



photos: Bench / Burton



WOMEN'S ACTIVEWEAR TREND REPORT

The “sexiest buzz word of 2015: Athleisure” (according to digiday.com), refers to the fusion of athletic and leisure clothing, and gives the rise of the yoga pants that we’ve mentioned in several trend reports on women’s wear a proper name. And deservedly so, as it doesn’t look like that trend is waning any time soon, if anything it is picking up speed and volume. Because even though some cynics might attribute it just to lazy people wanting to wear their comfy sweat pants all the time, it also reflects bigger overall developments in our society that is adopting a more healthy lifestyle and thus opts for more functionality and comfort in clothing. Trying to fit fitness routines into busy days, means it looks like “leggings are the new denim,” as Nike CEO Mark Parker stated at the Women’s Innovation summit in New York last Fall, and even Wikipedia has its own entry for the word. Rooted in active lifestyles, boardsports related brands have quickly taken this on and integrated activewear into their women’s collections, sometimes even in stand-alone capsules. **Anna Langer compiled a report on the category.**

Roxy “started to work on a specific performance range three years ago,” Marie Lauga, Global Head of Design fills us in and adds: “It’s quite new but our first client feedbacks are very positive which is always encouraging.” They focus on “three disciplines: running, yoga and water, which really corresponding to the brand’s spirit,” aiming to not only merge technical features with style but also to improve comfort during these activities. “Most of our products are in a polyester / spandex fabric with specific features” such as wicking, quick drying or compression “for better support in pants.” But, Marie adds, “fabrics also have to be fashionable,” as “fashion is an important side of the range and many pieces can be worn out of the sport practice.”

Bench also focus on practicality for their main target group of “city dwellers”, integrating “moisture wicking, windproof, water resistant and breathable fabrics along with reflective trim detail and new pack away product categories,” says Chief Product Officer Sebastian Streck. The first pants in this style that were offered by Bench date back to 2011 but were “only available in the North American

market, where the trend started much earlier,” Sebastian informs us. The first collection available in Europe was Winter 2014 and has expanded considerably since then. The inspiration for next year’s range is “celebrating the nocturnal party atmosphere of the city” with a colour palette of “rich dark tones and neon brights”, followed by softer shades “as dawn arrives in the city, perfect to inspire an early morning fitness call - whether running through parks or swimming in outdoor pools.”

CLWR will be launching their first designated activewear collection in Spring Summer 2016, although International Brand Manager Neil Slinger states that the “outdoor aspect has always been a strong aspect of the CLWR range in Spring,” taking their Winter expertise over into the Summer line. Hence CLWR present their range under the tagline “every day outdoor”, not “restricting it to running wear, or yoga clothing, but rather functional clothing for outdoor lifestyles for creative individuals. Be it trail running in the forest, cycling to work, checking the surf on the rough Northern Europe coastlines

or even just keeping dry at a music festival,” Neil explains. All with their signature, super stylish Scandi design feel, with proven cuts and twists to their successful winter patterns such as a Pink Leo or Swedish Camouflage. Fabrics are also crossed over from the CLWR Winter outerwear, “including highly waterproof 20k membrane fabrics called Pintech, or the fast drying Polyester Swiftdry which we incorporate in our fleeces, running shorts and training tees for example, mixed with mesh breathing panels.”

Breathability is key for all activewear and is one of the main features of the SUPPLEX fabric that Billabong is using in their collection. “This fabric doesn’t crease, it is highly resistant and still leaves you all the freedom of movement needed to train. Whatever your body shape or attitude to working out, these high performance fabrics will only quit when you do,” says Virginie Medel, Billabong Design & Product Developer. Inspired by tropical designs, the collection “truly embodies our identity, the beach spirit,” Virginie continues. With “fresh colours, turquoise and lemon yellow buttons, bright, large tropical flowers and broad stripes,” it ties in nicely with their surf capsule collection, similar to the brand’s first foray into the fitness realms in Fall 14. Fulfilling their customers’ elusive dreams of living life by the sea: “whether you are living in a city or by the coast, this line will whisk you close to the ocean.”

With a “play on modern nautical”, Finisterre also draw inspiration from the home of their main passion - surfing, albeit in a less “high shine and traditional sport looks” with “matt textured blends” as Product Director Debbie Luffman explains. Incorporating organic cotton,

prints that can be worn for years to come” plays into minimizing waste and consumption on yet another level, giving crossover functionality another edge on its own.

Interpreting functionality in their very own way as well, Burton’s activewear line is “built around the idea of fitting everything you need for a weekend trip into a single backpack”, focusing on three key themes: packability, lightweight and durability. “We’ve focused on creating a juxtaposition of technical fabric with lifestyle silhouettes to create more opportunity for women to wear their favourite pieces everywhere, everyday,” says Senior Global PLM of Softgoods Stephanie Renaud, mentioning the reversible Plasma Legging as a prime example with “a printed and a solid side, so it’s wearable from the street to the gym or the hiking trail and back again.” Adding function beyond that of a regular garment, the packable styles “fold neatly into one of their own pockets to become a nice little bundle.”

Rooted in winter sports as well, Eivy have featured “multifunctional base layers” since 2009 and are now expanding their approach. “Our customers had been using our base layers for working out for a long time,” says founder and designer Anna Vister, “and we wanted to provide them the same level of functionality in a lighter fabric for summer/indoor activities.” Translating their “street and hip-hop inspired design language” to the summer season, means blending “fabrics that perform when working out, providing comfort and breathability but with a streetwear look and feel” with “marble and floral prints, paired with colour blocking, cut and sew wedges and bold logos.”

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CLWR International Brand Manager Neil Slinger

merino wool, tencel, modal as well as recycled nylon and polyester derived from post industrial nylon and PET, including fishing nets and drinking bottles, “the design of our activewear is very much informed and led by the fabric selection and by performance and quality,” she continues. “We don’t believe in over-teching and over designing.”

Despite their origins in water sports ION’s activewear for 2016 is focused on female mountain bikers, catering to their specific needs in terms of durability, function and lightweight, while at the same time maintaining a “casual, yet sporty look that also works without a bike,” explains International Marketing Manager ION Bike Andi Lipp. Fabrics include Drirelease®, Coolmax®, Polyester and Polyamid, as well as “elastic softshell materials for the bike shorts and a combination of Polyester and Cotton for the shirts”, mostly in “subtle colours with vivid accents.”

Outdoor veterans Patagonia “have been making activewear for many years” without referring to it as a separate segment. “We see it as the expansion of product created for activities into every day living,” elaborates Helena Barbour, Senior Director for Sportswear. With strong brand ethics when it comes to sustainable production and environmentally friendly products, Patagonia wants “women to be able to combine and use these pieces whether they are into yoga or climbing” but, most importantly, they want “them to have a choice, a choice towards pro environmental and social responsibility.” This is implemented with “fabric technologies that meet functional needs and are comfortable: quick dry, stretch, easy care, UPF, odour control, lightweight and versatile” and are produced in a “socially and environmentally responsible way”, including Fair Trade, organic cotton, Bluesign, and recycled materials. Striving to “find colours and

“Mons Royale has always been about versatility. From the very start we’ve tried to design garments that function both on the mountain and off it” says Mons Royale founder Hamish Acland and Creative Director Hannah Aubrey adds: “Versatility is our key theme, for example our Cap Tee has a drop-tail, which is perfect for mountain biking and also looks great with a pair of athletic leggings.” Made from lightweight 170g merino wool, that “wicks, breathes and dries quickly” and is “warm when it’s cool and cool when it’s hot”, their range “is cut to allow for movement – for example most garments are slightly longer in the body so you can wear them to ride in.” Colours are mostly primary, contrasted with charcoal mesh panels where increased breathability is needed. Prints are “themed from our home town of Wanaka, New Zealand including ‘from the bottom of the world’ which obviously goes well with underwear.” says Hannah.

Whether all this active dressing will actually lead to more active consumers is still actively in the making though... 📈

HIGHLIGHTS

- Practical comfort
- Tech fabrics
- Fashionable cuts
- Reflective details
- Colourful prints

“Fashion is an important side of the range and many pieces can be worn out of the sport practice.” Marie Lauga, Global Head of Design at Roxy