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Pic: Rip Curl



WOMEN'S SWIMWEAR 2015 TREND REPORT

In this age of globalization, boundaries seem to grow out of fashion and while Women's Swimwear is becoming more fashionable every season, it also started to venture out of the water and onto the streets! **Report by Anna Langer.**

Swimwear is "blooming" (Afends) these days, not just in the literary sense. Although floral prints are going to be huge again next summer, with the likes of Volcom, Rip Curl, Breakburn, Maui and Sons, Pukas, Protest, Oxbow, Animal, and Roxy varying between mille fleur, all over, oriental styles (Animal) and oversized versions (Roxy). There's also a big nod to everything tropical from Roxy, Billabong, Breakburn, Maui and Sons, Urban Beach and Protest, while ethnic inspired Ikat, tribal and geometric prints from Volcom, Rip Curl, Billabong, Oxbow, Nikita and Animal, as well as some animal numbers by Volcom and Urban Beach, cater for all tastes.

Classic stripes are found in the ranges from Billabong (in black and white), Pukas, O'Neill, Protest, and Maui and Sons, who also play with layering and combining different prints together. Nikita have created a whole new kaleidoscopic look that resembles marble and Billabong are mixing up their colour palette with a bit of tie-dyeing. Despite this variety, Roxy, Nikita, Urban Beach and Volcom have put special efforts into creating cohesive print and colour stories between their apparel or sportswear and swim collections, facilitating marketing with easy-on-the-eye presentations and a blend from both categories.

FROM THE BEACH TO THE STREET

Taking swimwear out of the water and into the streets seems to be a major theme in 2015, that was initiated with the rise of surf leggings last year. "[We're] pulling swim fabrications into more traditionally technical silhouettes such as rash guards and surf pants to create a fresh approach that translates from the sand to the street. Swimwear is not just for the beach anymore. Women are working out in it, wearing it as their undergarments and mixing with their daily wardrobe, truly making this category all about lifestyle," says Volcom Women's Design Director Kristy Michaels and she's backed up by Billabong, who state that their "new top shapes blur the lines between swim and sportswear" or Rip Curl, who have noticed that "the bikini is now really a fashion piece in all ranges, this category is growing in

all kinds of markets: mass/mainstream, sports, high fashion and even couture". Inspired by the "beach babe lifestyle", who eats, sleeps and breathes in her bikini, a lot of styles are now purposely designed to be worn off the beach and in other, more urban surroundings. "We love our bikini tops layered under summer dresses!" say the ladies at Roxy, giving their customers a double choice to do so with some models that are reversible and sport two prints and colourways at once.

Hence there is a flood of new shapes, details and colours addressing this. While most brands continue with typical, bright summer shades including all colours of the sunset, the jungle and the ocean (including everyone from Afends and Animal, to Billabong, Brunotti, Fox, Maui and Sons, Nikita, O'Neill, Oxbow, Protest, Rip Curl, Roxy, and Volcom), Rip Curl and Maui and Sons mix it up with pastels, Pukas add a "pale yellow", RVCA play with watercolour shades and Rip Curl and Animal with bleached colours that Maui and Sons accent with neon. Animal and Breakburn add some styles in "crisp white" too, while Nikita introduce earthy tones in their marble prints and RVCA declare themselves as the "dark side of swim wear," with lots of black, dark olive and purple on "very sexy and feminine" silhouettes.

IT'S ALL IN THE DETAILS

Sexy and feminine is also the key word for the myriad of details that swimwear is adorned with these days. From embroidery and fringes (Rip Curl), exchangeable straps (Protest) to laser cut-outs (Maui and Sons) and perforated lycra (Pukas) to strappy details, that create sexy tan lines. Bec Nolan from Afends thinks that "girls are getting a lot braver and taking more risks when it comes to racy cuts - and strappy details are being higher regarded than minimal tan lines."

This is catered for by a lot of new shapes emphasizing the feminine curves, with a "modern yet sexy" spin (Volcom) and "fashionable, yet functional" looks (Nikita) with a "fashion twist" (Roxy). For Rip Curl, the "coming back of the push-up, underwire moulded cup" is the

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biggest trend of the summer, to which Urban Beach agree. Breakburn works with moulded cups as well, and Volcom have completely “modernized the interior details and created new cups”. The bandeau style is keeping its momentum from last year too, with various models from RVCA, Roxy, Rip Curl, Oxbow, Urban Beach, and Protest.

Bottom cuts are seeing a more sexy approach as well, with “tiny” and “cheeky” Brazilian sizes (Roxy, Billabong, and Rip Curl), high leg cuts (Pukas) and some stylish high-waisted pants from Roxy. The one piece is also making a strong comeback this year, with sexy cut-outs (Volcom, RVCA, Billabong, Urban Beach) and curve hugging features, but also in a sporty approach with neoprene fabrics and zip details, for example from Fox: “We introduced a one-piece inspired by the wetsuit. This piece has an innovative silhouette for active watersports, providing women with a feminine shape that actually accentuates the curves, compared to other one-piece suits that flatten them.”

FABRIC FOLLOWS FUNCTION

With the various sports most of the brands are rooted in, there is obviously still a very strong lean towards functional solutions complementing the more feminine, fashionable trend. Next to the already mentioned surf leggings, there are a lot of crop tops (RVCA, Billabong), a zipped through rash vest from Animal and of course rash guards in all colours and styles.

Many of these styles also incorporate modern and not so traditional materials, but also traditional looks play with new fabrics, making texture another key trend next summer. For Roxy, it’s even the trend of the year (“it’s all about texture, texture, texture!”) that sees completely new additions like Jacquard (Roxy), PU (Afends) or mesh (Afends and Volcom) next to the aforementioned neoprene (at Afends, Rip Curl, Billabong, Fox, Roxy). Crotchet and macramé numbers have been accompanying the bohemian style for a while now and are still growing strong in the collections from Volcom, Billabong, Protest, or are even topped off with some lace details, like Rip Curl and Billabong show.

On the technical side, the fabrics used for swim wear are getting a lot lighter, state Brunotti and O’Neill. “Our swimwear range features Hyperdry. It is the new standard. Your bikini dries faster than a regular bikini, and allows you to go for a swim just before leaving,” says Manon Pessel, Senior Product Manager for Women Lifestyle & Beach at O’Neill. Animal have introduced a UPF of 40+ to their rash guards, as well as a “boardshort connector”, while Urban Beach have “UV protection in all swim wear”.

Eco-friendly, recycled fabrics are appearing more and more as well, although brands are taking things slow here, as the functionality of their garments is still top priority and not to be compromised. Rip Curl “tested recycled lycra on the collaborative bikini line with Hawaiian artist Heather Brown” but experienced difficulties due to the expensive fabric, which left customers unable to understand the price difference to other, regularly manufactured bikinis. Roxy is using a “recycled REPREEVE poly fabric” for their boardshorts and Volcom are exploring more eco-friendly materials too. The environmental consciousness is growing with most brands in general. Afends switched their packaging to biodegradable cornstarch bags and Pukas are minimizing their swimwear’s ecological footprint through local production and manufacturing.

When it comes to price points, nothing has changed much, with the majority of pieces ranging between approximately 20 to 40 euros for single pieces and up to 70 or 80 euros for sets and one pieces. Besides Oxbow, who have ventured back to selling sets only, all brands have increased their offers of separately available pieces, to give the customer more choices to mix and match their favourites according to their own terms and styles.

OUTLOOK

The general trend for mixing and matching everything to the hearts’ content has reached the previously very specifically defined market of swimwear. This gives all water loving women and girls the chance to unlimitedly show off and express their personalities, whether that is the laid back bohemian beach babe, the active athlete or a sexy Bond Girl type. “The swimwear market is a lot more exciting now than it has been in the last 10 years, with lots of new brands popping up and people being really innovative. I think it’s amazing,” says Afend’s Bec Nolan and Maui and Sons agree that “it’s really great to see in the past few seasons how women’s swimwear has become more and more of a fashion statement.” Let’s just hope this fashion stays in fashion for the coming years!

AT A GLANCE

- Street Style: Taking Swimwear from the Beach to the City
- Details: Fringes, Crotchet, Cut-Outs
- Tan Lines are the new seamless!
- Neoprene: Bikinis, One-Pieces, Suits

SWIMWEAR RIDER’S FANBASE RANKING MAY 2014, GLOBAL SOCIAL NETWORKS Source: Rideometer.

Rank	Name	Sponsor	Total Followers	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter
1	Alana Blanchard	Rip Curl	2,074,067	975,817	950,792	147,458
2	Bethany Hamilton	Rip Curl	1,965,244	1,129,899	634,906	200,439
3	Anastasia Ashley	Airwalk	1,026,365	432,792	491,454	102,119
4	Coco Ho	Volcom	656,278	399,193	200,625	56,460
5	Sally Fitzgibbons	Roxy	596,011	307,787	191,629	96,595

