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Reese Witherspoon at the
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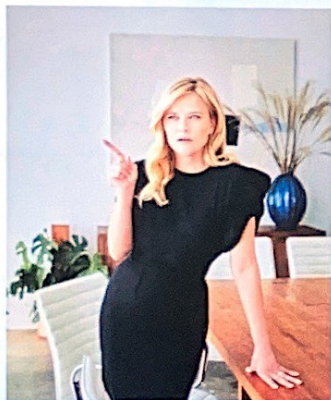
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HERE COMES THE SUN

From the offices of her new venture, Hello Sunshine, Reese Witherspoon spends her days empowering women through storytelling.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JASON FRANK ROTHENBERG
PRODUCED BY KATE BERRY TEXT BY MOLLY ROSEN GUY





You might think that as an Oscar-winning actress who recently won an Emmy for her producing role in HBO's *Big Little Lies*, Reese Witherspoon would look to top Hollywood stars for career inspiration. But, it turns out, her role models are refreshingly far from the red carpet. "Eleanor Roosevelt has always inspired me. She was so outspoken and astute," says Witherspoon—who, in 2016, cofounded Hello Sunshine, a cross-platform multimedia company dedicated to telling female-driven narratives. (A true entrepreneur extraordinaire, she also launched the clothing line Draper James in 2015.) For someone known for portraying headstrong leading ladies in such films as *Election*, *Legally Blonde*, *Walk the Line*, and *Wild*, the new initiative came out of necessity. "Once I started looking around, I realized there weren't a lot of interesting stories for women, by women, or about women," says Witherspoon. "There is so much more to the female experience."

The first step was to stake out a headquarters, which Witherspoon found in a huge, raw space in Santa Monica with "great natural light" and lots of potential. She knew that in order for Hello Sunshine to thrive, the company needed to eschew a traditional office layout in favor of an "easy environment where everybody feels

very comfortable." Employees don't have dedicated desks; instead, people can flow through the sun-drenched rooms and gather wherever they feel most inspired. "We are constantly meeting with actors, writers, and producers," explains Witherspoon. "The office is really an open space for women to work together. There are famous authors next to 20-year-old pop stars."

To conceptualize key areas, Cynthia Rupeka, director of strategy and operations, worked closely with Witherspoon and Crate & Barrel. "Female storytellers and complex female protagonists are at the core of the company," says Rupeka, who is also in charge of growing Reese's Book Club by Hello Sunshine, an online community that Witherspoon began last year, where she posts her favorite reads on Instagram. "We knew that we wanted a huge bookshelf on one of the big blank walls"—an idea they made a reality by turning to Crate & Barrel, which codesigned and outfitted the entire space with furnishings like a mid-century-style credenza and a solid walnut conference table. Witherspoon just launched a partnership with the brand (which is also carrying select Draper James items starting this holiday season), and will debut a tabletop and entertaining collection in spring 2018. "It's full of pieces that elevate hosting and gathering," the actress explains.

The hiking boots in Witherspoon's office is the same pair she wore in *Wild*, for which she nabbed an Oscar nomination for best actress.

This page: Blake Media Console \$1,499; Mactan Stone Table Lamp \$199; Kiwi Bird \$30; Trystan Rug \$999; Hayes Wine Cooler \$45, all crateandbarrel.com. Opposite: Mercer Serving Bowl \$25; French Kitchen Lazy Susan \$100; French Kitchen Wine Cooler \$25; Server \$60; Parsons Dining Table \$989, all crateandbarrel.com. Previous spread, on Witherspoon, at left: Blouse chloe.com; Skirt rolandmouret.com; Pumps us.christianlouboutin.com; Earrings and Rings shyleerose.com. At right and opposite: Sweater markuslupfer.com; Skirt draperjames.com; Pumps us.christianlouboutin.com; Earrings danarebeccadesigns.com; Rings grazielagems.com. Renny Short Vase \$60; Monarch Dining Table \$2,599; Ripple Desk Chair \$299, all crateandbarrel.com; MDS Mixed Media on Canvas by Catherine Booker Jones anneirvifineart.com.







This page: Witherspoon keeps up with book club reading (her current faves: Ann Patchett's *Truth and Beauty* and Francesca Segal's *The Awkward Age*). Opposite: The team assembled their most gawky photos for a lighter take on a gallery wall.



“Women need to be at the forefront of telling their own stories.”

Always striving to bring people together, Witherspoon champions a collaborative spirit wherever she goes—and literally beams positive vibes from the Hello Sunshine office walls. “We have a neon sign that captures the values of the business: Optimism, humor, curiosity, generosity, honesty,” she says. Another wall is dedicated to the team’s favorite quotes, with words from Beyoncé, Michelle Obama, and Joni Mitchell, among others, typed on pieces of paper and pinned up to create the ultimate literary mood board. Further channeling a place for bright ideas, a painted triangle of yellow “light” carries over a potted fern, dipping the leaves in the same sunny hue. The concept came from Pinterest, says Witherspoon, who is “obsessed” with the platform. “It’s where I find a lot of my inspiration.” Even the layout of the kitchen encourages constant ideation. “It’s communal,” says Rupeka. “There are small tables and little corner nooks you can escape to. People are always having spontaneous meetings.”

But Witherspoon herself has no plans to sit down anytime soon. Later this year, Hello Sunshine will be rolling out an OnDemand Channel with an original series starring Witherspoon. No doubt, she will be doing what she does best: embodying female power in all its beauty and complexity. “At the end of the day, that’s really our focus,” says the actress of her new venture. “Women need to be at the forefront of telling their own stories.”

This page: Era Coffee Table \$699; Sisal Almond Rug \$299; Cullen II Apartment Sofa \$2,199, all crateandbarrel.com. Previous spread: Grayson Chair \$1,099; Nero Accent Table \$269; Paley White Vase \$80; Kora Tall Vase \$100; Rati Vase \$25; Jelena Indigo Blue Vase \$50; Rope Indigo Blue Vase \$30; Circle Stand \$70; Circle Stand \$50, all crateandbarrel.com; Hello Light-Up Sign \$119 landofnod.com. Opposite, on Witherspoon: Dress draperjames.com; Pumps \$745 us.christianlouboutin.com; Earrings and Bracelets jennifermeyer.com; Ring efcollection.com.

Hair by Kylee Heath; Makeup by Molly Stern; Styling by Petra Flannery; Flowers by Velvet Leaf Studio.