

SIMPLE STYLE

THE SWIMSUIT

Words: **CLARE GOGERTY**

The joy of finding a swimsuit that is comfortable but not frumpy is a joy unsurpassed. It doesn't have to look as though it belongs on a sports calendar; it just has to be wearable and not deliver a wedgie. When one that actually fits is found, it is worn until threadbare. And then the fun begins all over again.

There are two types of swimsuits: ones worn in the water and actually swum in, and ones worn to get a tan and hang around in, poolside. The swimming ones tend to have little in the way of embellishment – just 'performance' material, a practical cut and the brand's logo. The sun-worshipping one-pieces are not just frequently adorned, they have structure. Even the most body-confident can be persuaded that moulded cups, cunningly concealed panels and occasionally a little ruching can be a good thing. As a result, the choice of swimsuits available has never been greater.

It hasn't always been like this. Our Roman ancestors felt no need for garments at all and bathed naked – a practice that continued in spas until nude swimming was banned for women in the UK in 1670. From then on, though, all was demure



Susan's cossie print may have been tropical but the pool temperature certainly wasn't...

“The one-piece can be said to have reached its apotheosis in Baywatch”

propriety, with women forced to wear stiff, flannel bathing suits that were weighted at the hem. As the fashion for sea bathing grew during the Victorian era, women emerged from bathing huts (wheeled into the sea) in two-piece bathing suits that reached to the knee.

Gradually, more of the female form was revealed. The one-piece can be said to have reached its apotheosis in 1989 in *Baywatch* when Pamela Anderson sprinted through the shallows in a high-cut, red swimsuit.

Happily, a few brands now make swimwear that fits all shapes and sizes. Youswim's simple, stretchy one-piece fits seven sizes and has no built-in structural devices; Bravissimo caters for women with larger busts. Several also take sustainability seriously, making theirs from recycled plastic (Tide + Seek) and recovered fishing nets and old carpets (Arket). Choice is broadening, not just in terms of fit and comfort, but also in terms of environmental awareness. And that can only be a good thing for all swimsuit wearers, whether they intend to get them wet or not. **S**

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THE UPDATE



Secret slimming swimsuit | £25
Chlorine-resistant, with hidden cleverness that's designed to flatter.
marksandspencer.com



Talamanca swimsuit | £60
A comfortable fit for swimming that comes in two lengths (and many colours).
boden.com



Poppy reversible swimsuit | £45
Floral one side; untie the halterneck, turn it inside out, and it's spotty. Neat.
whitestuff.com