



photo: Rip Curl

SWIMWEAR SS16 TREND REPORT

We already know that the days when women adorned the beach in bikini contests while the men were out surfing are long gone, and the new swimwear lines for 2016 are unmistakably showing it off. While you definitely still can dress to kill by the beach, female water lovers now also have a sea of choices when it comes to garments letting them look great and enjoy themselves in an active way at the same time. Surf's up in the new one-pieces, surf leggings and sports bra tops!

Report by Anna Langer

SPORTS PERFORMANCE

"Women are looking for more in their swimsuit than just looking good," Kat Hogg, Owner and Founder of Hive Swimwear states. Lovesurf summarizes the major trend for swimwear in 2016: "multi-functional swimwear pieces" that cater for sports activity as much as for fashion. Many brands incorporate both with surf-ready "active bikinis" (O'Neill) and one-pieces, while others address them separately with surf dedicated capsule collections.

Like Billabong, who revisited their surf capsule line "with more efficient cuts", the new Fox Race Dry swim capsule, that "has technical fabric treated for increased drying time and the fits are made to function in and out of the water for whatever activity the consumer has in mind", Rhythm's Get Salty neoprene line, Brunotti's SUP yoga collection sporting tights, sport bras, neoprene suits, shorts and active bikinis, Rip Curl's neoprene bikini line The Bomb or the new "feminine, multifunctional, leggings and top" from Jobe.

O'Neill continue their Active bikini line "made for active swim and surf", Protest feature "bikinis with improved support and for example, crossed straps", Finisterre offer a "wetsuit inspired swim-top with ergonomic seaming and 'sea inspired' patterned print swim leggings,"

Hive test all their cuts "to ensure maximum functionality and optimum fit and comfort" and The Seea have a whole sea of bikinis and one-pieces with "thicker straps that offer more support, adjustable straps and ones that cross in the back", while Volcom "transition from fashion to sport" with crop tops. "Always keeping the fashion details at the forefront of the market in mind" is also important says Roxy's Global Head of Design Roxy Marie Lauga, using "technical fabrics like xtralife lycra, neoprene, 4-way stretch, technical mesh, etc" to incorporate sports performance, as does Rip Curl's Mirage bikini line with its "circular knit fabric with extra elasticity but also perfect shape."

FABRICS & MATERIALS

The main material here are new takes on neoprene like neoprene-nylon from Rhythm, lycra-neoprene from Brunotti or The Seea's C-skin, that "drapes like an ultra thin jersey-coated neoprene, but is three layers with monofilament yarns standing between upper and backing fabrics," explains founder Amanda Chinchelli.

Other fabric innovations enhancing sports performance are O'Neill's Tactel featuring Hyperdry, that "contains Extra Life lycra for better

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shape retention and is chlorine resistant, anti pilling, UV-protection,” states Senior Product Manager for O’Neill Europe Manon Pessel. Urban Beach even have sun protection as a standard feature for all their garments and The Seea also have UPF 30+ to 50+ in their swimwear, as do Finisterre, who pair their fabrics with 78% ECONYL®, “which is made from 100% post-consumer recycled polyamide, is two times more resistant to chlorine and suntan products than traditional swimwear fabrics and provides excellent UV protection,” explains Production Director Debbie Luffman. Quick drying is another important trait of sports focused pieces that is addressed by Brunotti, O’Neill, Chiemsee, Lovesurf and Fox, who use “nanotechnology to reduce water absorption” which “dramatically improves drying time,” says European Product Manager Laura Chu.

The more fashion-oriented pieces innovate through feel and texture, such as the shiny lurex lycra that resembles “mermaid skin” from Rip Curl, their waffle lycra that is “a revival of the old bikini fabric from the 70’s mixed with flat microfibre”, the rib-textured lycra from Rusty, “jersey fabrications to make you feel like you’re going bare” from Volcom, “all-over printed piques and yarn dyed stripes” from O’Neill, butter and recycled fabrics from Roxy, textured knits from Protest and jacquard textured fabrics from The Seea, Roxy, and Fox or mesh from Lovesurf and Fox. Heather effects carry over from streetwear and crotchet continues to be a big influence for O’Neill, Roxy, Billabong, and Protest, mixed and matched with other materials, dyed and printed.

THEMES

Whether tailored for sports performance or more on the fashion side, customers will be able to mix and match their bikinis from almost all brands. Finisterre offer “co-ordinating shapes and prints” as they know customers like “to mix things up a bit”, “representing the individual approach and spirited attitude of strong and independent women” Lightning Bolt’s Women’s Design Director Sandra Gonçalves agrees. Rip Curl “separates bikinis to play mix and match are the must have” in 2016 and have made lots of their bottoms reversible, says Valérie Wieser, Head of Design for Girls. Rusty and Chiemsee even let prints clash and Hive agree that the trend is “definitely no matching.” Volcom make sure that “colours blend effortlessly with one unified palette, making the options of mix n’ match endless,” explains Design Director Kristy Michael.

Flowers are still the most popular pattern, from tropical (O’Neill, Roxy, Protest, Jobe, Rusty, The Seea, Urban Beach, Hive, Rhythm), to paisley (O’Neill, Billabong, Roxy, Lovesurf), vintage and retro variations (Billabong, Lovesurf), abstract florals (Roxy) and combinations with animal prints (Chiemsee), to Brunotti’s mix with birds and deep-toned colours. And even further with prints of exotic plant leaves (Protest), a “feminine palm print with shiny gold highlights” in Billabong’s Designer’s Closet collection and “giant all-over photographic beach prints” from Urban Beach.

Hive and Rusty continue their “signature animal prints”, Rip Curl have an all-over snakeskin print and Urban Beach have “abstract animal prints.” Ethnic and geometric patterns are still strong as well, adorning pieces from Billabong, Urban Beach, RipCurl and Lovesurf, while The Seea, Hive and Volcom opt for stripes, “giving a fresh and modern aesthetic.”

There’s a strong influence from travelling visible in all themes, “vibrant, boho, hippy and gypsy flavours” (Protest) and “boho-chic with a subtle injection of unpretentious yet modern details” (Lightning Bolt) like “architectural strapping design” (Fox), “knotting detailing (O’Neill), “lace details and tassels” (Rip Curl), “macrame and zippers” (Volcom), mesh and crochet (Roxy) or lace (Protest) inserts, rendering

a “really modern look to sporty shapes” as Roxy explain. With their Metal Aloha theme, “encompassing heavy Metal music with the Hawaiian Aloha spirit” Rusty is opening up a “a fresh direction that is yet to be seen in the marketplace,” says Connie Dixon, Ladies Product Manager. Bench are heading into yet another direction over to the “dark side of summer,” taking inspiration from “Holiday Noir”, a celebration of the nocturnal atmosphere of the city, reflecting on Bench’s acknowledgement of their consumers’ “24 hour lives”, leading to “colour palettes and ideas inspired by the night.”

COLOURS

“Bright colours to celebrate summer” (Billabong) are still “very important” (Protest) and it looks like in 2016, orange is the new black with shades ranging from tangerine (O’Neill, Roxy), to orange (Hive, Protest), tropico orange (Rip Curl) and even a fluo number that Fox pairs with “fuchsia, giving the colour theory a truly unique feminine attitude.” Protest combine pink with mints, The Seea mix it “with neutrals and darker hues” and Hive with “warm blues and light purples”, Rhythm go for indigo and sangria and Bench compliment their “indigo denim feel” with neon highlights.

“Deep sea blues, frond greens, and soothing stuccos” (Roxy, Bench) are a big theme for swimwear as well, taking inspiration from the “deep sea” (Jobe), as are pastels (Brunotti, Billabong, Rusty) and faded shades like “burnt sienna, soy, bleached aqua, complimented by highlights of pops of colour” (Volcom), “vintage pastels of pink, turquoise, violet, blue and yellow” (Urban Beach), “sun faded prints” (Finisterre), “sugary shaded prints” (Lightning Bolt) and “nude trendy colours light peach and washed denim blue” (Rip Curl).

OUTLOOK

As females are becoming “more daring with the shapes they wear in swim,” brands drawing more inspiration from garments and translate that into swim says Rusty’s Connie Dixon and Roxy’s Marie Lauga agrees that “swimwear is becoming the root inspiration for vibrant print assortments and bright bold colour palettes.” With that, the pieces are not only “more and more modern and relevant, sometimes even cheeky” but also more functional, allowing customers to transition from “the ocean or pool onto the next activity, whether it’s yoga or a jog” (Lovesurf), while at the same time fulfilling all the fashion needs a girl could have, no matter if she’s a sun-bathing fashionista or full on tomboy playing in the waves and in the sand. If anything, this trend will only expand over the next couple of years.



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Mix & Match
- Sports Performance
- Neoprene Blends
- Details – Straps, Materials, Fabrics
- Prints - Florals, Animals, Geos, Clashing