



One-Armed Bandits

Looking through the fall 2001 collections, one might think that a mad sleeve thief had made his way through the racks with a pair of shears. One-armed tops (overwhelmingly in black) hit runways as diverse as Daryl K. Helmut Lang, Diane Von Furstenberg, BCBG, and Oscar de la Renta. It's a clever way to show some sexy skin while remaining (half) warm, and a good variation on the asymmetry theme that has been around in recent seasons. "Anytime a woman plays with her shoulders she feels sexy," Von Furstenberg explained. So, check the stores—the one-armed blouse will be here soon. But if you're the impatient type, you could always take out your own scissors and make one yourself.



Belly Up

Because there are just so many crunches a girl can stand, belly dancing is suddenly attracting quite a following outside of Agadir. There's a belly-dancing show in at least one downtown spot any night of the week: Layla on West Broadway has one every night, Kush on Orchard Street has one Tuesday, Cafe Mogador on St. Marks Place has Wednesday covered, and at Sago on Clinton Street, the Thursday-night show has gotten such a crowd, they're adding Fridays. The trend is pervasive: Christina Aguilera has incorporated belly-dancing moves into her latest video, and Crunch offers classes in the art of stomach swiveling. You could try one, or just sit around and contemplate your navel.

BETH LANDMAN KEEL

Bee Stylish

Dressing in all black is over; it's an outsider's idea of what New York people wear. The really fashion-conscious are giving the somber staple a bit of levity this season by adding a bright dose of tasciab yellow. The stitching on Marc Jacobs's black leather purses? Yellow. The handle on a black Prada shoulder bag? Yellow. The combo finds itself in swirling Pucci prints; woven Missoni knits; tidy Comme des Garçons houndstooth; graphic Jean-Charles de Castelbajac cartoons; and sexy, mod slides by Michel Perry (pictured). *Elle's* March issue even flaunts the match: The canary-yellow cover is toned down by Rebecca Romijn-Stamos's black top. Be careful, however, about stripes, for all the obvious, bumblebee reasons.



Smart Set



Esther Nash

Esther Nash is opening her third boutique—a tiny, bright, delicious place called Baby Dolly Sugar Daddy in Chelsea (131 Seventh Avenue, near 20th Street; 646-336-1822). "I don't like to waste time," she says. When Nash was 19 and she took the cash she'd earned modeling her long, dark hair for Japanese shampoo ads and opened a shop in Park Slope, where she grew up. A year later, she opened another next door (50 and 502 2nd Street, Brooklyn; 718-

965-8674). "I did it all myself," she says proudly. "I always have my power drill nearby." Nash sells her own designs (clubwear, jewelry, swimwear) and vintage clothing with a rock-star aesthetic—tight, and heavy on the sparkle. "I design for the petite athletic millennium socialite divas and fashionistas of today and tomorrow," she says. "My motto is 'Be seen and be remembered.'" Anything else? "Sparkle and shine like the superstar that you are!" Anything else? "Oh, yeah. I give free personal-shopping advice."