

AT HOME

MARYLA SURF LIFESTYLE



MARYLA JOHNS

For local artist and designer Maryla Johns, inspiration comes from simply taking a beach walk. “When you’re looking out at the ocean, there’s nothing in front of you,” she says. “There’s no concrete jungle, just a horizon.”

Plus, there’s the array of treasures that provide constant visual fodder for those seeking it ... sea sponges and seaweed, for instance, in “beautiful vibrant colours washing up on the beach”.

Such finds have been a constant inspiration for Maryla, evident in her textiles and print label, Maryla Surf Lifestyle.

Many visits to the beach with camera in one hand (and leash in other, as Benny the cavoodle comes along too) have given this

ocean-loving artist an appreciation for the diversity of seaweed. As she explains, “no two pieces are the same”.

“I started just going to the beach and photographing seaweed basically to document the different shapes, the colours and the way they all overlay each other,” she says.

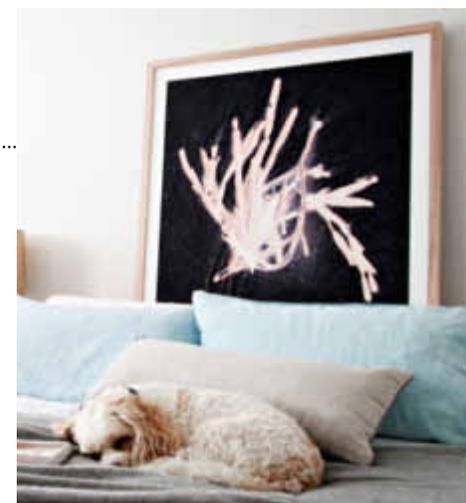
“My philosophy has been that I want to celebrate where I live and that’s close to the ocean and near the best surf beaches in the world. I want that to come across in everything that I do.”

Her latest collection, a series of photo art, celebrates this. Here we see seaweed in a different way, as the spotlight shines on this oft-neglected, oceanic find in all its tangles, textures and unexpected colour palettes.

“I WANT TO CELEBRATE WHERE I LIVE”



Surf Bloom Little Sponge, \$560 (unframed)



Surf Bloom Tangle fine art photo print, 80cm x 80cm, \$560 (unframed)



Surf Great Ocean Road designer cushion, \$118

(REG RYAN \ SUPPLIED)

through her cushions, however, that she’s discovered a niche market for surf-inspired pieces that reference local beaches.

These are cushions with familiar names blazoned on them – Torquay, Thirteenth Beach and Lorne taking pride of place. “My little Bells [Beach] cushion was one of the first I did and today, it’s still my best-selling cushion,” she says, adding that the types of homes it’s going into are very surf focused.

“People buy cushions for many different reasons.

“It’s not just to decorate an interior ... you might just have one cushion on a chair to say, ‘We’ve been there, we had a great time’.”

There’s also another point of difference, especially in a textiles landscape where products are often made overseas, and that is the fact that Maryla’s cushions are made in Australia, hand sewn in Melbourne using Belgian linen.

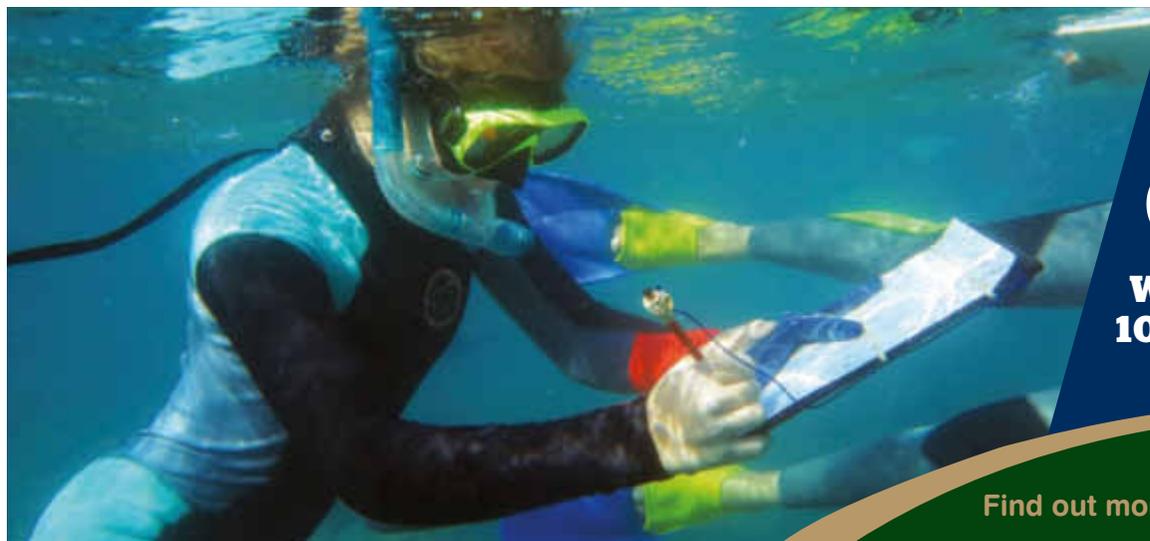
Cultivating her brand and its nod to surf culture, Maryla says she’s been inspired by businesses that operate within a similar framework, having found a common theme of “authenticity” within the surf industry.

Her advice to those looking to start a design label encompasses a philosophy she is passionate about: “Be unique, be authentic, do something different. And don’t try to be everything ... specialise. Do something that you’ll be known for.”

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