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Style Publishing Group
P.O. Box 1676
Frisco, Texas 75034
Phone: 972.335.1181
Toll Free: 877.781.7067
Fax: 214.722.2313

E-mail: info@friscostyle.com
Web: www.friscostyle.com

Ad Sales: (972) 335-1306



Find a Swimmingly Great Fit

By Karen Long

LADIES! LADIES! Spring is upon us, which means summer and the Texas heat are just around the corner. There is just one thing we dread more than the heat and that is finding that perfect swimming suit. Let's face it; we need a lot to choose from because they just don't seem to look as good on us in the spring as they do in the summer. Most of us just don't come out of the winter months looking like Barbie and Ken.

Well, never fear...I hope to give you some great tips to guide you to stores with the best selections. You will be pleased to know that manufacturers have come up with many choices for all different body types and selections are at their best now. Don't wait until summer when the choices are picked over and you have to settle for a less than flattering look.

Nordstrom was one of my first stops in search of a great fitting suit. I discovered a bathing suit designer by the name of Carol Weir. Her suits, called "slimsuits," come in a variety of styles and sizes. She focuses on many common figure challenges we

women face, especially those of us who have had children. These suits help with the bust, waist, and hip areas. Most of her suits have very nice looking cover-ups to coordinate the total "by the pool" look. She also has a line of swimsuits for women who have endured a mastectomy or reconstructive surgery. These suits are cut higher under the arms and also have hidden inserts available.

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Just Add Water is a specialty store in the Dallas area with several locations. It specializes in all different types of swimsuits and loungewear for the beach and pool. While a little more expensive, they are generally well made.

JCPenney also has a very nice swimsuit department. They carry a line of suits that are labeled for problem areas and figure flaws...bust minimizer, hip slimmer, or long torso. They also have a wide selection of two-piece bathing suits that can be mixed and matched and purchased separately. It's nice to see the manufacturers realize that most of us are not the same size on the top and the bottom.

Target is another store that carries a nice selection of swimsuits. I think they have a bigger selection of two pieces than one-piece suits. They also appear to be geared to younger women. Dillard's is another favorite at this time of year. They have a huge swimsuit department and carry a lot of different styles and brands.

For children's suits...Limited Too, Target, Animal Crackers, Children's Place, Wal-mart, Gap, Nordstrom, and Foleys all have an adorable selection for girls and very cute colorful tanks for boys. Pinks with brown, blues with brown and black seem to be very popular this season.

For the teenagers in your life, Gadzooks, Pac Sun, Guess, Bebe, and Target have a

*Swim apparel available from JCPenney and jcp.com
photo provided by JCPenney*

wide variety of suits. The price points vary from store to store. I really like the variety of cover-ups and skirts to match the swim suits that most of these stores offer.

Shopping for the guys is better than ever. Cargo trunks are the most popular for men and boys. Hopefully your guy is daring enough to wear the fun, bright tropical prints available. Don't worry, for the more conservative guys, solids are available. Remember to add some neutral leather flip-flops or sandals to his wardrobe as well.

If the thought of going to the store or a mall and trying on swimsuits makes you cringe, then catalogue or online shopping may be for you. Victoria's Secret offers a really nice variety of swimsuits including the Miracle Bra line of swimwear and designer brands. Their suits are colorful and trendy.

Chadwicks has a nice selection of one-piece suits...tummy control, skirted, halter styles and mallots. I like the variety they offer. Gap has some mix'n'match tops and bottoms in solids and rugby stripes. Check the return policy on any of

your catalogue on online shopping purchases. Some retailers will not allow returns for bathing suits.

Remember, the retail business is seasonal and now is the time to find the best selection of summer gear. Don't wait till the last minute because the stores will be packed with fall clothing by July 1st. Also, if possible, don't limit your wardrobe to just one swimsuit purchase and be sure to have fun with the accessories like sandals and flip-flops. If you feel you need help making your selections, go to a specialty store that emphasizes customer service.

I hope I have given you some ideas and motivation to get out there and shop. There seems to be a great selection out there this year. Good luck!

Karen Long is a Frisco resident and partner in Before and After Interior Makeovers.



Swim apparel available from JCPenney and jcp.com photo provided by JCPenney



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