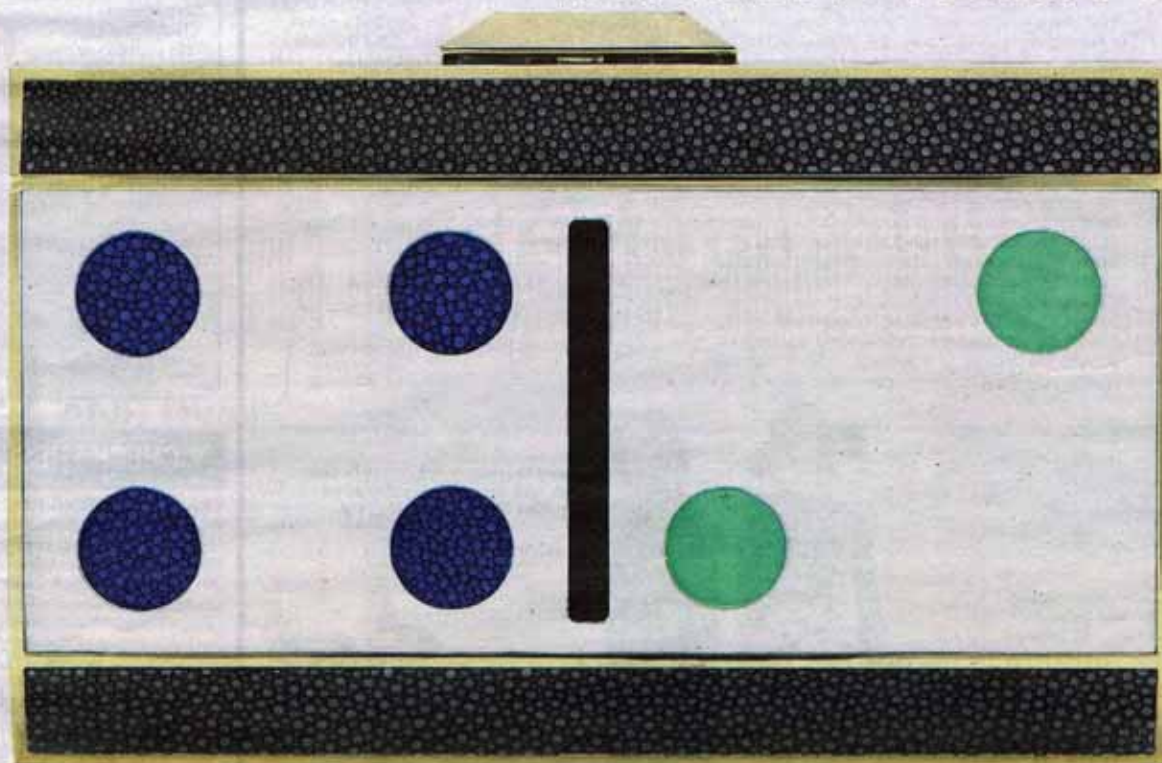


MCI (P) 050/02/2013

# URBAN

YOUR GUIDE TO **LOOKING GOOD**



## GET CARRIED AWAY

30 cute bags for all budgets and occasions.  
Plus, bag designers Anya Hindmarch and Lana Marks  
on the styles every woman should own

**WIN!**

Nuxe brightening skincare sets worth \$1,380

**I am going for a beach holiday. What are some swimwear options that are fashionable and flattering?**

Some swimwear options these days are so versatile that they can pass off for everyday wear. Think black lace bodysuits that would not look out of place when worn under a structured blazer.

A popular swimwear trend is the one-piece swimsuit with cut-out details, which lets you flaunt your curves without showing too much skin.

While this style has been in vogue for a few seasons, updated versions now feature edgy details, such as zippers on the front or necklines that are embellished with metallic panels.

Last month, Swedish fashion retailer H&M unveiled its latest High Summer collection featuring a line of swimsuits modelled by pop star Beyoncé.

Prices range from \$7.90 for a bikini top to \$49.90 for a one-piece swimsuit. Try this graphic print strapless swimsuit (photo 1), \$49.90, from 01-01 Orchard Building, from the collection.

It features a tusk-shaped zipper tab in front and cut-outs on the side. These details give the otherwise simple number a dressier vibe.

If you are heading somewhere before going to the beach, team the swimsuit with a pair of skinny jeans and an oversized linen shirt.

Or go for this bold-coloured strapless bandage number (photo 2), \$209, from Australian swimwear brand Seafolly at 02-16 Wisma Atria.

The two floral print panels on the sides help to make you look slimmer and leaner. The swimsuit also features gathers around the stomach area that can hide a jelly belly.

High-waisted bikini bottoms, another popular trend this season, also flatter those who are worried about showing a flabby tummy.

Channel your inner pin-up girl with this 1950s-inspired striped bandeau bikini from Dolce & Gabbana (photo 3), US\$490 or S\$617, from [www.net-a-porter.com](http://www.net-a-porter.com). With underwired padded cups and detachable straps, this bandeau bikini top gives good support and is more comfortable than flimsy bikini tops.

Or you can opt for a "swimdress". As the name suggests, it is a

# ASK URBAN

HAVE A PROBLEM WITH THE WAY YOU LOOK? DON'T SWEAT IT. Email your queries to [URBAN@sturban@sph.com.sg](mailto:URBAN@sturban@sph.com.sg)



PHOTOS: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE, AKRIS, DERMALOGICA, H&M, MIETI, NET-A-PORTER, SEAFOLLY

combination of a swimsuit and mini-dress made usually from a mix of lycra and spandex.

For a selection of such styles, check out American retailer Lands' End ([www.landsend.com](http://www.landsend.com)). It ships internationally and is known to cater to those with more conservative tastes.

The brand also offers options for most body types, ranging from petite to plus sizes. Go for the Beach Living swimdress (US\$53.40), which features a flattering cut and ruching to disguise

figure flaws. It is available in larger sizes – up to UK size 18.

Or try this toga-style swimsuit from home-grown swimwear label Milet (photo 4), \$174, from Antipodean, 27A Lorong Mambong, Holland Village, which suits those who do not want to bare too much skin.

The dark grey waistband visually sculpts your frame to give you a trimmer looking waist.

– ROHAIZATUL AZHAR

**Most cleansers make my face feel tight and dry. What should I look for when choosing a cleanser?**

There is a reason many regular cleansers leave the skin feeling dehydrated and tight, says Dr Diana Howard, vice-president of research and development at American skincare brand Dermalogica.

The 59-year-old American, who has a doctorate in plant biochemistry, has more than 30 years of experience in the cosmetic industry.

The skin's natural pH level stands at 4.5 to 5.5 on the pH scale, which ranges from 0 to 14, she explains. A pH level of 7 is neutral. Acidic substances measure below pH7, while alkaline substances measure above pH7.

"However, most cleansers that contain soap leave the skin with a residual alkalinity of 10," notes Dr Howard, who is also the vice-president of skin therapy school, The International Dermal

Institute, which started in the United States and now has 40 branches worldwide.

"They can make your skin feel clean but it becomes tight and dry afterwards because your natural lipids are stripped from your skin."

So, look for a cleanser that suits your skin type (oily, dry or combination) and removes the grime and sweat but keeps the integrity of the skin.

Most cleansers do not state the pH range of their products, so you have to rely on keywords to pick the right product.

Look out for words such as "soap-free" and "within the acid-balance range" or "respecting skin's pH balance".

Ingredients you do not want in your cleanser include fragrance and colourants, which can cause skin reactions; mineral oil, a cheap solvent that can clog pores; and lanolin, a wax that many are allergic to.

Pick products that are free of

such components, says Dr Howard.

Try Dermalogica Special Cleansing Gel (left), \$73 for 250ml, or visit [www.dermalogica.com.sg](http://www.dermalogica.com.sg) for stockists; La Roche-Posay Physiological Ultra-Fine Scrub, \$26.80, from Guardian stores; or Physiogel Hypoallergenic Cleanser, \$9.90, from Guardian stores.

Also, don't be fooled by labels such as "organic" and "natural".

"It's mostly marketing hype," she says. "Even if a formula contains organic ingredients, the other ingredients might not be organic. And different countries have different guidelines for organic certification."

In other words, do not buy a cleanser simply because it has a label that states it contains a high percentage of organic or natural ingredients. The cleanser may not necessarily be gentle on your skin.

Besides, synthetic ingredients are not always bad. "Some of the most effective anti-ageing ingredients, such as peptides and hyaluronic acid, are synthetic," Dr Howard says.

– GLADYS CHUNG

## STYLE WATCH

**CHARLENE WITTSTOCK, 35**

**HOT**



Wearing a gown from Akris at the gala dinner of the Monaco Formula One Grand Prix on May 26.

This cinched white strapless gown showed off the Princess of Monaco's athletic figure – the South African is a former Olympic swimmer. It accentuated her waist and gave her a curvier silhouette.

The neat bun and barely there make-up completed the chic look, while the high-high slit added a sexy touch.



**NOT**

Wearing a couture gown from Akris at the church wedding of Princess Madeleine of Sweden on June 8

The colour of this frock is too dark and dull for a day reception and the chiffon shawl emphasised her broad shoulders. The dated design says more mother-of-the-bride than sweet princess.

– ROHAIZATUL AZHAR