

# SUIT YOURSELF

## ...and lose the cover-up

By ANDREA KENNEDY

OUR ATTITUDES TOWARD SWIM-SUITS can be confounding. With the warning of warm weather, we stress about baring all, then pay top dollar for barely-there styles only to sheath our suits and ourselves in a cover-up until – Blink! – we're disrobed and neck-deep with the speed and agility of an international spy.

If this sounds like you, it's time for a new swimsuit. And not one that's only suitable for reclining poolside. Though we adore laid-back lounging in the perfect flat-tummy pose – especially with our WAG and Mai Tai in arm's reach – impending pool parties require actual mobility. Suits should take you seamlessly from the pool to the cabana – or bar, or buffet – without having to fuss with a cover-up.

Designers have picked up on consumers' demands for better coverage without

compromising design. Skimpy doesn't equal sexy – though, we've always known that – and this season is rife with well-constructed options with such fetching dress-like details they call for promenades worthy of a red carpet. Whether in the Hamptons, out West, on an island or in the suburban sun, these cute suits bring the coverage so you can lose that cover-up.

Chic and sheer is the name of the game with LUXE Luminosity by California designer Lisa Vogel. Her convertible bandini top upgrades the traditional bandeau bikini to a sexy body-skimming swimdress of Italian mesh.

Jean-Paul Gaultier brightens up see-through overlay with his tattoo-print tankini. The exotic design entices while drawing the eye down the midline for a slimming effect.

For a hint of tribal inspiration, try Carmen Marc Valvo's Malawi Kingdom halter with gold hardware front and center. A free-flowing bodice with just enough length keeps this suit low-stress.

For the high-diving diva, a dramatic one-shoulder ruffle will draw every eye in the splash zone. Neoprene supports in all the right places so it's as functional as it is glamorous. Strut in this suit by itself or pair with a floor-length sarong for Oscar-worthy elegance.

You may want to feather your hair when you sport this ruffled number by Kushcush. Two tones but one piece, the Kiki suit flatters with its cinched waist and deep V. At first glance, this Charlie's Angels charmer could be a girly aqua tank and navy hot pants. (We promise no one at the bar will care that you're not wearing

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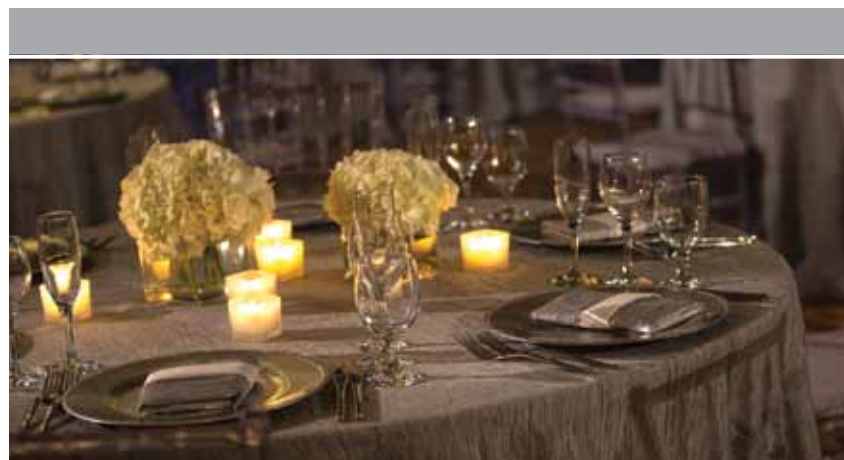

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actual pants.)

On to designer Norma Kamali, who actually suited one of the original Angels – Farrah Fawcett, to be exact – and in her red poster-worthy piece that’s now in the Smithsonian, no less. Kamali offers throwback styles that still resonate today, though now more pinup than private eye. Her sweetheart halter with high-waisted swim skirt will make you a Katy Perry-esque queen of the cabana. Kamali’s generous use of fabric keeps imperfections

well-concealed while body-hugging ruching offers a win-win by flattering curves and ensuring you don’t withstand the ice-cold slap of loose wet clothing. (It’s the worst.)

For a more modern look, Kamali’s strapless swimsuit-slash-microdress looks straight off a dance floor in the Meatpacking District. Complete the ensemble with a wide-brimmed sun hat, bangles, a hot pair of shades and, of course, the hottest poolside accessory of all – SPF. ■



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