

**I**t is not an easy thing to make a woman feel good about herself, especially when she has to get nearly naked. Even the best bodies out there come with body issues," designer Virginia Macari tells me when we discuss her new collection, Virginia Macari Beachwear Couture, a luxury swim and beach lifestyle collection.

"With my collection, I want women to feel good about themselves and their bodies. It's all about confidence," she explains. "If I can help a woman feel that she can hide her bad points and feel comfortable, then I have done my job. That is my aim."

I first met Virginia after she graduated from the Grafton Academy in 2001. She had just launched a clothing collection with Anthony Brennan, called Macari Brennan. Virginia has always loved fashion and been highly trend-aware. But when it came to her new beach lifestyle collection, her attitude was far more conservative, for all the right reasons.

"The whole thing is about luxury, about well-designed swimwear and beachwear. I never want someone to look like they have tried too hard. Elegance is the key component. I am not going for the latest trends. I am keeping it classic and timeless," she tells me. "Trends are important, in that they give fashion a direction. But I don't think it is necessary to conform to them."

What I like about Virginia Macari Beachwear Couture is that, in essence, even when using prints, the styles are flattering because they are near colour-blocked and of a simple shape. The pieces are that little bit different. There is a beautiful sensuality and flirtatiousness — not something that one associates with Irish designers very often. It must be her Italian/Cork heritage.

"My collection is luxurious and sensual," she explains. "There is a little bit of a boho vibe, but this is still classic design that will continue to be elegant next summer and the summer after."

In some pieces, Virginia has built in corseting to lift and shape the bosom, instead of padding, which she thinks is unflattering, especially when it gets wet. The range is produced in Portugal and Brazil, the world capitals of swim and beachwear fashion.

"I do a lot of in-house manufacturing as well," Virginia explains. "If people like a cut, I am willing to carry it over into the next season. I use really good-quality, luxury fabrics. The pieces are double-lined. The beaded styles are very hardy. These are pieces to wear and feel comfortable in. All that is the difference between what I do and other ranges."

When shopping, Virginia recommends that women don't buy too-big bikini briefs, as it makes our bottoms look awful.

"Many of the pieces are designed with Irish women in mind," Virginia tells me. "At the end of the day, I come from Ireland. I know what will work." ■

# ITALIAN SAVVY

Photography by  
ADAM VON MACK

Styling by  
COURTNEY SMITH

Fashion edited by  
CONSTANCE HARRIS



**Left**  
Bikini set, €240;  
beaded silk skirt, €460,  
both Virginia Macari Beachwear  
Couture.  
Rings, from a selection, €3-€7, Parfois

**Right**  
Bikini set, €240,  
Virginia Macari Beachwear Couture.  
Necklace, €35, eShe by Newbridge  
Silverware, [newbridgesilverware.com](http://newbridgesilverware.com).  
Rings, from a selection, €3-€7, Parfois



**FASHION**



**Left**  
Bikini set, €180,  
Virginia Macari Beachwear Couture.  
Rings, from a selection, €3-€7, Parfois

**Above**  
Bikini set, €260,  
Virginia Macari Beachwear Couture.  
Rings, from a selection, €3-€7, Parfois





**Left**  
Swimsuit, €240; cover-up, €240,  
both Virginia Macari Beachwear  
Couture.  
Rings, from a selection, €3-€7, Parfois

**Above**  
Bikini set, €140,  
Virginia Macari Beachwear Couture.  
Rings, from a selection, €3-€7, Parfois

**Contents page**  
Bikini set, €195,  
Virginia Macari Beachwear Couture.  
Necklace, €14.99; bangle set, €5.99;  
rings, from a selection, €3-€7, Parfois



All swimwear and beachwear featured is from the summer 2015 Virginia Macari Beachwear Couture collection, available exclusively from [virginiamacari.com](http://virginiamacari.com)

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