Trendsetter: Happy 2016!

by Maleena Muzio
STAFF WRITER
SHE/HER/HERS
maleena.muzio@uconn.edu

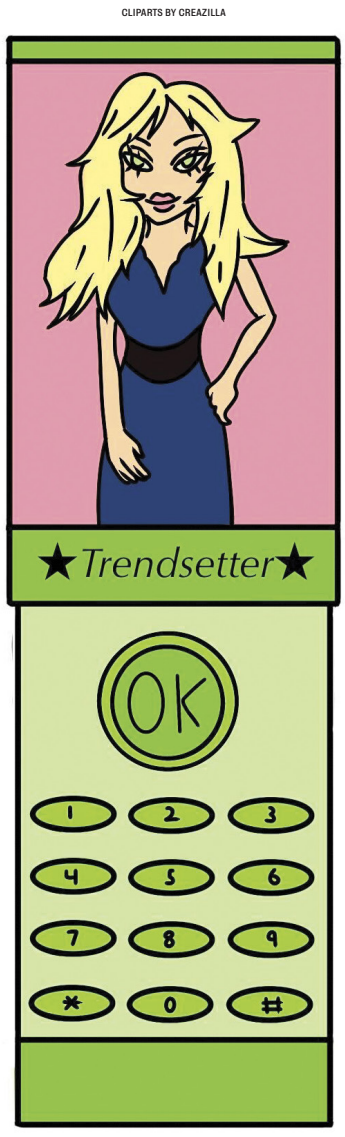
Hello and Happy New Year! Welcome back to "Trendesetter," where I take a deep dive into pop culture's most recent trends. While it may now be 2026, everyone online currently seems to be living in 2016. Today, I will be revisiting last issue's 2016 theme, taking a closer look at all the ways people are embodying decade-old trends in the new year.

> "A new single that is reminiscent of the era is Pinkpantheress' "Stateside" remix with Zara Larsson."

Former hits that were popular on the app Musically — TikTok's much simpler predecessor — are dominating social media posts. Creators are lip-synching and dancing or showing off outfits at twice the speed to songs like "3 Strikes" by Terror Jr, "Let Me Love You" by DJ Snake with Justin Bieber on vocals and "Roses"(feat. ROZES) by the Chainsmokers. All these hits are considered to be pop songs, with the greater common theme being used by DJ's an remixes.

A new single that is reminiscent of the era is Pinkpantheress' "Stateside" remix with Zara Larsson. The number is fun, upbeat and embodies the carefreeness that is often associated with 2016. Larsson herself first came to stardom around 2016 with her hits "Lush Life" and "Never Forget You" with MNEK that dominated Musically "Featured" pages, which can best be described as the "For You" page on TikTok today. The collaboration between Pinkpantheress and Larsson fully blossomed in its music video released on Jan. 15, 2025, which seamlessly blends Pinkpantheress' U.K. inspired indie-diva aesthetic with Larsson's "Malibu Barbie" look, finding its correlation among the vibrancy of videos from the 2016 era.

Music is not the only component of social media posts and content that is honing in on the vibes present in 2016, but posts themselves are being curated to evoke nostalgia from the period. Filters are being used in a capacity that they haven't since the "color customizer" uproar of 2020. However, this time, instead of grainy, saturated images, photos with blue and pink tints — such as those taken with the "Rio De Janeiro" filter on Instagram — are popular. Ironic uses of old Snapchat filters are also common.



LOGO BY LILLIAN LAFEMINA, ASSOCIATE ARTIST EDITOR/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Many celebrities and influencers have taken it upon themselves to post throwback threads of their old photos from 2016. Halfway through the month, Kylie Jenner reminisced on her "King Kylie" era through a series of images that turn 10 this year in a post captioned "you just had to be there." Other celebrities like Devon Lee Carlson, model and owner of Wildflower Cases, and Anaya Panday, popular Bollywood actress, joined in on the fun.

Fashion trends from 2016 are also back in full swing. From black skinny jeans, to off the shoulder and "lace-up" tops, the good, the bad and the ugly from this era are all being showcased once more. The resurgence of one item in particular has caught my eye: the wedge sneaker.

> "It appears we are bringing back the best of 2016 and choosing to forget the worst (besides skinny jeans)."

Although the wedge sneaker, popularized by designers like Isabel Marant and Jeffrey Campbell in the early 2010s, was once said to have died after 2016, it is back and relevant as ever. The Marant "Bekett" sneaker is high in demand on second-hand shopping sites, such as Vinted and Vestiaries Collective. Other brands, such as Steve Madden and Puma, have hopped on the trend and created their own dupes of the sneaker for hundreds of dollars cheaper than the original.

It appears we are bringing back the best of 2016 and choosing to forget the worst (besides skinny jeans). Some may call it a form of escapism during desperate times, and others may simply be choosing to bring in positive vibes from the past to brighten up their beginnings of the new year. Whichever it may be, just be sure not to confuse the mustache-loving Tumblr era of the early 2010s with 2016's LA girl rose-gold aesthetic. Make sure to tune in next time to see how these trends are holding up as February arrives!



PinkPantheress and Zara Larsson promoting their "Stateside" remix. The song released on Jan. 16, 2026.
PHOTO COURTESY OF @GLITTERMAGAZINE ON INSTAGRAM