

Intimacy Issues

BRASSIERE GURU **SUSAN NETHERO'S** SHOP IS A VERITABLE SUPPORT NETWORK FOR WOMEN.

By her own reckoning, bra fitter extraordinaire Susan Nethero has rescued more than 20,000 breasts. Small, large, lop-sided, enhanced, and au naturel: All flock to Intimacy, Nethero's Copley Place outpost where the lineup of European lingerie appeals to those with fabulous top-drawer finery, and comes as a revelation to the rest of us, slinking around in stretched-out, dog-eared, ill-fitting bras.

Whether working with a bra enthusiast or an agnostic, Nethero takes stock of history (childbirth, weight gain/loss, illness), listens to concerns, and sizes up — without a tape measure. Most of us, she believes, need a narrower chest width and bigger cup than we're wearing. In Nethero's hands, you'll likely trade a 34 B for a 32 C. Appealing, no?

"Ninety percent of the support should come from the bra band," she says. "The straps should only support 10 percent."

When breasts are lifted and pointed forward properly, instead of lolling to the side, the torso looks leaner and elongated. Clothes drape better. In cathartic moments during fittings, small-busted women discover va-va-voom curves with the right push-up. Women with shoulders permanently gouged by shoulder straps sob with relief at feeling comfortable and pretty again. (It's a point of pride that Intimacy's largest-cup bras, which run up to K, have as much lace, frou, and outright sex appeal as the As.) What often starts as an errand for a nude bra (try the Marie Jo "Ines," \$125) turns into fashion camaraderie in the big, attractively lit dressing rooms. Although Nethero is based in Atlanta and visits Copley periodically, the local team all went through the master's bra-fit boot camp.

Bras run from \$50 to \$150, justifiable given it's the most technical piece of apparel many women own. Strategic seaming, for example,

conceals and makes sheer lace styles such as Chantelle's "Caprice," \$115, wearable. That said, Nethero and her staff encourage fun. Bra straps inevitably peek out of certain clothes — particularly this season's slouchy, off-the-shoulder tops — so why not have one made of fawn-colored velvet (Aubade Demi-Cup "Contes d'Automne," \$125)? (Little known fact: Nearly all nude bras are made for the U.S. market. In Europe, the beige that we find so versatile is considered "granny." Chantelle's "Rive Gauche" bra, \$88, is a sophisticated nude-and-black combo that still disappears under clothing.)

For each bra, there are bottoms to match, dolled up with clever bows or lace inserts. The store also carries chemises, peignoirs, shapewear, bra-fit swimwear, and a rainbow's worth of Hanky Panky skivvies.

"We kid about our job sometimes," says Nethero. "But it's still astonishing to me how much a good bra can define your shape and self-image." —KATHERINE BOWERS

■ INTIMACY, COPLEY PLACE, BOSTON, 857-277-7887, MYINTIMACY.COM



RAISING THE BRA

A few of Susan's key fitting tips:

- Fasten your bra's band around your waist. Bend forward and slide your bra up your body into position. Your posture helps center your breasts in the bra cups and distribute weight evenly.
- Straighten up, turn sideways, and check yourself in a mirror. The band should ride level with your bust across your back.
- Don't wear the same bra everyday. Stretch fabrics need at least a day of recovery to maximize wear life.

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