

SBLS

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MAY YOUR SPIRITS BE BRIGHT

a MOTHER of a JOURNEY

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ALLORA BY LAURA'S TJ HARLIN OPENS UP ABOUT JUGGLING MOTHERHOOD AND HER CAREER



Ichi Antiquites linen dress, Jake & Jones | Kai Linz bracelets & chain necklace, Allora by Laura
 Ali Grace gold ring, long chain & charm, Allora by Laura | Pipiroo gauze onesie

As TJ Harlin, fashion director at Allora by Laura, puts it, balance is a funny word when you're a parent. Harlin gave birth to Hattie in July and has been striving to feel in sync while raising her daughter and honoring herself. Here's how she's finding harmony in this new, beautiful phase of her life.

What is the biggest surprise that's come with motherhood?

There is so much that they don't tell you. I had midwifery care through the Santa Barbara Birth Center and felt their education about pregnancy and motherhood was covered in depth, and still no one can prepare you for it all. There are so many things that are considered "taboo" to discuss and I feel that only disservices new families. Sharing experiences and talking about hot topics is so important. I've been surprised by how much I didn't know, and in turn, how much others didn't know until they were in it.

Also, they always tell you that "you'll never know a love like this," and honestly, I was like, "hmmmm I really love my dogs." That all changed when she got here. I'm truly surprised by how much I love this person. It's not that I didn't think I would—it's just crazy how much I do. Everyone was right.

In what ways has motherhood inspired you?

Motherhood has inspired me to be more organized and purposeful in not just my personal life, but in my career and with my style. I'm inspired to be more intentional with my time with friends and family instead of giving it away so freely, bending to the need or whim of who wants to see me. I find when I'm more purposeful with my time, I honor myself, my baby, and have a better time with said people.

How have you seen your style shift since becoming a mom?

I hate to say it, but more practicality. Clothes that can be washed and that I can wear a nursing bra with. Throughout my pregnancy it was nice to have a capsule wardrobe of pieces that fit and that I felt good in—the same goes for these early stages of motherhood. A rotation of chic button ups and bike shorts, slip skirts, and wrap dresses has been my go-to. Even on days that I'm home all day, and know I will surrender to being a human burp cloth, I still put on a cute oversized t-shirt or cotton dress. Feeling good—even though it might be an extra step to manage—ends up paying off for me.

What has been the most challenging part of motherhood so far?

Oh gosh, simply finding the time to do the things that I loved doing before I had a baby, and the new things I want to do with her. The hours in the day don't seem like enough once you factor in naps, feedings, bath time, and awake time. I now know that this is why they say it goes by so fast. Balancing stimulating them with age appropriate toys, resting, and hitting developmental milestones while also intuitively parenting is hard in this day and age with so much information, judgement, and different parenting tactics. Finding my way to simply raise her while honoring myself is absolutely the most challenging part.

How are you balancing being a parent, tapping into your creative side, and focusing on work?

Hmmm balance—a funny word when you're a parent, especially a first timer. To be honest, some days I find it, and some days I just cry. Luckily, I love my work, so finding the time to fit that in makes me feel proud. Do I sometimes kick myself for emailing instead of napping? Yes. My ideas for business, how to grow my career, and feel more fulfilled in that balance of motherhood and work have been tenfold. Enacting them is the challenge. But, if I can grow a human being, get her earthside, and keep her alive, I can for sure expand a business and grow creatively.

How do you make time for self-care and reflection during this new phase?

It's called help. I watched too many friends and relatives with children not ask for or hire help and I won't make that mistake. There is so much guilt wrapped up in that as a mom, but having someone come help even once a week—whether it be a family member or someone you trust—is such a blessing. That way you can go on a walk, take a yoga class, or simply go for a darn drive by yourself. It can be an extra expense, but there is assistance out there for mamas because mental health during this fragile postpartum period is so important and I know that firsthand.

What advice do you have for other creative, career oriented women out there who are becoming mothers?

That it is possible to do what you love and raise who you love. Lean on your community and make a plan. Your passion and the purpose you have for your career is important and doesn't make your passion and purpose to raise your family dimmer. You can do hard things!

What would you recommend to new mothers based on your experience?

Trust your gut. Always. Not Google, not the doctor, not your mom—your gut. It's easy to get caught up in this wild world we live in. Keep it simple, breathe, and know when to ask for help. *

Follow TJ's motherhood journey at @houseofharlin

TJ'S New Mom MUST-HAVES



Clergerie Mules
 \$350, ALLORA BY LAURA

A fuzzy comfy slip-on (that isn't your house slipper) for those "big" outings to doctor appointments and coffee shops. They keep me cozy while making me feel like somewhat of a human.



2 Furtuna Skin Biphase Oil
 \$225, WELL DERMATOLOGY SHOP

This oil is like a facial in a bottle. Skin can do funky things after you have a baby and this has been my saving grace from tired looking skin. It is so luxurious. Layering it on every morning and night is self care at its finest and has helped me feel great.



3 This is self explanatory—wine is a must! Folded Hills wines have no residual sugar (praise be for no headaches), are organic and vegan, and use only native yeasts that occur naturally in the vineyard. Cluster is my favorite for all seasons.

Folded Hills Whole Cluster Carbonic Grenache
 \$39, FOLDED HILLS



4 This tincture has been helping my whole body heal after the hormone rollercoaster known as childbirth. It's deeply nutritive for all stages of pregnancy, for new mamas, and is a fantastic women's health tonic in general.

Mother Glow Tincture
 \$30, PURA LUNA APOTHECARY