

The Sun

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STYLE

Swimming Pretty On the Upper East Side

Pia Catton on a New Swimwear Shop
Open Just in Time for August?



It may seem a little late in the summer to open a swimwear shop, but that's all right with Heidi Gosman, 35, and Penny Klein, 36. These English beauties have just opened the first New York outpost of Heidi Klein, a boutique filled with everything you need for a trip to a sunny locale — whether in August or January.

The goal at Heidi Klein is to make shopping for swimwear more fun and less anxiety producing. "Some people feel miserable when they leave a shop after trying on bikinis," Ms. Klein said.

Here, the goal is to make shoppers feel as if they're on vacation as soon as they walk in the door. The space is white and airy. The air is scented with coconut candles. More important, the dressing rooms all have proper doors for privacy, and lighting that was designed to flatter.

On the shelves are suits that range from bejeweled to practical. There are sequined skimpy numbers by

the Brazilian brand Maji (between \$200 and \$250) and sleek suits by Eres (\$300). The British-based Heidi Klein team also produces its own collections. One mix-and-match grouping (in red, black, or navy blue) allows customers to choose the cuts that look best on their body. Other Heidi Klein collections come in fruity colors, nautical themes, and polka dots (\$200 and up).

In the suits made for their private label, Ms. Gosman and Ms. Klein paid close attention to fit and cut, in addition to style. Some pieces have hidden boning, optional padding, and halter tops for more support. "We really train [the saleswomen] to understand fit," Ms. Gosman said, adding that the training is based on assessing a customer's shape and helping them look their best.

Ms. Gosman and Ms. Klein met while working on an e-commerce project for the British chain Marks & Spencer. In 2002, they decided to put their shopping savvy to work for themselves. They now have two shops in London, one in Notting Hill and another in Sloane Square. After setting up in New York, the duo hopes to open stores in Miami and Los Angeles next.

And though they know that their August opening in New York wasn't ideal, they're also ahead of the next curve. "Our busiest times are summer and December," Ms. Klein said.

The shop stocks Vilebrequin trunks for men and suits for children. Accessories like jewelry, hats, and straw bags (all starting around \$90) are sprinkled throughout the store, as are flow dresses (between \$175 and \$300) to wear to dinner or the beach. Also on offer is a Heidi Klein coconut body scrub (\$48) and a light, whipped moisturizer (\$45). With all that to choose from, Ms. Gosman says the store is a realization of their vision: "It's one-stop holiday shopping."

Heidi Klein (1018 Lexington Ave. at 73rd Street, 212-327-1700).

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