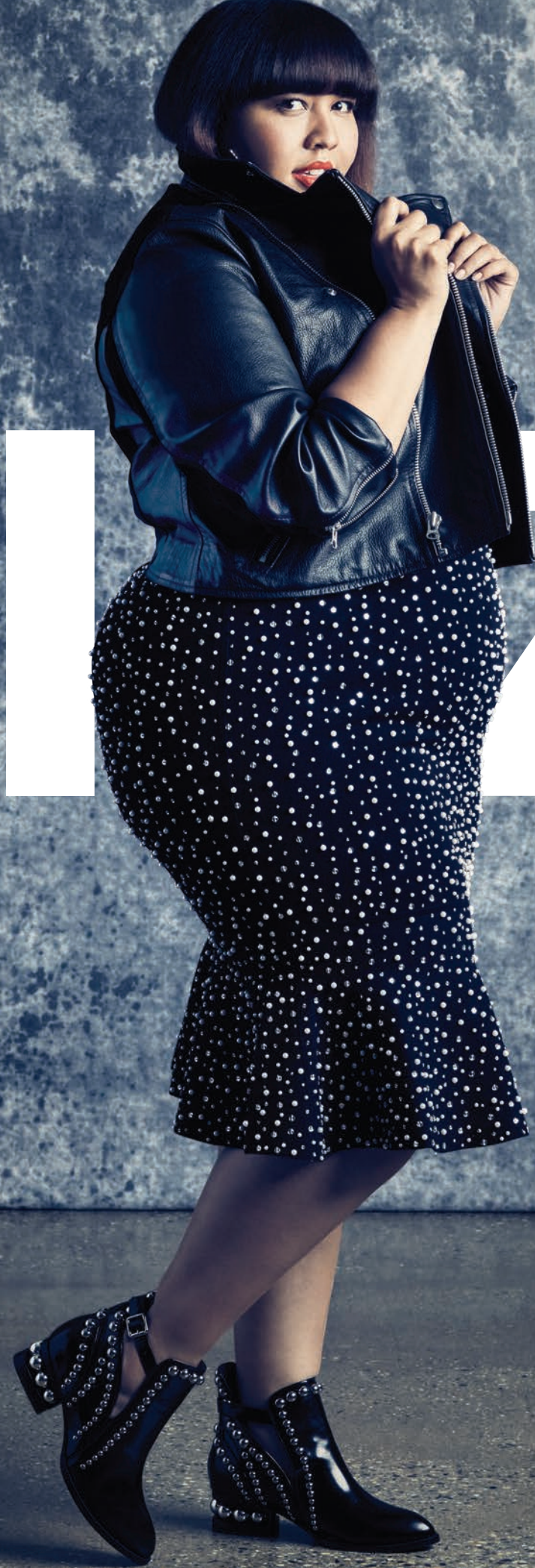


SIZE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DIEGO UCHITEL

GABI GREGG,
fashion designer,
influencer @gabifresh

Jacket, All 67. Dress,
Michael Kors Collection.
Earrings, Laruicci. Boots,
Jeffrey Campbell.



DANIELLE BROOKS,
actress, activist,
designer @daniebb3

Dress, Christian Siriano.
Earrings, Joanna
Laura Constantine.



WISE

**THE FASHION
INDUSTRY
FINALLY
SEES WHAT
IT'S BEEN
MISSING.**

▶ FOR 100 YEARS...

THIS WAS THE fashion industry gospel: Women of a certain size didn't spend money on clothes. They'd never wear anything clingy. They didn't want to show their arms, legs, or cleavage. As a result, they subsisted on shapeless garments in garish prints and cheap fabrics, shunted to the Siberia of department store basements.

How times have changed: Now plus-size women are rocking fringed skirts, underwear-as-outerwear, and body-con everything.

So how did we get here?

The role played by online retail cannot be overstated: E-commerce made it possible for niche lines like Ashley Nell Tipton and All 67 to sidestep the brick-and-mortar middleman and speak directly to a style-starved consumer. In the process, her shopping experience was wholly transformed—the virtual store allowed her to dream, experiment, and pirouette in the privacy (and better lighting) of her own home. Meanwhile, traditional retailers saw what was happening and caught a whiff of something chilling: In an economy where no one can afford to leave money on the table, they'd ignore this shopper at their peril.

But more than anything, it's plus-size women themselves who are bringing about the revolution. The internet and social media have provided platforms and created community as never before. Women flock to the style-licious blogs powered by a fierce and vocal crop of fashion lovers. A new gospel is taking hold—one based on body positivity and inclusivity instead of shame.

"I want to show fat women that we

shouldn't be afraid of being seen," says Gabi Gregg, creator of the blog GabiFresh. "And to reclaim the word *fat*. It doesn't mean frumpy." Gregg has modeled for Target and collaborated with companies to create swimwear and lingerie lines. Last year she launched Premme with fellow blogger Nicolette Mason; both were on *Forbes's* 2017 list of top ten fashion influencers. On Premme's first day, so many shoppers stormed the site that it crashed.

Naysayers argue that plus-size style promotes obesity, as if the poly-blend muumuu is a hair shirt a woman must wear until she drops some pounds. Putting aside the unlikelihood that ugly, ill-fitting clothes ever incentivized anyone to lose weight, the truth is that everyone deserves something beautiful to put on her body, regardless of what size it is.

Almost 20 years ago, designer Richard Metzger launched one of the first high-end plus-size collections. "When I did trunk shows," he recalls, "customers said, 'Finally, something besides pull-on pants!'" Today those customers are the reason the plus market is posting revenue gains while the overall industry is decidedly flat. For a who's who, a what's what, and where we still have to go, read on.

THE ROLE MODEL

Every movement needs a standard-bearer. Danielle Brooks, at your service.

I'VE NEVER BEEN small. Ever. As a teenager, I wanted to be wearing the polo shirts and the crop tops, but they didn't sell them in the plus-size stores. Or the clothes were too tight, and my mamma was not having that. So it was all about the accessories: I could find cool earrings and shoes and hats—but how are you supposed to figure out your style if you can't find any *clothes* to wear? I'm over hearing designers give excuses. I don't want to see girls from *Orange Is the New Black*,

Glow, and *Dietland* being ignored just because we have more junk in the trunk. I want us to be trendsetters and make it easier for the next generation. So when the fashion brand Universal Standard asked me to do a collection, I created the pieces I've always wanted: overalls, a sweater dress, a shirtdress called the Danielle. I wish I'd seen more plus-size women expressing how much they love their bodies when I was growing up. Now I'm doing it. I'm here, and I ain't going nowhere.

"Historically, we've used labels for larger-size women: matronly, stout, hefty. 'Plus-size' became the preferred term in the 1980s, when women entered the workforce in droves—maybe someone thought it would connote power. At the moment, it's a necessary evil, but I think 'plus-size' is on its way out. When we can shop from the same rack, we won't need a separate term."

—LAUREN DOWNING PETERS, PHD, assistant professor of fashion studies at Columbia College Chicago

Dress, Marc Jacobs.
Earrings, BaubleBar.
Necklace, Ashley Nell Tipton.
Bracelets, Alexis Bittar. Ring, Sabre.



"AS SOON AS WE WALK INTO A ROOM, WE'RE JUDGED. IT'S LIKE A PRETTY WOMAN MOMENT: 'YOU DON'T BELONG HERE.' WE'RE CONSTANTLY PROVING OURSELVES SO WE CAN GO BACK AND SAY, 'BIG MISTAKE. HUGE.'"

CANDICE HUFFINE,
model, designer of activewear
line Day/Won (day-won.com)
@candicehuffine

THE DESIGN CHALLENGE

How hard can it be to dress women of all sizes? You'd be surprised.

IF HUMANS can invent cars that drive themselves, could it be so tough to make a dress in sizes 4 and 18? Mark-Evan Blackman, professor at New York City's Fashion Institute of Technology, unravels the mystery.

Is this a skinny conspiracy? Larger sizes have been fashion's stepchildren, but to be fair, it's also true that creating a plus-size garment is more complicated than saying "Let's just add a few inches."

It is? Most manufacturers create all their sizes based on one sample pattern, usually a 6 or an 8. To go bigger or smaller, they scale up or down. But above a 14, you need a new pattern because the body takes on a different shape.

You make it sound like science fiction. Think what happens when a woman gains 20 pounds: Her arms and legs don't grow longer; her body gets wider and deeper—so you may need to adjust the shoulder seams or the slope of the bust. Another challenge is that different women gain weight in different areas. If a woman carries her weight in her stomach, the rise of her pants might need to get longer. It takes expertise to finesse those details.

Can't they hire someone? Those skills aren't typically taught in design school; it's also expensive to hire separate technical teams and models. Our culture's undergoing a major shift in terms of body acceptance—but fashion needs some time to catch up.

"A lot of companies are waiting for critical mass: They're looking at their competitors and thinking, You guys go first. But there's a tremendous opportunity, and the people jumping in now are going to reap big benefits."

—DONI JANTZEN, partner at KEDIC Fashion Workshop, a consultancy that helps companies enter the plus-size market

THE FIT MODEL

If your butt looks good in those jeans, you might have Elizabeth Brown to thank.



MY JOB is to be the technical designer's Everywoman, a live mannequin who shows how clothes will look on an actual person. I'm an 18, a common fit-model size for the plus market. I also studied apparel design, so I know patterns. Basically, I talk about my rear end all day.

I spend a lot of time imagining what it's like to inhabit another woman's body. If she's had kids, her tummy might sit a little lower; will this waistband be tight? Will her pants keep slipping down? If so, she'll hunch over, and that's like hiding. If she doesn't have to think about her outfit, she's free to think about her life.

My goal is to help the brands I work for understand what plus-size women want. For so long, the options have been "refrigerator box" or "I'm up in the club, here are my boobs!" We need more simple, professional clothes. We also need to see visibly plus-size women in ads, not some size 10. I want to know what the outfit will look like on me, so I need to see a big girl, dammit!



THE HERO

An ode to the real Lane Bryant, patron saint of plus.

YES, THERE WAS in fact a Lane Bryant (Lena Himmelstein Bryant, to be precise), a Lithuanian immigrant who founded a fashion empire. In the early 1900s, Bryant was a seamstress in New York City. One day a pregnant customer asked for a dress to wear outdoors. (Maternity wear didn't exist yet.) Word spread, and Bryant's creation became a best-seller.

But Bryant wasn't just a designer; she was a shrewd marketer. When newspapers balked at advertising apparel for moms-to-be (how indecent!), Bryant created her own mail-order catalog, with clothes for expectant women—and another snubbed community: larger bodies. By 1969, the company claimed \$200 million in sales from more than 100 stores. For the better part of a century, the brand's been synonymous with plus-size style.

Bryant died in 1951, but her former company still pushes boundaries—as when some TV networks refused to run an ad from its 2016 #ThisBody campaign, due to supposedly risqué content, which included a mom breastfeeding (how indecent!). Bryant never accepted that one size fit all. Nearly 115 years later, the rest of the world is getting on board.



PREVIOUS PAGE: ELIZABETH BROWN; CHRIS CARROLL; GRANDES DAMES. FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF LANE BRYANT; MAE WEST; PARAMOUNT/GETTY IMAGES; PERFUME GRACE HUMMEL. THIS PAGE: GRANDES DAMES. FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF LANE BRYANT; COURTESY OF THE MODEL ARCHIVES OF MARLOWE PRESS; COURTESY OF TRENDLISTR.COM

ILLUSTRATIONS BY Meagan Morrison

THE MISSING PIECES: FLIRTY

For women who thought they'd never see a moto jacket, sexy jeans, or a floaty frock in their size.



Fall's favorite go-to topper, with a booty-clearing crop in genuine suede or leather. **Suede moto jacket, \$290; all67.com (sizes 12 to 28)**

Bodysuits for all, available in three shades, with a sexy plunging neckline, adjustable straps, and full (nonthong!) coverage in back. **Bodysuit, \$99; goodamerican.com (sizes XS to 2XL)**

Edgy styling and on-trend high-rise comfort marry well in premium denim. **Good Legs lace-up jeans, \$189; goodamerican.com (sizes 00 to 24)**

The defined waistline and asymmetrical ruffles on this wrap dress pretty show off curves. **Dress, \$475; tanyataylor.com (sizes 14 to 22)**

GRANDES DAMES

The modern history of plus-size style.



1920s

Huzzah! Mass-produced "stoutwear" can now be found in department stores across the country, though relegated to special sections (behind iceboxes, phonographs).



1937

Designer Elsa Schiaparelli releases perfume bottle modeled after innuendo-slinging starlet Mae West's hourglass physique; 81 years later, different West—Kim Kardashian—will follow in fragrance footsteps with own voluptuous vessel.



1950s

Stoutwear OG Lane Bryant woos heftier teens with Junior Plenty department, offers girls the self-esteem boost of a National Chubby Club.



1977

Mary Duffy opens Big Beauties-Little Women, pioneering agency repping both plus-size and petite models. Size-18 Duffy sassily slays critics: "I've never lacked for dates."



1980s

High-end designers experiment with plus sizes: Valentino's Miss V and Givenchy's En Plus (left) offer options for bigger gals in the workforce.

THE DREAM WEAVER

Christian Siriano, the first runway designer to embrace every body, dresses five of his muses—and shares his behind-the-seams vision for each look.

"Ashley is fearless and has fun with fashion. If you're wearing an uncomplicated dress, why not throw on a cool beaded coat or statement shoe?"

ASHLEY LONGSHORE,
artist, entrepreneur
@ashleylongshoreart

"The simplicity of this dress is what makes it so great on Katie's shape. The clean tank style is flattering on the bust, and the color is bright and bold."

KATIE STURINO,
entrepreneur, founder of Megababe (megababebeauty.com) @the12ishstyle

"I love Precious in this dress. She's almost fully covered but still so glamorous—the hint of skin around the bust and legs is just enough."

PRECIOUS LEE,
model, advocate @preciousleexoxo

"It's perfect for so many shapes. The extra-long hemline lengthens the body, and the slit in the front is just revealing enough. Without that, it would be a totally different look."

JOY NASH,
actress starring in AMC's *Dietland* @therealjoynash

"This gown is meant to highlight a woman's body and not take away from her beautiful shape. The demi cup gives cleavage but not too much, and I love a high slit on a clean silhouette like this. And this color on Danielle is perfection—vibrant and so sexy."

DANIELLE BROOKS,
actress starring in Netflix's *Orange Is the New Black* @daniebb3

HEART: THREE SIX FIVE FROM THE NOUN PROJECT

NOT SO LONG AGO, even if a plus-size woman was a Hollywood power player, finding something to wear on the red carpet was the stuff of nightmares. Designers wouldn't dress anyone but the sylphlike. Then, in 2016, actress Leslie Jones publicly bemoaned her lack of options for the *Ghostbusters* premiere, and Christian Siriano answered the call. He's dressed A-listers of all sizes—Lady Gaga, Amy Adams, Christina Hendricks, Nicki Minaj, Oprah—and his ready-to-wear line, in sizes 0 to 28, has given customers everywhere the chance to feel like celebrities. "That mentality of 'I need a fat dress' is so wrong," says the designer, named recently to the Time 100 list. "It's awesome dressing women who haven't had access to high-end fashion. They're so in love with this world." Siriano's new concept store, The Curated, will be the scene of many torrid affairs to come: He's offering pieces from his own line and those of other designers who do inclusive sizes, so women of every shape can shop under one roof. "Beauty comes in all different forms," says Siriano. "We need to celebrate it."

THE SHOPPER

Amy Maclin on love, loss, and what she'd wear...if it zipped.

IN THE '90s, as a 25-year-old new to New York, I bought a Kate Spade Sam bag. Yes, it was spendy, but who cared about debt? That nylon rectangle turned me from Tennessee hick to hip chick. I've teared up reading internet comments from women with similar memories. We weren't just carrying the bag to tell everyone we were sophisticated. We were telling ourselves, too.

A shopper at heart, I mark life's milestones by buying clothes for the person I'm hoping to become...unless my butt doesn't fit into anything, in which case I get a purse instead. I'm on the cusp of plus-size, so I can find work clothes without much drama, but when it comes to fancy dresses or swanky suits, I'm out of luck: Most designers max out at a 10 that's really a 6. (I hate movies where the lover/sugar daddy/stalker/murderer surprises the heroine with the hot-stuff evening gown. If anybody pulls that stunt with me, he'd better include a few pairs of medical-grade Spanx.)

Body positivity is fabulous, but here's what I long for more than any YOU GO GURL tube top: to swan into a snooty department store, buy a fantastic suit, and say to myself, *You're a woman of substance*, not *This is the least offensive combo of flammable separates*. I'd like to get some midlife-crisis leather pants just so they can hang in my closet and whisper, *Sugar, if you took me out, wouldn't we have a time?* After all, if you're going to be the star of your own life, you need options. Wardrobe!

THE BRANDS

Thirty-one that ♥ plus-size women.

NEWCOMERS

CoEdition: coedition.com

Reformation: thereformation.com

And Comfort: andcomfort.com

Roucha: roucha.com

GLAM GOWNS

Tadashi Shoji: tadashishoji.com

EVERYDAY GREATS

QVC's G.I.L.I. and LOGO

by Lori Goldstein: qvc.com

NYDJ: nydj.com

JCPenney's Liz Claiborne

Plus and Boutique Plus: jcpenney.com

Franne Golde: frannegolde.com

OFFICE AWESOME

Lafayette 148 New York: lafayette148ny.com

Talbots: talbots.com

Loft: loft.com

SUBSCRIPTION STARS

Gwynnie Bee: gwynniebee.com

Stitch Fix: stitchfix.com

Dia&Co: dia.com

CELEB LINES

Rebel Wilson x Angels: rebelwilsonxangels.com

Reese Witherspoon's

Draper James for

Eloquii: eloquii.com

WORKOUT WONDERS

Fabletics: fabletics.com

Sela Fit: selafit.com

Beyond Yoga: beyondyoga.com

FANCY FOOTWORK

Long Tall Sally: longtallsally.com

Amazon Fashion: amazon.com/fashion

Lonia: loniashoes.com

SHAPEWEAR WOWS

Ruby Ribbon: rubyribbon.com

ThirdLove: thirdlove.com

HOT TRENDS

Violeta by Mango: shop.mango.com

ASOS Curve and Plus-

Size: us.asos.com

Simply Be: simplybe.com

THE SIZING CIRCUS

Are you crazy—or is it the numbers?

IF YOU HAVE to order three different sizes every time you need a pair of pants, Lynn Boorady, PhD, fashion and textile technology chair at Buffalo State College in New York, feels your pain. “Sizing is already challenging, but plus women have it ten times worse.” Why?

American body types are diverse. We’ve attempted to standardize in the past, and each time we’ve given up. One of the major problems is that we’re a melting pot. “It’s easier in Japan, where body types are more homogeneous—typically smaller chests, slim hips,” says Boorady. “In 2003, there was a study called Size USA, which gathered measurements from more than 10,000 Americans in various cities. If you put one waist measurement into their database, you might find hip measurements vary by as much as 12 inches.”

American sizing is complicated. Our sizing charts are “voluntary” (i.e., retailers are free to ignore them) and

set by the standards organization ASTM International, which periodically hosts committees of academics, experts, and retailers to review the metrics and tweak the numbers. That’s where vanity sizing comes in: Though Americans are getting larger, they’re distressed to see bigger numbers on tags (and less likely to buy), so decision-makers keep adjusting the charts.

Plus sizing is really complicated. You have your “Misses” sizes (00 to 20). And then you have your “Women’s” sizes (14W to 40W), which are considered plus sizes. Women’s garments are cut more generously in the bust and hips than Misses. Behold:

| | BUST | WAIST | HIPS |
|-----|--------|-------|------|
| 14 | 40.375 | 34 | 42.5 |
| 14W | 41.5 | 37.5 | 43.5 |

Why is 14 and up usually considered “plus”? Boorady admits even she isn’t sure.

THE DISRUPTERS

Two pals, one problem, and a game-changing solution.



IT ALL started with a party. New friends and fellow New Yorkers Alex Waldman and Polina Veksler (left) were both invited, but Waldman decided not to go; as a plus-size woman, she had nothing to

wear. “Alex told me there wasn’t a single store on Fifth Avenue that she could walk into and buy clothing for herself,” says Veksler. So since Waldman couldn’t find it, they used their savings to make it: quality apparel with an aesthetic of subdued colors and simple silhouettes, for a brand they called Universal Standard. “Plus women are so often infantilized, hypersexualized, or asked to dress like we’re attending a baby shower,” says Waldman. “We wanted to help women dress like their straight-size peers.” With a retail site (universalstandard.com) and appointment-only showrooms in Seattle and New York City, Universal Standard has changed the game with these guiding principles.

Fit is foremost: To keep proportions consistent, the brand uses a separate fit model for every size. The site also shows customers how a garment will look on every body with a “see it in your size” feature.

It’s in the details: Scrupulous attention is paid to fabric and construction. “We developed an enzyme wash to prevent leggings from pilling between the thighs,” says Waldman. “We add elastane to jersey so it bounces back with every wear and wash, and we cut shirt hems with a curve so they fit better on the hips.”

Women should shop for the size they are: Veksler and Waldman saw that customers often buy too-small sizes in hopes of losing weight. Enter the brand’s Fit Liberty collection: If you change sizes (up or down) within a year, you can exchange your garment from this line for your new size, for free. Says Waldman: “We wanted to shut up that bully that lives in our heads.”

VEKSLER AND WALDMAN: XAVIER MUNIZ; GRANDES DAMES: FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF STELLA ELLIS (STELLAELLIS.NET); BY JEAN PAUL GAULTIER; COURTESY OF NANCY NADLER LEWINTER AND JULIE LEWIT NIRENBERG; MCCARTHY: BEN WATTS.

THE LUXURY LINK

Shopping site 11 Honoré brings the high end.

IN THE STRUGGLE to offer fashion for all, designer clothing may be the final frontier: Just 0.01 percent of premium and luxury brands identify as plus-size, according to the retail technology company Edited. Fashion industry veterans Kathryn Retzer and Patrick Herning are addressing the need for more options with 11 Honoré (11honore.com), an online shopping destination that launched in 2017 and offers the luxe pieces of the straight-size world to plus-size women. Getting designers to create clothing up to size 24 was no easy feat. “We went door to door down Seventh Avenue in New York City, asking designers to come on board,” says Retzer. Since plus sizes are uncharted territory for most labels, Retzer and Herning sweetened the deal by offering the necessary resources to get the job done. “Patrick and I said, ‘We’re going to provide you with what you need—patternmakers, size-to-size grading, fit models—so you cannot say no.’” Their passion has paid off: 11 Honoré’s roster has already grown from 14 to 66 designers, including Marc Jacobs, Lela Rose, Wingate, and Prabal Gurung; the plan is to reach 100 by year’s end.

All the clothing worn by Gabi, Danielle, Candice, Retta, and Emme is available at 11honore.com.

ON RETTA Dress, ML Monique Lhuillier. Earrings, Lizzie Fortunato. Ring (left), Glamrocks. Ring (right), Bonheur Jewelry. Shoes, Savi Resort Wear.

“I DON’T NEED TO HIDE MYSELF. PEOPLE ARE GOING TO LOVE YOU OR NOT.”

RETTA, author, comedian, actress starring in NBC’s Good Girls @unforetable



1992 French couturier Jean Paul Gaultier takes plus-size model Stella Ellis as muse; punkish diva stars in ad campaign in dramatic ensemble that’s a little bit Ursula, a whole lot Hocus Pocus.



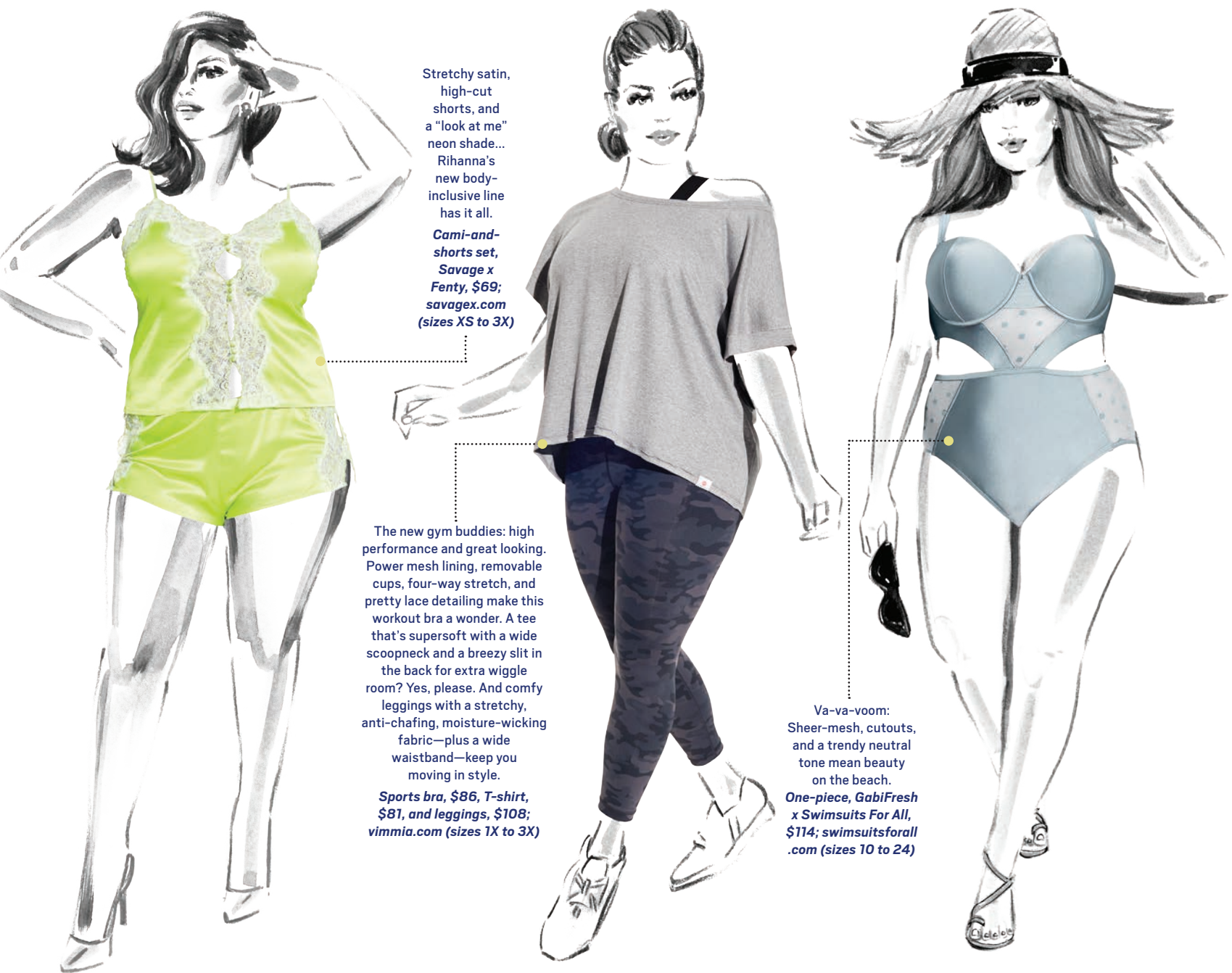
1997 Mode, a body-positive magazine devoted to sophisticated design in double-digit sizes, makes waves. Achieves 600,000 readership within four glorious years.



2015 Funny meets fashion: Iconoclastic comedian Melissa McCarthy forays back to first love with chic clothing line available up to size 28.

THE MISSING PIECES: PLAYTIME

See ya, granny panties, schlumpy workout wear, and show-nothing swimsuits. We found something better.



Stretchy satin, high-cut shorts, and a "look at me" neon shade... Rihanna's new body-inclusive line has it all. **Cami-and-shorts set, Savage x Fenty, \$69; savagex.com (sizes XS to 3X)**

The new gym buddies: high performance and great looking. Power mesh lining, removable cups, four-way stretch, and pretty lace detailing make this workout bra a wonder. A tee that's supersoft with a wide scoopneck and a breezy slit in the back for extra wiggle room? Yes, please. And comfy leggings with a stretchy, anti-chafing, moisture-wicking fabric—plus a wide waistband—keep you moving in style. **Sports bra, \$86, T-shirt, \$81, and leggings, \$108; vimmia.com (sizes 1X to 3X)**

Va-va-voom: Sheer-mesh, cutouts, and a trendy neutral tone mean beauty on the beach. **One-piece, GabiFresh x Swimsuits For All, \$114; swimsuitsforall.com (sizes 10 to 24)**



2016

Ashley Graham becomes first-ever plus-size model to splish-splash on *Sports Illustrated's* annual swimsuit cover.



2017

Rebel Wilson's pitch-perfect size-14-and-up collection features casual separates, wink messages (one jacket's embroidered command: **JUST FAN ME & FEED ME GRAPES**).



2017-18

Record-breaking 38 plus-size models strut stuff for New York Spring 2018 Fashion Week; 30 equally wow-worthy castings for later fall shows, too.

Betsy Teske on the Alexander McQueen fall 2018 runway.

THE SHAPE SHIFTER

Project Runway winner **Ashley Nell Tipton** refuses to be hemmed in.



BEING FAT IS a constant struggle between being invisible and too visible. Sometimes you want to be accepted; instead, you're singled out and judged. In

2015, when I became the first plus-size designer to win *Project Runway*, I hoped it would be a moment not only for inclusive fashion, but also for all other fat human beings out there. It wasn't just me who had won; *we'd* won. Many women told me they were afraid to wear bright colors or show off their arms until they saw me doing it. But some of the comments on social media were horrible: "Why did they pick that fat designer?" "How can she promote this unhealthy lifestyle?" I got depressed and gained more weight. I reached a point where I couldn't

climb stairs without losing my breath.

I finally realized that if I didn't take care of myself, I couldn't keep doing what I loved, so I went to therapy and started working with a trainer. I also decided to have weight-loss surgery. After that I got more judgment, this time from people in the fat community who once supported me. They turned their backs and said, "You can't be body positive and still lose weight." I thought, *Well, why not?* I wasn't trying to be "prettier"; I wanted to have control of my life.

Size should not define us, whether we're fat, thin, or anywhere in between. I'm focused on the plus woman, but one day I might be open to designing straight sizes. People judge me for that, too. But I just want to create clothes that make customers feel good. I want every woman to love herself and go after her dreams like I did.

THE SHOE FITS!

Stepping it up for bigger feet.



Margaux's ballerina flats, sandals, and more come in three widths and up to a European size 45 (U.S. 14). **Loafers, Margaux, \$245; margauxny.com**



Download the brand True Gault's app, scan your feet for a custom fit, pick a style, and they're ready in a month. **Heels, \$250; truegault.com**

THE TRY-ON

Author **Wendy McClure** gets real about the limits of virtual shopping.

THANKS TO E-COMMERCE, plus-size shoppers have a plethora of options, which I know I'm supposed to find liberating. But to me the victory feels Pyrrhic. When I buy online, the clothes are deposited at my door, and I tear into the bags like a scavenging raccoon, then put it all on and stand in front of my mirror, alone. Nobody asks whether I need another size, or commiserates about those infernal high-low mullet hemlines.

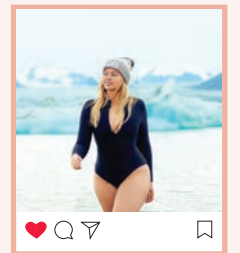
I need two weeks and three transactions to figure out that peasant blouses make me look like I'm slinging Hefeweizens at Oktoberfest. I stuff them back in the bag, a furtive gesture tinged with failure. That fitting-room ritual helped me bridge the gulf between the slick catalog photos and my own imperfect body. I could laugh at the stupid stuff, try on an armful of shapeless maxidresses, and finally say, *Screw it, the caftan look has power—like a high priestess!* All for free. And I felt a little more free myself.

"In some department stores, you have to go to the top floor for plus, or the same floor as the couches. If I were going shopping with a straight-size friend, we'd have to split up. Plus-size women miss out on that bonding time."

—ROSALIZ JIMENEZ, fashion director for *Dia&Co* (dia.com), a subscription styling service for women who wear sizes 14+

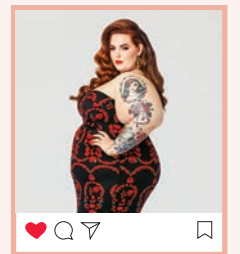
THE INFLUENCERS

Nine women whose digital presence shocked—and still awes—the world of fashion.



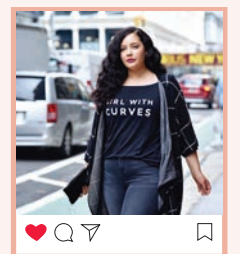
ISKRA LAWRENCE
@iskra

The British model and Aerie ambassador, who launched her own health and wellness program, everyBODYwithIskra, in January, has become one of the loudest and proudest advocates for size inclusivity and self-love.



TESS HOLLIDAY
@tessholliday

The largest plus-size model to land a major modeling contract, Holliday is a relentless, filterless activist for body positivity. Her retort to Instagram trolls? #EffYourBeautyStandards, a viral movement she launched in 2013 to celebrate nonnormative bodies.



TANISHA AWASTHI
@girlwithcurves

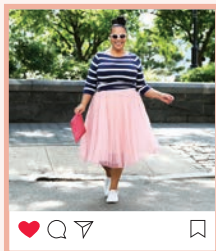
Awasthi's beloved fashion blog, *Girl with Curves*, is a mix of style inspiration, beauty tips, and sincere advice on body-related dramas—from stressing over stretch marks to shutting down swimsuit anxiety.

PREVIOUS PAGE: GRANDES DAMES: FROM LEFT: JAMES MACARI/SPORTS ILLUSTRATED/CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES. AMANDA EDWARDS/STRINGER/GETTY IMAGES. IMAXTREE: THIS PAGE: TIPTON: JULIA PEREZ SHOES; RICHARD MAJCHRAK/STUDIO D. PROP STYLING: GABRIEL RIVERA/R. J. BENNETT REPRESENTS. INFLUENCERS: FROM TOP: ALI MITTON/COURTESY OF AERIE. WARWICK SAINT. COURTESY OF TANESHA AWASTHI.



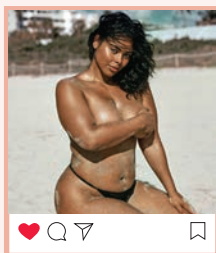
CALLIE THORPE
@calliethorpe

What began as a diet-diary blog has morphed into a shame-free site where plus-size model and columnist Thorpe talks openly about her body-confidence struggles (wedding dress shopping) and successes (her Nike partnership).



MADELINE JONES
@plusjones

A pioneer of the plus-size fashion industry, Jones cofounded PLUS Model Magazine in 2006, an online platform for the voices and faces of the curvy community.



TABRIA MAJORS
@tabriamajors

When Majors isn't modeling for *Sports Illustrated* or Ann Taylor Loft, she's cohosting *The Thick*, a podcast with plus perspectives on pop culture, dating, and more.

THE RUNWAY

Refashioning an industry tradition for a bigger audience.



EVERY September, designers, models, editors, celebs, and paparazzi

mass in Manhattan for the beautiful-people orgy that is New York Fashion Week. Of the more than 130 runway shows mounted last year, just two were exclusively plus-size. But elsewhere in the city, there's an alternative mini fashion week: theCURVYcon (like Comic-Con, but less sci, more fly). This year it's three days of workshops, discussion panels, selfies, and meet and greets. And *shopping*. Much-loved online brands like Eloquii and Simply Be bring racks of looks for attendees to try on IRL. TheCURVYcon is the baby of plus-size fashion bloggers CeCe Olisa and Chastity Garner (*above*), who sold clothes from their closets to help get the first gathering off the ground in 2015. Their goal: "We want to spread body positivity and inclusivity until it's a way of life for us all."

"Women of color have been pioneers of the plus-size fashion movement: Gwen DeVoe of Full Figured Fashion Week, podcaster Chenese Lewis, and models like Fluvia Lacerda have been powerful forces for many years. We need to see more representation in mainstream media. So many of us continue to champion and push for more size and race diversity, and the industry must recognize our buying power and how much inclusion matters."

—MARIE DENEE, founder of *TheCurvyFashionista.com*, a digital platform for plus-size fashion

THE INTEGRATORS

Getting closer to a world where all sizes hang side by side.

IF YOU'VE EVER despaired over the segregation of the department store plus-size section, take heart! A Kardashian is on the case. Good American, the denim brand cofounded by Khloé Kardashian and Emma Grede, is part of a utopian shopping experiment in select Nordstrom locations. The radical idea: Standard and plus sizes would be offered on the same racks. "It's the more modern approach," says Grede. "We make every single one of our items in sizes 00 to 24. If we're going to offer a full range of sizing, we want to offer inclusivity in every aspect of the experience, including the way customers shop."

When Good American debuted in 2016—the most successful denim launch in history, earning \$1 million the first day—Nordstrom, agreeing to Good American's conditions, sold the entire line in the denim section,

which generally offers only sizes 2 to 12.

The success of the experiment prompted Tricia Smith, Nordstrom's executive vice president of women's apparel, to ask other brands for sizes up to 24 that customers had already been requesting, especially 00, 0, 14, 16, and 18. "I think companies really needed to hear a retailer being customer-centric, saying it's not okay to offer such a limited range," she says. Indeed, this past spring, Nordstrom launched extended sizing in 30 stores with 100 brands, including Theory, A.L.C., and Rebecca Taylor. Of course, not every brand is offering 00 to 24 yet, Smith notes. "For some, it's been one size at a time—a 14 or a 16—but we're making progress. My vision is to eventually offer the full range across the board. We're even doing custom-made mannequins."

THE GODMOTHER

Legendary model Emme (@supermodelemme) pays it forward.

IN THE '90s, I was a supermodel, but no designer would ever ask someone my size to walk the runway. Sometimes photographers dismissed me, too, thinking, *What the hell, this isn't gonna count*. But if they didn't light me in a flattering way, I spoke up. I made sure it counted.

When I was considering coming back to the fashion business after a break, I kept asking myself, *What do I want my legacy to be?* Eventually, I approached the School of Design at Syracuse University, my alma mater, and in 2014, we launched the program Fashion Without Limits, which teaches students to design inclusively for sizes 12 and up. We started a competition for the juniors: The winner would get a cash prize, and I'd wear the design at a red carpet event.

At first, the kids were *not* into the idea. But I said, "This will make you highly employable, and I promise we'll get fantastic press." Fortunately, I didn't have to go back on my word. *Women's Wear Daily* and *Vogue Italia* covered us. Now the school has expanded the program to the entire four-year curriculum, and companies are calling to hire our students. In the most recent graduating class, half the seniors included nontraditional sizes in their collections.

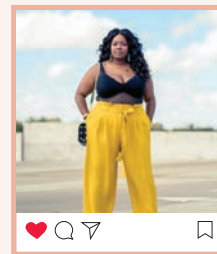
The fashion industry has been like a slow-moving ship, but it's turning quickly now. In 2017, more than 20 years after I entered the modeling business, I finally walked at Fashion Week. It was for the line Chromat, which does edgy athletic wear. Becca, the designer, put me in a cage bustier. She said, "Walk like a badass," and I did. Everyone was cheering, and I felt so grateful and joyous. The revolution is here.

ON EMME Dress, Zero + Maria Cornejo. Earrings, Jenny Bird. Ring (*front*), Established. Ring (*back*), Bonheur Jewelry. Shoes, Stuart Weitzman.

For details see Shop Guide.

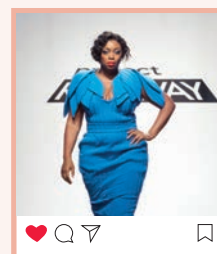


Fashion editor: Kym Canter. Set design: Charlotte Malmlof. Brooks, hair: Leticia Celestine for La Belle Boutique, New York City. Makeup: Michael Patterson for MakeupByMichael.com. Manicure: Jini Lim using Chanel Le Vernis. Retta and Gregg, hair: Amaran Asylum at Ken Paves Salon. Makeup: Jo Strettell. Manicure: Chelsea King using Orly. All others, hair: John Ruidant using Oribe. Makeup: Hector Simancas using Dior Backstage. Manicures: Jini Lim using Chanel Le Vernis.



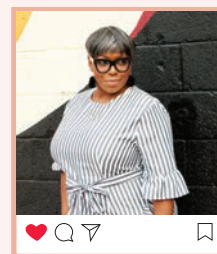
CHANTÉ BURKETT
@chanteburkett

On Burkett's blog, *Everything Curvy and Chic*, she shares the secrets behind her fun, fabulous style, from the most flattering flared jeans to the best plus-size boutiques.



LIRIS CROSSE
@lirisc

After 20 years of experience modeling for Lane Bryant, *Project Runway*, and more, Crosse (known as the "Naomi Campbell of Plus") teamed up with makeup artist Christopher Michael in April to launch #TheModelDiversityProject, a social media campaign promoting inclusion of all shapes, ages, and races in the fashion industry.



TY ALEXANDER-WILLIAMS
@gorgeousingrey

Alexander-Williams's striking silver hair may draw readers to her blog, *Gorgeous In Grey*, but her bold approach to fashion—and fun, snappy voice—is what keeps them coming back.

THIS PAGE: CHASTITY GARNER AND CECE OLISA; DIA&CO. INFLUENCERS: FROM TOP: KAYE FORD, @PLUSJONES, TABRIA MAJORS; MUSE MODEL. NEXT PAGE: INFLUENCERS: FROM TOP: GSPHOTOGRAPHY; COURTESY OF LIRIS CROSSE; MIKAEL AARON PHOTOGRAPHY.