

# Sensory Delights



## Get Real by Brooke Bessen



### Sweating over exercise plans as bikini season approaches

Every year, after wearing soft winter layers to conceal my waistline, I make big plans to get in shape for summer. Admittedly, "plan" is the operative word since, thus far, I haven't ventured much beyond that.

My goal is always the same: to attain the *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue Look – even though motivational experts say intentions should be not

only clearly defined but, well ... realistic.

Despite a decade of disappointment (foolhardy enthusiasm is one of my best traits) I prepare my annual fitness program, establish a timeline and begin my spring countdown to the Fabulous New Me.

I imagine myself walking, er, no, sashaying along a busy beach in a brilliant blue bikini. A gauzy sarong,

tied across my taught stomach, drifts back on the sea's salty breath, as does my long flowing mane of hair. Slipping off the cover-up, I dash into the cool water ... lean, muscular legs flexing beneath a shimmer of oil. Moments later, I reemerge in slow-motion, like a goddess, sleek, tan and – here's the zinger – wearing flawless make-up!

For honesty's sake, I feel obligated to share what I call my Before Picture, even though the following has consistently represented my Now:

Not since Bill Clinton's first term have I even tiptoed onto a beach without full coverage shorts over a one-piece swimsuit.

And, the 45 sun-block that bestows a greasy white hue upon my already pale complexion is, sadly enough, the only thing

that keeps my skin from requiring wet bandage wraps at the resident Burn Unit.

As for my hair, it's usually pulled up in an elastic band to keep the brackish wind from tangling it into the kind of rat's nest that, to rectify, requires a bottle of conditioner, 30 minutes with a wide-tooth comb and a slew of salty words.

Even the playful waves that once summoned me toward the horizon are losing their magic. I have discovered an inverse (and suspiciously rhyming) correlation between age and water temperature: the older I get, the colder the water.

Braving a jaunt beyond the swirling tide inevitably results in giant goose-pimples, which push out the stubble on my legs, rendering them viable sanding tools.

That said, sculpting my body into the sea idol Amphitrite will clearly need to come before the Vickie Secret swimsuit purchase.

Yes, coming out of a dressing room half-naked at this stage could cause severe psychological scars – and it might make me feel uncomfortable, too.

Swimwear shopping will have to wait until rigorous exercise has begun shifting my continental plates back to their original latitudes.

Launching a new training program is really quite easy ... I've done it dozens of times and always with great success! I schedule fitness classes like imperative business meetings and count calories like a fun new math game.

Sometimes I even corral a friend to join me on the quest, since companionship makes agony infinitely more tolerable. The adage "misery loves company" likely was coined by a Gym Rat.

I sign-up for fat burning classes like Spinning, in which a mob of masochists gather in a dark room on stationary bicycles to

participate in synchronized sweating while pedaling to loud, rhythmic music. The goal? To survive one hour of hypoxic delirium without – under any circumstances – stopping.

After a couple weeks of culinary deprivation, aerobic activity and countless trips to the mirror in my undergarments, I finally spy one muscle, a lone crusader, fighting its way to the surface of my abdomen. And my confidence soars!

Making such obvious headway in the pre-summer months, you must wonder why I fail to reach my SI target, year after year.

At this point it seems I am always tripped by the oafish foot of procrastination. I postpone one lousy conditioning class to read a book, defer one healthful salad for a gluttonous helping of fettuccini alfredo (and 216 complementary breadsticks) and soon I am back to my lazy habits.

Next thing I know, my Summer of Dreams is over. As August slips by, I confront defeat, wracked with shame and sincerely thankful that winter is waiting with baggy jeans and sweatshirts.

But color me daffy! It's only April and I've no time to fret the past. I have one month before pool party invitations start arriving (tick, tock, tick, tock) and I've got to get to my panty muscles shaking.

Join me for a Spinning class? No?

Well, if you go to the beach this summer, look for me. If you don't spot a goddess in a blue bikini running in slow motion ... I'll be the one in the shorts.

Scottsdale resident Brooke Bessen is the author and illustrator of the children's book *Look Who Lives in the Desert!*, a humorous-but-educational look at desert wildlife. It's available at all book retailers, including Gridleys of Fountain Hills.

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## NEELY'S DINER

by Crawford

