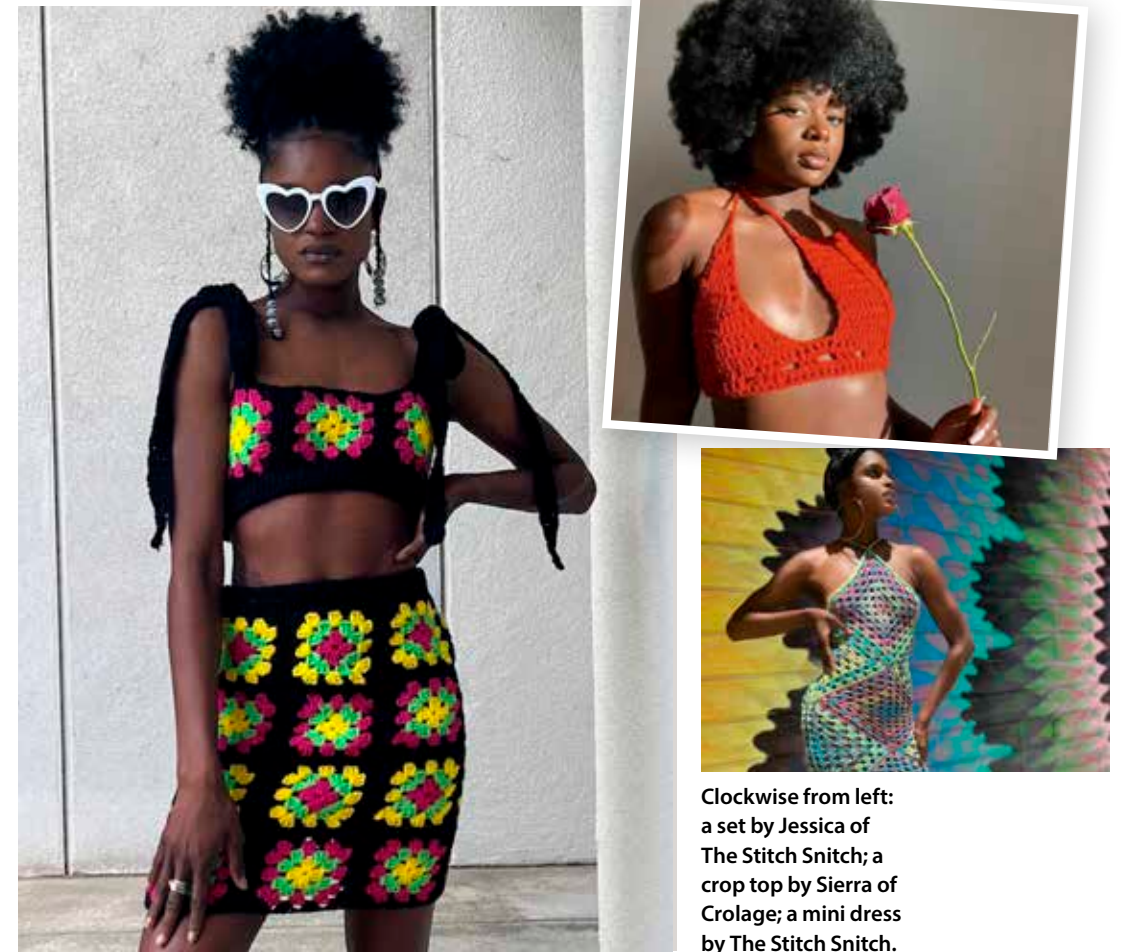




Figure-hugging fashion is taking the crochet world by storm. Handmade is hot!

Bodycon bonanza!

Handmade can be bold and youthful too! As the temperature rises, so does the popularity of form-fitting, on-trend crochet outfits. Let's meet the makers...



Clockwise from left: a set by Jessica of The Stitch Snitch; a crop top by Sierra of Crolage; a mini dress by The Stitch Snitch.

We saw a lot of strappy, figure-hugging crochet clothing hit the high street last year, and it looks like the trend is more than just a summer romance. With high-end fashion houses featuring alluring crochet on the catwalks, as well as a new wave of indie designers releasing more form-fitting designs, a new contemporary edge has arrived as an alternative to looser silhouettes. We chatted to four designers about why crochet is trending for another season in the sun...

YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL

"In a world of fast fashion, I think people really want to see sustainable art again," says Jessica, the designer behind The Stitch Snitch on Etsy, which sells patterns for flirty mini-skirts, form-fitting dresses and halter tops. "Many crocheters, like myself, learned to crochet during the pandemic, and we're injecting modern fashion trends into the age-old tradition, embracing a more contemporary approach to the craft."

To engage younger, more fashion-conscious audiences and keep the tradition of crochet alive, Jessica sees an exciting evolution taking place, with many becoming curious about what pairing figure-hugging silhouettes with beautiful crochet stitch combinations can create.

Handcrafted clothing has become notably more popular since the pandemic, a time when people embraced learning new skills. And with this vanguard of crocheters comes a fresh perspective, with form-fitting designs and unconventional patterns and colours emerging as new trends. "These designs serve as a valuable form of self-expression and individuality for younger crocheters – myself included," says Nicole of The Crocheting, whose designs include not only slinky dresses and twin sets but also saucy filet stitch cutouts, quirky appliqué and unexpected silhouettes. "I can't wait to see more of how each crocheter challenges the status quo," she says.

"My customers who are drawn to bolder, more form-fitting designs are typically younger women who are looking to design an exciting, eye-catching wardrobe," Nicole explains. "I often hear that my designs are a favourite because they're unlike anything else out there – and that speaks volumes to me." When thinking about her pieces, Nicole designs for the audience that is looking to break out from the crowd and embrace what makes them unique.

Sierra Ndagire's brand, Crolage, has gained huge popularity over the past few years, due to her innovative designs that are made to celebrate women's bodies. Full of custom

and ready-to-wear pieces that hug curves and stand out from the crowd, Crolage was thrown into the international spotlight when Love Island host Maya Jama wore a piece from Sierra's collection on the ITV dating show. "I think bodycon clothing had become quite repetitive and giving it texture is what crochet does," says Sierra. "With crochet you can [take] thread that isn't stretchy at all and give it whatever level of stretch you desire. That versatility makes it such a great medium, and I personally think there's no rules with it."

HOW TO DO IT

When it comes to the technical side of making a figure-hugging item from yarn, each designer follows their own process. "To get a bodycon-style crochet piece, the tighter the stitch, the snuggier it will be, so I like to opt for a slip stitch or single crochet stitch [a double crochet stitch in the UK]," explains Nicole. However, the designer has learned that sizing is critical to get the perfect fit without the garment becoming too tight or too loose, so the very first thing Nicole does is to create the perfect gauge – tension truly matters here!

Jessica recommends stitches that are easy to increase and decrease, as these techniques give bodycon styles their signature shape. "It's possible to translate boxy stitch combinations into bodycon crochet as well,



Clockwise from top left: crochet sleeves by Jade Ann of AnnsClst; a form-fitting crop top by Nicole of The Crocheting; openwork crochet makes this mini dress from The Crocheting even bolder; a crop top from AnnsClst

but this may require more crochet experience," says Jessica.

SPREADING POSITIVITY

The bodycon trend is also tied to the body positive trend, and sees designers creating beguiling outfits for every size and shape.

"Unlike conventional clothing sold in stores, crochet clothing can be made to your exact measurements," explains Jade Ann Gibbs, the designer behind AnnsClst, a site filled with ready-made and patterns for crochet crop tops and bikinis. "You can create items that flatter your body in the best ways."

Sierra agrees. When designing her bodycon crochet pieces, she says her main goal is to empower her buyer, no matter what shape or size, age or gender they are. "I want people to feel confident," she says.

And Jessica's crochet patterns cater to sizes XS-6XL, which means even people who don't fit into high-street clothes can enjoy making and wearing modern, close-fitting and stretchy styles in their size. "I've had feedback like, 'I never thought I could wear this' and 'I'm glad I stepped outside of my comfort zone' from crocheters who have historically taken a cosier approach to crochet," says Jessica.

"But the cool thing is, there are no rules to fashion. Wear what makes you feel good!"

ELEVATED STYLE

Once synonymous with festivals, beach cover-ups and the like, crochet has been adopted by high-end designers, including The Row and Marine Serre, elevating it from hobby craft to chic and modern. Crochet garments are now worn for every occasion, from beach trips to nights out. "These pieces naturally stand out because they're handmade, one-of-a-kind pieces, and when paired with bodycon silhouettes, that we normally see outside of crochet, the combination is truly stunning," says Jessica.

The designers' love for own their designs also gives them a better understanding of their customers' wants and needs. "When I wear one of my pieces, I feel confident because I'm designing what makes me feel most like 'me'," explains Nicole. "I encourage anyone who buys one of my crochet patterns to reach out if they want to customise their look, because part of what I'm looking to share with others is the ability to design your own clothes that make you feel powerful and most like yourself! For me, that's colourful,

interesting, and edgier designs – but it can be different for everyone."

The power of sustainability mixed with unique fashion means this rise in modern crochet is liberating the art form, giving power to both designers and consumers. "It's starting to slowly rise over fast fashion," says Sierra. "And crocheting is a simple technique to learn – everyone can have a go. There are so many creators on Instagram who have had such a big impact that it's so hard to ignore. They have shown that it can be fun, it can be sexy, and you can make anything with it."

And with all yarn crafts becoming more inclusive and accessible, anyone can enter the arena. "Also, with climate change still in full swing, I think many people are creating more and shopping less," says Jessica. "The possibilities with crochet are limitless; all you need is yarn, a hook and a pair of scissors to create almost anything you want. And why not create a piece that celebrates your figure and turns heads at the same time?"

Written by Colette Earley

Jessica: [@the.stitch.snitch](#)

Nicole: [@crocheting](#)

Sierra: [@crolage](#)

Ann: [@annsclst](#)