



DAVID BAILEY



TRENCH WARFARE

For a quintessentially British fashion house, the latest weapon in the battle of the brands is a burgeoning beauty line.

Words: Sigourney Cantelo

In the clash of the fashion labels, Burberry is brandishing some big, shiny guns. In recent years it has been strategically outsmarting other leaders in luxury with a high-tech artillery of digital innovation and subtle marketing strikes. It has expanded its global reach (Burberry is now in 80 countries) and sales, with an effective online land-and-expand strategy, all the while waving the Union Jack in the faces of the French and Italian conglomerates.

At the front line, alongside CEO Angela Ahrendts, is the brand's chief creative officer, Christopher Bailey.

Don't get me wrong, Bailey is hardly the army major type. In fact, he is quite the opposite. Bailey is the fashion industry's Mr Congeniality: good-looking, polite and eloquent, a far cry from the cliché of a black-clad *enfant terrible* fashion designer. And now I'm here at the brand's slick headquarters, Horseferry House in London, to meet the man himself and hear about Burberry's latest tactical move: the launch of the signature fragrance Burberry Body. Apparently the scent is a "trench coat in a fragrance". As I wait in the fabulously shiny foyer, I wonder what that smells like. Gabardine? Drill cotton? A rainy embrace in a New York street (*à la Breakfast at Tiffany's*) or more like the mist wafting off the English moors?

On my way to meet Bailey, I'm given a tour of Horseferry House. The sleek seven-storey structure of steel and glass is home to more than 1,000 Burberry staffers. It's modern and bright, with generous windows and skylights that showcase London's predictable grey drizzle, all excellent inspiration when designing a trench coat. As we walk, beige panelled walls give way to cream blinds subtly embossed with the Burberry check, and everywhere you look there are stylish young things being busy. Bailey's love of gadgetry is evident: there are plasma screens beaming the latest runway shows and everyone seems to have an iPad.

I'm led into a cosy cream room in the bowels of the building and introduced to Bailey, who shakes my hand warmly.

"Welcome, so nice to meet you. Thank you for coming," he says earnestly. His warm boyish smile, blond stubble and stylish scruffed-up hairstyle makes him look younger than his 40 years. He shows me a video about the fragrance on a plasma screen that he controls with an iPad.

"We wanted to create our signature fragrance, which is going to be the core of all our fragrances," he explains. "It's taking the idea of the trench coat, which is intrinsically multifaceted in the way that it makes people feel. You can feel very sexy in it, very confident in it ... it can feel protective ▶

Burberry chief creative director Christopher Bailey at the company's London headquarters.

vogueVIEW

February 2011
More naughty than nice,
Burberry goes biker.



BURBERRY IN VOGUE

October 2005
Gemma Ward
in a Burberry coat.

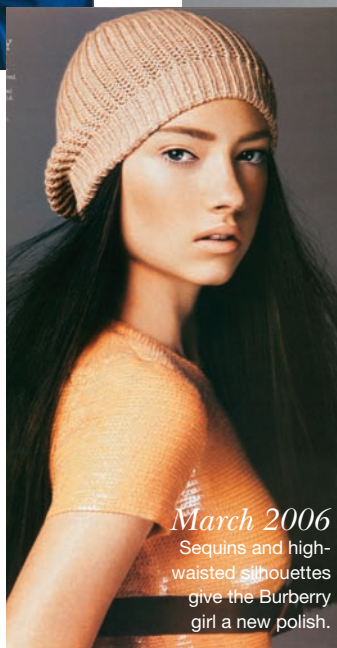


February 2009
City chic meets
country charm
for spring/
summer '09.

September 2009
Christopher
Bailey creates a
bikini inspired by
Australian style
for Vogue's 50th
anniversary.



March 2006
Sequins and high-
waisted silhouettes
give the Burberry
girl a new polish.



August 2010
Julia Nobis
models an
iconic shearling
jacket from
autumn/winter
'10/'11.



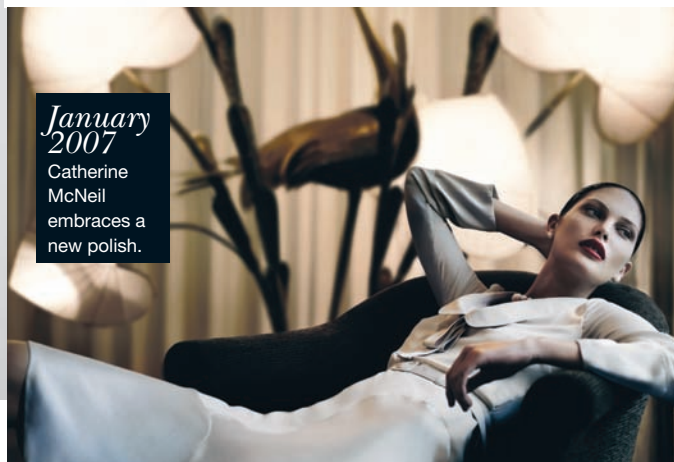
February 2011
Studs give a new
edge to a classic for
spring/summer '11.



April 2007
Canvas
beaded dress
and shoes.



May 2005
English florals made
for a fresh take on
summer dressing.



January 2007
Catherine
McNeil
embraces a
new polish.



October 2010
A sexier side reveals
itself in lace.

RICHARD BAILEY TODD BARRY NICOLE BENTLEY ANDREW COWEN
PATRICK DEMARCHELIER MAX DOYLE PAUL EMPSON DIRK LAMBRECHTS
THOMAS NITZL ALL PRICES APPROXIMATE DETAILS LAST PAGES

when you're feeling vulnerable. We wanted to create something that reflected those different sides of all our characters."

The campaign, which will combine multimedia elements and innovative digital events, features a (rather risqué for Burberry)

"We wanted to express these sides of everybody's character. At first it smells floral, then it will dry to be much sexier"

visual, shot by Mario Testino and starring model Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, a Burberry favourite. In the image, Huntington-Whiteley is recumbent, wearing nothing but a nude trench coat that contrasts sharply with the azure allure of her eyes.

"I've worked with Rosie for many years on lots of different projects," says Bailey earnestly. "She epitomises one side of the trench coat, but there are so many different characteristics to Rosie. She is known as this strong sexy woman but, as with everybody, there's a real soft, delicate, almost vulnerable side, and this incredible sense of humour. She's the most fun person to be with, and she was a perfect person to work with on the first launch of Body." He adds that Huntington-Whiteley will be the first face, or "body" of the fragrance, but after the launch they will add a whole portfolio of other bodies as the project develops.

To further build excitement around the fragrance launch, Bailey has also designed a capsule fashion collection of nude pieces across outerwear, accessories and underwear, including a rose-gold/nude trench coat that features in the campaign.

"The capsule collection is different shades of nude, because when you look at the iconic trench coats they are all shades of nudes and neutrals and I wanted to really embody that with a fragrance, then work this little capsule around it," he says.

Okay, enough fanfare. Let's smell it. He sprays the fragrance on a scent card and passes me the bottle, which is heavy and cut like a gemstone.

"I often talk about Burberry as this multifaceted diamond and I wanted the bottle to be multifaceted, like a jewel. I wanted it to feel heavy, precious and expensive because I wanted it to feel [like] something that you

keep out on your table rather than put in the cupboard," says Bailey. "Spray it on yourself, if you prefer; everyone is different."

I squirt it on my wrist. At first whiff a big, sexy, voluptuous peach note hits you, followed by flowers (freesia and rose), but then it softens to a warm woody base of amber, musk and vanilla. It's seductive and understated, sparkling but warm. An olfactory dichotomy.

"With the notes we wanted to express these contradictory sides of everybody's character. At the very beginning, it smells quite floral and then it will dry to be much sexier. I wanted it to be quite fresh and alive when you first put it on, and then it gets sexier as the day goes on."

Body is the 11th Burberry fragrance in an already impressive perfume portfolio that includes blockbusters Burberry Brit Sheer and Burberry The Beat. In addition to scent, the brand has been busy expanding a broader beauty offering.

Last year, the company launched a make-up range, Burberry Beauty (which hit Australian counters in July), a wearable collection of compacts, foundations, mascaras and lip colours, which Bailey says he envisaged to be as functional and versatile as a trench coat.

"We were doing all our ad campaigns and communication and we kept being asked where people could buy the same attitude, this kind of natural elegant attitude [in] make-up, and we realised that it just doesn't exist, really."

Packaged in sleek silver and embossed subtly with the Burberry check, the natural-finish foundations and perfect natural flush shades conjure the peaches-and-cream complexion of the Burberry woman. The colours are sheer, ▶

BEAUTIFULLY BUFF

Bailey's capsule collection of nude clothing and accessories complement the brand's new signature fragrance.

Burberry London leather trench coat, \$3,295.



Burberry sunglasses, \$360.

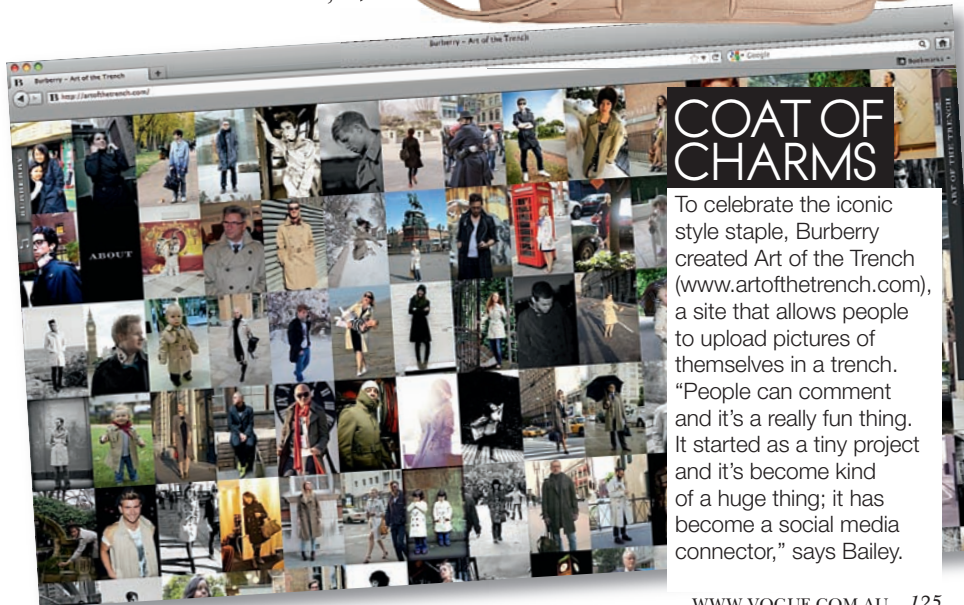


Burberry London sandals, \$895.

Burberry Body EDP, 85ml for \$170.



Burberry London Shrimpton bag, \$2,195.



To celebrate the iconic style staple, Burberry created Art of the Trench (www.artofthetrench.com), a site that allows people to upload pictures of themselves in a trench. "People can comment and it's a really fun thing. It started as a tiny project and it's become kind of a huge thing; it has become a social media connector," says Bailey.



Model Rosie Huntington-Whiteley stars in a Burberry campaign.



From left: Burberry Sheer Foundation in Trench No. 5, \$75; Light Glow Natural Blush in Russet Blush No. 1, \$70.



“We kept being asked where people could buy the same natural elegant attitude [in] make-up. We realised it just doesn’t exist”

yet contain just the right amount of pigment to create that subtle “I was born like this” brand of beauty.

“We wanted something that felt effortless but elegant and that enhanced rather than covered. The attitude of the trench coat is that you just throw it on, it’s very easy. I wanted the make-up and the beauty to have that kind of ease.”

And, yes, watch this space for a Burberry skincare range. “It’s absolutely on the cards,”

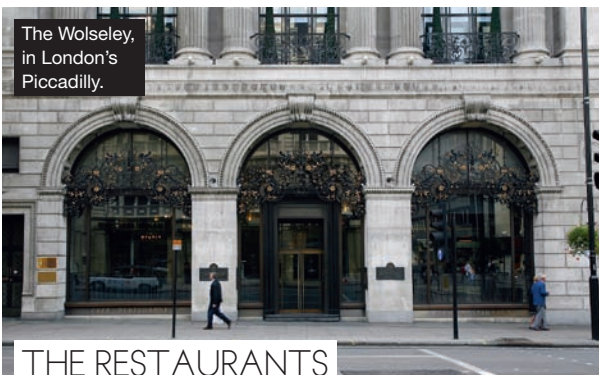
Bailey says, “but we don’t have any immediate plans.”

Beauty products are the big guns when it comes to branding and are clearly a major part of the company’s strategy going forward. For fashion behemoths like Burberry, perfume sales alone count for more of the revenue than ready-to-wear or accessories. Add make-up and skincare to that equation and you’re laughing. These items are not only widely stocked and sold, they are also the accessible entrée into the brand for new customers, a little piece of branded luxury for a fraction of the price.

“I think it’s a way of people buying something of the brand that is more accessible than a trench coat. I come from a working-class background and I certainly didn’t grow up being able to buy wonderful designer pieces that had a big price ticket on them, so I’m very realistic,” he says, referring to his upbringing in Yorkshire, where his father was a carpenter and his mother was a window dresser for Marks & Spencer. ▶

A LITTLE BLACK BOOK OF BRITAIN

Bailey walks us through his favourite homeland haunts.



The Wolseley, in London’s Piccadilly.

THE RESTAURANTS

“I like the grand cafes, like the Wolseley, and I also love tiny little Italian trattorias. One of my favourites is Como Lario in Chelsea; they’re so warm and I know everyone there. They do amazing pasta with truffles.”

England’s Yorkshire moors.



THE COUNTRYSIDE

“It’s so diverse. You go from Scotland’s crazy, austere mountains and all the moorlands of Yorkshire to the chocolate-box towns of Oxfordshire, the gardens of Kent and then into Dorset where you have the Jurassic Coast. It’s just so beautiful.”



London’s Tate Modern gallery.

THE MUSEUMS

“The museums are just extraordinary. [There is] the Tate, the National Portrait Gallery and a new museum that’s just opened in the north of England, which is incredible: the Hepworth Wakefield.”



Battersea Park, on the Thames’s south bank.

THE PARKS

“I love all the parks in London; I think they’re so special, such as Battersea Park, Green Park, St James’s Park.”

ANDREW COWEN GETTY IMAGES PHOTOLIBRARY
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TRENCH TIMELINE

NOW

2011 Bailey designs a rose-gold trench coat as part of the nude capsule collection to be worn by model Rosie Huntington-Whiteley in the campaign for the brand's new signature scent, Burberry Body. **Below:** Kate Middleton wears a Burberry trench on an official visit to Belfast.



2006 Australian model Gemma Ward becomes a face of Burberry.

1999 Stella Tennant in Mario Testino's campaign for Burberry Prorsum.



1983 Prince Charles and Diana, Princess of Wales in Burberry trench coats in 1983.



1979 Meryl Streep as Joanna Kramer wears an oversized trench in *Kramer vs Kramer*.



1961 George Peppard and Audrey Hepburn wear matching Burberry coats for a romantic embrace in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*.



1930s A model wearing a 1930s Burberry trench coat.

THEN

1914 When World War I breaks out, the British army engages Burberry to design a coat for its officers in the trenches.

He is still very close to his family and regularly escapes, with his partner, actor and writer Simon Woods, to his country house in West Yorkshire to be near them.

Bailey's pragmatism plays out in a uniquely inclusive approach to branding. "I'm interested in talking to anybody who's interested. I like to be inclusive, rather than excluding people. I find 'exclusive' something that I don't feel comfortable with and I prefer someone to be warmly welcomed with a smile and a generous spirit [rather] than making somebody feel intimidated or not quite worthy just because they can or cannot afford something."

It's a particularly egalitarian attitude that is further reflected in the brand's innovative approach to digital communication and social media. In April, Burberry broadcast its autumn/winter collection show in Beijing live online and to more than 50 stores around the world and, in doing so, eschewed the traditional invitation-only attitude and allowed its customers to see it happen in real time. No front-row theatrics here. The show, which featured models walking alongside holographic projections of other models, blurred the lines between the virtual and real worlds in a refreshingly innovative fashion.

Other projects such as Burberry Acoustic (a program that nurtures unsigned bands, broadcasting their music to the world from the Burberry web site) display a genuine desire to create a culture beyond the brand.

"There's no commercial selling thing; it's just because Britishness is so much about music, and I love music, and it has become a part of our culture," he says passionately.

"I think that experience is priceless, so I don't care if somebody wants to experience Burberry just by the music on Burberry Acoustic. It's not just about selling something: it's about trying to make sure that somebody relates to it and we have a point of view and if you like that, if you appreciate it, brilliant! Come and join the gang and we can do fun things together."

It's this come-one-come-all attitude that ensures Burberry is gaining victory in the branding battlefield. With the launch of the Burberry Body fragrance and the expansion of Burberry Beauty, the company is poised and ready to engage in the art of war once again. Move over Sun Tzu, Christopher Bailey is coming out of the trenches. ■