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Heat Waves Due from Brazil this Swimsuit Season

By Blake Kritzberg

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If you've passed a swimsuit hanging on a rack, or touched on a swimwear website, you've probably noticed that Brazil is leaving no stone unturned on the beach scene this year.

Why the focus on Brazil? You'll find the answer in a bikini-sized history lesson. In short, Brazil is urbane: almost every Brazilian lives in the fast-paced city. Tack on Brazil's legacy from Europe — a love for high fashion that borders on religion. Now top it all off with Brazil's 5000 miles of beach, each and every one of them filled with fashion-forward women who insist on clothes to sizzle at the scene.

Now let's return to America. We've done and redone the triangle-top and string bottom. We've pretty much exhausted the thong — de minimis can only go so far before there's nowhere left to go. But there's one thing we haven't exhausted: high glamour.

Enter Brazil, drenched in the big, heady spirit of the sixties, and the international goddesses that drove it. Think Brigitte Bardot. Or Ursula Andress, stepping out of the surf in her belted bikini to set the world on fire.

// The Colors

Just like other areas of the fashion scene, the Brazilian retrospective combines modern colors and fabric tech with unmistakable hues from the Sixties. This means bright, bright plastic white, cocktail black, and clashing fluorescents. And touches of vinyl and metal. And Mod.

// The Shapes

The old triangle top, always meant for the small-busted woman, starts to look a little blah compared to the womanly styles from Brazil, like low-slung "hipster" bottoms (especially beguiling when combined with kicky belts). You'll find Brazilian tops emphasizing larger busts, with stabilizing lace-ups or

underwire support.

// The Textures

My favorite thing about Brazilian styles are the textures, which seem exotic in our post-production, plasticized world. Brazil knows that women love the softer side of sexy — the kind that never shows up in beer commercials.

Instead of vying for minimal coverage, Brazil uses high-tech savvy to weave water-friendly crochet and macramé into swim tops and bottoms. We love the macramé-strung bikini bottoms — sometimes adorned by brassy buttons or shells. And we love the giant embroidered flowers (touched up with crystals), the French knots, and the hand-painted fabrics that show up on tops. But our favorite is the lycra-touched crochet pullover that goes from day to night. Wear it on the beach, then wear it again at the lounge. A feminine, crocheted top over a bikini bottom is the kind of look that hits the Richter scale.

Best of all, these styles can be dressed to the nines with a smoky shade of eye shadow and big, clunky jewelry.

// Your Mission

Did you accept the Brazilian challenge for your beach adventures this summer? Then bring in another major trend by mixing and matching tops and bottoms. Don't be afraid to combine hot pink with orange (a hot Mod look). But then, don't take trends too far — it's probably best to leave your knife belt at home.

Blake Kritzberg is proprietor of

. Visit the site for sought-after swimsuit

designs in maternity, mastectomy, designer, tan-thru and performance lines, plus kid & baby categories and more.

Mom's Head To Toe List – Five Things To Do Before Summer

By Nicole Dean

Summer is here! Are you prepared to be a sun-loving beauty? This checklist for Summer Preparation will give you a good start for swimsuit season.

Exercise - Ladies, there's nowhere to hide it anymore. The big, bad cellulite fairy visited during the winter again. Or does cellulite reproduce when it's cold? Either way, get out your walking shoes and hit the streets. Or grab an exercise video and shake it until it melts off.

Pluck or wax those eyebrows. - The bright sunlight will show every little straggler. There's nothing

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worse than looking like Bert in a bikini!

Swimsuit Shopping - Although most women would rather have a root canal than to go swimsuit shopping, it is a necessary evil. If your options are to go swimsuit shopping or to run around the pool in a worn, baggy, see-through swimsuit - please drag yourself to the store! I'll be the one hiding in the stall next to you, laughing as I try on yet another swimsuit over my undergarments and try to figure out exactly what I'm looking at.

Body Hair - Let's face it. Winter is not the time we are most diligent about keeping up with shaving. If you're dreading another year of shaving, there are many more options these days to choose from --- from home waxing kits to laser hair removal.

Feet - Eew! Those scratchy, rough, lizardy-feet need to go away now. Buff them or grab a power sander, but get them looking like skin again before sandal season. Once you've got people-feet instead of hobbit-feet, then dust off a bottle of toenail polish, grab a toe-ring, and make them pretty.

Now you're ready for swimsuit season. Grab a little drink umbrella, drop it into your diet Coke and enjoy your summer, as the sun goddess that you are!

Nicole Dean is the mostly-sane mom behind

- 'til death do us

part is a looooooong time. Enjoy it!

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