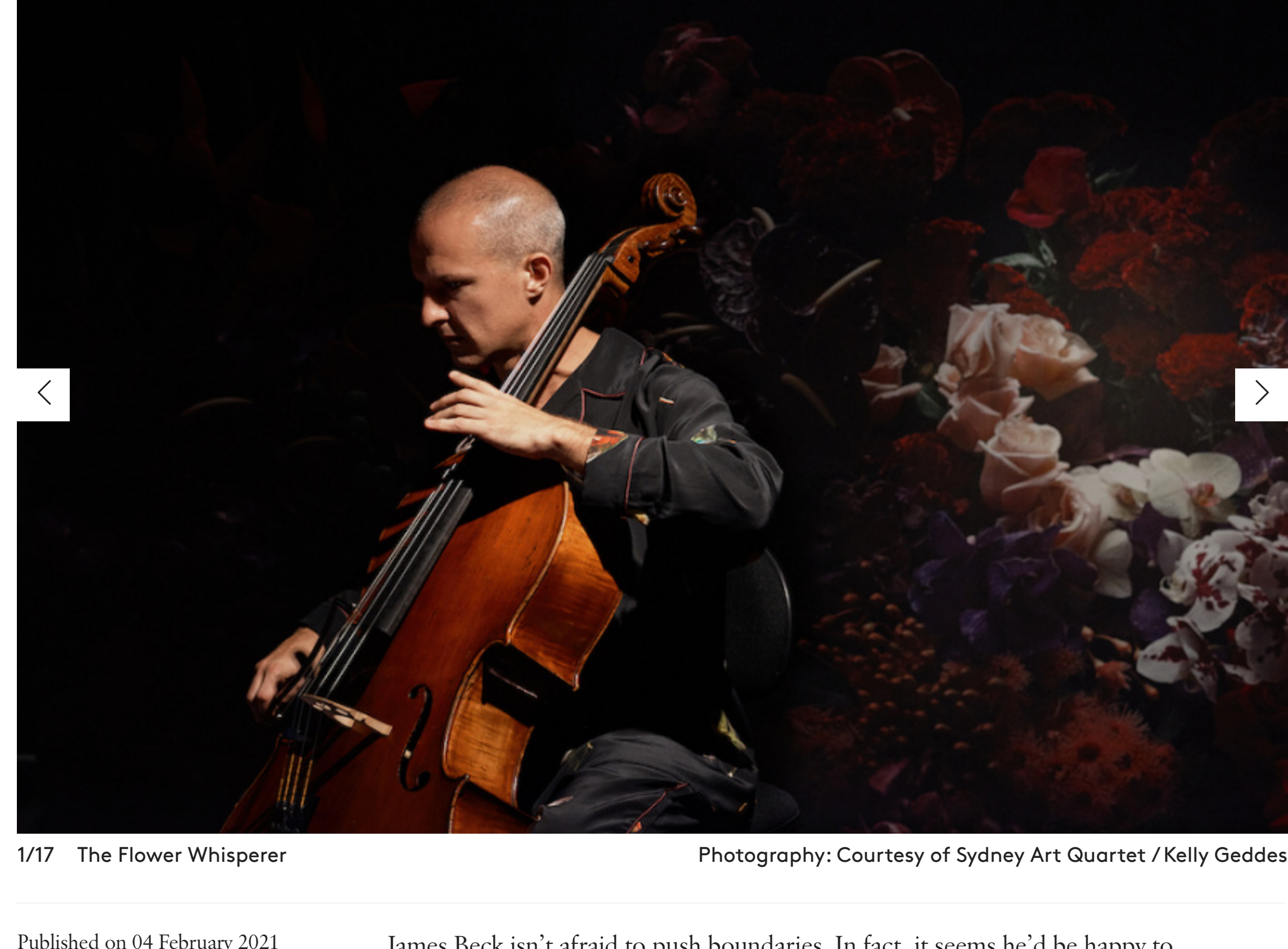


# Classical Music, but Not as You Know It: The Sydney Art Quartet Works With a Top Florist on a Multi-Sensory Show

Past shows have seen audiences blindfolded; a naked composer posing for a painter; and musicians electrocuted – yes, really – as they played. This time around, the quartet collaborates with Grandiflora’s Saskia Havekes.



1/17 The Flower Whisperer Photography: Courtesy of Sydney Art Quartet / Kelly Geddes

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James Beck isn't afraid to push boundaries. In fact, it seems he'd be happy to tear them down outright. For a classical musician he's refreshingly out there.

You need only look at some of the inspired collaborations Beck and his Sydney Art Quartet (SAQ) have worked on over the years: in *Blind Trust* the audience was blindfolded to brighten their hearing as harpsichordist Erin Helyard performed concertos from Mozart and Bach, accompanied by the quartet. In *Bart Naked Salon*, concertgoers watched as Archibald-winning artist Wendy Sharpe painted composer Andrew Bart-Rowden's form while he stood starkers before them, as the SAQ performed one of his compositions. And in *Shocking Cliches*, two of the musicians were hooked up to electrodes controlled by the audience and electrocuted – yes, electrocuted – as they performed, in an experiment about free will in conjunction with psychologist and composer Michaëla Davies.

It's classical music, but not as you know it.



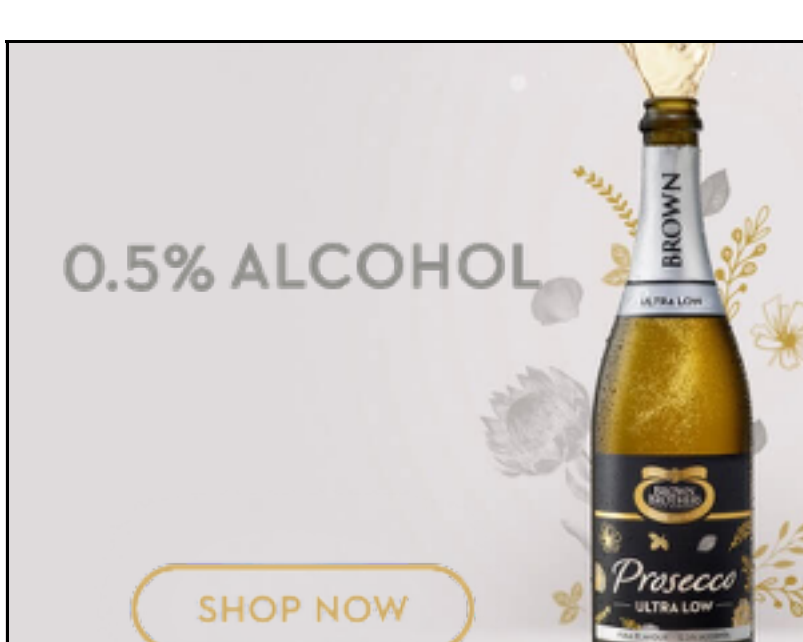
Now Beck and the SAQ are enhancing our aural experience by exploring one of our most evocative senses – scent – in collaboration with Saskia Havekes, the Sydney floristry doyenne behind Grandiflora. Havekes will not only surround the audience with a sublime, soothing forest of flowers, she'll also pair each musical work with one of her signature fragrances. Attired in bespoke *Jac & Jack*, the quartet will perform *Remember Me* in a stunning private Woollahra ballroom before a crowd sipping Perrier Jouët.

It's an irresistible way to appreciate the music of Claude Debussy, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Maurice Ravel, Fanny Mendelssohn and Gustave Mahler.

Beck's *raison d'être* is simple enough: "We want to take people deeper into the music or deeper into their own interior life, and we think we can do that best by stimulating more than one sense." Beck is the quartet's founder, artistic director and cellist.

His fellow musicians are viola player Andrew Jezek, Australian-French violinist Thibaud Pavlovic-Hobba and violinist Anna Albert (who is this writer's cousin). The quartet has performed more than 100 times since it was formed in 2015, often alongside other renowned Australian creatives, including artists Bill Henson and John Olsen; chef Brent Savage (*Monopole*, *Bentley*); and opera singer Taryn Fiebig.

Beck insists his creative collaborations are not avant-garde but a return to the salons of the *belle époque* era in Europe, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, where groups would gather to appreciate music in a range of relaxed and immersive ways.



"In many parts of Western cultures we silo art forms, whereas [previously] they didn't divorce poetry from visual art or music or fashion," says Beck. "By using something more than music it makes music more powerful."

*Remember Me* is not the first time SAQ has collaborated with Havekes. In *The Flower Whisperer*, directed by the indomitable Tony Assness, the quartet performed music of the French impressionists in a breathtaking night garden created by Havekes in partnership with fashion label *Romance Was Born*.

But Havekes and Beck's relationship goes back even further; Beck lived above Grandiflora's Potts Point store for 10 years, and the pair became fast friends. In 2020 they collaborated on the podcast series *Cross Pollination*.

For *Remember Me*, Havekes will create a parterre-style gardenscape inspired by the work of her friend and renowned landscape designer John Bangay, which she'll decorate with flowers. "It's very white, crisp and clear, very apt for this time, and very green," Havekes tells *Broadsheet*. "I want it to be a beautiful, sensitive approach, nothing too heavy."

Each of the six pieces of music will be paired with one of Havekes's signature fragrances. Her new eau de parfum, *The Namesake*, has inspired a piece by Aria Award-winning composer Elena Kats-Chernin, and this performance will be its world premiere.

"To have a piece of music dedicated to that is beyond [comprehension], Elena is my favourite female composer, [and] a great source of encouragement and inspiration, so I was incredibly touched," Havekes says.

Audiences will each receive six separate fragrance cards and Havekes will explain each scent before Beck describes the music they're about to hear.

"*Remember Me* is a more refined project, we're certainly not electrocuting anyone," Beck says. "Saskia is a creative hero of mine and this is an homage to her as well."

For her part, Havekes is hoping to give Beck, and audiences, some much-needed respite from the darkness of 2020.

"During Covid I heard James say many times he would love to perform in a garden and I really wanted to give him that somehow, and that room lends itself to that," she says. "It's called a ballroom but feels like it could be a conservatory. It will be really enjoyable for people to be submerged, like sitting and watching a concert in an abstracted garden."

*Sydney Art Quartet's Remember Me will be held in a private Woollahra ballroom from February 5 to 7. Tickets are still available for the 3pm performance on February 7 here.*

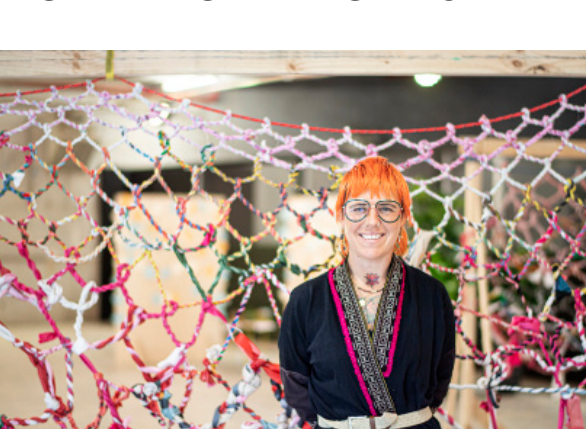
[sydneyartquartet.com](http://sydneyartquartet.com)

### PLACES MENTIONED



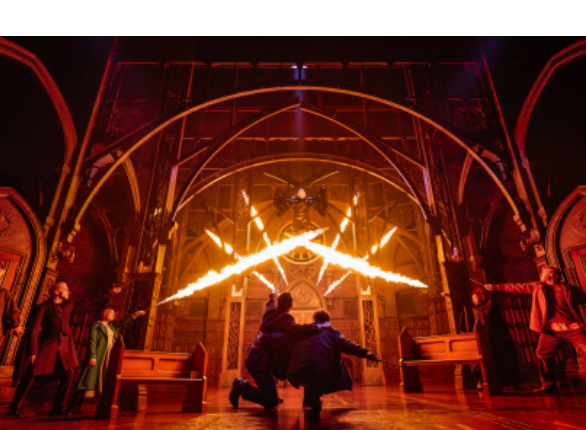
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**It's Time to Apparate to Melbourne's Princess Theatre – Harry Potter and the Cursed Child Is Back**

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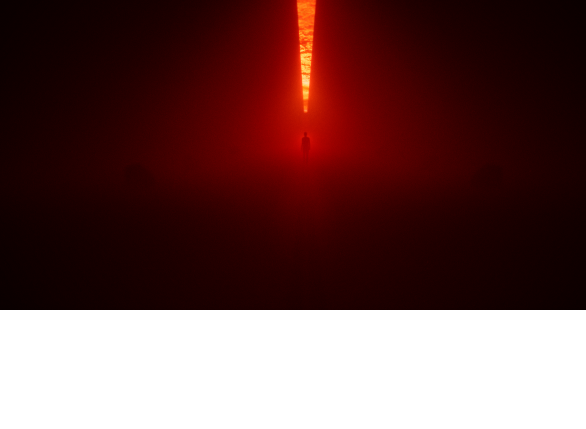
**What's the Deal With the Eccentric Sculptures On Top of Marrickville's Shops?**

The retro sculptures that grace many a shop awning along Marrickville and Illawarra Roads – the banana in a hammock above the Woolworths Metro, the lady getting a blow-dry above Fernando's Hair Design – have long been a local curiosity, but how did they get there?



**Broadsheet's Top Picks for Vivid Sydney 2022**

Vivid Sydney returns with a schedule filled to the brim with must-see music, lights, ideas and events. From the biggest light show ever seen in Australia to discussions about AI and end-of-life rituals, here's our top picks.



**A Large-Scale Immersive Light Installation Is Coming to Carriageworks for Vivid**

Contact, by light artist Sam Whiteside, will lure visitors through a dense haze and pulsating shafts of light that bend and warp the shadows of the historic Carriageworks buildings. Plus, free DJ sets from Stereogamous, Vibe Positive, Flower Boy and more.



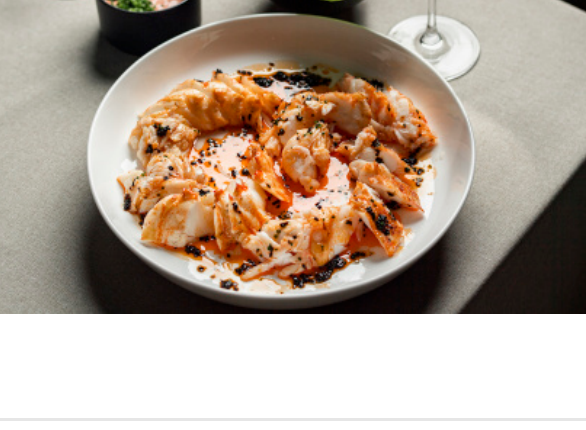
**Inside the Gravy "Sinkhole" Burger BL Burgers Created for The Bob's Burgers Movie**

The much-loved Darlinghurst burger joint has struck upon a truly innovative creation to celebrate the launch of the Bob's Burgers movie. In partnership with 20th Century Studios, we dare to investigate.



**What Comes Next – A Film About the Recovery**

The culture industries were among the hardest hit by the pandemic, and our CBDs haven't been the same since the lockdowns ended. So, what happens next? We sat down with eight prominent Australians, in front of the camera, to find out.



**Gallery: Broadsheet x The Gantry – An Elemental Seafood Dinner With Rhys Connell**

One of Australia's best up-and-coming chefs, Rhys Connell, showcased a luxe menu at an exclusive one-night only seafood extravaganza for Broadsheet readers. In partnership with Marriott Bonvoy, here's what went down.

### VIDEOS

- 04:35 A Walking Tour of Six World-Class Sydney Cocktail Bars
- 01:38 Beci Orpin's Hand-Painted Pixar Piano
- 01:05 Almay Jordaan's Sweet'n'Sour Pineapple-Paprika Doughnut Recipe

### GUIDES

- Best Bars in Sydney
- Best Restaurants in Sydney
- Best New Cafes in Sydney

### RECIPES

- Recipe: A Peppery Native Ingredient-Dressed Fresh Oysters for Food & Drink
- Recipe: Chase Kojima's Oyster Vinaigrette (and How to Shuck) for Food & Drink
- Recipe: Davidson-Plum-Glazed Lamb Ribs From Culinary Duo Analiese Gregory and Clayton Wells for Food & Drink

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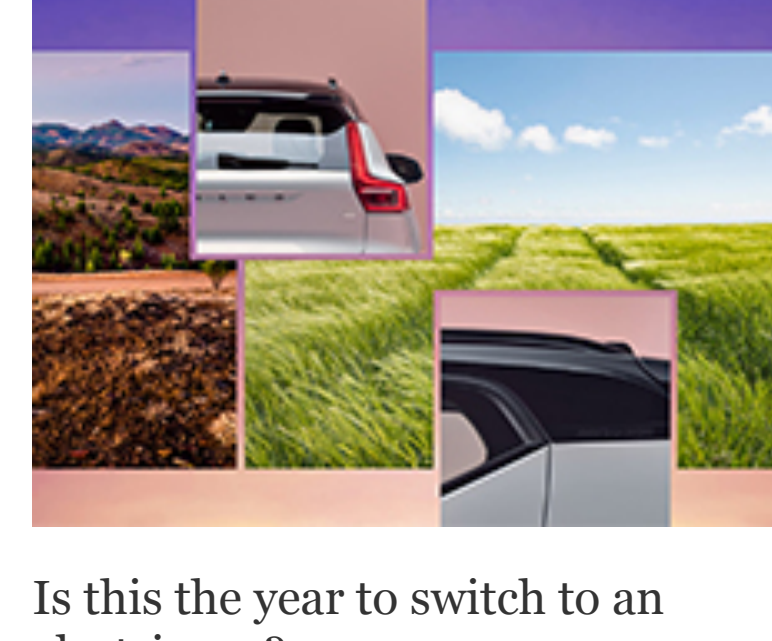
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