

# Birth Year of the Brassiere

**F**rom constricting contraptions in the 16th century to undergarments stiffened with whalebone in the early 20th, there are varying accounts of the exact birthday of the modern bra or her creator. Was it Otto Tittling whom Bette Midler sang about in the film “Beaches” who invented the world’s first over-the-shoulder-boulder-holder? Or was it conceived in 1907 when Vogue first began using the term “brassiere” in print? According to bra expert and founder of Intimacy lingerie store, Susan Nethero, the credit goes to Mary Phelps Jacob, who in 1910 grew weary of whalebone corsets and created and patented the first bra fashioned from two silk handkerchiefs, some pink ribbon and cord. One hundred years later: Happy Birthday, Bra. You’ve come a long way, baby!

Of course, there is always room for improvement. “Sixty-five percent of women have never been fit for a bra and eighty-five percent of women are wearing the wrong size,” said Nethero, who trained under the Queen of England’s Royal Bra Fitter, June Kenton, has made multiple appearances on the Oprah show and was the exclusive bra fit expert on Lifetime’s “How to Look Good Naked” makeover show with Carson Kressley.



SUSAN NETHERO,  
THE BRA WHISPERER

Worse yet, most women wear only a fraction of the bras they own. Nethero recommends that every woman have at least five to seven good working bras in her wardrobe that will work with a host of different outfits and occasions.

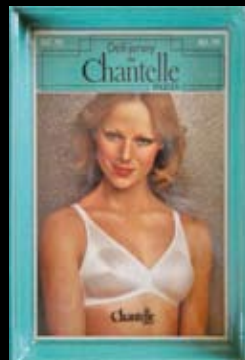
The T-shirt bra is a great start featuring a convertible strap option that works with any T-shirt, halter or racer back top. The plunging bra falls low at the center and is the right choice if you are wearing a V-neck or a crossover or wrap dress or top. “It creates a great cleavage effect with nice volume without the spilling out effect,” she said.

For the small and full breasted alike, the push-up bra gives great volume and lift. And a great sports bra is a must. “We believe rather than having compression based crop top or soft top that presses the breast down, it is better to have a bra in the right size to reduce bounce, to support you but one that won’t create breast injury as the breast moves up and down, and elongates and tears the breast tissue.”

## HOT FALL TRENDS THAT WILL GET YOU HOOKED

This fall, Nethero says hot bra colors include navy, plum, purple and gray. “Gray is sophisticated, and around the holidays a red or burgundy bra is a great statement piece.”

And gone are the days when showing your bra strap was considered trashy. Lace detailing on the side or the back of the bra



# We've come a long way, baby

or on the strap can transform your bra from being just an undergarment to a stylish expression. "It is fun to show the lacy details at the neckline of your dress or outfit you are wearing. It's more like a fashion accessory now," she said.

Proper fit assures a polished look. Size matters. Are you over or under filling your current bra? Rather than the tape measure of yesteryear to find the right bra, Nethero and her team use a woman friendly, holistic approach where a bra fit expert (using a client's current bra as a starting point to ascertain fit around the body and cup depth) spends at least 30 minutes to help each client identify what bras are the most comfortable, and what bra will look best on their body type, for their wardrobe and their personal style.

Women tend to think of their bra size like grades in school – A B C D, Nethero said, but as a woman's body changes so does her cup size. "Today more women are fuller busted and one cup size larger than previous generations," she said. While implants have grown in popularity, Nethero attributes the increased cup size changes to hormones and weight issues in this country.



Perfect for smaller busts, the detailed embroidery and pattern work of Lise Charmel's "Fashion Jungle" bra and panty set combined with the push-up effect of the deep plunge flatter the bustline. Available at Intimacy of Atlanta in Phipps Plaza. Visit [myintimacy.com](http://myintimacy.com).

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