

THE FAMILY ISSUE

TOWN & COUNTRY

FEBRUARY 2024

INTRODUCING
NATALIA BRYANT
Fashion's New MVP

A Palm Beach
SURPRISE

Das Crescendo:
Inside 2024's Secret
OPERA WAR

Trouble in Monaco?
AGAIN?

Father-Daughter
SUCCESSION
SAGAS

THE COOLEST
BASEMENT
in America



Here. We.
GO!

Happy 178th Anniversary, T&C

Girl with a ERPENTI EARRING



And necklace and ring and handbag—future heirlooms from
a most distinguished Roman house.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY **ROBBIE FIMMANO** STYLED BY **DANIA LUCERO ORTIZ** SET DESIGN BY **TODD WIGGINS**

Already a member of one storied dynasty, Princess Olympia of Greece and Denmark now joins another: la famiglia Bulgari, where she is the face of its new Roma bag.

RALPH LAUREN COLLECTION JACKET (\$2,490) AND JUMPSUIT (\$3,690); **LARROUDE** PLATFORMS (\$375); **BULGARI** NECKLACE, RING (\$17,300), AND ROMA HANDBAG (\$4,200). OPPOSITE: **DOLCE & GABBANA** TOP (\$2,345), SHORTS (\$1,195), AND BELT (\$375); **ARAKS** BRA (\$120); **GIGI BURRIS MILLINERY** HAT (\$385); **BULGARI** EARRINGS (\$36,300)







As Bulgari knows, the key to a dynasty's longevity is evolution. Take its 75th anniversary Serpenti jewelry collection, with the coils revamped in rose gold, or the Divas' Dream earrings, which offer a fresh look at the house's Art Deco treasures.

ALTUZARRA DRESS; **BULGARI** EARRINGS (\$31,800), RING (\$10,900), AND HANDBAG (\$5,600). OPPOSITE: **PRADA** DRESS (\$8,100) AND MULES (\$1,150); **BULGARI** EARRINGS (\$10,500) AND BRACELET; **WARD + GRAY** RUG (FROM \$2,810)



A sumptuous wardrobe—especially one crafted by masters of Italian design—is an effective way to telegraph status. If you want to really level up, show them the Monete (see right).

GUCCI DRESS (\$24,500) AND PLATFORMS (\$1,490); **BULGARI** EAR CUFF (\$10,900) AND NECKLACE (\$69,000).
OPPOSITE: **MAX MARA** GOWN (\$4,690); **BULGARI** MONETE NECKLACE; **WARD + GRAY** RUG (FROM \$2,810). FOR DETAILS SEE PAGE 87

*Hair by
Takuya Yamaguchi
for Oribe at the Wall
Group. Makeup by
Stoj for Nars at the
Wall Group. Nails
by Kayo Higuchi for
Chanel Le Vernis.
Design consultant:
Isiah Magsino*





THE RULE OF THE RING

[CONTINUED FROM PAGE 81] style of a Greek amphitheater, with financing from Wagner's patron King Ludwig II of Bavaria. The stage spans 89 feet, large enough to accommodate more than 100 chorus members, and there's an orchestra pit below the stage that allows singers to use a softer pianissimo without fear of being drowned out.

The ticketing system is also a thing of legend. In the 1970s it became common for fans to have to wait a decade for a ticket to the festival. Applicants would send a request to the ticket office each year, which would guarantee them a spot on the wait list. If an applicant skipped a year of letter writing, he would lose his place on the list. This postal ticket system remains in place, although online purchasing has been made possible in recent years. Before the 2023 festival, tickets were so hard to come by that hopeful Wagnerians roamed the theater gardens before shows and during intermissions for a chance to buy last-minute seats. But demand isn't what it used to be.

"The ticket system is currently changing, because we had a year when the offering was larger than the demand," Friedrich says. "In particular, *The Ring*, with its four parts, was not sold out for the first time in decades."

Trouble selling out *The Ring* highlights the weaknesses of Bayreuth when it comes to satisfying new audiences. Although *The Ring* consists of four separate operas, *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre*, *Siegfried*, and *Götterdämmerung*, they are sold as a cycle and meant to be watched sequentially as one story, with a run time totaling roughly 15 hours over the course of a week—not including the festival's notorious hourlong intermissions. This is intense viewing for audience members, and a strenuous feat for the singers, who need rest days between performances. And while the town of Bayreuth is not without its charm, it lacks the amenities cosmopolitan audiences have come to expect, such as luxury hotels or an innovative dining scene, and several consecutive days of opera and bratwurst can be tough for anyone to digest.

"Wagnerians were once satisfied with simple lodgings that had toilets in the hall and

simple food," Friedrich says. "They only went to go to the festival and see performances. This has changed. As a rule, especially in Bayreuth, you have to see *The Ring* as a single piece in its entirety. But this is an idealism that you have to be able to afford."

LEERES NEST (EMPTY NEST)

Having a Wagner at the helm may be a tradition Bayreuth can no longer afford. Katharina won the throne, but she has no obvious heir. Succession struggles have alienated family members who were once engaged in the festival, such as Eva and Nike, and there are currently no younger Wagners learning the ropes on the Green Hill.

Eva's son Antoine Wagner has carved out a niche as an experimental filmmaker, creating projects out of his family history, such as *Wagner, a Genius in Exile*, a documentary about the composer's time in Switzerland, and the 2009 music video for "Lisztomania," a song by the pop band Phoenix. "My motivation lies in trying to share the beauty of opera and classical music with a younger and broader audience," Antoine says. "The themes and stories of Wagner's work are timeless. To shed a different light on them and to place them in the present is what keeps them alive."

Nike's daughter Louise pursued a career in dance. Although she is inspired by the work of her grandmother Gertrud Wagner, who choreographed famous dance numbers like the Venusberg ballet in *Tannhäuser* and was responsible for choreography at Bayreuth, Louise wanted to establish herself as a choreographer in her own right, staging pieces at Berlin's Maxim Gorki Theatre and the Off Festival Aix-en-Provence. She says she would be open to a collaboration with Bayreuth, but only under the right conditions. "There has been a lot of arguing about Bayreuth's heritage," Louise says, "but little thought about family cohesion in the next generation."

Maybe, after a century and a half, it's time for a new chapter for Bayreuth—one with fewer skeletons in the closet and fewer blood feuds. At the same time, Katharina is in the prime of her career. A reconciliation or new family alliance wouldn't be the most outrageous thing to happen in the history of the festival.

"People aren't going to simply agree with everything Katharina or another Wagner does simply because of their surname, but it gives a tremendous cachet," Fairman says. "Bayreuth with and without a Wagner is like the difference between a country run by a king and a country run by a prime minister." T&C

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GIRL WITH A SERPENTI EARRING

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