

2015 WATERWEAR

Diane's Beachwear

Back to the Future

SWIM STYLE
Summer's
Key Trends

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Beach

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NEW RESOURCES
Together California
Corona



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fashion

12 Street Scene: Miami Beach

Art meets sun-drenched style in Miami's South Beach in December during the annual Art Basel celebration of modern and contemporary art.

Photography by Tim Regas

trends

14 Swim Style-Summer's Key Trends

Swim designers fill us in on the chic inspiration for their Summer collections.

By N. Jayne Seward

features

18 Back to the Future

Swimwear guru Diane Biggs revamps the Manhattan Beach bathing suit store that started it all. By Deborah Belgum



departments

10 New Resources

Together California Corona

22 Swim Shorts

26 Textile Trends Soft Focus Tropical Garden

On the cover: Miami Beach street scene photo by Tim Regas

Apparel News waterwear

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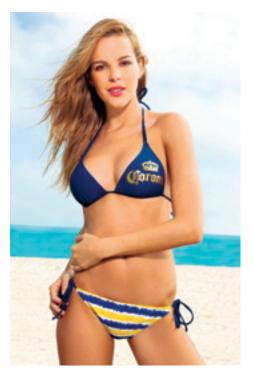
Corona It's a Swimsuit

Make no mistake, Corona Extra is a popular beer.

Constellation Brands Beer Division, the brewer, marketer and supplier of Corona Extra, claims it's the No. 1 imported beer in the United States. Punk band The Minutemen wrote a song about the beer, which was later used as the theme song for the popular MTV show "Jackass," which aired from 2000 to 2002. Constellation is upping the ante for marketing the popular beer, and its next step will be rolling out a women's swimwear line bearing the Corona logo.

It will be introduced Jan. 8-10 at Surf Expo in Orlando, Fla., said Adam Frija, director of licensing for Ingear Fashions Inc., the Aventura, Fla.based swimwear company that also

holds licenses to make swimwear for Hello Kitty, Paul Frank, DC Comics and Coca-Cola.



The Corona line will be a full collection of bikinis, monokinis, rash guards, boy shorts and coverups bearing more than five core groups based on different looks. The first delivery features blue and gold colors on the bottles of most Coronas. The swimwear tops will bear the Corona logo. The back of the bikini will bear the Corona crown.

Other groups in the collection will feature pink and lime colors and even plaid designs featuring the Corona logo. Different bodies feature traditional triangle tops along with twist bandeaux and push-up halters. There are also boy shorts, banded string bottoms, bottoms with side ties and shirred-side hipster bottoms. The swimwear will wholesale for \$14 to

\$18 for swim pieces and coverups. For more information, contact info@ingear.com or call (305) 830-2900.—Andrew Asch

Together California

Eco and Art Driven

There's another world, hidden in plain sight, said Lily Chehrazi and Benedict Barrett, owners and designers of the fashion brand Together California.

It's the hyper-real world, revealed by Barrett's photography. Barrett's trips take him to such places as national parks in Hawaii and botanical gardens in San Francisco, where he takes photos of unique patterns found in plants and fauna and brings out the beauty of these patterns. "He's taking what is in nature and amplifying it," Chehrazi said.

The views of this world are placed onto prints, which become the dresses, leggings, tops and swimwear of the Together California label.

friendly fabric that is 84 percent polyester fibers recycled from plastic bottles and 16 percent spandex. "It feels a little bit silkier," Chehrazi said of the fabric. "It's a flexible four-way

The swimwear is cut out of an eco-

stretch. It feels like a lightweight neoprene."

Using this material, the company manufactures in Los Angeles several bodies for the collection's swimwear line. There's a revealing monokini in the collection. There's also a one-piece, which gives more coverage. There's also the Belinda, a two-piece with a bandeau top and a high-waisted bottom. The floral snakeskin bandeau bikini features a lower-cut bottom with a little ruching in the back.

> Wholesale price points are \$39 to \$68 for the suits. For more information, contact sales@ togethercalifornia.com.







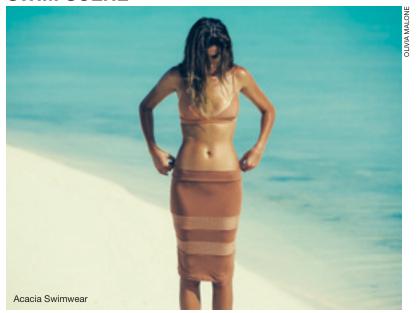
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SWIM SCENE





From weekend getaways to exotic island holidays, designers have plenty of chic inspiration for Summer. Think '70s glam, sport luxe and boudoir-inspired bikinis as key looks for the season. As beach-to-street dressing becomes ever popular, designers are creating versatile options that make it easy to chill on the beach, lounge poolside and be dressed for cocktail hour. Here is a look at key trends of the season. —N. Jayne Seward





BEACH TO STREET

Women are ready to be dressed for the beach—and designers are giving them plenty of options. "Versatility is critical," said L*Space founder Monica Wise, who has created a line of tunics and coverups that transition effortlessly from the

beach to the street. "Women can wear them over a swimsuit and easily throw on a pair of jeans and it still makes sense," she said. Many brands—including Mikoh, Kushcush, Lee + Lani and Acacia Swimwear—have expanded their coverup

collections this season. Ponchos, kimo-

nos, rompers, maxi dresses, T-shirts, and matching swimwear and coverups are popular items. For Chio di Stefania D, coverups are becoming more and more important as fashion pieces, and the Canadian swim line's glamorous styles can be worn from day to night. Beach Riot is all about the beach-to-street look, said designer Nicole Hanriot. "Bikinis that are versatile as crop tops or body suits that you can mix and match with your outfits is a trend we feel will become a staple in any

girl's wardrobe," she said.





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Solid & Striped









THAT '70s SHOW

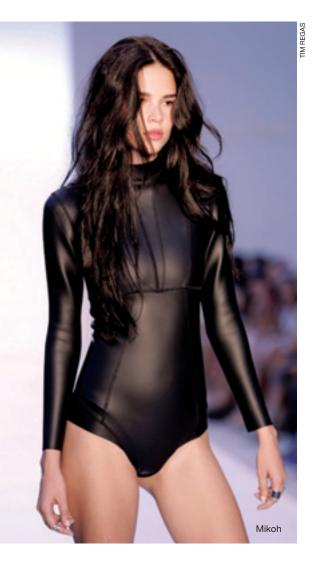
Studio 54 glam and Marrakech chic circa the '70s are back-with a vengeance. "We are seeing a return to 1970s shapes, high-cut thighs, low backs and plunging V-neck lines," said Suboo founder Sue Di Chio. "Lurex and shimmer fabrics, ruching and side ties will complete the overall '70s vibe." Designer Red Carter also found inspiration in the '70s era when designing his "Boogie Nights"-inspired group. "I looked through vintage photographs from the Studio 54 era, the 1970s early disco days and dancing nights. These pieces bring the club to the beach!" he said. An earthy palette, Moroccan prints, embroidered textiles, crochet trims, beading, sequins, fringe and au-naturel boho-chic style are de rigueur this season. Frankie's Bikinis designer Francesca Aiello said boho chic is her inspiration for Summer '15. Key trends include Brazilian-cut bottoms, detailed crochet and macramé bikinis, and halter tops. The collection's "Poppy" one-piece with floral crochet detail has been a hit with buyers. "Girls will be able to wear the 'Poppy' from the beach to the music festivals all summer long," Aiello said.

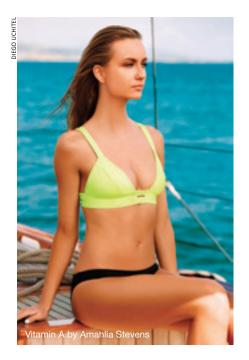






SWIM SCENE





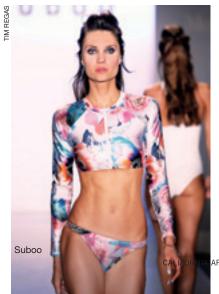


SPORTS CHIC

Sporty inspiration from athletic wear to surfer chic continues to influence the swim market. Mesh fabrics, neoprene, high-neck tanks, color blocking and rash guards are key trends for Summer. "There's been a lot of influence from activewear in the swim market," said designer Red Carter. "Designers are really paying attention to detail, fabric quality, underwire support and overall construction of the swimsuit," he added. Mikoh co-founders Oleema and Kalani Miller said retailers are gravitating toward their sporty cuts as well as their latest signature pieces from the brand's black neoprene Mikoh X Surf collection. Other brands, including Suboo, were also inspired by the active lifestyle this season. "We've brought this idea forward by softening [it] with unexpected tropical and floral prints, making



the collection highly fashionable and fun," said Suboo founder Sue Di Chio. The halter neck in a two-piece or one-piece is the newest and strongest shape, she said, whether it's on crochet or sport-luxe neoprene. Vitamin A designer Amahlia Stevens created a vintage take on the trend. "I was inspired by the idea of sporty chic—from the crisp vintage glamour of tennis and sailing to the Slim Aarons' photos of the jet set on holiday," she said.











LOUNGE ACT

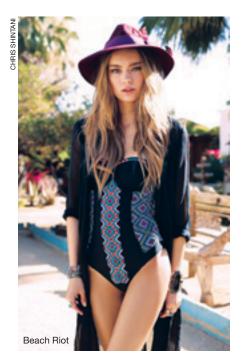
From underwire tops to cheeky bottoms, lingerie-inspired swimwear is one of the most fashion-forward looks of the season. Think sexy back details, bralette-style tops, floral fabrics and mesh paneling. "We are focusing on the trend inner-wear as outerwear—we see a big crossover lately between beach coverups, loungewear and sportswear," said Solid & Striped designer Morgan Curtis. "A lot of our pieces can be worn to the beach, around the house, and out and about depending on how you style it," Curtis explained. Bustiers and bralette tops are the newest trend going forward, according to Vitamin A designer Amahlia Stevens. "[They are] perfect pieces for the

beach and equally chic peeking out from beneath a low-cut tank, layered under sheer styles or on their own as a crop top," the designer said. This season Lee + Lani's structured bustier pieces and cap-sleeve mesh bodysuits have been popular with buyers. Acacia Swimwear has introduced a basics lingerie line that can convert from undergarments to swimwear. Designer Naomi Newirth

said the collection's signature cheeky bottoms are difficult to keep in stock. Less is definitely more when it comes to beach chic for Summer.











Diane Biggs could be considered the long-reigning "Queen of the Bikinis."

After 50 years in the swimwear business, she's seen it all. When she started selling swimsuits in the 1960s, bikinis that rode just below the belly button were considered scandalous. Acrylic was considered an innovative fabric touted for not fading in the sun. And if you needed a size-10 bottom and a size-8 top, you were out of luck. Separates were not sold separately.

Biggs could write a book about the evolution of swimwear, witnessing the transformation in everything from fit and fabric to fashion and form. "We live, breathe and eat swimwear here," Biggs said, sitting inside her corporate office, located in an industrial park in Torrance, Calif. Her white Maltese, named Leilani, sits on a pink cushion near her feet.

When Biggs launched her first store in Santa Monica, Calif., she did custom suits that were made in the United States. She now

BEACH BOUND: The Manhattan Beach Pier (above) is just steps away from Mickie's Beach, recently remodeled after opening 50 years ago as Mickie's Swim Shop

TEEN CROWD: A few doors up from Mickie's Beach is Diane's Beach Fever, a store that caters to younger women searching for swimsuits.

has 20 swimwear stores under her Diane's Beachwear nameplate, with the majority of them in Southern California.

There are no immediate expansion plans on the horizon, unless a fabulous location should materialize. Instead, Biggs had been looking back to her roots for retail change.

The swimwear maven just completed a 15-month remodel of one of the first swimwear stores started by her family 50 years ago in the then-sleepy surfside community of Manhattan Beach, Calif. The small town is now an affluent Los Angeles suburb that has been home to several professional athletes such as Tiger Woods, Shaquille O'Neal and Maria Sharapova. Many Lakers, Dodgers and Clippers players have staked out seaside real estate that sells for millions of dollars.

When Diane's 88-year-old mother, Mickie Bandle, opened Mickie's Swim Shop in 1964, Manhattan Beach had more of a summer resort feel to it. The swim store was on the main shopping lane, Manhattan Beach Boulevard, just steps from the Manhattan Beach Pier. It was Bandle's third location after her first two years in business. But it was the first location she owned.

The remodeled 1,800-square-foot outpost has an updated mid-century feel to it—with track lighting, bright orange mannequins and stylish dressing rooms. Upstairs, in another 1,800 square feet, are showrooms for swimwear labels who want an ocean view while displaying their collection to buyers.

Bandle is one of those people who got into the swimwear business by chance. Sitting inside her daughter's office, the spunky octogenarian talks about the box of Rose Marie Reid swimwear closeouts she bought, selling the slightly damaged goods to friends and neighbors for \$5 a piece.

"They all loved it," said Bandle with a laugh. "They wanted me to have house parties. So I did, and everything went really fast. At first it was closeouts, and then we started ordering suits and went from there."

Bandle opened a hole-in-the-wall space on Manhattan Avenue, which was only a few





blocks from the Manhattan Beach seashore. "We put a scrap of carpet on the floor, and my younger daughter, Carol, made the curtains. There was no plumbing," the pioneer retailer recalled.

Then she moved to another location before her husband, Lee, a sergeant with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, found a vacant lot on which they built a two-story structure that became home to Mickie's Swim Shop, now the remodeled store with a new name, Mickie's Beach.

THE FOUNDERS: (Top) Mickie Bandle stands with her daughter Diane Biggs inside the updated Mickie's Beach store.
SWIM STYLE: (Above) A wall of bikinis inside Diane's Beach Fever



NEW LOOK: The former Mickie's Swim Shop, now called Mickie's Beach, has a totally modern look and more-colorful mannequins.

"When I started my own business 10 years ago, Diane was one of the first people who gave me a chance to expose my talents."—Red Carter

Diane's

Continued from page 19

It was here that Bandle had customdesigned suits made for her clients. They would be measured downstairs. Upstairs were about a dozen seamstresses who sewed the suits and had them ready in two to three days. They sold for \$14 to \$15.

"We had a lot of mother-and-daughter fights because bikinis were just coming into fashion, and nobody wanted their kid in a bikini," Bandle remembered.

At the time, the bikinis they sold were modest by today's standards. Bottoms fell just below the waist. They were paired with a cross-over reversible top.

One of Bandle's first marketing ideas was to take photos of her younger customers and then set up a Carousel slide projector in the store window that at night displayed a revolving photo show of the young women in their suits. "The kids

would stand outside and look at all their friends," Bandle said. "Then the Catholic Church came down and said, 'No way."

For a while, Biggs worked at her mother's store. But then she wanted to be on her own. So her father helped her find a small retail spot in Santa Monica on the Third Street Promenade, which in the 1960s was a run-down, open-air pedestrian mall often frequented by more down-and-out homeless people than shoppers. It was years before the blocks-long strip was converted to what is now a sleek retail thoroughfare frequented by tourists and well-heeled shoppers alike.

Biggs' first swim shop was really the old candy counter of a movie theater that was being sublet for retail. Biggs called her store Bikinis by Diane, and it was open from March through Labor Day, fashioning custom-made bikinis for clients along with ordered merchandise.

About the same time, she and her best

friend, Janette Van Doren, founded the swimwear line Sunsets, which was manufactured in Huntington Beach, Calif.

Van Doren was the designer, and Biggs handled other aspects of the business. But after one year of working 14 hour days, Biggs knew she couldn't do retail and manufacturing at the same time.

Van Doren continued the label. Eventually, Van Doren's son-in-law, Greg Stager, took over the business, converting it into a multi-million-dollar swimwear company with additional labels such as B.Swim, Aerin Rose and Swim Systems. Biggs still stocks the labels at her stores.

Shortly after launching in Santa Monica, Biggs opened her second store, in Long Beach, Calif.'s Belmont Shore shopping district, which is only blocks from the ocean. From there she started to slowly expand.

At one point in the early 1990s, when a recession saw many retailers going out of business and giving up space, Biggs had 36 pop-up stores in far-flung places such as Springfield, Mo.; Michigan; and Utah.

But in recent years she has decided to keep her stable of 20 permanent stores at a manageable number. She likes to be in prime beach or resort-centric locations.

Most of those are in California, in areas such as Laguna Beach, Palm Desert, Palm Springs, Huntington Beach and La Jolla. There are two retail spots in Arizona—Scottsdale and Phoenix. Biggs took over Mickie's Swim Shop about 35 years ago.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Keeping things manageable and being on top of trends and new labels is part of Biggs' secret to staying in business for five decades. When other retail chains such as Water, Water Everywhere and Just Add Water were absorbed by swimwear retailer Everything But Water, Diane's Beachwear kept its independence.

Wednesdays at the corporate office are known as "vendor day," when a new swim line or an old swim label can stop by to show what is in its collection. "It's

"I don't want to miss that up-and-coming designer."—Diane Biggs

perfect for new swim lines that can't afford a showroom or reps," Biggs said. "I don't want to miss that up-and-coming designer."

Red Carter was one of those up-and-coming designers who got a break at Diane's Beachwear. "When I started my own business 10 years ago, Diane was one of the first people who gave me a chance to expose my talents," said the swimwear designer who is the man behind the Red Carter, Jones New York and Jessica Simpson labels. "She is really a spokesperson for talent and newness that keeps her innovative and fresh."

A. Ché is one of the newer swimwear labels on the shelves at Diane's Beachwear. A. Ché director of design Christie Weinberg believes the stores are a great destination shopping spot for swimsuits. "They customize the stores for each location," she said. "One of their strong points is the sales staff. They are very well trained, and they get a feel for what the customer is looking for."

To keep the look of her stores fresh, each outpost gets a total merchandise overhaul about every six weeks. Biggs sits down with one of her main merchandisers, Janice Brown, to analyze what is selling and what is not. Then they restock the store.

Over the years, Biggs has seen the swimwear retail business transition from a seasonal affair to a year-round venture. These days, people are traveling extensively and visiting more resorts where a swimsuit or two are a must. With that in mind, Biggs rounds out her merchandise with casual sweaters, long flowy dresses, coverups, tops, activewear and yoga wear. "We sell everything you need to pack into a suitcase to go on vacation," Biggs said.

Looking beyond its female customers, Diane is expanding to other demographics. The new Mickie's Beach shop has a section for men, complete with a black leather couch and a flat-screen TV, and another for children.

The retail chain's latest focus is appealing to the next generation—that teenage girl known as Generation Z. Biggs has been seeing the younger set taking an interest in her merchandise.

She recently advertised a warehouse sale at her industrial-park office and saw scores of 13-year-olds and other teens having their parents drop them off at 6 a.m. for the sale. Many were Instagramming the event.

"I'm not done yet," Biggs said inside her 6,000-square-foot headquarters, where 24 people work on everything from updating the website to managing the warehouse. "I am passionate for working. I get up at 4 a.m. and can't wait to get into work and look at my numbers." **ww**





SWimshorts

Chamorrita Swimwear brings the bikini back to its roots, where it all started in 1946 with French inventor Louis Réard and the Bikini Atoll in the Marshall Islands

in Micronesia. The daring two-piece swimsuit was "the bomb," creating quite a stir



as it was promoted as "smaller than the world's smallest bathing suit." Chamorrita Swimwear is a cheeky collection designed with love on Guam in limited editions, delicately crafted with natural tropical elements such as coconut and mother of pearl shells and perfectly tailored to feature the natural beauties of our island. Using quality fabric from around the world, cut for optimal coverage, and stitched to enhance the natural beauties of our island. Chamorrita Swimwear is carefully selected for vibrant colors and cuts, a blend of the Italian low cut and the flirty Brazilian fit, fused with local natural elements of the island. Established in 2011. Chamorrita Swimwear is the first bikini line locally owned and designed with love on Guam. Sandrine@ChamorritaSwimwear 671-488-0890 www.chamorritaswimwear.com

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ECO PEACE® by Aqua Green® continues to change the world with this young designer, sustainable swimwear collection. This brand-new line collection is thoughtfully created by Aqua Green to combine sustainability, glam, bohemian spirit, and fun, festival-chic trends. The made-in-America, young designer collection launched in Miami this past July and was a sensation with retailers. ECO PEACE® by Aqua Green® strives to make a bold, adventurous fashion statement while keeping in mind its impact on our planet. www.Ecoswim.com



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Invista has developed a fresh approach to fashion swimwear based on new consumer insights and technical advantages with XTRA LIFE LYCRA® fiber. Global research commissioned by INVISTA reveals perspectives on consumer priorities when

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What would you call a fabric that scuba divers use to pursue their goals? Well, of course, that would be called "SCUBA." La Lame is doing very well with their scuba fabric they call "SCUBA," which is a version of Neoprene. The "Neoprene" has more than 10 solid colors with black and white often in stock, and other fashion colors are available. Our highest-quality Neoprene

is now featured in Bloomingdale's and Saks. The digital prints



in the "Neoprene" fabric are beautifully executed with vibrant colors, some with 20 colors or more. We are now developing our Neoprene with Laser executions. This development will be available shortly. The Lace line at La Lame has been expanded. We now offer laces that have been embroidered, giving a new, textured look. Also, our geometric laces with sequins give our customers a larger line of choice. These features are receiving a positive reaction from many new customers. Note: La Lame will be at Première Vision in New York showing the elite French line Bugis Textiles of France. For more information, visit www.lalame.com.

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unique proprietary fabric that has three times more Lycra than most other swimwear made around the world, Miraclesuit swim garments provide a more trimming and slenderizing fit, with full comfort control and a longer-lasting life. Miraclesuit...the originator of slimming swimsuits continues to ride the wave



of success with its innovative designs. These garments are simply created like no other swimsuits in the world. www.miraclesuit.com



In the world of swimwear, small is often beautiful, but for designer/actress Jessica Rey, bigger is better. Her motto is: "Who says it has to be itsy bitsy?" Inspired by fashion icon Audrey Hepburn, Jessica captures Audrey's sense of style, grace, class, and fun. She has seamlessly sewn together contemporary fashion with vintage glamour. Established in May 2008, Rey Swimwear has international presence in over 19 countries and is rapidly growing. Rey Swimwear only works with partners who share their values and believe in ethical production. Our manufacturers have rigorous compliance standards against which they're constantly assessed. They're responsible for upholding production and sourcing practices across areas such as human rights, health/safety, and fair wages, thus respecting the dignity of all people. (323) 319-3508. www.reyswimwear.com

SwimShorts page 24



SWIMShorts

SWimshorts

Continued from page 22

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Whether they're swimming, sailing, or just enjoying being a kid, children around the world are safer in the sun than ever before, thanks to **Snapper Rock Swim Wear**. This stylish gear, which blocks 98 percent of harmful UVA and UVB rays, was originally created in New Zealand, a country with high rates of skin cancer. It proved to be a worldwide hit, with Snapper Rock now one of the leading protective swimwear

The range — which now goes from size 0 up to size 14, allowing tweens to get in on the action — includes swimsuits,



Con Calabara Samuel

bikinis, boardshorts, rash tops, kaftans, and hats. Best of all, they come in fun colors and patterns, so kids love wearing them. Visit Snapper Rock at Surf Expo, Orlando, Florida, Jan. 8–10, Booth #2241, and view the fantastic new collection of swimwear, aftersun wear, and accessories. Contact Julie Rich at julie@snapperrock.com to make an appointment or visit www.snapperrock.com

Surf Expo is the longest-running and largest boardsports and beach/resort lifestyle trade show in the world. Produced annually in Janu-

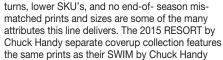


ary and September, the show draws buyers from specialty stores, major resorts, cruise lines, and beach rental companies across the U.S., the Caribbean. Central and South America, and around the world. Surf Expo features approximately 2,600 booths of apparel and hardwoods and a full lineup of special events, including fashion shows, shaping competitions, and demos. The show attracts more than 27,000 attendees and was named among the Fastest 50 Growing Trade Shows by Trade Show Executive Magazine and among the Top 25 Fastest Growing Shows for Attendance by Trade Show News Network. Surf Expo will be held Jan. 8-10, 2015, and September 10-12, 2015, at the Orange County Convention Center in Orlando, Florida. www.surfexpo.com.

2015 SWIM by Chuck Handy

Take a peek and fall in love! This resort destination collection will inspire you like no other with their swimsuit and matching coverup combina-

tions sold as a set. New for 2015 are their solids swimsuits with matching print coverups. Ask to see their "Perfect Poppy" group (ad feature this issue, page 6). Chuck is also offering more than one coverup in several groups camouflaging the waist, hips, and thighs with more functionality and versatility than ever. Customer ease of purchase, excellent margins, multiple sale



collection in kimonos and cocoon wraps with dyed to match pom-poms, fly-a-way pants, maxi vests, and other on-trend styles. This line is short and sweet—a must see! See their collections at Surf Expo in booth #2541 and ask for your free gift. To receive their catalog and schedule an appointment, please contact Rachael Amrein at (888) 504-5525 or at rachaela@bychuckhandy.com for personalized service. Visit them at www.swimby-chuckhandy.com. "More than a swimsuit, it's an outfit!"—Chuck Handy

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SwimShow has grown to be bigger and better than ever! The show has expanded to encompass almost 550,000 square feet of exhibition space taking up all four halls of the Miami Beach Convention Center! From brand-new events to brand-

new lines to a complete redesign of the entire layout, this show will be bigger, bolder, and better than ever. As the industry's largest and most established swimwear trade show,



we're kicking off the start of the buying season by hosting four days of the best swim brands in the world. Not to miss is the expanded men's, children's, accessories, resort, and lifestyle areas—which feature the best new and fashion-focused collections we are seeing from this area of the industry. Show dates are July 18–21 at the Miami Beach Convention Center. www.swimshow.com

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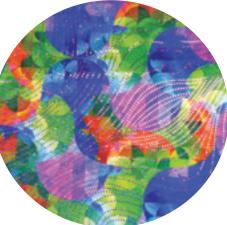
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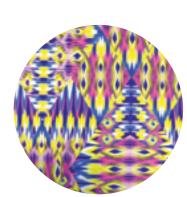
NK Textiles/Nipkow & Kobelt Inc. #A-4733



Textile Secrets International #SIC/231-CDC "November"



Geotex "Cloudburst"



Geotex "Mara Mara"

Soft Focus

A soft focus is combined with pastel shades and soft candy colors to give florals, tiedyes, abstracts and ikats a pretty, feminine look for coverups and swim styles.

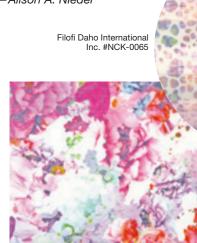
-Alison A. Nieder



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Geotex "Anda Lucia"

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Tropical Garden

Swim textile designers head to the tropics to take inspiration in lush botanicals, butterfly prints and feather imagery for swimwear and coverups. - A.A.N.



Liberty Art Fabrics #03636159A "Fornasetti Forest"



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27

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