

BETTER FROM BEHIND

DOES YOUR BUM LOOKS BIG IN THIS? IF SO, THEN EMBRACE IT, SAYS **CLOVER STROUD**, BECAUSE GENEROUS-SIZED BOTTOMS ARE HAVING A MOMENT RIGHT NOW

More than that dress, that hat or even that kiss, April 29 is seared into the memory of the world's hot-blooded males as the day of that butt. While I've really struggled to figure out exactly what the point of Pippa Middleton is, I've got to thank her for the fact that while her sister was flying the flag for all things British, she was doing a mighty PR job on the beauty of a well-rounded derriere. The truth, of course, is that an aggressive devotion to the god of Dukan means Pippa's behind is actually more flabby batty than juicy fruit. As Jemima Khan kindly reminded us via Twitter, the Middleton curves are hardly "heir-bearing hips". Pippa actually has the ass of a prepubescent boy, as Tinie Tempah recently pointed out. "I've not actually got what all the fuss is about," he told *The Sun*. "I prefer a bigger bum. I'm definitely a bum man, but she's not doing it for me. Sorry, Pippa." And with the curvaceous Carole Vorderman pipping Miss Middleton to the post to win this year's Rear of the Year (at 50, no less — go, girl!), it seems Tempah is not the only one. Summer 2011 is shaping up to be the season of the beautiful bottom, the age of ass.

Just check out Kim Kardashian, whose substantial behind was the subject of a recent *Cosmopolitan* cover. "I'm proud of my booty, and it's all mine," she told the magazine. You've got to hand it to the Armenian hottie and that mighty derriere of hers. More than her on-off BF relationship with Paris Hilton, her notoriously porny sex tape and *Playboy* spread, or even the fact she reportedly earned £3.5m last year just for being herself, Kardashian's infamy, as well as her fortune, is down to her glorious butt. Growing up in LA, a city whose ideal of physical beauty is embodied by a snake-hipped, straight-up-and-down Jennifer Aniston on Venice beach in her endless supply of khaki slacks, Kardashian flaunts an admirably cheeky pride in her mighty ass. And she has over 5m Facebook fans who agree with her. Not for nothing did *Famous Cupcakes* choose her to launch the Va-Va-Va-Nilla cupcake mix. "For me, skinny is just a style of jeans, not a goal," she says defiantly, denying the rumours of implants.

Our bums — their shape, or lack of it, their dimples and curves, their hateful cellulite — are the feature we obsess over more than any other. And now summer is here, and with it the looming migraine moment of bikini shopping, the plaintive cry of "Does my bum look big in this?" can be heard from Topshop changing rooms up and down the land.

But worrying about the size of our bums is where we've been getting it very wrong. Let's not forget, girls, that size really does matter, and that big, when it comes to anything veering close to the erotic, is definitely best. If in doubt, take a look at *FHM* and its annual 100 Hottest Women list. Jennifer Lopez, whose magnificent behind is rumoured to be insured for £16m, was the first woman to be voted hottest woman in the world twice. The bootylicious Beyoncé and her "jelly", Kardashian (natch) and Britain's own Kelly Brook all figure regularly. And Eva Longoria, the Latina curve ball, has twice been crowned Hottest Woman in the World by *FHM*'s American counterpart *Maxim*.

Brazilians have always been hot for a good bot (no wonder they love beach frisbee so much), but the obsession with big butts is now going global. Japanese plastic surgeons have seen a flurry of interest in butt implants, and in India, girls have set up websites to swap diet tips in their quest for a better butt beneath their saris. In America (where else?), you can buy yourself an instant glorious behind in the form of the \$30 Bump-A-Booty padded panties.

Which is all great news if you ask me, because speaking as a girl with a bum that — so my boyfriend delights in telling me — could give Kardashian a run for her money, I couldn't help feeling a little short-changed after Fiona Bruce won last year's Rear of the Year. Bruce is an admirable newsreader, and no doubt a lovely lady, but her ass is a pancake compared to the delicious proportions of Miss Kardashian and company.

My big butt has never given me anything but a very nice ride, and so I don't take criticism of it well. For a while, I went out with a man who couldn't glance at my bum without telling me I needed to lose 4lb. This prescriptive body fascism was utterly counterproductive, because all it made me want to do was eat another slice of chocolate cake, just to spite him. Did his attitude make for good sex? No way.

Today I have no such complaints, because my boyfriend is a pygophile, the proper term for someone who loves a good butt, and he particularly loves what he calls my "multicultural" ass. Maintaining the proportions of my big butt isn't, admittedly, very arduous, but I've found there are certain exercises that help to keep a larger bottom pert. This is done by working the glutes, because a well-defined gluteal fold — the area where the bum joins the hamstring — will give you a perkier bottom. You can measure this muscle by doing a pencil test, which is more fun if you get your boyfriend to help you. If you can hold a pencil under the fold when standing, you could do with working your glutes a little harder to give some lift. Lunges and squats are effective; as is sprinting, a high-intensity exercise that will make them stand to attention à la Serena Williams, and which also has the effect of burning more calories even after you've finished working out, and are hopefully sitting down to a nice cream tea. A peachy ass also needs a bit of stroking, so rubbing with an exfoliator or loofah in the shower helps keep it smooth. Slather with coconut oil, and you'll be, as they say, good to go.

Best of all, a big butt is just plain good fun. There's a perennial saucy Carry On comedy to a really round ass, and a flick through *Taschen*'s gloriously beautiful Big Butt Book reminds you that big bums rock because they're defiant, too. Recently, Kardashian admitted that "sometimes I think, 'See this little dimple of cellulite here? It was so worth it for that cookies'n'cream ice cream!'". When Elle or Gwyneth or any other of the stick-like beauties confess to gorging on pizza, it sounds all wrong, because you know it's utter rubbish, but coming from Kardashian you know it is true. If you want to wiggle like Monroe, just think like Kim, and keep on eating those cupcakes. ●



THE BOTTOM LINE Pippa Middleton (centre) can't compete with Kim Kardashian (left) and Nicki Minaj (right)

ELLEN VON UNWERTH/ART AND COMMERCE, PA, GETTY, REK FEATURES