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Get In Shapewear

Thanks to women-run brands including Skims and Spanx, smoothing shapewear—once hidden under clothes—has become fashion unto itself. Here's how to wear it without its looking too underwear-y.

By RORY SATRAN

IT'S UNFORTUNATE that nature has a bad sense of humor," said Beverly Hills plastic surgeon Dr. Robert Rey to *Women's Wear Daily* in 2007. The star of the reality show "Dr. 90210" continued: "Even the thinnest women have love handles." His then-new brand, Dr. Rey's Shapewear, was conceived to "help" women achieve the kind of slimming that he practiced surgically. At the time, shapewear—stretchy, often compressive lingerie designed to smooth one's figure—was a corrective tool meant to be hidden under your regular clothing. Just as you wouldn't go to work with visible pimple cream on your chin, you wouldn't venture outside with visible shapewear, or even discuss it. Dr. Rey's quote underlined the shameful nature of the product in those days. The doctor's office did not respond to requests for comment.

In 2021, shapewear could not be more visible. Not only do millions of American women rely on it

as an underwear staple, but sporting it out and about has emerged as an unexpected trend. Thanks in no small part to Skims, the juggernaut of a shapewear company valued at \$1.6 billion that Kim Kardashian West launched in 2019, compressive bodysuits, tops and leggings have become incredibly popular as actual clothing. One of this summer's trendiest outfits for women was a high-necked shaping bodysuit in black, brown or beige, worn with a pair of jean cutoffs. And on TikTok, one can see Gen-Z adherents of shapewear, clad in bodysuits and leggings, gyrating like so many smooth baby seals.

Shapewear brands, which generated over \$500 million in sales globally in 2019, according to market research firm NPQ Group, have increasingly been expanding their offerings, moving beyond the nude-colored cinching shorts some women wear underneath event dresses. Now that the niche includes compressive leggings, shorts, bodysuits, ultra-stretchy pants, tube dresses and even tight T-shirts, it's hard to know what's

shapewear and what's just...anythingwear. To describe the feeling she hopes women experience in her products, Kim Kardashian West offers an adjective: "I always say the word 'snatched,' making you feel put together and confident."

Shapermint makes leggings and tanks in extended size runs; Commando designs shaping crop-tops and leggings in faux leather; and classic purveyor Wolford has earned a rep for bodysuits coveted by stylists. The stalwart Spanx, founded in 2000 by Sara Blakely and initially beloved for inner-wear, has also found success with its smoothing pants, jeans, skirts and the like. For years, Ms. Blakely said, women who would recognize her at airports and in carpool lines and wanted to make a connection, would have to "flash" their undergarments at her. Now, she added, it's exciting to see so many of her designs out in the world more easily on display. Many shapewear pieces, including those by Skims and Spanx, cost less than \$100.

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1. Amina Muaddi x Wolford Dress, \$580, wolfordshop.com; Necklace, \$37,800, sidneygarber.com 2. Essential Crew neck Bodysuit, \$68, skims.com; Citizens of Humanity Jeans, \$228, intermixonline.com; Hoop Earrings, \$8,700, sidneygarber.com 3. Sculpting Bodysuit Mid Thigh, \$68, skims.com; Rhinestone Fringe Top, \$9,000, Skirt, \$3,800, Gucci, 212-826-2600; Pumps, \$665, manoloblahnik.com. Fashion Editor: Rebecca Malinsky

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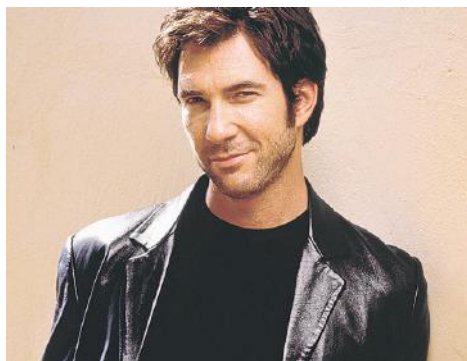
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Grandmillennial designers are resurrecting frilly trends of the past **D10**



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DESIGN & DECORATING

Frill Seekers

From ruffles to allover pattern, five old-school trends that ‘grandmillennial’ designers are revitalizing

By REBECCA MALINSKY

THOUGH 35, Whitney McGregor considers herself an old soul, an identity she shares with many young people drawn to unmodern things. The Greenville, S.C., designer—one of many self-identifying grandmillennials giving new life to traditional décor—embraces florals on florals and doesn’t quail in the face of scallop-trim.

Décor motifs like scallop-trim are subject to the trend-pendulum’s swing. “It all comes in cycles,” said 68-year-old Dallas designer Cathy Kincaid. When she graduated in 1974, she considered her midcentury-modern sorority house horribly dated. She spent the next 20 years finding fresh appeal in ornate dress-maker details like trims and tassels but, another two decades later, was peeling hand-painted scenic floral paper from her clients’ walls as midcentury came roaring back.

Today, in turn, many millennials covet patterns and ornaments their parents found frumpy. Ms. McGregor and her ilk find inspiration in historical American designers like Elsie de Wolfe, who brightened heavy Victorian interiors with trellises and chintz in the early 20th century, and Mark Hampton, who later in the century would cover walls, furniture and windows in the same floral print.

“We are looking back on what has stood the test of time,” said New York designer Lilse McKenna, 32, who swears by delicate Sister Parish patterns and Les Indiennes block prints. Style archaeologists like Ms. McKenna don’t just re-enact history, however, said Ms. Kinkaid: “They temper the traditional with the contemporary.”

Here, five design trends we can thank grandmillennials for resurrecting, plus how to find, layer and live with them without accidentally re-creating a high school production of “Arsenic and Old Lace.”

Deck the Everything

Allover pattern—be it petite stripes, soft geometrics, fauna or florals—is a cornerstone of the movement. Some decorators apply a single print everywhere, from wall coverings to headboards and lampshades. Others mix the scale of their prints. Either way, the impact is swift and thunderous. “It’s impossible for it not to create a mood,” said Ms. McGregor, who considers the move her design secret weapon. “It’s just so easy,” she said. “I don’t have to make seven decisions.” If applying allover pattern strikes you as too much of a

commitment, limit your swathing to curtains and walls, and cover a sofa or headboard in a solid color that appears in the print.

Brown Is the New Black

“We’ve all made mistakes with inexpensive, do-it-yourself dressers,” said Benjamin Reynaert, 38, a New York creative director for a furniture company. Currently restoring a Victorian home in Wilmington, Del., he plans to bring in durable, “brown furniture,” a once disparaging term for vintage and antique wood pieces, so that he doesn’t have to replace pieces too soon. London TV host and writer Louise Roe, 39, recently renovated a country cottage, building an Instagram following of over 100K as she documented the process and shared her back-to-the-future style inspirations. Ms. Roe

believes brown furniture grounds a room and lends a rich warmth. But she warned, “If you get too many antiques in the same room, it starts to look like the set of ‘Downton Abbey’.” Ms. Roe also recommends pairing brown furniture with simple, pale carpets or a bright piece of art to counterbalance its visual weight.

Scallops and Ruffles

“Ten years ago, if I told a client I wanted to put a ruffled trim on their sofa, they would have said ‘Hell, no!’” said Ms. McGregor. Since then, she has slowly incorporated scalloped pillows and ruffled trim into her designs. (“Scallops are the gateway drug to ruffles,” she quipped.) She recommends British upstart Matilda Goad’s scalloped lampshades for beginners and suggests studying ruffled chairs and curtains by leg-

‘Grandmillennials temper the traditional with the contemporary.’

endary 20th-century designers such as American Albert Hadley and France’s Madeleine Castaing. Ms. Roe makes up her guest room with crisp white linens edged in red-embroidered scallops. That high-contrast color scheme offsets what could become treacly in softer colors.

Grown-Up Illustrations

“When spending \$30,000 on an original piece of art isn’t an option, you can hang a grid of 12 prints for a fraction of the price,” said Ms. McGregor. High quality Audubon reproductions (called



QUIETLY BUSY Designer Lilse McKenna layered this entryway in Manchester-by-the-Sea, Mass., with several grandmillennial musts: an antique brown desk, multiple patterns and framed vintage prints.

giclées) on One Kings Lane range from \$155 to \$400, and some of these bird prints come framed. Ms. McKenna grouped and reframed a client’s collection of antique Vanity Fair magazine illustrations to display above a desk (shown above.) She matted them with traditional Italian bookbinder paper, adding old-timey gravitas, but kept the frames themselves simple.

Dressing Up

Textile skirting around tables and bathroom basins slips pretty texture and softness into a space. “It’s a great way to add another pattern into the room,” Ms. McKenna said. In a Nashville powder room (shown right) by local firm Alexander Interiors, for example, plaid ruffles under the sink complement a fruity floral wallpaper while obscuring ugly plumbing. A skirt can disguise storage as well, hiding everything from kids toys to Wi-Fi routers. In her Manhattan living room, Ms. McKenna covered IKEA shelving with a tassel-trimmed linen until she was able to replace the piece with a handsome, proper cabinet.



Nashville’s Alexander Interiors skirted a sink with an unexpected plaid.

THE ARRANGEMENT



FLOWER SCHOOL

A Florist Tries the Painting of a Saint

Floral designer Lindsey Taylor attempts to convey the mood of Giovanni Bellini’s ‘St. Francis in the Desert’ via an earthy bouquet

BACK IN SPRING I made a visit to the Frick Madison in New York’s Breuer building, the temporary home of the Frick Collection while its own building undergoes a renovation. There I saw a work by well-known Italian Renaissance painter Giovanni Bellini

THE INSPIRATION



Parrot tulips, spirea foliage and a poppy seed head allude to the shades of green in the landscape of Giovanni Bellini’s ‘St. Francis in the Desert’ (ca. 1476-78), while a shock of blue larkspur emulates the corner of bright sky.

(ca. 1430-1516), which I decided would inspire my September arrangement. His ‘St. Francis in the Desert’ (ca. 1476-78) shows St. Francis of Assisi stepping out from a humble pergola structure and looking up to the sky, hands outspread. You can get lost in the details of this moving oil painting. Your gaze travels from St. Francis’s tan habit, its simple rope belt tied with three knots (symbolizing the virtues of obedience, chastity and poverty) to the flora peeking out from the rock outcroppings. Then you notice a raised masonry bed filled with medicinal plants like mullein; a well-worn, red book and scull atop his desk; and various creatures and a village in the distance.

To capture the feeling and palette of Bellini’s work, I started with a low, handmade, footed bowl from North Carolina potter Jason Hartsoe. Its

rough, matte monastic quality set the tone. I secured a floral frog to the inside bottom with floral adhesive and gathered a mix of flowers. A bunch of pale yellow-tan scabiosas came close to matching the color of St. Francis’s robe and highlights on the rocks. I let soft, lichen-colored spirea foliage represent the trees and vines. Parrot tulips mottled with sage green and soft white mimicked the lines in the rock outcroppings, while a single poppy seed head in sage green added another ‘geological’ note. I left stems of contrasting azure larkspur long enough to dance in my arrangement’s upper left (which I deliberately left airy), a nod to the sky above the little village. By cutting other stems shorter, I established a denser lower zone to ground the arrangement and let flowers, stems and vessel become one.