

Surf Brands

The history of today's surf brands

The main surf brands are well known throughout the world, but where did they come from and what inspired them to become what they are today.

Animal

Animal was established in 1987, the brand was started by two surfers who were fed up of losing their watches in the water while they were surfing. The two surfers came up with a solution to their problem with a webbing and velcro strap.

The two surfers began production of small quantities of watches for their friends and used the money to fund surf trips where they sold more watch straps to fund more trips. The strap was very versatile and was soon used by other extreme sports enthusiasts such as wind surfers, snow boarders and mountain bikers the strap became a success and Animal was born.

Animal later began to make sports watches which were robust water resistant and stylish, these watches were also a huge success and became a household name.

Animal is now a design-led sports brand producing clothing, watches, eyewear, footwear, luggage and accessories.

Billabong

Founded by surfer and board shaper Gordon Merchant and his partner in 1973 who began by designing and producing board shorts at home to sell in the local surf shop. The board shorts were popular because of the triple-stitching technique developed by Gordon.

The brand grew with company sponsored contests and special events which helped establish the company in Australian surf culture, the brand was ready to go international in the 1980s when it had success in North America and other areas.

The logo which is still used today was created by its founder. The majority of Billabong is now owned by GSM operations with the founder Gordon Merchant owning around 20% of the company.

Billabong produces shirts, shorts, swim wear, surf and skate equipment which is sold to a global market.

Rip Curl

Rip curl was founded in 1969 by Doug Warbrick and Brian Singer in Australia following the trend of short boards and surf design experimentation in 1967. Rip Curl began as a surf board manufacturer but later noticed a lack in availability of quality surfing wetsuits and in 1970 began producing wetsuits based on diving technology adapted for surfing.

Rip Curl is now a leading surf wear brand in Australia, Europe and South America.

Quicksilver

Alan Green had been producing wetsuits for Rip Curl but later formed Quicksilver in 1970 with John Law. They began by taking an existing pair of board shorts and removing anything they thought was not necessary for surfers such as front lace and buttons that hurt when you paddled, they came up with an anatomically based pattern designed specifically for the surfer.

These board shorts attracted interest in the surfing community and Quicksilver started to grow into what it is today. Quicksilver now has a diverse line of products to include clothing, accessories, eyewear, watches and wetsuits and is diversifying into winter sports.

About the Author

Phil Croucher is the web master for [surf shop](#) RokSport Surf who stock a range of [billabong board shorts](#) and [surf clothes from the leading surf brands](#).