

# Golden girl

Nikki Reed has a glittering Hollywood career, a beautiful family and the healthiest pantry you've ever seen. But it's her passion for turning waste into jewelry that's pure gold.



Green living Adah Top & Jordana Pant by Cult Gaia; jewelry by BaYou With Love

Clockwise from left:

- Odette Top & Jordana Pant by Cult Gaia; jewelry by BaYou With Love
- Don't Mess With Mother Tee by Camp Collection; Floral Stripe Button Front Trouser by Raquel Allegra; jewelry by BaYou With Love

- Willow Dress by Cult Gaia; Bianca Sunglasses by Reformation; jewelry by BaYou With Love

Have you ever looked at your jewelry and wondered, "Just where did this come from?" Nikki Reed has. In fact, the actor has asked that question about a lot of things. Now, she's coming up with her own eco-friendly answers. Always on a journey of health and discovery, the new mom works hard to balance family life, feeling strong and running her own company. For her, it's all connected: one golden circle.

## **The holistic hyphenate**

Reed has been part of the young Hollywood set since her 2003 debut in Catherine Hardwicke's *Thirteen*, a visceral portrayal of adolescent life in the fast lane. Since then, the brunette beauty has made a name for herself in features like *Lords of Dogtown* and the *Twilight* franchise.

But Reed's interests lie beyond just the camera: She's an accomplished singer and writer too. She's also made her passion for holistic living into a lifetime cause, educating and inspiring others to make informed choices about their health habits. When it comes to her approach to wellness, Reed, 30, is refreshingly down to earth, broadcasting that making small, realistic changes is really the way to improve things.

She should know: She wasn't born into a world of plant-based food, organic body products and ethical accessories. She was born determined.

## **In Nikki Reed's pantry RN**

One of Nikki Reed's keys to staying balanced is having a pantry stocked with feel-good treats. Here are a few of her favorites.

- **Vegan turmeric latte mix:** "Something delicious to put in your body."
- **Raw vegan chocolate:** A sweet way to indulge without the guilt.

- **Adaptogenic coffee alternative:** An herbal concoction with chaga and reishi for “coffee without the kick.”

## Independence Day

Growing up with a single mother who raised two kids in LA, Reed’s childhood diet consisted of the fast food and budget-friendly decisions so many modern families are familiar with. By the time she hit her twenties and was seeing her star rise in Hollywood, she’d begun to notice her lifestyle decisions were affecting how she looked and felt.

At 21, while living overseas, Reed had her own Independence Day. She simply woke up the day after the Fourth of July with a newfound dedication to her health.

“I decided that I was done with all of the naughty things that had been part of my lifestyle before,” she recalls. “I was a big cigarette smoker and making these silly decisions that are just part of growing up fast and moving out young and being my own little ‘adult’ at such a young age. When most people are just starting down that path, I had kind of graduated out of it. I decided that I was going to step on my very first treadmill ... and put down that pack of cigarettes and ... start taking care of my body.”

As she began to educate herself about what she was consuming, her dedication strengthened. A longtime animal lover,\* Reed started to see the connections between her decisions, valuing not only the benefits to her health, but also to the community and world around her.

Reed thought to herself, “‘You care about animals, and the animals are connected to the environment, and our bodies are connected to the environment.’” In fact, she says, everything we do to the planet and to animals, we’re doing to ourselves. “[It’s] a very cyclical thing.”

It sounds overwhelming, but Reed—who’s shared tips on everything from

plant-based living to animal rescue to “encourage or inspire” on her social media—says it doesn’t have to be.

“I think if you are just making an effort on a daily basis, then you’re doing something right,” she says.

## **Motherhood and a new awakening**

Although Reed spent years educating herself on her health, it wasn’t until she became pregnant with daughter Bodhi, who was born in July 2017, that her wellness instincts kicked into overdrive.

“It’s funny that it takes growing another human in our bodies to even think about some of these things,” she says with a laugh. “Suddenly, I was like, ‘Oh my God, what’s in my toothpaste?’” She began to wonder about lotions and body oils too. “Our skin is our largest organ ... but you don’t necessarily think about it until you’ve got this big belly and you’re rubbing stuff on it and you’re like ... ‘That’s so close to the baby.’” She was even googling “chemical-free pajamas”!

As her pregnancy progressed and Reed continued to question the products her family was using, she recalls turning to her husband, actor Ian Somerhalder (of *Lost* and *The Vampire Diaries* fame). She told him, “‘It’s amazing. There isn’t a lot out there for what I’m looking for.’”

She figured that if she was on the hunt for cleaner products, other women were too. And she decided to create some herself.

## **Gold standard**

In 2016, approximately \$22 billion in gold was thrown away around the world as part of electronic waste. The good news? Tech company Dell has devised a process to extract gold from recycled technology so the precious metal can be reused—for example, in Nikki Reed’s BaYou With Love jewelry.

Dell's gold recycling process is 99 percent more environmentally friendly than mining gold from the earth, which can produce 20 tons of toxic waste per gold ring! Here's how Dell does it.

At more than 2,000 Goodwill locations across the country, Dell sources motherboards from used computers that cannot be refurbished and resold.

Gold components are extracted from the motherboards and melted down into gold bars.

The bars are then transformed into new motherboards or material for jewelry. It takes approximately six motherboards to create a single ring.

## **Birthing a business**

In spring of 2017, Reed launched her sustainable lifestyle company, BaYou with Love, with Morgan Bogle, founder of Freedom of Animals. Focused on selling products and accessories that are both socially conscious and fashionable, the LA-based company carries everything from organic baby bonnets to ethically made bags (like the Lolita Bag: "A small, whimsical basket bag that you might have worn to a party at Joan Didion's Malibu house in 1971"). And yes, there are chemical-free pajamas.

Launching a company while pregnant was no easy feat ("I kind of birthed two babies at the same time," Reed jokes). Yet her passion for giving new moms and consumers everywhere the options she hadn't been able to find gave her newfound energy. Reed was also inspired by Bea Johnson's sustainability tome, *Zero Waste Home*, the bible on reducing and reusing for the modern age.

Shortly after the launch, the expectant mother learned that tech giant Dell had been extracting gold from the motherboards of used computers (see "Gold standard" on p. 52) and was looking for ways to give that gold new life. Reed decided to partner with Dell on a jewelry line. BaYou With Love x

Dell's first collection of recycled gold jewelry was launched at the Consumer Electronics Show in January 2018, and the partnership hasn't slowed down since.

From learning about the business side of her company to dreaming up designs, "I'm wearing 40 hats at the same time," says Reed. "I'm proud of that."



## All that glitters is green

Reed recently designed a collection of sustainable wedding and engagement rings featuring tech-derived gold and conflict-free diamonds cultivated in California. The jewelry is manufactured in downtown LA in a factory that utilizes sustainable practices (recycling water used to cool metals, for example).

This spring, BaYou With Love launched its first men's line using a revolutionary process that extracts pollution from the air, distills it into ink and mixes that ink with resin. That resin is used to create the men's accessories and jewelry.

"There's so much excitement that's generated in taking something that would otherwise be considered waste, recognizing the potential that it has to be repurposed and then creating ... a luxury item," says Reed. She wants people to "throw out the idea that somehow sustainable items are cheap or dirty or less valuable." It's why she loves creating jewelry.

## (Down to) earth mother

Reed is frank about the uphill battle that is balancing ethical choices with the pressures of being a new mom. "You find yourself making worse decisions for yourself, but better decisions overall in your household," she says. She spends hours learning about everything that could be toxic to or harmful to her family. "Simultaneously ... as a new mom, you actually forget to take care of yourself, right?" she bemoans. "You wake up one day and you're like, 'Okay, I haven't taken any supplements in how long?'"

Reed stays grounded by taking time to create for herself—she loves making her own body scrub and face oils. She's also part of a supportive community of mamas. "All of us moms have challenges and things that we



want to talk about all the time—things that we feel we're doing wrong," she says. The key is opening the door, having the conversation and finding that other women are going through the same thing. From that comes empowerment.

Even after pioneering her own company, Reed admits that she continues to learn every day. "The truth is that you just do what you can, where you can, and it's not going to be perfect," she says. She's a fan of Meatless Mondays, for example, simply because the movement recognizes "if everyone just did one little thing, we would move mountains."

For Reed, it's never about achieving some impossible ideal—and that's coming from a woman who was once cast in the role of the most beautiful person on earth.

"I think it's just about encouraging ourselves, being kind to ourselves and seeing that every little thing that we do makes a difference," she says. "It's definitely a journey."

Nikki Reed isn't just flexible when it comes to new challenges; she's also a huge acro yoga buff (you know ... the gravity-defying version of partner yoga that's been blowing up your IG feed). The best part? She strikes many of her poses with her brother. So ... acro bro-ga?

### **Photo credits:**

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