

# style

THE SUNDAY TIMES

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## Heston's new tricks

Imagine making the most perfect comfort food you've ever tasted. In a four-part special, Mr Blumenthal shows how it's done

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Fashion's gothic moment

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The joy of hating everything

**From crystal meth to megastar**  
A pop diva tells her story



**Bethan Cole**  
THE SYBARITE

## Kitsch inspiration

Chiara (one word, like Madonna) is a 29-year-old artist who lives and works in Rome. She creates photographic tableaux that recall 1960s beauty advertising – all silvery bouffant wigs and surgically clean pink backdrops. She populates her images with authentic vintage finds: atomisers, traditional soaps and powder puffs gleaned from flea markets and perfumeries.

"It's about considering feminine beauty solely in aesthetic terms, according to the tenets of a none-too-distant past," says Chiara, who poses in the images. "You see a young woman, naively content, absorbed in everyday activities, posing for the camera. The candy-coloured atmosphere is typical of the 1960s." Chiara's staged photos show her engaged in various intimate boudoir activities, such as showering (above), manicuring or indulging in a foot bath, with all the innocence of the era.

I like them tremendously: they're fun, witty and rather kitsch, a pop-lite version of Cindy Sherman. "I think beauty enhances life," Chiara says, "but I don't like the way it is used in contemporary imagery and in the media. The 1950s and 1960s were more idyllic." Not surprisingly, her beauty icon is Audrey Hepburn. Her favourite contemporary artist is Miranda July, who played the lead in the quirky film *Me and You and Everyone We Know*.

And when she's not posing, what make-up does Chiara wear? She likes mascara and blusher and red lipstick for evening. Of course, a truly smart beauty company would hire her to collaborate on its marketing, as *Comme des Garçons* did with Sherman herself in the 1990s. But are there any adventurous enough, that's the question.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHIARA Chiara's Variations on a Theme: Beauty is at 127, 127 Brick Lane, E1, until November 13

DO IT NOW

Banish eye bags with Lancôme Rénergie Lift Duo Concealer

[BEAUTY STYLE]

## It's only natural

Antipodes is a New Zealand skincare range based on nourishing, antioxidant-rich avocado oil. The Vanilla Pod Hydrating Day Cream is packed with skin hydrators such as shea butter and manuka honey, yet makes a great matt base for make-up.

£23; [www.myvanitycase.com](http://www.myvanitycase.com)

## Top of the tree

We're pretty sure you won't find a more feelgood hand and body wash than Ecosoapia's liquid soaps. They won't strip your skin of moisture, plus they are organic and have the Soil Association seal of approval to prove it. Better still, 10% of profits go towards rainforest conservation. Tea Tree Liquid Soap, £6 each; [www.ecosoapia.com](http://www.ecosoapia.com)



## Simple luxury

Like her clothes, Margaret Howell's beauty products are tastefully understated. We're hooked on the delicate fragrance and minimalist style of her White Lavender soaps. £9; 020 7009 9009

## SOFT TOUCH

One whiff of the exquisite new Sense and Sensuality massage oils for couples is enough to reveal they have been blended by the master aromatherapist Michelle Roques-O'Neil. Her scent Imagine has the power to truly uplift and inspire. £40 each; 0845 603 8779

