



MEDIUM



WELL DONE

SPOTLIGHT

# Picture imperfect

BY Greg Callaghan

REMEMBER THE retouching scandals that hit magazine land a few years ago and the women celebrities – Mariah Carey, Kim Kardashian, Nicki Minaj and Lena Dunham among them – who lined up to complain about having their crow’s-feet smoothed out, their legs slimmed, their hair thickened, in high-gloss cover images? The so-called Photoshop wars really kicked off in earnest in 2003, when actor Kate Winslet, dismayed by an unrealistically skinny version of herself on the cover of British *GQ* magazine, griped to the BBC: “I actually have a Polaroid that the photographer gave me on the day of the shoot... I can tell you they’ve reduced the size of my legs by about a third.”

Ten years later, Lady Gaga took her objections about a super-airbrushed image of herself on the cover of *Glamour* magazine straight to its editor in a speech at the publication’s annual Women of the Year Awards. “What I want to see is the change on your covers,” she protested. “When the covers change, that’s when culture changes.” *Awkward*. This represented a seismic shift

from the 1980s and ’90s, when celebrities would be the first to have their publicists harangue editors if their visages were anything but flawless.

The retouching wars now look especially quaint given that you no longer need Photoshop or a desktop computer to enhance your face or body – only a smartphone and your choice of a dozen or so photo editing apps. And amid all the glamour filters now available, it would appear there is also a demand for hyper-realistic, warts and all photos. Witness last month’s FaceApp challenge, in which celebs and non-celebs alike posted photos of what they might look like in 20 or more years’ time. The app, which uses artificial intelligence to age users’ faces, is an update of a 2017 app that could make you look younger and more attractive. The app grabbed additional headlines when it was claimed that its Russian developer could harvest private information from users, an accusation roundly rejected.

No prizes for guessing that the vast majority of celebrity users were young and dewy fresh. Among the older exceptions: an already cantankerous Gordon Ramsay

↑  
*They say the face mirrors the heart: Gordon Ramsay circa 2039.*

WATCH / READ / LISTEN

ALBUM  
*Western Stars*  
BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN

CAN I tell you how much I love Bruce Springsteen? I’ve seen him perform live in Australia three times between 1985 and 2013, and each performance was an unforgettable experience. During *The Rising Tour* in 2003, I was 5½ months pregnant with twins, but my large belly wasn’t going to stop me from seeing the Boss. This man gives his all to his live shows and exudes talent as a musician and as a singer, but his special gift is as a storyteller. His narrative writing is often more like memoir, with personal observations of poignant moments written from various perspectives. I never tire of hearing my all-time favourite Springsteen song/story, *The River*.

Naturally I was thrilled with the recent release of his 19th studio album, *Western Stars*. It follows a run of sold-out performances of



his one-man show, *Springsteen on Broadway*, which finished in New York in December last year. The new album is rich with dark, melancholic songs reminiscent of those recorded

on his 1982 album, *Nebraska*.

Never one to shy away from being vulnerable, Springsteen’s lyrics examine anxiety, pain and disconnection like few others’. He’s been open in revealing his bouts of depression, and *Hello Sunshine* is a notably soul-searching track, expressing how darkness closes in if you allow it. “You know I always loved a lonely town,” he sings. “Those empty streets no one around. Fall in love with lonely, you end up that way. Hello sunshine, won’t you stay?”

Two more personal favourites on the album are *There Goes My Miracle* and *Sundown*. Both songs feature orchestral accompaniment and soaring choruses enhancing his soulful baritone. Just classic Bruce Springsteen.

The Boss turns 70 next month and shows no signs of slowing down. This devoted fan is very grateful for that. *Jennifer Johnston*

SHOP / PLAY

LOOKING LIKE a futuristic power tool (with the tech specs to match) the Theragun G3PRO is a hand-held percussive therapy device designed to mimic massage by pummeling tight muscles using frequency, torque and amplitude. It aims to trick your brain into minimising discomfort while delivering deep muscle relief to release tension, improve mobility and speed up recovery. Designed by Melbourne Institute of Technology sound and mechanical engineers, the industrial-grade motor offers two speeds for targeted deep-muscle treatment.

Frances Mocnik



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