

# marie claire

Sexy  
for  
Spring

HOW TO  
FINALLY LOVE  
YOUR HAIR

FACE OILS—  
WORTH THE  
HYPE?

PLUS:  
6 BEAUTY  
PRODUCTS  
THE  
INTERNET'S  
OBSESSED  
WITH  
P. 181

Scarlett  
JOHANSSON  
ON BABIES,  
BACHELORETTES  
AND HER  
CRAZY NIGHT AT  
THE OSCARS

SEX &  
STARTUPS  
THREE TRUE  
STORIES  
P. 133

# FRESH FASHION

In with the New! Cool colorful  
jackets, ultra-feminine

## Genius!

ONE WOMAN,  
ONE BRILLIANT IDEA



DANA MARLOWE  
GIVING HOMELESS  
WOMEN A LIFT

**HER INSPIRATION:** After losing 35 pounds in 2015, Dana Marlowe was looking to donate her old clothes. She called a homeless shelter in Washington, D.C., where she lives, and learned that the women there desperately needed bras—an item most donors never think to pass along. Some women even told her they had resorted to hoisting their breasts with belts.

**HER BIG IDEA:** Before Marlowe donated, she posted about it on Facebook, and her friends mobilized. Soon, the 16 bras she intended to donate became 1,071. She wanted to keep the donations flowing, so she launched the nonprofit Support the Girls to collect and distribute bras. “Everyone has bras shoved in the back of a drawer that they don’t wear,” says Marlowe, 40. “They feel good about clearing clutter and donating them to people who really need them.”

**THE RESULTS:** Support the Girls has since expanded to 30 states and six countries, and donated more than 80,000 bras. (It’s also donated 200,000 tampons and maxi pads—other badly needed items at shelters.) Marlowe receives donations of bras every day, which she washes and stores in her basement. And she personally handles most of the contributions in the D.C. area, where recipients have dubbed her “the bra fairy.” —Alexandra Robbins

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

# LISTEN UP

This all-female radio station is speaking up and changing the conversation

Women in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, known as the “rape capital of the world,” are often portrayed in the media as tragic figures. Douce Namwezi, a 28-year-old Congolese journalist, was tired of seeing the same clichéd stories and felt that career-oriented women like herself in the country’s emerging middle class were being overlooked. “Congolese women aren’t just victims of rape or economic hardship,” she says. “We are dynamic—we’re leaders, we’re friends, we’re mothers.”

Last March, Namwezi founded MAMA Radio, the nation’s first radio station by and for women. While other local stations play rumba tunes or discuss the latest football match, MAMA Radio has run segments on why it’s OK for women to wear pants and the challenges of being a military wife, and hosted a call-in show on birth-control options. The 23-person staff also solicits stories from non-journalists, women who, Namwezi says, are told by society that they are to be seen, not heard. “It’s really important for women to tell their own stories,” she says. “We teach them how to do everything from holding a microphone to developing a narrative.”

The work hasn’t been easy. It took four years to make the station a reality, and keeping it in business amid an ongoing civil war and a lack of infrastructure and funding is a challenge. Namwezi even had to overcome nay-saying male colleagues at competing radio stations who said that the station would fail within a month. Instead, one year and 2 million listeners later, MAMA Radio has become the talk of the town. —Elaisha Stokes



MAMA Radio  
founder Douce  
Namwezi

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

# Dial-a-Fatwa

You have questions about Islam; the women at this hotline have answers



Islamic scholars  
take calls at the  
JAE’s fatwa  
hotline, 2014

“Can I divorce my husband if he’s having an affair?” “What are the rules about abortion?” “Can I play sports without wearing a hijab?” These are some of the questions posed by women calling in to the Middle East’s only “fatwa hotline”—a telephone help line staffed by Muslim female scholars aiming to educate women on their rights according to the genuine rules of Islam. The hotline, based in the United Arab Emirates and funded by the moderate UAE government, launched eight years ago, but it has seen a rapid increase in the number of callers in the past two years owing to the rise of jihadist groups such as Islamic State.

“There are many conflicting beliefs about what women can and cannot do due to religious hard-liners who want to restrict women’s freedoms,” says Sheikha Radia, one of the four full-time, paid female Islamic experts who answer the hotline’s 200 calls per day.

The scholars listen to callers’ dilemmas and then issue fatwas, or religious rulings, to help them know what to do. “We give advice based on the direct teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, which are based on fairness to women, so they can avoid fear and confusion,” Radia explains. Many of the callers, who can choose to remain anonymous, are young women who want to pursue education and careers outside the home without violating the religious rules, while others call to ask about sex or other sensitive matters—questions they are too embarrassed to ask male religious leaders. “Nothing is taboo for us, because we understand women’s issues,” says Radia.

So, is it permissible for a woman to divorce a philandering husband? “It depends on the exact situation. Usually we don’t condone divorce,” she says. “But our basic message to Muslim women is that they often have much more power and freedom than they think.” —Abigail Haworth