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GUIDE

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HELLO #81

Despite a slow start to the FW15/16 season with less than favourable snow conditions making for tricky selling conditions in the run-up to Christmas, the fluffy white stuff did eventually join the party.

The hotly anticipated El Niño reversed a recent snow trend in America, with the parched West Coast finally receiving a winter to remember, and the East Coast suffered from a strange weather system, resulting in a fairly snow-free season. While El Niño mixed things up for the snow business, the pacific ocean served up some all-time conditions ranging from many spots on the Americas' coastline to Hawaii's Pe'ahi (Jaws) providing the greatest live televised XXL Wave contest ever. Not to be left behind, snowboarding has just seen its highest ever air, made at the Suzuki Nine Knights hip session at Watles in South Tyrol in Italy, with Christian "Hitsch" Haller boosting an astounding 11.3 metres into the sky.

As thoughts of snow turn to slush and to the beach, waves and balmy days full of skating, it's with great pleasure that we can report on the news of Sport-Achat, Nantes, Europe's first tradeshow since ASR Europe with significant relevance to the surf industry. Sport-Achat, Nantes offers the European surf industry an opportunity for retailers, brands and distributors

to meet under one roof to discuss, share stories and view next season's collections for purchase.

In this issue, we take a look at what retailers in both our industry and the wider landscape are doing to 'Embrace Technology', while online action sports marketing expert Jérôme Harlay talks us through a case study of his, where he helped launch the digital offering (website and social media) for a newly opened bricks and mortar surf shop in Tenerife. We have all our usual spots, with Retailer Profile going to Bude in Cornwall, Buyer Science travels to Brittany in France and trend reports spanning surfboards, SUP, longboards, hanging shoes and sunglasses.

For our first surf issue of the year, our Big Wig interview features Reef's EMEA General Manager, Nathan Hill. Nathan's life hit a fork in the road, when in the 90s he decided to swap selling cars at an Audi dealership for a career in the surf industry. Nathan fills us in on what he's learned in 20+ years in the business and explains why Reef's 'Just Passing Through' campaign has seen great success for them.

Always Sideways,
Harry Mitchell Thompson
Editor

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On the cover: Dragon's Director of Product, Mike Tobia slotted in a dreamy Nicaraguan pit.
Photo: Tony Zacharek.

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MIKITA

mikitaoclothing.com

KERING SELLS ELECTRIC TO CEO ERIC CRANE

Kering have sold Electric via a management buyout to a group led by CEO Eric Crane, making Crane the 100% owner of the brand. Under the new leadership the brand hopes to grow from what it learned under the Kering umbrella and apply the business analysis and KPI-related knowledge on a more workable scale. Crane is looking forward to running the company at a pace that suits the brand, and not in the way that one of the world's largest luxury goods companies thinks it should. Crane informs us that the brand is well financed through cash and loans and that its goal is to self-finance the company's growth, but also says he wouldn't rule out a strategic partner in the future if goals and values were shared. In operations terms, Eric says it's simply business as usual in Europe, serving France, UK, Spain and Germany based out of their European HQ in Anglet.

SPORT ACHAT NANTES DEBUTS SEPTEMBER

Sport Achat in Nantes debuts from September 17-18 to serve the west of France with a surf and outdoor tradeshow. Over 70 brands have already signed up and the show is supported by the FPS, FIFAS, Eurosima and OSV associations. This in particular gives the surf and SUP brands their first major trade show for a number of years close to the Atlantic coastline. Located in Nantes, Brittany the location is only two hours from Paris and one hour from Geneva and Lyon by train making the show extremely well connected to the whole of France. www.sportachat.com

WASTED TALENT TO DISTRIBUTE SLOWTIDE AND OCTOPUS IN EUROPE

Wasted Talent Agency, based in Hossegor, France have won the European distribution for Slowtide and Octopus. Slowtide won AGENDA's Accessories Award for their aesthetically pleasing towels and Octopus is a new surf traction brand on the market, coming from California and founded by professional surfers Nate Tyler, Dion Agius and Chippa Wilson.

SURF SNOWDONIA RE-LAUNCHES FOLLOWING £1 MILLION OF NEW INVESTMENT

The Surf Snowdonia Adventure Park re-opened its doors for its first full season at on March 19, a week ahead of the long bank holiday weekend and Easter holidays. The first man-made wave in the world open to the public had to close its doors at the start of the winter due to a mechanical fault, but thanks to £1 million of new investment, the project owned by Conwy Adventure Travel Ltd is back up and running, and with an all-new Total Wipeout-esque 'Crash & Splash' obstacle course.

DVS APPOINTS KERRY GETZ AS GLOBAL SKATE TEAM MANAGER

DVS Shoe Company, the Southern California lifestyle footwear brand has appointed Kerry Getz as their Global Skate Team Manager. Getz skated pro for many years, is an X-Games gold medalist and has been with DVS since the turn of the new millennium.

FREESTYLE.CH CANCELS 2016 EDITION

Swiss action sports event Freestyle.ch has cancelled its event for the second year in a row. A representative of the company stated: "We are very disappointed and sorry to break such bad news for the second year in a row. We want to thank you all for your support and loyalty towards this unique event."

UWL WORKSHOP APPOINTS SEA FOLK AS UK SALES AGENTS

UWL Workshop have appointed Sea Folk as their UK sales agents for South Coast Surfboards Cj Nelson Range as well as guest

shapers Tanner Prairie / Panda Surfboards / Neal Purchase Jnr / Ellis Erikson / Thomas Bexon / Dyer Brand / Dead Kooks & Josh Oldenburg.

VANS APPOINTS GEORGE PEDRICK AS JUNIOR PR & MEDIA MANAGER VANS EMEA

George Pedrick has joined Vans to assist with the running of PR & Media for the company in the EMEA region. George most recently served as Senior Account Manager at Canoe Inc Ltd, where he looked after brands including Burton, KR3W, Oakley and Vans.

HOBIE REUNITES BRAND UNDER SINGLE OWNERSHIP

The Hobie Cat Company are reuniting all facets of the brand under one roof again, for the first time in 40 years. Previously the company had been split under three separate entities, but the company says they are uniting in order to "continue its strong track record for product innovation while opening new doors for corporate partnerships and growth."

BURTON ANNOUNCES KEY PROMOTIONS IN MARKETING & PRODUCT DEPTS

Burton has announced several key job appointments, including: Anne-Marie Dacyshyn transitioning from her role as SVP of Marketing to Burton's first Chief Marketing Officer, Creative Director Evan Rose has been promoted to VP of Creative Marketing, Randy Torcom has been promoted to VP of Brand Marketing and on the product side, Chris Cunningham joins the senior management team as VP of Global Product and will now lead all product categories in both softgoods and hardgoods.

FOUNDER BEN MACKAY APPOINTED CEO OF ABSOLUTE BOARD CO LTD.

Absolute Board Co. (Absolute) has announced that founder Ben Mackay is to take on the role of Chief Executive Officer. The move has been made in order to ensure Absolute can continue to deliver its mission "To get more people skateboarding."

SHAUN WHITE LAUNCHES APPAREL LINE WITH AMERICAN FASHION RETAILER MACY'S

In his latest business venture, professional snowboarding's most successful son, Shaun White is releasing a line of apparel with Macy's in the United States. WHT SPACE will deliver a fashion-forward capsule collection for the retailer, which will offer "fashion-forward staples that are highly wearable and capture the faster sides of White's style" aimed at "the trendy and active millennial guy."

BIRDHOUSE SKATEBOARDS APPOINTS SHINER DISTRIBUTION AS EUROPEAN LICENSEE

Iconic skate brand Birdhouse, founded by skate legend Tony Hawk, is supported by one of the best teams in skateboarding, boasting two consecutive Thrasher King of the Road victories to their name and has appointed Shiner to handle their European business.

BROCK LITTLE: BIG WAVE SURFER & STUNTMAN DIES OF CANCER, AGED 48

Big wave surfer and stuntman, Brock Little has died aged 48 after a short battle with cancer. The Hawaiian gained a reputation as a big wave behemoth early on in life after finishing fourth in The Quiksilver In Memory Of Eddie Aikau, aged just 19 and went on to compete at some of the world's gnarliest big wave spots including Waimea and Mavericks. Little later went on to feature as a stuntman in films including Tropic Thunder, Training Day, Transformers, Live Free Or Die Hard, Lords Of Dogtown and Godzilla to name a few.

QUIKSILVER APPOINTS CALIFORNIA SPORTS AS ITALIAN DISTRIBUTOR FOR QUIK & ROXY

Quiksilver group has appointed Turin-based California Sports as its new Distributor in Italy for the Quiksilver and Roxy brands.

IASC ANNOUNCE THOMAS BARKER AS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The International Association of Skateboard Companies (IASC) has announced the promotion of Thomas Barker from Director of Research to the role of Executive Director. He will take over the position from former Executive Director Josh Friedberg, who served as executive director from 2011 until 2015.

MAKIA PARTNERS WITH FINNAIR FOR IN-FLIGHT SHOP

The Finnish apparel brand Makia and Finland's flag carrier airline Finnair have signed a new partnership. Now you can get your next Makia shirt on-board through Finnair's online service.

PROTEST SPORTSWEAR ANNOUNCES OPTION AS NEW DISTRIBUTOR FOR ITALY

Protest has appointed Option Distributor to take care of its Italian distributor starting with product for the 16/17 season. Current distributor California Sports will remain the company's Italian distributor until the end of the Spring/Summer 2016 collection.

BURTON EXPANDING ITS EUROPEAN RETAIL PRESENCE

Burton Snowboards is expanding its retail space in the Alps and recently opened two additional partner stores this past season in Laax and Flims (SUI). These shops joined the squad of Burton Stores in Innsbruck (AUT), Milan (ITA) and Helsinki (FIN) and the brand are now looking for new partnership opportunities.

FOX MAKES STRATEGIC ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGES

Fox Racing (Fox) have announced four steps in the execution of the company's long-term strategy intended to improve effectiveness and align the business with its five-year plan, including relocating its finance, IT and sales function from their Morgan Hill offices in California to their Irvine global HQ. The company is also scaling back its women's lifestyle apparel design and development divisions and David Durham has been promoted to Creative Director for all categories. Pete Fox is also transitioning from his previous operational role, to now sit on the board of directors.

HLC TO PRODUCE AND DISTRIBUTE SK8MAFIA & JSLV

HLC have announced a partnership with Sk8mafia and lifestyle brand JSLV. Founded in San Diego by Dan Connelly and Josh Priebe in 2004, SK8MAFIA has become one of the strongest and most recognizable skate brands in the world.

SHINER APPOINTED THE NEW EUROPEAN APPAREL LICENSEE FOR SANTA CRUZ AND INDEPENDENT

NHS has announced that Shiner's first delivery of Santa Cruz and Independent apparel will be the Autumn/Winter 2016 ranges.

BLACK DIAMOND MOVES HEADQUARTERS TO INNSBRUCK

Black Diamond, a global innovator in climbing, skiing, mountain sports equipment and apparel, has announced Tim Bantle has been appointed

to Managing Director of European operations and will oversee business at their new HQ in Innsbruck.

AMERICAN SPORTS RETAILER SPORTS AUTHORITY FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY

American sports retailer, Sports Authority looks to close 140 American stores and lay off a third of their work force as it files for bankruptcy to fix its \$1.1 billion dollar debt. The company will remain open for business during its period of controlling its debt and modifying the business with Sport Authority's CEO and higher management stating that this downturn is largely due to the retail landscape heading online.

ARC'TERYX ANNOUNCES JON HOERAUF AS THE NEW GENERAL MANAGER

After four successful years at the helm of Arc'teryx, President/General Manager Vincent Wauters will be passing the leadership torch to Jon Hoerauf, currently the brand's global commercial leader.

DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENT BETWEEN NICE SKATEBOARD AND SURF LOUNGE SAS

NICE SKATEBOARD and Surf Lounge SAS are joining forces for the French market by an exclusive distribution agreement effective immediately.

HOBIE SUP ANNOUNCES NEW EUROPEAN DISTRIBUTION

Hobie Stand Up Paddleboards Announces Hobie Cat Europe as its new European Distribution Partner.

TOM SIMS' WIDOW HILLARY LEADING SIMS RENAISSANCE

Snowboard legend Tom Sims passed away in 2012 and his widow Hillary is heading up the brand under its ethos of 'Back To The Core' in a renaissance that is seeing the brand make quality snowboards out of the Never Summer factory in the States. Under their 'Back To The Core' ethos, SIMS are only working with "truly core shops who live and showcase the spirit of snowboarding". SIMS are distributed throughout Europe through the following partners: Sardona Trade GmbH (Switzerland), Maxtrack (UK) and Choppy Water (rest of Europe).

WOMEN IN BOARD & ACTION SPORTS ANNOUNCES RE-LAUNCH

WIB team has been restructured to keep pursuing the association's goal of promoting women in the action sports industry and is now an official non-profit organisation "Verein", registered in Switzerland.

BRIXTON APPOINTS RUUD VERMEY AS EUROPEAN GENERAL MANAGER

Brixton have appointed industry vet Ruud Vermey as their European General Manager, based out of their new European HQ in Amsterdam. Vermey has over two decades of experience in the European market, previously working for Vans and Sole Technology.

SURFSTITCH CO-FOUNDER JUSTIN CAMERON RESIGNS AND LOOKS TO ACQUIRE COMPANY WITH PRIVATE EQUITY. COMPANY APPOINTS NEW CEOS

SurfStitch's co-founder Just Cameron has resigned and intends to acquire the company in conjunction with private equity. The company abandoned its financial guidance to push on with their restructuring/expansion plans and saw their stock plummet from \$1.73 to \$1.07 with the news. After the news broke, the SurfStitch Group announced Lex Pedersen, one of SurfStitch's founders and head of Swell.com and founder and head of SurfDome in Europe, Justin Stone will share CEO duties.



photos: pilonl



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TRADE SHOW REVIEWS

ISPO, MUNICH, JANUARY 24-27, 2016

Overall ISPO continued its domination of the European winter trade show schedule with the number of exhibitors increasing again to 2,645 with a total of over 80,000 industry professionals at the show. Likewise the international nature of the show was underlined with 87% of exhibitors and 65% of visitors coming from abroad. So at a global level no winter sports show in the world comes close in number of visitors and exhibitors and within Europe ISPO visitor numbers are 15 times more than the next biggest show. Most winter sports categories were happy with the new hall layouts which essentially saw outdoor and action sports swap halls.

However the action sports sector at the show is not reflecting this optimism. This year brought a mixed bunch of reviews, as difficult trading times particularly for the snowboard industry meant that fewer brands than normal exhibited. The hardgoods brands that were there all seemed happy with the levels of business, in particular the Nidecker group commenting it was their busiest ISPO ever - with less brands exhibiting retailers had more time for those that were there. The new hall layout saw action sports moved to Hall A6, B6 and B5, all grouped around the Messestadt Ost entrance served by the last stop on the U-Bahn. Brands had been worried that the move would see a dramatic drop in visitors to their booths as the traditional entrance was at the other end of the halls, but the draw of action sports still has its attractions. The snowboard labels exhibiting in hall A1 in the past were now in hall B6 along with the miniramp, the longboard Embassy, ISPO Inspire, Tailgate Munich (snowboard-freeriding/splitboarding), ISPO Tandem Space, and Monochrom City - showing a strong overall brand mix from the categories on show. With the number of exhibiting snowboard brands down, the hall was no longer full and some late cancellations gave little time for the hall to be reorganized. The far end of the hall was busy as always with the miniramp and longboard embassy continuing to pull in the crowds. The new Action Sports Lounge at the entrance to hall B6 was a useful calm oasis for daytime meetings.

In hall B5 the focus was on general snow apparel, cameras, ISPO Cold Water Surfing, Sneakology and The ISPO Brandnew Awards. The CWS Platform's first outing was a great success in 2015 and it was a shame this was not repeated this year as the concept is a strong one giving

the surf industry a real winter focus at the only show in Europe that has a surf platform. ISPO also took the opportunity to introduce their Sneakology platform with a display featuring 100 legacy sneaker items from brands such as k1x, Asics, Luf, G-Shock/Casio, Eisbär and more. In Hall A6, The ISPO Freeski Summit continued to be a draw for their community and the OSV's Camp de Base had grown again and become the focal point for the French winter sports industry with nightly events and great food. At the far end of Hall A6 the SUP platform was part of the Water Sport Village which this year included a large test tank. Also new for 2016 was the DJI Cable Session in the Atrium between halls A6 and B6, which took place over the first two days of the tradeshow.

So with its unique combination of skate, surfing and paddle offerings on top of its traditional strengths in the winter sports markets, the show still offers great opportunities for those brands that attend. As the number of snowboard-only retailers drops, the importance of crossover shops that stock all winter sports increases and this kind of retailer is ISPO's bread and butter. A number of brands with both snowboard and ski products combined their snowboard stands into their ski stands and were happy with the number of crossover shops who took a new interest in their snowboard offering.

The networking opportunities at the show continue to draw brands not exhibiting as many sent in teams of people to take what ever they could from the show, so this obviously shows that these brands continue to see the positives of the ISPO show, even at times when a tough budget environment mean they have other priorities. The main issue for snowboard brands has been the overall cost of attending the ISPO show and this is something that ISPO is now working on to provide a cost effective solution so that all brands - whatever their size - can afford to attend. As long as this can be achieved, the Snowboard industry, which ever country its from, will have a European show around which it can tie its collective flag to and demonstrate to all retailers that this is a sport that they need to be involved in.

Dates for 2017: February 5-8.

www.ispo.com

SLIDE TELFORD, UK, JANUARY 19-21, 2016

For the second year in a row Slide tradeshow in the UK took place before ISPO, in fact it was again the first trade show in Europe where it was possible to see all of snowboarding's 2016/17 winter products. The early dates gave buyers plenty of time to make their selections whilst meeting order deadlines for production. As always attendance was about quality rather than quantity with most of the key buyers attending Slide. The show hosted over 250 brands in 2220 square metre of exhibitor space. As well as attracting key hardware brands, there was a modest increase in apparel brands attending the show. New exhibitors to the show for 2016 include Big Balls Collective, Blitz Eyewear, Sunny cam, K-nit, Cuddle Duds, Heat Holders and Xensr and brands returning to the show include Melon Optics, Man O'Leisure, Dirty Dog, Oakley and Bloc Eyewear.

On the first night (Tuesday) was the annual bowling night at nearby Telford Ten Pin. The first 100 entrants who got 2 free games (teams of

5), were served platters of food and half price beer kept retailers and brand employees alike entertained for the evening.

On Wednesday evening the AGM of the SIGB was held. The formal business was kept short and was followed by the presentation of the Slide Awards, prize giving for the bowling and an update of SIGB activities including the Go UK Buy UK campaign. The Slide Awards were voted for by invited media, specialist retailers and industry opinion-leaders. In the software category, the Head Quantum Jacket was recognised for its innovative breathable outerwear with The EXO Phase technology and for accessories the award went to Dragon Alliance's X1 Goggle featuring 'Transitions' lenses, which automatically change tints in response to changing sunlight and weather conditions. Dates for 2017: January 24-26.

www.slideuk.co.uk

BRIGHT, BERLIN, JANUARY 19-21, 2016

We arrived in Berlin to bright blue skies with a thin layer of snow underfoot. This is Bright's second winter show in this location, which is directly beside fellow trade show, SEEK and the first under common ownership. The combination of the two shows in one location has made the Berlin Arena Europe's main hub for streetwear and contemporary men's fashion and one of the main draws of Berlin fashion week. Visitors were 30% up on last winter's show, with the international draw remaining strong with over 50% of visitors coming from abroad. Bright looks and feels like a real tradeshow with over 250 exhibitors taking over 2,600 sq metres of exhibitor space on a single floor with the de-industrial backdrop fitting well with the variety of stand designs. The floorplan had been changed a little to create a better flow for visitors with different areas for the different segments of Bright. Boardsports is located in the entrance area with brands such as Nixon, DC, Diamond, Globe, Brixton and Vans. New for this winter is an indoor skateable area with skate hardgoods companies such as Element, Cleptomanicx, Primitive, Mob and 24/7 Distribution exhibiting next to it. This quickly became party central as the skate brand teams hung out, videos were premiered and a number of competitions were held - the highlight being Element's Barrel Jump Challenge which was won by Chris Pfanner. This has really reinvigorated skateboarding at the Bright show, which was what the exhibiting brands were looking for.

SEEK, BERLIN, GERMANY, JANUARY 19-21, 2016

Across the road from Bright, SEEK is a key destination for buyers at fashion week and was particularly busy on the first two days, as visitors flocked to view over 200 brands exhibiting on a single floor in a single hall. All the stands are supplied to the brands with the same chipboard backdrops and decoration is kept to a minimum. Boardsports apparel brands at this show are looking for a more boutique style retail base and this year a few interesting accessories brands showed for

JACKET REQUIRED, LONDON, UK, FEBRUARY 3-4, 2016

Having started in 2011, this was the 10th anniversary show. In those five years exhibiting premium menswear casuals brands have grown in number from 30 to over 300 confirming Jacket Required's position in the UK trade calendar. The Autumn/Winter 16/17 trends were presented in the new expanded layout format and floor plan first used successfully in the summer show at The Old Truman Brewery. The show's bare white walls, and the provision of two simple hanger-rails per stall allows for buyers and brands to get back to basics - the product. Visitors entered on Hanbury Street and then walk through an entire new hall before finding themselves back at the old entrance

SPORT-ACHAT WINTER, LYON, FRANCE, MARCH 7-9, 2016

3,750 visitors attended the 16th edition of the Sport-Achat winter show. This was a slight decline in visitors from the previous year but the number of companies visiting remained the same, demonstrating that retailers were still attracted to the show but were trying to find cost effective solutions to attending. This was a repeat of the pattern at the Snow Avant event earlier in the season. Over 640 snowboard, ski, outdoor and mountain brands exhibited across all the winter sports categories in 20,000 square metres of exhibition space. As last year the show was opened by the Secretary of State for Sport, Thierry Braillard, who also participated in the conference on the economic importance of sport in France. There was a general positive air about the show as snow conditions had improved considerably in the month before the show, with retailers more interested in hardgoods and accessories than softgoods. To cater for the French February holiday, the show is always held considerably later in the calendar than the other European winter sports shows and the brands have adapted their sales deadlines to meet this requirement.

Bright also featured various art shows, live painting and tattoo action as well as the launch of Lamono's latest book. As always there were plenty of off-site activities from brands such as Carhartt, Obey, Converse, Mastered.com, Adidas and Nike. It got a messy at the Lido - the European Skateboard Awards' new home. There was a big queue at the door, with a good old crush to get in, followed by a noisy fun-loving crowd enjoying the opportunity to get messed up, with a much smaller stage and less lighting. The winners were: Daan Van Der Linden, who picked up European skateboarder of the year, Isle Skateboards (brand of the year), Kilian Zehnder (rookie of the year), Vase (Isle Skateboards video of the year), Tom Knox (Vase - Isle Skateboards video part of the year), Jacob Harris (Vase - Isle Skateboards videographer of the year), Skate Pal (West Bank Palestine charity of the year), Solo skate Mag (media of the year) and Alex Pires (photographer of the year). The new skateable area combined with the Bright European Skateboard Awards has cemented Bright's position as the defacto home of skate and youth streetwear during Berlin Fashion week. Dates for Summer: June 28-30.

www.brighttradeshow.com

the first time including Sneaker Lab with its environmentally friendly water-based premium cleaning kits and Heimplanet with its inflatable tents and bags. Dates for Summer: June 28-30.

www.seekexhibitions.com

leading to the rest of the show. Action sports brands were located in the same hall as in the summer and for the first time were joined by Quiksilver, with Global Creative Director Josh Rush, on hand to take you through the latest collection and even rolling his sleeves up and getting some sales done. Just off from the home to action sports brands, JR opened up a new working space for those who simply can't leave it in the office.

Dates for Summer: 27-28 July

www.jacket-required.com

Building on its successful introduction at Sport-Achat Ete 2015, Crème Fraîche, an area showcasing young companies selected by Sportair, made its debut at the winter show. In the 400 sq metre exhibition space emerging companies such as Aphex, Prism and Red Keys exhibited, all are under five years old and have a turnover of less than €150,000 with an emphasis on innovative new products. This summer's Sport Achat, Lyon show is from September 12-13 and will be combined with Bikexpo. But the big news for boardsports is a new in Nantes on September 17-18 to serve the west of France. Over 70 brands have already signed up and the show is supported by the FPS, FIFAS, Eurosima and OSV associations. This in particular gives the surf and SUP brands their first major trade show for a number of years close to the Atlantic coastline.

www.sport-achat.com



ON SNOW DEMOS

The on-snow demo calendar was squeezed this year with ISPO moving forward, and the Snow Shop Test in Italy being held four days after the trade show. The weather extremes had quite an impact on demos this year, with Snow Avant Premiere having high winds closing lifts on the middle day and Shops 1st try having bluebird and powder for its middle day. Just the luck of the draw! But whatever the snow conditions these events will continue to play a key part in retailers' snowboard product selection. A common development this year was to have brand personnel riding with retailers while they tested new equipment, this gives the brands the chance to explain their new technology whilst retailers are actually strapped in.

SNOW SHOP TEST BARDONECCHIA, ITALY, JANUARY 31 - FEBRUARY 2, 2016

This is the only combined snow and ski test event in Europe and is the essential in-season meeting point for the Italian snowboarding and ski industry. The event organised by Marco Sampaoli was held at Bardonecchia after ISPO. Conditions were a little windy in the early mornings, but then the sun prevailed and maybe even made it a little too hot for a good quality test because the snow was of a 'spring-slushy' quality. During the two days, 1,293 products from 102 brands from both sports were tested by 90 Italian retailers. Deeluxe boots and Funky Snowboard exhibited for the first time and Black Hole was back after five years absence. The pre-test evening saw an ISPO workshop with talks on splitboarding by Jonathan Craviotto and on the

European Outdoor Market by Benedetto Sironi followed by grappa at the Hotel Des Geneys. The next night at the welcome party by ISPO the 2015 Snow Shop Awards were presented. The Best Snowboard Shop for 2015 presented by ISPO went to Sportmarket Cornuda. Minoa Sport was awarded for the "Fly-Zone" promotion, in the category 'Best Shop Promotion 2015' by Pointbreak and the Lifetime Achievement Award by SOURCE was presented to Luca Molon, founder and owner of the Detour Verona shop.

www.snowshopstest.com

SNOW AVANT-PREMIÈRE, LA CLUSAZ, FRANCE, JANUARY 10-12, 2016

Sportair's SAP test gave the European snowboard industry its first look at winter 16/17's hardgoods, gathering 50 exhibitors and 348 shops from across France, the UK and Switzerland from Sunday though to Tuesday. On The first day the weather gods finally looked down on the French Alps favourably with some much needed snow but also poor visibility for testing. Snowfall turned to rain on day two in the test village with testing restricted to the beginner slope with high winds closing down the rest of the mountain. On day three the wind died down and the freezing level dropped below town-level, meaning there was plenty of snow to be had, so powder board testing was the order of the day. Back in the test village the 450 sq metre on-site exhibition and dining tent really came into its own when the weather closed in, giving everyone somewhere to congregate and get some respite from the elements. On the first day at 4pm Act Snowboarding

magazine invited everyone inside the showroom tent for a "soupe de champagne" aperitif. This is always the best time to debrief, speak with reps and press to exchange views on the kit tested with retailers and to look at the exhibition wall to choose which snowboards you'll test the following day. This was followed by the SAP party at the Bachal Bar with Infamous DJ, Radiomeuh. The second evening's appetitif was courtesy of Nitro Snowboards. Some retailers also took the opportunity to visit ASAP, Sportair's softgoods show in Annecy, where brands show their 16/17 apparel lines at their own showrooms or at the ASAP specific showroom, before visiting the Monday night Fashion Show Party at Impérial Palace in Annecy. Dates for 2017: January 15-17.

www.sportair.fr

SHOPS 1ST TRY, ALPBACHTAL, AUSTRIA, JANUARY 17-19, 2016

The snow gods answered prayers and graced Shops 1st Try from the first day with a heavy snowfall followed by day two's ideal testing conditions; bluebird and powder. With the test held only four days before ISPO, those brands and retailers who had come along way were able to go from one event to the other with only a short gap in between. The test area at Alpbachtal was slightly increased in size from last year to squeeze in the 62 exhibiting brands. New to the show were Stepchild, new bindings brand Fix, and Boa Technology. The updated Candy data tool was less temperamental this year after a series of updates. Dakine gets a big thank you for breakfast waffle time, which became a must and warmed the industry up for the day ahead. This year's exhibition dinner on the first evening was once again held in the Congress Centrum Alpbach, the local exhibition hall, but this time the dinner tables were interspersed with product displays from almost all the test brands. This gave brands the opportunity to

sit down and really talk through their products at length with retailers and provided a calm relaxed ambience before the late night partying. All those involved in the exhibition put in a lot of hard work, for what was a very well received addition to the event. Later that evening The Shops 1ST Try Retailer's Choice Best Board Design Award by BoardSportSource was won by CAPiTA with Jones and Nitro equal 2nd and Bataleon in 3rd. The following evening it was dinner at the Alphof and a casino evening afterwards with a roulette table, a poker table and a black jack table to gamble your luck away. Following an exhibitors meeting at the end of March, the organisers, Munchie Konsilium are open to all new ideas to develop their event. So please contact them if you have any suggestions. Dates to be confirmed at time of going to press.

www.shops-1st-try.com



photos: Harry Mitchell Thompson

THE SURF CABIN, BUDE, CORNWALL

The Surf Cabin in Bude is a well-supported and favoured local surf shop for the dedicated surfers of the North Cornish and Devon coast. Owner Ian Boyd caters to the exact needs of his local surfing audience with an array of top quality premium products alongside his exceptional experience and knowledge of the English surf industry.

Could you tell us a bit about yourself?

When I was younger, we'd spend hours driving to the South West just to surf two hours of often freezing cold onshore walls of white water, but sometimes you'd score it and that was always the great gamble. After university I quickly realised that Law wasn't exactly the route I wanted to go down, so I upped sticks for ten years, spending time boat building and surfing in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, USA and Mexico.

Please could you explain how and why you decided to set up shop when you did?

After returning from Baja, Mexico my wife and I settled in Bude and I managed Surf Wind n Ski for the owner and local big wave charger Barry David. I spent ten fun and informative years learning and building up a solid customer base before we closed after an amazing 25 years. The natural, but slightly frightening progression was to set up a shop myself, with my nerves steadied by the brilliant support of my wife and much of the surfing community here in Bude.

You have a close relationship with Firewire - what are they like to work with as a brand?

I'll always remember being on my knees, covered in dust sanding the floor of a completely empty shop, when Firewire's global CEO Mark Price walks in and shakes my hand. I literally had nothing to show him, but he understood my vision, and saw the passion and the direction I wanted to go in. Thanks Mark if you're reading this! Firewire have continuously supported me to this day. They have a highly desirable product that is a strong seller and the greener element sits especially well with me.

What's your assessment of the current state of the industry as a whole? I'm positive and excited; it's refreshing to see new ideas and brands consistently trying to better their products. The wetsuit industry is still producing lighter, warmer and more flexible suits on a regular basis and working hard to lessen the impact on the environment with bio-rubbers. Surfboard technology is alive with new brands and models. Kelly Slater has won the Volcom Pipeline Pro on his new Slater Designs boards and will be in the shop soon.

If lessons have to be learned then look no further than the seismic turnover in ecommerce where the internet shops are steadily lowering margins to undercut competition. Only last year I saw a highly desirable surfboard brand that I stock, being sold online for less than trade into me. It's unnecessary and in my opinion devalues a great product.

As far as the next few years are concerned, I would like to see a conscious shift by more consumers to shop locally at their independent surf shops.

What advice can you share with fellow core, surfer owned stores?

Firstly I think you really have to love what you do. Secondly you have to put the hours in and I mean a lot of hours. Customers don't want to walk into your shop and see a 16-year-old kid staring at social media - they want you, the owner. The owner makes the shop, he makes the business. Try and ask your customers for feedback about the shop as much as possible. Listen to them as much as possible and they are so much more likely to come back. Educate them over prices. Rather than laughing when they ask for £100 off a new board, explain that actually that's your entire margin. How are they to know?

Unlike the online stores, we can get hands on; encourage trying on as many wetsuits as possible. Get the boards off the racks and under their arms. Oh and most importantly don't forget get some surf and family time.

You're very involved locally - why and how important is this to the image of your store?

I wanted a shop that served and sat comfortably within the community. I've strived to be as open and approachable as possible and support local activities. The shop is proactive in looking after our stunning environment and is a committed supporter and promoter of our local beach cleans. Coordinating and sponsoring charity surf competitions will always play a special role, now and in the future. Giving back is something special and certainly appreciated by the community. 🇬🇧

LIKE WEARING NOTHING

Gabriel Medina wears Mirage Aggrogame

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HAYDENSHAPES



photos: Euroglass

SURFBOARDS : 2016 TREND REPORT

Healthy and straightforward, the surfboard market is cruising along nicely. With a progressively more high-end position and a big wave of technological innovation, the surfboard is no longer a consumable but an investment in pleasure capital.

By David Bianic.

Last year in the same surfboard trends report we were presented with an observation that was both reassuring and demanding in relation to retailers. While surfboard sales were going like a dream with double figure growth, the flipside of the coin was that there had never been such a diverse range. The paradox: a specialised market, which is a generalist at its heart.

Twelve months later and the report healthier with the big players of the market such as Euroglass (Quiksilver Surfboards) indicating a "10% rise in made in Europe boards compared to last year", explains workshop manager Darren Broadbridge. With an international presence, Firewire are also confirming the sector's good health with CEO Mark Price noting that "sales in European coastal areas were on the rise in 2015, while the technical surf sector still performs better than most other categories in core shops". And yet, another medium is partly cannibalising the water boardsports market: "SUP continues to grow at a higher rate and is attracting many new participants", ponders Liam O'Shea from Holysport, European distributors of Global Surf Industries Brands (Haydenshapes, 7S, Walden...).

Even those making a comeback to the surfboard market in 2016, such as Brunotti, are revealing through their market studies that the upward trend is very much a reality. This proves that the clientele has turned up to play and is welcoming newcomers with open arms. Obviously Lib-Tech springs to mind, a solid snowboarding and skateboarding machine that has been investing in the surf segment for four years now: "Our sales are increasing year after year", indicates Mike Olson, snowboard champion and founder of the brand, "all our boards are manufactured in our own factory, four minutes from the sea and it is cranking seven days a week, practically 24h/day."

This new competition doesn't scare the usual suspects of the industry, as marketing manager of Hoff (SurfTech, Venon, Torq...), Benoît Brecq asserts: "More and more market players are selling boards. The cake just keeps getting bigger so no one's slice is getting smaller." And this is not even counting the second hand market, adds Benoît, "the second

hand market is very active, in shops as well as on the internet." All the foams that pass through the shaping machine cutters take different forms of course, but to tell the truth, there is one that seems to be in.

THE H BOMB

The most wanted model in 2016 remains the hybrid shortboard, a shorter, wider version that's rounder than the traditional high performance surfboard. "They are appreciated by intermediate surfer who want to get onto a small board and also by good surfers who want a bit more of an easy paddle without compromising on performance", explains Benoît from Hoff. For Darren at Euroglass, the requirement specifications are simple, at least on paper: "We want hybrids that surf like shortboards (performance) but that paddle like hybrids."

Early into the hybrid niche, Firewire were also amongst the first to sense the rise of this kind of shape, as Mark Price reveals: "Hybrids are continuing to sell well but performance hybrids are now overtaking". But why? According to the Firewire big boss, it might just be a way for a surfer to complete his quiver. He also cites the impact of the world WSL elite whose own boards have grown round: "They are now a bit shorter and wider, which allows a wider segment of average surfers to draw enjoyment out of this kind of board." This prodigious, never-seen-before versatility is now also significant at SUPERbrand, whose "three classic models, Toy, Vapo and Fling are seeing great success", designs that are "user friendly" points out Rémi Chaussemiche, commercial and marketing director for the brand in Europe, and are "able to be surfed by high-standard surfers as well as intermediate surfers."

Of all these hybrids, the numero uno is called the Hypto Krypto, a world bestseller signed by Haydenshapes and popularised by freesurfer Craig Anderson. It has been the top selling model for three years, "three-time winner of the Board of the Year prize", adds Liam from Holysport. "Its sales increase each month while word of mouth plays its part and highlights the board's great versatility." To strike while the iron's hot, the Hypto Krypto is coming back in 2016 with three different colourways and a new, 5-fin set up.

BIG STICKS

As the El Niño winter 2015/2016 is characterised by the frequency and considerable size of the swells that lap the Pacific as well as Atlantic shores, the gun market is coming out of its niche to become a significant segment in the annual report: "We have sold 30 guns of over 8 feet between October and December, it's become a real market," confirms Darren from Euroglass. Another big board to make a comeback is the ever-appealing longboard and it's not just popular amongst the retro-lux movement. "The longboarding is working well at Firewire", says Mark Price, "because surfers are realising that our technology is even more effective on longer boards." At Hoff, long-term distributor of SurfTech, 9 footers and over have always represented an engine of activity and Benoît confirms that they have "always been popular", with "models that are sought after by the wider public."

SOFTCORE

In less than five years, a new epiphenomenon has come to shake up our standard quivers: a mellow purveyor of contagious fun. The softboard is no longer limited to surf schools with new designs seducing more experienced surfers. Characterizing this trend, the Beater from Catch Surf has been invited into the most core surf shops, confirms Andreas 'Maui' Maurmeir, distributor of the brand on the Old Continent since autumn 2015: "To cut a long story short, I'd say that the Beater is a good choice for any conditions that you'd have previously written off as lousy or considered unrideable." It's still too early to quantify their success but Maui speaks of having "bought all that was available at the American manufacturer and it all got sold". These funny little weapons are backed up by technology after serious R&D from brands, as Frans van der Vegt, marketing and product development manager at Brunotti confirms: "we have developed new techniques to provide top-of-the-range softtops." The Beater from Catch Surf has two or even three slats on longer models, "truly rigid boards", stresses Maui, "which sets them apart from other foam boards". For under 300 euros, these boards have found their place on the market, complementing "serious" models.



Photo: SUPERBrand

TECHNOL-ORGY

At last. At last. At last. While the traditional polyurethane/polyester combo is still getting most people's vote, the wider public is warming to innovations in construction materials. Since traditional foam was

born, everyone has been striving to reinvent the wheel like Channel Islands have with their BarronFlex, as Adur Letamendia from Olatu (Channel Islands, ...Lost, Pukas) explains: "It's about EPS foam with varying densities to provide different flex configurations." It's the same objective but different means at DHD with the brand new Epoxicore, "a hit at every surf expo in the world", rejoices Tiago Raimundo, boss at Mindx, manufacturer of boards branded Darren Handley in Europe. The Epoxicore combines two pieces of different foams to make one piece, classic PU (polyurethane) and Styrofoam (extruded polystyrene) to provide the dynamism of an epoxy board and the flexibility of a PU/polyester model; the distribution of the slats also contributes to making a particular flex. The result is even more striking in the flesh! SUPERbrand are also venturing into this by using "a very lively EPS foam, without slats, laminated with four types of different reinforcements, spread in six directions," explains Rémi Chaussemiche.

It comes as no surprise to see an impressive demonstration of technology from the mad scientists at Lib-Tech and their intriguing Nitrogencell Foam: "A foam whose structure has been drawn from top to bottom and filled with liquid nitrogen to make it more resistant to compression and provide lots of springback", reveals Mike Olson. Another advantage of this foam, it does not absorb water: invaluable in the event of damage. And that's not all, the foam is covered head to toe in basalt fibre, "an excellent shock absorber compared to fibreglass", then the whole thing is laminated in a honeycomb structure, the Hexzylon Fibrefoam: "the upper layer is super solid and light with magnesium fibre tissue", adds Mike, "and along the rails, elastomer (elastic) fibre serves to reinforce everything, giving you the feeling of surfing on silk".

Olatu has a big part to play with the Spanish factory producing for the brands Channel Islands and ...Lost, as well as its own label Pukas: "Carbon patches, different stiffnesses thanks to slats or lack of, different foam densities...A whole load of ingredients to play with", exclaims Adur Letamendia. And why not cardboard? This is what Brunotti are onto with a honeycomb structure that will feature in a mass produced line, confirms Frans van der Vegt.

In contrast, "sandwich/moulded boards are in decline compared to classic PU/epoxy", relates Benoît from Hoff, which was the target for SurfTech, NSP and TORQ. "In terms of new constructions, for

"10% rise in made in Europe boards compared to last year."
Euroglass Workshop Manager, Darren Broadbridge.

2016 we have Thunderbolt technology in distribution in the Tolhurst/Harley Ingleby longboard: a sandwich high-performance epoxy mixing epoxy and carbon with incredible memory, very light and ultra-high performance", commends Benoît, while other models should also see the light of day with this technology.

Even the PU purists at Euroglass are offering the flavour of the month: "We have released a few boards in Varial foam for Leo Fioravanto and he digs them", reveals Darren Broadbridge. Finally, GSI are enjoying the success of Haydenshapes' models and their FutureFlex construction (EPS foam without slats but with a carbon frame along the outline) to include technology a bit similar to the brand 7S: "the Carbon Vector on the 7S and FutureFlex boards at Haydenshapes were in high demand as customers were seeking lighter, more responsive models", highlights Liam O'Shea from Holysport.

In terms of fins, the trend is no longer about exclusive choice but about exhaustive choice with more and more brands offering set ups with five fins, meaning you can have as a thruster, a quattro or five-fin (Thanks Kelly Slater).



#LC6 IS HERE



EUROGLASS
 HOSLEGOR FRANCE

Photo: Haydenshapes by Hugo



WASTE DISPOSAL

"We are probably still quite far away from seeing true cradle-to-cradle technology (C2C), but its day will come", extends Mark Price from Firewire whose eco-credibility is a reality. Here and there, everyone is striving to fight against the production of waste in their own way, especially by reusing resin waste (Olatu), or by recycling boards in the Resurf project: "We all have a collection point within the company to recycle used boards to be then dealt with by Resurf", points out Benoît from Hoff. At Euroglass, they are going in pursuit of cleanliness by "directly improving our carbon footprint" affirms Darren, explaining that rigorous cleaning allows the machines to work better and consume less electricity. The argument of "better boards=happy customers=longer lifespan" keeps cropping up. For Darren once again "less bad boards out there on the market is beneficial to us and to the planet".

Further still, Lib-Tech are using "foams that do not contain isocyanates or swelling agents that are full of nitrogen. As for the offcuts, they are recycled for making more foam. We do not use any airbrush paints, adhesives or sandpaper. Our factory runs on wind and water power." Firewire's fight against pollutants is too long to be explained in detail: bio-resins with foam densifiers and outsourced waste control management, these efforts have the aim of making "zero waste come 2020" says Mark Price.

DISTRIBUTION

More fun, more tech, more clean; the 2016 surfboard crop does not lack selling points and the proof lies in the fact that sales of the top-

of-the-range are performing better and better: "Boards for beginners are

hardly selling", explains Pete Craig, co-manager of the shop Bundoran Surf Co, in Ireland. A few hundred miles away in Munich, Toby Haseloff from the shop Santo Loco notes that "people are better informed and prepared to pay the price for a known brand or shaper". So far this wave of very specialised models has not broken into the bigbox sports stores or other wider-public shops and Darren from Euroglass adds: "The big shop chains rarely get involved in core products and anyway, the margins are not what they are looking for." The same feeling is at DHD, as commercial director of Mindlx, Clésio Correia, admits to having worked "80% with core shops, 10% with more mainstream shops and 10% with big chains". The loyalty that brands show to retailers is the mark of a successful marriage and the sales figures prove the expertise of core shops. Back to basics. 📍

HIGHLIGHTS

- Performance Hybrid
- Foam Innovation
- Without slats and carbon reinforcement
- Combo flex/stiffness
- Short softtops

venon SURFBOARDS



VISIONARIES

CARVE
EYEWEAR :: CLOTHING :: FOOTWEAR :: ACCESSORIES



JUMP INTO 2016 WITH YOUR STORE'S DIGITAL GAME

The internet is the most important communication and information medium; but small traditional skate, surf and snowboard shops can be suppressed by the big online players – it's a complex thing and **Jérôme Harlay** from Harlay Sports, an online marketing outfit with a focus on action sports talks us through a case study of his, where he's equipped Quivers Surf Pro Shop in Tenerife with the tools they need to survive as a small store online in 2016.

It's now a shop's mission to turn shopping into an experience again, to turn the shop into a treasure trove, and to inspire customers, ensuring they return to the shop – even when the weather's not great. While many larger shops in urban areas have impressive, interactive websites, SOURCE has been made aware that there are still a large number of stores across Europe who still haven't fully embraced the internet. You can do this without extensive investment, and it can even be done during your store's quiet periods.

Quivers opened a 20m² shop space in early 2015 in Puerto de la Cruz, not far from Playa Martiánez – a favourite with tourists, beginners and kids after school. The shop stocks a high percentage of hardware (boards, leashes, pads, board bags), clothing from Vissla, SUPERbrand, Billabong, Element and skate shoes from Vans.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Quivers are active on Facebook, but don't heavily boost their channel; they post and share, but not a massive amount. Instagram followed for them in autumn 2015 and, most importantly, they installed a Google MyBusiness account, so users searching for a surf shop on Google Maps will immediately see their venue. This is vital for your business online; it's free of charge and only takes five minutes.

Ensure that profiles on Facebook, Instagram and Google MyBusiness are filled out completely; the more information you offer your customers, the more relevant you are. Also make use of the whole image area for your logo – you want to stand out. Use Instagram to post images of new arrivals, have a 'pick of the week' and involve customers in dialogue – you'll soon your social presence grow.

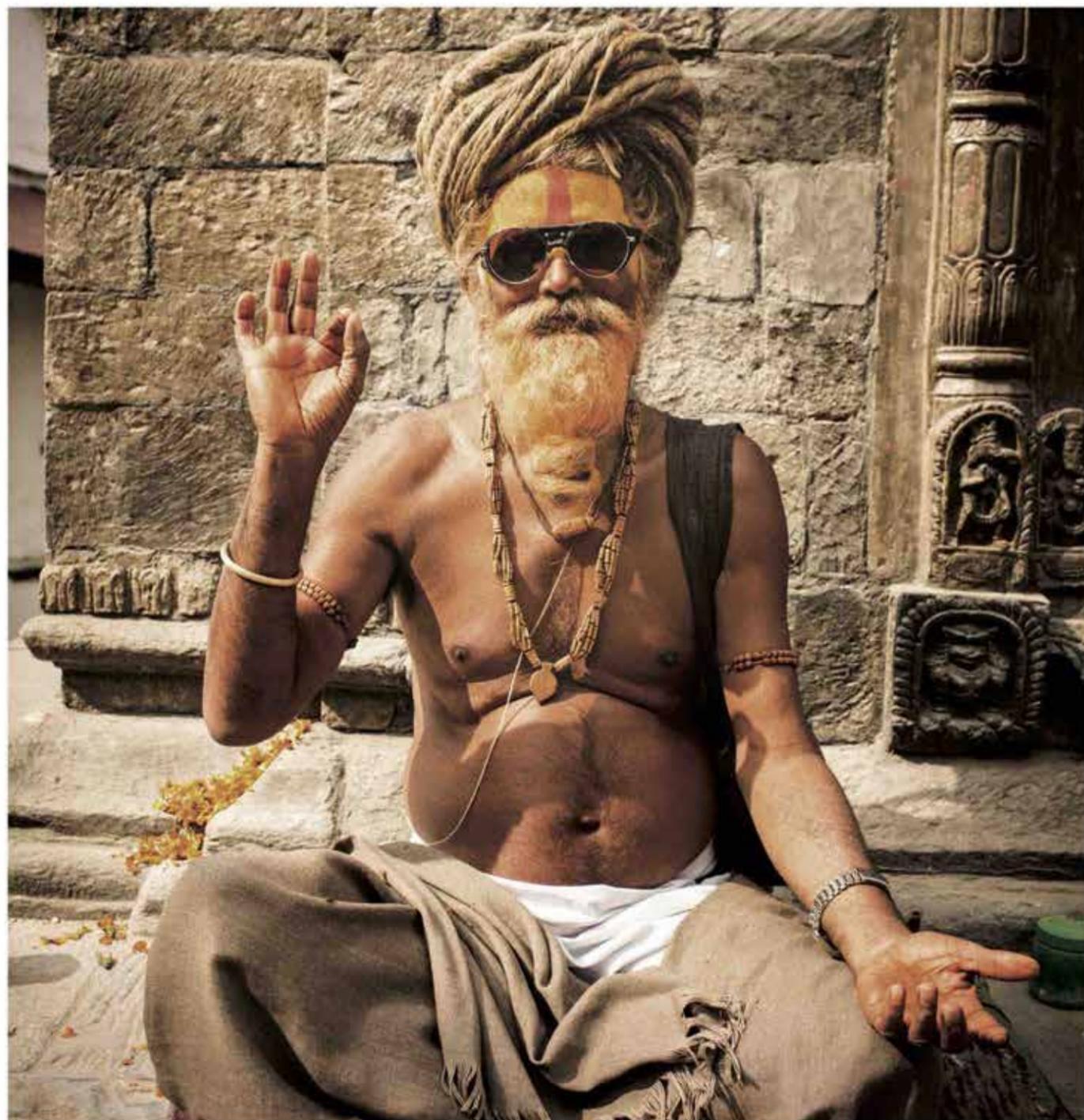
WEBSITE

A website came next for Quivers in 2016. Not to sell product online but

to create a presence, like a virtual business card. This showcases the shop, but also shows the services offered, the team and brands on sale. This is easy to do even without programming skills; the Quivers site was generated on Wordpress, for which there is a huge forum full of people happy to help if you get stuck. The site is simple yet functional, and contains all necessary information in three languages. Google MyBusiness is embedded on the homepage, the Instagram feed appears at the bottom of the page to visually jazz things up, while the footer contains buttons for Facebook and Instagram. And to really get a better idea of who their customer is, Google Analytics is incorporated as well. Analytics is a free tracking tool, which allows you to see where your users come from and how long they stay on which page. These factors help you to decide which posts are working and which aren't. Wordpress features various plugins to make things easier, such as a SEO plugin that allows you to implement SEO operations easily.

Don't use the Wordpress web-hosting service, instead look for your own host – domain and hosting should cost no more than 60-70€/year. You can also create your own email address there (eg. info@own-domain.com), which looks more professional than a Hotmail account. Also, ask brands to add your shop and website to their 'Shop Locator', to direct prospective buyers to your shop –this increases web relevance. Avoid channels such as eBay and Amazon like the plague! If you use these platforms consumers are able to find the products they desire on the web and won't visit your shop. Amazon is able to see which products are working well and will thus be able to sell your niche product itself the following season – for a cheaper price, of course. As you can see, you can utilise the Internet in a positive way, with next to no cost or effort, and guide customers to your shop. Return your shop to what it set out to be: a meeting point for liked minded people... 

There's limited space to go into great detail in print, but check "Your Guide to Web Marketing" on the SOURCE website for in-depth articles on each subject mentioned above.



FEATURING THE ELECTRIC X ROARK GLACIER GLASS TO SUPPORT NEPAL. PHOTO: CHRIS MCPHERSON

ELECTRIC



THE OPTICS OF OHM

OPTICAL HEALTH THROUGH MELANIN

CALIFORNIA DESIGN - SUNGLASSES - WATCHES - ACCESSORIES - WWW.ELECTRICCALIFORNIA.COM



Photo : VonZipper

SUNGLASSES : TREND REPORT

While most product groups have a clear seasonal distinction and more or less straightforward ordering systems, there is an exception to the rule: sunglasses. Which are sold through the year, on beaches, mountains and in cities, and for core clients as well as mainstream-passersby. And hence follow slightly different rules to meet that never ceasing, always changing demand. This trend report will clear things up and give some insights into what brands will be selling into shops over the next couple of months.

By Anna Langer.

Since sunglasses are an accessory that performs all year round, is needed in every season and basically fits into any shop concept, they ask for different processes than most categories that follow a seasonal pre-order model. Sunglasses roughly do too, but only Electric and Neff work on purely pre-order nowadays, most other brands also work with stock sales. Mainly due to increasing online sales, as David Cowan, Marketing at Melon states: "We do both – thanks to the significant activity on our online shop" and Dylan Roukous, CMO at Nectar Sunglasses also finds that their "online business is stronger than retail at this time" and hence works with pre-order and stock sales.

Dirty Dog, Proof, Zeal, Quiksilver, Spy, Roxy and Oakley work solely with stocks for their sunglasses, allowing them "to be more reactive and efficient within the market as we always have stock of the best sellers" says JP Bonnemason, Global Eyewear Product Manager at Roxy & Quiksilver, "Sunglasses are a unique field, so we have adopted a different way of ordering in this specialised distribution."

TRENDS

The main trend for sunglasses is still the combination or integration of sports performance and stylish looks. "The key trend for Electric Fall/Winter 16/17 sunglasses collection is the OUTDOOR segment. We live at the intersection of style and performance," says Trade & Retail Marketing EMEA, Maite Dupont. Their S-Line adds grip

pads, stronger, thinner, lighter frames and dedicated performance lens coatings to some of their most popular styles. Dragon Sales & Marketing Manager EMEA Craig Smith's reading from the same hymn sheet: "Tech in our eyewear is a huge focus for us," saying they are adding more colours and styles to their H2O Floatable collection, as well as their Adaptable XP (Cross Performance) Range. Zeal feel a "growing need in the market to provide additional stylish lifestyle pieces that don't compromise function or performance while maintaining our commitment to environmental responsibility," says Marketing Specialist Nate Hrivnak, and POC, Quiksilver, Spektrum, Spy, VonZipper and Shred focus on the "perfect combination of style and performance" too.

VonZipper are launching their "all new patented technology called 'Wild Life Lenses' which will create an all new visual experience by selectively absorbing light in the area where the eye is more sensitive, creating an energy boost as well as more comfort and clarity".

“Sunglasses are a unique field, so we have adopted a different way of ordering in this specialised distribution.”

JP Bonnemason, Global Eyewear Product Manager at Roxy & Quiksilver.

When it comes to fashion, “round and oval shapes” (Brunotti) are still popular, especially with “thin acetate or metal” (Roxy). VonZipper introduce two new women’s models with round shapes, Cheapo combine them with mirror lenses, Proof love “funkier retro silhouettes” and Spy experiment too, yet admit that “round shapes still have trouble gaining sales traction, but are a great talking piece,” says Keith Asher, Spy’s Senior Eyewear Designer. Oakley also see that “on-trend customers currently love round shapes, but we still have an ongoing demand for our dynamic rectangular and square shapes,” says spokesman Hans Arnesen.

Retro-inspired square shapes are staying important for VonZipper and Quiksilver, “inspired by vintage bikers” since “many surfers are fond of custom bikes” explains Quik/Roxy’s JP. They also feature an Aviator shape and Carve “push back to classics” as well, with Club Master models that can also be found in Sinner’s collection. Wayfarers aren’t going anywhere either and are in lines from Carve, Dirty Dog, Neff, and Proof. Spektrum completely stick to classics with all four models of their very first sunglasses collection.

Making sure that things don’t get too boring, Oakley is introducing the Wind Jacket 2.0, “an oversized cylindrical shield that was engineered for snow use,” and Roxy incorporates a new flat lens, “a Korean inspiration adopted by all the fashion brands.”

COLOURS

Dirty Dog sport “bright two-tone frame colour-ways”, Melon feature “inside two-toned acetate frames,” and VonZipper combine “two different colours within the same frame” and “solid and translucent” colours, explains Pedro Fernandes, Brand Manager for Europe. POC feature a “new range of translucent frames,” Oakley do “crystal colours” and Spy also mention “translucents.” Roxy go for “matte crystal champagne”, Shred put “neutral colours on the frames and temples”, Ovan have “several earth tone spotted acetates,” and Zeal stick to “neutral-oriented, subdued patterns and tones.”

Electric combine a nude shade with the continuing tortoise trend that made a huge come back last year and is going to last for at least another season, with representations in almost all collections, including Smith, Sinner, Shred, and Brunotti. Spektrum feature “Havana tortoise”, VonZipper have “normal torts, shadow torts, demi torts,” Melon feature a “gloss terrapin” next to a “new take on traditional patterns with our aqua tortoise frames,” and Smith add “flecked green tortoise for men” and “flecked mulberry tortoise and matte tortoise shocking pink” for women.

Colour will probably never go out of style and even though the more sports-performance oriented models tend to “include loud, brighter colours”, as Zeal’s Nate explains, the overall focus on combining style and function means that there’s a bit of both in everything. Dirty Dog make it very easy for the customer to find what they’re looking for in separating their collection into the “Stealth & Anti-Stealth Range,” the latter of which brings “colour to the table in a big way, utilising bright, vibrant colourways on crystal frames” as Operations Manager Tom Lazarus states. Melon concentrate on “diversifying” colourways with “new takes on traditional patterns” and “limited edition prints.” Neff have “every colour of the rainbow available in the Daily Sunglass, including seasonal patterns (Pizza, Hot Sauce, Rasta)”, Ovan offer “two pop colours, yellow Havana and blue Havana for the bolder look”, Quiksilver and Roxy have tie dye, “artworks from the boardshorts/ bikini or outerwear collections” as well as a “glow in the dark collection” for kids. Spektrum rock a Mint colourway, Sinner have a few neon colours and Spy use “colour blocking to accent different materials and textures.”

Counterbalancing all this brightness, there are a lot of classic shades,

in line with Dirty Dogs’ “anything goes as long as it’s Black” approach to their Stealth Range. Black gloss, polished and satin finish from Carve, Cheapo, Ovan, Sinner, Spektrum and VonZipper, sit next to matte versions from Brunotti, Carve, Cheapo, Dirty Dog, Smith, Electric and Melon.

LENSES

There’s not that much new when it comes to lens colours. Electric complete their “existing offer of grey, bronze and alpine” with “amber, rose, green and natural,” Spektrum favour “brown, green and smoke” and Carve go for “traditional grey, green and brown lenses” like most other brands. Revo and mirror lenses are still popular as well, especially with Carve, Brunotti, Dirty Dog, Melon, Neff, Proof, Spektrum and Sinner, although Hugo de Boo, Creative & Designer for Sinner thinks that “shiny lenses (revo) are getting less intense. More just a blue mirror for example,” like Dirty Dog, who add blue and red fusion to their emerald lens.

More innovation is found behind, or rather inside the lenses that are becoming more high tech every year. Polarized options are continuously gaining grounds with more models in collections from Brunotti, Quiksilver, and Roxy, or even completely polarized ranges like Nectar introduce. As do lenses that adapt to changing light situations and enhance vision, such as Spy’s Happy Lens and Smith’s ChromaPop. VonZipper are launching their “all new patented technology called ‘Wild Life Lenses’ which will create an all new visual experience by selectively absorbing light in the area where the eye is more sensitive, creating an energy boost as well as more comfort and clarity”. Zeal introduce their “AUTOMATIC LENS for 2016/17 – a high-performance style that combines photochromic technology and polarized protection into a single lens to provide a consistently improved visual experience despite what weather the day brings,” and Oakley transfer their Prizm™ technology to their sunnies range with the WindJacket 2.0. Shred use “Rapid Photo, which is built to instantly adapt to varying light conditions,” while Ovan features a “low-stress, high grade EMS Polyamide Nylon 6 lens” that “relaxes the eye while providing enhanced colour perception, impact protection, total UV protection and insanely clear optics thanks to fused polarization,” explains Vice President Joel Kramer. Electric infuse their lenses with Melanin (‘Optical Health through Melanin’) to “block harmful UV & HEV blue light relaxing your eyes and providing vivid, crisp, clear, haze free vision,” and also Quiksilver’s mineral glass polarized lenses aim to enhance “eye comfort”.

For frames, Grilamid and Acetate are still the main materials, but there are more eco-friendly alternatives emerging. Next to the plant-based Evolve by Smith and Z-Resin from Zeal, they include cotton-based acetate, recyclable aluminium and wood from Proof, bamboo and “100% recyclable CX” from Sinner and a new “polymer formulation based on high crystalline polyamide, which is derived from a natural oil” in the NoWeight™ line from Shred, that uses “structural engineering” to “minimize the amount of material used while maximizing the stability and performance.” 

HIGHLIGHTS

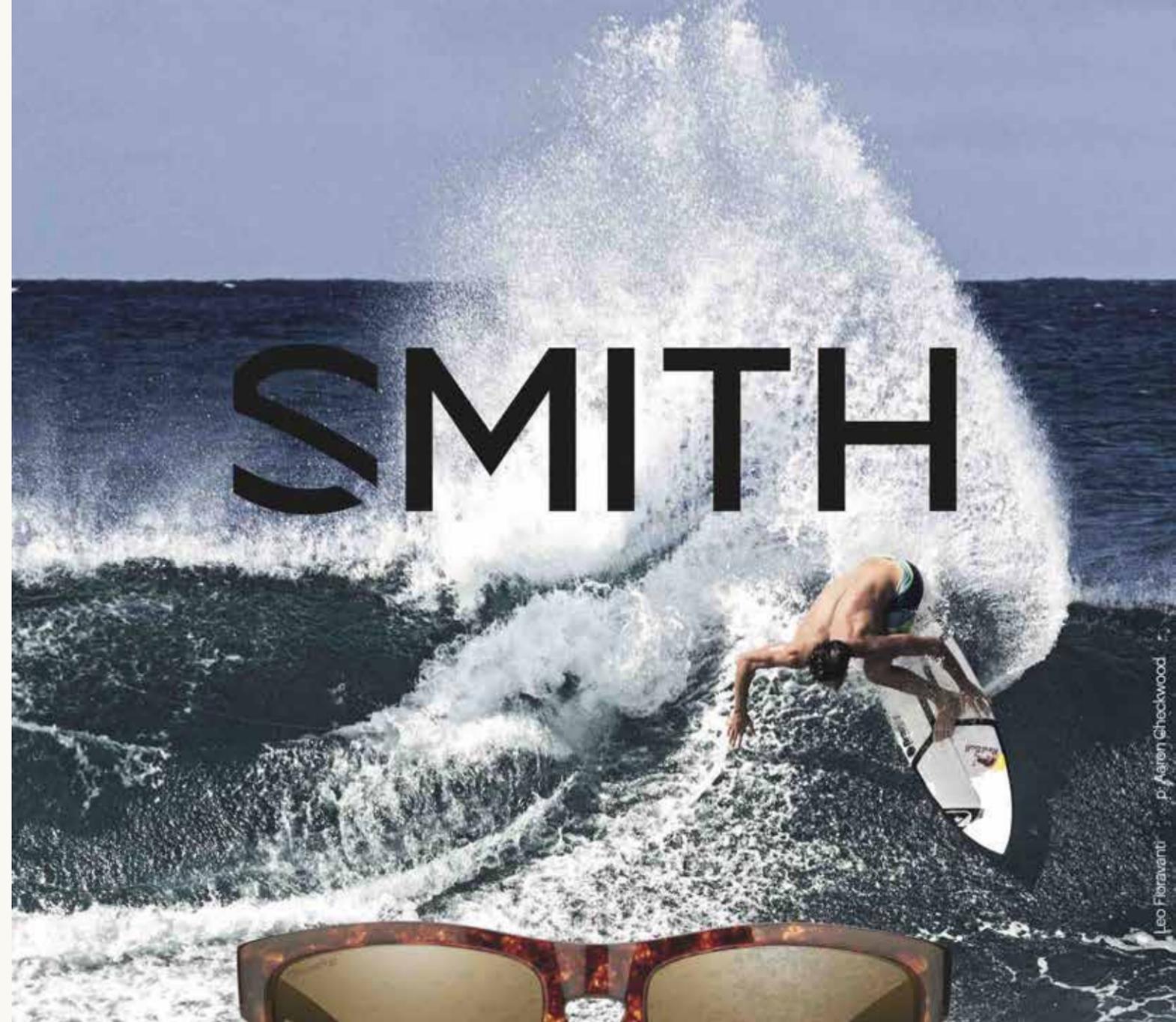
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Bliz - Rapid



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Brunotti - Hadeo



Brunotti - Hefano



Brunotti - Hincio



Carve - Sublime



Carve - Onyx



Carve - Volley



Cheapo - Burn



Cheapo - Padang



Cheapo - Stockholm



D'Blanc - Tan Line



D'Blanc - The Champagne Coast



D'Blanc - The Dosed



Dirty Dog - Axle



Dirty Dog - Vendetta



Dirty Dog - Ultra



Dragon - Liege



Dragon - Montaineerx



Dragon - Seafarerx



Electric - Stacker



Electric - Fade



Electric - Knoxville



Gloryfy - Déjà Vu



Gloryfy - Genesis



Gloryfy - Bon Voyage



Melon - Layback



Melon - Nomad



Melon - Tripper



Neff - Brodie



Neff - Sweep



Neff - Daily Shade



Oakley - Latch



Oakley - Moonlighter



Oakley - Sliver

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Proof - A Eagle



Proof - E Scout



Proof - S Ontario



Quiksilver - Barrett



Quiksilver - The Ferris



Quiksilver - The Summit



Roxy - Alicia



Roxy - Jill



Roxy - Miller



Shred - Axe



Shred - Belu\$hki



Shred - Lance



Sinner -Cascais



Sinner- Red Forest



Sinner - Skagen



Smith - Bridgetown



Smith - Comstock



Smith - Founder



Spektrum - Mint



Spektrum - Havanna



Spektrum - Havanna



Spy - Atlas



Spy - Cameo Alana



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BIG WIG: REEF EMEA GENERAL MANAGER **NATHAN HILL**

Reef EMEA General Manager and industry vet, Nathan Hill has dedicated 20+ years of his life to the surf industry.

Nathan was working for an Audi dealership in Bristol, England in the early 90s when he decided to swap trading cars for a career in boardsports, and he hasn't looked back since. Having started out working for brands including Hot Tuna, Headworx and Voodoo Dolls before joining VF Corp in 2005, Nathan has some fascinating insight on how the industry has changed over the years and explains how Reef has aligned all business strategies; resulting in the brand firing on all cylinders. **By Harry Mitchell Thompson**

How has the surf market changed since 2005?

It's changed massively, the retail landscape is completely different and the core retailers have become fewer and fewer. I don't think we as an industry did the best we could to protect some of them, although some of them were their own worst enemies.

At Reef we have always maintained a strong connection with the core, from grassroots sponsorship through to having Mick [Fanning] on the team, but now the opportunities in core are decreasing and this is leading to more of a focus outside our traditional landscape. We have seen this in so many industries, and those that manage to keep their core values and speak to that wider lifestyle audience have been the most successful. The outdoor element surrounding all surf brands is becoming more and more important in ensuring that we are able to

speak to that more general consumer. It's where we have always been found at in a retail space perspective; it's just not something we have spoken about in great detail.

I also believe that the surf industry is unfortunately still recovering from the boom days, when the big brands felt that there were no consequences to sell all, to all. Both the high street and online were full of brands and the price wars ensued. I think today we look back as individuals at those darker days as a very painful learning process, but the brands themselves are still hurting. Major brands, industry leaders, losing virtually all of their value was not something that the general public ever really saw, but within the industry these have certainly been troubling times for all involved. Although I see this as a consequence of poor decisions made when we all thought we could do no wrong.

Please talk us through the repositioning of the brand in Europe since your appointment to Reef.

I don't think we have 'repositioned' the brand in the truest sense. I think the team has simply grown to understand the brand's strengths, and these are the things that resonate most with the end consumer - surf, travel and the freedom that these things afford all of us.

I believe that 'Just Passing Through' has been a huge vehicle for us to talk to these values. I feel that the 'adventure' tag is too widely used to bridge the gap between surf and outdoor retailer opportunities, but for Reef this really does apply. It applies to us through our ambassadors, the products and the content we produce. What we have done is ensure that we are working with the best partners and we are working with them to ensure that we are both invested in the stories that we are telling of the adventures that we are having.

In late 2014 Mike Matey joined from a marketing perspective as VP of Global Marketing to head up the team in the US. What we saw quickly after this appointment was that the experience and the expertise at this level is key to ensure that everyone at the brand are all pulling in the same direction. Mike made sure that the brand was globally aligned behind one message, and that message was 'Just Passing Through'.

What is Reef's USP?

I believe the ability for Reef to both resonate in heritage and innovation is certainly something that sets the brand apart from the competition. The fact we still have a huge business in franchises over 20 years old, like the Smoothy and the Fanning, whilst seeing the newest products with the newest technology do so well in the form of The Rover Sandal and closed-toe footwear.

" I think the team has simply grown to understand the brand's strengths, and these are the things that resonate most with the end consumer - surf, travel and the freedom that these things afford all of us. "

This is certainly true in apparel where we continue to marry the most advance boardshort technologies with some of the most heritage fabric prints. In Spring 16/17 you will see this develop even further in how we view the essentials needed for a trip and how versatile a product can be when truly designed with the surf traveller in mind. This is another way that 'Just Passing Through' is built into everything that we do. In apparel our recent success has really come from that fusion of the new and the old and understanding that you can deliver great aesthetics and function without having to compromise.

Which product categories (new and old) are Reef currently investing marketing into and why?

Swellular technology, which is featured in the Rover shoe and sandals in both men's and women's has been huge for us over the last two years. It's seen the shoe jump to our number one footwear product in the line and the sandal is currently the third best seller - something that is no mean feat when you consider the volumes of sandals we produce globally. You will see even further development of this platform in SS16 and beyond as we have taken the first step towards making this technology more widely accepted with the introduction of the Slammed Rover, a slimmer profile sandal with a much younger feel - the reaction has exceeded our expectations so far and it's still yet to be pushed through our advertising channels.

Apparel and accessories continue to play a huge part in the future growth of the brand - from, as previously mentioned, Surfaris, the boardshort franchise through to how we develop the accessories

that will ensure our trips are as simple as possible. We have taken a pragmatic look at the needs and wants of our consumer and what we have found is that fit, cut and quality are still drivers for success. Modern travel doesn't allow for poorly produced, ill-fitting apparel, as the chances to replace it whilst on your journey are probably not an option (and most of don't want to see a shop on a surf trip anyway, that's what we are trying to escape).

Luggage and backpacks still present a big opportunity for the modern traveller. Every trip we take we are actively improving our offering; more relevant pockets, easier access at the airport, etc. And with the likes of Kai Otton, Mitch Crews, Evan Geiselman and Ben Skinner as daily users, product develops pretty quick.

Sitting under the VF umbrella you're in good company. Please could you give examples of synergies shared between Reef and other VF brands?

VF have been a fantastic brand owner for us - we have been afforded the ability to invest and grow the brand not just from a product and new technologies perspective, but also with regards to people. Jeff Moore, the Reef Global President is a long-serving VF employee and has brought many of the disciplines ingrained in VF to the brand. Jeff, as a surfer, has also been able to balance the needs of a surf brand with the corporate requirements that come with being in the VF family - doing this correctly brings huge benefits.

On a day to day basis, I am lucky that I sit at the same table as the heads of Vans, The North Face and Timberland, and the learnings that can be taken from brands of that scale certainly benefit the way I am able to approach my business with more confidence.

At a product level there are also obvious benefits: One of our newest Fall 16 apparel offerings has been supported by being able to work with the teams behind The North Face when producing jackets like the Insulator and us having access not only to their expertise, but the technology that makes them the very best in their field.

What's the thinking behind Reef's current 'Just Passing Through' ambassador campaign?

We continue to develop the best riders in Europe that we believe not only surf to the highest standard, but also ensure that they are behind the brand and its ethos. I have personally been very involved in working with the team to ensure they are just that, Ambassadors and not just a sticker on a board. We are all very involved in the selection of the team; in Europe we tend to look for those guys that really offer something different from the global team and that are fairly diverse in their interests within surf - riding all crafts, for example. And the travel element is huge for us, we are still groms at heart and if we can't travel the world we certainly look to have as many images from the team arriving in our inbox as possible from world class breaks around the globe.

I am so incredibly proud of the way that every one of the athletes has been involved in the brand and how they all have a vested interest in the brand being a success. The key to this is the fact we have treated every one of them as we would want to be treated ourselves; open dialogue, delivering on our promises and sometimes giving constructive criticism where something isn't necessarily right. 🌐

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STAND UP PADDLE : 2016 TREND REPORT

The stand up paddle industry is diversifying in a myriad of directions while still seeing growth and having a significant impact both beside the ocean and inland. I am pleased to once again have the opportunity to share what I have gleaned these past months regarding the health of the SUP industry. I would be remiss in not reminding you of the vision evoked some years ago by Laird Hamilton; of seeing SUP become the bicycle of water sports. Today, more than ever, all signs indicate that this is exactly what is happening. If I were a weatherman my forecast for the 2016 European SUP season would be simple: "Bright with a few clouds on the horizon..." **Report by SUP Editor Robert Etienne.**

KEY EUROPEAN MARKETS

Our best indicator for this year's market outlook here in Europe is to look at how our friends in the southern hemisphere have fared (opposite seasons means they've coming to the end of their summer). It is summed up in one word - growth! Both Australia and New Zealand have recorded strong sales with about 30% growth for their 2016 season, according to John Hibbard, Red Paddle Co's Founder and Brand Director, while there is no guarantee that the European market will mimic this trend, the steady growth and low inventories at season's end are very positive signs.

Germany, France and the UK clearly continue to lead in terms of volume. However, the direct imports offered by various Asian producers, especially for inflatables, has caused major brands to be more cautious in sharing numbers. Karin Gertenbach, International sales manager at Fanatic remarks: "At Fanatic we're even careful not to disclose total national sales estimates (all brands) for any country as they've seen too many Far East producers contact dealers directly with seemingly great prices but poor quality product as well as non-existent customer service". The smaller market sizes are also proving to be solid players, boasting a steady rise in their sales, as stated by Karl Muller distributor for both Naish and Starboard for Switzerland and Austria.

While at ISPO in Munich last January, I had the opportunity to speak with PaddleExpo's founder Horst Fürsattel to get his view on SUP oversupply risk due to the steady rise in the sport's popularity. Horst responded with measure: "In my view, I think that many of the players in the SUP scene are the same professionals who've learned good lessons in the years of windsurfing's oversupply; those still in the business have years of experience and are cautious to no longer stock high levels of inventory". When asked what exciting novelty to expect at next PaddleExpo (Nuremberg, October 7-9, 2016), Horst answered: "I am checking out the options for an on-water demo on the first exhibition day with BBQ and all if we can get the authorization in time."

HOT TRENDS

As the sport continues to mature, materials, design and technology have also continued to improve, resulting in lighter and stiffer boards. Nowhere is this more noticeable than in the inflatable category where these improvements are literally felt when lifting the board and pushing off for a paddle.

John Hibbard, Red Paddle Co's Founder and Brand Director reports: "The biggest thing for us this season is the MSL technology (Monocoque Structural Laminate). By automating the outer/second layer laminating process we have been able to produce boards with an unrivalled cosmetic finish that is 20% lighter but also up to 5% stiffer." When asked if this has other advantages, Hibbard is quick to respond: "Yes, the MSL boards also roll up smaller so you get improvements in all aspects."

High-end board designs continue to evolve, but according to the majority of brands the bulk of sales remain within the mass market/general participation category (10'6" - 11' all-round boards). Hibbard adds "SUP is a sport for all, so, while there are some niche trends with race board designs, for example, the main tendency will be that there are more people on the water in the general participation category."

Helgo Lass, SIC's Sales Manager shares: "At the high wind areas, downwind becomes more and more of a hot topic, as riders become more attracted to the discipline". Although SIC was somewhat of a niche 'custom' brand, things are rapidly changing since their partnership with Flow Sports. Their roots remain deeply embedded in open ocean and coastal downwind riding.

Thierry Kunz, Brand Lead for Nidecker and Laird Standup concludes: "There are so many ways to use a SUP today that trends come from everywhere, but in the end, enjoying riding is the most important trend."



Photo : Fanaic

RETAILER SUPPORT

Since the sport is still so new to the masses and because more and more non-watersport consumers are joining the activity, the industry needs to educate the newcomers and train sales staff. This is key to the healthy growth of both the sport and the industry. Clément Morandière, Starboard's International Sales Manager clearly understands this and states: "It's so important to correctly relay the specifics and direction of the brand. Last September, we had 250 boards and paddles shipped to the Costa Brava (Spain) where over 300 dealers and 35 distributors participated in our 2016 international sales meeting. Our entire crew made the trip to share product innovations, and conduct presentations."

On retailer support, Benoit Treguilly, Bic's Communication Manager likes to have feet on the ground: "There's nothing better than regular shop visits by our sales reps. Despite the myriad of tools available (retail shows, online website, online training, sales books etc.), it is very difficult to replace having a sales rep actually go and visit the store, talk to the owner and present the range."

At Red Paddle Co they're building a platform to help retailers learn about what the company does and specifically how they work and differ from the pack. John Hibbard, Red Paddle Co's Founder and Brand Director says: "Our global retail network is our focus. We want to help every sales person in every shop that sells Red Paddle to be able to sell with more confidence and more knowledge and not just read from the brochure."

The opportunity to get on the water and demo the product remains key. Hoff's Marketing Manager, Benoit Brecq (NSP, Ari'i Nui) promises: "For 2016 we are developing training days for the top retailers, where we will come with our SUP Demo Truck to inform them about technologies and shapes".

ONLINE VS BRICKS & MORTAR

Online stores have massively benefited from the ease of selling inflatables as they're already boxed up and easy to store. This is certainly the single factor that has motivated so many to enter the business. On the downside, many consumers have had the unpleasant surprise of purchasing poor quality equipment and have had terrible experiences in getting return authorizations with faulty products and ensuing logistics of the exchange. Brands unanimously agree that nothing replaces the feeling of being in a shop where friendly, experienced and passionate staff share the stoke. Sander Blauw NSP's Sales & Marketing Manager comments: "Online is growing but only works when combined with brick and mortar; actual stores with a

solid online presence carry much more trust, repurchase and upsell potential than simply anonymous web sales". People still want to try before they buy. For Red Paddle Co this translates into the majority of their online stores also having brick and mortar stores.

Nikki Wester Naish Marketing at Kubus Sports concludes: "Shipping of hard boards is complex, so we're talking to (brick and mortar) retailers about defending their margin and market by not just focusing on air boards but being specialized in hard boards as well where online retailers can't compete."

OPPORTUNITIES & THREATS

Maybe cliché, but the analogy fits: SUP has the wind in its sails! It is so attractive and accessible to the masses, diverse in its uses and applications and offers so many avenues for income. Focus SUP Europe's Phil Mandeau points out: "The Sport of SUP is starting to get the attention of the general public. More and more SUP schools, races and retailers are popping up on the market. SUP federations are forming and SUP is a sport for every age and person."

A pessimist might see an industry going in too many directions, but this is an opportunity for all-weather users and for those making a living from SUP. As an industry, we need to be responsible in the ways we address every angle of the sport to protect its image as best we can and to create potential chances for its development. My approach is usually "the more, the merrier..." and have heard such extremes as a dog trainer teaching people to SUP with their dog! No joke and he is handsomely paid to take four-six dogs and owners for 'doggie SUP training'. In Hawaii, a reputed rehab centre has been working with combat veterans to help with their mobility and balance. The soldiers report that this has helped beyond the physical benefits and love the activity. There seems to be no end to SUPs reach: Touring, surf, race, downwind, river, fitness, yoga, fishing, polo, rehab, yacht tender and so forth. Cross utilization of modern day SUPs is virtually endless.

"There's nothing better than regular shop visits by our sales reps. Despite the myriad of tools available (retail shows, online website, online training, sales books etc.), it is very difficult to replace having a sales rep actually go and visit the store, talk to the owner and present the range."

Benoit Treguilly, Bic's Communication Manager



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“The biggest thing for us this season is the MSL technology (Monocoque Structural Laminate). By automating the outer/second layer laminating process we have been able to produce boards with an unrivalled cosmetic finish that is 20% lighter but also up to 5% stiffer.”

John Hibbard, Red Paddle Co's Founder and Brand Director

I think this personal anecdote about sums it up: Just three years ago, I was invited on a sailing trip on France's Mediterranean coast and we took along three inflatables. Out of some 70 yachts moored in a pristine bay off the island of Porquerolles, about half a dozen yachts had a SUP on-board. When I returned to the same place last year, it was the complete opposite; one could hardly spot a yacht without at least one SUP on-board.

Boat owners are now considering wide inflatable SUPs to use as tenders instead of traditional rubber dinghies and sometimes a mix of both. This trend is enabling coastal marine supply stores and ship chandlers to foray into the SUP industry and it will be interesting tracking their numbers.

Sander Blauw, NSP's Sales & Marketing Manager reminds us of the importance of SUP centres: "There are still big opportunities for schools and rental businesses introducing more people to surf and SUP". Karin Gertenbach, International Sales Manager at Fanatic is more reserved: "We think 2016 will see a bit of consolidation and perhaps not quite the same steep growth as the last two years, which is always good for an industry to reflect on where it wants to go in the long term." Hibbard of Red Paddle Co cautions: "Probably the biggest threat is shops not forecasting and stocking enough product. Last summer, for example, there were times when everyone was out of stock and we were even able to sell demo boards at full price - people were that desperate to buy a board!" Brunotti's PR manager, Anouk van Haaster states: "The biggest threat is the big vertical companies pushing out cheap SUPs."

Beyond the pros and cons of this dynamic industry, it's refreshing to hear of sustainable efforts some are implementing: "We're planting mangroves to rebuild Thailand's coast line and bringing solar panels to our office's roof; it's just a start," shares Starboard's Clément Morandière.

SOMETHING FOR THE FUTURE?

There are many novel ideas on show as one walks the tradeshow halls, and here are a few of the most innovative trying to grab their slice of the pie. Sipaboards, a new Slovenian company presented their crowd-funded, jet-propelled, self-inflating SUP at PaddleExpo. Tripstix, a Munich based start-up is bridging the gap between inflatable SUPs and hardboards. They presented VacuuAir technology at ISPO's Brand New platform and Founder Andreas Trapp, an engineer says: "Our new VacuuAir technology combines pressure chambers, which define the shape of the board with vacuum chambers creating stiffness." As previously mentioned, SUP is going 365, and to go along with it there are many promising products being launched to ease cold-water paddling during the winter months. The Dador Quantum drysuit has been created by proficient Swiss SUP distributor, Karl Muller. He hired a ski clothing designer to eliminate the 'baggy' look of traditional drysuits and is made with a hi-tech breathable, 100% waterproof material produced by Schoeller of Switzerland. Another interesting innovation from the is Yona Belfort's dry glove start-up with Furnace. Also crowd-funded, the dry glove includes an internal bite valve allowing you to add (blow) warm air from your mouth into the glove before you hit the water.

OUTLOOK

Here is what New Zealand SUP pioneer Bill Dawes, a key distributor in the Southern Hemisphere had to say about 2016 sales in his region:

"We've had another huge season; Red Paddle Co is once again the best selling paddleboard brand in New Zealand and sales are up 35% on last year. There are far more cheap inflatable brands on the market now, but we seem to be holding market share against them. There will always be a market for the best quality product. And the MSL Fusion has been a huge factor in this, I think it could have been very different if we hadn't been able to shout about how the boards are so much lighter yet still just as strong and tough..."

With record sales in the antipodes, new technologies generating lighter, stiffer and stronger boards, equipment novelties making SUP a year-round sport in any climate and the ever increasing applications; now is the time to review the final checklist or if still unsure, think no more - JUMP ABOARD! 🇺🇸



Photo: BIC

HIGHLIGHTS

- Record early season growth
- SUP becomes a year round activity
- Dedicated brick and mortar stores continue to rule
- New technology allows 20% weigh reduction
- Southern Hemisphere sales jump 30% in 2016 season



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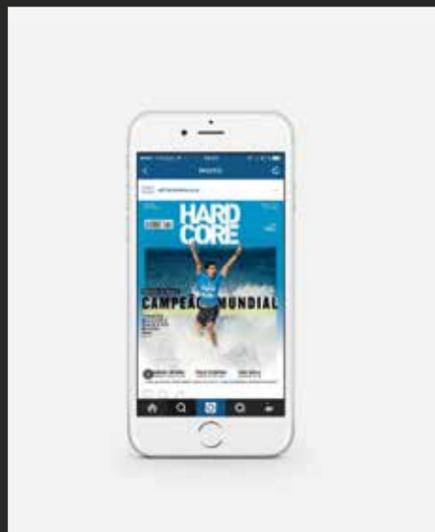
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Surf media analyst : Simon Volpoet, Data engineers : Vincent Charpentier & Valentin Barit

WEB / TEAM EXPOSURE RANKING TOP 5

RANKING	TEAM	TEAM EXPOSURE	LOGO EXPOSURE	LOGO FACTOR
1	FCS	3 174 985 €	25 888 €	2%
2	Futures Fins	2 202 556 €	10 479 €	1%
3	Red Bull	1 961 953 €	202 570 €	10%
4	Oakley	1 636 697 €	139 980 €	9%
5	Rip Curl	1 588 513 €	279 209 €	18%

This ranking shows the five teams with the highest exposure over the period in international surf web coverage between July and December 2015. Fin brands sit atop the rankings thanks to almost all WSL surfers using one of the two main systems on the market. Energy drinks behemoth Red Bull sits beside core surf brands Oakley and Rip Curl, sponsoring top names such as Julian Wilson, Mick Fanning, Adriano De Souza and Gabriel Medina in the race for the world title.

Period analyzed: 01/07/15 - 31/12/15

VIDEO / RIDER AUDIENCE RANKING TOP 5

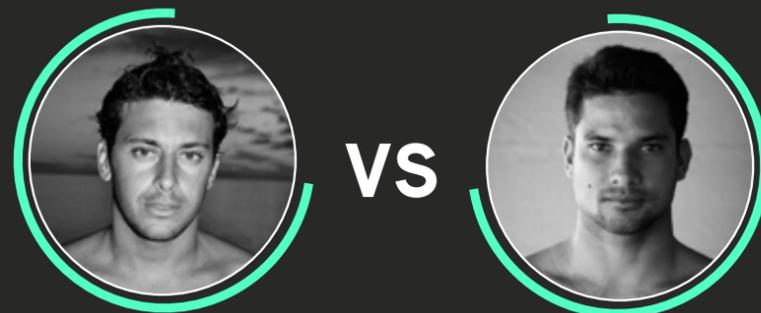
RANKING	NAME	NB VIDEO	TOTAL VIEWS	CUMULATED AUDIENCE (hrs.)	TOTAL PART (hrs.)
1	Mick Fanning	315	39 105 301	7 145 841	31
2	Julian Wilson	215	28 314 654	950 817	7
3	Jamie O'Brien	147	27 001 194	953 279	5
4	Kelly Slater	337	23 515 606	1 325 252	39
5	Alana Blanchard	57	18 387 694	358 391	7

Period analyzed: 01/07/15 - 31/12/15

This ranking shows the five riders with the highest combined number of views in surf videos between July and December 2015. Mick Fanning tops that ranking with over 300 parts, mixed between high performance surfing and his dramatic shark encounter at J-Bay, generating close to 40 million views in six months. Julian Wilson and Kelly Slater, two of the top 10 WSL surfers, also make the cut, alongside two of surfing's most interesting characters: Pipeline local Jamie O'Brien who regularly scores massive views on his web series, and Alana Blanchard whose video appearances regularly break the internet.

SOCIAL / RIDERS MATCH UP

In 2015 there were two European surfers from French islands competing on the WSL CT, Michel 'The Spartan' Bourez and Pipe Master Jérémy Flores. Thanks to their high octane surfing and lifestyles, both men have a loyal following on their social media accounts. Reunion Island local Flores has a bigger fan base with over 330k and Tahitian Bourez has close to 200k fans, both with promising fan growth over the period. Looking closer, both have a fan engagement ratio around 0.8%, representing an average of eight fans in every 1,000 interacting with their posts over the three platforms.



JEREMY FLORES

MICHEL BOUREZ

337 3337	Total followers	194 108
210 205	Monthly interactions	66 670
2 681	Interaction per post	1 482
0.79%	Fan engagement ratio	0.76%
339 211	Monthly tagged interactions	86 109
1.61	Tagged factor *	1.29

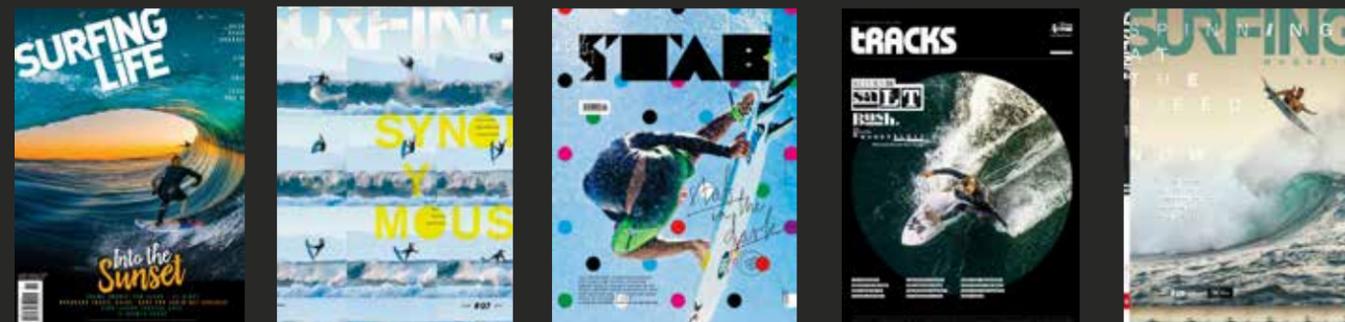
*Comparison between own rider posts interactions and interactions created by posts when tagged (Brands, Medias, Contributors & Riders).

PRINT / COVERS RANKING TOP 5

RANKING	NAME	COVER VALUE	NB COVER
1	O'NEILL	49 457 €	3
2	VOLCOM	42 457 €	4
3	OAKLEY	38 462 €	3
4	HURLEY	37 160 €	8
5	NIKE	32 880 €	2

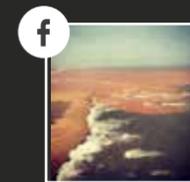
Scoring a magazine cover remains the top honour and a true career highlight for a rider. For its sponsor it means a lot too. This ranking shows the five brands with the best rider exposure on the covers of international surf magazines between July and December 2015. O'Neill tops the ranking with Russell Bierke scoring two major covers with Leroy Bellet's award winner shot from the barrel. Dustin Payne and Julian Wilson recently scored covers of Surfing, Surfer and Stab to help their sponsors reach the top five.

Period analyzed: 01/07/15 - 31/12/15



TOP POSTS

Here are the three best surf-related posts on social media between July and December 2015, featuring Pedro Vianna's post regarding the environmental disaster in Brazil as well as Gabriel Medina and Julian Wilson.



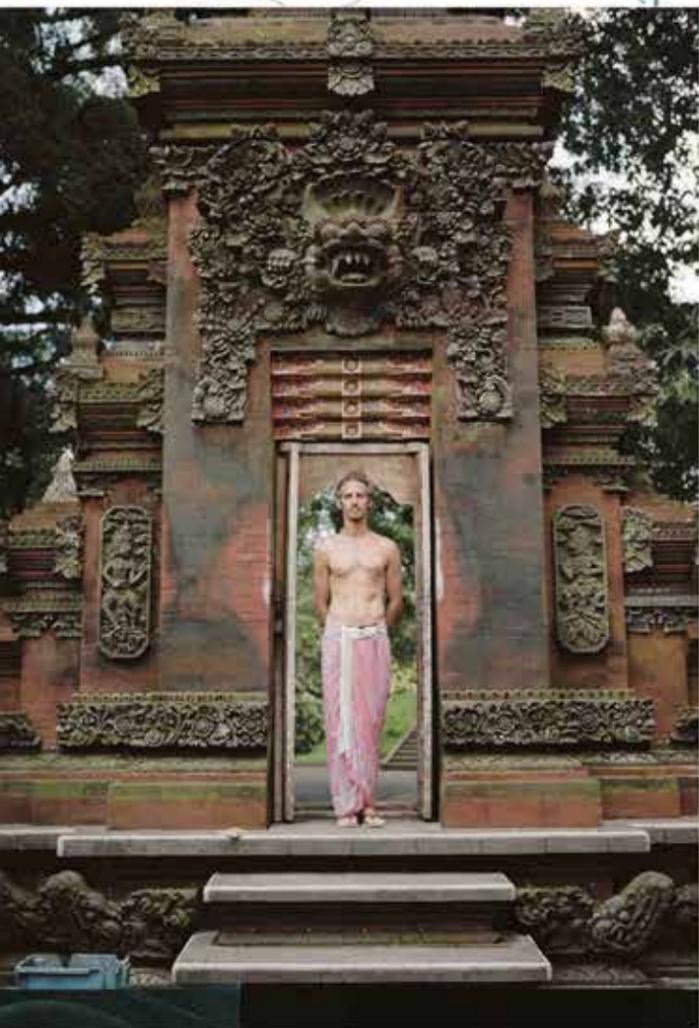
PEDRO VIANNA
330 309 interactions



Gabriel Medina
176 057 interactions



Julian Wilson
5 487 interactions



ROB MACHADO JUST PASSING THROUGH



SLAMMED ROVER



Photo : Freewaters

HANGING SHOES : 2016 TREND REPORT

Always trying to keep our readers informed about all the latest trends in the widespread boardsports industry, we're exploring and adding a new category to our popular trend report category: shoes that are not displayed on shelves, but rather hanging from racks that lure passersby from the street into the shop and can act as useful last minute purchases when spotted on a rack by the till. **By Anna Langer.**

Whether your poor feet have been cramped inside snowboard boots all day, been skated until they bleed or have been lucky enough to spend all day on the beach – all shredders' feet need something comfy to end the day. Here's an overview over of this high tech yet lightweight product category that can be used for (almost) anything, anywhere.

TRENDS

Born from and made for beach culture, Reef give their hanging shoes a "deconstructed vibe" and a special update that "will be unlike anything else in the market. Truly a unique take on the hanging space and an innovative platform that will change the definition of hanging footwear," with a new approach to construction that minimizes weight while improving comfort and durability, as Colton Marquardt, Product Line Manager for Men's and Women's Closed Toe Footwear, explains. Sanuk expand their "Yoga Mat comfort story" with new models, embossed and textured details for women and vibrant colour stories for men.

At Freewaters, the focus for Spring/Summer 2017 is on "taking advantage of new material and seam technologies to simplify, rather than complicate, the footwear experience," says Eli Marmar, Co-founder & VP of Marketing. Their new Sky collection is designed "to be super lightweight, highly breathable and with clean design aesthetics." Gumbies also concentrate on "improving the makeup of the sole, the materials and the branding," with inspiration from tyres and orthotic foot beds.

FIT

Even though only a small portion of the foot is covered, sandals and soft shoes need to fit a variety of feet. Creating shapes that "protect the sole of the foot" for over 10 years now, Gumbies have perfected their sizing, resulting in "zero returns on internet sales," Managing Director Michel Maurer states.

Fit is especially an issue with leather, as it generally needs time to be "broken in", which Reef aim to bypass with their Swellular technology. "We developed a 3 layer strap that provides that classic leather look, but with absolutely no seam or stitches on the lining," to avoid chafing and pressure points, explains Taylor Leopold, Product Line Manager Sandals Men. Freewaters follow a similar approach, combining minimal

seam designs that are welded to creates "a soft 'sock-like' fit", as Eli explains.

MATERIALS

To withstand the wear and tear of life on the beach, materials have to be just as durable as comfy. Gumbies go for recycled rubbers, Hessian fibres and EVA (non toxic) for the sole, Reef introduce new foam compounds for their "most comfortable sandals yet" and "gel as both a comfort and supporting agent" and Sanuk use a "modernized Phylon outsole that is durable, lightweight, and extremely comfortable."

On the upper end, canvas is popular with both Gumbies and Reef, the latter adding a 6 oz cotton liner, paired with slub linen, "like a premium linen cotton shirt" for men and Gore for women "to create an extremely easy to use experience," says Product Line Manger Women's Sandals, Amanda Dratler. Sanuk also uses Gore, as well as "soft micro fibre with perforated detail" for women's and a "super soft neoprene liner" for men's.

Freewaters introduce Smartsuede to their line for 2017, a new microfibre with the "premium look of suede" that is breathable, vegan and scuff/fade resistant. Reef even offer full grain leather with an exclusive water-friendly treatment.

COLOURS

Most collections focus on bleached, subdued, earthy colours. Terracotta, Gecko, Grass, Slate, Gravel and Camouflage at Gumbies; Sunset Rust colours to Deep Aqua Blues and Washed Out Daises to Tonal Palm Prints inspired by vintage 60s surf culture from Reef; and a "dusty colour palette from the rustic country side" in the Sanuk men's line. Freewaters focus on colours "that really sell: black, grey and navy", that are also found in Reef's female collection.

Sanuk add some more colour to the mix, with Coral as a key colour for women, a new "multi tribal stripe" for men and an "eco-active mixture of organic, florals, and animal prints" for men, explains Ryan Gumienny, Global Product Line Manager Men's. Bright prospects from a product category that suits all boardsports.



Cruisers for the wild ones

"Main Squeeze"
Anyway Cruiser

ALUMINATIBOARDS.COM



BUYER SCIENCE

Xavier Auffray and his team have over 15 years of experience in the surf industry. Here he explains the fierce reality of running three surf shops, including a successful surf school, alongside an online store. Xavier has some fantastic industry insights, and explains what he thinks both new and established brands need to provide in order to succeed.

What team structure do you have? Are roles and responsibilities shared, or clearly divided? As the retail buyer, do you also have involvement in the school or workshop?

Our company has three main activities; retail with the surf shop, service with our surf school and production within our surfboard factory. I am the manager and in charge of buying for both the surf shop and surf school. As a small company, I am also in charge of bookings for the surf school. As our company is developing, this year we're due to put someone else in charge of buying for the surf school, giving me more time to concentrate on the shop. The shaper manages his stock independently for the factory.

During your time as a buyer, what have been some of the most important lessons you have learned in how to cater for your customers?

I learn lessons everyday, but I'd say that the most important one is to follow your gut feeling. Of course it's important to know the industry and product really well, and to keep up to date with technology and new products. Quality and longevity of products is key for sustainable business and customer satisfaction. I think some firms are understating this too. Buying boards is one of the trickiest tasks, especially owning a surfboard factory. You need to have big brands in the shop, but customers willing to spend 700 euros for a Merrick, will probably be willing to have it custom made if you don't have the right thickness, rocker, model or even logo colour (don't laugh, it's true!!).

Do you find that you need different strategies when buying for online vs buying for the physical stores?

Indeed you do... The main reason is localisation. The physical store brings local customers, so you need to adapt your strategy to meet the needs of locals. The online store brings the world to your shop, so to be attractive on the internet your products need to be (choose one) the cheapest, the hardest to find, the newest etc. We also know that people won't buy a wetsuit without trying it, or buy a surfboard without handling it... Technical products are harder to sell on the internet compared to clothing, accessories etc. The battle is fierce.

Are you seeing more growth online or in store?

Our online store has been growing, however we are observing a newer trend where people want to come to the shop and talk to us; get some advice, have a chat, a look, feel products etc. That's why you have to be aware, don't take customers for granted and work on your customer service.



Which brands are doing it right at the moment?

A lot of brands are doing it right... And a lot aren't. Marketing blurs boundaries between good and bad and I think it's hard for customers to see clearly. Patagonia does it right, a lot of customers come to the shop because we sell Patagonia. They get in here and their first question is: do you sell Patagonia? In my opinion this is doing it right.

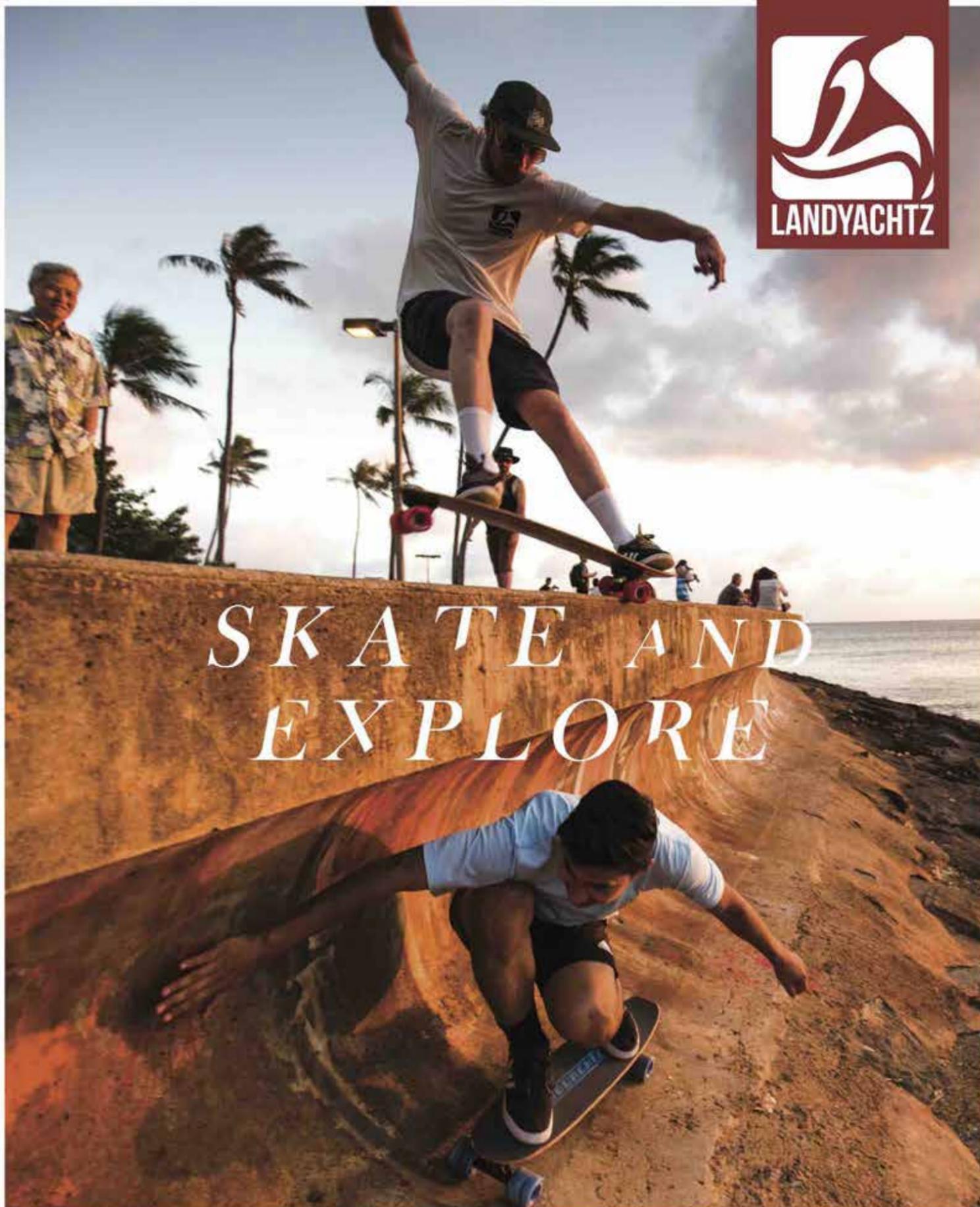
Do you have any advice to upcoming brands on how to be attractive to retail buyers?

Well, this depends on what kind of product you're making, but the main trick is delivering quality goods. A product that lasts and does the job (whatever it is). Stay true to what you are and put it into your brand. Our brand is doing it right for sure. We believe in custom-made here in Brittany, in quality and performance, you know like back in the day, when products were made to last.

How does your buying cycle work, is there a noticeable difference between your range planning for summer vs winter?

Summer and winters are very different for us. Cold water means less people, different products for different types of customers. Our summers get busier and busier each year. It brings people from all over France and Europe, who come here to learn how to surf and enjoy the beach. Those guys are totally different to our local customers. Different needs, different expectations and different purchasing power too. ☺

www.board-kulture.com



SKATE AND EXPLORE

PHOTOS: JACOB LAMBERT

RIDERS: DILLON STEPHENS, STEVEN VERA

LANDYACHTZ.COM

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photo: Miller Division

LONGBOARD : FW16/17 TREND REPORT

The global longboard trend is slowing from a wild ride to a cruise. But it's still moving forward. **Trend Report by Dirk Vogel.**

The history of selling oversized skateboards in retail goes back to the big 1975 skateboarding boom. That's when skateboard pioneer Tom Sims, also known as the creator of the first snowboards with metal edges, began marketing longboards crafted from old waterskis under what would become the SIMS Skateboards label. Longboarding took off in a major way, and by 1977, SIMS and other companies sponsored team riders exclusively for longboarding.

The recent boom – the largest in history – had other drivers: Longboarding has become a fun, casual category appealing to masses of non-endemic consumers with boundless growth over the past five years. But these strides into the mainstream prove an Achilles heel once the majority of riders purchased that one board they will ever buy.

That point in time – market saturation – seems to have arrived in Europe right now, after already manifesting in the US during the 2015 season. "Longboarding has slowed in Europe, which I must admit came as a bit of a surprise to all of us," said Steve Douglas at Dwindle/Dusters California. "It has slowed pretty dramatically. Shops are reporting excess inventory and that is preventing them from bringing in any product," said Chris Brunstetter at Goldcoast. Asked about the main reason for the decline, most brands responded like Graham Buksa at Rayne: "The European market is over-saturated with low-end product and as a result longboard sales slowed substantially but only at the end of the year. We expect a slowdown in longboard

sales overall, but expect strong sales in the high-end market." Geographically, the decline is specific to certain regions, said Andreas 'Maui' Maurmeir at Sector 9 Europe: "The only country where we expect weaker numbers is Germany. Other countries like France seem to gain back some terrain and momentum. It is true though that a lot of stores sit on a lot of bad quality skateboards that do not want to leave the stores." Chris Allen from Shiner (European distributor of D-street) says that "business has actually grown the last six months compared to the same time last year, and we have gained market share in most countries in Europe except for UK and France."

THE HARD NUMBERS

Let's look at some statistics: The market peaked during the previous year, when most brands in this article doubled their sales. "From 2014 to 2015 our business grew by 150%. Everybody wanted a longboard," said Mike Jucker at Jucker Hawaii. Another interesting question is market size in terms of unit sales, which appears to fall into the following sweet spot: "We believe the number to be somewhere in the region of 40-50,000 long boards a year for the EMEA region," said Steve Douglas at Dusters California. "After I talked many brands at ISPO last year has dropped for everyone like a 30%," said Kote Olascoaga at Miller Division. Keeping in mind what Maui at Sector 9 said about the German market, warning signs here are troubling: Yogi at German longboard brand Pogo said business is down 25%. A wave of stores solely dedicated to longboarding emerged around 2013, but now many have already been forced to close down.

“We believe the number to be somewhere in the region of 40-50,000 long boards a year for the EMEA region.”

Steve Douglas, Dusters California

Speaking of shops, Benoit Brecq at French Hoff Distribution and Flying Wheels estimates the retail base for stores carrying at least four longboards as follows: “France around 1200 shops, Spain around 500 shops, and Portugal around 100 shops.” From what Benoit sees, also echoed by other brands, the main pricing hot spots are: “Completes at €185, decks at €80, trucks at €39, and wheels €39.” At the same time, many brands see future growth in the upper/middle price point segment. “Arbor sells boards in the medium to high-end price range. Our price sweets spots for 2016 are the Drop-Cruiser Premium (Flagship Series) at €290, the Fish Premium (Groundswell Series) at €280, and the Axis (Artist Collection) at €270,” said Christian Siebrecht, Sales and Operations Manager at Arbor.



photo: Sector 9

Everybody agrees that cheap, interchangeable products will lose ground to higher quality. Moonshine MFG is driving a price point strategy from €229 to €325 in an effort to focus on “enthusiasts” instead of “participants” from the mainstream. CEO Jeff Logosz states: “We have noticed that real skaters want clear separation from skaters who are ‘posers.’ The hardcore guy is willing to spend more money to build out their board. It’s important for them to distinguish themselves as a part of a sport, not a fad.” New riders go straight for quality set-ups instead of entry level kits, said Nano Nobrega, Dusters’ Creative Director: “Watch out for the girls and young kids that will go

straight for a downhill skateboard as opposed to a street deck!”

KEEPING THE STOKE

Parallels to the situation in snowboarding or rumours of longboarding’s demise are greatly exaggerated. “The market in Europe is saturated, this doesn’t mean the market is on the decline – the surge of new riders is still out there and riding,” said Andy King at Mindless Longboards in the UK. On that note, retailers can keep the stoke alive with these five strategies:

1. Culture beats strategy. Stores that are at the heart of their scene – with races, contests, and events – keep the flame burning. “There continues to be passion, innovation and a strong community spirit which we believe will help carry the industry through the hiccups,” said Pablo Castro at Loaded Longboards.
2. Know what you sell. The trend towards quality products at higher price points puts a premium on technology – so it pays to know the details. Ask for sales materials or join the Dwindle/Dusters global online meetings on new technology by asking your distributors or contacting EMEA sales manager Leigh Nardelli.
3. Celebrate product. Use Facebook and Instagram to praise top-of-the-line product. “Retailers should communicate that quality matters. A well-built board will contribute to a positive riding experience and create repeat customers,” said Shane Maloney at Madrid Skateboards.
4. Face the strange. Dancing boards? Why not! Niche customers are willing to pay more, according to Moonshine MFG: “Dancing boards are big and so they tend to be more expensive. Dancers are really sensitive to how a board feels.”
5. Upsell. Gently nudge casual participants towards ‘real’ riding – turning them into repeat customers – by showing downhill videos and displaying magazines and books. “As they develop their skills it’s only natural that they will want better ‘thane, bearing and trucks,” said Andy King.

PRODUCT TRENDS

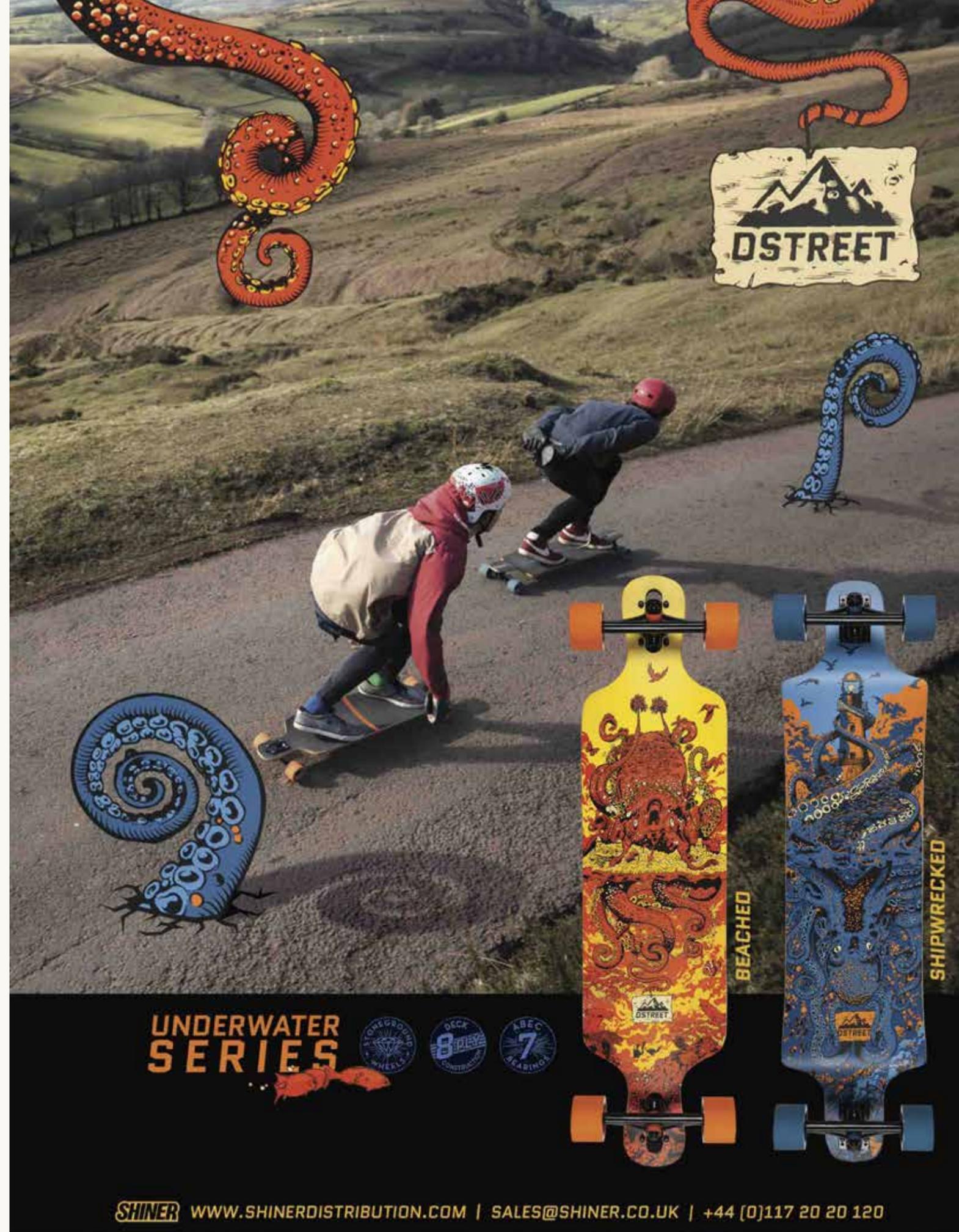
Speaking of upselling, let’s look at what’s trending in products next season:

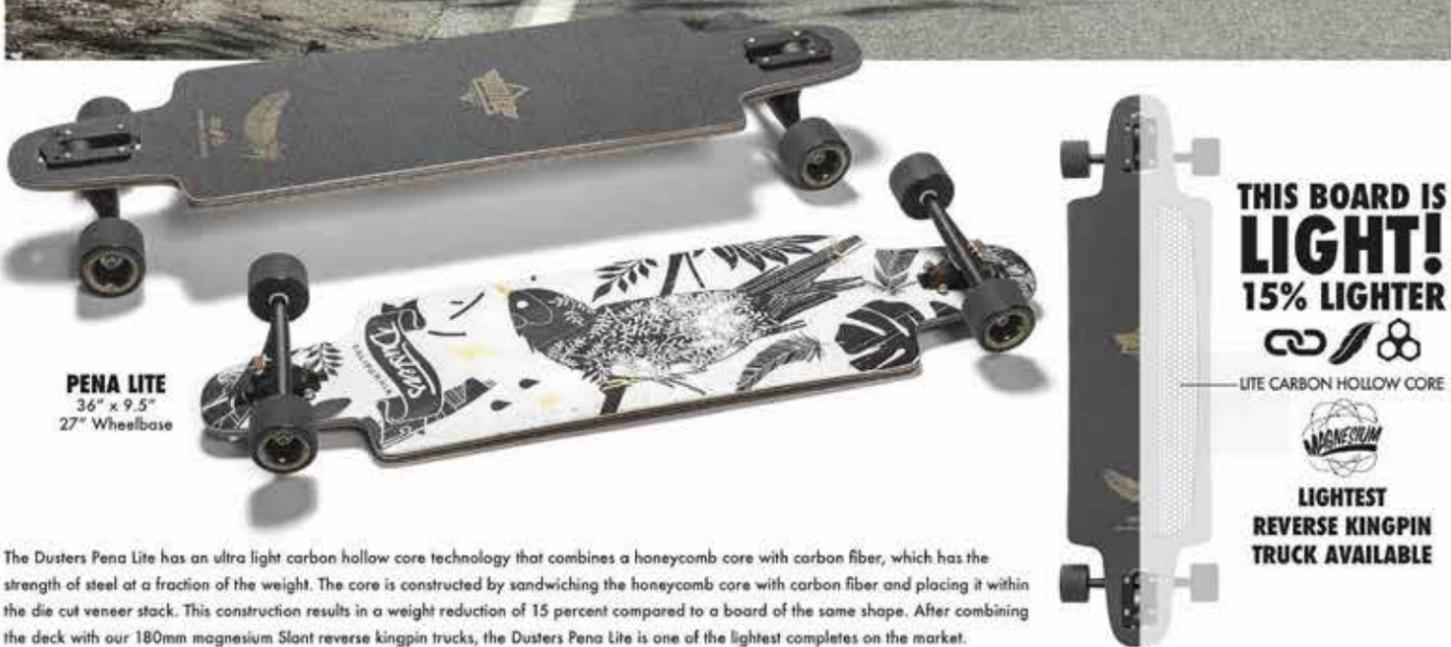
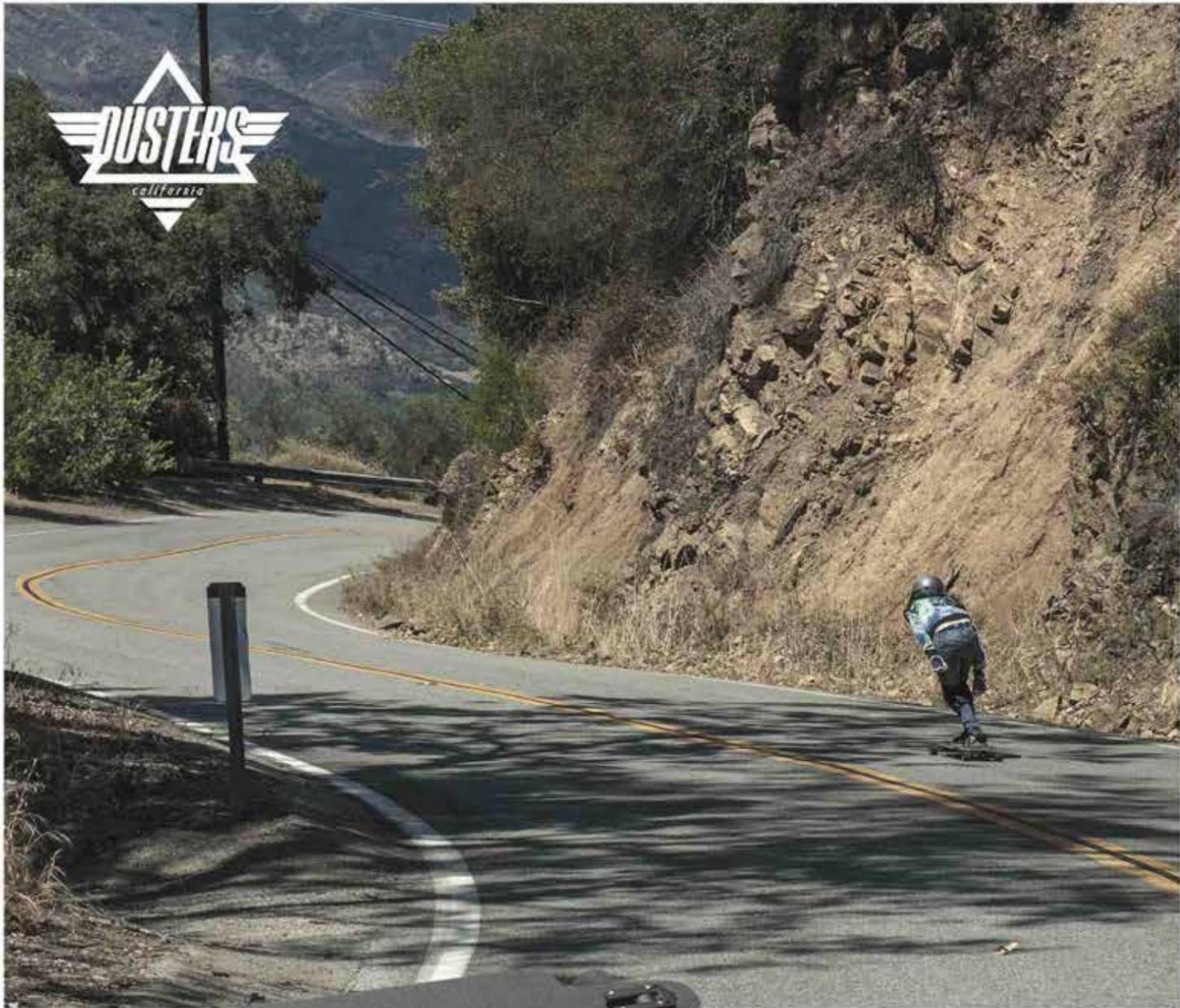
1. CONSTRUCTIONS

Longboards are trending towards all-terrain, nimble constructions. “The new trending construction is smaller (36”) top-mounts with kicktails. Added city versatility and fun for riders graduating from simply pushing and carving,” said Graham Buksa at Rayne. The second major trend is lighter weight constructions – both in decks and trucks, like the Dusters ‘Pena’ model, “a Lite Carbon Fibre construction paired with Magnesium Slant trucks, the whole board weighs about 20% less than a normal longboard.” Miller Division is bullish on the new “construction R.O.P. (return on pressure) in Fiberglass and Zebra Bamboo.”

“The European market is over-saturated with low-end product and as a result longboard sales slowed substantially but only at the end of the year. We expect a slowdown in longboard sales overall, but expect strong sales in the high-end market.”

Graham Buksa, Rayne





PENA LITE
36" x 9.5"
27" Wheelbase

**THIS BOARD IS
LIGHT!
15% LIGHTER**



LITE CARBON HOLLOW CORE



**LIGHTEST
REVERSE KINGPIN
TRUCK AVAILABLE**

The Dusters Pena Lite has an ultra light carbon hollow core technology that combines a honeycomb core with carbon fiber, which has the strength of steel at a fraction of the weight. The core is constructed by sandwiching the honeycomb core with carbon fiber and placing it within the die cut veneer stack. This construction results in a weight reduction of 15 percent compared to a board of the same shape. After combining the deck with our 180mm magnesium Slant reverse kingpin trucks, the Dusters Pena Lite is one of the lightest completes on the market.

DEALER INQUIRIES:
SPAIN Dwindle Distribution - luigi.s@dwindle.com | GERMANY Urban Supplies - info@urbansupplies.com - www.urbansupplies.com
UK Dwindle Distribution - steven.crawford@dwindle.com | FRANCE v7 - v7@v7distribution.com - www.v7distribution.com

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trend report

"We have noticed that real skaters want clear separation from skaters who are 'posers.' The hardcore guy is willing to spend more money to build out their board. It's important for them to distinguish themselves as a part of a sport, not a fad." **Moonshine MFG**



Photo: Dusters

2. MATERIALS

Canadian Maple and bamboo reign supreme, but brands like Sector 9 are also using Triaxial Fibreglass for weight saving. At Landyachtz, Nate Schumacher is stoked on their "Hollow Tech construction comprised of a pocketed core and fibreglass top and bottom sheet, which is unique to us and creates a stiff, lightweight board that won't break down over time." Also unique, Aluminati Skateboards is working on the "continued development of aluminium as a deck with improved components," said Art Director Tyler Ruffino. Moonshine MFG added urethane rails, while Madrid is innovating with "Formica, fibreglass, and bamboo."

3. SHAPES

Hybrid street and downhill boards are the next big thing. "Drop-trough boards will keep selling, but shorter wider boards with big wheels will be an upcoming trend this year - but not plastic," said Brunotti's Frank Uyt den Bogaard. Kote at Miller Division puts his finger on the major trend: "All round terrain boards and boardercross disciplines will probably get more and more developed." Multiple wheel base options - with several drill mounts - are trending, as are swallow tails. And Pablo at Loaded has the big sleeper hit for next season: "We're also working with Lotfi Lamaali and Adam Colton on a new-fangled dancing board."

4. TRUCKS & WHEELS

With growth in the hardcore segment, urethane wheel formulas are being tested to the limit, and companies respond with more diverse

durometres for different riding styles. Nano at Dwindle is pointing out their "new limited edition pink 80A and orange 84A Kryptonics." Meanwhile, Hoff has launched a new European wheel brand, Fast Forward wheels offering, "a lot of sizes, shapes, and the best urethane formula!" Benoit at Hoff is also stoked on the arrival of their new truck brand, Dozer "with new geometries and angles." Overall, retailers need to stay on top of new truck constructions and talk to their suppliers about technology.

5. GRAPHICS AND FLAIR

Brands are adding value and style through elaborate graphics and artist collaborations, including the Jucker Hawaii 'Honolua Bay' board created by Eric Abel benefitting the Save Honolua Coalition. Miller Division's Hopi Kachina Collection is inspired by the Hopi Tribe of Arizona-North America. The Rayne Darkside Series is drop-dead gorgeous while Sector 9 has the far-out Static model with "a vertical coloured wood lamination that is so flashy that it will make you blind!" Goldcoast is psyched about, "really cool SunBurn" graphic tech that reacts to the UV light of the sun." Top graphics are trending hard, including Aluminati's Atlanta Hawks graphic, while Dusters concocted the psychedelic "Blotter" model with Grateful Dead-inspired graphics and tie-dye wheels, next to the Aqua double drop-through board featuring "a unique Anodized paint finish. Get ready to shine!"



Photo: Dusters

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lightweight constructions & trucks
- Kids and girls
- Hot trend: Dancing boards
- Hybrid street/downhill shapes
- D drop-throughs & pintails
- Mini style longboards
- Urethane edge constructions
- Advanced urethane constructions
- Magnesium trucks
- Artist collaborations
- Elaborate top graphics



NEW FREERIDE DECKS



RETRO REISSUE DECKS

MADRIDSKATEBOARDS.COM



photo: Mellow Boards

THE LOST HISTORY OF LONGBOARDING

Fresh off the press, a new 334-page coffee table book uncovers the winding history of longboarding in the words of pioneers and insiders. Boardsport SOURCE talks to co-author Alex Lenz, also known as the man behind 40inch longboard magazine.

Interview by Dirk Vogel.

Don't be fooled by the hype. Despite the recent longboard boom, riding skateboards above 36 inches in length is not a 'recent' development or brand-new 'evolution'. Far from it: The roots of longboarding go way back in time, as far as the dawn of boardsports in Polynesia 4000 years ago(!), and the earliest documented longboards in the 1930s. At least that's how the recently released coffee table book *The Lost History of Longboarding* tells it. Published by Ministry of Stoke with writing and design courtesy of German-based 7 Sekunden Agency, the 334-page hardcover book traces the highs and lows of longboarding with insights from industry insiders and longboard pioneers. The long list of interviewees, guest authors and supporters includes Michael Brooke, Dan Gesmer, Jerry Madrid, Curt Stevenson, Jogi März, Pablo Castro, and Roger Hickey, among others.

Over three years in the making, *The Lost History of Longboarding* was a passion project for the makers of Germany's 40inch Longboardmagazin and an attempt to preserve history for future generations "In 20 or 30 years, the founders of the sport will not be around anymore, so the entire culture would not be traceable. Sure, there would probably be info somewhere on the internet - if there still is an internet at that point. But we're pretty old-fashioned about it - a book is a book!", said book author and 40inch editor Alex Lenz. Now that the finished result is available as an eBook and large-format print edition (in German, an English version is on the way), we took the time to sit down with Alex Lenz to talk about learnings from the ambitious project and his new perspective on the state of longboard culture.

You're really well-connected in the longboard scene through 40inch magazine. How did the magazine come about?
We started 40inch longboard magazine one year before longboarding really took off in Germany. There was no magazine solely dedicated to

longboards at the time, only skate mags focused on street skating. So we started out without financial backing and journalistic training, and over time our staff became a steady crew of three people.

And what is your position at 40inch?

My job involves pretty much anything revolving around publishing a magazine, from stories, to graphics, all the way to intended or unintended political statements, and finally heading to the post office when it's time to send out issues.

From your perspective, what is the relationship between longboarding and 'regular' skateboarding?

We've discussed this question for days, and no matter how you slice it, you're always bound to step on someone's toes. Looking back, was skateboarding in the '60s already longboarding or skateboarding? To be nitpicky, you could go back to the origin of the term and find that 'skate board' was really the name for a model of board, like the 'Symbian' model from Lush [longboards]. The term provided a new name for the sport of 'sidewalk surfing,' which was too long and complicated. I think it would make sense to combine everything under the moniker 'skateboarding,' but then the street skateboard industry would raise hell over throwing in 'punk' street skating with longboarding.

Really? How so?

Just as an example, when Wyatt Welter took his world record attempt in long distance skateboarding, he wore shoes from a major shoe company, since they turned out the most durable and comfortable after several tests. I notified the shoe brand and they wanted nothing to do with it, since that wasn't the kind of skating they considered skateboarding.

“In 20 or 30 years, the founders of the sport will not be around anymore, so the entire culture would not be traceable. Sure, there would probably be info somewhere on the internet – if there still is an internet at that point. But we’re pretty old-fashioned about it – a book is a book!”

EVOLUTION

Writing the book must have afforded you a broad perspective on longboard history. What was the biggest surprise along the way?

Perhaps the high sales volumes in the 1960s. Without the help of YouTube or the internet, they sold millions of skateboards. It really must have been the biggest thing in youth culture at the time. But I also think that the lack of the internet led to healthy and organic growth, instead of flooding the market within a matter of months, as was the case in Germany in late 2014.

In the pre-internet days, how important was the competition aspect of longboarding? There was already an entire pro circuit of sponsored longboarders in the 1970s, right?

Competitions were always important, very similar to racing in the automotive industry. The best and most practicable inventions would make their way into serial production. A few broken bones here and there were hard to avoid, but that’s the cost of pioneering. There was the Signal Hill downhill race [outside Los Angeles], which had the most impact, although luge and skate cars dominated. But for stand-up skating – and pretty much the entire sport – it was the most important event in the 1970s.

Do you have any findings about the highs and lows of longboarding?

The skateboard/longboard booms happened in waves. From 1959 until November 1965 it was invented by surfers and ended over safety concerns. The next boom was 1972 until 1978, started by Frank Nasworthy’s urethane wheel and ended over insurance problems. Then it went quiet, the classic street skateboard trend arrived around 1984 and things only picked up around the mid-1990s with Sector 9, Landyachtz, and Loaded. Growth really set in around 2006 and in

“Earlier this year at ISPO, the consensus in the industry was that while core companies would not be facing significant damages, the market was headed for a consolidation period. We’re certain it will happen. All the cheap products and overstock will be sold off and from then on, these companies will stop “investing” in the sport.”

2010 the floodgates really opened. That lasted until 2014 in the U.S. and to late 2015 in Germany. Now the market seems saturated, but it’s already changing again and we’ll come out of the slump next year. The core brands will not be affected by declining interest in the sport, although revenues are bound to take a hit.

THE INDUSTRY

Speaking of the industry, which brands and manufacturers have really pushed the scene forward and why?

Sector 9, Landyachtz, Loaded, Makaha, Hobie, Madrid, Tunnel, Kryptonics, Seismic... the list is massive and everyone contributed their share. Most respect is due to Tom Sims (RIP), Sector 9, and Dan [Gesmer] at Seismic. People initially laughed at Sector 9 for building

boards the way they saw fit. Despite these barriers they grew larger than any other brand in the industry. Dan at Seismic did things entirely against the grain in skateboarding and despite the critics, he perfected his products with scientific attention to detail.

And which brands are pushing it in Europe?

A small board company by the name of Sancheski from Irun in the Basque Country became synonymous with the entire industry in Spain during the ‘60s and ‘70s. Here in Germany, Pogo and Hackbrett are the time-honoured standouts, so are Lush in England, Icone in Austria, Slipstream in Sweden and of course the Swiss guys, including Indiana. And there’s a Czech label building lots of OEM for European brands. But the credit for pushing things mostly goes to all the longboarders out on the streets.

On that note, how many longboarders are there right now?

That’s about to change soon, but the ratio will never reverse. Looking at the competition circuit in Germany, there are the same familiar faces in the downhill scene, about 300 active riders. And you need to differentiate between dedicated competitive skaters and casual riders, and there are tons of the latter.

Longboarding has experienced a major boom over the last five years. What were the biggest drivers?

That’s pretty easy to pinpoint. The boom started when Original Skateboards released their “Go Longboarding” video on YouTube, which garnered 17 million views. But I can only speak on the German scene. When we toured the Atlantic coast in autumn, there wasn’t really a boom anywhere in countries outside of Germany. I discussed the phenomenon with [pro skater and longboard distributor] Richie Löffler and he said the boom happened because the timing was just right. Society was predestined for this sport both in terms of purchasing power as well as average age levels.

The perfect storm. But is the boom going to last?

Earlier this year at ISPO, the consensus in the industry was that while core companies would not be facing significant damages, the market was headed for a consolidation period. We’re certain it will happen. All the cheap products and overstock will be sold off and from then on, these companies will stop ‘investing’ in the sport. Which doesn’t mean that longboarding will fall into obscurity again, because the public presence is much too strong at this point.

Where do you see the European longboard scene in five years?

The market will solidify and we are really keeping our fingers crossed for the founding of new associations to organize the sport as an official platform, with its own championship circuit and youth development programs. The only way a sport can grow is by providing a sound organizational backbone that’s headed by people who make decisions with their hearts, not with their wallets.

That sounds positive, thanks for the interview, Alex. ☺

For more information on The Lost History of Longboarding visit www.longboardmagazin.de



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HOOTLUGGER
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COUNTY LINE
43.75" x 9.5"



HOBDOWN
41" x 9.5"



EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY

American action sports has had a hard time of it recently, with the likes of Sports Authority biting the dust and PacSun in real murky waters. Zumiez also just posted results from a tough financial year, with all retailers uniting in their blame for a 'soft market'. Too much product, a 'soft' apparel segment and the Internet have made bricks and mortar retail a tough sell in 2016. But the Internet and technology don't have to be our foes and instead of blaming them for our woes, there are a number of ways innovative retailers are embracing their customers' affinity with smartphones and combining it with ways to improve their in-store experience. **By Harry Mitchell Thompson**

HARNESS YOUR DATA

In the information era, we are all very aware that 'data is king', however the real mission is harnessing the plethora of data you as retailers are collecting through the rapidly increasing Internet of Things (IoT). Roberto Ugo is Co-Founder and CTO of Movvo, an innovative platform that measures the flow of people in physical spaces and helps retailers enhance consumer shopping experiences: "Data is what powers the Internet of Things, and to avoid data overflow, you'll need to identify the most important data to collect for your business."

Using customer data is going to be vital for survival. Whereas before, simply living off your store buyer's 'gut instinct' was enough to survive, now we're up against machines that can predict what a customer wants by analysing data spanning their age, interests, previous purchase history, income and much more. Ugo advises that retailers "Update your current IT architecture to support the coming influx of data" now, before it's too late.

BEACONS

Beacons are the piece of technology, which presents the biggest opportunity for boardsports retailers. They are little Bluetooth devices placed around shops that awaken a customer's mobile phone and allow you to engage with them on a much more personal level. The idea is to collect data from the customer as the beacons track where customers walk and what they stop to peruse.

Once you start to build up a profile of the customer, your system will be able to begin curating bespoke posts to their phone. Perhaps it's the third time in two weeks a customer has come in store and wandered around the winter wetsuits corner; you can push the latest cold water surf video for them to watch in store. Reward them with return visit loyalty bonuses and coupons, or simply use the devices to push your latest product arrivals to consumers in store. Stores can also use this tracking information to optimise shop layouts.

Justin Honaman, a digital marketing solutions expert for Moxie USA,

predicts that beacons will provide bricks and mortar stores with a new weapon: "When beacons and loyalty apps are used together, they can generate instant rewards, experiences, or location-based offers for the end consumer." This presents a great example of how a stationary retailer can trump online - through creating experiences.

THE FUTURE OF INVENTORY

RFID stock tracking systems track all products in store through their barcode via radio waves and allow the retailer to monitor inventory levels in real time. The Harvard Business Review found that out-of-stock shelves cost retailers 4% of their annual revenue, and while sensor movement technology on shopping trollies and on-shelf availability cameras may only apply to bigger stores at the moment, it is the future.

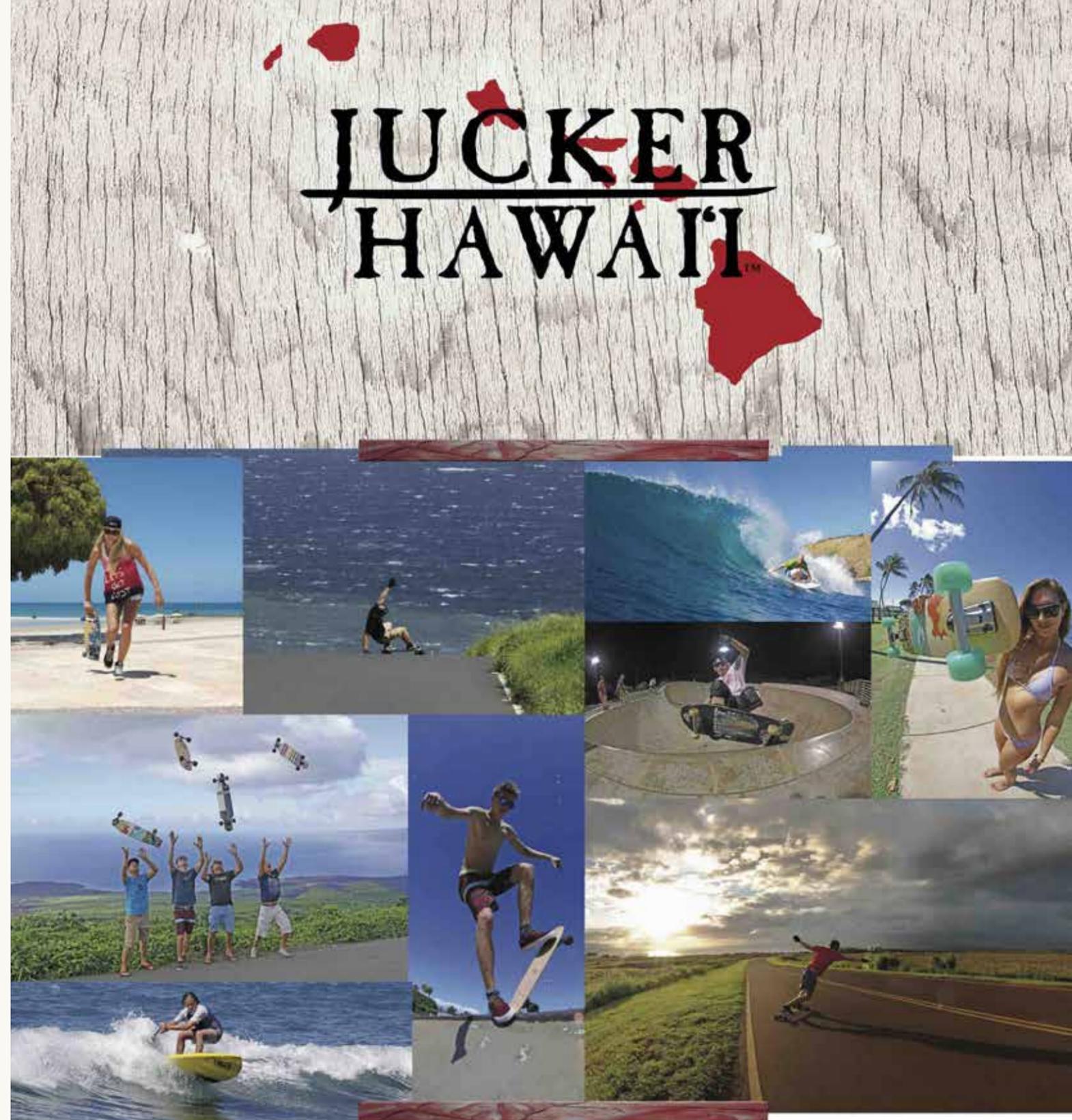
VIRTUAL REALITY & SOCIAL SHOWROOMING

Out of all the innovations in this article VR (Virtual Reality) is perhaps the one that still seems a little out of reach. We've seen it with kitchen fitting for years; where a consultant draws up your dream kitchen/bathroom in CAD and then brings it to life. But how long will it be, before via slipping on some VR goggles, you'll browse a store that meets your bespoke needs, allowing you to try on items of clothes, or visit a holiday destination before actually going there?

On the other hand, social showrooming is a new concept where retailers such as Nordstrom are encouraging customers to pin items on the company's Pinterest account and are then making displays full of fan-favourites. A great way to help your store fuse your social and physical presence.

TO INFINITY...

So there you have it; a brief overview of what the future holds for retailer tech. I'll leave you with a quote from Robert Ugo on the subject: "The Internet of Things will transform retail for the better, improving the physical space and optimizing the customer experience. With enough preparation, this model could mean a whole new universe for your business." 📍



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CATCH SURF

Catch Surf are bringing a change to the surfing world with a carefree, exciting and all-out entertaining approach to foamie surf sessions. Catch Surf's aim is put the fun back into surfing at all levels and Andreas Maumeir from their European distributor, Rollin' Stoke SAS, explains their setup in the region.

Please could you tell us about your relationship with Catch Surf, and how you are operating them in Europe?

Rollin' Stoke is the European distributor for Catch Surf. We are the direct relay station for all demands. We work extremely close with the California HQ and offer the perfect infrastructure and vibe for the brand over here.

Are you looking for distributors in any European region?

Our structure is specialised on serving all of Europe. Our staff speak six languages and we have a solid sales crew across the old continent. It is easy for US brands to have one reliable partner in Europe.

Which European athletes/ambassadors have you added to the team already?

Alain Riou is our Pro Catcher in Europe. Our best ambassadors are our customers themselves. Once they have tried these foamies to attack some crazy shorebreak, some real messy surf or even regular glassy waves they are mega stoked. It's like a virus... you cannot escape the Catch fever!

Who is on the management team, and what are their backgrounds?

Sylvain Torres is the brand manager for Europe and Boris Löcke in charge of sales. The marketing is headed up by me, Andreas Maumeir. Sly (Sylvain) has a 20-year background in pan European distribution with

the most emblematic skateboard brands and custom surfboards. Sector 9, Z-Flex and Joel Tudor Surfboards are just some examples. Take 15 years off and you have Boris and Maui.

What is the company ethos?

It is all about fun. Some parts of surfing have moved away from the essence of surf – fun. It has become too competitive and even sometimes aggressive. That is not what most surfers seek, yet it has become a reality in surfing today. If you show up with a pink or leopard print foamie on the beach, the seriousness is gone. Then, you will be ready for a session of fun. Check out some of Jamie O'Brian's videos from the North Shore and you will get the picture.

How long do you see the foamie trend continuing?

It hasn't really started yet in Europe. There is so much going on in the States with Catch Surf. If you haven't seen all the videos on the web, you must've been living under a rock. Buckle your seatbelts, it's never going to be the same again.

What sets you apart from your competitors?

Catch Surf has opened the backdoor to the surf world with a very simple key: Fun for everyone, no matter if you are a pro or a total beginner. The entire Catch Surf team are great and really have the right vibes to infect the surf organism with less hedonism and more smiles. It is very different to other foam board providers who use

it as an entry product for beginners. We are not at all only for beginners.

We have loads of crazy colours and designs, which both kids and adults love. Also, the cores of the boards are really stiff, meaning you don't have that strange 'bounce' you get in other foamies. This is certainly a key point when comparing to competitors in the segment. We are also about to launch some other slide devices for surf that others won't have. Plus did I mention the crazy marketing that is going on? Who else is proud of being foam?

Why is the European market so important to Catch Surf?

Europe has a strong surf culture and along with that a strong demand of surf hardware. Catch Surf takes the seriousness out of the surf ego vibe and just makes you have a good time, even when you're just surfing leftovers. Europe has been a very bipolar market for a long time, which is now opening up to new stuff. We are that new stuff. When we cruise around with the boards, people look up. The curiousness is there in Europe. So yes, it is for sure a very important market.

What do you see for the future of the industry?

We are as curious as you are. Hardware always has a strong demand and a certain "less seriousness" just arrived at the right time. There will be more foamies in the quiver of surfers, this is for sure. The feedback we have speaks for itself. ☺



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BOREALIS

Borealis is a French-based and nature inspired company specialising in high-end sustainable and environmentally friendly snowboards. Their ethically sourced products are at the forefront of maintainable production methods whilst still enabling exciting shaping developments and design concepts.

Please give an overview on how and why the company began?

The company was established in 2013 by Ben Hall, a dual French-English snowboard aficionado. Borealis offers a true alternative to other snowboard companies not only in terms of sustainability and graphics but also in the way we communicate with our clients and fans. Bamboo is the foundation of the brand.

Who is on the management team, and what are their backgrounds?

The manager is Ben Hall. He grew up at the foot of the Jura Mountains, close to Geneva and later lived in the French Alps in Megève. He has been riding down mountains for the past 30 years. After studying Social Anthropology at university in England and working in different fields, Ben went on a six-month trip to Asia and returned to Europe with his idea of creating Borealis. Ben started Borealis as he believed it would be fun! He got his first snowboard at the age of 14, after skiing from the age of two, and to him some of the best moments in his life are those spent in snow-covered silent forests, riding down between the trees, listening to nature.

Where are you manufactured?

All of our boards and splitboards are made by Meditec in Tunisia, which is convenient as we live one hour inland from Marseille where the boards arrive by boat.

How do you differ from you competitors?

The company focuses on using sustainable materials such as bio-resin (made in Marseille very near our HQ), bamboo topsheets, basalt

and flax fibres, plant-based bioplastic and eco-wax. As the brand develops further, we plan to use more materials such as recycled ABS and base materials. Another idea is to create an eco-lab to test new sustainable materials and bring them to the market in order to push the transition towards more sustainable boards. Our graphics are inspired by nature and tribal cultures whilst also being influenced by Ben's anthropological studies.

What do you find important about the European market?

Innovation and quality are very important factors when selling in Europe. In Europe, many snowboard brands are already quite established, so it's important for us to study the needs of the customers and to develop our niche by meeting riders' specific needs. For instance, in specific countries there will be more demand for freeride boards or for particular sizes. But in general, we think that it's important to distinguish ourselves from other brands by projecting a unique and alternative identity. This is important for Europe but also for other regions. There's clearly a return to the roots of snowboarding, with new funky shapes and a rise in the numbers of "hors-piste" freeride enthusiasts. We participate in many on-snow events and we think it's a very important factor not to be forgotten. Creating demand in the first place is the best way of having shops calling you to sell your boards.

How do you support athletes and boardsports?

We currently have team riders at Borealis. Some of them participate in the Freeride World

Qualifier. At the moment, we can't afford to give cash but we support them by offering snowboards and splitboards in exchange for photos, videos and for talking to their local shops about Borealis.

What other marketing are you running?

We work with magazines and various websites. We are active on social media and we participate in many events in order to touch as many riders as possible.

Why should retailers sell your brand?

Our boards are well priced, very good quality and they offer a true eco-friendly alternative to other brands. Our shapes are exciting, our graphics compelling and our bamboo topsheets are simply beautiful.

What do you see for the future of your company?

Funky new shapes, new eco-materials and technologies, more team riders and ambassadors, new artists and more boards in shops.

What do you see for the future of the industry?

New technologies and a transition towards cleaner and more sustainable materials.

Where can we check out your products/videos/stuff? (web/facebook/etc)

Website: www.borealis-snowboards.com
Facebook: BorealisSnowboards
Instagram: @borealissnowboards



BOLZEN

Heiko Schöller is the founder, owner and creative mind behind Bolzen trucks and hardware. He and two others: Richie Löffler and Frank Beste have been working on their range of hardware products from 2011/12 and here Heiko explains how the company began, and what he predicts for the skate industry's future.

Please give an overview on how and why the company began?

In 2010 we asked ourselves, 'why are we not producing our own longboard trucks?' Everything that was available at the time was ok, but not as good as it could be. So we asked ourselves again, 'how should a longboard truck look, and how would they look if we designed them with our own ideas in mind?' Frank Beste, who designed some high end CNC made slalom trucks in the past, helped us to develop our first Bolzen trucks. At the beginning of 2011, the design was ready but we had many problems with the production in China. By the end of 2012, Richie Löffler joined the company and with his contacts we found a new manufacturer. We tested many samples and made some changes before the first trucks hit the shops in August 2013.

Who is on the management team, and what are their backgrounds?

Bolzen trucks is: Richie Löffler (Mantis Skateshop and MDCN Distribution), Heiko Schöller (Concretewave Skateshop and Season Distribution) and Frank Beste (GOG trucks).

What is the company ethos?

We have fun and create new products that we like to skate ourselves. Maybe this sounds like a German cliché, but for us quality and German engineering is important - and is visible in our products.

What sets you apart from your competitors?

We design and develop everything in-house.

Our trucks and parts are designed in Germany, which is unusual for longboard products. We all have long backgrounds in skateboarding and the industry itself so we have in-depth knowledge of what we sell.

What do you find important about the European market?

For us the German market is most important. From day one our trucks were available in all important stores across the country. The skate and longboard industry is dominated by US brands but this is changing more and more and brands from Europe now get more attention in general. I think this is good for the whole scene.

How do you support athletes and boardsports?

Right now we sponsor a few team riders and different events/races during the season.

Where are you currently manufacturing?

Our cast trucks and hardware is manufactured in China and the CNC trucks (summer 2016) are made in Europe. Our slide gloves are made in Pakistan and our Bolzen slide pucks are made here in Germany.

Why should retailers sell your brand?

Bolzen is a European brand and everything is designed and tested in Germany. Our prices are fair and shops get a good margin. Our team riders are very friendly and well known in the scene.

What do you see for the future of your

company?

We will release our second-generation Bolzen trucks soon. Right now we are working on some new CNC high-end hangers for the downhill guys and when this project is over we will start to design our own skateboard trucks. We just signed a contract with the guys from Omen Longboards so Bolzen trucks will be available in the USA now too. We are getting more and more requests from all over the world, especially Asia, where there is a growing market.

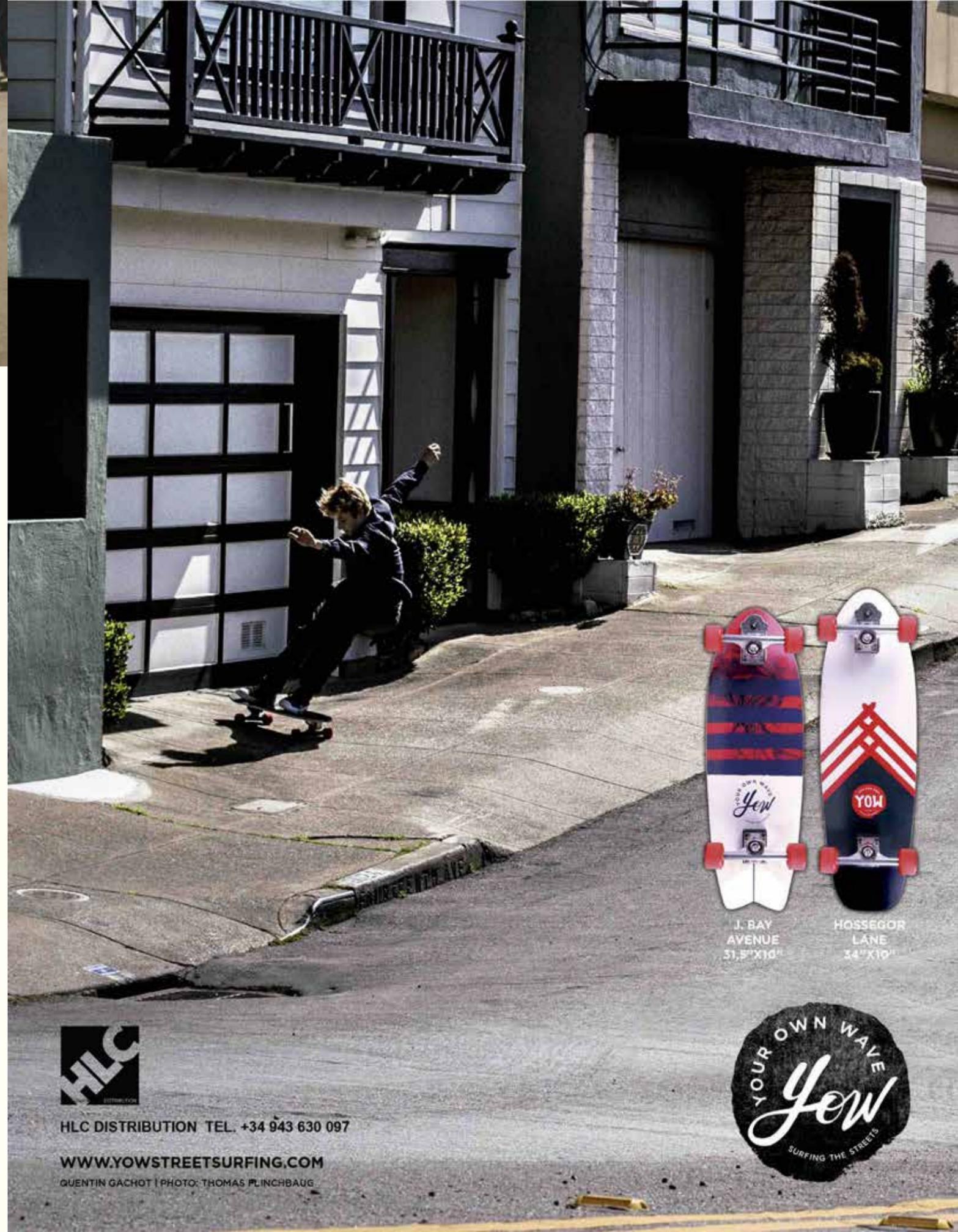
We hope that our customers like our products as much as we do, as we enjoy what we do, and do it not only for business, but for the enjoyment it gives us too.

What do you see for the future of the industry?

In Germany we had a massive longboard boom because some youtubers that started longboarding at the beginning of 2014. Now the boom is over and everything is returning to a normal level. I can only speak for the longboard and skateboard industry, but I predict that skateboarding will continue to grow, and longboarding will maintain its current popularity in the future... Hopefully.

Where can we check out your products/ videos/stuff?

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Instagram: @bolzentrucks



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#WHOMADEMYCLOTHES?

Success and survival have always been benchmarks for achievement in business, but few brands actually realise how much power lies within a better knowledge of the supply chain.

By **Cira Ridel at GreenroomVoice.**

At ISPO in February Greenpeace published their latest Detox-Report calling out some major outdoor brands on the PFC (perfluorinated chemical)-issue. Word has it, that Greenpeace's target could soon be the broader sport industry including action sports and the focus point could be anything from labour rights to chemicals.

In the past, some of the bigger boardsports brands have somehow produced "greener" token products addressing a potentially conscious customer. In most cases they were a flop because the product lacked performance and design in comparison to their conventional collection. Learning from that experience, most decided that environmentally and socially more sustainable product and business practice is a good will issue and not a priority in times of financial instability. It turns out, this way of acting might be much more expensive in the long run.

Very few brands know all the factories involved in their supply chains, let alone work with traceable raw materials, which make up a product, (down, leather, wool, plastics, etc). With priorities on prices and delivery time and too many converters and subcontractors, there is a lack of transparency, making it impossible to answer the more uncomfortable questions raised by NGOs and consumer effective campaigning.

"48% of brands hadn't traced the factories where their garments were made, 75% didn't know where their fabrics came from, and 91% didn't know where the raw materials came from." **Behind the Barcode, Australian Fashion Report 2015.**

"48% of brands hadn't traced the factories where their garments were made, 75% didn't know where their fabrics came from, and 91% didn't know where the raw materials came from." **Behind the Barcode, Australian Fashion Report 2015.**

Having transparency, though, is easier said than done if sustainability concerns are only an afterthought. To be accountable and responsible means companies must first of all to do their homework and know where the hot spots in their supply chains are.

Let's have a look at the situation: Asian mentality is known to take timelines and price agreements very seriously; highlighting difficulties

is not part of their cultural makeup. Under pressure, human rights and the environment are potentially violated. The timeframe of production gets squeezed more and more between late decision making on design to reflect the latest trends and the demand from retailers to receive deliveries as timely as possible. Since the sales pressure from competition is on, retail can only sell product at full price really early in the season. So the production phase is like a fragile tomato being squeezed. At some point the system spills its insides out. Sometimes, this results in a social disaster, other times it has negative environmental impacts. Most of the time, it's both.

But there are tools that can help. And with EU legislation regarding these concerns looming on the horizon - of which it is not yet clear, whether they will be voluntary or mandatory - the pressure to perform environmentally and socially responsible is definitely on.

The main tool to have transparency and gain control of the complexities of the supply chains is the Higg Index, which is run by the Sustainable Apparel Coalition, as mentioned in earlier articles.

"Within the SAC we believe in the core principle of collaboration: along the value chain, with civil society, as well as with authorities looking into legislating environmental, social and labour practices within the garment industry.

By sharing SAC's technical expertise and experience on sustainable production and on issues pertaining to environmental foot-printing and consumer communication, we are working with authorities towards common and worldwide solutions such as aligned standards at a global level. The Higg Index is not a compliance tool but can definitely provide the first step towards one holistic standard recognised by the industry, civil society and authorities," explains SAC's CEO Jason Kibbey.

The EU Garment initiative is expected to be launched in Spring 2016. Until 2020 European businesses will face a set of tools concerning labour standards and environmental performance, resulting in possible eco labelling, and which might well be mandatory at some point. So, yes, it's worth keeping a close eye on the developments and getting started to master the supply chains. A good example is Burton Snowboards, who has entered the data of all its factories into the Higg Index.

And this is not all. Authorities are currently investigating the possibility of further restrictions of hazardous substances specifically used in textile under REACH Regulation. 



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2015/16 was one of the most difficult winters of the decade. After heavy snow falls in early autumn, it was an Indian Summer until Christmas. And even the traditionally coldest first months of the New Year only sporadically graced the Alps range with snowfalls.

“Once things are, frankly speaking, already a bloody mess”, says Heiko Hiesinger, owner of the Funbox Store in Ludwigsburg, it’s “hard to counteract them”. “Trying to fight the weather is something that’s just impossible in my eyes,” he continues. And he’s dead right, of course. Because as much as the modern human is wishing for it, we simply have not mastered and don’t control everything – certainly not the weather. Which leaves us to deal with the situation as it is, trying to make the best of it, anyway. Heiko has successfully done so for over 15 years now, as one of the very few last true core shops in the Stuttgart area. He puts this down to his effective groundwork: “From previous years we learnt to buy upscale and to focus on quality and advice to ensure a certain consistency in turnover.”

In Bavaria, Anna Ehrmann has similar experiences as a rep for Roxy. “Despite the mixed winter, the more expensive styles surprisingly performed better,” she says. “The more technical, upscale segment is also what retailers sold pretty well. Women in particular are ready to pay more money if they like something,” she concludes.

In general, outerwear is still a difficult topic, but not catastrophic, is how Kolja Keetman from Your People distribution in Stuttgart grades the current development. After an already bad last season, orders have gone down again – especially in the lower part of the country. Kolja explains the North-South difference in our industry: “Retailers in the South are very negatively influenced by the weather conditions. They don’t feel it as strongly up north. Most people there only go skiing for a week or so on holidays anyway and they’re still doing that. Hence things are pretty much as usual up there. But from Frankfurt downwards you clearly feel that the climate is not right.” Yet he still made a slight plus with hardware, “mainly due to making a huge effort,” he admits thanks particularly to on-snow activity, together with his retailers. “At Shops 1st Try for example we only had one person at the Rome SDS stand this year, and went riding with the shops a lot. This way we were able to get feedback during the runs, switch a board or simply give tips. That was received incredibly well and showed the retailers that it really is a true snowboard brand, with all of their employees snowboarding, and not just beginner-style, but ripping.”

Smith Optics also gave Kolja a plus, like previous years, and streetwear is picking up again too. “With Animal we’ve only just delivered and shops are already selling. Especially shirts and tops for girls,” he reports. Anna from Roxy confirms that the girls market is making a comeback after having virtually vanished into thin air. “Of course a lot is dependant on the collections, but we definitely notice that clients are becoming more courageous now that they feel things are picking up speed again.” Kolja agrees that in the women’s segment, success is very much dependant on the right pieces, and also on “the retailers themselves. A lot of them still sport an environment that is much more targeted at guys, which makes them feel more comfortable but may intimidate girls.” For

him, the Funbox Store in Ludwigsburg sets a great opposite example, employing regular female staff that are not only around to take care of female customers, but also inspire them with their style and looks. “If there’s a girl in the shop who inspires other girls simply through her attitude, appearance and style, it makes a huge difference. Girls also have a very different approach to buying, just as a male buyer has,” Anna agrees. “A male buyer would choose something very different, hence the whole range and choice in a shop is a lot better with a female buyer, who has a better feel for the market. And if that girl is working in the shop too, it makes everything that much more authentic and will draw a lot of girls into the shop.” This works because the market grew up with female customers, as Anna describes it, “who are still brand-conscious and willing to pay more money for a good product.”

This “growing up” of the boardsports customer has another advantage that in snowboarding we’ll experience for the first time ever: the second generation, the “direct descendants of the snowboarders of the early days,” as Heiko calls them. “That area is growing a lot, especially sales and rentals of kids boards – and indeed with families that are already immersed in boardsports and snowboarding.” Of course these families need the opportunity to put that into effect, for which Heiko names Burton’s Riglet Park and Nitro’s Young Ripper Program as great examples. “Right now, when the old school snowboarders’ kids are between 8-12 years old, we must not forget to invest in kids and youth work,” he warns.

Turning away from snowboarding and towards longboarding, we are seeing a problem that Heiko had warned of previously: “The market had been exploding for five years, but the final quarter of last year brought what I had always warned about: if you’re not careful, everything will blow up in your faces!” The oversupply of product – previously addressed in earlier market intelligence - has now been followed by big reductions on wholesale prices.

Stand Up Paddle offers a huge range of demographics a means of transport/surfing, and at the same time ties to the globally booming fitness trend, which is seeing a growing number of boardsports brands utilise through activewear collections. This area is already becoming more and more important for Anna with Roxy, although it’s mainly regular sports shops buying that line right now, as core shops are still cautious here. But she sees great potential for all shops in this segment, that could one day even replace the momentarily stagnating outdoor segment by a “relocation of fitness sports to the outdoors, like SUP, yoga or also running.”

And even though fitness and SUP appeal to a very different audience than the regular boardsports customer, it can surely help to make the ‘boardsports lifestyle’ more popular again. Because even though it’s still belittled by a lot of skaters, surfers and snowboarders, a Stand Up Paddleboard is still a board under your feet; a board that you move with and a board that enables you to have fun and enjoy yourself out in nature. And in the end isn’t that what we all strive for and what unites us?

Anna Langer



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY

UK

FRENCH

ITALY

SPAIN

AUSTRIA

SWISS

The UK's economic news is dominated by Brexit – “will we stay, or will we go”, adding further instability into the economic pot. The direct effect on the high street is (for now) probably small but businesses will start delaying decisions until after the referendum. Overall the high street is being hit by the long-term trend of shopping moving online where sales have risen by more than 12% in the last year combined with prices falling in stores on average by 2.5% a year as consumers search for bargains. The value of sales has risen just 1.4% (February) year on year compared to a 3.8% rise in volumes. Looking ahead, retail spending looks likely to slow down this year, as the economy both here and abroad is weakening. The good news is that unemployment continues to fall and at 5.2% is the lowest jobless rate since January 2006, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Turning our focus to boardsports biz, one of our retailers has shut up shop – well more than one – but this particular shop has closed after 34 years. Jon and Carol Dodsworth from Surf & Ski (Brighton) have closed their doors. They've gone. They have moved on to travel the world and enjoy, I hope, a long and healthy retirement. And the reason? Their lease came up, the landlord wanted more and more and the business was no longer viable. Jon was, as always, pragmatic about it and very clear about the reasons “It's been a great 34 years, most of the time, but the past few years with the growth of the internet and the continual discounting, it's been tougher to keep going.”

So another one bites the dust.

And another one... sort of... Ian Madden of Boardshop and Hardcloud has concluded that there's nothing more to get out of the softgoods market: “We're out” he confirms “we're no longer offering clothing, shoes and related accessories. We just cannot make the margin to sustain the business and so we're out.” Hardcloud is not actually disappearing as Ian has sold the business, although “not for a great deal of money”. He's pretty clear about who's to blame for the demise of the softgoods market: “The big boys, the PLC's that have to chase turnover. To achieve this they have no option but to rely on the huge retailers. In a similar way these retailers really only care about volume and turnover and they'll sell stuff at any price to win the data.”

Is it sustainable? “No is the short answer. We can see that already with the larger brands having such a hard time. The chickens will come home to roost but I have no doubt that the softgoods market will never get back to being a good business.” I asked Ian if he had any regrets? “Absolutely none. There is not a day that I don't wake up happy with the decision. Boardshop is doing well and we're really focussing on hardgoods. The margin may be smaller but our commitment is less and it's more of a day-to-day reactive business. Much better than softgoods. I am so happy to be out.”

Another, rock solid, hardgoods guy is Ben from Big Dreams. He popped in to see us this week. Those of you that know Ben will appreciate that he has strong opinions and, for years, his opinion has been that he is a snowboard shop through and through and that's where it starts and ends. Not any longer. “I'm going to the dark side. I have to. I'm turning business away. I'm fed up of people coming in

and asking for them. I really think I have no choice.” To begin with I thought he was talking about in-line skates or worse still maybe scooters – but for Ben the dark side is Ski. “Yeah – it's time that I opened up the doors to skiers and so for next season we'll have a ski selection.”

Will it work? “It has to work – we can no longer survive on snowboarding alone and we have to be pragmatic about it. Ski is growing and snowboarding is not – so for me it's really a no brainer.” Ben is fairly unique in his approach to the market in that he is still a bricks and mortar store only with no online sales. He also has a straightforward reason: “I don't like it. It doesn't work for us and so we're sticking to what we do best.”

So shops are changing and reinventing themselves. Take Mon and SS20 – one of the longest established skate/snow stores in the UK. The business is reinventing itself as a cooperative – inviting everyone to become a member. “We've got to reinvent and simply cannot go on doing the same-old-same-old. It will not work anymore.” It's a really interested concept and if they can pull it off I see no reason why it shouldn't be a huge success. One of the best examples of this is the Edinburgh Bicycle CoOp who now boast six stores as far south as Manchester and Leeds. Good luck to the guys at SS20 – we watch with interest.

Ben, Mon (and all retailers remaining in the church of bricks and mortar) may take heart from a recent British Retail Consortium report outlining that shoppers have returned to the High Street – numbers rose by 1.2% in January - the first rise since 2013. The general feeling as we come to the end of the winter sports sell-in is that snowboarding has been hard and ski is still tough although ski boots appear to be doing well. Show visitor numbers were down but quality remained high. It's interesting that retailers are working hard to shift more responsibility back to distributors/brands demanding that they take a bigger share of the risk. This will play into the hands of the larger brands who perhaps have deeper pockets and makes it harder for the likes of independents who simply cannot do this.

So what of surf? This time of year is always difficult. “It's been a long winter with business being sporadic at best,” says Paul from Zuma Jay, “this year the quiet times were very quiet but when we did have the surf and weather then customers returned as normal. With the beautiful run of weather and surf we have been having for the last two weeks you easily forget about the months of on-shores and drizzle. So it's a great start to the spring. Easter is early and although the weather is being the usual classic bank holiday rain, people will come down and enjoy the coast as always.” I asked Paul about clothing: “It's still tough and it is now becoming questionable as to whether to continue with it at all as there is no real sign of it picking up. People seem to want new clothing and styles but it really has become the domain of the Internet and discount companies. I had to laugh having seen a 'surf clothing' shop local to us with a big sign outside advertising 'new spring season stock 50% off'. Leave them to it.” Good advice Paul.

Gordon Way



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY

UK

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SWISS

Employment reform: these are the words on everybody's lips these days in France. A bill that “aims to bring new liberties and protection for companies and assets”. The text intends to lend more weight to labour negotiation. More flexible working hours, a new scheme for overtime, capped tribunal allowances, rules on economic dismissals, these issues are provoking various reactions in France that threaten to be debated at length by all economic players.

With the guns put away, it's negotiation time. After raising the threat of forcing through the labour bill by calling on article 49.3 in the Assemblée Nationale, the government said it is now ready to open a “dialogue” and “discussion”. “There is a desire to talk, we are listening, nothing is set in stone”, insists the cabinet employment minister Myriam El Khomri.

Aim: to control the fire that could enflame the left (and France?), before the bill's introduction into the Council of Ministers one year before the presidential election. The logs are stacking up: unions are preparing to mobilise, socialist representatives are ready to “not vote in favour” of a bill that the Medef welcomes, online petitions are demanding the bill's retraction and youth organisations are on the verge of battle.

So it's in this rather tense economic and social climate that France finds itself in during the 2016 winter. If we are going to attempt to summarise this period, let's start with the winter sales: the benchmark period is quite revealing about economic activity in our country this season. “Pretty average, not to say terrible,” according to retailers. The winter sales overall saw visitations up on a catastrophic 2015. But the period suffered from a progressive breathlessness and stumbled upon diminished budgets. As Yann from Nozbone in Paris underlines: “Footfall during the sales were quite good. People are waiting more and more for this period to consume and are looking for the best deals.”

Because it was mild people went into shops and the increase in turnover came in at around 1.5%-2% during the six weeks of reductions. This figure was confirmed by M Boyé, assistant manager of the shop Freeride in Bidart: “The sales were quite good, we saw a bit of an increase on last year to the order of 2%.” This growth is only relative however; the rise is only compared to results from last year's sales, which were a fiasco, following the terrorist attacks of January 2015.

What's more, the “period seems to be a bit misleading with the two or three first weeks showing strong increases before running out of steam. The concentration of purchases in the first few days is getting stronger each year” says Yann at Nozbone. Whether it's Yann, M Boyé from Freeride or Alexandre from Okla, they all agree that the sales period is just too long.

Particularly pleasant weather and dwindling purchasing power explains these feeble figures in part. But consumers are also in the habit of spreading out their slashed-price purchases throughout the year, making the most of increasingly more frequent offers. “This year, pre-Christmas promotions were particularly numerous and therefore staggered spending”, highlights Philippe Guilbert, from French survey institute Toluna.

Generally speaking, e-commerce came out best with a rise of 15% in the first four weeks and an average basket of 114 Euros, similar to last year, according to Fevad (Fédération e-commerce et vente à distance).

This winter's warm weather also played a part in shop sales. This was beneficial to urban and coastal shops with lovely skies and really high temperatures for the season. The combination of these two meteorological factors, however, meant a lack of snow in resorts, which did no favours for mountain-based shops' sales. Yann from Nozbone in Paris confirms: “The nice weather this winter helped us to sell technical skateboarding products.” The same goes for the Atlantic coast at Freeride in Bidart: “The good weather and waves brought quite a few people into the shop, especially since the surf conditions were so good throughout winter.”

However, the opposite is true for resorts and ski-orientated shops. “The lack of snow and the nice weather did nothing to encourage sales of big warm garments this winter,” states Alexandre at Okla in Toulouse. “The lack of snow had a direct impact on our turnover, which is down on 2015 over the whole season,” says Laurent from Snowproblemo in Saint Lary. “Even still, in the Alps, the outlook is more circumspect, for Ride & Style in Val Thorens: “The lack of snow meant that skiers had more time to spend in the shops, in terms of sales it's quite similar to last year, it depends on the shop but we can't really complain.” Black Cats in Tignes saw things similarly, as Alex told us: “We had good conditions at the start of the season and it was a shame the media didn't share this information.”

The February holidays are normally crucial to the success of a season in the mountains but they unfortunately couldn't make up for the losses suffered due to the late start to the season. For Laurent from Snowproblemo the holidays were “similar to other years”. Even still, Ride & Style saw a “slight increase on last year.”

As for mountain trends this winter, it seems like the French brand Picture is still in, as Laurent relates from the Pyrenees: “The brand's themes and ecological approach seem to be appreciated by consumers once again this season.” This trend is confirmed in the Alps at Ride & Style: “This year, customers were attracted by different brands and selling points, Picture for its ecological dimension, Oakley for its technical aspects and Neff for its Fun side.” At Black Cats in Tignes, “the technical products worked particularly well from brands such as Lib-Tech, CAPiTA and Burton. Outerwear stalled a bit despite the pretty bad weather conditions.”

At urban shops, we note the return of core brands such as Thrasher. “This is a core brand that we have always stocked in the shop,” says Yann at Nozbone. However, it sold well this winter to clients in the fashion world such as bloggers. This is no doubt linked to the appearance of these products in various videos...”

On the coast, “technical products once again worked well this winter,” M Boyé from Freeride tells us. “The good conditions allowed people to surf all winter and they came into shops to kit themselves out”.

Overall, the 2016 winter was somewhat complicated. While the weather favoured the urban, coastal and flatlands shops, it obviously did nothing to help shops in resorts. Nonetheless, despite the lack of snow, the results are pretty OK. The spring's socio-economic climate, with the labour reforms being announced (initiated?), is unfortunately not good. However, French buying power is up; finally an encouraging sign for a springtime pick-up in consumption!

Benoit Brecq



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY UK FRENCH **ITALY** SPAIN AUSTRIA SWISS

Starting with the economy it's pretty similar to the last year here in Italy; it's OK, but not great. There are good signs of improvement but no huge steps. We are seeing great innovation from Italian companies, which is encouraging. More people are also starting their own businesses, but the public debt is still massive and bureaucracy combined with high tax pressure is still a big problem. Our Prime Minister Matteo Renzi remains strong and this seems to be unwavering. In the long run this is all very positive as Italy has suffered recently from unstable governments who made it impossible to make long-term reforms, which we really need in different parts of our system.

Turning our attention to boardsports, we saw a very warm winter until the beginning of January and the winter sports market suffered heavily, with large numbers of hardgoods and outerwear going on sale, damaging healthy margins. This isn't something all that new for retailers, but it makes pre-books for FW16/17 very poor, as stores are very cautious with the amount of product they buy. Stores have been asking brands and distributors for a lot of help, as they don't want to take big risks when pre-booking. Special terms and deals are a hot topic right now.

When talking to retailers such as Fakie shop from Merano, owner Alex Berger confides: "We need to believe in our business and we need to invest more into the younger generation as this is key for our future. We also need to support brands that invest in the new generation and beginners." Wise words, and something everyone in the industry should think about, especially considering the growing number of freestyle skiers who seem to be taking over snow parks and the mountain in general. This is a serious point: We need to start asking the question - why don't these kids have a snowboard under their feet?

As far as brands who did well this past winter, it's a pretty mixed bag as every store tries to find their own mix of brands and as turnover on outerwear and hardgoods dropped (also thanks to the warm weather) the variety in every store significantly dropped and stores carried less brands in general. Most stores tried to keep some big names for winter such as Burton and added brands such as Airblaster or Colour Wear for some added spice.

The spring season is slowly kicking in and stores are getting ready for the new season by stocking up on skateboards, cruisers and longboards. Hardgood sales on the skateboard side seem stable, but the longboard market will become tougher this summer with more competition from sports stores and an overstocking issue with both long- and cruiser boards.

Online business overall is growing season after season and is a blessing on the one hand, but is also something a lot of smaller retailers are questioning as to whether or not it will benefit them in the long run. Only time will tell.

The surf season isn't in full swing yet, but the sport itself has kept its good momentum. On the apparel side of the surf industry, smaller brands and more exclusive labels seem to be gaining traction in surf stores and have gained a lot of ground on the bigger players. An event that we really look forward to is the Nine Knights snow contest taking place in Watles, a resort in South Tyrol (northern part of Italy) in early April. With some of the world's best athletes from the snowboard and ski world, the setup will be constructed by the Italian snow park company F-tech in collaboration with Schneestern. Don't miss it - it will be huge!

Franz Josef Holler

GERMANY UK FRENCH ITALY **SPAIN** AUSTRIA SWISS

The Spanish economy is growing, but it is a slow and uncertain growth. GDP registered a quarter-to-quarter growth of 0.8% during the fourth quarter of 2015 - flat with the previous quarter. By the end of 2015, family spending on consumer goods maintained a high level of activity, which carried on through to the start of this year. Employment expanded at an annual rate of 3% compared to the same period the year before and the most recent information even shows acceleration in salary growth at the beginning of this year. As a result, spending power among Spanish families is projected to be greater than last year. Does this mean we can expect the same from the boardsports industry? Let's see what our industry professionals think.

"In our case, we have grown greatly in every aspect," says Iker Beistegi, Co-Founder at Ocean Sunglasses, a member of the Surf Industry Cluster of Donostia / San Sebastián City. "At first, we positioned ourselves in the technical glasses category for water sports. We entered the market and saw great growth from lifestyle glasses, where the market is much bigger. However it has been our technical glasses that have given us global recognition and we have sold well here while opening new channels of distributions." Thinking about market trends, Iker continues: "In our case, traditional channels are flat or have decreased slightly, and digital channels have grown exponentially for us. There are lots of opportunities in digital and we think it is necessary to be in all of them. The key is how. We continue to grow both in shops and online, and people have tested the product and are happy with the result. However, due to the economic crisis the market has become polarized, with people craving either high- or low-end product, with not much in between. We have adapted to suit and offer both a high-end and a low-end

line." Next we spoke to Luis Malo, CEO at the Vans Málaga (Pedro de Toledo, 1) and Madrid (Montera 43) stores: "Despite the economic crisis and the amount of time it took for winter to finally arrive, sales increased by 8%. The demand for accessories has grown and the demand for shoes has maintained, and in particular shoes with a lighter sole have sold well, with people vying for more comfortable options in general."

When we asked him about his view on the market, Luis states: "The future of multi-brand stores is uncertain. We continue our commitment to develop single-brand stores. When talking about products, we can confirm the popularity of old school models, such as the Sk8 Hi and the Old Skool model. At the same time, we also envision the increase in retro running shoes and light soled shoes." Looking at the snow market, Javier Anula Castells, CEO at AN Sport store, says: "The selling season has been really good. Sales of clothing, footwear and accessories were better than last year. On the other hand, sales in technical materials and equipment were similar to last year, which was a turnout for the books, considering the lack of snow. In general, our most important clients are families where every member participates in a snow sport."

Due to the lack of snow, rentals have been more in demand and this influenced the sales of equipment. I feel that if we would have been blessed with decent snowfall this past winter, the winter season would have been excellent instead of very good for the first time in five years.

Jokin Arroyo Uriarte



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY UK FRENCH ITALY SPAIN **AUSTRIA** SWISS

In spite of the warm winter, Austrian retailers are, in general, happy about the season. "From October to the end of December we had a very strong winter," says Thomas Alton from Alton Premium Board Store in Feldkirch (West). "Our passion for the sport and our constant effort to remind locals that a specialist snowboard shop knows exactly what they are doing paid off. From year to year, we have more and more regular customers and are really happy about that." Surf Service Graz (East) had a surprisingly good winter until December, as Gernot Brandstätter recounts. Mid to top range snowboards, boots, and bindings were selling especially well. Products that stand out from the rest through technical innovation." Interestingly, the season's winners in Graz were "high-end carving snowboards by SG and Kessler together with high performance hardboots by UPZ." In Gernot's opinion, this winter's losers were "splitboards since the beginning of January as well as functional layers in general." In Western Austria, the opposite is the case: "Splitboards are exploding!" In Feldkirch, powder boards had initial starting difficulties too, because of the late snow, but the sell-off recovered later on. Airblaster ninja suits sold "like hot cakes" and other brands that did exceptionally well were Volcom streetwear, Burton, Analog, Volcom and Airblaster outerwear, Electric and Anon goggles as well as Anon helmets. When it comes to hardware, Burton, Slash, Lib-Tech, Jones, Nitro, and Union were the most popular brands.

Alton Premium Board Store focuses very much on events as a marketing and customer connectivity tool and organised eight different events from September to the end of December, including video premieres, in-store dinners, wheel of fortune days for the girls, pre-season VIP evenings for customers, and a skateboard contest in Autumn. They didn't stop there: "In winter, we built the Burton Snowpark Damüls with our in-house snow park company

'Parkdesign'. There, we have up to nine different events throughout the season."

For springtime, both shops clearly focus on surf products - and we are talking all different kinds of these: Gernot sees "SUP boards (predominantly inflatables) together with wetsuits and high-end carbon paddles as well as stand-up paddling boards with an option for windsurfing," as fast-selling items. "Windsurfing is once again enjoying a steady clientele, but in this segment, dealers need to guarantee attractive offers. River surfing is still an issue, even if in this case customers are only demanding low budget boards." Also, Gernot is convinced that "surfing has a high significance and a constant group of customers in Austria, but advanced surfers now buy their boards at their holiday destinations more often, where local shapers can produce very individual and reasonably priced boards." So what about the boards on four wheels? "The skateboard trend is growing, but in a very relaxed way. Longboards are already over in our store," reports Thomas. "We noticed this last year and didn't buy many more longboards for this season." Gernot agrees: "The longboard segment has already reached its peak, but in 2016 they will still be selling well."

Smaller brands and good, often also limited products are still in demand in the core shops, and know-how is an important criterion for the customer as well: "Professional advice is welcome again and the products are bought in the shop, too!", Thomas is happy to report. Gernot is convinced that "the heyday of brand fetishism" is over. "Boardsport lovers are still willing to invest their money, but are more and more looking for an excellent price/performance ratio. Now is the time for smaller, innovative and very authentic brands."

Barbara Mayer

GERMANY UK FRENCH ITALY SPAIN AUSTRIA **SWISS**

It's time to draw up our report on a very complicated, up and down winter and the result is generally not very encouraging. We've known for years that snowsports and winter equipment in general is strongly influenced by the weather but this year's studies show that this correlation is proven to within a day either side. Snowfalls on the plains automatically provoke an increase in winter equipment sales on the same day and continue into the next day if the weather stays gloomy.

As a result, this winter was not the same for everyone. It was a winter with a lot of precipitation but also a lot of warmth, which caused highly variable snow conditions according to region and period. With the rapid increases in temperature, it went from excellent to terrible in the same day.

In general, the winter was warm in the plains and the snowless start harshly damaged snowboard sales and rentals. Equipment was stacking up in shops and sales struggled. The bad conditions combined with how expensive our country is mercilessly impacted by business in resort-based shops. Tourism dropped because of obvious price reasons and local tourism was slow due to lack of cold and white gold. We are talking about losses ranging between 10% and 20% turnover compared to last season, in part because of the price drop but especially because of a decline in sales volumes. Visitations in general were down in all shops, in the plains due to lack of interest and in the mountains due to lack of tourism. This season, the Russian clientele that we have the pleasure of welcoming in January declined by 41% according to the newspaper "Le Matin" while as for our own compatriots, at least 5% admit to going to Austria to ski and snowboard. The Swiss winter sports sector is in more hot water than ever before.

As for the splitboard market, although there is a trend for walkies and touring, as we can see in the ski market, it seems to have dropped off a bit. It seems as though splitboard purchases are done in waves and this year was pretty flat. It should be noted that the complexity of the thing does not help with sales, not everyone is able to sell them and so are limited to specialists, which is good but even they admit to not having sold many this year. It could be down to the climate or because many people are already kitted out.

The snowboard market is undergoing change, doesn't know where it's going at all and no-one knows how to tackle the problem. That's why retailers these days are turning to their suppliers to ask for help. Help that in theory would consist of them taking back some or all of the unsold items in exchange for the promise of reordering a certain quantity of equipment the following year (often equal to or more than the previous year). This practice, although still uncommon, seems to have spread, especially for brands having stock in Switzerland. We already knew the advantages of suppliers having stock in Switzerland: speed of delivery, ease of product exchanges and now the return of unsold items or designing deposit systems.

There is clearly a competitive advantage for brands who are offering services that others are not able to because their stock is located beyond our borders. Today we are entering into a situation where suppliers are offering them solutions rather than 'this' reduction or 'that'. But we should not forget that returning equipment brings its own problems with it such as the creation of a parallel market due to surplus equipment being liquidated by the brands themselves.

Fabien Grisel

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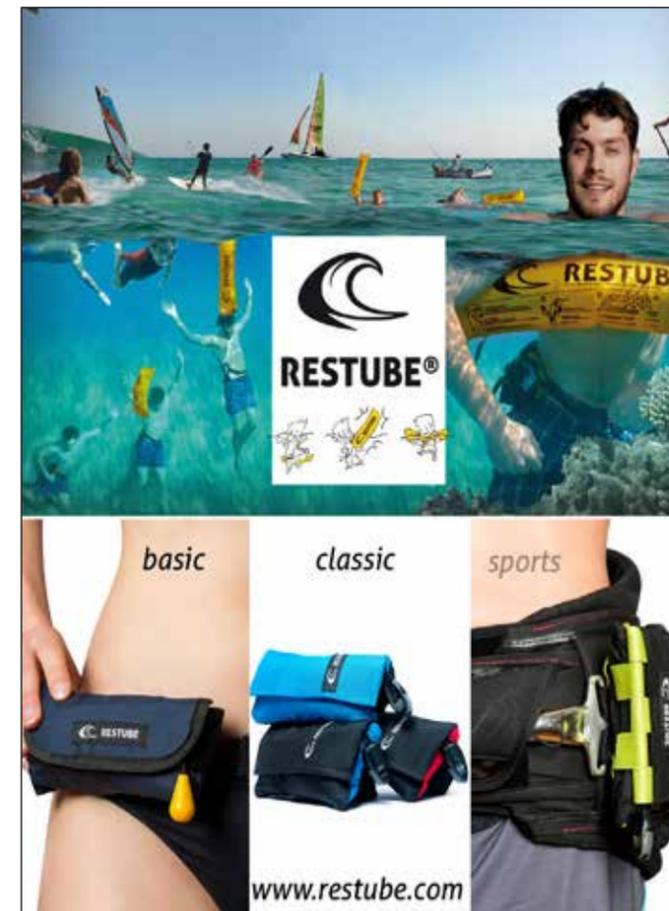
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SUCHT EINEN ONLINE CONTENT MANAGER (W/M)

DEINE AUFGABEN

- Planung, Konzeption, Umsetzung und Optimierung redaktioneller Inhalte und Beiträge in Blog, Newsletter und Social Media - kurz: das Schreiben kreativer Texte, welche unseren Lesern Skateboarding und den dazugehörigen Lifestyle vermitteln
- Web-Costen-Management
- Unterstützung der strategischen Marketingplanung (Anzeigen, Banner, Foto- & Videocontings etc.)
- Mitarbeit im Online Marketing (Werbewebis-Monitoring, Linkbuilding, Recherche)
- operative Abwicklung von Marketingaktionen

DEIN PROFIL

- Begeisterung für Skateboarding, Streetwear und unsere Marken
- gutes Skateboard-Knowhow und Szenekenntnisse
- klarer, freier Schreibstil und eine große Leidenschaft für ansprechende Texte
- absolut sichere Anwendung von Orthographie und Grammatik
- erfolgreich abgeschlossene journalistische Ausbildung, wirtschafts- oder kommunikationswissenschaftliches Studium, vergleichbare Ausbildung mit Schwerpunkt Marketing oder mindestens zwei Jahre einschlägige Berufserfahrung als Online-Redakteur
- sicherer Umgang mit HTML, Adobe Photoshop und Grundkenntnisse in CSS
- sehr hohe Motivation, Kommunikationsstärke, Engagement, Teamfähigkeit und Eigeninitiative
- sehr gute Deutsch- und Englischkenntnisse
- weitere Fremdsprachenkenntnisse (Französisch, Niederländisch, Spanisch, Italienisch) wünschenswert aber kein Muss

BEI UNS ERWARTET DICH

- ein attraktiver Arbeitsplatz mit flexiblen Arbeitszeiten und hauseigener Miniramp
- ein dynamisches und hochmotiviertes Team mit flacher Hierarchie
- spannende und anspruchsvolle Aufgaben mit viel Gestaltungsspielraum und Eigenverantwortung
- Festanstellung in Voll- oder Teilzeit

MEHR INFOS FINDEST DU AUF: WWW.SKATEDELUXE.COM/JOBS

Wenn du an diesem Angebot interessiert bist, freuen wir uns auf deine aussagekräftige Bewerbung!
 Bitte stelle deine Bewerbungsunterlagen in digitaler Form und sende diese an jobs@skatedeluxe.com



Digital Marketing Manager

Position details

- Location: Poole Head Office
- Salary: Negotiable depending on skills and experience
- Contact: Michele Murphy

Description

Animal, the UK action sports lifestyle brand is currently looking for an experienced candidate for this new exciting role

You will be responsible for developing and executing a Digital Marketing strategy. A leader with extensive experience in establishing online digital propositions to drive traffic and sales. This role is responsible for customer centric campaign planning, driving traffic and ROI through digital media channels.

You will be responsible for:

- Strategic planning & execution
- Customer acquisition
- Customer retention
- Ensuring strong ROI
- Planning and budgetary control of all digital marketing channels
- Development and successful implementation of eCRM programme
- Ensuring digital marketing and social media are consistent with the overarching marketing plan
- Working closely with the Ecommerce department to ensure all company-wide digital marketing initiatives are consistent
- Working alongside the wider marketing team to create innovative campaigns and optimisation
- Drive engagement through social media and paid campaigns (PPC, display advertising)
- Analyzing various marketing campaigns and conducting competitor analysis
- Accountable for performance of digital marketing channels against agreed KPIs, using all available optimisation levers to maximise performance within and across channels
- Be the champion of digital marketing techniques within the company to communicate and drive the importance of techniques such as SEO
- Responsible for enhancing 3rd party relationships and identifying, negotiating and implementing new opportunities in order to maximise incremental revenue
- Oversee all relationships with external suppliers of services to the marketing team, including agencies, technology providers and affiliate networks
- Responsibility for selecting and negotiating with any future relationships with new and existing suppliers
- Oversee & critique the work of 3rd party PPC, SEO, Affiliates or Programmatic providers
- Work closely with internal stakeholders and external agencies to ensure optimal customer targeting and onsite user experiences with both customers and conversions in mind

Candidate must be a strategic thinker, analytical and results focused with excellent oral and written communication skills.
 Ideally is a Google Analytics super user experienced with customer reporting and Google Tag Manager knowledge.

To Apply: Send CV & cover letter to recruitment@animal.co.uk or visit the Animal Website at www.animal.co.uk/careers

EVENTS # 81

SURF / SKATE / SNOW / SUP TRADE

APRIL		MAY	
2-10 SWATCH FREERIDE WORLDTOUR VERBIER, SWITZERLAND FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM	5-10 VOLKL WORLD ROOKIE FINALS TIROL, AUSTRIA WORLDROOKIETOUR.COM	8-19 MARGARET RIVER PRO AUSTRALIA WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM	14-16 VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES QUALIFIER MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA VANS PARKSERIES.COM
20-21 PERFORMANCE DAYS MUNICH, GERMANY PERFORMANCEDAYS.EU	30-06 SPRING BREAK UK BOARD TEST KAUNERTAL, AUSTRIA SNOWSHOPTEST.COM	10-12 RIO PRO BRAZIL WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM	15-17 KING OF THE HILL RIKSGRANSEN 20TH ANNIVERSARY
JUNE		JULY	
26-29 FAR 'N HIGH VILLIERS-SUR-ORGE, FRANCE WCSK8.COM	2-5 SUMMER X GAMES AUSTIN, TEXAS XGAMES.ESPN.COM	10-11 VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES QUALIFIER FLORIPA, BRAZIL VANS PARKSERIES.COM	14-17 PITTI UOMO LORENCE, ITALY PITTIMMAGINE.COM
7-19 FIJI PRO FIJI WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM	18-19 EXTREME BARCELONA SKATE COMP PARC DEL FÒRUM, BARCELONA - EXTREMEBARCELONA.COM	25-27 CAPSULE PARIS - FRANCE CAPSULESHOW.COM	28-30 BRIGHT BERLIN BRIGHTTRADESHOW.COM
28-30 SEEK BERLIN SEEKEXHIBITIONS.COM	6-7 J-BAY OPEN JEFFREYS BAY, SOUTH AFRICA WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM	8-10 NASS FESTIVAL SOMERSET, UK NASSFESTIVAL.COM	8-9 VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES QUALIFIER VANCOUVER, CANADA VANS PARKSERIES.COM
10-13 SURF FILM FESTIVAL ANGET, FRANCE SURF-FILM.COM	13-16 THE OUTDOOR SHOW FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, GERMANY OUTDOOR-SHOW.COM	18-19 AGENDA MIAMI, FLORIDA AGENDASHOW.COM	23-24 ITALIAN SURF EXPO SPIAGGIA DI SANTA SEVERA ITALIASURFEXPO.IT
24-31 VANS US OPEN OF SURFING HUNTINGTON BEACH VANSUSOPENOFSURFING.COM	27-28 JACKET REQUIRED LONDON, UK JACKET-REQUIRED.COM	29-30 AGENDA LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA AGENDASHOW.COM	29-30 VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES QUALIFIER HUNTINGTON BEACH, UNITED
AUGUST			
10-14 BOARDMASTERS CORNWALL, USA WWW.SEEKEXHIBITIONS.COM	15-17 AGENDA LAS VEGAS, NEVADA AGENDASHOW.COM	19-20 BILLABONG PRO TAHITI FRENCH POLYNESIA WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM	🏄 SURF EVENT 🛖 TRADESHOW EVENT 🏂 SNOW EVENT 🛹 SKATE EVENT



BRIGHT

X X I I I
 28 . - 30 . JUNE
 W W W
 BRIGHTTRADESHOW
 . C O M

IMAGE BY SUPER FUTURE KID / SUPERFUTUREKID.COM

VANS 50v ANNIVERSARY, HOUSE OF VANS LONDON



Vans' new PR recruit George Pedrick & European Brand Manager, Oli Culcheth



Vans team rider Tom Lowe, Surf Team Manager Mikel Urigoitia & Snow Team Manager Bruno Rivoire



Route One's Will Radula-Scott & Vans' Ollie Plumley reminiscing over a recent Route One team strike mission to Japan



Noel Reynolds & Vans' Steve Van Doren making friends over a t-shirt

THE ROME LODGE



What a crew!



Rome's European Marketing Manager Philip Kämmerer steezing out a chairlift ride



Rome squad. Eddie Rakete (Euro customer service & events), European Marketing Manager Philip Kämmerer & Global Marketing Manager Grady Skelton and Glove & Bag Project Manager George Eget.jpeg



Gigi Rül's uncle and Rome's Grady Skelton

SECTOR 9 SALES MEETING, LANZAROTE



Thomas Kahle from Praha



The 9er Crew skating the volcano



Rollin' Stoke forefather Sly - stylin it old school



Nick Sacks and Marc Ferullo from Sector 9 HQ in San Diego

MERVIN FESTIVAL, ST ANTON, AUSTRIA



Wayne McDonald from St Anton store Surfer's Paradise with Mervin's Didi



The test tent



Mervin Sales Rep Austria and Festival Chief Mr. Didi Feichtner



Jennewein's board rental master Stephan Schmiderer with his favourite board in the Lib Tech range - Jamie Lynn's Rat Tail

BURTON'S #40YEARSFORWARD, MEDIA TRIP, INNSBRUK



Burton's Steph Renaud (Global Line Manager Women's) following up her presentation on soft goods with a small product workshop



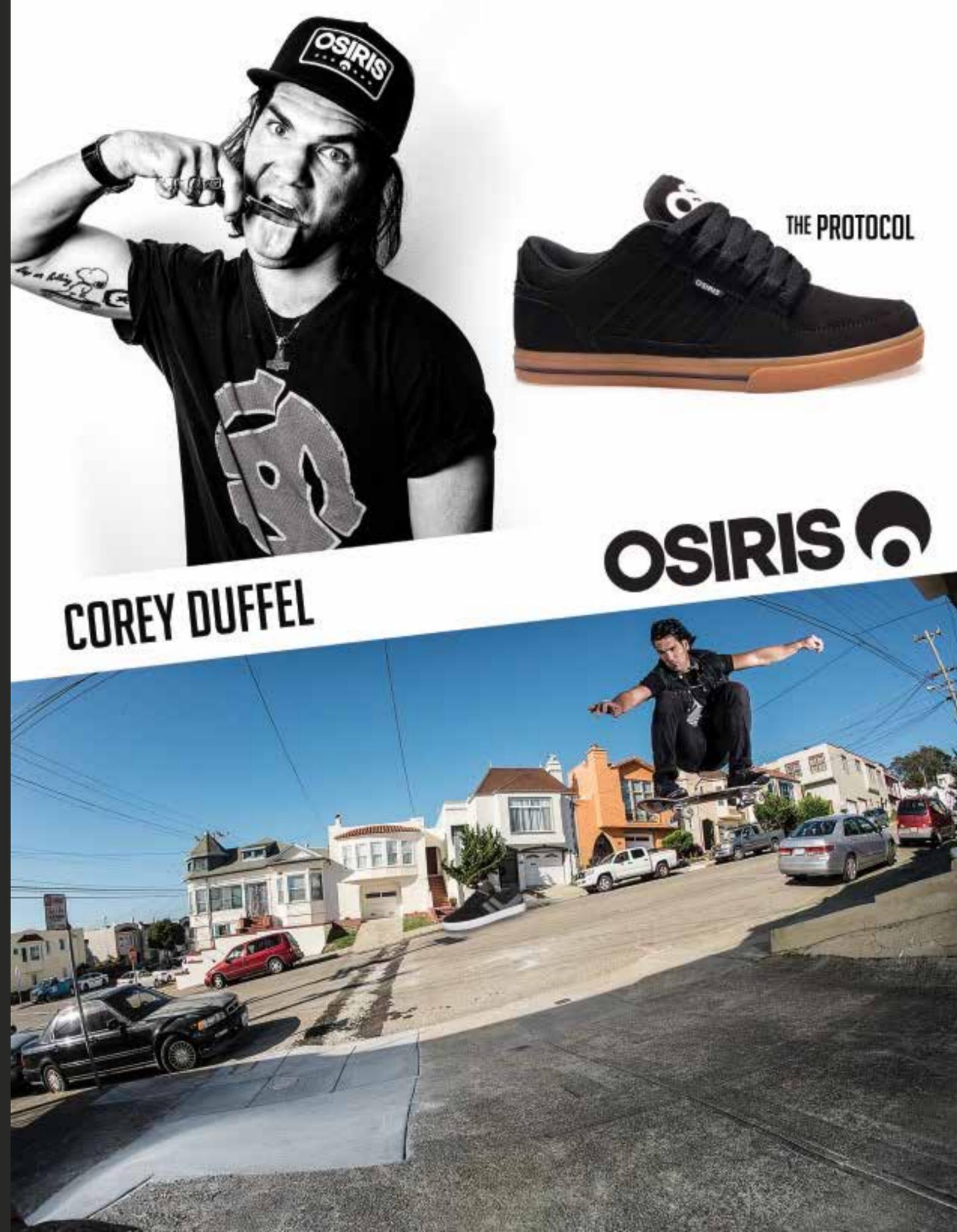
Burton's PR Guru, Birgit Gruber helping out team rider Anna Gasser with the FW16/17 order



Burton's Franck Waterlot (Vice President of Sales & Marketing Europe) opened the Product Presentation day with an introduction to the company



Burton's Chris Patsch (Marketing Manager Europe) talked us through how far Burton have come in 40 years





MARKETING // LICENSING // EVENTS



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// ENQUIRIES@EXTREMEINTERNATIONAL.COM

LESS BORED // MORE BOARD

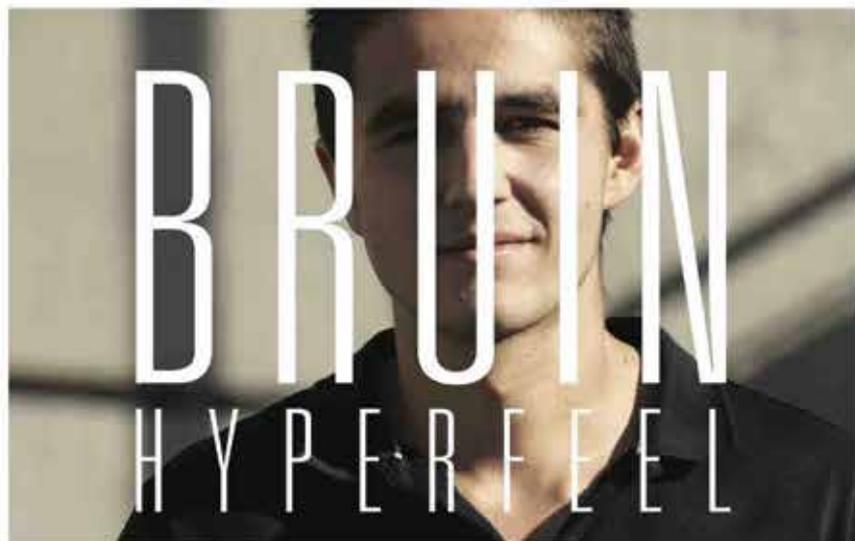
In today's complex world, clarity, authenticity and integrity are the key to truly successful and engaging marketing.

EXTREME offers a pioneering sports and entertainment marketing service that connects brands to fans through passion and experience.

What sets us apart is that we enable partner brands to tap into EXTREME's existing flow of ongoing marketing activities and brand presence that is driven by our growing array of marketing initiatives which deliver significant and guaranteed reach.



DONOVAN PISCOPO FRONTSIDE BLUNT SLIDE



ANY STYLE / ANY SPOT / ONE BRUIN