and comes out with so much more. It's about how it affects his life and his relationships.”

True to form, Bryant has a 10-year plan: it hinges on round-the-world adventures, with Mali and Iceland at the top of her itinerary. “I see Dave and I kicking back a little more and doing the things that our company is supposed to be about—like traveling and researching and having a wonderful quality of life,” she says. “We're putting in this time to reap the rewards later.” On the near horizon, she's looking forward to a post-wrap trip to Utah, where the couple have a condo, and spending downtime at home in her favorite nap spot: a window seat outfitted with custom-made denim cushions that sits near the entry and looks out into the hundred-year-old California oak tree that first sold Bryant and Bryant on their home. “I just like to lie here and look at it,” she says, “and think about, when I finally do climb it, how far I'm going to go.”



Bryant and Pope file in somewhere between the Fiction and Religion sections of their library.

GOOD READS

Bibliophile Joy Bryant shares the four titles in her library she can't live without

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES
Howard Zinn

“This was my de facto history book growing up. My mother gave me my first copy when I was in the eighth grade, and it has remained my favorite book of all time.”

GUSTAV KLIMT: COMPLETE PAINTINGS
Tobias Natter

“I love his work—my favorite is *Judith and the Head of Holofernes*—and this book is a gorgeous display of his art.”

THE WOMEN WHO RUN WITH THE WOLVES
Clarissa Pinkola Estes

“A wise woman recommended this book to me many moons ago and it is such a treasure—I will be reading it soon, for the third time. The stories of others help us understand our own.”

WAVE
Sonali Deraniyagala

“Sonali is my hero. Her true story of tragic loss and the survival of her mind, body, and soul is inspiring.”

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