

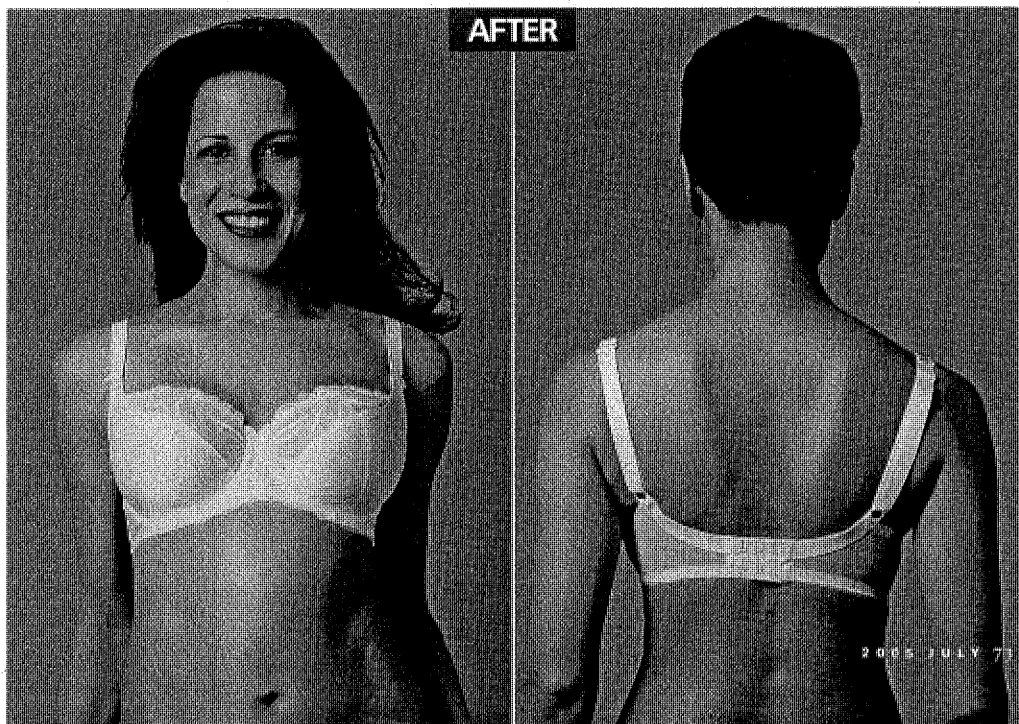
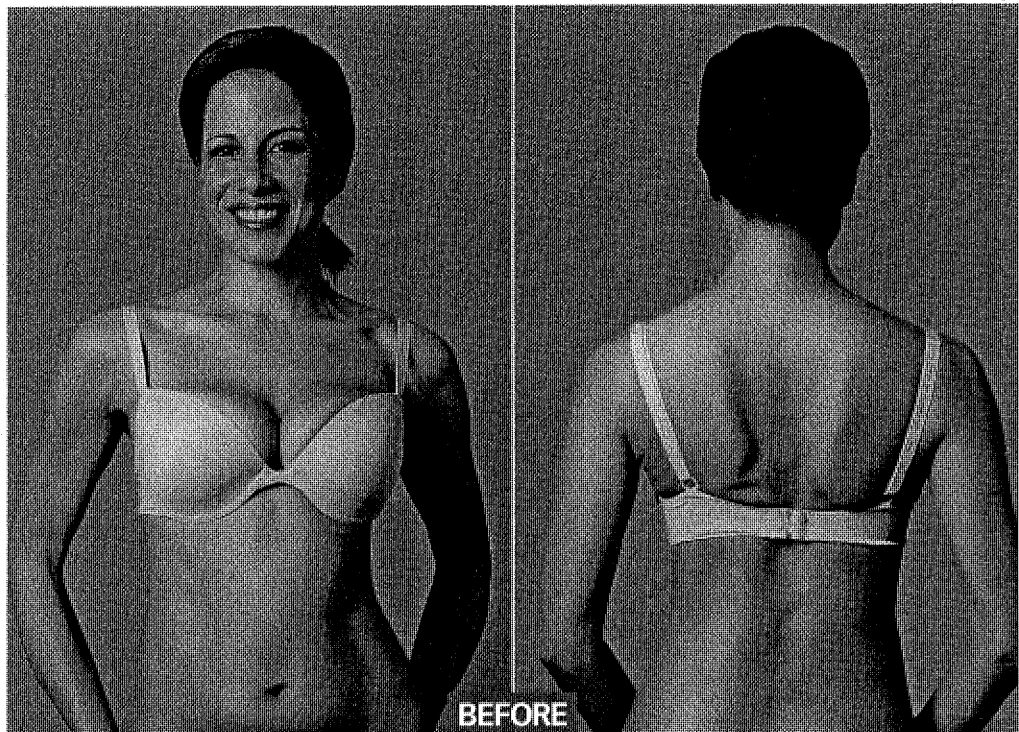
O's Bra Intervention Most of us—85 percent!—are wearing the wrong-size bra right at this moment. Expert fitter Susan Nethero shows six women the ABC's (and DEF's) of comfortable, gorgeous support. Join them on an uplifting journey.

CUPS THAT RUNNETH OVER

Vivienne Jurado
Actor and producer, 28

BEFORE "It's hard to find sexy support," Vivienne admits. In the back, this bra rides up and makes her look fleshy; in the front, she needs "a deeper, less rigid cup so she won't pop out," says Susan Nethero, president of Intimacy, a bra-fitting business with stores in Atlanta and New York City. "In a T-shirt, she'd seem to have two sets of breasts—the 'double bust' effect."

AFTER Vivienne went from 32C to 32DD for better coverage and greater stability ("I can walk without jiggling!"). This "balcony" style, midway between a demi and a full cup, is both cute and practical: "The fine lace and silky texture make me feel flirtatious." Fantasie, \$62. ▶

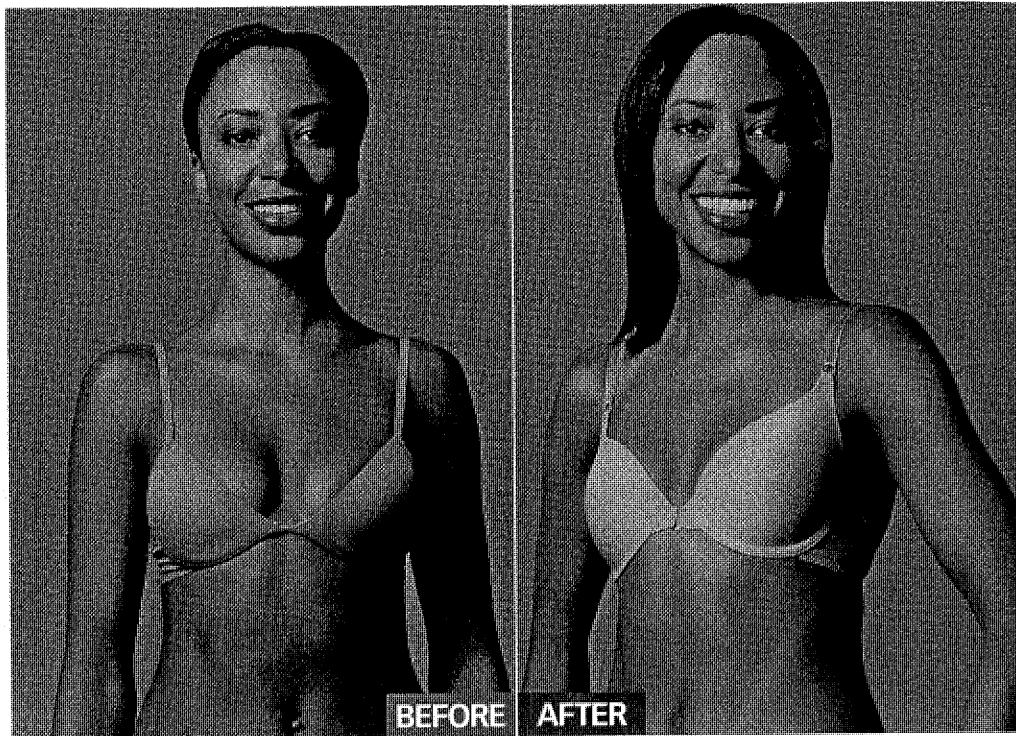


BUSTING OUT

Saudia Davis
Actor and
housepainter, 31

BEFORE "Cleavage" is what Saudia says she wants in a bra. But this low-cut Janet Jackson-esque style is verging on full disclosure. There's also too much space between the cups (the centerpiece shouldn't be more than an inch across), so she looks wide rather than high and firm. **AFTER** A front-closure contour bra with a racer

back gives Saudia "nice definition and plunge," Susan says, yet it's snug enough to stay with her when she's painting. Many stores don't stock bras smaller than size 32, so Saudia may need to have hers altered down to 30 inches. "Being fitted was awesome," she says. "Susan educated me on what I need. This bra is very comfortable, and it doesn't slip or slide." Maidenform, \$29.



NEEDS UPLIFT

Gayle Kirschenbaum
Documentary
filmmaker, 50

BEFORE "I don't like a lot of bra," says Gayle, but she does appreciate comfort and support, and her lacy Parisian number simply doesn't deliver. Its wide-set straps and cut make her look as if she has "nothing in front," Susan says, and because of decreased elasticity in her breasts (a.k.a. sag), there's no

volume in the upper part of the cup. **AFTER** "This is a very soothing bra, physically and emotionally—it makes me feel young and sexy and cared for," Gayle says. The narrower space between the cups and smaller band size (32C rather than 34C) keep the bra centered on her body, so her breasts seem "more important," as Susan puts it. "It adds shape but doesn't make her look excessively busty." Aubade, \$95. ▶

Surfing for Support

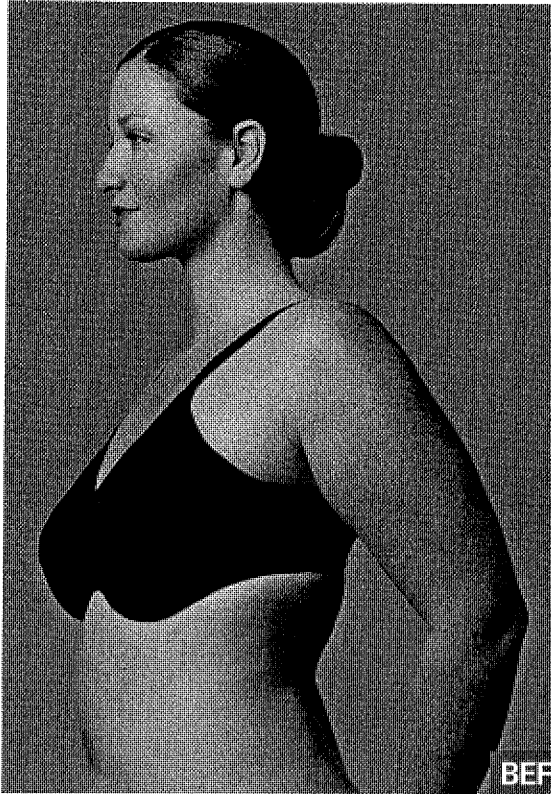
Whether you're happiest in a simple contour bra or you yearn for something a little more femme fatale, it's findable online. A few of the best Web addresses:

FOR EVERYONE: Herroom.com (illustrated troubleshooting bra-fitting guide); maidenform.com (all-American classics); figleaves.com (free standard shipping).

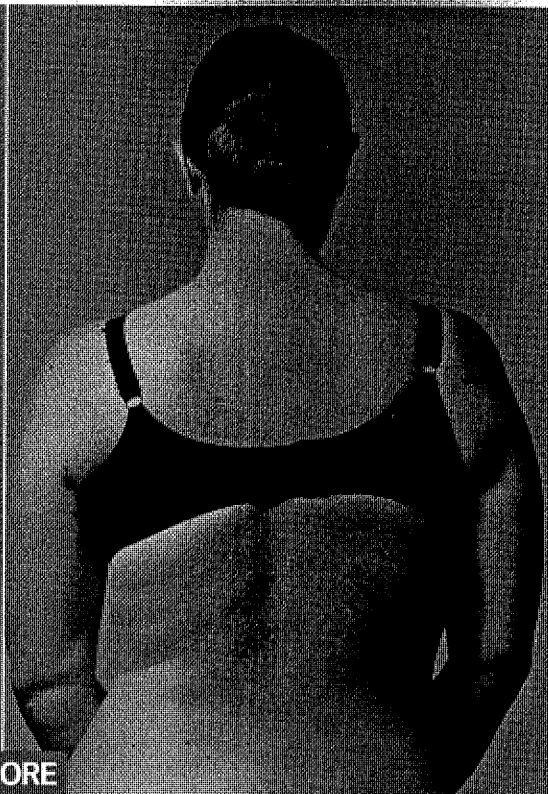
FOR THE VOLUPTUOUS: Justmysize.com (goes

up to 58J); feelpretty.com (plus-size labels like Goddess—accessible prices, great styling—and Prima Donna, a luxury line).

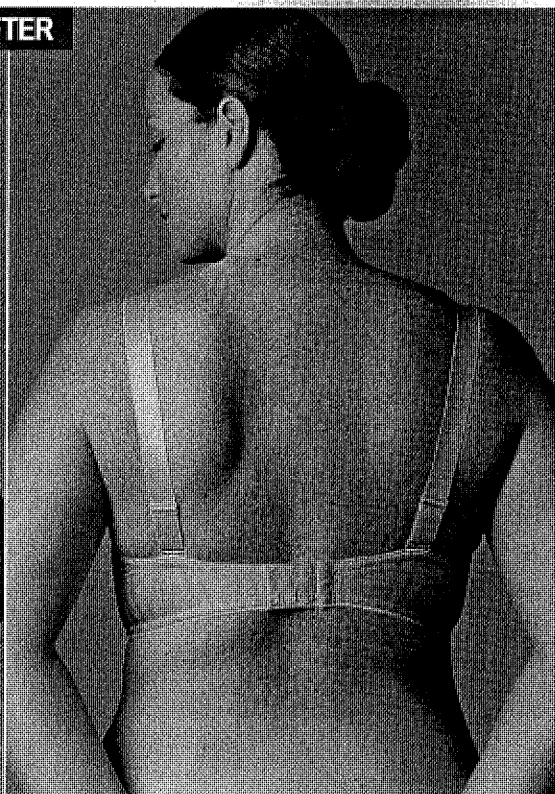
FOR FUN: Thelittleflirt.com (an interactive site from hip NYC lingerie shop La Petite Coquette).



BEFORE



AFTER



THE MINIMIZER MISTAKE

Bernadette Vajda
Public relations student, 28

BEFORE "Spillage is my problem," Bernadette says. But this "minimizer" is so big that her body seems wider and thicker (plus, the flattening action is bad for breast tissue). The band creeps up in the back, causing unfortunate bulges, so Bernadette has compensated by shortening the straps, putting most of the weight on her shoulders.

AFTER Firmer, happier, younger looking. "Finally—a bra that doesn't cover my entire chest or have five straps in back," says Bernadette. This 34F contour style (replacing her 36DD) is level on her body, and it's hooked in the loosest position. Later, when it stretches out, she'll have plenty of room for adjustment. Chantelle, \$62. ▶

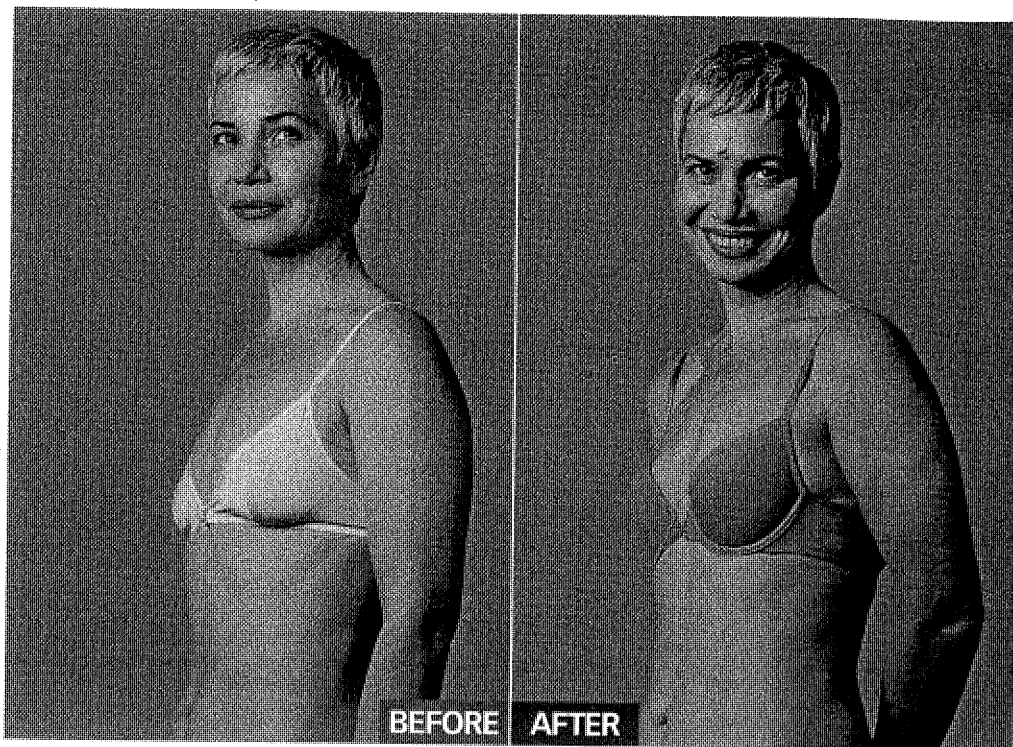
"You need a good bra," says Bernadette. "It's something nice to do for your body, like buying well-made shoes for your feet."

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL

Debra Roberts Program assistant for nonprofit organization, 47

BEFORE Although Debra once had implants and often uses gel inserts in her bras, she's become quite comfortable in her own skin ("There's nothing artificial about me"). Still, she wouldn't mind "a fuller look," and this bra gives her no support or definition. **AFTER** "Small-busted women like to be small

busted," Susan says. "We want to give her enough volume to make her clothes fit better yet not change her sense of self." A side bump panel on this padded push-up bra moves breast tissue toward the center and gives Debra a rounded, natural shape. "I feel more womanly in this bra," she says, "and it's nice and clean looking—I don't like dressy-dressy stuff." On Gossamer, \$39.



There's no such thing as bad breasts. Small ones are chic. Big ones are swell. And now you can find incredibly pretty, sexy bras in any size category.



CONTAIN YOURSELF

Jordan Tesfay Communications student, 25

BEFORE "I want a bra that lifts and separates while also being attractive and feminine," Jordan says, "but full-figured girls don't have a lot of choices." The cup is too shallow and inflexible to handle Jordan's breasts, Susan points out, so it binds her, creating unnatural-looking cleavage. **AFTER** Her surprisingly narrow back and

her full volume were both accommodated by this bra (34F instead of 36DD). Well-built side panels stabilize her breasts, and seaming in the cups brings them forward for a lovely rounded shape. And the style, chocolate-and-navy embroidered lace, surprised Jordan: "I'd never seen anything like this for women my size. It's sexy without being trashy or over-the-top." Prima Donna, \$157. >

BRA FITNESS: WHY SIZE MATTERS

Susan Nethero helps us get smart about support.

TRY A SMALLER BAND... Most women wear their bras too big—they think “comfortable” means “loose.” What they actually need is a firmer band to keep the bra level across the front and back.

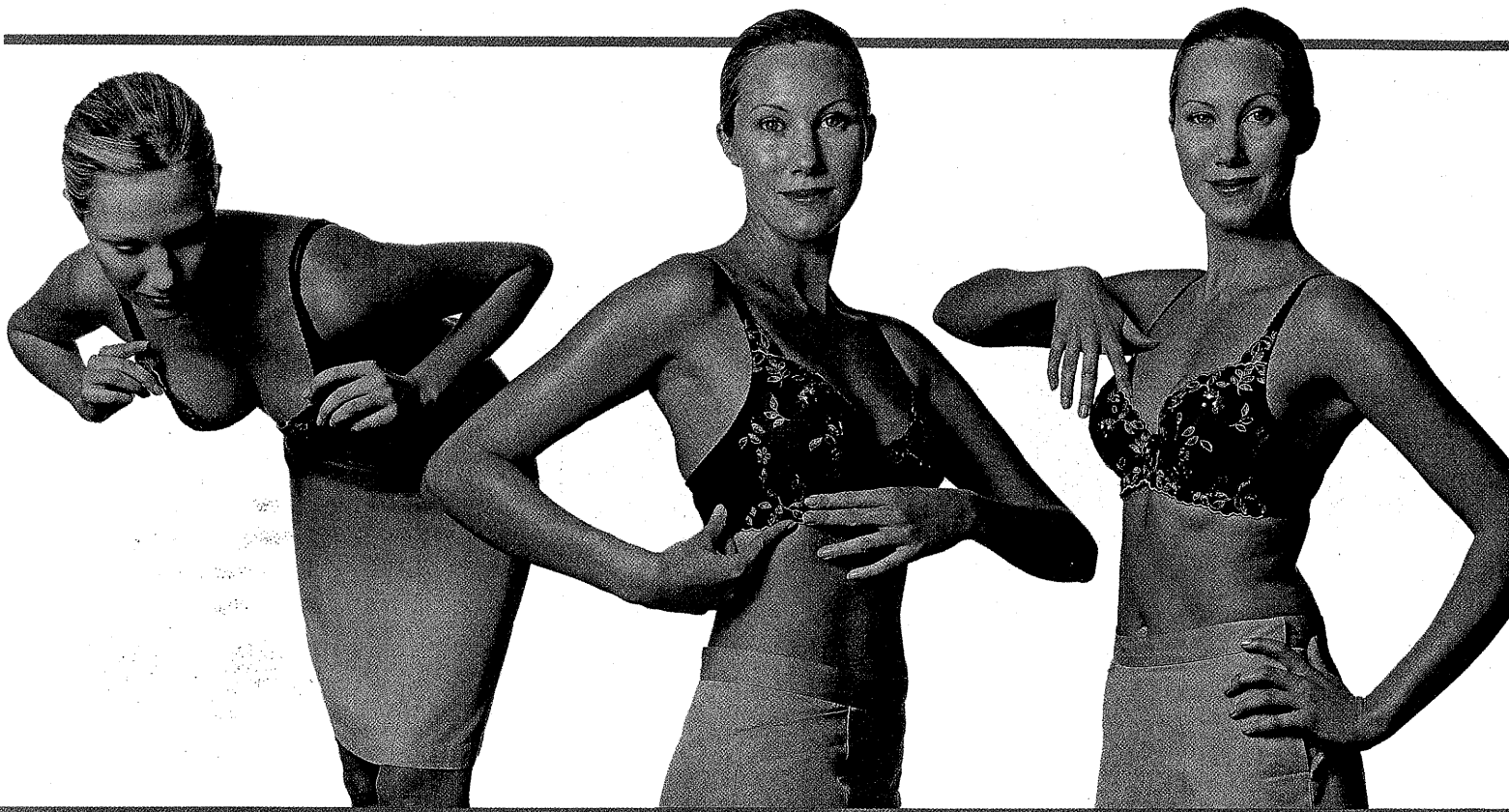
...AND A LARGER CUP Cup size doesn’t remain constant—it increases and decreases proportionally with band size—so if you go to a smaller band you may need a bigger cup. (Example: You think you’re a 36B, but your bra isn’t fully supportive? Consider a 34C or D.)

BREASTS FLUCTUATE The average woman’s bra size changes six times during her life—weight loss or gain, pregnancy, and age are all factors.

ASYMMETRY ISN’T WEIRD Most of us have breasts that don’t match perfectly. If that’s true for you, take your bras to be altered by a tailor.

IT PAYS TO UPGRADE Buy three top-quality bras rather than a lot of cheapies. You need only one to wear, one to wash, and one in the drawer.

MACHINE WASHING IS SAFE Put bras—even fancy, lacy ones—in a net bag, use mild soap, and run on the delicate cycle.



1

THREE STEPS TO A BETTER FIT: Bend deeply at the waist before fastening your bra—this automatically centers it and distributes the volume evenly. Straps should neither fall down nor dig into your shoulders (they ought to provide only 10 percent of your support—the rest comes from the band).

2

Buy a size that fits you very closely—it may even feel a bit tight at first—when fastened on the first (loosest) hook. This will enable you to tighten the bra over time as the material stretches out. Make sure that the band is perfectly horizontal on your body.

3

Fix minor puckering in the cups by smoothing down and “tucking in” your breasts. Fit check: If there’s a major gap between bra and body, the cup’s too big; if you’re overflowing the top or sides, it’s too shallow. Wacoal bra, \$48. For details see *Shop Guide*.