

The right bra works wonders

CYBER SHOP
I never realized until recently how important the right bra is to looking good.

Standing in front of a three-way dressing room mirror, trying on blouse after blouse and one slinky T-shirt after another, I quickly decided it was time to not only invest in new fall clothes, but also toss out this summer's comfortable cotton sports bras and buy a new collection of undergarments.

According to research, most bras wear out and function less optimally after six months of use.

Furthermore, bras need a day of rest after wear to return to their original fit, say the bra police. Wearing the same bra over and over again puts stress on the garment's fabric and causes it to stretch and lose its fit more rapidly, the experts say.

Okay, hopefully I've gotten you to ask yourself: When is the last time I had a really good fitting bra? In any case, fall fashion is packed with body-clinging fabrics, so why not take inventory of your undergarments and learn more about achieving a good fit.

General tips to get you started:
■ To achieve good support, make sure your bra fits properly. You need to fit fully into the cup of your bra, and the cup needs to entirely support you. A common trick is to bend over, place all tissue into the cup, then stand and center yourself in each cup at the seam of the bra.

■ For the best support and comfort, the back band of your bra should be anchored at or below your shoulder blades.

■ If you wash your bras in the washing machine, place them in a mesh lingerie wash bag to protect them from being wrapped around the agitator or other clothing.

Avoid putting your bras or panties in the dryer. The heat of the dryer breaks down Lycra, spandex and elastic, so you will find yourself replacing undergarments more frequently.

Here are a few tips aimed at fall fashion trends:

■ Seamless style bras are a good bet for fall, as knits are popular.

■ With low-cut and plunging necklines, it's always nice to get a little extra lift and cleavage. Try a lightly lined seamless and padded bra.

■ To prevent blouses from pulling or gaping in front, try a "minimizer." They reduce the bust line by one or two inches and give you a rounded shape.

Now that we've learned about proper fit and bra styles that suit fall fashion trends, grab a cup of tea and head for your computer. I found the experience of buying bras on-line to be a seamless fit with my busy life.

Cari of West Bloomfield is a free-lance stylist and writer. Please send your Internet shopping questions to Cari at OECYBERSHOP@AOL.COM.

Click Pick:

www.barenecessities.com

Description: The site is broken down by category (bras, shape wear, panties and hosiery). It's also chock full of name brands like Calvin Klein and Maidenform.

Navigation: You can browse by product, brand or bra size. Sizes range from 30A to 52L.

The site loads quickly and is easy to navigate. The location for special offers and mail-in rebates is easy to spot. Currently, on-line shoppers who buy a Bali bra, get one free by mail. Also, visit the site's clearance area. While sizes are limited, the deals on such name brands as Chantelle and Ultimo are fabulous.

Shipping: A flat shipping rate of \$4.95 is charged. You can feel secure about your purchases since there is a 100-percent guarantee on returns and exchanges. You will find a return form enclosed with your order, but shoppers are responsible for the cost of returning merchandise.

Feminine Florence

Local clothier talks shopping, culture in latest travel book for women

By NICOLE STAFFORD
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Lynn Portnoy loves to dress the women who come to her clothing boutique.

But dressing up is more than meets the eye at Lynn Portnoy Women's Clothier in Southfield.

At the risk of sounding silly, it's a defiant assertion of womanhood; though Portnoy cares about fashion, the act of exalting the female perspective – and prodding women to experience the world through their eyes – is what drives her.

As she drapes a "fabulous" Italian wool wrap over a pair of petite shoulders, yes, Portnoy is selling a stylish stole. But she's also peddling the splendor of being a woman.

The same principle informs Portnoy's travel books, *Going Like Lynn: A Series of Liberating Travel Primers for Women*, the latest of which takes readers across the Atlantic Ocean to the Renaissance city of Florence.

Portnoy is slated to sign copies of her latest primer at local Borders stores: 2 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 16 at the Birmingham store; 7 p.m. Monday, Oct. 8 in Novi and 2 p.m. Sunday, Oct. 14 in Beverly Hills. However, *Going Like Lynn – Florence*, as well as Portnoy's guides to Paris and New York, sell at Borders stores and by direct order.

"Most guide books are geared towards business men or are a more general source," says Portnoy, who traversed the globe – all by her lonesome as a clothing buyer for Claire Penrose, a well known metropolitan Detroit women's clothing boutique that did business in what is today the Somerset Collection.

"I want a little hotel with a concierge who knows I've come home," says Portnoy, alluding to women's No. 1 worry about traveling alone: personal safety. But such hurdles are precisely why Portnoy, who's toiled around solo in such places as Afghanistan and Guatemala, writes travel books; arm them with knowledge and unleash the traveling fool in them all. "This isn't a dress rehearsal," she comments, rather seriously. "What are they waiting for?"

So, rather than catalogue the major hotel chains, Portnoy ticks off a tiny list of small, neighborhood hotels – former palaces, mansions and villas in the case of *Going Like Lynn – Florence* – where the concierge is likely to be a member of the family that runs the hotel.

Instead of a lengthy description of every major tourist attraction, Portnoy goes straight to the female heart: dining, culture and shopping, broken down into three chapters. In each, she describes her personal favorites and provides all the essential tourist information. But pay close attention, some of Portnoy's selections veer off the beaten path.

Have you ever heard of Florence's cat houses?

Do you know where you can buy leather and feel spiritually nourished simultaneously? The answer to the last question is inside the S. Croce Church. "It's the only place I know where you can pray and shop," jokes Portnoy.

As with all her guides, Portnoy weaves her recommended destinations into a time-efficient itinerary followed by a resource list to close the primer.

Her signature instruction on how to pack a travel wardrobe in one bag follows the first chapter "Pre-planning."

"I think I knew I was going to be a traveler when I had my first spanking," recalls Portnoy. "I dug up the rose garden because I wanted to see China. Children were told then that China was down there. And I invited



STAFF PHOTO BY JIM HIGHTER

World traveler: Lynn Portnoy, owner of Lynn Portnoy Women's Clothier in Southfield, introduces her latest travel primer for women, *Going Like Lynn – Florence*. She'll sign copies of the book at area Borders stores in September and October.

all the neighborhood's children over to help dig."

But fear not, Portnoy won't make you want to dig, just travel.

To directly order any *Going Like Lynn* guide, call (888) 366-9688, visit www.goinglikelynn.com or visit Lynn Portnoy Women's Clothier, 29260 Franklin Road in Southfield.

Retail, style and special attire events are listed in this calendar. Please send information to: Malls & Mainstreets, c/o Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 805 E. Maple, Birmingham, MI 48009. By fax, (248) 644-1314. E-mail, nastafford@oe.homecomm.net. Deadline for publication is two weeks in advance.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

YARN GARMENT SHOW
The Knitting Room, 251 Merrill Street in Birmingham, hosts a samples show of garments made with fibers from Rowan Yarns featuring both current and new yarns, through Sept. 16. Store hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday. For additional information, call (248) 540-3623.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

ESCADA FOR FALL
Saks Fifth Avenue, the Somerset Collection in Troy, presents the Escada fall 2001 collection in an informal fashion show with light buffet lunch, noon. Escada Boutique, second floor. Tickets are \$25 and benefit the Michigan Chapter of the Arthritis Foundation. Please make reservations by Sept. 10 by calling (248) 424-9001, ext. 40.

ANNUAL FASHION SHOW

Join fashion followers at the 12th Annual Birmingham Fall Spring fall fashion from Birmingham merchants plus live and silent auctions, a strolling dinner and entertainment, 6:30-9:30 p.m., outside under tents between the Townsend Hotel and The Community House in downtown Birmingham. The event benefits the Beaumont Pediatric Cancer Survivors Scholarship Fund. General admission tickets are \$65 in advance and \$75 at the show. Patron seats are \$175 and benefactor tickets are priced \$250. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (248) 644-1700. Tickets may also be purchased at the following

ADDED ATTRACTIONS

Birmingham stores: Astrein's Jewelers, Tender and Imelda's Closet, all on Maple Road.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

CASHMERE TRUNK SHOW
Lynn Portnoy Women's Clothier, 29260 Franklin Road in Southfield, presents a trunk show of Forte Cashmere, through Sept. 16. Show hours are 11 a.m.-7 p.m. on Thursday and 11 a.m.-6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. For more details, call (248) 353-2900.

TRUNK SHOW
Sherri's at the Orchard Mall in West Bloomfield features Skinz Designs in a trunk show with informal modeling, through Sept. 15. For more information, call (248) 626-7470.

BRIDGE COLLECTIONS SHOW
Saks Fifth Avenue, the Somerset Collection in Troy, presents the Best of Bridge, a showing of fall 2001 sportswear collections, to benefit The Child Abuse and Neglect Council, 6 p.m. wine and hors d'oeuvre reception, 6 p.m. fashion show, Designer Bridge Sportswear, second floor. Tickets are \$35 and \$50. To make a reservation, call (248) 352-7173.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

JEWELRY TRUNK SHOW
P.R. Haig Jewelers in downtown Rochester presents a trunk show of Nagalle opal inlay jewelry through Sept. 15, 10 a.m.-9 p.m. on Friday and 10 a.m.-5 p.m. on Saturday. For additional information, please call (248) 652-9660.

JEWELRY DESIGNERS VISIT
Julius R. Schubert Jewelers, 3001 West Big Beaver in Troy, welcomes jewelry designers Leo de Vroomen of

De Vroomen Designs and Gianni Stivanello of Ambrosi, along with their recent collections, at a champagne reception, noon-8 p.m. The designers and their collections will also be in the store from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 16. For more details, call (248) 649-1122 or (800) SCHUBOT.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

HOMECOMING PREVIEW
Jacobson's stores in Birmingham, Livonia and Rochester Hills give teens a head start on shopping for homecoming with a Ms. J homecoming party event through Sept. 16. For more information, call the store near you: (248) 644-6900 in Birmingham; (734) 691-7696 in Livonia and (248) 651-6000 in Rochester Hills.

BILL BURNS VISITS
Meet designer Bill Burns and view his fall collection at Nordstrom, the Somerset Collection in Troy, 11 a.m.-2 p.m. Event includes informal modeling and lunch in Studio 121, second floor. To make a reservation, call (248) 816-5100, ext. 1650.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

POWER CARD SHOPPING DAY
Purchase a power card for \$50 and enjoy a discount of 20 percent at Saks Fifth Avenue, the Somerset Collection in Troy (some restrictions apply). The event benefits the Junior League of Birmingham and Ilitch Charities for Children. Cards must be reserved by Sept. 10. For more information or to purchase a power card, call (248) 848-2613. Or, if you are already a member, call (248) 848-2613. For more information or to schedule an appointment, call (248) 816-5100, ext. 1417.