

Teeny weeny bikini: Reviving retro swimwear

Canadian designer Ashley Eady evokes vintage glamour with her flattering suits.

By Stephanie Gray



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Nestled away in the small village of Rosseau, located in beautiful Muskoka cottage country, is Teeny Weeny Bikini, an itsy-bitsy store that if you're not careful you may pass by.

Stepping into the adorned cabin is like glimpsing into a girls' bedroom. Refurbished luggage, earrings transformed into chic rings, charm bracelets and frilly frocks are scattered throughout the store. A seventies vintage California beach vibe rings off the walls where mod ice buckets, Hawaiian-printed drink glasses and oversized sunglasses (Goldie Hawn snagged a pair last year) sit on shelves in and outside.

As the name implies, bathing suits (not just bikinis) are the stores' specialty. Owner and designer Ashley Eady began TWB last year on somewhat of a whim. "I'm very spontaneous," she spills. "I wanted to build a tiny shack to open on July first, so we built it three days before."

What she did plan on was to have all women of all body types fit into her suits. She calls them "love handle free," meaning the design actually holds in the stomach, nixing the hip dip, holding down the paunch and creating a smooth look.

After last season's designs were received so well (she sold out three times last year) she expanded the range and quantity of suits available. Included now are bottoms called tiny bums, which have a tie string at the back, full-piece bathers and the new fifties halter.

All of the suits are also reversible. Two suits for the price of one – a definite steal. No fastenings and no tags, courtesy of the silk-screen printing, make each side just as sleek as the other. Although the tops don't have padding Eady explains, "The halter doesn't need it. It pulls everything smooth."

For women looking for a little more coverage, the full-piece retro-style bathers have enough give that she found pregnant women were grabbing them off the racks.

No tan-line bandeaus are the most popular, as the top can be played with to create three different looks, plus it includes a tie if you want a halter look. Chocolate and sky blue, green with bubble-gum pink polka dots, are just some of the colour combos she's used.

Launching next week will be her nautical line conceived after noticing the seaside palette of fabrics coming in. "I don't really follow trends," reveals Eady. "For me it's instinctual. I see the fabric and it inspires me to design something."

For this collection it means classic blue and white striped bandeaus with hints of gold, coral red with white polka dotted bathers and periwinkle with white stripes and cobalt blue halters.

In total six new styles are coming out, but her quantities are limited. She only carries three of each size, ranging from XS to XL. Prices for each two-piece are \$45 to \$55, while full suits are from \$98 to \$110.

Visit teenyweenybikinico.com or if you're lucky enough to get up to Ontario cottage country, swing by the shop off Hwy 11.

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