

Seamless Suits

One of the black and white pictures in Scuba Pix's online gallery (Scuba Pix, n.d.) is an early 1950s advertisement for "The Skin Diver's Seamless Suit". The image appears below.

A young woman poses in a two-piece version of the outfit, "constructed of dipped pure latex, a tough resilient material" and consisting of a hood-less long-sleeved shirt and footed long-legged pants, rolled together at the waist to form a watertight seal. Each part of the ensemble – shirt, pants, hood and boots – is priced and purchasable separately. Although the suit's manufacturer and distributor remain unidentified, the model's diving mask hood and "arbalete" spear gun both appear to be US Divers Corporation accessories.

Palley's of California published catalogues of the skin-diving equipment they sold in the early 1950s. Page 12 of its 1953 issue featured a range of "frogman suits for year round skin diving enjoyment" (Palley's, 1953). Men posed in "shorty" and full-length "Seal" and imported Pirelli suits, which were US Divers product lines.

On the same page was an illustration of the young woman in the advertisement with the US Divers mask hood in her right hand and the spear gun in her left. She wore the same hood-less long-sleeved shirt and footed long-legged pants with the skirts rolled together to form a waist seal. On this occasion, her "dipped pure latex" outfit is billed as a "lady's seamless diving suit" and each part has a slightly increased price.



The Skin Diver's Seamless Suit

Seamless Suit Facts

- Two sources of information about Seamless Suits have been identified: the image on the left (Scuba Pix, n.d.) and page 12 of Palley's 1953 catalogue
- Due to its properties of durability and resilience, dipped pure latex was the choice of material for the construction of the Seamless Suit.
- The separate shirt and pants could be rolled together to form a complete watertight suit.
- The suit was made in "shorty" and full-length versions for mild-weather and year-round use respectively.
- The shirt came with short or long arms.
- The pants came with short or long legs.
- A hood for both versions of the shirt was available.
- Boots for the long-legged pants could be supplied.
- All parts were economically priced. Full-length versions of the shirt and pants cost less than \$5 apiece.
- The price list had nothing to say about the sizing of the shirt and pants.
- Seamless Suits seemed to have been designed for women's exclusive use. Underwater sport, even in the early days, was never a male preserve.

References

1. Palley's (1953) *Palley's*, Glendale CA and Los Angeles CA: Palley's.
2. Scuba Pix (n.d.) *Black & White*, http://www.angelfire.com/super2/scuba_pix/Blackandwhite.html