

ORIGINAL  
PAPERBACKS



# FINDING A PLACE IN THE SUN

More fashion-forward than ever, men's beachwear gets colorful and creative, with cover-ups playing an important role

BY N. JAYNE SEWARD



O'NEILL

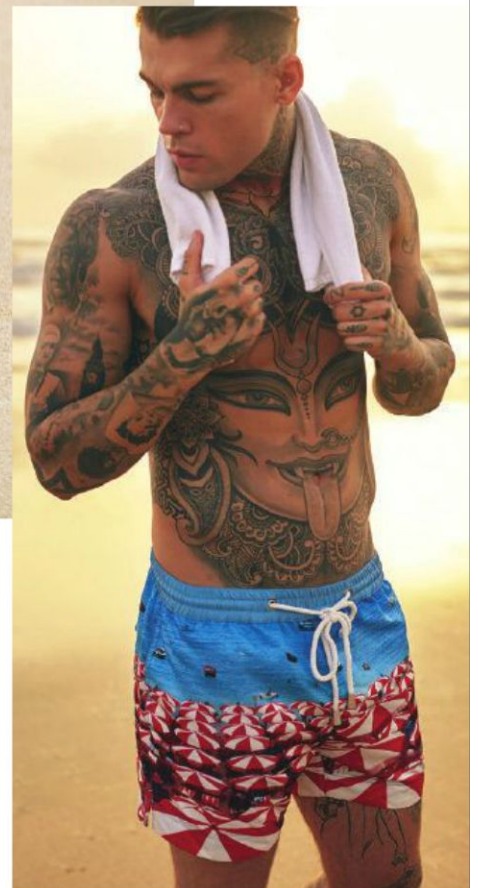
**M**en's beachwear is having its fashion heyday. As the popularity of lifestyle dressing increases, designers are creating plenty of beachwear options so men can have fun in the sun and look great while doing it. From tees and board shorts to retro prints and casual button-downs, the look at poolside is cool with a fashionable twist.

Directional British label **Thomas Royall** takes inspiration from vacation vibes and the poolside atmosphere to help customers look and feel stylish, day or night. "Season after season, we are seeing men's fashions

becoming more eye-catching and fashion-forward," says Laura Moore, brand design manager. The most colorful and creative designs tend to sell best, she says.

**O'Neill** also believes in color for 2016. The surf brand's collection includes bright colors in solids, stripes and print blocks. Overall, a variety of prints are trending this season, including colorful graphics, photo-real prints and retro-inspired patterns, especially from the '70s.

Lifestyle brand **Original Paperbacks** just launched swimwear, and "fun" is a key ingredient. "We head to the pool or the



THOMAS ROYALL





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beach to have fun, and we think that guys are ready to have some fun in their trunks while stepping outside the box a little," says Tommy Kerns, national sales manager. Retro lengths in fun yet subtle prints are directional, he adds. A cheeky "retro sport" lifestyle trend—think preppy influences and tennis court chic—captures Original Paperbacks' take on the season, with a slightly more upscale but playful style in swimwear inspired by Palm Springs.

Casual and comfortable—tees paired with swim trunks—are the look for **Robinson Les Bains** and **Retromarine**. Case in point: For casual cool, visualize a fitted T-shirt, printed Retromarine trunks, white Superga and a pair of cool shades. "Less is more," says Masud Rabbani, president of Retromarine New York. Comfort will be the key word going forward, according to Christophe Vérot, founder and creative director of Robinson Les Bains. "People want to look sharp but still feel comfortable wherever they go on holiday," he says.

As for fit and length, the look is all over the map. The mid-length tailored short is becoming mainstream, but many brands are including a variety of lengths in their collections. "In Europe we have been seeing shorter shorts for the last season; the American market is starting to pick up this trend," says Vérot. "But I have a feeling that the hipster clientele is going back to the more roomy and comfy shorts, but still with a tailored shape...far from a potato bag," he adds.

Men's beachwear is translating both on and off the beach, according to Parke Lutter and Ronen Jehezkel, designers for **Parke & Ronen**. The pair are adding details such as button closures and



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functional pockets to make swim trunks look more like actual shorts. A cover-up is just as important for a man as it is for a woman, say the designers, and this season the brand has introduced a relaxed-fit trunk which doubles as a cover-up for those men who wear bikinis.

Cover-up options for men are indeed expanding as brands add more items including ready-to-wear to their collections. UV Skinz is seeing great success with its long-sleeve paneled rash guards, swim shirts and men's beach hoodies, says Rhonda Sparks, founder and designer of **UV Skinz**. Men's board shorts are also selling well and are longer in length, providing more sun protection. "Believe it or not, men want to protect their skin," says Sparks. ■



UV SKINZ



O'NEILL



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