

*Celebratory bikini designs –
Manuel Canovas, Andres Sardà,
Sauvage and Shan.*

Invista

30 inches of fabric celebrates 60 years of coverage

I t's the smallest of garments, but the bikini had a gigantic impact on swimwear when it was launched in Paris in 1946. The reaction to its appearance on the market was explosive, which is rather in keeping with the theory that it was called the 'bikini' after the US military detonated a nuclear device near the group of islands known as the Bikini Atoll in the Pacific in 1945. Although it is not renowned for its high functionality—after all there is only so much technology that can be incorporated into such a small area of fabric—this anniversary is worthy of recognition as it highlights the huge impact a single development can make in the sportswear industry whether it is a design feature or a new technical innovation.

Going two pieces

Designed by Louis Réard, the bikini has continued to cause a stir for 60 years.

The first bikini was so small (it comprised a mere 30 inches of fabric) that models refused to wear it and it was even banned in certain countries such as Spain and Italy. In fact it took

until the 1960s for the bikini to become accepted in the modest USA market. Once it had made its mark the bikini's large scale success in the 1960s and 1970s was thanks to actresses such as Brigitte Bardot. It went out of fashion in the 1980s and early '90s and sales slipped to such an extent that even Réard's business went bankrupt. But it has seen a revival in recent years and is now more popular than ever, with the most expensive bikini ever produced appearing in the 2006 issue of Sports Illustrated—a diamond encrusted version worth \$30 million.

To celebrate this significant anniversary, Invista—the producer of Lycra that also had a huge impact on the swimwear market when it first appeared in the 1950s—commissioned a bikini range to celebrate 60 years of this 'infamous' two-piece swimwear. It collaborated with nine designers—Agua de Coco, Andres Sardà, Manuel Canovas, Olga Cantelli for La Perla, Vannina Vesperini, Lenny, Salinas, Sauvage and Shan—from three continents to ensure that this 'itsy bitsy teeny weeny' garment received massive global attention on this important occasion.

WSA is happy to assist. 🌐

