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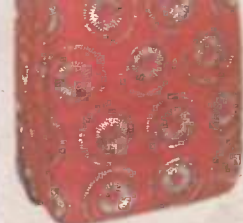
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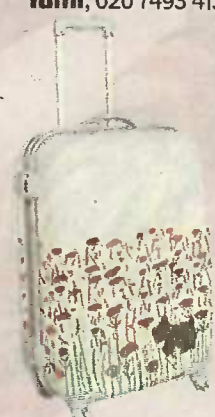
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girls, legs like this look sick not sexy

SHE'S considered one of the beauties of our time. Former model Lisa B has dark glossy hair, flawless skin, perfect features and ... hideously skinny legs! It would be easy to say this photograph beggars belief, but, sadly, it does not, as there are similar shots of so many women, including Teri Hatcher, Amy Winehouse, Kate Moss, Victoria Beckham and Sarah Jessica Parker.

The list goes on and on. They are rich, powerful, successful beyond most of our wildest dreams — yet still they feel the need to have legs that resemble an old chicken's wishbone after it has been sucked clean of flesh. The fake-tanned, bandy-legged look has become as essential a component of female fame as talent, or beauty, or youth.

These super-skinny legs are not attractive, or remotely sexy, but you can rest assured their owners always make sure their pins (and never has a word been so apt) are on display. It is as if they were saying: deny myself every day to obtain legs like these. They prove how com-

mitted I am to fame, to being a fashion victim. I have starved and exercised my way to the top — and I am bloody well going to stay here.'

Never mind the recommendations of last year's Model Health Inquiry, which urged the fashion and magazine industries to promote more realistic images of beauty, and found that 40 per cent of models have problems with food.

Never mind that two young Brazilian models died from anorexia-linked illnesses. Never mind that pro-anorexia websites — which display pictures of emaciated celebrities and models as 'thinspiration' — have mushroomed.

Never mind that French MPs are to back a new law to bar the media from promoting anorexia; judges may punish those responsible for a magazine photo of a model whose 'thinness altered her health'.

No, these women put their careers first. I concede that, perhaps, Kate Moss has never been on a diet in her life, and that Amy Winehouse's emaciation is 'fuelled' by addiction, not an iron will. But you do not get thighs like these unless something extreme and health-threatening is going on in your life.

Any committed anorexic will tell you that the most difficult pockets of fat to budge are those at the top of the inner thigh. So many young women I have talked to mention the elusive 'Bermuda triangle' — that space at the top of your thighs through which, if you are thin enough, there may be a great deal of daylight.

ONE 26-year-old anorexic told me that, aged eight, she looked at her chubby thighs and wondered why they were 'all joined together, which didn't seem right'. She spent the next ten years in

by Liz Jones

famous women believe that to be thin not only to be successful but acceptable. I am not convinced of the health of these self-deluded. When I had dinner with Teri Hatcher in LA not that long ago, she stayed up all night long that she was eating and eating cakes, while pinning a raw salad like a sparrow.

What does worry me is that these women are now seen to be the new norm. The sort of thighs we used to see on Marilyn Monroe and Celine Dion now seem hopelessly elephantine.

PREVIOUSLY, I had written on these pages that casting directors who dictate the 'look' of a designer catwalk are the problem. Today, I think, it is the turn of the fashion magazines to take some of the blame. One of the recommendations of the Model Health Inquiry was for magazine editors, fashion directors and casting directors to announce a moratorium on the excessive use of retouching.

In fact, very soon, members of the Association of UK Magazine Publishers (PPA) are to elect a new chair, Baroness Kiwana, a former member of the British Fashion Council, to discuss how magazines can be made more responsible and more profitable.

A possible 'kite mark' to ensure that the PPA is not just a moralising body has not been discussed yet. The PPA is currently