

**3 WAIST HAUTE**

Hache wool trousers, \$445, Hu's Wear, 2906 M St. NW, 202-342-2020; Oscar de la Renta D'Orsay pumps, \$385, Sassanova, 1641 Wisconsin Ave. NW, 202-471-4400.

PAIR THEM WITH: A sleek, body-hugging top to play off the volume of paper-bag waist pants. "Tuck in a silk shirt, put on a cropped swing coat and, of course, wear high heels," says Hu's Reid Ethier.

GOOD FOR: Hiding thicker thighs and "accentuating a tiny, Marilyn Monroe waist," Lilly says.

4 SHORT STORY

Organic silk shorts, \$217, Shopbop.com; Oscar de la Renta peep-toes, \$299, Sassanova.

PAIR THEM WITH: Anything you'd don with a flirty miniskirt: a floaty cami, metallic flats.

NOT FOR: The thick of thigh; pleated styles will just show off what you'd rather hide.

GOOD FOR: Petites, since these shorter-than-most babies reveal — and lengthen — stems to (almost) Heidi Klum levels.

5 WILD WIDE

Organic seersucker trousers, \$207, Shopbop.com; Seychelles leather sandals, \$79, ShoeFly, 2727 Wilson Blvd., Arlington, 703-243-6490.

PAIR THEM WITH: Simple flats on weekends or wedges for work. On top, "balance out the menswear feel with something feminine, like a ruffled blouse," Lilly says.

NOT FOR: Petites. "They'll overwhelm them and drag the look down," Lilly says.

GOOD FOR: Tall chicks with boyish figures.



HIP BELOW THE BELT

How to rock (not ruin) your look with new pants shapes, from dressy shorts and pleated trousers to harem styles

For the past few years, pants and shorts have played a mere supporting role in fashion. Like those character actors who are killed off quickly on “Lost” or “Grey’s Anatomy,” slim jeans and flared trousers partnered with flashier stars — voluminous blouses, showy tees. But now, designers have recast trousers, pants and shorts with new shapes (harem, peg leg) and design elements (dropped crotches, the return of pleats), putting the spotlight below the waist. At first, these retro, 1980s-meet-1950s styles can seem tricky to wear and a little costume-y. “You need to mix them with current styles,” says Reid Ethier of Georgetown’s Hu’s Wear. This means silky harem pants are tamed by a fitted blazer and high-waisted, Katharine Hepburn-ish trousers are cinched with a wide belt. “Give different silhouettes a try,” Ethier says. “When you tell yourself, ‘I can’t wear this or that,’ you might miss out on something that suits you perfectly.” Or at least a piece that’s far more forgiving of your summer ice-cream cone belly than those skin-tight skinnies. **ASHLEY JOY PARKER**

1 WILD HAREM

Alice + Olivia silk pants, \$130, Shopbop.com; sandals, \$158, Reiss, 1254 Wisconsin Ave. NW, 202-944-8565.

PAIR THEM WITH: A simple tee, a boyfriend blazer and high, chunky heels. Donning these out-of-Africa babies with a pair of beaded flats and a hippie top could get you mistaken for a belly dancer.

NOT FOR: “The vertically challenged,” says Hu’s Reid Ethier. All this below-the-waist volume can overwhelm petite figures.

2 PREP COOL

Elizabeth and James shorts, \$265, Neiman Marcus, 5300 Wisconsin Ave., 202-966-9700; sandals, \$177, Reiss.

PAIR THEM WITH: A crisp ruffled blouse, a kicky long pearl necklace and a long cardigan for work; or “maybe a tee and high heels for a night out,” says Annandale personal stylist Margaret Lilly (Lillysclosetonline.com).

GOOD FOR: Taller girls who find many other shorts too Daisy Duke-teeny.