

John Lewis & Partners Shop, Live, Look 2021 report reveals the work-life balance has shifted towards life

Tents, air fryers, trampolines and Crocs were among the products that defined the last 12 months, according to this year's Shop, Live, Look report by John Lewis. The report, which looks back at the products and trends that shaped the year, found that UK consumers adapted to lockdown by redesigning their living spaces to make way for home offices and exercise equipment, such as Peloton bikes. Meanwhile, outside space became the 'new inside' as sales of hot tubs, outdoor furniture and accessories soared. This was also the year that TV screens became our new shop windows as viewers adopted the fashion and lifestyle trends they watched on shows such as Friends: The Reunion, Line of Duty and Clarkson's Farm.

Even though we couldn't travel abroad for the majority of the year, swimwear was as in demand as ever this summer; control swimsuits and Speedo briefs were some of the most popular products. Beauty became all about skin care instead of make up as people had more time for their wellness routines, and the trend for comfortable nightwear isn't going anywhere as sales continued to rise. Meanwhile, the nation fell out of love with filing cabinets, which we stopped selling this year.

The way people shop has changed too. Our [johnlewis.com](https://www.johnlewis.com) website now accounts for between 60% and 70% of our sales, up from 40% before the pandemic. Customers expect flexibility and convenience more than ever before. This is why we expanded our Click & Collect service to over 1,000 locations and extended our Services division into furniture rental and new financial services products.

Pippa Wicks, Executive Director at John Lewis, said: *"The unprecedented events of 2020 and 2021 have left a permanent mark on how we shop, live and look. People have become clearer about what matters to them and their work-life balance has shifted towards life. At John Lewis we've seen these changes emerge. We aim to delight, to deliver and to disrupt."*

We have analysed extensive internal data to get an insight into the products that defined the year, which we left behind plus the trends and themes which dominated the year.

Products that defined the year:

- **Tents** - up 650%
- **Air fryers** - up 400%
- **Trampolines** - up 270%
- **Speedos** - up 100%
- **Crocs** - up 58%

What we left behind:

- **Filing cabinets** - we stopped selling filing cabinets as storage goes digital.

- **Travel accessories** - we didn't travel this year so we didn't need them. Passport covers, travel adaptors and suitcases were some of the items where sales fell.
- **2-in-1 laptops** - sales of laptops that can also become tablets when their keyboard is detached fell. Conversely, we doubled the size of our range of laptops with bigger screens.
- **Neck ties** - with formalwear not required, sales of ties were down three quarters.
- **Thongs** - whilst it made a brief comeback in 2018, customers opted for more comfortable and practical underwear this year.

TV: the new shop window:

With shop windows boarded up or left empty for much of the last year, our TV screens temporarily took their place: they became our shop windows into interesting fashion and lifestyle trends.

- November 2020. The Undoing caused sales of colourful coats to rise by 49% and online searches for neck scarves increased by 148%.
- March 2021. Searches for aviator sunglasses and sales of AND/OR flare jeans rose thanks to The Serpent.
- May 2021. Sales of waistcoats rose 114% between May and August as Line of Duty fever swept the country. We know the series was behind this trend as prior to it starting, waistcoat sales were down by 75%.
- June 2021. The Friends Reunion created a wave of Nineties nostalgia. Journalist and author Dolly Alderton spotted the resemblance to Rachel Green's dress in 'The One Where No One's Ready' and a green Whistles dress. Sales at John Lewis flew up by 400%.
- July 2021. Jeremy Clarkson becoming a farmer on Clarkson's Farm saw sales of women's wellington boots increase by 53%.

How we shopped, lived and looked:

Embracing Generation Rent

We launched a furniture rental service with Fat Llama, the peer-to-peer rental marketplace dubbed 'the Airbnb for things'. We offer over 500 products, including beds, desks and bar stools. It's an affordable and sustainable choice, whether people are furnishing rented accommodation or furnishing a new home that they've bought. We're here for them. Always will be. The response to the furniture rental was extremely positive. 86% of the available products were rented out in the first 48 hours.

Outside Is The New Inside

For those lucky enough to have outdoor space, their garden became their sanctuary and entertaining space over lockdown. Gardens were people's parks, their gyms, their campsites, their festival fields, their outdoor cinemas and extensions of their kitchens and dining rooms. Modular outdoor sofas sold strongly as people lounged outside. Sales of outdoor rugs rose 50% and due to demand we have doubled the amount we now offer. Fire pits and garden heaters rose by almost 1,000% in October and November 2020 as lockdown rules

meant we could only meet outside. Even the terrible British weather – the summer of 2021 was one of the wettest in recent memory – couldn't stop people doing up their gardens. Outside genuinely became the new inside.

Make A Meal Of It

With more time on their hands, homeowners were dressing their tables for dinner every day of the week for no special reason. Sales of coloured dinnerware rose by a third over the year, overtaking demand for white dinnerware. Tablecloth sales increased by 79%, napkins increased by 97% and old school napkin rings increased by 22%. To give the table a finishing touch, candle stick holders were up 13% and candlesticks up 34%. Not only did tablescaping provide a break from the monotony of life but it provided a cheerful focal point to the evening.

Skincare

In terms of beauty products, we saw a shift to skincare, which accounted for over a third of all our beauty sales. Online saw almost half a million searches for skincare last year. Customers became more interested in the ingredients in their products, with vegan and eco-friendly beauty lines remaining popular. By contrast, sales of cosmetics fell by a fifth as people spent more time at home and left their make-up products in the drawer.

Lingerie

Hunker down or spice up? It seems that the lockdown option for millions was the latter: our AND/OR Lingerie line had its biggest ever year, with sales up 6%. But there was a subtle shift in emphasis. While sales of suspenders, bustiers and garters were down by a quarter, sales of more comfortable lingerie and crop top styles rose by similar amounts. It seems that fashion experts were right when, back in early 2020, they predicted that three clothing trends would dominate lockdown: sporty, slouchy and sexy.

What's new for '22:

Future trends predicted by John Lewis Futurologist, John Vary, include:

- Together Apart - online places where we can hang out with friends and family - rather than just talk at a screen - will go mainstream. Going hand-in-hand with this trend will be an increase in the popularity and purchasing of goods that exist only in the digital world.
- Nostalgia Tech - it's easy to feel snow-blinded by the mass of digital content raging around us. What better way to counter this than by harking back to the audio and photographic technologies of old?
- Circular Economy - environmental concerns from the younger generations have been passed to the older ones and we are seeing greater consciousness about our planet in Britain's households.

Download a copy of the [Shop, Live, Look report here](#).

- ENDS -

**Shop, Live, Look is created every year and is based on its shopping data from August 2020 to September 2021*

Notes to editors:

The John Lewis Partnership owns and operates two of Britain's best-loved retail brands - John Lewis and Waitrose. Started as a radical idea nearly a century ago, the Partnership is the largest employee-owned business in the UK and amongst the largest in the world, with over 80,000 employees who are all Partners in the business. Profits made are reinvested into the business - for customers and Partners. John Lewis operates 34 shops plus one outlet across the UK as well as johnlewis.com. Waitrose has 331 shops in England, Scotland, Wales and the Channel Islands, including 59 convenience branches, and another 27 shops at Welcome Break locations. The retailer's omnichannel business includes the online grocery service, Waitrose.com, as well as specialist online shops including waitrosecellar.com for wine and waitroseflorist.com for plants and flowers.