

GRAZIA
EXCLUSIVE

THE CHARLIZE EFFECT

Charlize Theron gets real about motherhood, make-up and the big goal she has teed up for her empty-nest era

WORDS ANNIE VISCHER

CHARLIZE THERON IS ON A break. *Old Guard 2* (the sequel to 2020's Netflix action thriller based on the comic book of the same name) is in post-production, a series of projects are on hold because of union strikes – 'we're waiting until deals are renegotiated, in solidarity', she tells me over the phone – and school is out for her daughters, August, seven, and Jackson, 11. 'It's mayhem in the Theron household right now, absolute mayhem,' she laughs, 'my girls are part of a dance academy and we had their end-of-year recitals yesterday. They did three shows and we came home at midnight, so everyone's a little cranky this morning.' And yet the novelty of the school holidays is still fresh. 'I'm sure in a week I'll be like, "Oh my god, what do we do now? How do I keep you guys busy?"; but I'll cross that bridge when I come to it.'

Theron lives in LA with her daughters and her mother, Gerda Theron, who she credits as her biggest beauty icon. 'I was always so impressed by the level of effort she put into each look when I was growing up – even at 6am before she had to drop me off at the school bus stop. She was never a sweats and T-shirt person. I'm that person, but I have Polaroids of my mom in her fur collar coats and high boots – she always dressed to the nines.'

Sweats aside, Theron doesn't exactly let the side down on the glamour front. For starters, there's her red carpet style legacy – read: haute couture Dior, custom Gucci, Givenchy, Celine, the list goes on – not to mention two decades' worth of campaigns for Dior's iconic J'adore Dior fragrance franchise. 'Dior came into my life at a very surprising moment,' remembers Theron. 'I was not playing conventionally attractive characters in film per se. In the early noughties, Theron was best known for donning a set of prosthetic teeth and shaving her eyebrows to play serial killer Aileen Wuornos in *Monster*, a role that earned her a Best Actress Oscar in 2004. Theron's first J'adore Dior campaign hit billboards that same year.'

This month, Theron takes to the gilded ads again, this time to launch the line's newest iteration, L'Or de J'adore, a fragrance conceived by legendary nose Francis Kurkdjian. 'I love this scent,' says Theron. 'It's intoxicating. It's so different to anything else and yet the cornerstones of J'adore Dior are all there, it's bold, it's sexy, it's balmy.'

CHARLIZE'S SELF-CARE ESSENTIALS



■ **Dior L'Or de J'adore**
Essence de Parfum, £144
for 50ml 'It's a great scent for summer, very easy to wear and I love that it's free from alcohol.'



■ **Dior Prestige La Crème**
15ml, £121 'My work doesn't allow for my skin to be in the best condition, but I shift my focus to skincare at night and slather this on.'



■ 'I discovered lash curlers on set over 20 years ago and I remember thinking, "How did I not know about this?"'

■ **Dior Iconic Overcurl**
Mascara, £35 'I love getting a good curl on my lashes.'



■ 'Sometimes I put on a sheet mask and move a piece of ice over the top for 10 minutes. It's a great way to wake up before work.'



■ **Fushi Organic Castor Oil**
£9.95 'I'm a big fan of castor oil. It's great for my scalp and I put it on my brows too; it's brilliant for hair growth.'

■ **Balanced Body Studio**
Reformer, £3,655 'I have an amazing Pilates teacher who comes to my house and teaches me on my reformer, which I admit is luxurious. I spend an hour or so with her and feel so great afterwards.'



GRAZIA HEALTH+BEAUTY

Though she has her favourites, Theron isn't ritualistic about scent. 'I don't assign different perfumes to places or moments,' she says. 'I prefer the playfulness that comes with not knowing, of waking up and choosing how I want to use fragrance on any given day.'

As for make-up, she's all about two essentials. 'You'll never find me without a lash curler or mascara,' says Theron. 'I love a good curl on my lash and a mascara that doesn't flake.' Theron first discovered lash curlers on set 20 years ago and speaks about them with a reverence that borders on comical. 'That instant lift you get is game-changing. It's one of the most amazing make-up tools ever designed, in my opinion,' she says passionately. 'Why did this person not get an honorary degree somewhere?'

A delicately enhanced eye may be her daily go-to, but Theron's all for a dramatic makeover on set. 'I loved shaving my head to play Furiosa in *Mad Max: Fury Road*,' she says. 'It made me feel great.' The look gave Theron a foothold on her character. 'When you're in discovery mode for a film, you're looking for a Goldilocks moment, a look or a way of portraying your character that is neither too small, nor too far, that's just right,' she says. 'When I shaved my head for Furiosa, I thought, I know what to do with this woman, I know how to play her.'

At home with her family, the temporary downtime afforded by an hour or two in the hair and make-up trailer is hard to come by, but Theron has her ways. 'Three weeks ago the kids were at school and I thought, I want to go see a movie. It was 2pm and Theron sought out a screening. I saw something that isn't out yet, I can't say what,' she says, 'but things like that are important to me, whether sitting down to watch a matinee or having dinner by myself at a place I really love, moments of alone time can feel like a real gift.'

With over 100 award nominations to her name and 39 wins, including that Oscar, a Golden Globe and a Screen Actors Guild Award, as well as production company Denver & Delilah, you'd think Theron would be more than happy to take her foot off the gas. And she is, for now. 'There's still one big thing I want to do,' she reveals, 'and that's direct. Being a director is so all-consuming – as an actor you get a break, as a producer you get a break, but as a director you shepherd everything.' So, when? 'It's the empty-nest goal,' she says. 'You never know, I might get there and be like, "No! I just want to stay in my condo," but we shall see.'

PHOTOS: JORDAN FOR PIRELLA GÖTTSCHE LOWE J'ADORE; JORDAN FOR PIRELLA GÖTTSCHE LOWE J'ADORE; JORDAN FOR PIRELLA GÖTTSCHE LOWE J'ADORE