

THE BEST ADVICE

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URGENT QUESTIONS

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DEFINITIVE ANSWERS

What's the best swimsuit for a grown-up man?

Beware of Speedos, knee-length shorts, and that mankini thing that Borat squeaked into. It's a jungle out there on the beach, and style mistakes can get you noticed in all the wrong ways. Oceanside fashion faux pas are easy to avoid, however, if you apply the same rules that you would to other dressing choices. Steer clear of extremes in color and size, and then follow these tenets:

Find your length. Tall guys look good in long shorts (20- to 22-inch outseam). Men with bellies should stick to boxer-short styles (14- to 16-inch outseam) in dark colors, which draw attention away from the midsection. Shorter gents should consider modified board shorts (18- to 20-inch outseam) in solid colors, which can give the illusion of height.

Stick to the originals. Two of my favorite brands are Birdwell Beach Britches and Vilebrequin. Birdwells are the original nylon board shorts, predating OP, Quiksilver, Hurley, Billabong, and all those other hot surf companies that like to splash neon skulls and crossbones over your backside. The family-owned company crafts its lifeguard-style board shorts in Santa Ana, California, and the suits are quick-drying, tough, practical, and the embodiment of timeless style.

Pattern your personality. Most people look best in solid colors, but some personas demand flair, and Vilebrequin provides it. Founded in St. Tropez, France, Vilebrequin produces shorts with bold, sophisticated patterns (think: Fauvism meets Keith Haring), mesh liners, and a waterproof wallet that fits into the pockets. The company also makes identical shorts for toddlers, so your boy can dress like a grown-up too. **ERIC VILLENCY**
Villency is the president of the design studio Maurice Villency and a contributor to NBC's Today.



BEACH BOYS
Big-wave surf legend Buzzy Kerbox, 51, and son Kyler, 6, at Baby Beach in Maui

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BEST LIFE

WHAT MATTERS TO MEN.

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Hugh O'Neill Explains
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Mr. Duchovny wears
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