

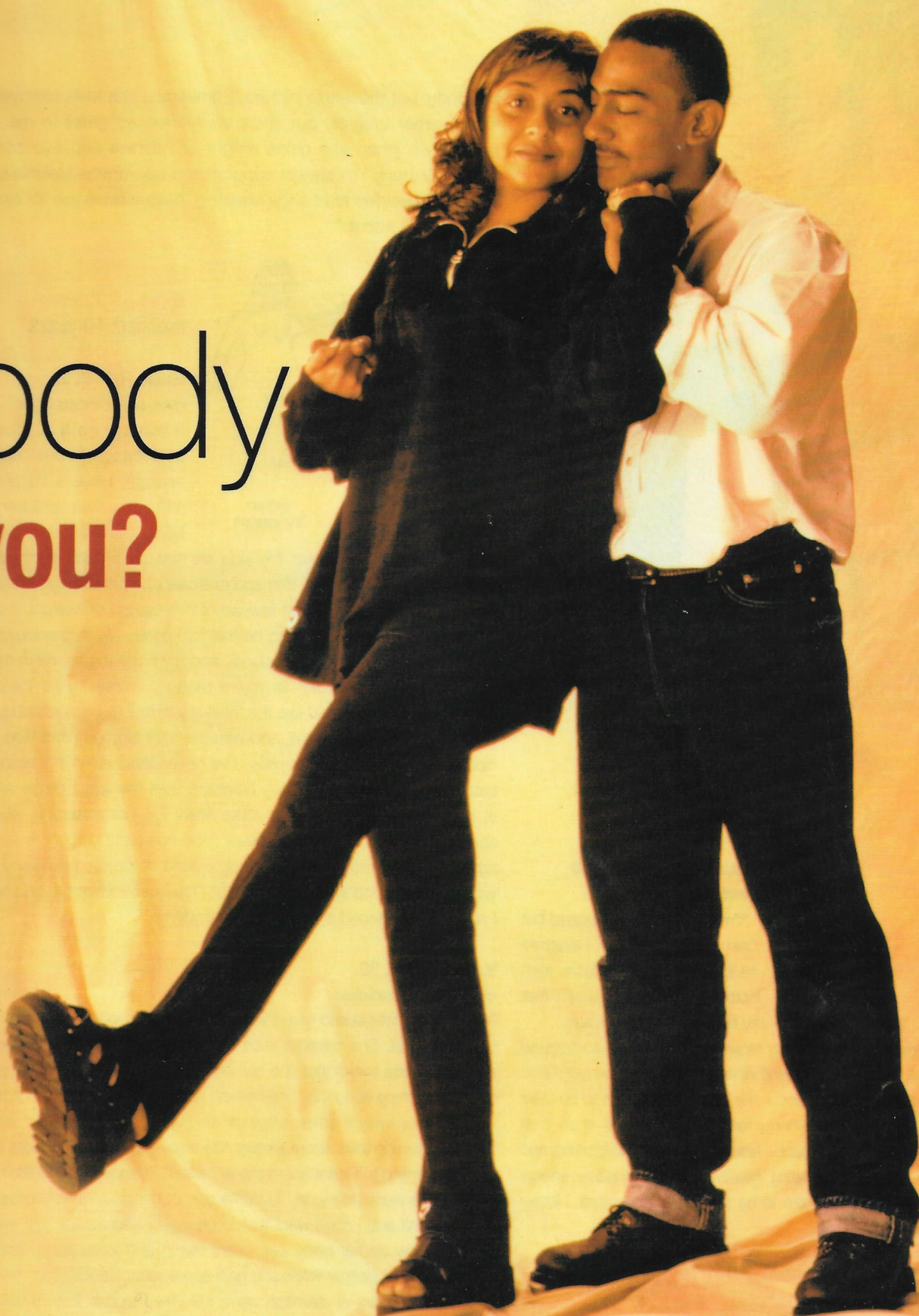
he loves your **why don't**

Chubby thighs, small breasts and flabby hips are just some of the reasons for most women's unhappiness and insecurities. But do men see us the same way? Jo Lennox asks four women about their bodies and discovers that their partners have very different views. Photography: Grada Djeri.

Melanie & Anton

relationships

body
you?



Gillian & Yasiem



Phillippi & Abrie



melanie
by melanie



melanie
by anton

Melanie & Anton
married: 2 years

Melanie Fortuin-Durr, 28
promotions manager

"I'm short and small-boned but I've never been skinny. I weighed 44 kilos for about 13 years, then I picked up five kilos after I met my husband four years ago.

"I wasn't comfortable in tight clothes any more and it's not easy to disguise excess fat on my small body. A starch- and wheat-free diet helped get me to my target weight, and I'm confident about my body, but I'd love to be taller and bigger-breasted. My best feature is my flat tummy, but I only show it off if I'm tanned and feel great. My husband, Anton, and I enjoy exercising and we follow a healthy eating plan; being healthy ensures positive energy between us, and, although I would like to be tall and big-breasted, I know Anton prefers me being petite."

Anton Fortuin-Durr, 35
regional company manager

"Melanie is slim and attractive and has no reason to change her body. Her petite frame is great, but what attracted me to her wasn't

her body, but the whole picture. Sometimes she feels overweight or wants larger breasts, but she's always looked great to me. If she feels down when she gains weight or hears a negative comment about her body I'm always supportive. I appreciate Melanie's body, but if she decided to change anything, have a boob job for example, I'd go along with it."



gillian
by gillian



gillian
by yasien

Gillian & Yasien
married: 10 years

Gillian Ryklief, 27
gym service manager

"I was always a bit chubby as a teenager, but strangely enough, I lost a lot of weight after my two children were born. I loved being pregnant,

and I felt and looked great. My kids are now seven and eight years old and it's hard to maintain a diet and exercise routine when you're a working mother, so over the last few years I've picked up weight. I used to be size 32 and I would love to be that thin again. My thighs are my main problem. I have a small upper body and my huge thighs make my body seem out of proportion. To make matters worse I also have small breasts. In short, I would like the fat in my thighs to be pushed up to my breasts! I'm lucky to be tall, and with the right clothes I can hide my big hips and small breasts; anyway, I've never liked revealing clothes and prefer loose-fitting clothes. My husband likes the way I dress, although at bedtime he prefers to see more flesh! I'm not miserable about the shape of my body and would never have cosmetic surgery, but I sometimes feel uncomfortable undressing in front of Yasien, and being thinner would give me more confidence. Also, my husband would be pleased if I no longer switched off the lights at bedtime."

Yasien Ryklief, 30
computer technician

"Gillian and I got married when she was 17, and I loved the fact that she was young and tall. She became even more attractive when she fell pregnant. I know my wife thinks that she has problems with her figure, but I wouldn't change anything about her. She doesn't need to lose weight, but I don't want her to pick up weight either; she must stay the way she is. I never take much notice when she talks about dieting. We enjoy going to restaurants together and I certainly don't want her to starve herself. Besides, she wouldn't feel the same if she were skinny. My favourite part of her body is her bottom — it's nice and soft and I don't want that to change. I also like the fact that Gillian doesn't show off her body, but wears stylish and loose-fitting clothes. I'm proud to be her partner when she gets appreciative glances from other men, and after 10 years of marriage we're still very much in love. If Gillian feels uncomfortable with her body it's up to her to change it, but I love her just the way she is."

relationships



phillippi
by phillippi



phillippi
by abrie

Phillippi & Abrie dating: four-and-a-half years

Phillippi Bothma, 29
sales secretary

"I've always struggled with my weight. I get thin with dieting, but pick up kilos the next month. Luckily my body distributes

weight evenly so I don't end up with huge hips and no breasts. Abrie likes my breasts, but I wouldn't mind if they were bigger. My biggest problem is my tummy and non-existent waist. If I reach my target weight and still have a big tummy, I'll consider surgery.

"I have broad shoulders, good posture and muscular legs, but I'm too overweight for short skirts so I wear tight pants. I was sporty at school, but the muscle turned to fat which I'm trying to lose; I gym three times a week, but as I age it's harder to get into shape. I get insecure and depressed when I'm overweight. My boyfriend believes he's dating two women — one fat and depressed, one confident and thin, but he's understanding when I fall into an overweight depression. I'm staring the big 30 in the face and I'm determined to be in shape before then. I want to regain confidence in my body, and I know that I'll be a happier person when I do."

Abrie Vivier, 28
production supervisor

"Phillippi has great breasts and calves. She has good sporty legs, and although she never shows off her body, I like her best in her birthday suit or a tiny G-string! If that's not possible a mini and cleavage-revealing top will do. Like most men, I appreciate a woman with a good body, but a warm personality is more important. Overweight women can be attractive if they carry themselves well and emphasise their natural beauty. Phillippi becomes a different person when she's unhappy with her body and I try to understand her feelings and help her diet. I like Phillippi's body, but I realise that it's more important for her to like herself. Her warm personality and outer beauty become more radiant when she projects self-confidence."



lorraine
by lorraine



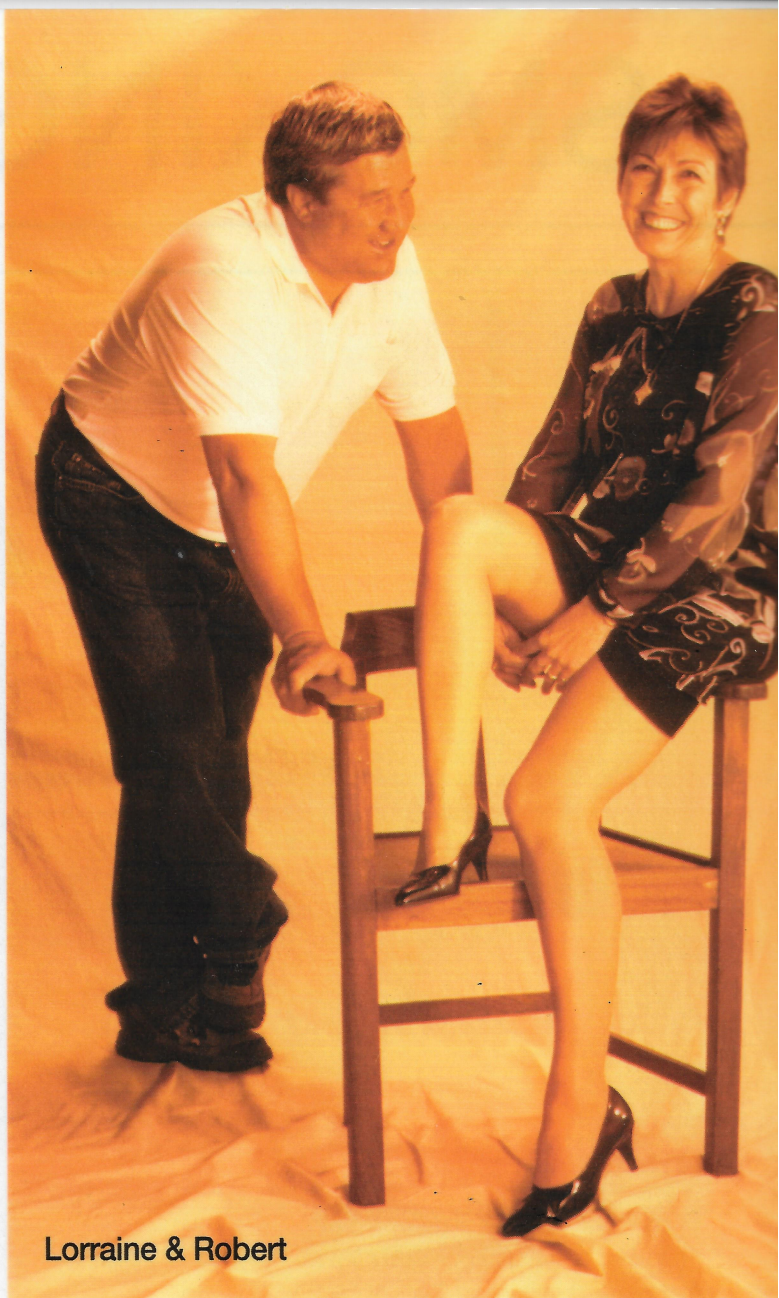
lorraine
by robert

Lorraine & Robert married: 19 years

Lorraine Lambert, 40
group cosmetics distributor

"I've always been slim and I've maintained my weight for six years; I watch what I eat, but never deprive myself of food. It's hard to maintain a strict diet

and exercise routine when you have two teenage daughters and work



Lorraine & Robert

from home, and with age your body inevitably changes, but I do my best with what I have. After my children were born I developed a big tummy — something I never had before — and I'm not as firm as I used to be, but at least I'm not flabby. I've always been self-conscious about my big breasts, and I do my best to hide them; the same goes for my hips and bottom. If I could change anything, I'd wish for a flat stomach, smaller bottom and smaller breasts. My best assets are my legs which I emphasise with tight pants and knee-length skirts. On fat days I wear loose T-shirts and jeans, but mostly I like fitted pants and skirts — I still wear sexy outfits."

Robert Lambert, 43
group general manager

"Lorraine and I were high school sweethearts and I still remember the halter-neck she wore on one of our first dates — it accentuated her breasts, which threw me completely! Lorraine has reason to be confident about her figure. She's never really put on weight and when she did, during her pregnancies, she soon lost it. She has great legs and looks best in a black dress a few inches above her knees. When we go out I like her to show her arms and a bit of cleavage. Most women are self-conscious about their breasts and bottoms, but I go for good breasts and bottoms. I also don't understand Lorraine's problem with her tummy; anorexic types don't appeal to me. A woman must have something to cuddle, and after 19 years of marriage I love Lorraine more each day."

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