

## A Sophisticated Brazilian Bikini Line for Export Only

Contributed by Isaura Daniel  
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When she was a mere 6, Brazilian Luciana Martinez, from the southernmost Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul, cut the hem off a dress her grandmother, a seamstress, was making for a client. With the piece of material, the girl made clothes for her Susi doll.

Despite her merit for sewing by hand at such a young age, of course Luciana was reprimanded by her grandmother. Today, around 30 years later, Luciana no longer needs the fabric from her grandmother's dresses.

She is running a brand that produces bikinis for women in 22 countries. And beach fashion from Porto Alegre is not only made out of fabric, but also includes details like rings, chains, mother of pearl, sequins and even Swarovski crystals.

The rich style and high level of creativity are among the main characteristics of the Lybethras brand, which belongs to Luciana and is based in the city of Porto Alegre, capital of Rio Grande do Sul.

For next summer, for example, the businesswoman has released a limited collection inspired on Coco Chanel, to have just 200 items produced for each model. White, luxurious bikinis with rings are mixed with bikinis with leopard prints.

In the other items produced by the brand for the summer will be exotic bikinis and bathing suits with fabric that brings a light gloss and floral prints, as well as crochets and lycra.

It is Luciana who creates all the products, and production is outsourced. The whole of production is exported. The main buyers are the United States, with 70% of imports, according to Luciana.

The United Arab Emirates are also in the list of clients of the Lybethras brand. The buyers of brand products in the Middle East are a chain of stores with shops in Austria, the United States and Dubai. "The bikinis and bathing suits we sell there are well embroidered. They do not worry about the cost. We sold one with over 100 bits of mother of pearl," states the businesswoman.

The model of the garments exported to the Emirates is European, with a higher waistline than the models worn in Brazil. "They (the Arabs) like the Brazilian articles very much," says Luciana.

Lybethras bathing clothes styles also include Brazilian, adapted Brazilian and American, which is a more covered style. Now the businesswoman wants to find a representative to distribute her products in the whole of the Middle East.

In the Arab world, she is also negotiating the start of exports to a chain of stores in Lebanon. Sales to the Emirates began due to contacts made through the Internet.

It was thanks to the Internet, incidentally, that the brand also started exporting to the United States, in 1999. At the time, Luciana was still the owner of brand Phylantropia, which she sold in 2002 to establish Lybethras.

When she opened her shop, in 1991, at the age of 19 and was emancipated by her mother, she produced party dresses. The first bikini was made in 1993. "I saw bikinis in shops, but I found them too simple," explained Luciana.

That was when she had the idea of producing different products. She even developed some products that would make it possible for clients to go straight from the beach to a party.

Today, she produces just beach fashion. Apart from bathing suits and bikinis, complementary beach products are made, like skirts, dresses, shirts and trousers. Lybethras produces around 90,000 garments a year. Entry into the domestic market should take place in coming months.

Luciana is graduated in Tourism from the Pontifical Catholic University, in Rio Grande do Sul (PUC-RS), and in Business Administration from the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS).

Her entry into the fashion world began informally, when Luciana sewed her own dresses and her friends started asking her to make them dresses too. Thus, from dress to dress, Luciana hired a seamstress and made her talent into a business.

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