



SWIMMING IN STYLE

Find the newest looks in swimwear at Laguna Beach's local boutiques.

By Kelsi Maree Borland | Photos by Jody Tiongco

IN LAGUNA BEACH, SOME LOCALS CONSIDER their swimsuit to be part of their year-round wardrobe. As long as the sun is out, people are down by the ocean in their favorite swimwear. When you live near the beach, stylish swimsuits are essential—and when you live in Laguna Beach, they are not hard to find.



▶ L SPACE SLINKY FRINGE BIKINI AVAILABLE AT LAGUNA SURF & SPORT; MODEL: ELSA STEPHEN



THALIA SURF SHOP ▲

BOTTOMS UP

With many new looks peeking over the horizon, this will be an exciting year for swimwear. It may be surprising, but men will actually see the biggest change in board short styles this year. “Board shorts are starting to consistently become a lot shorter,” says Corey Brindley, the manager and buyer at Thalia Surf Shop. “That’s what we specialize in carrying here, and we have seen it across the board from all different companies; they are starting to come out with shorter shorts than in the past.” Thalia Surf Shop will carry a 15-inch board short this year, a noticeable departure from the standard 22-inch board short of years past. “It is going to be the full ’70s style,” Corey says. Of course, the shop carries longer board shorts as well,

but maintains the retro, ’70s vibe throughout.

Just down the street, Jason Watson, the manager and buyer at Laguna Surf and Sport, has also noticed the growing variety in board short styles. “The trend I am seeing a lot of younger kids wearing is somewhere between a 19- and a 20-inch board short,” Jason says. Although the shop carries the new, shorter styles, they strive to maintain a wide variety of lengths.

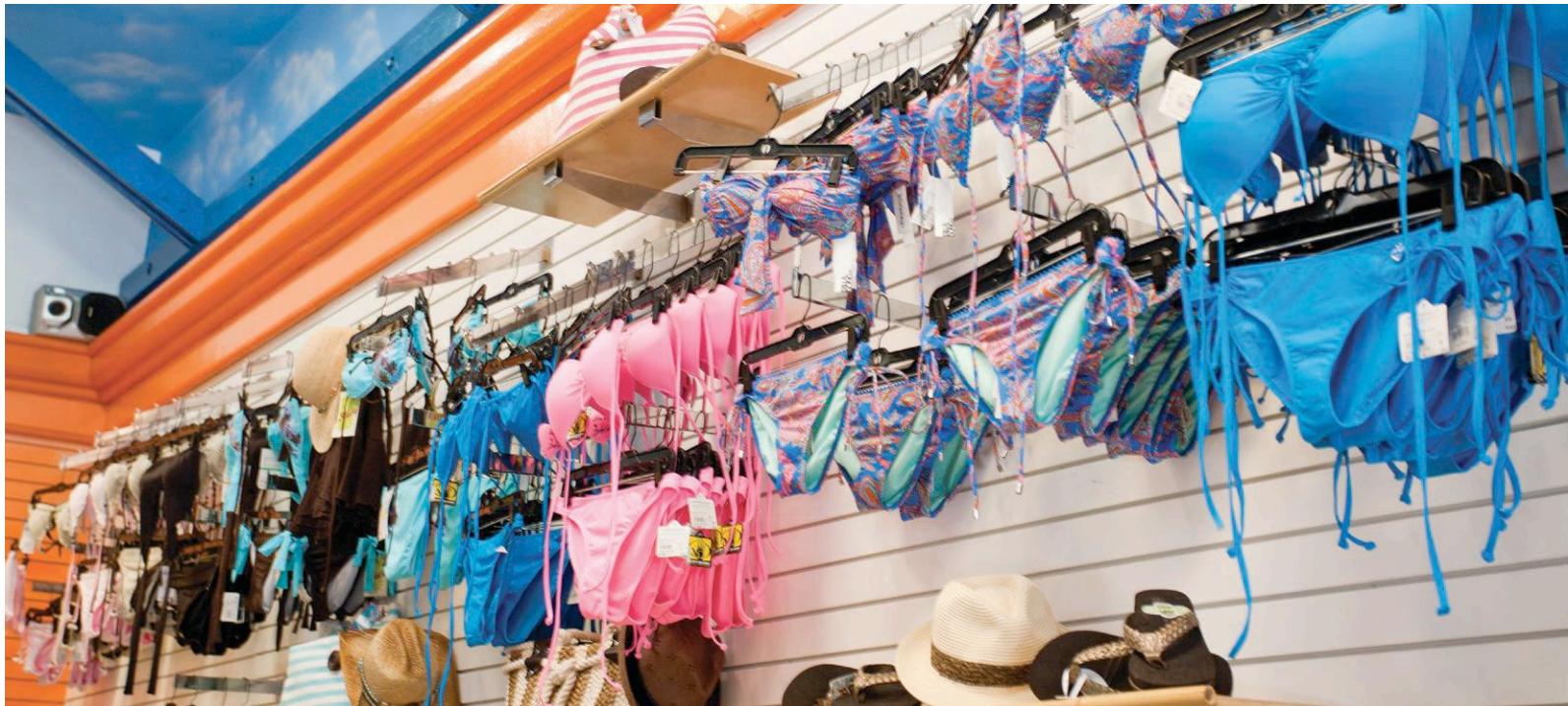
Women will see new swim styles as well—the most popular trend is the scrunch bottom, also known as the scrunch bum or butterfly bottom, meaning there is an elastic band going up the back. Both Debbie Carrette, the store manager of Diane’s Beachwear, and Deborah King, the owner of Laguna Beachwear, agree that this will be the “it style” this summer. “You

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▲ BRIGHTLY COLORED SWIMSUITS AT DIANE'S BEACHWEAR



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style in any cut," Deborah says. "For our store, it is the sexier the better, so we sell the style mostly in a Brazilian cut." Other varieties include the standard wide band or the side-tie band.

BACK ON TOP

Traditional string tops, halter-tops and bandeaus pave the way as swim top options for women this season. Like the guys at Thalia Surf Shop mentioned, the '70s style is coming back strong, and women are no exception. Expect to see a lot of bandeau tops and fringe tops this summer. "I have a bandeau top with fringe by L Space that is amazing, and it is just blowing out of here," Debbie of Diane's Beachwear says.

When looking for the ideal swim top, support and comfort can be obstacles. However, Deborah sees a trend in structured tops for women. "More and more women have been asking for support, so designers are playing around with different styles—not so much wanting to go all the way to an under wire, but to have the younger look of a bandeau or a triangle, just with a lot more structure," she comments.

FRESH FABRICS

A new style pleases the eye, but designers also gratify the tactile sense with innovative fabrics. For men, high perfor-

mance stretch seems to be the first choice. "The stretch fabrications are what everyone is doing so that is definitely going to be big," says Jason from Laguna Surf and Sport. Corey agrees that more companies are trending toward stretch materials, but adds that there is still variety available. "The stuff that we carry is mainly a lot thicker materials, like heavy cotton, so it can be worn in the water or just walking around," he explains.

Fabric play in swimwear is also fueled by the green trend. L Space, carried by Diane's Beachwear, has a new eco line of fabrics that utilizes recycled nylon and lowers carbon dioxide greenhouse gases during production. "That's really a cool thing—just being aware of the environment and being able to help out while making clothing," Debbie says.

A COLORFUL VARIATION

Men have ample selection when it comes to colors and patterns, with shops carrying everything from bright and bold colors to a washed out, retro look. "We have seen a lot of earth tones and vintage looking fabrics, like old Hawaiian prints," says Corey from Thalia Surf Shop, but walk over to Laguna Surf and Sport, and Jason will have plenty of bright colors in stock. "It's summertime, so we carry a lot of reds, yellows and blues—black is always one of the best sellers, too," Jason says.

At the women's shops, animal prints are a popular trend this season. At Laguna Beachwear, Deborah likes a brighter palette of blues, purples and greens, and sees designers pairing those colors with a peacock print, a fun new look at animal prints. **LBM**

WHERE TO SHOP

Find the latest beachwear at the following stores:

COSTA AZUL

689 S. Coast Hwy.; 949-497-1423;
costaazul.net

DIANE'S BEACHWEAR

379 S. Coast Hwy.; 949-376-9194;
dianesbeachwear.com

HOBIE SPORTS

294 Forest Ave.; 949-497-3304;
hobie.com

LAGUNA SURF AND SPORT

1088 S. Coast Hwy.; 949-497-7000;
surfandsport.com

LAGUNA BEACHWEAR

490-1 S. Coast Hwy.;
949-494-5737

MERRILEE'S SWIMWEAR

790 S. Coast Hwy.; 949-497-6743;
merrileeswimwear.com

QUIKSILVER

255 Forest Ave.; 949-376-0245;
quiksilver.com

SECOND REEF

1020 S. Coast Hwy.; 949-497-6742

THALIA SURF SHOP

915 S. Coast Hwy.; 949-497-3292;
thaliasurf.com

TOES ON THE NOSE

276 S. Coast Hwy.; 949-494-4988;
toesonthenose.com