

fashion

WHAT LIES BENEATH

It's not just about the sari anymore. It's all about what's beneath! The blouse which goes with your classic drape has reinvented itself like never before, finds SAVIA RAJAGOPAL

Till some time back, the sari and its finery was the sole focus of attention. Cut to 2006, and you can't miss that it's what you wear with the sari that has reinvented itself in cuts, shapes and colours. Visualise Sushmita Sen sizzling in her bikini blouses in 'Main hoon na', or Priyanka Chopra in the more recent 'Bluffmaster'. The normal sleeved, necked, tamely cut-blouse is almost obsolete, what with everyone opting for variations and newer and bolder styles in vogue. Take a look at the new favourites...

EXPERT TIPS:

Shaina NC:

Always have blouses in neutral colours – that's gold, silver and black which can be mixed and matched with most saris.

Payal Singhal:

The shoulders are the key to any sleeveless blouse. If you have nice shoulders, you can carry off almost anything. So work on toning those shoulders and arms!

Prriya Awasthy:

Plumper women should steer clear from showing too much skin. Enhance your plus points like your shoulders, or back or cleavage or abs. A sari will camouflage your flaws anyway, so choose what you want to flaunt!

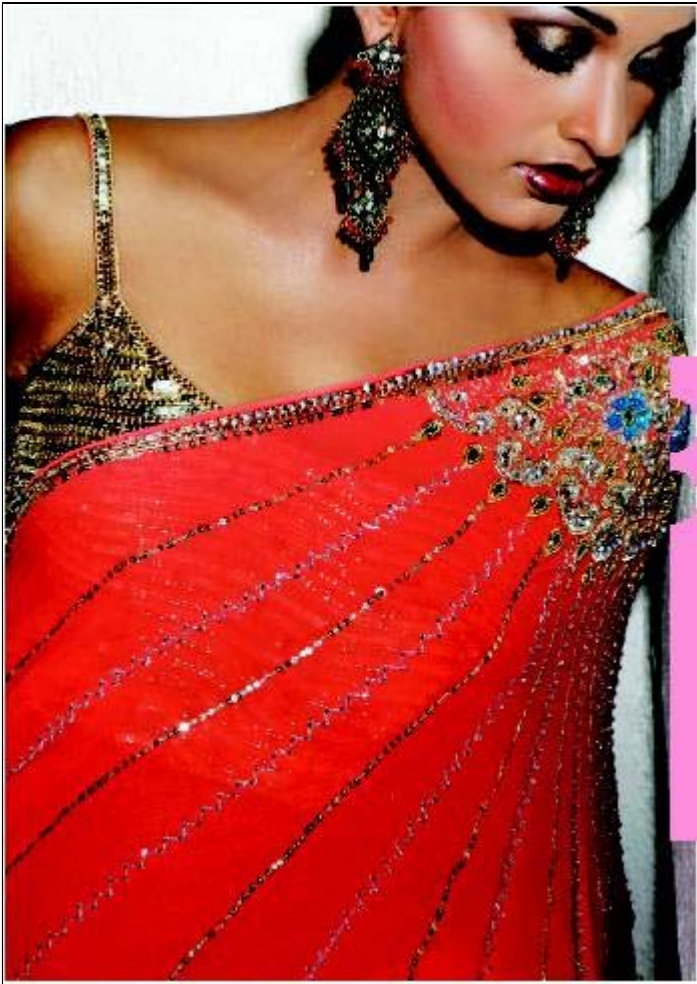


CORSET

What used to be hidden below layers of Victorian clothing has come out in the open — literally! Says fashion designer, Shaina NC, "Most women can wear a corset quite comfortably. You can drape your sari like a lungi or you can wear your sari around your neck as a dupatta. A word of caution though, women with very big hips and a big stomach should avoid a corset." Reiterates designer Payal Singhal, "A corset is for the waist savvy! Depending on the embroidery or embellishment on the corset, you can wear the drape accordingly. If there is heavy embroidery or embellishment on the front, then you'd do well to wear it in the Gujarati style with the pallu kept straight down from the shoulder. If the back has an interesting motif, then you could wear it the regular way and show off the back." Designer Priya Awasthy, however, offers a solution for slightly plump women, "Opt for slightly longer corsets that touch the navel, or wear one that has a neck sash with it." She also adds that it's the perfect choice for slimmer, smaller breasted women as it gives a visual body contour and feminine curves to the body.

**HALTER BLOUSES**

Designers unanimously say that halters suit broad-shouldered women the best. "Halters enhance cleavage and show off a well workedout, toned body. Depending on whether you want to show off your cleavage or back, you can drape your sari accordingly," explains Awasthy. Singhal advocates that broadshouldered women should wear a halter as it gives an illusion of looking narrower. It's an absolute no no for very busty women. She claims it suits flatter women better.

**BUSTIER**

Think of a bustier, and the mind conjures up images of a voluptuous woman looking sinfully gorgeous. "A bustier has the most flattering silhouette," states Singhal. "It lets busty women look slimmer while flatter women appear more curvaceous." She suggests that the classic sensual way to wear a sari with this kind of blouse is the regular Bengali style. Awasthy gives her take on the bustier, saying, "Very large women with either a C or D cup, or those with thicker upper arms and back should avoid a bustier." Shaina recommends draping the sari normally, but having the front pleats placed lower in the front to show off the blouse.

**NO STRINGS ATTACHED**

Strappy blouses are quite the rage this season. Whether it's the bikini blouse that titillates the imagination or the daring string-back blouse, there's a lot of skin on display. You have to be truly bold to wear this blouse and carry it off confidently. Shaina advises that to wear such blouses, your back must be flab-free! Adds Singhal, "Women who are heavy on the shoulder and arms, should avoid a strappy number as it makes them look wider."