

ABI ROAD DESIGNS

Brand Story

Durban, South Africa

EST. 2014

Drop 01: Spice Route | Indian Ocean Resortwear

ABOUT ABI ROAD DESIGNS

Abi Road Designs is a Durban-born resort wear and swimwear label founded in 2014 by designer Abi Downs (Abigail Glover), a fashion graduate of the Durban University of Technology. From the beginning, the brand was built around a simple obsession: bikinis, and the world you build around them.

The early collections made their name through a signature mix-and-match philosophy that felt native to Durban's beach culture. Reversible bottoms that flipped from solid burgundy into intricate paisley prints, high-contrast graphic tops paired with geometric separates, and the Viola Set, a structured micro bikini that became one of the brand's most recognisable pieces. The swimwear was never designed to stand alone. Abi Road's signature silk and chiffon kimonos were made to be worn open over the bikinis, creating a complete Indian Ocean resort uniform long before 'resortwear' became a category.

The brand sold through Mio Designs in Hillcrest and Rampage Boutique in Cape Town, showed up at rooftop pop-ups across Durban's creative scene, and built a quiet following among women who understood that what you wear to the beach matters as much as what you wear anywhere else.

Then came a hiatus. Years spent in corporate fashion buying, building other businesses, growing a community. The brand went quiet, but the vision never left.

In 2026, Abi Road Designs is back.

DROP 01: SPICE ROUTE

The relaunch collection returns to everything the brand was always about, and pushes it further. Spice Route draws on the textile heritage of the Indian subcontinent and its historic connection to the KwaZulu-Natal coastline: the spice trade routes, the silk, the colour, and the warmth that Durban has carried in its identity for generations.

Drop 01 includes two bikini sets, each available in a print and a solid colourway, alongside locally made sarongs and scarves hand-cut from Balinese silk saris. The kimono layering system is coming back too. The same DNA, a decade later, distilled into something you could pack into a vintage trunk and wear from Ballito to Zanzibar.

Each piece is limited. Each drop will be named for a place, a season, or a spice route. That has always been the Abi Road way.

THE VISION

Abi Road is not just a swimwear brand. It is the continuation of a full resort wardrobe: sarongs and scarves, embellished separates, and accessories that carry the same visual language wherever they go. Each drop will be limited, named for a destination or a spice route or a season, and designed to feel like something you keep for years.

The brand is built on the belief that luxury resort wear does not have to travel to you from somewhere far away. The textures, the prints, the light, and the mood all already exist here, along the sugar cane roads and tidal pools and coral-walled hotels of the Indian Ocean coast. Abi Road is simply the edit.

FOUNDER

Abi Downs

Abi Downs is a Durban-based fashion designer, entrepreneur, and content creator. A graduate of the Durban University of Technology with a background spanning fashion design, buying, and over a decade of brand building, she is also the founder of Girls Who Dinner, Reset With Abi, and Beyond the Feed, and has been recognised by Forbes Women Africa for her work in media and entrepreneurship. Abi Road Designs, founded in 2014, is the brand she has always come back to.

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