



The fine print

Fuelled by passion for their niche – be it Nordic life or cats – and their medium, a new wave of independent magazines are thriving despite talk of the printed word’s demise.
By *Rena Niamh Smith*

If you believe what you read, the print media has been on its deathbed ever since the birth of the internet. But someone forgot to tell the creatives behind the latest wave of independent magazines. There seems to be a new launch looking for funding on Kickstarter every week, and the sector is booming: last year the independent-magazine subscription service Stack reported a 78 per cent increase in revenue, with its number of subscribers growing by 76 per cent.

Most of the magazines are launched by people looking to explore a tiny corner of interest in a new way. “We felt there was a growing movement for well-crafted products and a holistic lifestyle, but there was nothing out there reflecting the scene in the way we do,” Sam Walton of *Hole & Corner* explains. This is a

sentiment echoed by everyone behind the magazines profiled here. Walton is one of many who hail directly from the world of journalism, with previous experience at *Vogue*. For others, such as the historian and former antiques dealer Nicole Burnett of *Pretty Nostalgic*, it is their niche that they know intimately.

Beautifully curated and printed on thick, uncoated paper, these tomes are more than just magazines: they are luxury products for a discerning reader, a respite from the frenzy experienced by the always-on generation. This is a revolution against the digital revolution, an organic farmers’ market to rival the supermarket culture of online media. As Kerry Diamond, the editorial director of the food magazine *Cherry Bombe*, puts it, “Printed matter is a nice refuge for your brain.”

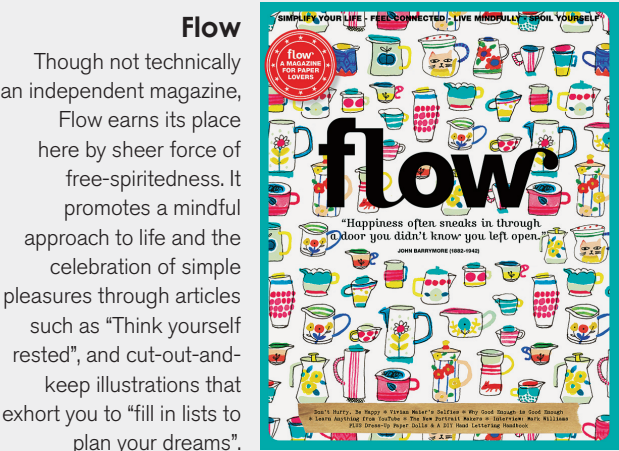
That said, it’s not as simple as an either/or choice. Many, such as *Betty*, started life online as a free-to-publish blog before graduating to print. This transition, however, does not come cheap: production costs on a magazine such as *Hole & Corner* can reach £20,000, raised from a combination of sources. But the editors of these publications are driven by a passion for their subject, and for the value of print.

“Publishing online is the gateway experience before moving on to the heavy stuff,” Jeremy Leslie, the author of *The Modern Magazine: Visual Journalism in the Digital Age*, says. “There’s still that feeling in the back of people’s minds that it’s not proper until it’s proper.” Further proof that reports of the death of print have been greatly exaggerated.

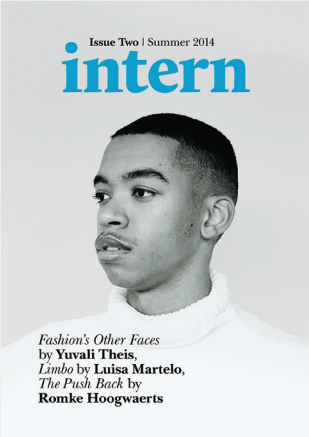
Yuvali Theis, Scheltens & Abbenes, Gretchen Ellen Powers



Betty
“Certain magazines can make women feel deflated and insecure,” *Betty*’s editor, Charlotte Jacklin, says. “We want to give people the confidence to embrace who they are.” This approach has led *Betty* to interview a grandma and illustrate fashion trends on woodland creatures – both of which it did for its most recent issue.



Flow
Though not technically an independent magazine, Flow earns its place here by sheer force of free-spiritedness. It promotes a mindful approach to life and the celebration of simple pleasures through articles such as “Think yourself rested”, and cut-out-and-keep illustrations that exhort you to “fill in lists to plan your dreams”.



Intern
Behind much of the magazine industry is an army of unpaid worker bees, their cvs rich with experience, and at *Intern* they take flight. Showcasing their knowledge and debating the morality of prolonged work experience, these photographers, illustrators and writers are doing it for themselves. A student magazine for the university of life.



The Plant
The editorial team here takes a different plant as inspiration for each issue. Aimed at people with green fingers, an artistic sensibility and a sense of the surreal, the magazine is influenced by botanical books from the 1960s and 1970s. The recent asparagus-fern issue takes the reader to Namaqualand, an arid region of South Africa and Namibia, during the months when it comes into bloom.





Hole & Corner

Bringing together “globally renowned contributors and some very reclusive makers” – according to its founder, Sam Walton – *Hole & Corner* aims to find a balance between craft and luxury. The fourth issue traces the roots of creativity, taking in Tracey Emin’s first work of art and Paul Smith’s shed. The fifth, due out in May, will focus on “stories of dedication, discovered in some unique locations”. *Hole & Corner* also hosts events and is set to offer an academic programme.



Cat People

Launched in 2013, *Cat People* is an art magazine with a cat theme rather than a magazine dedicated solely to felines. It has featured interviews with fashion designers including Suzanne Clements and Inacio Ribeiro of Clements Ribeiro and the artist Tanya Schultz – the common denominator being that they all love cats. It is published once every two years, with the second issue due this year.

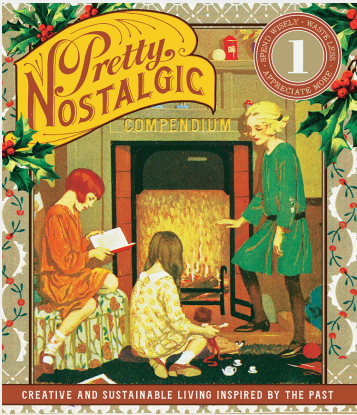


Cherry Bombe

Glossy, bossy and beautiful, *Cherry Bombe* intends to celebrate food and the women who eat it. Using phrases such as “reclaiming the meal-time”, it profiles female catering entrepreneurs and fashion foodies, pitching their enjoyment as a sassy and seductive new brand of female empowerment. Girl power in iced-cupcake form.

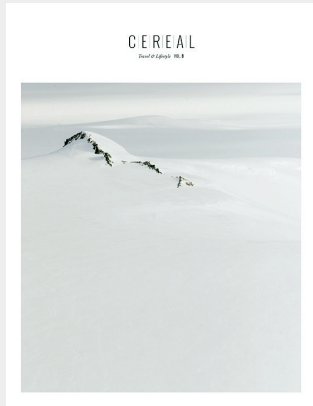
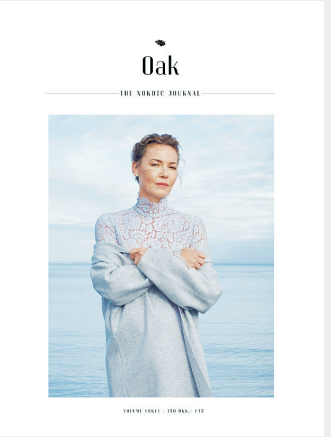
Pretty Nostalgic

“Spend wisely, waste less, appreciate more” is the noble sentiment behind this British lifestyle magazine. Featuring writing on the history of jigsaw puzzles, traditional beauty remedies and brands still creating their products on British soil, it taps into the current obsessions for flag-waving, bunting and cake stands.



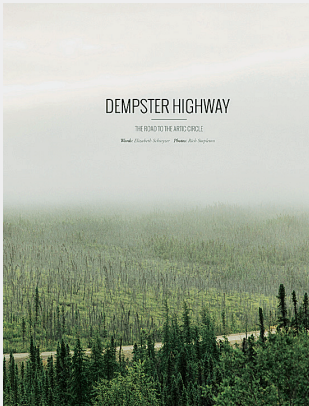
Oak: The Nordic Journal

With their minimalist clothing, high cheekbones and acute design sensibilities, Scandinavians have never been more in vogue. *Oak* takes the reader on a journey around the region with long reads on lesser-known subjects, such as the Danish actress Connie Nielsen or the Swedish island Öland. At £15 a copy, this is where magazine-max becomes art-book-light.



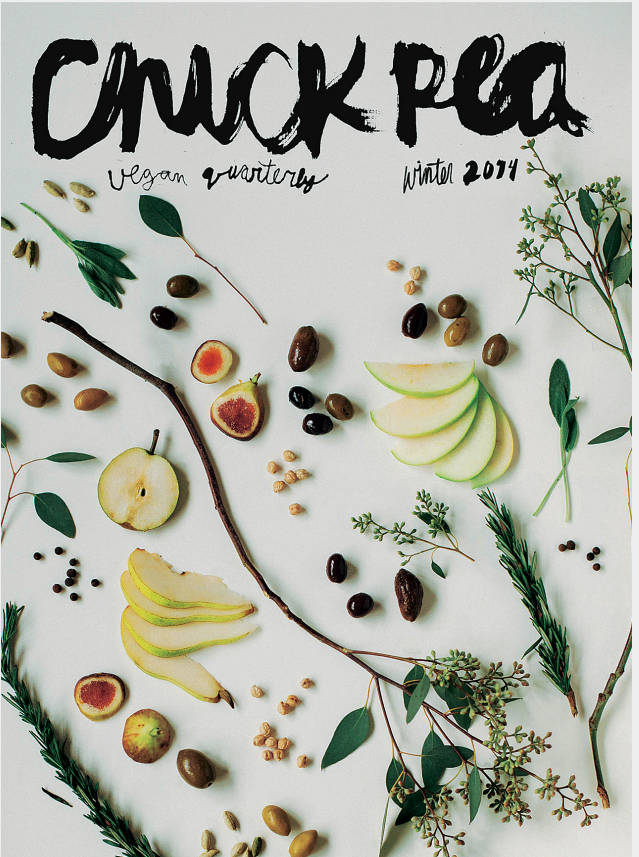
Cereal

Found on the coffee tables of fashion stores such as Cos and filled with high-end advertising, Cereal has quietly become a benchmark on the indie-magazine scene. The travel and lifestyle journal celebrates the Yukon in Canada and the seaside town of St Ives as well as ESK Cashmere and winter candles through exquisite photography and long-form features.



Pom Pom

Another mini tome to unite a tribe, *Pom Pom* is for everyone who has ever wondered, who exactly are the “five people you meet in knitting bars”? With patterns and the occasional recipe, the magazine has a fun, home-made feel. The spring 2015 edition is inspired by Scandinavian minimalism.



Chickpea

Infuriated by an overheard conversation about “stupid rich vegans”, the New Yorkers Cara Livermore and Bob Lawton set up *Chickpea* to bring veganism to the fore. These days entire lifestyles are based upon specific dietary requirements, so features such as “Putting together a vegan cheese platter” are bound to fit in on the kitchen counters of Hackney.