

US Divers Seal Suit

In 1948 René Bussoz of René Sports in Westwood, California, acquired North American distribution rights to the Aqualung regulator and in 1952 launched U.S. Divers (Aqualung, n.d.). He later sold the company to Jacques-Yves Cousteau and returned to France where he became a golf-course entrepreneur.

Terry Cox of Waterwear, Newport Beach, California, “made more (diving) suits and a greater variety of them than anyone else in the business” (Roberts, 1960, p. 311). After conducting numerous experiments in the cold waters of the Pacific Ocean, “he developed and made the ‘Seal’ Suit for U.S. Divers.”

Historical Diving Suits

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Seal Suit Facts



On the left is a detail from Palley’s of Glendale and Los Angeles underwater catalogue of 1953 (Palley, 1953), showing two versions of the Seal Suit. The flutter valve visible on the rear of the hood was used on some models to drain the air out of the suit and to keep the neck area from becoming inflated (Roberts, 1960, p. 298).

The Seal suit, which was also stocked by Fenjohn of Ardmore PA (Carrier & Carrier, 1955, p. 272), came in a choice of length (long or short arms and legs) as well as entry (neck, front or back). The shirt and pants could also be purchased separately.

THE DRY SUITS . . .

This cold-water suit is the final development of countless experiments in the cold Pacific. Made of pure-gum rubber, it keeps the diver warm and dry indefinitely, while retaining 100% maneuverability. When ordering Seal Suits, specify Neck, Front or Back entry.

1103	Rubber shirt for mild weather and youngsters.....	14.95
1104	Rubber pants to match 1103 shirt.....	14.95
Optional parts to connect shirt and pants		
1125	Hard rubber rail.....	5.00
1126	Rubber ring.....	2.50

THE SEAL SUIT



The Seal Suit (Discount Divers, 1999)

- The natural rubber Seal Suit remained warm, dry and manoeuvrable when used for extended cold-water dives.
- When dressing, a neck-entry Seal Suit required a helper’s assistance. Other models had a tunnel-like “chute” at the back or front which the diver used to enter the suit. Then a watertight seal was effected, as illustrated on the left, by tying excess chute material together. *Basic Scuba* (Roberts, 1960, pp. 295-311) gave step-by-step directions for putting on neck-, front- or back-entry suits of this type.
- Shirts with short arms and matching short-legged pants were an option for young and mild-weather divers. These rubber garments could be sealed together at the waist if additional parts were bought.
- Hood, long arms, legs and boots for water below 55°F cost \$54.95; hood, short arms and legs for water above 55°F cost \$44.95; shirt and pants only cost \$29.90.

References

1. Aqua Lung (n.d.) *Aqua Lung, First to Dive, Continues the Legacy Six Decades Later*, http://www.aqualung.com/news_releases_history.html
2. Rick & Barbara Carrier (1955) *The Complete Book of Skin Diving*, New York: Wilfred Funk.
3. Discount Divers (1999) *Black and White Relics*, <http://www.discountdivers.com/photoGallery/oldbw/April23.1999.html>
4. Palley’s (1953) *Palley’s*, Glendale CA and Los Angeles CA: Palley’s.
5. Fred M. Roberts (1960) *Basic Scuba: Self Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus*, Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand.