

Surf Supplies

TAKE YOUR STYLE FROM THE SHELVES TO THE SEA WITH THE HELP OF THESE LOCAL SHOPS.

By ASHLEY RYAN

TOUTED AS AN ART COLONY, LAGUNA BEACH IS JUST AS heavily known for its history of water sports and ocean culture. Long-standing events like the Brooks Street Surfing Classic and The Vic skimboarding championship have not only solidified the town’s position as a prime location for active residents, but also helped to promote and enhance these pastimes.



Hobie Surf Shop

But where would modern surfers be without the many stellar surf shops that line the streets of Laguna? From boards and wetsuits to all of the accessories required for a successful surf sesh, hitting the waves wouldn’t be possible without these stores that supply amateur and professional athletes.

“In some sense, the modern surf shop was born in Laguna Beach,” says Kris Carlow, brand manager for Hobie Surf Shops. “Yes, [surf legend] Hobie Alter eventually moved to Dana Point to open his shop in 1954, but the concept was born on the beach in Laguna. Alter made some 200 boards—unnumbered—before his departure from his father’s garage. Furthermore, Dick Metz, the probable founder of modern surf retail, was born in Laguna. All of these cohorts spent their summers on Laguna beaches. They would discuss their prospective careers, but they all knew that they didn’t want to work east of Highway 1, wear[ing] hard-sole shoes or a necktie. In my opinion, that’s the original ethos of the surf shop, and that began in Laguna Beach.”

That historical component is key to the success these shops enjoy in current times, with Laguna’s coves and south Orange County beaches beckoning surfers both to the sea and the shops. All of this just further enriches the local surf culture.

“In every beach town, surf shops have always been the cultural center for local flavor. Laguna’s pristine rocky coastline and rich surfing history create an incubator for unique experiences in and around the ocean,” says George Arzente, founder of Catch Surf. “Living near the ocean is a privilege enjoyed by only a select few, and surf shops offer a window into that lifestyle.”

Here, discover what Laguna’s surf stores have to offer shoppers from near and far.

TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF CA SURF N PADDLE; ALL OTHERS ON SPREAD: ASHLEY RYAN



BILLABONG LAGUNA

Find your summer uniform at this shop from a brand that launched across the world in Australia’s Gold Coast in the 1970s. Initially focusing on boardshorts that could withstand tough ocean conditions, Billabong has since expanded to feature a wide range of clothing for both men and women, including wetsuits, rash guards, bikinis and beach cover-ups in addition to casual tees and tanks plus accessories ranging from hats, backpacks and tote bags to towels and flip-flop sandals. And with sprawling views of the ocean visible mere steps from the store entrance, you’ll be inspired to grab a suit and hit the waves.

CA SURF N PADDLE

Epic adventures await at this Pacific Coast Highway shop, whether you’re looking for gear, rentals or lessons. Owner Rod Greenup, who is also a surfboard shaper, is eager to help shoppers whenever he’s around. Established in 1985, the store offers wetsuits and apparel for men, women and children in addition to accessories like towels, sunglasses and sandals. Surfboards—for adults as well as smaller

versions for kids—and inflatable paddleboards can be purchased here while Greenup’s lessons are top-notch. He also creates custom boards, so buyers can help dream up an art-forward design that embodies the spirit of Laguna.

CATCH SURF

Originating here in town in the mid-2000s, this eclectic north Laguna spot has everything you need to get out on the water. “Our boards are engineered to withstand the rocky coastline and punishing shorebreak, and [the] clothes [we sell are] suitable for a night out on the town,” he notes. In addition to offering its own surfboards, bodyboards and skimboards—as well as ready-to-wear beach apparel, towels, sandals, stickers and flying discs—Catch Surf organizes meet-and-greets in the shop with professional athletes, donates boards to nearby schools and fundraisers, and hosts a weekly running club to elevate the local community.

HOBIE SURF SHOP

Hobie needs no introduction, but we’ll clue you in anyway. Started by surf legend Hobie Alter, who got his start here in Laguna, this iconic



Clockwise from top left: Billabong Laguna; CA Surf N Paddle; Catch Surf; Hobie’s selection of surfboards



Clockwise from top left: Laguna Surf & Sport; Thalia Surf Shop; Rip Curl Laguna Beach; Toes on the Nose; Quiksilver

LAGUNA SURF & SPORT

Opened in 1982, this is one of the original places in town to get surf and skim products. The company sells tees, tanks, hats, boardshorts and wetsuits for men, women and youth. You'll also find some unique items at this shop, such as a beach umbrella and waterproof speaker that doubles as a bottle opener for very necessary relaxation after hitting the waves. Private group or one-on-one surf lessons are also available, giving beginners the chance to learn the basics and more advanced groms the opportunity to expand their skills.

QUIKSILVER

Although Quiksilver also got its start in Australia—way back in the late 1960s—it's now headquartered in Huntington Beach, aka Surf City. Designed exclusively for men and boys for the last decade, the brand's local shop offers oardshorts, wetsuits, rashguards and other surf-related accessories as well as everyday apparel, sandals, backpacks and wallets, water bottles, beanies and more. Women need not

worry, as items from sister company Roxy are sold here as well. Peruse items while videos of surfers play in the background.

RIP CURL LAGUNA BEACH

The premium items sold at this store are built to last. But, on top of this, the Australian company, whose American headquarters are in San Clemente, aims to create designs that inspire as well. "Laguna Beach is known for being an artistic and eclectic town," says P.J. Connell, vice president of marketing and e-commerce for Rip Curl. "I think the surf shops pull that cultural authenticity into their store experience." Surf accessories, clothing, swimwear and wetsuits are offered for men, women and kids, but Rip Curl also has waterproof watches and surfboard covers plus a Recycle Your Wetsuit program that allows surfers to bring any suit in for a \$25 voucher.

THALIA SURF SHOP

Authentic since the very beginning, this beloved local spot prides itself on style and

originality, presenting rare or hard-to-find apparel items and surfboards for more than two decades. Thalia Surf Shop works with local shapers and artists to create uniquely designed items in addition to used and vintage boards and accessories like leashes, surfboard fins, traction pads, handplanes, wax and ding repair products. Throw in Vans shoes, music, movies, books, magazines and artwork and you've got a visually stunning store with much to offer.

TOES ON THE NOSE

Located across from Main Beach, this flagship store showcases an inventory influenced by California culture. Choose from the brand's Sea Silk and Sixty One collections or peruse items from other brands, such as Carve Designs, Reef, Billabong, Olukai, Rainbow Sandals and more. While this store focuses more on apparel than actual surf equipment, one unique aspect is the Element Guard collection, which features apparel that helps protect wearers from the sun with UPF-resistant material—an important consideration for any water sport enthusiast. ■

TOP RIGHT: COURTESY OF RIP CURL; ALL OTHERS: ASHLEY RYAN

DIVE IN

PERUSE LOCAL SHOPS TO FIND ITEMS LIKE THESE, PERFECT FOR CATCHING WAVES AT A SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BEACH.

1) The cold waters of the Pacific Ocean are no match for the **2MM SYNERGY WETSUIT GLOVES**, which feature a foam core topped with recycled Pro Stretch fabric and a special design to enhance grip, \$39.95, at Billabong Laguna. (949-715-7732; billabong.com)

2) In an art community like Laguna Beach, it's only natural to seek out vibrant, creative boards like Catch Surf's own **ODYSEA LOG // 9'0"**—a longboard that comes in a variety of colorful styles and designs to ensure you stand out as you stand atop the waves, \$449.99, at Catch Surf. (949-715-7828; catchsurf.com)

3) Grab the **SECRET SESH 37L LARGE BACKPACK** to store all of your gear for any surf session; the durable, roll-top bag has separate wet and dry compartments that make it easy to whisk your wet items home without soaking things that are supposed to stay dry, \$75, at Quiksilver. (949-376-0245; quiksilver.com)

4) Lady groms can keep warm in the cold California water in the **WOMEN'S COASTAL PALMS G-BOMB LONG SLEEVE HI CUT SPRINGSUIT**, which features a neoprene material for insulation as well as high-stretch, long sleeves for sun protection and a zipper at the chest for functionality, \$149.95, at Rip Curl Laguna Beach. (949-715-4885; ripcurl.com)

5) Wander through the sand in Cobian's **MEN'S ARV 2 SANDALS**—bestsellers locally d to the molded footbed with arch support and soft, comfortable strap that grips the foot for ultimate seaside comfort, \$39.9 at CA Surf N Paddle. (949-497-1423; caboardsports.com)



6) Creatures of Leisure's **FISH DAY USE SURFBOARD BAG** comes in various sizes and shapes—find the perfect option for your board to ensure it gets to and from the waves safely, protected by the brand's diamond-tech material, from \$174.95, at Thalia Surf Shop. (949-497-3292; thaliasurf.com)

7) Keep your skin protected from the sun without even trying with the loose-fitting **PROTECTOR ELEMENT GUARD UPF 50+ LONG SLEEVE UV PROTECTIVE SHIRT**, featuring a quick-dry material to help control body temperature while combating the sun's harmful rays, \$58, at Toes on the Nose. (949-494-4988; toesonthenose.com)

8) As you head to and from the beach with your board in hand, enlist the help of the **CLASSIC BOX ORIGINAL RECTANGLE PATCH SNAPBACK HAT** to shade your face; it features adjustable sizing and classic canvas in a range of colors to match your own unique style, \$29.95, at Laguna Surf & Sport. (949-497-7000; surfandsport.com)

9) This summer, make a splash in the **ENDLESS SUMMER BOARDSHORT** from Hobie, which allows you to easily transition from a surf sesh to enjoying a bite to eat on the sand, \$52, at Hobie Surf Shop. (949-497-3304; hobiesurfshop.com)