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Publicists Tatiana Dwyer (left) and Rachel Ruben pair pieces from Victoria's Secret vintage collection with their own favorite jeans.

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Early bloomers: new life for old undies

By LIBBY CALLAWAY

YOUR granny's panties might seem like the least chic things in the world.

But this summer, antique silk, lace and cotton camisoles, slips, bed jackets, even bras, are finding their way out from under our clothes and into public.

"Vintage lingerie is a lot more covering than the modern lingerie, which can look like Playboy-wear," says celeb stylist Danna Weiss.

"Vintage things are much more modest."

Early next month, Victoria's Secret will introduce a 30-piece retro-inspired line of silk, lace and cotton sleepwear—nightgowns priced \$50 to \$500.

Next month, before the VS Vintage Collection hits the floor, a mass-market party pusher is selling a stash of authentic vintage (bed coats, camisoles, bras, full- and half-sleeved blouses and '40s at their Upper West Side flagship). All cost: up to \$200 a piece.

Wearing nearly naked doesn't come cheap, but there are other alternatives. Check out thrift stores and antique shops for good deals.

Also check how the fabric feels. "Any fabric that's stiff, brittle or hard" is probably deteriorating," she says.

"It might look fine to the naked eye, but it's begun to rot, if you were to try and hand wash or have it dry cleaned, it would probably disintegrate."

Pay close attention to the area under the arms, where dry rot first sets in.

Once you've found your vintage under, it's easy to integrate it into your existing wardrobe.

"I really think it can be worn on all occasions," says Weiss. "You can layer long chiffon slips and wear them to black-tie events."

(For sheerer pieces, she suggests nude-tone underpinnings — black and white shows through thin fabrics.)

Weiss, who works with celebs including Molly Sims, advises against wearing vintage underthings head-to-toe. "You'll look like you're stuck in a time warp," she warns.

Pair a vintage camisole or bed jacket with a modern piece, such as a new denim skirt.

Or wear a vintage full slip as a dress, paired with a belt or fitted jacket.

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Weiss likes vintage cotton slips with simple white tank tops and bold accessories — especially the Southwestern jewelry and accessories that are so popular this season — and worn cowboy boots, though, in general, lingerie looks better with dainty, light-colored sandals.

You can even wear unmentionables to work, provided you toil in a liberal environment.

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