

The Rules: Swimwear

Swimsuit shopping doesn't have to be a soul-crushing experience. From bikinis to boy-leg cuts, there are togs to flatter all figures this summer. By Lara Zamiatin.

Illustration Wai

The one-piece revival

For those who don't have that sensible-diet-and-exercise thing happening yet, don't panic. This season, bathing beauties are going poolside in one-pieces. The most chic swimwear provides full, figure-forming coverage and harks back to the suits beloved of 1950s pin-ups such as Jane Russell and Grace Kelly. Knockout maillots include C&M Camilla and Marc's strapless Hudson in pink lemonade (\$145), Lover's demure striped one-piece (\$242) and the streamlined bathers in block prints from Gottex's Silver collection for \$240.

The new bikini

Itsy-bitsy bikinis will always bask in the sun but this summer, big is better. The star is Gorman's wonderful Marilyn bikini with scarlet polka dots (\$168). With a retro top and 1950s-style pants that reach the waist, it's old-school bombshell. Equally fabulous are Seafolly's bikinis with form-fitting ruched pants for \$115. G-strings are so passe.

Petite

Bold, bright prints work splendidly on petite figures. Textured fabrics and frills boost cleavage, while ruching at the sides gives a curvaceous line to the hips. Check out Zimmermann's frilly, floral bikinis. Bandeau tops visually broaden narrow shoulders. Try Billabong's patterned B52 ones (\$70) for size. Small-framed women can get away with brief-as-can-be four-triangle affairs. They're everywhere. Top marks go to the tiny leopard-print bikini for \$120 by Who is Angle? Hallican Boodie comes up trumps with its dramatic cutaway one-piece in jungle green with the cheeky name "I Am Taken".

Curvy or pear-shaped

You're aiming for an optical illusion here. Brightly printed tops combined with dark, figure-hugging bottoms draw the eye up, away from the derriere. Catering to curvy bodies is Gorman's bikini with a patterned top and black low-cut pants that stretch

to the waist (\$168), tucking in the tummy. Boy-leg pants pull in less-than-taut behinds. Best of the bunch include the tropical-print bikinis by Jets (\$199) and Zimmermann's polka-dot bikini with a ruched, boy-leg cut (\$180).

Full figures

Generously proportioned body shapes suit darker hues. There's no need to stick to black; deep reds, greens and navies work just as well. To accentuate curves, choose a cossie with a defined waist and a high proportion of spandex. Deep V-neck tops emphasise the waistline, while ruching across the tummy and hips hides all sins. Lisa Ho Swim's gorgeous low-cut knotted maillots have plenty of ruched fabric from the waist to the hips (\$185). If you have a larger bust, opt for a one-piece with extra support. Jets has a canary yellow bandeau maillot for \$165 that gathers at the bust and gives full belly coverage. Speedo's new miracle fabric, Sculpture, promises to shape and lift bosoms and flatten stomachs (\$130). Or go for the brand's striped tankini (\$100) with removable bra pads.

Complexions

Swimsuits follow fashion. Fluoroc and bright hues flatter dark skins, while dark and primary colours suit pale complexions. Remember, all light-coloured bathers sans lining turn transparent in water.

Maintenance

Salt water, chlorine and sunshine wreak havoc on Lycra. Be sure to rinse togs in cold water and dry in the shade to retain the fabric's colour and elasticity.

Must-haves

A spectacular one-piece that hugs curves. Retro-style bikinis with frills and flattering ruched details.

Must avoid

Crocheted bikinis are sweet on sales racks but sag when wet. Never, ever opt for a G-string.



Seafolly ruched bandeau bikini top, \$60, and pants, \$55, 1300 130 715.



Moonside jewelled one-piece, \$130, (02) 9212 1212.



Speedo Sculpture one-piece, \$130, 1800 023 807.



Bond Eye print tri-tankini, \$70, and pants, \$60, (02) 8399 2239.



Hallican Boodie loose tankini, \$160, (02) 9922 1266.



Lisa Ho Swim knotted one-piece, \$165, (02) 8399 2239.



Who is Angle? leopard-print bikini, \$120, (02) 4655 5947.



C&M Camilla and Marc bow strapless one-piece, \$145, (02) 9699 8655.



Gottex graphic one-piece, \$240, 1300 130 715.



Zimmermann floral fill bikini, \$185, (02) 9294 2218.