

BOARDSPORT

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EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

#87 JUNE / JULY 2017 €5

JAN HOLZERS, RVCA EUROPEAN BRAND MANAGER

LOCAL SKATE PARK ARTICLE

REGIONAL MARKET INTELLIGENCE

BRAND PROFILES, BUYER SCIENCE & MORE



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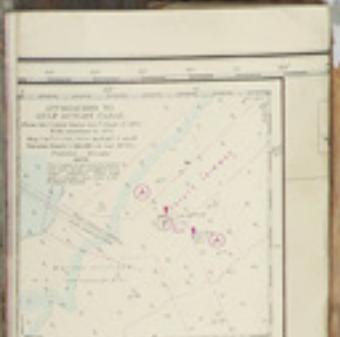
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HELLO #87

Eco considerations were once considered a luxury, however, with the rise of consumer awareness and corporate social responsibility the topic is shifting more and more into focus. Accordingly, as the savvy consumer strives to detangle themselves from the ties of a disposable culture, they now require fewer products, but made to a higher standard. Before, for example, a brand may have intended for its jacket to be worn purely on the mountain, but now it's expected to work in the snowy mountains, on a rainy commute or for going fishing in.

We saw it a number of years ago with snowboard brands who wanted their customer to feel just as comfortable at après ski in their jacket as they did on the hill, hence cuts became slimmer and cleaner, allowing for outerwear to be worn discretely on and off the mountain. These lines have continued to blur over the years and with last summer's explosion of wanderlust sparking a surge in the outdoor segment, many boardsports brands are keen for a slice of the outdoor pie. And trade shows have evolved to adapt with the likes of Bright once again showcasing an outdoor segment, the OutDoor

Show introducing a lifestyle crossover section and in the States, SIA & Outdoor Retailer merging.

Issue 87 provides boardsports retail buyers with all they need to know for walking the halls of this summer's trade show season. It's with this in mind that we're rebranding our trend articles; goodbye Trend Reports, hello Retail Buyer's Guides. As we battle through information overload, it's more important now than ever before for retailers to trust their SOURCES of information. Our Retail Buyer's Guides are compiled by industry specialists through brand interviews and research to help retailers evaluate each season's product offerings and make better-informed buying decisions.

So, whether enjoying this on your iPhone, iPad, computer or in all its printed glory, grab a cup of coffee and enjoy our SS18 trade show edition.

Always Sideways,
Harry Mitchell Thompson
Editor

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BIC SPORT ADDS SIC TO ITS PORTFOLIO

BIC Sport has added SUP brand, SIC, to its portfolio. SIC products will now be available in over 90 countries globally for both retailers and consumers. This transaction will also mean that retailers and service operators will now have access to a wider range of products, technologies and price points from a single supplier with SIC covering the premium segment of the BIC Sport offering.

RVCA LAUNCHES NEW RETAIL CORNERS IN BARCELONA & HOSSEGOR

RVCA have just launched two new brand spaces in Barcelona and Hossegor, sharing retail space with fellow GSM brands Billabong and Element (Barcelona) and Element (Hossegor). The new features are a combination of artist-inspired designs from their Artist Network Program (ANP) and garments from their SS17 range.

SAXX UNDERWEAR APPOINTS HKT PRODUCTS TO LEAD LAUNCH IN THE UK BIKE/MOTO & SKATE MARKET

SAXX underwear has been making waves in North America for some time and now, with the demand growing across the pond, it has joined with HKT Products to guide its UK growth.

FORMER VOLCOM EXEC KEVIN MEEHAN APPOINTED RVCA GLOBAL GM

The Billabong Group has appointed Kevin Meehan as the new Global General Manager of RVCA, one of its three key brands. Meehan has served as an exec for Volcom, Hurley and Burton and most recently served as President of the Americas for Volcom. Meehan was originally appointed as President of North America for Volcom but later moved on to cover the whole Americas region. Meehan replaces Bill Bettencourt at RVCA, who is said to be moving onto an unknown footwear brand.

ENGLISH SURFING FEDERATION LAUNCHES NEW IDENTITY AS SURFING ENGLAND

English Surfing Federation has now announced their new identity as Surfing England. These changes follow a merger with Surfing GB and brings the brand more into line with National and International NGB's for Sport.

SURF EXPO RANKED AMONG THE TOP 100 SHOWS IN 2016 BY TSNN

Each year Trade Show News Network (TSNN) compiles a list of the top 250 trade shows in the US and for 2016 Surf Expo was ranked 95th and 96th for their January and September events. Surf Expo is the largest and longest running boardsports and beach lifestyle tradeshow in the world and since 2010 it has consistently been awarded for its continual growth.

LRG ACQUIRED BY MAD ENGINE

Mad Engine LLC has stepped foot into the action sports world with its purchase of creative lifestyle brand, Lifted Research Group, Inc. (LRG). Mad Engine has expanded substantially since its founding in 1987, from a small t-shirt supplier in Southern California to a best-in-class design, merchandising and distributor of licensed apparel, catering to the needs of a wide spectrum of retailers. The company has gained full vertical capabilities over the past 30 years, enabling greater control over sourcing and the supply chain, as well as providing reliability and predictability to customers. In more recent years, Mad Engine has diversified product offerings by launching additional divisions outside of its core male/kids apparel business to include female apparel and adult loungewear/underwear. Mad Engine also expanded its horizon globally by acquiring Xtreme Worldwide to serve as the foundation of

its International Business Division.

MAD ENGINE ACQUIRES NEFF HEADWEAR WITH SHAUN NEFF STEPPING IN AS CHIEF CREATIVE OFFICER

Mad Engine has announced that it will be adding Neff Headwear to its portfolio having acquired the brand from Marlin Equity Partners and the Neff Family. With this move, Shaun Neff will be joining Mad Engine as its Chief Creative Officer with the view to continue Mad Engine's growth in the licensing world. Mad Engine's acquisition of Neff came one month after their purchase of LRG.

MELON OPTICS APPOINTS ASH PALMER AS HEAD OF MARKETING

Bali-based eyewear brand, Melon Optics have appointed Ash Palmer as their new Head of Marketing. Palmer previously served as EMEA Action Sports Manager at Monster Energy. Ash is already out in Canggu, Bali with the rest of the team.

ISA INTRODUCES FIRST SUP DEVELOPMENT COURSES IN IRAN

The ISA continues to push the sport of SUP worldwide with the first-ever development course for StandUp Paddle in Iran with the aim to promote positive social change, promote gender equality and engage the youth.

ALL CONDITIONS MEDIA HONCHO MATT BARR LAUNCHES ACTION SPORTS PODCAST

Action sports agency All Conditions Media's founder and journalist, Matt Barr has launched a new action sports podcast. The Looking Sideways podcast has already featured the likes of Andrew Cotton, Ed Leigh, Sascha Hamm, Tom Burt, Xavier de le Rue, Orlando von Eisendel and Christian Stevenson with plenty more in the pipeline. An industry vet, Barr has worked in the action sports industry for over 20 years and his new Looking Sideways podcasts look to "uncover the most interesting stories in action sports and other related endeavours".

1000 WAVES PER HOUR AT THE NEW WAVEGARDEN COVE

Wavegarden, a manmade wave producing facility in the Basque Country has released news of new technology, which it claims will produce up to 1000 waves an hour of various heights ranging from knee-high and playful to 2.4-metre barrels. Wavegarden has built a demonstration model at their R&D centre in Spain measuring just 50m x 80m that has been creating waves non-stop since October 2016 – endeavouring to prove that it's possible to make a great surf spot in a relatively small space. With the Cove, Wavegarden has also introduced new technology which eliminates backwash.

OTIS EYEWEAR APPOINTS SCOTT LEWIS AS GLOBAL BRAND MANAGER

Otis Eyewear have appointed Scott Lewis to fill the newly created roll of Global Brand Manager. Lewis has served at many positions for different action sports brands including Oakley, Spy, Globe and Fox.

SURFTECH NAMES JERAMIE VAINÉ AS TEAM MANAGER

Surftech has announced that professional SUP athlete, Jeramie Vaine, has been appointed as Team Manager for the company's international team of ambassadors as well as NSP's North American ambassadors too.

INTERNATIONAL SURFING ASSOCIATION & ASSOCIATION OF PADDLESURF PROFESSIONALS WORLD TOUR ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP

The International Surfing Association (ISA) & Association of Paddlesurf Professionals (APP) World Tour have announced a partnership where the ISA will take a minority ownership in the APP World Tour and will provide an official ISA sanction of all APP World Tour events.

SPY UNVEILS REVAMPED WEBSITE SPEARHEADED BY NEWLY APPOINTED DIGITAL DIRECTOR

SPY have launched their newly revamped website which showcases their products whilst simultaneously promoting the brand's unique, aspirational lifestyle mentality. The website redesign was led by newly appointed Digital Director, John Gilson, who brings a wealth of experience to SPY having worked on a range of successful digital improvement initiatives for leading active outdoor and technology brands.

INTRODUCING THE OUTERKNOWN FIJI PRO

The Fiji Pro stop on the WSL Championship Tour and Kelly Slater's clothing brand Outerknown have signed a deal, giving naming rights to the apparel company.

CHRIS COTÉ LAUNCHES ACTION SPORTS PODCAST

Action sports personality Chris Coté has launched a new podcast, The Monday M.A.S.S, hosted on yewonline.com. Coté features the latest action sports news and interviews with pro surfers, skaters, snowboarders and musicians associated with the scene.

WEARCOLOUR FOUNDERS TAKE BACK CONTROL OF COMPANY

Founders Thor Kruse, Johan Ullbro, and Fredrik Abrahamson have taken back leadership of the company and the brands WearColour and VOID Cycling. The majority of the handover back to the founders has been completed already with the trio feeling confident moving forward and taking back leadership.

O'NEILL WETSUITS FOUNDER JACK O'NEILL DIES AGED 94

Wetsuit pioneer and O'Neill Founder, Jack O'Neill has died aged 94 of natural causes. O'Neill started the surf brand in 1952 while also running one of California's first surf shops in San Francisco. Jack O'Neill's commitment to producing garments that kept surfers warm during and after surfing is what he'll be remembered for, a true surfing pioneer.

BILLABONG APPOINTS NEW CFO

Billabong have hired Jim Howell as their new Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of the Company, succeeding Peter Myers who had been serving in the position since 2013.

RIDE & K2 SNOWBOARDS ACQUIRED BY KOHLBERG & COMPANY

Ride & K2 Snowboards are to be sold to Kohlberg & Company, a private equity firm, along with all of former parent company Newell Brands Inc's winter sports brands. Gross proceeds from the divestiture are expected to be \$240 million. Sales from the winter sports portfolio were about \$330 million in 2016.

STEVE HOLLEY APPOINTED AS CEO OF HUF AND LAKAI

Steve Holley has been appointed CEO of HUF and Lakai with immediate effect. Holley has been acting in an interim role for the past nine months and has made a positive impact in that time bringing over 20 years marketplace experience and a clear focus to the role.

SALTROCK SURFWEAR ANNOUNCES AMBITIOUS UK GROWTH STRATEGY

Saltrock Surfwear has announced that it is expanding their network of stores nationwide with the launch of a new strategic partnership with fellow South West retailer, The Range.

LOADED BOARDS PARTNERS WITH PARIS TRUCKS

Loaded Boards will now be in charge of the global distribution of Paris Trucks via its Californian HQ. The two brands have had a close working relationship for over a decade and Paris Trucks will continue to manage all of their own product development and marketing.

TTR PRO SNOWBOARDING & WORLD SNOWBOARD FEDERATION JOIN FORCES

The two major bodies of competitive and grass roots snowboarding, TTR Pro Snowboarding (TTR) and the World Snowboard Federation (WSF) have decided to become united and form one joint organisation. The new joint organisation will represent nations, event organisers and riders in order to shape the future of snowboarding.

SIA'S BOARD UNANIMOUSLY APPROVES DEAL WITH EMERALD EXPOSITION

The board at SIA (Snowsports Industries America) unanimously approved an agreement to sell their annual Snow Show trade show, which is booked in Denver until 2030, to Emerald Expositions. January 2018 will see the first ever combined Outdoor Retailer + Snow Show in Denver, Colorado.

SURFSTITCH TO CLOSE SWELL IN NORTH AMERICA

Australian online retail group, Surfstitch Group Ltd is to close down its North American operation SWELL, based in Irvine, California. The group will transfer all operations to its Australian home where a new tech platform they have introduced will allow the "SWELL site to operate in North America whilst being serviced and managed by our teams in Australia," Chief Executive Mike Sonand said in a statement on Monday May 22.

Surfstitch based the decision on a poor retail environment: "Although, considerable progress has been made in arresting losses in North America, the region will continue to be unprofitable for the foreseeable future," CEO Sonand stated. The North American operations will cease as of January 2018. SurfStitch has now forecast a full-year EBITDA loss of between \$10.5m – \$11.5m, double the size of its previously advised range of \$5m-\$6.5m. Share prices hit an all time low on Monday (6.9c), a 93% decline in shareholder investments.

Surfstitch has said that despite its poor American business that it plans to continue with its European (Surfdome) & Australian businesses through cost cutting and potential selling of company assets to alleviate cash flow.

INTRODUCING WASTED TALENT MAGAZINE

Wasted Talent Magazine is a new European printed and digital surf/skate-inspired magazine based in Hossegor, France. Presented by the guys from Wasted Talent Agency, the first printed edition is due to drop in June of this year while the website launched in April. 



OUTDOOR SHOW, FRIEDRICHSHAFEN, GERMANY, JUNE 18-21

Outdoor is a hot topic right now as action sports retailers look for new product categories and to grow their consumer base while satisfying their existing consumer audience who are now getting increasingly involved in the outdoor and camping markets. The Freidrichshafen show, which is traditionally the big European summer trade event for these products, is now making more of a concerted push into the action outdoor cross over market.

Three themed areas have been created to help retailers to get involved in new key trends. The Hangout in the Open-air Grounds West will be a totally relaxing exhibition area where you will find brands offering outdoor cooking equipment, games, furniture etc. – anything you need for hanging out and chilling outdoors. The Lifestyle collection area will be full of exhibitors who are targeting the urban outdoor crossover market, looking to broaden the scope of the outdoor market with their

new products and services. Finally the watersports area with products from SUP, swimwear, canoeing, kayaking and accessories brands from the field of water sports will be larger than ever before with Trial SUP runs possible on the Messe Lake. Last summer 960 exhibitors met 21,507 trade visitors from 92 countries at the show and expect things to be equally busy this year. Accommodation is sparse on the ground but you can always bring your tent and pitch down. For the OutDoor party on Tuesday all you need is a valid day pass and the Goretex party shirt, which is for sale for 15 Euros and covers eats and drinks. There are two Party Zones, the Open Air Grounds West with the band "Midnight Special" and in the Atrium Foyer West is DJ Lucky & DJ Short. So if you have not already visited the show in past years, this maybe is the right time for you to make the journey.

www.outdoor-show.com

BRIGHT, BERLIN, GERMANY, JULY 4-6, 2017

The Bright/Seek combination during Berlin's fashion week is Europe's key destination for streetwear and contemporary men's fashion, with the two shows almost seamlessly joined together into one experience. The floor layout at Bright was adapted last show to help with the visitor flow to give a definite path to walk around the show. Much of the stand build is now standardised around a plain backdrop that focuses attention on the product. This is similar to how Seek has operated for years, but uses white or black as against Seek's plain chipboard construction. Both shows are now similarly divided into sections but with the focus of each tradeshow remaining as before. At Bright the focus is on four segments: Street n Skate, Outdoor Aesthetics, Bright Urban and Accessories. Outdoor Aesthetics was introduced at the last show to bring brands from this marketplace together for the first time in Europe, will expand and is the focus of the Bright Diaries show issue this summer. RVCA, Swanski, and forbidden Spot/ Nobodysten will hold art exhibitions. The program of evening entertainment includes the Bright opening party together with

DC at Else, including a cash for trick contest on a brand new skate course. Wednesday will see the Volcom event at Hoppetosse, on the boat right in front of Badeschiff (the hub between Seek and Bright) and on the same night at Badeschiff will be the Patta BBQ. Also on Wednesday, Adidas will hold the Copa, a skate contest and demo with the adidas team ending in a BBQ, the location to be confirmed. Brands at the show of interest to boardsports retailers include CHPO, Dark Seas, DC, Element, Etnies, Heimplanet, Hippy Tree, Huf, Independent, Iriedaily, Jeckbeng, Lakai, Levi's, Makia, Mambo, Maui, New Balance, Nikita, Obey, Primitive, Protec, RVCA, Santa Cruz, The Hundreds, Vans and Volcom. And over at Seek you will also find Deus, Dickies, Eastpak, Forvert, Nixon, Pendleton, Poler Stuff, Wemoto and Wesc. Tickets are valid for all Premium events and the Premium group are working on a better shuttle connection between the different Premium Group shows.

www.brighttradeshow.com

JACKET REQUIRED, LONDON, UK, JULY 26-27, 2017

This year nearly 300 brands will be present at the Old Truman Brewery to present their spring/summer 2018 collections as the show continues to be a key stop in the European menswear trade calendar. Brands for the casualwear, tailoring, sportswear, streetwear, denim, footwear, accessories and lifestyle markets all come together in the vibrant East end of London. This summer's show sees the introduction of Jacket Required Woman; the idea is to now welcome women's brands as much as men's, whilst existing exhibitors will be encouraged to show all their lines. There will be no separate area, just a complete mix. "Bringing a selection of womenswear to Jacket Required has

been something under discussion with brands and buyers for a number of seasons, and it now feels like the time is right," says Alice Elliott, Event Director. Opening hours are Wednesday 10am- 7pm and Thursday 10am - 5pm and if you're driving to the show there are two car parks available within The Old Truman Brewery on Brick Lane and Grey Eagle Street. Otherwise Shoreditch High Street, Liverpool Street Station, Aldgate East Station and Old Street Station are all within walking distance.

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SKATE HELMETS & PROTECTION

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Falling doesn't come much harder than when on a skateboard, and even though human bones plus concrete equals disaster, wearing a helmet has been taboo since year dot. However, with the recent surge of participants and ever-slimming helmet and protection technology, times are starting to change.

Anna Langer reports on the new trends for Skate Helmets & Protection in Spring/Summer 2018.

TRENDS

While skateboarding is a true core action sport that involves a die hard passion, recent developments like the "Penny Skateboard explosion," as Bern's International Sales Manager Andy Steel calls it, and new technological advancements like battery-powered boards have opened the sport to a wider and more varied audience. And these new skaters don't just feel a different need to protect themselves because their bones are not the youngest anymore, but also question the 'cool' stigma, which has prevailed for way too long.

Triple Eight feel this trend becoming stronger every year, especially through Mike Vallely and the 'Get Used To It' campaign: "Thousands of skaters have joined the conversation - posting their own pictures and stories at getusedtoit.com and on social media. We hear from skaters all the time, across generations, who recently decided to wear a helmet - some of them directly because of Mike, but there also seems to be a growing awareness in general," notes Yana Farrally-Plourde, Director of Product and Marketing. Less injuries also mean more shred-time, adds Robby Burleson, Global Marketing Manager for Bike and Boardsports at G-Form, who thinks that "protection is growing faster than the broader market because the product is getting better."

This is not limited to skateboarding of course, but spans other boardsports, as our Snow Protection Trend Report had outlined earlier this year. "More people are interested in dual certified helmets," notes Yana and Bern also see a "big increase in liner sales that allow our customers to seamlessly switch from summer riding to winter shredding," confirms Andy.

TECHNOLOGY

The rotational impact protection system from MIPS continues as an important standard for all sports that people are actively asking for. Most brands also still count on hard materials for concrete sports, yet there are a couple experimenting with soft materials too, as well as hybrids combining both.

"Protection is growing faster than the broader market because the product is getting better." Robby Burleson, Global Marketing Manager for Bike and Boardsports, G-Form

Rekd pair heavy duty ABS (Acrylonitrile Butadiene Styrene) in the outer shell with high density EPS (Expanded Polystyrene) for the inner mould, similar to Bern's Thinshell EPS lids that "feature a thin ABS hardshell with the traditional EPS core." Even lighter is their new proprietary Liquid Foam technology called Zipmold+®: "A PC microshell lined with Zipmold+® liquid injected foam to create a super low profile finish that screams style," Andy explains. Sandbox inject both the EPS liner and the ABS for maximum durability, while Rekd use a rubberised finish on three of their models for a "premium and outstanding feel".

Hard shells are standard for EU safety certification but comfortable soft foam helmets by Pro-Tec, Triple Eight and Bern also make the cut.

"The new generation is growing up with helmets on full time for all of their action sports."
Kevin Sansalone, **Sandbox Founder.**

These softer helmets won't pass certification tests, but are still more protective than not wearing a helmet at all, as Yana from Triple Eight points out. And since you can hardly feel them on your head, they might even convince those still refusing protective gear that it can actually be comfortable.

PADS

When it comes to pads, it's the opposite where brands use soft instead of hard shells: "For areas of the body that are in constant flexion during riding, like knees, elbows and hips, we feel our softer, more flexible materials and pad designs offer a more comfortable solution," Robby from G-Form outlines.

Pro-Tec add "some more technical materials" to their pad line, while Amplifi continue their partnership with Sas-Tec that has led to some exciting developments with new products for knees and elbows, and finalize the possibilities around 3D knitting technologies for an ultimate glove-like fit. TSG continue their Arti-Lage soft foam that adapts perfectly to the curvature of the knees through body heat and absorbs up to 95% of the impact energy. For Vert and Mega Ramp skateboarding on the other hand, "pads need to have a hard-shell on the outside otherwise the pad would stick to the ground and the skateboarder could not slide out the impact" explains Nadja from TSG.

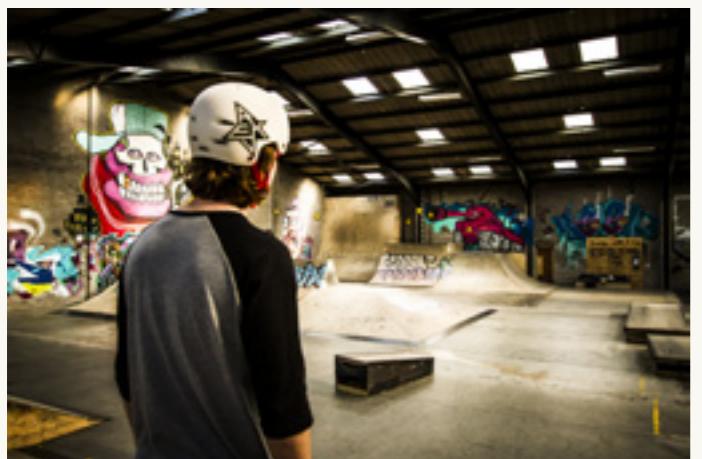


photo: REKD

Next to knee and elbow guards, Rekd find their longboard Slide Gloves an extremely popular choice. Triple Eight update their gloves with touchscreen fingertips next year and launch a new Exoskin knee and elbow pad with Kevlar exterior that can easily be worn under regular clothing and was initially developed for BMX and mountain biking. TSG also offer their slim soft foam pads that were designed for mountain biking to street skaters for the option of a little less impact "than hitting the pavement without any padding."

Most pads can be used for different disciplines in boardsports, from snow to concrete and water, and also across sports like moto or MTB, yet the majority of products are not certified for multiple uses. Such activities involving higher risks will adhere to higher safety standards, yet customers should make sure of what works for their designated usage before entrusting their bodies and lives.

DESIGNS & COLOURS

Pads don't have to be just black anymore either, but appear with a variety of "subtle prints and colours that speak to the outdoor athlete without distracting from the function of protective product," from G-Form and "tonal sublimations" on the Cortex Polymer range from Amplifi, who have decided "black is the new black," for the rest of the collection. And rightfully so, as black continues to be a best seller and not just for Pro-Tec and Bern.

Triple Eight feature a lot of black, grey, and classic colours as well, yet as the targeted audience in the protection market widens, so does the range of tastes that needs to be catered for. And brands are answering with a great variety of new designs and colours.

"While most of the people end up buying plain black products, we can see that most of the brands (including ours) still want to insist that playfulness can also be an attribute of your protective gear," says TSG Designer & Art Director Jordi Torres, who keeps working with colour gradients and introduces new colour blocks, allowing for two or more colours in a product. Rekd feature semi-transparent styles, Pro-Tec add brighter colours and designs that play up what their team riders are into, Nutcase opt for deep, rich blues and greens that are trending in fashion and soft goods and Triple Eight play with Metallic and Fade (light blue to dark blue). Bern adjust their large colour range, that has always been one of the reasons for the broad appeal of the brand according to Andy, to the trending palette of the leading fashion and outerwear brands.

Neon continues to be especially popular option for kids models, enhancing their safety through increased visibility. But adults can also play with the new Neon Tangerine and Neon Fuchsia colourways at Triple Eight or TSG, who combine neon in adult helmets with reflective logos, offering a "cool and safe solution for riding in the city." They even have a phosphorescent glow-in-the-dark coating, similar to Triple Eight's new stealth reflective helmet, Gotham Darklight, that's dark by day, and lights up when headlights hit it.

PRINTS & PATTERNS

Since "all-over print on a helmet is not easy because of the spherical shape of a helmet," Sandbox have come up with a "unique printing technique, using the brim/visor," on their Classic 2.0 model and pair prints or patterns with a unique paint finishing. Bern feature a Flying Tiger (Shark) print for kids, while TSG stick to "easy going graphics like stripes next to more figurative and descriptive illustrations." Feeling that "people are reaching back to the 90s for pattern and colour inspiration," Nutcase sport a range of wild and bright prints, from a retro Hawaiian shirt print, to wood grain, "dark side" and military green.

Other highlights to watch out for in 2018 include a collaboration between Sandbox and Sesitec and Mark Gonzales' new pro model from Pro-Tec.

OUTLOOK

With most brands targeting a wide variety of rider types, trying to encourage as many new participants to enter our sports as possible while at the same time aiming to convince those still sceptical or 'too cool' for protective gear, growth seems almost inevitable in this segment. However Yana from Triple Eight points out, that "categories that were rapidly expanding in past years have all tended to level off or decline," which she says is why they focus on working closely with athletes and shops to fill their niche needs. Pro-Tec on the other hand are re-entering categories that they pulled back from, growing their sales by "capturing that audience that doesn't see a need for protection. And the first time participants." The biggest group of which are kids, who have the added benefit of a parent that is concerned with keeping their groms safe and are "willing to throw down money" as Jens from Amplifi puts it. Sandbox agree that the youth market of age 5 to 25 is a major part of their business: "The new generation is growing up with helmets on full time for all of their action sports," and also Bern state that the kids category is the fastest growing in both helmets and pads. A very promising fact, allowing us hope for a future besides smartphones and video games. ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lighter & more durable hard shells
- Multi-sport pads
- Glow In the dark helmets
- Semi-transparent & metallic colour ways
- Growth in kids category
- Losing the "cool" stigma

ATHLETE: JEREMY GREEN PHOTO: PATRICK JOHNSON

THE MACON
Available in
thin SHELL
and all new redesigned
HARD HAT

bern
STAY OUT THERE

BERNUIMITED.COM #STAYOUTTHERE





photo: Dakine

BOARDSHORTS SS18 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Reworked season after season, the boardshort sector is still the preserve of kings where each brand can express their technical and creative potential. Large general retailers try, here and there, to invest in this market where surf retro is flavour of the month but they are ultimately dwarfed by specialist brands whose level of expertise and identity have been refined over many years. Excellent designs with versatile, durable shorts with modern cuts suitable for all situations. A little taste of what's on the menu for summer 2018 by **Denis Houillé**.

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MARKET

Right in line with the times, boardshorts take pride of place in the lives (and wardrobes) of 21st century individuals. Active lifestyle is visible on every street corner and the demand for technical products that are stylish is forever on the rise. Thanks to their versatility, boardshorts are complementary to this modern lifestyle, which requires us to switch between one environment and another, from one activity to another, without having to change our outfit.

It might even be the only item that provides such adaptability. You wouldn't go swimming in your running shorts, or go hiking in denim shorts. The boardshort ticks all boxes in all contexts and possesses real dynamism as Billabong's Men's Design Manager for Europe, Nicolas Perceval observes: "Boardshorts are heading in the right direction, the figures prove it." Protest are also citing a "fantastic year for boardshorts, especially thanks to the SUP range." Quiksilver are also talking about really good rates of sale all over the world right now and are identifying "great potential on beach type shorts (with lateral pockets)" of which they are expanding their range as Swimwear Product Manager, Maël Armellini explains.

Retailers are aware of the efforts in marketing and R&D that brands put into practice, like at Dakine for example for whom the surf category is booming as PJ Rueda, EMEA Marketing and Communication Manager states: "The arrival of John John Florence to the accessories team has had a levering effect on the brand in general and all surf products are benefitting from this phenomenal surge of energy."

*"With global fast fashion businesses moving in on every corner, we try and ignore the noise and focus on what relates to our brand ethos." **Afends***

The technical nature and high quality of products explains the rise in sales at Rip Curl who maintain their focus, true to their history, to "surpass technical demands each season to supply the ultimate product." The boardshort remains a product category that has the wind in its sails and not just in the summer and that's why Finisterre have decided to keep it in their catalogue all year-round and to add three extra styles.

In response to this spike in interest and growth, the staff from Salty Crew are expanding their range in order to appeal to and complement the way of life of the "mature soul-surfer who appreciates references to surf culture, as well as that of modern individuals seeking performances that give rhythm to their lives."

"Strong colours share supremacy together with pastel tones, burned by the sun and worn out by the salty water." Maria João Nogueira, Lightning Bolt

On the other side, the giants of "fast-fashion" have isolated the phenomenon and are trying to expand their range to take a piece of the pie; "we try and ignore the noise and focus on what relates to our brand ethos," the guys from Afends tell us.

INFLUENCES

It's impossible to ignore it: the 90s revival, very much alive in streetwear, is creeping into boardshorts. A "retro sport" touch here with a nod of nostalgia there translates into "strips and blocks of colour, bolder logos that hark back to an era when it was all about brands," reminisces Dan Preston from Design at Globe.

Billabong are also following an end-of-80s graphic design vector called "SURF THRASH" in which boardshorts have dark backgrounds with touches of fluoro. Lightning Bolt are incorporating faded tones and materials to plunge us back into the 90s as well as stronger, more 80s-style washes.

Monochrome is also proving to be a hit, inspired by simple, pared-down looks of present-day prêt-à-porter. "Plain", single colour models will continue to brighten up and structure boardshort racks, as long as the purchasing manager is prepared to play with all the colours of a single style.



photo: Rusty

Finally, the cross-over/hybrid appears to be a sure thing as it corresponds to the demands of contemporary lives that require frequent environment shifts. These "amphibious" hybrid shorts allow us "to use the technical fabrics of boardshorts in urban silhouettes," explains Maël Armellini from Quiksilver who are also envisaging strong growth in this sector in Europe.

In the design department at Pull-in, the "beachy" colourways on display can easily be tweaked to obtain a more street look. "There's been a real increase in the amount of elastic and all-day boardshorts we're selling," asserts Daniel Owens at Rusty, "the average consumer is chasing product that looks good and is comfortable enough to surf, swim and chill in...."

THEMES & PRINTS

Loyal to their stone icon, Volcom will offer an enhancement to black and white by injecting summery tones with hints of blues, oranges and yellows. At Lightning Bolt, "strong colours share supremacy together with pastel tones, burned by the sun and worn out by the salty water," declares Maria João Nogueira, European Communication Manager.

Different colours will also be a trend to follow at Rip Curl with a range of strong and poppy colours on one side and a contrasted mix of subdued colours on the other. For Afends, "the classics never go out of fashion" and black will undoubtedly be a strong theme next season. The influence of crossover will be clearly visible with darker grey palettes, black and denim as Julien from Picture describes.

As a quintessential motif, tropical has entered into the classics category, whether in collages, all-overs or miniatures. Brands such as Billabong are revisiting this with tribal features and stencils. Protest are developing their floral motifs with more natural botanicals based on plants. Retro Hawaiian style dominates the graphic direction at Lightning Bolt as well, accompanied by leafy and camouflage motifs that bring you into wild, exotic environments. Also, at Dakine, the palm tree print on their Kailua boardshort highlighting their Hawaiian heritage gives a bit of a vintage touch to their range. Meanwhile, at Pull-in, it's tropical flora and fauna that provides all the fun for their collection. Finally at Globe, it's Asian flowers that stand out with hints of dark colours combined with mythical creatures.

At Salty Crew, "we are adopting an approach that looks towards the past but that retains a resonance with current-day culture," says Andrew Hartshorne from their design department. In terms of colours, we find a conservative side with nautical indigos and rusty reds in contrast to camouflage tones. Finally, at Brunotti, inspiration follows two complementary themes that make a striking ensemble; one from Morocco with typical colour pigments, nomadic mosaics, and golden and geometric details while the other is inspired by modern art from the 70s (the brand's beginnings) and refined, colourful revival styles and signed Keith Haring graffiti art.

TECH

Spending hours cooking in the sun and soaking in salty water, 100% nylon is not good enough. Only specialist surf products guarantee sufficient levels of durability and quality while offering a bang on-trend look. As Marketing Manager from Afends, Vanessa Angheleri reminds us: "Function is crucial but we do our best to blur the lines between fashion and function."

In the requirement spec for "performance", everyone agrees on four-way stretch, quick drying, U.V. protection and moisture wicking properties. Details contribute to the product's final overall quality, for example: laser cutting, solid pockets, waterproof zips, silicon lacing and seamless panelling.

ECO-DESIGN

Each season, our industry stands out in terms of making its products more ecologically sound through innovation and improvement. Using recycled fibres (coconut, polyester or cotton) has been a priority for hardened surf designers for years now.

The recycling process is totally controlled "with plastic bottles collected, converted to chips, then granules before being woven into polyester that can in turn be recycled again," explains Julien Durant at Picture. Finisterre are proud to integrate SS18 Econyl to their manufacturing; a material solely made from oceanic rubbish. Spurred on by their partnership with Repreve, last season Quiksilver reused 11 million plastic bottles.

For product packaging, we are now opting for potato or corn starch bags like at Afends; bio degradable and compostable materials as opposed to traditional plastic packaging. Another just as conscious approach at Lightning Bolt means that their manufacturing is now entirely carried out in Europe by specialised, certified workshops that follow strict European environmental regulations.

But efforts don't stop there. Washing techniques needed to get those retro "on trend" colours sometimes call upon chemical treatments that have an impact on the environment. To counter this, designers at Globe have found alternative ways of giving vintage looks without chemical treatments or powerful washing. A small change that makes a big difference long term. 

HIGHLIGHTS

- Cross-over/hybrid shorts for all situations
- Nostalgia for 80s, 90s & DIY themes
- Tropical theme now a classic
- Predominance of eco-design
- Simplified ranges in style and cut, fleshed out by prints

SUPERBRAND



**BONES**

37" x 9.5"
29.5"/30.5"/31" Wheelbase Options

With the help of team rider, Malachi Greene, we developed the Dusters Bones, a true downhill machine. Constructed with a custom shape, W-Concave, slight rocker, multiple truck mounting options, routed wheel wells and a 10-ply veneer layup, this board was built for speed and feel. We also used extra coarse printed grip tape to give the rider more control over the board. Finally, we paired this bad boy with all new 70mm 78A Gliders wheels, designed by Dusters for smoother slides while still keeping a grip in tight turns. If you're a downhill fiend, the Bones complete will not let you down!

DEALER INQUIRIES:

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BANA, PORTUGAL

Bana is a Portuguese surf and skate shop based directly between Lisbon and its stylish surf suburb of Cascais. Started by José Marques (aka, Bana) in 1992, the shop won the Vans Shop Riot 2016 and they are a store doing things the way they should be.

Please give a brief history of your store including when it was started, who started it, who the owners and key players are.

Back in 1992, I took my father's advice to open a surf shop. Initially it was a small shop with little more than 18 square meters, but different enough to gather a group of loyal customers. The idea was simple, to be a pioneer through betting on alternative brands in streetwear, skatewear, surfwear and some very exclusive products. This idea combined with a very smart sales strategy based on very professional but friendly service, where the costumer's needs always come first, was a hit! The charisma of the store grew quickly and soon people from all over were coming by.

In time, Bana became a cult brand locally and youngsters from all over Lisbon were using the Bana stickers proudly on their surfboards and cars. Today, we see the sons of old costumers coming to visit the store and more than ever, the Bana brand is reaching more and more people.

Seeing the success these kinds of items were achieving, I created my own line of products which now sell in his store. Once again, it was a hit! And to people who aren't just skaters and surfers; actors and musicians wear them too.

Today, the store is 150 square metres and the prime bet is on sneakers (+200 models on display), clothing and technical material (+150 skate decks and lots of surfboards), and always with a relaxing and cool environment.

You won the Vans Shop Riot last year – tell us more.

It was great and not only because we won! We were able to interact with skaters and shops from all over and it's always a blast to be able to exchange knowledge and crazy stories with people who have the same love for the sport.

How is the skate scene in Lisbon ?

It's growing! I wouldn't say it's as mainstream as other places but you can clearly see that year after year there are more people participating. We already have a few great skate parks scattered through the city and

conditions are improving, which will make it easier for Portugal to have better and better skaters every year.

What are five products you couldn't live without right now ?
I couldn't live without my Vans sneakers, Primitive boards, Herschel backpacks, Thrasher t-shirts and of course my Bana caps.

Did your store's sales increase or decrease over last year ?

There was a small increase in this year's sales over last year because I think the consumer in Portugal is becoming more and more optimistic about the economy and the younger generations are more into surfing and skating than a few years back. This is why we are betting hard on the younger athletes that will build the future.

What makes your store different and in what ways does your store excel beyond your competition?

I think the difference comes in many ways; we keep the shop fresh and it always has a good vibe, we bet on new and exclusive products, our costumer relations are tailored and are our priority and we know about every product we sell. But our biggest difference is definitely our costumer management - we want to make people happy and informed.

Please could you explain your social media marketing strategy.

Right now we are starting to apply our new social media strategy. Our bet will be on cool, fresh, clickable content, mostly based on our sponsored athletes. More than talking about the brand we want to talk about the people we touch, the values we stand for and promote our Portuguese roots further.

As brands are gradually moving mainly online with direct to consumer sales, what does a bricks and mortar store offer that online can't ?

It's true that all brands (at least the wise ones) are moving towards a model based more on online sales over anything else, but the truth is nothing will ever substitute the local store. That friendship you make with the staff, that feeling you get when touching the product, trying it out for a perfect fit... it's a different experience, meaning it's unlikely it will ever be surpassed by digital. ☺



PEACE AND LOVE IN SOCKS AND SANDALS

RMBLR
HANDMADE IN ENGLAND

RMBLR - OUTDOOR LIFESTYLE ACCESSORIES

'Manufactured solely in England, RMBLR products are made to withstand the age old pilgrimage from dark satanic mills to green and pleasant lands'



photo: Hemiplanet

THE GREAT OUTDOORS SS18 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

With the pace of our daily lives accelerating every day and digital media seeping into every nook and cranny, more and more people flock outdoors to recharge and reconnect – with nature as much as with themselves. And despite an already active lifestyle, boardsports enthusiasts are no exception to the rule and a whole host of traditional outdoor brands as well as action sports companies are providing gear that not only fulfils their practical needs, but also speaks to their style aesthetics. **Anna Langer** had a look into the trends in the Camping Gear & Outdoor Apparel for Summer 2018.

TRENDS

"Camping/outdoor is getting back to be hip and cool" (Thermos), "seen as a trendy alternative to a city break" (Primus) and is embraced "as authentic, experiential, and aspirational" (Pendleton), especially amongst Millennials. Arc'teryx attribute that to the widespread trend towards health consciousness and "incidentally, an increase in participation in the various outdoor activities." And since "being 'out there' makes more fun with the right equipment", as Thermos put it, the offer of essential, practical and at the same time stylish gear is growing every year.

With the current 'lifestyle' ethos entering the category, "the lines between action sports and the outdoor category will blend. We love the idea of taking your surf adventures by the forest first (or after). Nothing better than wild camping and being within good distance of the water," argue Finisterre, who specialize in Cold Water Surfing, which is a growing trend of its own. "Surfing has and forever will be a real outdoor experience that has always been closely connected to camping & outdoors," state Heimplanet, who find that "the separation between boardsports and outdoors is actually more of a fiction."

The side effect of this broadening love for The Great Outdoors is of course that it's getting more crowded out there. Hence "those who seek solitude and tranquillity are going further into the backcountry to avoid the masses," Arc'teryx notice. Accordingly travel plays an important factor as well. "Discovery is the most important component to humans when it comes to travel and adventurism," say Roark Revival and Finisterre also adapt a "more 'travel' focus",

"The lines between action sports and the outdoor category will blend. We love the idea of taking your surf adventures by the forest first (or after)." Finisterre

encouraging an adventurous spirit, promoting "full 'across the land and to sea' journeys." At Poler Stuff: "Our collections are built with the brand's DNA at their core and we always ensure our apparel and accessories are suited to any camp vibes situation. At the same time we have the mindset that our products can also be used in the city and for everyday use."

GENUINE

THERMOS.

B R A N D


www.thermosbrand.de

"Durability is also a way to fight against fast fashion" Picture

TECH LIFESTYLE / LIFESTYLE TECH

With the next Outdoor trade show accommodating a 'lifestyle' sector for the very first time, the "trend toward multifunctional, versatile clothing that works just as well on the hill as in the gym or during your daily cycle commute," is also growing, as Paramo state. The continue: "Styles have evolved a lot over the past few years, from a purely functional approach to one that elegantly fuses function and aesthetics." Even so far that "techy, functional and stylish camping gear gets shared on Facebook videos and websites like Insider," as Anevay note.

Picture Organic Clothing's range combines "technical features like breathability, insulation, and waterproofness, with on-trend, urban designs. People are now looking for hybrid crossover products, wearable in town thanks to an urban design, and wearable during outdoor activities thanks to technical functionalities as breathability, insulation and waterproofness." RMBLR agree that there is a "new space in the market for modern outdoor brands, targeting what we refer to as Hikerdelic customers, road trippers, festival-goers and the van life 'home is where you park it' customers." Dish & Duer also "believe in the intersection of fashion and functional clothing - meaning you don't have to have separate outdoors clothes from 'real life' clothes." Heimplanet argue that "the same solution that keeps you comfortable in the outdoors makes your life easier, everyday"

In this intersection between outdoor action and lifestyle, natural materials experience a revival as well. McNair identify "natural fibres enhanced for performance" as a second trend after lifestyle aesthetic, and also Pendleton see wool re-emerging as a "best fabric for every day casual wear, for outdoor active wear, and for extreme sport activities," as they combine "high performance and protection that synthetics do not provide."

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability is an important topic in the outdoor segment and great influence for its products. "Durability is also a way to fight against fast fashion" say Picture, and Jeckybeng even find that "people are making a conscious effort to invest into products and equipment that will last season after season, year after year, rather than buying an item that is disposable after a couple uses."

Finisterre cater to this trend by maintaining an aesthetic that will keep their products "looking just as relevant in 10 years time as they are today." RMBLR "believe that providence of product is important and therefore produce our entire collection in the UK, making product here means we support the local economy and the impact on the environment is reduced." Icebreaker, McNair, Paramo, Picture Organic, Finisterre, Jeckbeng and Burton have strong engagements in sustainable production as well.

CAMPING GEAR

For camping gear, sustainability is an even bigger issue, as Klean Kanteen and Mizu confirm. "Millennials want to invest in products from conscientious brands; campers are continuing to evaluate their impact and are purchasing from companies committed to transparency and accountability," state Klean Kanteen. Which is the exact reason, why ex-snowboard pro Jussi Oksanen started his own brand of sustainable drinking bottles: "Mizu was founded to create a solution to the problem of single-use plastic waste," and is now extending their product philosophy to "reduce not only single-use plastic water bottles, but single-use plastics of all kinds," including cutlery with a set of stainless steel fork, knife, spoon and even chopsticks.

Hydro Flask even feature a reusable Beer Growler that will keep beer as carbonated and icy cold as it was when it was first poured, hopefully rendering cans in the wild obsolete. Thermos' Stainless King Series (SK Line) also offers coffee mugs, cans and food jars, combining "cool urban design with highly functional stainless steel vacuum isolation." Primus have a variety of CampFire and OpenFire stoves to "bring your kitchen outdoors," Hydro Flask and Thermos feature high tech cooling bags so you can easily bring food with you and Petromax even introduce waffle and sandwich irons for camp fires. Their Campfire Anchor helps you set up your kitchen area with a few simple steps (hammer into ground & cook over open fire) and Feuerhand provide the necessary light to do so at night, with their storm proof hurricane lanterns that are available in several colours.

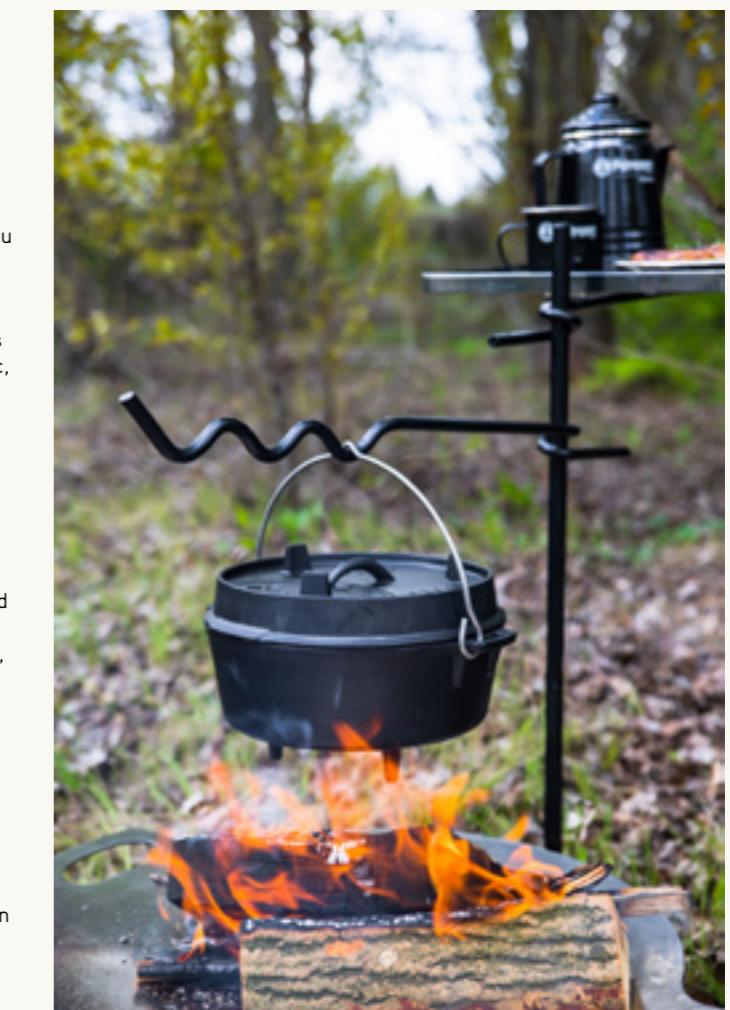


photo: Petromax

Yet "the one piece that will always represent the real outdoor experience is a tent," add Heimplanet, who introduce a new design, that can be used all year and also works great for winter adventures. Whether winter or summer, a sleeping bag is essential for the outdoor experience and the Picture Sleepen Bag is especially good for the environment, as it reuses leftover Primaloft paddings for a "design, hybrid, handy and eco-friendly sleeping bag with a 'zero waste' approach." Outdoor Tech add that "a tough, rugged product is almost a requirement for the outdoor industry," and "create products that look great, work perfect, and survive in any environment," with room for growth in portable power.



 HEIMPLANET

"people try to figure out the elemental question as to why our modern society always seems to have to compete with nature instead of striving to achieve harmony." Jeckbeng

OUTDOOR APPAREL

When it comes to outdoor apparel, the main aim is to "enable people to move with intent; without hesitation or constraint. Your equipment and apparel should enhance your experience and enjoyment of your chosen activity," Arc'teryx explain. "If the product fails - so can your adventure," warn Jeckbeng and Dish & Duer agree that "your clothes shouldn't hold you back when you're on a trail or scrambling up a boulder." Paramo go even further, designing their gear to "extend your comfort zone" with a focus on "intuitive use, so that you can focus solely on your activity and go further than ever before" and McNair also aim for "comfort in challenging conditions."

"High performance is critical," agree Mons Royal, who cater for different types of users: "Those who are committed to high performance and look for features and benefits that will help them perform better, go faster, higher, do more and those who are perhaps less serious in their approach but still need garments that work well and look good." Vital features of these include water repellency, quick drying and wicking (Finisterre), as well as stretch (Hippy Tree), anti-microbial (Dish & Duer) and temperature regulation, odour management and UV protection (Icebreaker).

MATERIALS

Natural fibres such as merino and wool serve all the above attributes and are great for layering, which is an essential requirement for outdoor activities, according to Pendleton, who offer a range of wool base layer products and layering pieces. McNair agree that "nature's finest performance fabric is merino wool," and enhance it with "a range of finishing techniques honed over generations in the mills of West Yorkshire," for shirts that "are so warm and weatherproof they work like jackets." They also use cotton moleskin and corduroy with eco-friendly PlasmaDry™ treatment that boosts stain resistance and weatherproofness. Mons Royale feature a tencel/merino blend "that's incredibly light and soft" and Icebreaker focus on their Cool-Lite™ innovation, "which combines merino wool with tencel, a natural fibre from sustainably sourced eucalyptus, that helps heat dumping and wicking to enhance cooling."

Other innovations include Living Lining from Burton: "A thermo regulating technology that features a tree-layered system of fully integrated outerwear materials that keeps you warm when it's cold and provides ventilation when you're hot." Dish & Duer created a performance stretch denim with Lycra and COOLMAX woven for incredible stretch, temperature control and comfort in the No Sweat pant, "which looks like a woven pant but feels like a sweat pant (and which is naturally anti-microbial), and Limitless Stretch - the stretchiest, most comfortable dress pant out there". Paramo exclusively use high performance Directional Fabrics by Nikwax®: "Their technologies are more than just breathable; they actively push water in the direction needed."

With the new lifestyle appeal, silhouettes are becoming more fashionable, "contoured, athletic fits with excellent ergonomic tailoring that ensures maximum freedom of movement" (Paramo). Burton give highly technical and functional jackets a street look through longer silhouettes, HippyTree include stretch in many of their woven shirts for improved comfort, fit and moisture wicking and Finisterre launch UV shirts with which you can jump into the sea. Trousers also show "more sophisticated fits like chinos, and more fashion forward elements like updated (so minimal) cargos," notice Dish & Duer. For women on the other hand, they find that "there is still a strong trend towards volume and more unisex/androgynous fits and styling." A similar trend to women's wear in general, which Finisterre are answering through oversized shirts with big square pockets.

Due to the nature of being outdoors, needing to always be prepared for changing conditions, packable styles also play an important role. "Packable windbreakers are an essential category for all outdoor brands," say HippyTree.

COLOURS & PRINTS

HippyTree find that especially "bright and colour-blocked windbreakers continue to be strong" and can also be found in collections from Finisterre and Mons Royale. Finisterre also use colours "taken directly from various seaweed and molluscs," while Dish & Duer see pink as the trending colour for 2018. Burton show some fun prints, Hippy Tree showcase "either bright and interesting prints or stripes on wovens," and Picture mix heather fabrics with more technical fabrics such as Cordura for high abrasion resistance and sport a cool leaf print "thanks to a jacquard construction."



photo: Thermos

GROWTH

With the sport/outdoor category growing strongly overall, this will also continue for the boardsports-inspired sub sector, with people "staying outside and extending the experience," as Heimplanet state. Thermos will develop a wider range of products to serve all needs for different sport categories, adding certain features and dimensions to match the needs of the respective sport and category. Primus also broaden their appeal to the growing lifestyle aspect of the market, which also facilitates "glamping" as a way to enjoy the outdoors in a unique environment, in a luxurious way". Anevay also see growth in the glamping sector with temporary accommodation in pods, yurts, tipis or bell tents.

Yet "not every person is setting a goal to climb the highest peak, but rather simple opportunities to get away for a few days," remark Jeckbeng, who expect even more cross over between city and nature as "people try to figure out the elemental question as to why our modern society always seems to have to compete with nature instead of striving to achieve harmony." Or as McNair advocate: "Be of nature, not against it." ☀

HIGHLIGHTS

- Lifestyle aesthetics in outdoor gear
- outdoor tech for every day
- sustainable approaches & eco-friendly production
- wool as performance fabric

ROBBIE BROCKEL - KICKFLIP

**CERO**

FUSIONGRIP

Vulcanized Construction / 2 Layer Foxing Tape
Fusiongrip Rubber Outsole / Lightweight EVA Insole / Sizes 5-13



BLACK/GUM | SUEDE

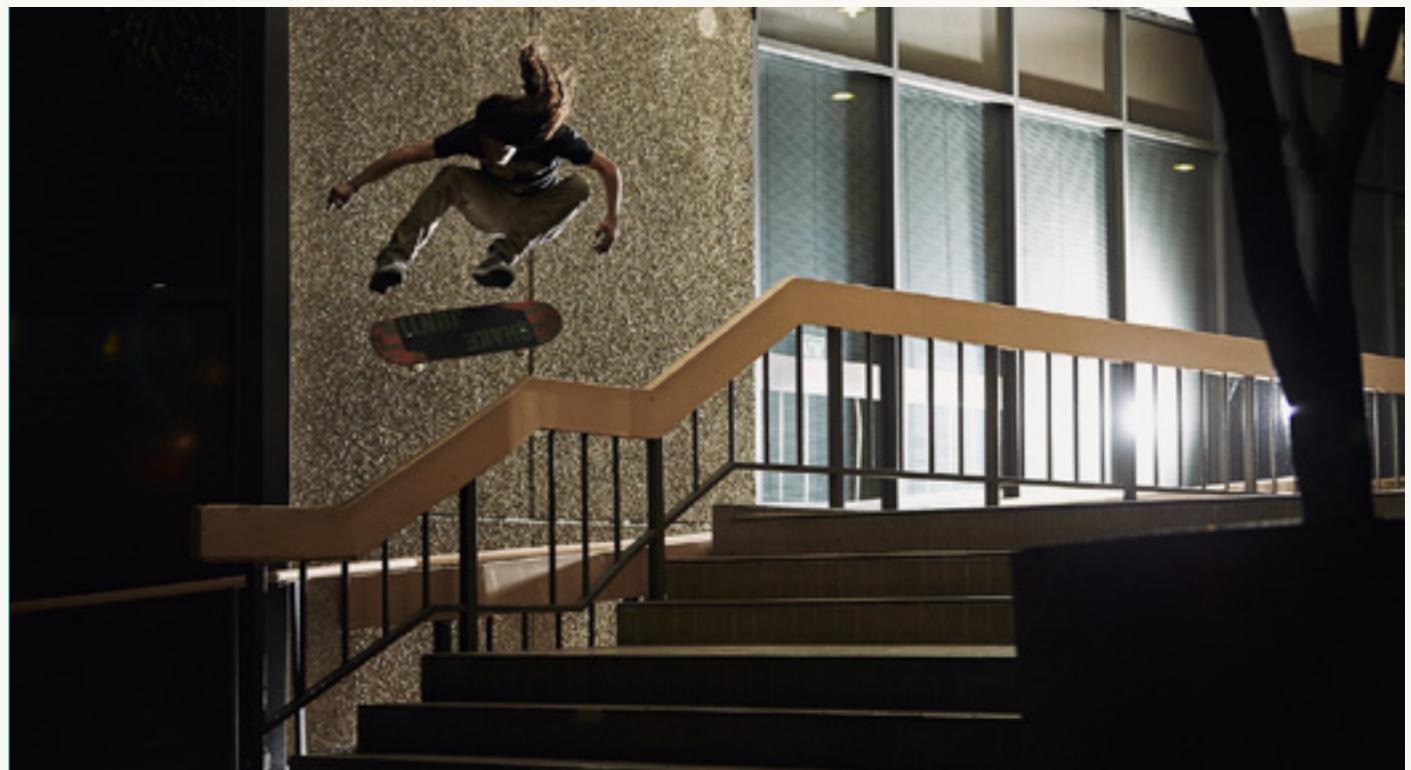


photo: S. Spurz

SKATEBOARD FOOTWEAR SS18 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

The current 1990s revival looms large over skateboard footwear next season – both from an aesthetic as well as a market perspective. See the trends, designs, and brands to watch in our Retail Buyer's Guide for Spring/Summer 2018 by SOURCE Skateboard Editor **Dirk Vogel**.

The pendulum of pop culture nostalgia swings in 20-year cycles. Right now we're witnessing a massive throwback to the glory days of big logos, athletic style, and blunted-out hip-hop, as inspirations from the mid-1990s infuse everything from fashion, to music, to television, all the way to skateboard sneakers. Classic styles like the beloved éS Footwear SLB Mid are back on the streets, while Canadian brand Rone is selling hand-stitched renditions of 1990s skate shoes in premium materializations for \$400 a pair. And remember Californian-based footwear brand Simple? They're back in the mix as well.

"The Nineties represent the period of birth of many skate brands, so many customers remember the iconic 1990s shoe models as truly representative. I truly believe that people love the Nineties," said Fabrizio Messineo, C1RCA Footwear EMEA Sales Director. This sentiment is echoed by footwear designer Morgan King at Australian brand Globe: "We are a product of the Nineties, so we always keep this look in check with our heritage series of shoes."

With that said, most companies featured in this article proudly trace their roots to a mid-1990s wave of skater-owned start-ups, including DC Shoes, Osiris, C1RCA, Globe, DVS, and éS Footwear to name but a few. And speaking of start-ups, the 1990s loom large over Spring/Summer 2018 skate footwear offerings not only aesthetically, but also from a market perspective.

MARKET: FACING REALITY

A new generation of rider-operated brands is coming to core shops, including Proper (started by Nike alumni Shawn Baravetto), State (Dekline's Kevin Furtado), Straye (Jamie Thomas and SUPRA's Angel Cabada), Rone (pro skater Tony Ferguson), and Kingston Union (Vox's Ed Dominick and Matt Hensley). But although history appears to be repeating itself, there's a huge difference: The 1990s allowed rider-owner brands to launch into a hungry market, filling a vacuum left by the demise of behemoths such as Airwalk and Vision Street Wear. No such blue-sky moments for today's new entries – it's sink-or-swim from day one in a compacted marketplace.

"The skate footwear business is continuing to consolidate around a handful of big players. To be fair, these major brands are giving a lot to skateboarding but also receiving a lot as they have opened all tiers of the action sports and sports distribution. This dynamic has left little room for the small and independent shoe brands to exist and grow," said Julian Vergnes, Global PLM Footwear at Element. "The overall European skate shoe market remains very challenging. The best-selling models continue to be the models at the lower end of the price scale," said Osiris International Sales Manager, Tony Chen. On one hand, there's still reason for optimism, as etnies UK marketing coordinator Clare Boland-Dean said: "We're hearing a gradual trend to improved hardware market for skateboarding." And these riders appreciate realness: "The brands that remain authentic to the space

"The Nineties represent the period of birth of many skate brands, so many customers remember the iconic 1990s shoe models as truly representative. I truly believe that people love the Nineties," said Fabrizio Messineo, C1RCA Footwear EMEA Sales Director.

"Materials for spring are usually keeping in tune with the season. Breathable and lightweight canvas and twills combined with suede for skateability."

seem to resonate well with skateboarders globally, not just in Europe, and those are the brands that are healthy in the skate shoe market," said Nick Pappas, Product Manager at New Balance Numeric. But on the other hand, endemic brands are also facing sobering business realities. "You can do great in skate but still have a hard time with your overall numbers. Being the best in 'core skate' is only getting you so far," said Philipp Schmidt at Mosaic Sales (HUF & Lakai), adding: "There are still skateboarders out there buying shoes, but the decreased sales in the 'not-so-core' section are what everyone is missing these days."



photo: Globe

SEASON TREND: VISIBLE TECH

Last season saw designers concealing technical features underneath classic-looking exteriors, but the 1990s throwback is flipping the script. Boosted by the general public's value perception for technology, visible tech will hit shoe walls in SS18. Get ready for air pockets, PU cages, abrasion-resistant toe boxes, heel bumpers, eyelet protectors, rubber-moulded midsoles, and next-gen fit-enhancing technologies. Asked about the purpose of current technical features, Aleksander Rist, Brand Coms Manager at adidas, offered: "Enhancing fit and comfort in the correct areas to get that snug feel, and enhance the sense of security and stability, together with strategically placed cushioning to soak up impact and soften landings."

Next to these factors, brands are re-tooling their outsoles for the ultimate board grip – also slapping on branded sole graphics while they're at it – with developments such as Fusion Grip (C1RCA), Shogun rubber (Globe), Impact I Inflexion outsole (DC Shoes), Stick Grip (DVS), Infinity Rubber (HUF), Statepoly Urethane (State), and 400 NBS and Michelin rubber (etnies). But make no mistake: The return of 1990s-style visible technology is not to be confused with a return to "puffy" shoes. That's because our footwear designers now have the know-how to add tech without adding bulk. Clare at etnies said that "the '90s are still going strong – with 'mid puff' styles and pastels leading the charge."

Every endemic brand features slim-but-powerful core skate shoes for SS18 that pile on the tech without packing on extra weight. One prominent approach consists of replacing air pockets with a drop-in midsole and insole technology, for instance in the Osiris Techniq VLC model. "This allows the shoe to be slimmer, lighter and more flexible adding to its overall performance and durability," said Rob Dotson at Osiris.

SILHOUETTES & CONSTRUCTIONS: SMART AND REFINED

Speaking of "slimmer," next season's silhouettes continue the trend towards form-fitting, lightweight shoes, but with an extra element of functional tech, especially in the toe area. "The return of toe caps and rubber bumpers and ollie guards may last longer, as it can be improved with new technologies and nice colour combos," said Justin Nicot, Retail Marketing Coordinator at SUPRA. Meanwhile, choosing the right silhouettes for SS18 is all about striking a balance instead of going all-in on just one style: "There is indeed a regained interest for '90s overbuilt models but the best selling ones remain the low vulcanized soles," said Antoine Soulé, EMEA Footwear Product Line

Manager at DC Shoes.

Bucking the trend, State Footwear is going all the way back to 1950s styles with the Harlem model, featuring a "small toe with ollie patch, suede toe box, minimal collar and tongue foam pack," said Kevin Furtado. Also choosing the classic route, tennis-style "court" models have been building momentum, and will also feature prominently in SS18 for brands including adidas. "With a long tradition of creating shoes we make sure we use the best from our heritage, with a modern take," said Aleksander Rist at adidas, while pointing out the Matchcourt RX, Adi Ease Kung-Fu, Lucas and Busenitz models. Osiris is moving forward by combining the NYC 83 with the 1990s blockbusting D3 silhouette to create the D3H model. "It's a blend of two of the most successful styles Osiris has ever produced and hopefully it will be a repeat performance," said Rob Dotson, Product Development Manager.

COLOURS & STYLING: LIGHTEN UP

Black on black on black. Skateboarders tend to be conservative about their colour preferences, but summer time brings some changes: "Now you walk into a store and 90% of the shoe wall is black suede with white foxing tape, but our retailers are seeing more success when we do favourite models in other colours," said Nick Pappas at New Balance Numeric, pointing out burgundy, navy, earth tones and trend-relevant colours such as salmon. According to Brent Phelps, Product Director at DVS, colours like "tan, naturals, and olives have blown up!" The streetwear trend (see Buyer's Guide in this issue) towards pastels informs footwear colorways this season, and State Footwear is playing with taffy colour and mint suede next to that major trending summer hue: White! Either paired with natural gum soles or in white-on-white constructions with suede and premium leather uppers – choose a court-style shoe for the win – discerning skateboarders are keeping it clean with white kicks in SS18. Also prepare for a hot streetwear trend: brand logos and messages printed on laces.

MATERIALS: LIGHTWEIGHT & TECH

Today's skaters also tend to be conservative about their preferred shoe materials, but Antoine at DC Shoes sees some changes: "The material of choice remains suede, but we are also using new technologies such as engineered Jacquard Mesh for breathability." At Globe, footwear designer Morgan King is on the same page: "Materials for spring are usually keeping in tune with the season. Breathable and lightweight canvas and twills combined with suede for skateability." With that said, retailers should keep an eye on twill as a possible breakout trend for SS18. Next to technically enhanced mesh, double foxing tape, rubber-reinforced ollie sections, and next-level foams, next season's uppers also feature PU "cages" for extra support like in the DVS Chinch model. Longevity remains a focus, achieved by HUF's 3D Fox Tape in the Hupper 2 model. The partnership between Michelin tires and etnies, continues, and the results are "three times more durable than our previous outsole compound. These outsoles are built to provide support and durability no matter how many miles you put on them."

At the same time, cruelty-free footwear – another trend started back in the 1990s by brands like Zero-Two – remains a strong focus for next season. "We are pushing for a more intensive use of synthetic 'cruelty free' materials, and we also released a vegan shoe," said Fabrizio Messineo, C1RCA. With that said, the 1990s may be back in style, but the journey continues – and it's great to see original brands still leading the way. ☀

HIGHLIGHTS

- New endemic brands
- 1990s style, visible technology
- Cushioning, ventilation, longevity
- Reinforced toe boxes
- Court-style shoes
- White and tan uppers
- Grippy outsoles with graphics



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Photo : RVCA

BIG WIG: JAN HOLZERS, RVCA

RVCA are a brand entrenched in music, art, culture and boardsports. Countless artist collaborations over the years combined with an ever-relevant roster of top-drawer athletes and ambassadors has cemented their place as one of the truly diverse and unique boardsport brands. Jan Holzers is RVCA's European Brand Manager and for this issue's Big Wig we touch base with Jan on the company's strong European growth, their new VA Sport segment, life under the Billabong umbrella, RVCA's approach to modern marketing and much, much more. **By Harry Mitchell Thompson.**

Please could you tell us about your background.

I have 15+ years experience in the boardsports industry that started off with a few years touring in Europe for the World Surf League (formerly ASP European tour) as tour manager. That was the starting point to my professional career after graduating in economics while enjoying the snowboard scene and luckily travelling the world to surf and discover South America, Asia, etc. From that super exciting surf tour experience, I had the chance to enter Nixon in its acceleration & growth phase where I started as a marketing & team manager before jumping into the business world of EMEA export. Another rich, diverse and international experience that gave me a foundational business overview. This led me into the European Sales Manager role for Billabong in Europe before being offered the great chance to take the lead for the re-launch of RVCA, which is where I am today.

What have been the highlights of the past 12 months at RVCA?

Most probably seeing the team evolve into an operational group of experienced professionals. It comes as a whole but while streamlining all operational aspects, setting up the distribution and refocusing the brand vision, seeing Etienne Pinon (Sales Dir) and Greg Puget (Mktg Dir) join the crew was a really important step to set the work force in operational mode; with the experience of Camille Labussière (Product Manager) and the accelerated communication flow with our global HQ, the brand has clearly made a big step-up towards an ambitious future.

What does the RVCA brand bring to the GSM group?

Looking at the portfolio today, GSM clearly stands out with an incredible offering: A strong authenticity in skateboarding with the success of Element, the unquestionable surf leadership of Billabong and the growing alternative artist-founded brand that RVCA is - GSM can pretty much cover it all. Speaking to athletes, amateurs, artists or lifestyle-inspired consumers, the three major brands of the group allow for a diverse, inspiring and open-minded voice. Yes, RVCA is a great complement to the global 'Big 3' GSM game plan (Billabong, Element, RVCA), and the RVCA development is a priority in Europe for the group, headed by CEO Jean-Louis Rodrigues, and benefiting from shared resources while still being able to build our own future by remaining authentic to our roots is just awesome.

RVCA is at its essence a surf and skate brand rooted in boardsports culture. The brand made a big move into the wider sports market through its active wear segment with good success a couple of years back. Please could you give us insight into where the brand sees itself on the market in the coming years?

RVCA is at its essence rooted in creativity and art, applied to a surf and skate-led lifestyle, which makes it so authentically different from its direct competitors on one hand, and allows it to also speak beyond these boardsport-inspired consumer versus street fashion brands on the other hand.

The brand is consequently approaching the market with various assets and potential, including RVCA Sport or VA Sport, an exciting component of our future development rooted in Jiu Jitsu and mixed martial arts and headed by the founder Pat Tenore. Overall, RVCA has a potential across an impressive variety of channels; whether it be through surfing, skateboarding, women's and men's fashion or modern fitness, all under the creative umbrella of our Artist Network Program (ANP) and we are working to see the brand unleash its full potential across all, on global markets.

Which European national market has been the strongest for RVCA and why?

Overall, we've had the chance to witness growing interest across all main European countries with high double-digit growth including in all main European regions. Being more relevant with an extended in-store offering and constantly fresh capsules and stories allows us to elevate the brand awareness. The distinctive RVCA women's range and its recent triple digit acceleration has also contributed to a more balanced cross gender RVCA offering.

How has the RVCA target demographic changed in recent years? The diversity of the brand and product offer makes our consumer target quite wide, and interesting. Depending on the channel; skate or surf, street fashion or sport, RVCA engages with various sub-cultures, which eventually are linked through the Artist Network Program. But trying to sum it up, we are likely to reach out to a 17-25 year-old lifestyle-driven male and female consumer. We have the stories and assets to speak to an influencer type of consumer as well as an insider or inspired profile as we try and segment things internally. Again, one of the most exciting things working for RVCA is how diverse our reach can be.

Targeted advertising is quantifiable and ticks boxes for marketers, but how does a brand promote its image to the wider market in 2017 and moving forwards?

In such a competitive context, it's either you have unlimited resources and can use all tools to elevate your brand, or you need to focus and leverage your authenticity by picking your battles. At RVCA, I believe we are in the second category; sticking to our foundational pillars of creativity and artist-driven authenticity and obsessing our differentiation. Because few other brands can claim they have been built on a true and authentic support to artists, consequently we pick marketing tools according to our resources, and we remain true to our roots. This is how we organically grow our reach and remain consistent. Resources are limited, but our potential isn't.

Ecommerce is a key focus for many brands and has seen a huge shift in the wider retail landscape in recent years. However, with core surf and skate shops so central to our industry, how does an apparel boardsports brand grow its business without forgetting their roots?

I guess the previous answer gives you a good share of this one. When you have to play on a smaller scale in terms of investments, you also have the chance not to dilute your DNA. You do less, but you do quality and you do what matters directly to where you come from. Again, because RVCA remains true to its roots, it has an unquestionable authenticity versus most competitors in the boardsports world. When you elevate an artist collaboration founded in years of relationship, support and product design, you worry less about if the brand and its stories can be doubted or not. With this as a given, you can then speak to any type of customer and consumer, by segmenting your offering, your storytelling and your partnerships.

Growing without forgetting our roots is quite natural for RVCA, because those roots are rock-solid. To give a tangible example, we will globally launch a Toy Machine x RVCA capsule in Ho17 (October'17 in stores). Ed Templeton has been an ANP artist for years, he is one of the world's most respected skateboarders from the 90s, a renowned artist globally, and the founder of Toy Machine. Overall, the story makes sense for core skateboarders, skate-inspired artists, art-inspired fashion lovers, designers, etc. This is how we remain close to our roots. By picking the right stories, the right people.

The trade show model is undergoing heavy scrutiny at the moment - where and in what form do you see trade shows in the future?

Definitely an interesting one that clearly varies from one brand reality to another, from one moment to another. Depending on the development of your brand, your goals or expectations, trade shows make sense, or not. We are set to show at BRIGHT this summer when we were not present last winter and were at SEEK the previous two seasons. I guess that can be a good answer to how we approach things. When most brands used to constantly hit all trade shows in the past, it seems you can now look at it as a platform for various goals. It's tough to say where it's going but we could possibly look at it in the future as a menu you pick from depending on your reality at a given moment...



Photo : RVCA

Artist collabs and athlete endorsements have always been a huge part of RVCA's MO - How has this enabled RVCA to differentiate itself from its competitors?

Clearly, this is how RVCA has and continues to lead with its authenticity. Being able to work with global artists like Templeton, McGee and Brookes, while having Bruce Irons and Alex Knost wearing the brand and seeing legendary MMA Hall of Fame member BJ Penn fly the flag is as unique as it can get. And not forgetting our latest addition, Andrew Reynolds, an inspiration for generations of skateboarders and counter-culture aficionados. From the amazing talent-scouting of the global team along with founder Pat Tenore's clear vision, RVCA benefits from an amazing group of talented individuals. And being based on art and creativity, it allows the widest scope of possibilities. Music, design, MMA, surf, skate, books, sport events to art exhibitions... RVCA is probably the only brand out there that can authentically be all around without risking its roots and DNA. And that's thanks to the people flying the flag, whether it be in HQs around the world, studios and galleries or riding their boards... We have a visionary talent acquisition dynamic that clearly makes the brand different, diverse and rich. ☀



CRUISER & SURF SKATE



FUNNY BOARDS



OLD SCHOOL BOARDS



photo: Carver

SKATE HARDCOODS SS18

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Summer tradeshow season is here and we've got you covered: Find all the latest products, technologies, and market developments in our 2018 Skate Hardgoods Retail Buyer's Guide. By

SOURCE Skateboard Editor **Dirk Vogel**.

Forget designer handbags. Skateboards are becoming the must-have accessories of the haute couture. Vogue magazine recently outlined the perfect pairings between skateboard graphics and designer dresses (turns out a Gucci dress and Toy Machine deck are the perfect match). London's own Palace Skateboards – worn by rap stars and supermodels – just opened a store in New York's ritziest streetwear district and Cartier premiered a gold-plated skateboard with golden trucks (mounted backwards but who cares, it's blingin').

"Skateboarding is now high fashion apparently, but has it helped or just watered down things for everyone? And how many copied Thrasher hoodies can you spot?" asks Adam Wood, Director of ifive distribution (Skateboard Printing UK, Karma Skateboards), adding. With that said, the big question is whether skateboarding's mainstream heat – and all the glitter and gold (trucks) – will translate into actual wealth for our industry? Because right now the skateboard hardgoods biz is showing significant pressure cracks. Established hardware brands are going out of business or changing distribution. Independent skate shops, traditionally canaries in the coal mine for overall market health, remain at risk. "There are challenges and unfortunately some really good stores have closed recently. But overall things are looking positive going into 2017," said Calum MacArthur at Shiner Distribution in the UK.

THE EUROPEAN MARKET: PRICES AND POLITICS

Big-picture changes to international trade agreements (big changes, just huge!) and currency fluctuations are finally coming home to roost. A quick survey of leading online shops indicates price increases for

US brand decks, confirmed by respondents in this report. Brand-new US decks for leading pros list at up to €75, but customers demand cheaper options. "€60 retail is the main price point right now, but of course there are a lot of brands around that go lower which makes it hard for US brands to compete," said Franz Josef Hoeller, CEO of Fresco sales and marketing agency and Bright Tradeshow Italian Ambassador.

Red tag pricing remains a problem across Europe and may signal deeper problems: "Too many sales and discounts usually are a sign of the industry being unhealthy," said Jörg Ludewig, Co-Owner of Urban Supplies distribution in Wiesbaden, Germany, adding that decks "start at €20 during crazy sales actions. Shop decks are about €35-39, some Euro brands are between €45-49, US brands start at €45 for entry-level decks, pro decks sell between €59-65. Tech stuff is €75 and above." In search of a culprit for overstocking and price-slashing, Neil Carver, Founder and CEO at Carver Skateboards offered: "After a glut of cheap boards made by overseas manufacturers that don't have a real brand, just a factory that makes look-alike boards, the market has become oversaturated."

Cleaning up this mess weighs hard on independent retailers, whose situation is "sketchy, some people are still stable because they run a small-sized business and are behind their own counter. Major guys with major funding see growth. All the guys in between are starting to die," said Nils David Gebbers at 24/7 Distribution in Germany. "Brick-and-mortar shops are struggling unless they have a good online

*"Skateboarding is now high fashion apparently, but has it helped or just watered down things for everyone? And how many copied Thrasher hoodies can you spot?" Adam Wood, Director of **ifive Distribution**.*

"Great quality trucks are an absolute must for every skateboarder. These can make or break your ride as inferior trucks with poor geometry will really hamper your enjoyment of skateboarding and give you a false impression of how a skateboard should perform." Ali Crichton, Mindless.

presence, but even that is a huge workload for any shop," said Adam Wood at ifive, adding that "between great sales and poor sales it's hard for shops to manage cash flow."

On the upside, participation levels in Europe are reported at stable levels, supported by an increase in female skateboarders as well as new facilities. "New parks are still being built all the time and this definitely helps out the scene in that area," said Calum at Shiner. But asked whether local shops profit, Jörg Ludewig at Urban Supplies said, "you cannot always count on increase in local business once a park has opened. It should support sales, and I am sure it does, but depending on the location, it may help online business." Speaking of parks, Neil at Carver Skateboards expects a positive impact from the rise of (beginner-friendly) surf-skate style, which has "led to the creation of new designs in skateparks and ramps based on a hybrid of classic 70s snake runs and SoCal ditches."



photo: Enuff

Also keep in mind the Seven Skateboard Hardgoods Trends to Watch Right Now:

1. Deck shapes: Carry a big stick. Wider rides have become the norm, with most of the action at 8-8.5 inches. Ali Crichton at Mindless in the UK notes that, "a few companies have recently released 144mm skateboard truck with an 8.25 inch axle which obviously fits perfectly on 8.25 inch decks." Calum at Shiner even sees a trend towards, "larger popsicles in the 8.75 - 9 range." Popsicle shapes are in competition with what Nils at 24/7 calls, "more diversity in shapes than ever," including a hot trend towards early 1990s shapes with boxy tails and rounded noses, perfectly executed by the likes of Polar, Anti Hero, Street Plant, and Welcome. Distributors report a relapse in technical deck sales: "There is a price barrier in the heads of most consumers that tech decks are above," said Jörg Ludewig at Urban Supplies." Carver Skateboards has high hopes for surf-skate shapes that unfortunately are often, "incorrectly being lumped together with cruisers."

2. Season Trend: Small deck companies. The 1990s are back in a major way, as (skate) history repeats itself. "A lot of small and new brands are trending, also a lot of European ones. The established big brands seem to struggle to be as cool as the newcomers," says FJ Hoeller at Fresco, adding: "The so-called hype brands like Palace, Magenta, Fucking Awesome, Hockey, Pizza, Numbers and so on are very hot right now. They are a huge percentage of all board sales but especially store owners really like to carry those as their distribution is selective." The list also includes Alltimers, Quasi, Call Me 917, Heroin, Isle, Passport, Skull Skates, Hook-Ups, Street Plant – plus a dozen new brands launched before this issue of SOURCE is finally printed.

3. Decks: Keeping it slick. Riders are discovering the joys of sliding and grinding, even if it's just slapping a curb or sliding a parking block. Rails have been back for some time now, while "slick bottom" coating – first introduced by Santa Cruz Skateboards in 1990 – is making a return as well. "We have seen some reasonable sales in slick technology from Real, Krooked, and Alien Workshop," said Calum at Shiner. Aesthetically, slick bottoms also support photo-realistic

graphics and combinations with creative shapes (see 1.) like the brilliant Alltimers flip-phone deck.

4. Wheels: All-terrain, all-day. Decks and trucks keep trending into wider territory, but wheel sizes still crystallize around 51-53mm – indicating that skaters still like to flip their boards. Advanced wheel formulae provides a longer-lasting, better ride including entries from OJ, Pig, Bones, Ricta, Spitfire, and grippy surf park wheels from Carver. Calum at Shiner identified a sleeper trend for next season: "Soft wheels keep gaining momentum provided they are in a skateable size and shape. Ricta Clouds are the best-selling in this segment and the 'Soft Slide' formula from Bones does well." And if the formula works, the good news is that, "the market is actually willing to pay more for a better wheel," said Jörg Ludewig at Urban Supplies. Supertoxic and Wayward Wheels are two new brands from the UK, joining the likes of Heroin, who just premiered amazing glow-in-the-dark urethane wheels, and Mindless with a Peacekeeper wheel collab with guest artist Darrell Thorpe.

5. Bearings: Diversity and evolution. They're coming for you, Bones Swiss Bearings. A new wave of bearing brands – including the likes of Part, Andale, Shake Junt, Jart, Modus, Sabre and Bronson Raw – are shaking things up in the bearings drawer. Notable technical novelties – some spilled over from longboarding – include the shield-free bearing design by Bronson Raw or black silicon nitride ceramic balls featured in Sabre bearings. Inside scoop: ABEC ratings aren't everything – they were developed for grading industrial bearings featured in machines and desk drawers, not skate-specific impact resistance.

6. Trucks: All the same but different. "In terms of trucks, the US brands are ruling the market heavily. Independent, Thunder, and Venture. Stores ask a lot for lightweight trucks in basic polished in large sizes for over 8 inch boards," said FJ Hoeller. Shiny metallic polish isn't everything: "Definitely customers are out there for coloured trucks, especially on pro models," said Calum at Shiner, adding: "We see good sales in Mini Logo and Bullet at the price point end of the market." Ali Crichton at Mindless is stoked on Decade trucks and reminds us: "Great quality trucks are an absolute must for every skateboarder. These can make or break your ride as inferior trucks with poor geometry will really hamper your enjoyment of skateboarding and give you a false impression of how a skateboard should perform." While ultra-lightweight models from Tensor remain popular, a few home-grown European brands such as Bolzen and Anker introduce new designs and geometries. Carver is making an impact with the CX and dual-axis C7 surf style trucks.

7. Accessories: The full lifestyle. The independent brand trend has also reached the accessories segment, including upstarts such as Ashes grip, Bolzen hardware, Bro Style Wax and Sk8ology tools. "Anything that allows you to change and personalise your set up goes a long way with the kids looking to stand out," said Ali at Mindless. Stores also need to stock, "Hot Shot Handles for professionally iPhone filming your buddies while having fun skateboarding," said Nils at 24/7. And while Thrasher hats and tops remain hot "accessories", Adam Wood at ifive distribution is all about spreading the actual lifestyle: "We are seeing many skate schools and skate camps opening which helps bring new kids into the scene. I know John from Wight Trash teaches more than 250 adults, women, and kids a week." That's good because skateboarding may be fashion-hot right now, but most runway models still can't ride a board. ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- US import price hikes
- Female skaters increasing
- Season trend: Independent brands
- Early 1990s shapes
- Sleeper trend: Soft Wheels
- New accessories brands





WOMEN'S SWIMWEAR SS18 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

The days in which women served as a pretty distraction, modelling bikinis in between heats at surf contests aren't only long gone but are rather obsolete by now. While females still enjoy sunbathing on the beach, they're also taking to the water in a new way that doesn't leave room for compromise when it comes to performance or style. Hence the new Swimwear for 2018 is all about girls in action, as our Retail Buyer's Guide by **Anna Langer** shows.

TRENDS

"I would say that the active influence will continue and further strengthen its impact, across both active and fashion brands," thinks Finisterre's Product Director Debbie Luffman and Volcom's Global Swim M&D Manager Marina Hamm agrees that "sportswear silhouettes are very on trend." Especially crop top styles, inspired by sports bras that can crossover from swimwear to every day wear. They're not only great for surfing but also Stand Up Paddle boarding, which is emerging as a trend of its own, next to classic short- and longboard surfing. Protest feature more stretch styles to cater for this and have teamed up with Lokahi for a board cooperation, while GlideSoul emphasize the perfect combination, tailoring their to women "who are both active in sports and appreciate fashion."

*"I would say that the active influence will continue and further strengthen its impact, across both active and fashion brands." **Finisterre's Product Director, Debbie Luffman.***

One-piece swimsuits continue their comeback, bridging the gap between action and fashion in a number of stylish ways. Offering perfect coverage for all kinds of action, while still allowing for a lot of fashionable details, they are becoming the new staple in any beach loving gal's wardrobe. "Especially styles that can be worn as a bodysuit with a pair of jeans or shorts or a skirt to complete the outfit," says Marina from Volcom. Rip Curl, Finisterre and Roxy focus cut and

fabrics on the action side, while Billabong plays with more fashion-heavy models like a one-shoulder and lace suit, and Afends "push the boundaries" with bolder prints and cleaner, simplified fits.

Mix & Match is staying strong too, transforming form a trend into a characteristic that's becoming ever more important for the customer expressing her individual style. "We have created a swim range where individual pieces all compliment each other, allowing consumers to create their own unique style," explains Animal's Women and Girls' Design Manager Lucy Seaman. Pull In, Brunotti and new sustainable swimwear brand, Wear Your Waste offer even more possibilities in 2018 with reversible styles that can be worn on two sides, in (at least) two different ways.

PERFORMANCE

Billabong, Rip Curl, Roxy, Rusty, Brunotti, Finisterre and Animal have specific capsule lines that are designed for premium performance in all water sports. Protest focus on shorts and bikinis for SUP, Billabong add more crop tanks and longsleeve rash guards to their Surf Capsule Collection, and Roxy feature a full range of sporty swimsuits as part of their fitness collection: "One piece, two pieces with coverage, support, and adjustable straps," next to their iconic Pop Surf line. Rip Curl expand their Mirage bikini range with a new athleisure capsule as a crossover to the active apparel line, as well as a new Surf Grip capsule that adds a super grippy elastic band under the bust and to the waist for even more secure coverage when surfing. Glide Soul use silicone lines on the inner wrists and ankle areas to prevent slipping and Rusty also recognise the strong sport trend coming for 2018, which is seeing the return of slightly wider straps and more athletic inspired silhouettes,

We have created a swim range where individual pieces all compliment each other, allowing consumers to create their own unique style."
Animal's Women and Girls' Design Manager, Lucy Seaman.

naturally giving more support," says Breanne Carmody – Global Head of Merchandising.

While not all brands feature designated surf collections, they all offer pieces that are ready for action, like Pull-in's Belharra top, Afends' one pieces or Chiemsee's surf leggings and crop tops. The bikinis from Wear Your Waste bikinis can be tied in multiple ways that facilitate sunbathing and sea-splashing alike, and Volcom launch some new surf specific pieces like a cropped reversible rashguard and a zipperless bodysuit made out of their new sustainable jersey fabric.

THEMES

Sustainability is finally making its way to the marketing forefront, not just on the material side (which will be outlined in detail further on), but also when it comes to marketing stories.

Wear Your Waste follow an eco-friendly, sustainable approach from the beginning: "At WYW we make a point of not designing collections according to trends, neither in prints nor in cuts. The whole concept of sustainability relies on the production of pieces that will last many seasons, therefore we prefer to look at aspects like versatility in tying options and uniqueness in prints," explains Founder Rocio Enriquez. For the Brits at Finisterre, their deep commitment to the environment is key for their SS18 collection: "We are taking the theme of marine plastics and exploring this also through print and detailing within our swimwear range, to highlight and promote the issue," states Debbie. And Volcom have a sustainable swimwear capsule line, Simply Solid, that is made from 100% regenerated nylon and is featured as their main marketing theme.

Individuality is a popular topic too, with Pull-in working "around the concept of freedom and self creativity", a "Spiritualism" theme from Protest and various travel as well as beach inspirations from Pull-in, Rip Curl, Brunotti, Billabong and Roxy.

Next to the typical beach stories and tropical themes, there's also a more urban vibe with some retro inspirations coming up. Brunotti celebrate their beginnings in the 70s with clean and colourful Memphis art and the graffiti style of Keith Haring, Billabong throw back to the 80s with iconic "New Wave" styles, Volcom pay homage to the "bright sporty styles of the 1990s" in their collaboration with Georgia May Jagger and Rip Curl work with flea market inspiration from the 90s as well.

Rusty are focusing on two main themes, the Belize and the Orient stories, the former with a tile print and stripe, while the latter is "our take on an oriental floral done in beautiful shimmery fabric making the earthy tones really pop against a dark navy base," says Breanne.

PRINTS & COLOURS

Mirroring the trends and themes, swimwear comes in two main pallets in 2018; strong and bright colours contrasting and complementing softer tones as well as neutrals. Including all shades of red, orange and neon, next to turquoise, sea green, pool blue, bright pinks and electric purple, next to pastels that range from rose to mint and extend to nude colours and earthy tones. Black and white will always stay a classic, which Brunotti update in a "wet look" style with golden details and Glide Soul focus on in their "Black Pearl" line. Rusty play with "earthy tones with an edge due to the shimmery effect of the base cloths. Think coppers, golds, flame reds and metallic navys."

Matching the beach themes, we find a lot of surf-inspired prints with tropical flowers and leaves in all kinds of shapes and styles, from oversized to abstract to pineapples. Geometric patterns have been super popular in recent years and are becoming a bit more subtle with mosaic-variations, while stripes are picking up again with new multi-coloured and textured interpretations and their very own "Vibrant Stripes Collection" from Glide Soul. Wear Your Waste feature exclusive illustrations created by guest artists and Afends explore more bold prints, which they find work well.

With the ongoing trend to mix & match, a lot of brands offer complementary patterns throughout their swimwear, apparel and accessories lines. "Girls are wearing our swim category not only to the beach but as body suits and bralettes, so we've kept the swim and the apparel pallet tight and cohesive," says Volcom's Marina. For Billabong, "Swimwear is always the most important layer and designed to harmonize with the rest of the collection," states Weppe Isabelle, Women's Design Europe Manager.



MATERIALS

In order to facilitate the seamless transition from land to water and back, poly elastane with quick dry finish as Chiemsee uses, or microfibre like Rip Curl's Mirage are still among the most popular materials. Animal adds some mesh fabric, "reflecting an emerging trend for fuller style suits but with areas of mesh, as we see the 'athleisure' trend cross over into swimwear," explains Lucy. Volcom introduce a new bonded, reversible fabric that gives a neoprene-like feel and more texture, which is something Billabong and Roxy focus on too. This includes ribbing fabrics, macramé, crotchet, rope as well as knotted details and Jacquard from Pull-in, who also play with a metallic effect. Glide Soul feature a new high quality S-FOAM neoprene that is softer and easier to put on and take off.

Yet as aforementioned, the main story in swimwear materials are eco-friendly and sustainable options. Volcom's new Simply Solid collection features a tricot fabric that is 100% regenerated nylon from discarded fishing nets and other nylon waste materials, next to a luxurious jersey that is made with the same regenerated content. The main fabric in Wear Your Waste's collection is VITA, a combination of Econyl (78%), which is a regenerated polyamide, mixed with Lycra XtraLife (22%), ensuring that the bikini lasts a long time looking as good as new: "No piling, no damage due to oil creams, chlorine or sun exposure and a perfect fit regardless of your movement." Roxy use Vita Xtra life fabric for their technical swimwear products as well, while Finisterre mainly work with Econyl, emphasizing the soft, comfortable stretch and matt, structured feel in addition to the environmental benefits. In 2018 they will also use recycled polyester in their women's boardshorts for the first time and Afends ask us to keep our eyes peeled for the luxe fabrics in their new Hemp range.

A lot to watch out for and look forward to, whether the surf's up or not! **S**

HIGHLIGHTS

- Sustainability - eco-friendly materials & stories
- One pieces & crop top silhouettes
- Nude & earth tones
- Tropical vibes & beach themes



photo: Globe

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MEN'S STREETWEAR SS18 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Courted by high fashion and pressured by copycats, endemic streetwear brands are reclaiming control of the narrative. The aesthetics for next season are loud, proud and 100% boardsport-inspired. Men's SS18 Streetwear Retail Buyer's Guide by **Dirk Vogel**.

The latest collaboration between skate-driven streetwear and the upper echelons of high fashion rocked runway shows at Paris Fashion Week. SUPREME and Louis Vuitton created a humble line of designer bags, apparel, and accessories super-charged with synergistic logo power and the halo of elusive luxury – customers and the hype machine went nuts.

"Skateboarding is getting very fashionable again," said Michael Spitzbarth, CEO of eco-brand bleed organic clothing, while adding that skate companies are taking the power back. "In the past few years, the boardsports industry had the problem of streetwear and fashion influences being much stronger than the influence of skateboarding on the fashion industry. But now you can see that this is turning again."

A new wave of small, independent brands are major drivers of this inward-looking aesthetic. "They are part of a counter culture and are real. They can represent the people on the streets and not the mother buying a complete for their son," said Sean Justus at Wemoto Clothing. "Boardriding is Globe's lifeblood. The strength and foundation. One constant that will never change," said Dan Preston, Apparel Design Manager for Globe. Tomas Koudela at Horsefeathers also heads into the season with a "focus on what we know and what our fans expect from us. We don't focus on fighting with the big streetwear brands."

THE MARKET: PLAY YOUR POSITION

Instead of serving fast-moving cycles, boardsports companies are choosing to make waves of their own, for instance with heritage-inspired lines like the Santa Cruz Skateboards apparel collection. Or in the case of Protest Sportswear, by "combining styles, patterns, and trends that highlight our passion of surf, sun, and fun, with a sprinkling of spiritualism," said Anjet Wesselink, Head of Marketing.

This sense of authenticity inspires everything in SS18 collections – from colours to graphics to fits to marketing campaigns – and brands are having fun with it. "We are getting more and more playful in terms of colours, details and humorous elements in the collections," said the team at RVLT, whose embroidered middle finger graphic perfectly sums up the vibe.

While Patrick Kressner, Men's Designer at Iriedaily, assured us that, "it's much stronger than the years before," there's also more competition. Pressure comes from the outside, as "streetwear brands gain more floor space in boardsports-influenced stores and customers mix their styles throughout the spectrum of fashion," said Jesse Hyvärni at Makia Clothing. But pressure also comes from the inside, as new indie brands such as Dime, Illegal Civ, Quartersnacks, and Call Me 917 enable "woke" customers to fashion themselves as initiates of true boardsports culture.

SEASON TREND: CONSCIOUS CONSUMERS & PRODUCTS

Speaking of "woke" customers, their focus is shifting towards buying less but better and authentic clothing. It's a countermovement against fast-fashion cycles that litter the planet with textile waste: In a recent study, McKinsey and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimated that out of 100 billion items of clothing manufactured in 2013, only 15.2% were recycled and 15.1 million tons discarded in landfills. Jesse at Makia sees, "more awareness towards sustainable choices in fashion." Or as Michael at bleed sums up his company's manifesto: "We develop our products for a long life cycle and this should be the aim for every company – to avoid waste."

SEASON STYLE: THE GLORIOUS 1990S

Turn up the Biggie Smalls! "Globally in our market we are seeing the

For added durability, Levi's is adding, "double lined back pockets and reinforced bar tacks at the inseam to reduce crotch blow out."

majority of streetwear brands push into '90s sport nostalgia. We have interpreted this theme into the wider Globe range with various design techniques, the most notable including roomier fits in shorts and tees, colour panelling and blocking, and bolder logo placements," said Dan at Globe. Prepare for a return of big logos, athletic-fabulous style like mesh shirts and track suits – foreshadowed by SS17's all-white adidas Originals x Hélas wind pant and jacket – together with athletic caps, and mid-1990s tennis-style sneakers. And since everything was a bit "phatter" in the Nineties, colours will get louder and garments a bit bigger. "Larger silhouettes or oversized products are the trend," said Mathieu Santoni, EU Head of Product at Volcom. Levi's is also taking "styling cues from '90s era skateboarding. Quirky prints, stone wash finishes and relaxed fits work together to round out the look," said Temar Biratu, Marketing Manager at Levi's.



photo: Iriedaily

COLOURS: PUMP UP THE VOLUME

Loud and proud! While the rest of the world still dresses in post-apocalyptic tone-on-tone Yeezy colours such as tan, black, and grey, boardsports apparel brands have some eye catchers in store for SS18. "Colours are back!" said Patrick at Iriedaily while pointing out, "pastels like mint or light yellow and tropic blues. Powerful red is also a key colour in SS18." Mathieu at Volcom confirmed: "Pastel colours are definitely the trend! From pink to yellow with salmon, all the bright colours will come in pastel." Jesse at Makia is on board with, "some light pastel pink colour, some faded agave greens together with different shades of blues in the collection." At Vans it's all about balance: "We made sure that we offer a good balance of commercial and wearable colours like copen blue and balsam green, which are our seasonal interpretations of the more accessible colours, and mixing these with some fresh seasonal options – like ambrosia which is a fresh pastel green pantone or apricot ice, our seasonal orange colourway. They give the collection a great spring / summer vibe," said Vans EMEA Merchandising Manager Men'

MATERIALS: TECH VS. VINTAGE

Materials gravitate towards two opposite ends of the spectrum in SS18: On one hand, the 1990s revival creates a strong value proposition around technology-infused fabrics. Stretch or ventilation features – championed by outerwear leaders like Horsefeathers, Protest, and Makia – or even recycled variations such as bleed's Econyl fabric. On the other hand, customers want something classic and lived-in. RVLT notes that the, "sun bleached second-hand vintage look is taking over from the clean look." Also look for unique logo or design applications: RVLT is playing with cork, metallic, 3D-hairy printing and cross-stitching, while bleed is going vintage with, "handmade prints from old techniques like woodcarving and natural structures from things like leaves and feathers."

MATERIAL SPOTLIGHT: DENIM

The dream of the 90s continues into denim. "Blue and black colour variations remain strong, but distressed treatments and '90s inspired washes – like trashed, double-stoned, or acid washes – on both black and blue denim seems to be on trend," said Justin Nicot, Retail Marketing Coordinator for KR3W Denim and SUPRA Footwear. Mathieu Santoni at Volcom – also home to a growing denim line – said: "In SS18, light washes are still trendy on indigo fabrics or even in black

fabrics and light grey." For Scandinavian upstarts RVLT, denim is not only limited to bottoms: "We carry some interesting coloured denim options on jackets while the silhouette on the bottoms are getting wider – so denim is still strong and important for SS18."

Tech plays into denim materializations by ways of stretch fabric and durability enhancements in many collections. Temar Biratu at Levi's is stoked on "our Skateboarding 501 that has its roots in our '90s Shrink-to-fit block infused with Cordura and S1 Stretch. It's visually true to our roots in that the character of the fabric is maintained but modernized with our Skateboarding DNA." And those Dickies chinos you like are also coming back in jeans fabric: "We are seeing success in denim versions of our classic styles, so we will probably evolve in that direction," said Kevin Penney, Dickies' Life Marketing Manager at Williamson-Dickie Europe.

PATTERNS & PRINTS: LIVE AND IN COLOUR

Snow camo, woods camo, desert camo – the 1990s throwback includes the full spectrum of camouflage variations. All-over prints include monogram prints as well as full-fledged photo prints of classic skate and boardsports imagery. Anjet at Protest said: "Part of the Protest DNA is to incorporate nature with classic surf and extreme sports imagery. This includes place prints relating to the surf lifestyle such as surfboards, palm trees and so on." Over at Vans, Roland Slavik said: "This season we shall use some of our most iconic one, the checkerboard print, throughout our collection however we shall offer also some flower prints with some interesting creative spin on them." Andrew MacLean at Shiner/Santa Cruz Skateboards Apparel – who are bringing back OG skate graphics on coaches jackets, tees, and sweaters – also expects, "more all-over printing, badges, embroidered embellishments" for SS18. Tomas at Horsefeathers is stoked on the "Wish you were beer" T-shirt, as his brand "created a lot of beer-inspired products, because that's what summer is all about. Friends, trips, beers, chill." Also look for fine details like small, technical labels – for instance model numbers or unit codes – printed in sans-serif fonts.

CUTS & SILHOUETTES: ROOMIER AT THE TOP

"Tops are getting more relaxed and little bit bulky. Bottoms staying straight like the seasons before," said Patrick at Iriedaily. And now that every brand from H&M to Primark is slinging jogger pants by the barrel, the new boardsport-approved pants for SS18 are chinos with a slight "high water" crop. "Crisp, roomy chinos get preference in straight fits worn rolled up or chopped short," said Dan at Globe. Temar Biratu at Levi's said: "Currently we are seeing the fits get a bit wider and the washes get a bit cleaner. Our Denim Carpenter's pant is on point for this type of look." Mathieu at Volcom confirmed that, "bottoms are larger – especially chino pants – and short shorter and baggier. Tops are still the same – bigger fit in tees and wovens." "The looser fits and the oversized trend that has been happening lately has shaped our line as well," said Roland Slavik at Vans, adding: "In the past and the current season too, we have focused heavily on our chino pants making sure that we are leveraging all the knowledge and expertise from our Vans skate athletes which we then took and translated the design of our bottoms." Workwear stalwarts Dickies also noticed: "The more loose fit is becoming more and more popular every season. Our double knee pant has seen a significant rise in interest," said Kevin Penney. The rugged longevity of workwear also features in SS18 shorts collections, including the Globe Goodstock worker short, "sturdy worker-inspired shorts built to resist the daily grind." For added durability, Levi's is adding, "double lined back pockets and reinforced bar tacks at the inseam to reduce crotch blow out." ☀

HIGHLIGHTS

- Boardsport-centric aesthetics
- Eco-conscious clothing
- Peak 1990s revival
- Pastels (remember where you heard it first!)
- Full photo prints
- Tech-injected materials (stretch)
- Scarves and luxe accessories



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photo: Makia

WOMEN'S STREETWEAR SS18 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

"I think I have enough clothes, I don't need anything new," said no girl or woman ever - no matter how stuffed her closet is - and Summer 2018 will be no different. Whether they like it feminine or rock the tomboy-style, here's our overview of what will be in stores for Women's Streetwear next year. By **Anna Langer**.

TRENDS

After the rather distinct segmentation between very feminine, chic styles and more casual, sporty tomboy-silhouettes, which have been prevalent for the last couple of seasons, the division is not so clear any more in Spring/Summer 2018. While there is still a big offering for both ends of the spectrum, you can find more intersecting and crossover-pieces next year as well.

Iriedaily's collection is "inspired by the roots of classic sports-and streetwear," and combines boyfriend silhouettes "with feminine, sexy 7/8 bottoms," says Brand Marketing Manager, Denise Graff. Roxy use "sport codes" in very feminine products, Protest pair elastic tapes with ruffles and Makia play with an "edgy contrast in silhouettes, colours and graphics," as Designer, Elina Lappalainen states. Bleed go for "easy and sportive cuts" while Santa Cruz stay true to their "Skate Casual" tomboy aesthetic. Horsefeathers concentrate on "technical, high-end products for any activity girls want to do with Horsefeathers style," says Marketing Manager, Tomas Koudela.

Nikita name "90s nostalgia" as a big trend that is also catered for

with patches from Bleed, big logos from Iriedaily and Santa Cruz and coach jackets from Element. Denim is playing an important role for the latter as well, who show it "destructed and worn in throughout all categories: jackets, skirts, shorts, and overalls," explains Cararayne Slay, Global Women's Designer. Roxy also have "denim at the heart of a collection that visits every shade of blue and with this season's must have bandana, the possibilities are endless."

THEMES

Capitalizing on the denim blues, Roxy embark on a cruise to the Caribbean in their "Coastal Escape" story, with "vibrant handcrafted details, embroideries and bold prints," reminding customers of "tropical days in the Bahamas," with "sailor inspired details and nautical elements." Makia stay true to their roots with a "Nordic Contemporary" theme that is "reflected in the subtle details and colours," as Elina tells us.

Bleed celebrate the gypsy lifestyle, "restless but connected to nature - wild and free," and play "far away from trends and regulations," as Lena Grimm, Womenswear Designer and Product Manager explains.

"Like pool-hopping from yard to yard, impromptu dance parties and other BFF bonding moments. They're testing their wild side and savouring the fun memories as they make them,"

Nikita Brand Director, *Stephanie ter Hürne*.

"We stay different and support women from different sport genres like fixed gear, skateboarding, snowboarding and surfing." Iriedaily

Nikita follow a similar vibe, with a collection based on the adventures a group of friends can get into on a summer evening: "Like pool-hopping from yard to yard, impromptu dance parties and other BFF bonding moments. They're testing their wild side and savouring the fun memories as they make them," says Brand Director, Stephanie ter Hürne.

Horsefeathers narrow their focus on groups of just girls, or "Girl Squad" as they call it: "Girls are different from boys, they do a lot of activities, and they shop differently." Staying more on the tomboy side, Element concentrate on skateboarding and the girls actively pursuing this sport with a "playful graphic story inspired by fruit stickers." Iriedaily "stay different" and "support women from different sport genres like fixed gear, skateboarding, snowboarding and surfing."



photo: Nikita

COLOURS

Colour pallets vary according to themes, with most brands complementing strong, bright tones with more neutral ones.

Dark reds, core browns, stone greys and greens are at the heart of the Bleed collection and are "great to combine" says Lena. Cararayne from Element agrees that neutrals are "easy to wear and layer" and hence play an important role in their whole collection. Nikita complement black and white neutrals with a soft blush pink, Roxy use warm and earthed colours that "evocate Caribbean spices" and Makia pair "calm deep navy and sage with a bit of muted pink."

Horsefeathers concentrate on darker tones like olive for the "core girls" and spice it up with some "brighter and more summery colours and prints like Orchid or Tropical." Element name Red Dahlia as a highlight colour for 2018, Protest work with orange and deep purple, the latter of which is also key for Iriedaily.

Nikita are telling two different colour stories next summer, with the "After Hours" palette that resembles twilight, where colours pop before they sink into negative space," and a softer, washed out "Bleached" palette inspired by 90s geometries, complemented with Sunflower yellow. Iriedaily even go back to the 70s with their "fresh pastels, light rose, light olive and mint," combined with "more intense summer colours like beryl and yellow," and Santa Cruz also stick to pastels such as Jade, Coral, and Lilac.

PATTERNS & PRINTS

Prints are playing a key role in 2018 for Roxy and Nikita alike, who feature graphics as a big part of their lines. "This season our artwork was inspired by Nikita mantras that celebrate and encourage the rebellious spirit of the brand," says Nikita Designer, Kristin

Normansen. "Freak Out," "Stop Making Sense" and the notion of finding "Beauty in Chaos," are some of the topics that are implemented in a throw-back, rock 'n' roll style, featuring hand-drawn banners, tigers, skulls and roses.

Roxy feature "spectacular handmade florals," and sailor inspired graphics that are worked "in a more feminine way," for a "more mature and urban look," yet still ties very well to the summery vibes of the travel and beach lifestyle marketing stories. Horsefeathers go tropical too, Protest celebrate "surf lifestyle, summer fun," and pineapples while Iriedaily are proud of their bestselling La Palma pattern and add a new playful cactus number.

Batik and tie-dye are strong in 2018 as well, with tops as "fashionable highlights," from Iriedaily, a "night time batik print," from Nikita and an appearance in the Santa Cruz line, next to "metallic gold logo detailing." Yet camo is coming in for girls as well, with a "textured camo print that speaks to the vintage past of camouflage," from Element and Olive Camo from Horsefeathers, that is inspired by their outerwear.

Makia focus on a subtle melange of colours instead of prints "to highlight form," and next to collabs with NGOs like the Surfrider Foundation and PETA, Bleed take their inspiration from nature and "use this in textile structures, handmade prints or patterns."

SILHOUETTES

As previously mentioned, there is a lot to pick from for every girl and woman out there in 2018, spanning all tastes and styles.

As usual, the major part of streetwear is casual cut, easy and sportive - "more oversized than skinny. Comfortable but fashionable," as Bleed sum it up. In line with the current trend of "boyfriend style" that is prevalent in all the high street stores, Iriedaily took some inspiration from their men's collection, for pieces like hoodies or boyfriend "fit tops" that are then combined with light summer shorts or mom jeans. Nikita expand their hoody line with a variety of graphics and patches and play with varsity-style jackets while Horsefeathers highlight their classic street parka.

Bridging from tomboy to feminine we see a lot of "easy-to-wear dresses and tops," like Nikita's Cat's Eye Dress, that is "a classic sleeveless shirt dress that is good for any occasion." Element pair denim dresses with dad caps, Roxy feature maxi printed dresses and Iriedaily feature dresses in different length from maxi to mini with fresh patterns.

For those females who like it really fashionable, Roxy highlight a combo of "high waisted sailor inspired short and printed crop tops" and a long kimono, Protest feature pants with wider legs in a "palazzo style" next to long skirts and high necklines and Makia sport "longer jackets with fitted shoulder line, light relaxed tops and longer A-line styles." Bleed also have a jump suit in store and Nikita showcase "more tailored wovens for feminine appeal."

With such a variety of styles and looks to choose from, every girl out there should be able to find their perfect wardrobe for summer and maybe experiment a little bit too. ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- Tomboy styles with feminine appeal
- Feminine looks with sporty vibes
- Neutrals & pop colours
- Graphics & tie-dye

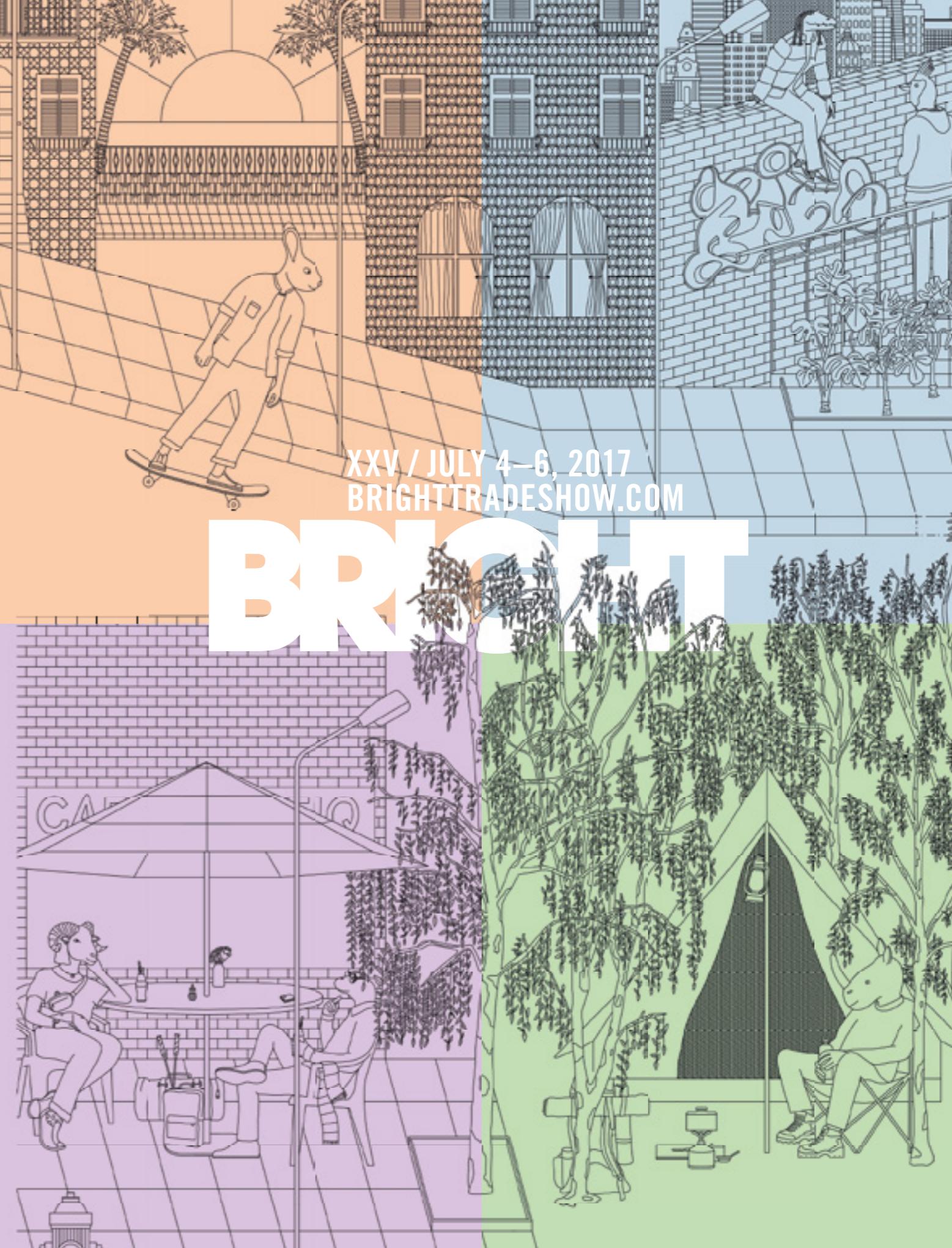




photo: Vertical

7 REASONS WHY BRANDS AND RETAILERS SHOULD INVEST IN LOCAL SKATE PARKS

Shops, brands, and distributors stand to gain substantial benefits from realizing new skate parks within their communities. Report by Boardsport SOURCE Skateboarding **Editor Dirk Vogel.**

Skate park design is a double-edged sword: Done correctly, parks breathe life into local scenes, actively promote skateboarding in the public eye, and provide stomping grounds for the next generation of rippers. Done poorly, skate parks become safety hazards and create negative experiences that may deter newcomers from ever wanting to pick up a skateboard again.

Skate parks are generally an important part of the infrastructure of skateboarding. To 'own' those places means to 'own' a part of skateboarding."
Veith Kilberth, Co-Founder LNDSTK

Fortunately, a new generation of skater-operated design, consulting, and construction firms is building user-approved places to shred. These are key to the future of our industry, because while skateboarding is a \$4.8 billion per year market (IASC), it's also pretty much illegal in public spaces all across the world. "Skate parks are generally an important part of the infrastructure of skateboarding. To 'own' those places means to 'own' a part of skateboarding," said former pro skateboarder Veith Kilberth, co-founder of Cologne-based full-service skate park agency LNDSTK (pronounced "Landskate").

All service providers quoted in this story agree that skateboarding needs more parks. But industry involvement has been lacklustre,

especially at a regional level. "To be honest, there is no big push from shops or the industry to push the local parks. Most of the time, it's the skaters or parents themselves who push this initiative," said Andreas Schützenberger, founder and CEO of IOU-Ramps in Passau, Germany, who has built more than 1,300 projects in 30 countries including Europe, Russia, and Afghanistan over the past 20 years.

OBSTACLES & PAIN POINTS

Schützenberger raises an important point. There are several reasons why industry involvement remains lagging: First, the approval process for a public park can be a lengthy affair, rife with politics. Second, sponsors may not receive the level of control from public parks that a fully brand-funded option like, for instance, the House of Vans parks can offer. And third, skate parks are expensive. Especially the new generation of concrete-moulded wonderlands like the 3,800-square-metre park with LNDSTK planning involvement currently awaiting construction in Dusseldorf-Eller at a projected cost of €1.8 million and the Yverdon Bowl and Skate Plaza completed by Swiss company Vertical Skate for \$1.7 million in 2016.

These budgets can be daunting, and "we need to keep in mind that most parks are funded with public money and most shops – at least independent ones – are not able to pay large amounts of sponsoring fees," said Veith at LNDSTK, whose track record includes brand-sponsored parks like the Nike SB Shelter in Berlin as well as community-funded municipal parks across Germany. He also points out that shops, instead of paying for the park, can partner up with municipalities as the main spokespeople for the park in the local skate

In an age where content is cultural currency, the park is an endless treasure trove of clickable treats.

community. "In return, the shop can get rights like a regular sponsoring partner. In marketing this is also called a 'barter' deal, an exchange of advertisement and communication value."

Companies like IOU, Vertical, and LNDSTK are seasoned pros when it comes to aligning different stakeholders behind a park. They can help get the ball rolling and routinely involve skaters in choosing the right designs. "We always invite future users and city officials to participate in our workshops. Our role is to establish the concept of the future skate parks within the frame of the financial and special possibilities of the project," said Paul Heuberger, who founded Vertical Skate in 1989. No one says it's going to be easy, but here are seven reason why brands, distros, and shops stand to benefit from investing time and money into new skate parks:

1. PARK DESIGNS ARE BETTER THAN EVER

Skate parks used to play second fiddle as substitutes for the "real thing". Now technical advancements in concrete construction and computer-aided design are unlocking next-level skate parks that become the centre of attraction. As Veith Kilberth at LNDSTK sees it: "The biggest event platforms like Street League, the Vans Park Series and the Olympics are defining the disciplines Street and Park as the two main categories of skateboarding." While Park designs implement transitions and ramp-like features into fluid arrangements, Veith also sees a trend towards "Flow Street Parks" combining "classic geometric, angular street features with organic tranny shapes to add flow to the street course." Creating that kind of flow is what separates real, skater-run companies from the fake. "The design of good skate parks needs to take into consideration the functional design with good flows, which at the same time prevents accidents," said Paul at Vertical Skate.

2. PERMANENT VISIBILITY

How about a permanent banner ad that's not on the internet or charged on a click-by-click basis? Skate parks provide a blank canvas for brand logos – or in the case of shops and distributors, a plethora of brand insignia. "Depending on the skate park format – private or public – shops can display their logos in the park or make another deal," said Paul Heuberger at Vertical Skate. Brands and shops can even rent out advertising space to other companies – or energy drink sponsors – in their park. Veith at LNDSTK points out options like "classic logo branding on various spots within the skate park," while advanced variations include "other more individual brand and shop integrations."

3. GROW YOUR AUDIENCE

In today's networked society, supporting a skate park gives shops and brands deep hooks into the daily lives of consumers. They can collect contact data through an official skate park website, Facebook page, or newsletter and keep audiences engaged while sprinkling in products and sales initiatives. And it's not just about virtual engagement, either. "They can build up a network of fans from which they can source team members, future employees and so on," said Paul at Vertical Skate. Just make sure the park matches the demands of the locals: "It's all about the right mix of beginners and advanced riders. Have something for every level, just a bowl is no key to happiness," said Sven Eckert, owner of TX Sports who operates the TX Sports park in the town of Kammerstein.

4. RIPPING & TEARING

One enduring conspiracy theory maintains that companies began promoting street skateboarding in the late 1980s because it burns through far more shoes and hardware than vertical skating. Whether that's true or not, it's a proven fact that shops sell more products if customers have a space to tear them up. And if their scene is prone to shutting down during cold season, building an indoor park beats the seasonal sales slump. What's more, year-round skating avoids churn among active participants who put down their board for the winter, and never pick it up again. "There are big benefits like creating a community, having a good infrastructure, which means a bigger skate scene and more board sales," said Andreas Schützenberger at IOU-Ramps.

5. TEACH THEM YOUNG

Kids need to get off their video games and parents nowadays love the option to enrol them into regular course programs. Andreas at IOU-Ramps suggests, "the new generations need to get pushed with a skate school." Shops can enlist their team riders to host afternoon or weekend classes at the park. Brands reach even bigger audiences: As part of Nike's Honor Roll Skateboard Club, the Nike SB Shelter indoor park in Berlin conducts workshops with over 10,000 participants every year. Current research, including a University of Western Australia study led by Lisa Wood, confirms a positive correlation between regular skate park attendance and pro-social behaviour in adolescents. So they're not just skate lessons, but life lessons.



photo: LNDSTK

6. EVENTS & COMPETITIONS

Time to ramp up the stoke! "Parks offer a simple way to organize contests and sessions. It's all about giving something back to the scene," said Sven at TX Sports. Extra sponsor perks include shutting down the park for exclusive sessions or product launches, and hosting demos, contests, and photo shoots, says Veith Kilberth: "There are all sorts of projects a brand or shop can host long-term. Annual events like special contests, digital activities like social video contests with weekly winners, local skate workshop program, hosting BBQs on a regular basis and many more." The Nike SB Shelter hosts regular product release events and weekly video features – generating thousands of online views – as well as the Nike SB Berlin Open competition with competitors from over 30 countries and 3,000 spectators.

7. MEDIA PRODUCTIONS

High profile skate parks such as The Berrics in Los Angeles or the DC Shoes Embassy in Barcelona, although not accessible to the wider public, are examples of enormous media reach. Paul Heuberger encourages park supporters to, "shoot videos and put events in place. This is done on a regular basis when we build new skate parks." If the park is operated independently and runs its own communications, brands and shops can also leverage synergies to reach broader audiences. "Via integration into skate park communications," says Veith Kilberth at LNDSTK, "the brand or shop is part of all communications of the skate park like website, social channels, skate workshop program, events." In an age where content is cultural currency, the park is an endless treasure trove of clickable treats.

OUTLOOK

Looking ahead, skateboarding's inclusion into the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as an official event promises to unlock official funding and support. "I can imagine that the demand for skate parks will increase. Cities and towns will more easily be able to unlock financial resources to build skate parks because of the Olympics," said Paul Heuberger. Cologne's North Brigade skate park, built in 1992 and revamped in 2013 by LNDSTK, now already serves as an Official Olympic Training Centre in Germany. But whether new parks will raise the next generation of Olympic athletes or not, "the biggest benefit are the thousands of happy kids and the foundation for their future," said Andreas at IOU-Ramps. ☀

BUYER SCIENCE

STREETMACHINE'S HENRIK PEDERSEN

Copenhagen's Streetmachine is one of Europe's best respected skate shops and for this issue's Buyer Science interview we speak with their buyer Henrik Pedersen to see what's working for them.

How long have you been a buyer for Streetmachine?

I started working at Streetmachine around 8 years ago. I started as a basic fulltime worker folding clothes and selling products etc. After some time I was asked to help out with the buying (opinions on items) and after that I started to help out (assistant buying) until I got the full responsibility. That's been around 5-6 years now, together with the store manager role. I think the way I started with buying is the right way to do it; you need to learn all the basics. There are a lot of feelings attached, especially with skateboarding, and it's also crucial that the people you work with in the store are on the same page as you.

Looking back at past seasons, what have been your biggest lessons on writing orders and selling products?

I wouldn't say it's a lesson, but more that the past few seasons have been a big change for the scene. Back in the day, you could rely 100% on statistics, for example. That is pretty much unrealistic to do now. You have to rely on your gut feelings. Trends are changing almost every week in some kind of way. The youth are bolder these days, and their opinions on clothing and hardware have evolved, and they have extremely strong opinions now. It's great, but it can also be difficult as a buyer.

What have you learned from specific skateboard product categories in the last two years?

That the circle is changing. Big brands are having hard times, and the smaller brands are evolving due to their creative mind-set. Not saying that the big brands don't have a creative mind-set, but sometimes they should get out of their comfort zone.

If you could ask brands for support - what would it be for?

Many of the brands we work with support in their own way. Our 'scene' is smaller compared to other countries in Europe, so the assets the brands have here are not as high as other places. But I think many brands should be more open-minded and really listen to what us buyers are telling them. I mean it is us that in the end are selling their products. We are their eyes and ears.



photo: Michael Jepsen

Have you changed your brand line-up and main brands I recent years?

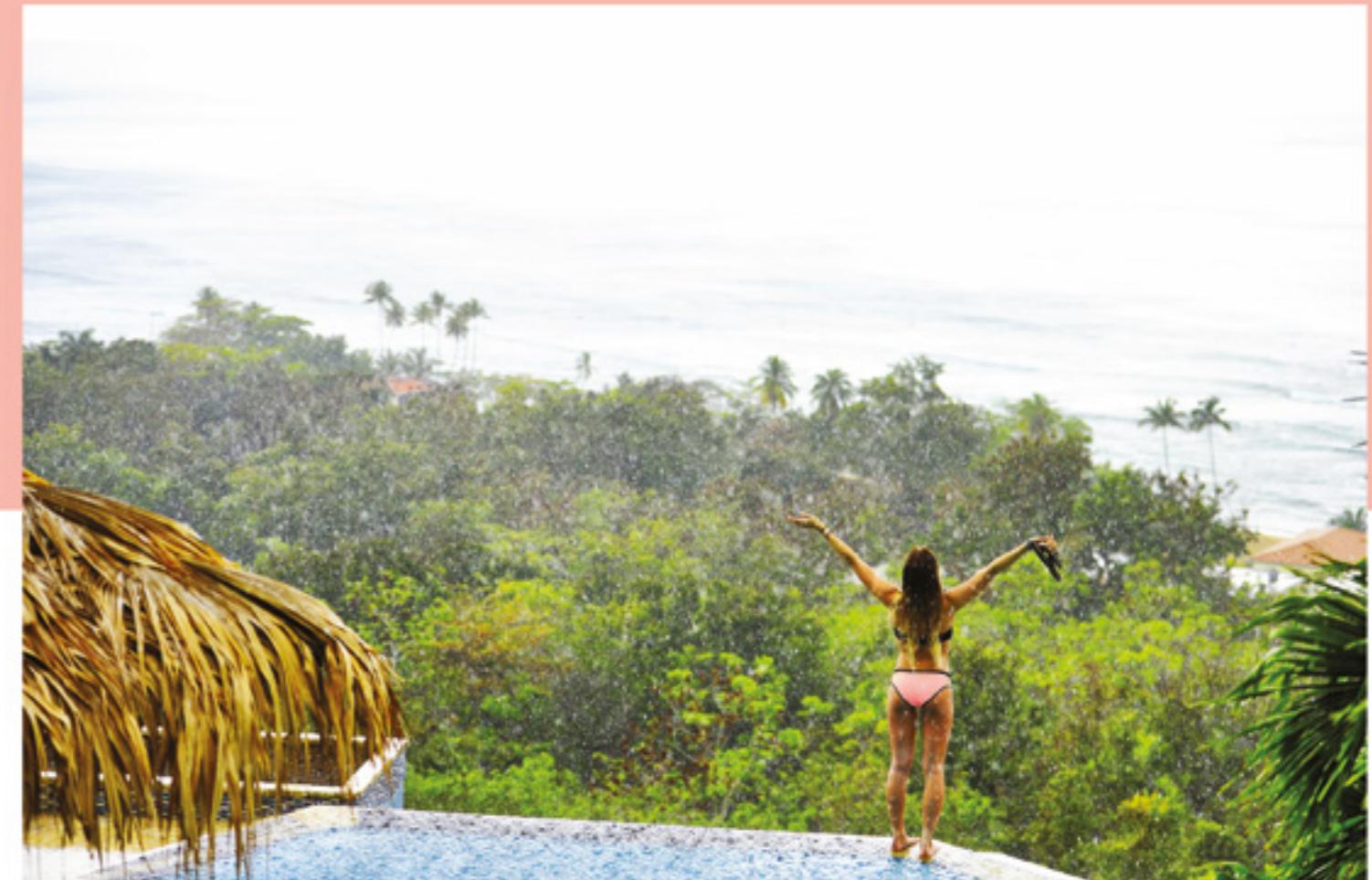
I think change is good. You always need to look ahead, and it's difficult, but it's important. You can't just rely on brands to evolve. If you do that, then you're not doing your job right. As a human being and a store you need to evolve, which is up to you. But for me it's a basic life rule. Otherwise you are just stuck in a world of change. Especially in the skate world - I personally see skateboarding as a culture, and cultures evolve. We are addicted to subcultures and they keep growing by the minute. So yeah I do change once in a while, but it's in an organic way and it has to fit my concept for the store.

What's your process for finding new brands?

I think more concept-wise than brand-wise. Our skate scene is great; it's strong (maybe many people would disagree with me). It's difficult being a buyer today - there are so many small brands popping up everywhere, and a lot of them don't have a filter, it's just creative individuals who hit some niche thing, and don't give a f*** about what people say. That's powerful; I really hope that all the big brands have them on their moodboards! But it's difficult regarding brands, there are a lot of brands out there, great ones, but sometimes you also have to look at your shop and realize how big the store is - you can't fit everything in it. But for me, my process is finding the concept, moodboarding and searching for brands that fit that vibe.

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

Just be the person you are, don't look too much at what's already out there. Characterize your brand by your passions, and build it up slowly. Do small collections with good quality rather than big collections and poor quality. ☺



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HANGING SHOES

After our inaugural article last year, the second Retail Buyer's Guide for the category of Hanging Shoes shows some new developments and innovations that retailers can capitalize on this summer.

Trend Report by Anna Langer.

TRENDS

Since their main field of activity is a warm summer setting, it's no big surprise that beach inspiration is at the forefront for sandals, flip flops, espadrilles and all other kinds of hanging shoes that are not displayed on shelves but, as the name suggests, hanging from displays.

Cool Shoes used the French beach culture and patterns from all around the world which they found on their surf trips as a base for their new styles. Havaianas play with a "Tropical Mood" for both genders and Reef expand their "Beach Casual Collection," which offers cute-feminine basics that "exemplify the casual beach lifestyle that Reef is all about," as Footwear Product Line Manager, Colton Marquardt explains.

Heritage vibes are another strong topic for Spring/Summer 2018, with the "Californian spirit of the early 80s," from Cool Shoes, a "photo print with a vintage feel," from Havaianas and a redesigned new vulcanized line for men from Reef that gives their heritage men's styles "a new life."

Rainbow add that "sandal trends are moving towards having more straps and/or braids and ornaments," which they are catering for with "new options with braids and flower accessories." Reef also try a new take on a "classic sling back slip-on that has a removable ankle wrap to dress this style up or down." For Rainbow their main focus will remain on "keeping quality high and making a comfortable sandal that can be worn every day and won't wear out."

Cobian agree that "bringing comfort and support, without sacrificing style, is now expected within the market", and offer "pillowing and comfort features within key strike points on the footbed, such as the heel and transverse arch."

TECHNOLOGY & MATERIALS

To ensure top quality, Cool Shoes have all their models handmade and Reef emphasize the very traditional way in which their shoes are made at their factory, giving them a "raw and organic feeling." Their women's line uses a cold cement process that allows for foam outsoles, while Cobian use cold press and hot press moulds for their footbeds. Rainbow work with a layered construction that allows for repairs if the shoe breaks. To ensure a great fit, most brands do a combination of usability and wear testing. EVA and other rubbers continue as the main materials for this category, with Cobian introducing a new silicon-based top-

sole material for less wear over time and better rebound. Rainbow are experimenting with shuttle loom nylon with bonded nylon thread. We can also see more leather on our feet: unlined from Reef, top grain unbuckle leather from Rainbow, vegan alternatives from Cobian and Cool Shoes, and Havaianas also introduces leather for the first time.

Other new materials include velvet (Reef & Havaianas), cork from Cool Shoes and 6 oz. canvas, cotton rip-stop and "organic hemp basket weave," from Reef.

COLOURS

Since footwear needs to go with a lot of different looks and clothes, classic colour ranges including black, brown and grey stay popular, as Rainbow confirm: "We dabble a little in other colours but we've found that brown works the best."

Havaianas utilize synergies between categories and prints that refer to their tropical theme, inspired by "Brazil and in the vibrant way the Brazilian lives," says Barbara Bento, EMEA Product Merchandising Manager. With inspiration gathered in Miami, Reef play with the contrast of "tropical colour pops and muted natural tones," and show "subtle pops of vibrancy alongside wearable natural earth tones," while Cobian match their colour palette with the outdoor and athletic markets.

POINT OF SALE

Besides comfy, quality products that customers will instantly want to wear, if only for the feeling of summer on their feet, brands are also supplying some great aids for shops to capitalize even more on this relatively easy and rewarding product segment. Different kinds and sizes of display allow for presentation in different spots in and outside of the shop, to attract as many customers as possible. Rainbow offer displays made from recycled pallets and Barbara from Havaianas says: "We always have a large selection of POS materials from freestanding displays, to walls, table top displays and special hangers. We create a range of options to suit the different styles of retailers."

Rainbow have customized hang tags for every style and Cobian feature a special hangtag that "extends off the hanger and over the sandal with specific messaging about the product," that is unique on the market, as Sean Morrison explains. Reef also launch new hangers made from recycled plastic with an added eco-agent that allows the material to decompose if it ends up in the landfill. ☀

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TORQ SURFBOARDS

Torq surfboards are made by computer-generated aluminium moulds in order to cut down waste and produce consistently shaped surfboards that are durable with good flex and at an affordable price point. The brainchild of longtime windsurf shaper, Sebastian Wenzel and distributed globally through a network of international surf distributors (International Surf Alliance), torq are ramping up their operation off the back of a successful collab with Channel Islands.

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

The idea to unite international surf distribution companies was developed by Sebastian Wenzel in 2010. Following the idea, he gathered a group of international surf distributions and they decided to join forces. The ISA – International Surf Alliance was born. With a global network at hand the ISA started to develop the torq surfboard brand.

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

Sebastian Wenzel is the General Manager, with a 35 year background of making windsurf boards, being a professional windsurfer and currently also still designing shapes for Fanatic. He is also the former Global Brand Manager for NSP Surfboards.

Apart from Sebastian, we work with freelancers.

ISA is a company owned by seven shareholders, each distributing torq surfboards in their respective territories. The ISA shareholders are constantly in contact with the brand and are involved in all major decisions.

Please briefly explain the benefits of moulded construction surfboards and the demographics it targets.

Our TET and X-lite ranges are moulded boards, which are built from very precise aluminium moulds. The result is a very consistent, low tolerance surfboard. The TEC range uses

new production techniques that allow us to implement very durable layups at normal weights, combined with a wide variety of shapes.

Our goal is to serve every surfer - no matter the age - who wants a board that can enjoy for many surf sessions.

Please explain the eco benefits.

Due to the highly optimized production process, there is very little waste of materials and the cycle time in production of each surfboard is quite short. We invest quite a lot of money into the tooling/moulds, which leads to a very lean production process.

How successful was your Channel Islands collab? And more in the pipeline?

Our collaboration with Channel Islands is great success story. We've had a lot of interest all over the world in the PodMod model that we are doing with CI. With our new X-lite layup we are able to offer a light and very durable surf board with good flex, at a very good price. There may be more collabs in the future, but for now we are very happy with our partnership with Channel Islands.

How do you support athletes and boardsports?

As we are still a young brand and started in the premium recreational sector of the market our focus was and still is very product driven. But with the launch of our TEC range (our more performance-oriented category), we've

also started to work with some team riders. This is currently handled on a mainly local bases. Besides that, we involve some surfers in helping to test new technologies and shapes. Moving forward and growing the brand, we want to invest more into team riders and brand ambassadors.

What other marketing are you running?

We really focus on delivering as much information as possible on our website. Besides that there are a lot of local activities that each distribution organizes on our behalf. We try to stay very close to the retailer and support them as much as possible.

Why should retailers sell your brand?

Torq surfboards offer great value for money, combined with good margins to support the retailer and we do not do any online sales from our end. A torq surfboard delivers a great customer experience, and a happy customer is the best customer.

What do you see for the future of the industry?

I think we will see more and more development in technologies and production processes. Shapes have been tested and fine-tuned over and over for the past few decades, but actually only very little work has been done on technology and production processes. We are working intensively on new technologies and production processes, to create a lighter and stronger surfboard, which is still affordable. 



LEUS

New to the towel market, LEUS launched in the States in March of 2017 and have seen great success in that market so far. With pro surfers, Conner & Parker Coffin, Clay Marzo and legendary photographer Brian Bielmann on board as ambassadors the brand is looking to break into the European market this summer.

Who's behind LEUS and what are their backgrounds?

LEUS is comprised of many individuals who saw a need in the market place. We have been working on LEUS for two years now and we are very proud to introduce LEUS to the public. Following our team's prior work experience in accessories, we have learned from those past successful accessory brands on how to find a niche market and create a mainstream demand for it. Also, our team of sixteen highly experienced sales reps/agencies, spanning the entire US, have been key to our success and growth.

How is the brand working in the European region?

Many distributors have been approaching us and we are currently discussing and negotiating the terms for our European launch. Due to the high demand from Basque Country retailers (both French and Spanish) we will find a solution to select a couple of lucky partners and supply them from the US.

How is business?

We launched in select US retailers in late March 2017 and sales are off to a great start! The feedback from buyers, shop employees, and customers has been extremely positive. We are already receiving re-orders in early April from our accounts. Retailers are excited to see sell-through even before summer business kicks into high gear. Customers have responded well to our displays and unique packaging, many times even buying 2-4 towels at a time. The

family needs a fresh towel setup for summer! We also are launching changing ponchos soon that our retailers can't wait to get in their stores. The feedback from them has been incredible.

Where are you manufacturing?

Our supply chain has been designed to allow for fast global expansion, maximizing the margin equation for both retailers and distributors. Due to their technological and quality advance over other countries, China is our main production partner. We also utilize limited production runs with other countries when the story and quality proposes a unique product to our customers.

How are you helping retailers to merchandise your products?

Surf shops have been selling towels since the dawn of time, but they've always been folded and shoved down in a corner, hidden from customers. We're changing that with innovative POP displays, product design, and an ambassador program that will give consumers a reason to come into to their local shop to buy. We grew up in and around surf, snow, and skate shops and want to support them in every way possible.

With our combination of merchandising, displays, shelf appeal, and pricing we have created the perfect recipe that is already proving to be a new and exciting revenue stream for our accounts.

The management team are from surf backgrounds – do you plan on placing Leus outside of surf retail?

LEUS is a global lifestyle brand that launched with a very specific strategy to disrupt the towel category through all distribution channels. We have big plans but can't quite share them yet. Follow us @leustowels to find out more.

How do you envision the brand's growth over the next three years?

Our team created a solid infrastructure for two years before our launch in February. This included a very detailed and accelerated growth plan set for the next five years. Currently everything is going to plan and growth has been better than we expected.

Please could you tell us about the athletes on the team and any artist collabs?

LEUS has enlisted professional surfer turned partner, Conner Coffin, along with legendary photographer Brian Bielmann, surf savant Clay Marzo, Conner's best friend and brother Parker Coffin (and the list goes on) as ambassadors to lead the way. We have many influential people using our towels including many WCT surfers. Through social gorilla marketing, our tribe is growing every day.

We have some bold marketing activations coming this Spring/Summer and will be doing so through traditional media (both endemic and non-endemic) channels as well as seeding social media influencers and local heroes. Stay tuned for more collabs in our 2018 collection. 

NEW PRODUCT

01

01-PENNY SKATEBOARDS THE SIMPSONS COLLAB

Endlich bekommt Bart Simpson sein eigenes Skateboard. Zusammen mit anderen Charakteren aus Springfield erhält der gelbe Frechdachs sein eigenes Premium-Plastikskateboard von Penny Skateboards. In Längen von 22 bis 27 Zoll präsentieren die Bretter der Collab-Edition Graphics bekannte Gesichter wie Bart, Maggie, Mister Burns sowie vielen anderen. Ein Muss für Simpsons-Fans!

www.Pennyskateboards.com



02



02-PROTEST CHET BOARDSHORT

Umwelt trifft auf Style. Protest verarbeitet recycelte Materialien in seinen Boardshorts, darunter das neue CHET Modell aus 50% recycelter Baumwolle und 50% recyceltem Polyester aus wiederverwerteten Plastikflaschen. Weiterhin bietet die Boardshort bequemen Stretch sowie ein trendiges Flower Stripe Muster.

www.protest.eu

03-SPY HAYES SUNGLASSES

The perfect "driver glass," the Hayes is for those who are driven to fully embrace the road of life and whatever character-building bumps it holds. Featuring the detail- and mood-boosting Happy Lens™, the Hayes is crafted from fine handmade acetate, smooth 5-barrel hinges, and includes a hard case and cleaning cloth.

www.spyoptic.eu

03



04-ELLIOT BROWN BLOXWORTH

A gorgeous wave-proof wonder from Elliot Brown's stable of finely honed watches. Two-tone sunray brushed dial, jet-black bezel and soft black rubber strap work so well with the brushed tungsten PVD case.

www.elliottbrownwatches.com



05-LANDYACHTZ DINGHY TROUT

Landyachtz cast their line and reeled in a 28.5" trophy. New for Summer 2017, the Dinghy Trout features a redesigned swallow tail shape and embossed scale graphic. It comes complete with 63mm yellow swirl Fatty Hawgs and Polar Bear 105mm trucks.

www.landyachtz.com

05



06-VONZIPPER LEVEE BLACK LAGER GLOSS

Rise above your low-lying surroundings and reinforce your flow with the Levee Black Lager Gloss in Wildlife Vintage Grey Polar. Offering 100% UV protection with Base 6 spherical and impact resistant polycarbonate wildlife polarized lens in a nylon grilamid frame with stainless steel hinges, all from Italy, the Levee prevents a flood of rays from breaking down your terrestrial fortification.

www.eu.vonzipper.com

06



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www.npsurfboards.com



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

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UK

FRENCH

ITALY

SPAIN

AUSTRIA

SWISS

It's a funny world. Just take British Politics. If you wrote a book about UK Politics (and added in a bit of USA Politics for good measure) nobody would believe the plot. For me, and many others, there appears to be a famine of inspiring people who want to lead a fair society – on both sides of the Atlantic!

And, surprise surprise, this morning we woke up (3 days after the election) to news that business confidence is at an all time low. Whatever happens next let's hope that they manage to negotiate a decent deal with the EU – fair for all sides – so that we can get on with 'business as normal'.

And 'business as normal' is where we appear to be ... or, right now perhaps a little better than normal. The winter sell-in concluded with relatively happy people and the winter order book is generally strong. Let's hope that carries through to sales when we get to the Autumn. I am not so sure, but so far so good.

It's early June and we're in the middle of some storms (I mean weather not political) with warning of a potential ground frost last night. Has nobody told the weather gods it's June?

One of the busiest parts of the UK for watersports is the Poole/Bournemouth area and if any retailers are ready for the summer it will be the plethora of boardsports shops in this area. So this month I thought I would stick around this part of the country.

First stop, Matt at H2O who started the conversation in a typically British style: "What's going on with the weather?" This for any Brit is a key part of the conversation. When we'd got past the weather I asked Matt how business was: "Kids are back at school so it's a bit quiet right now but generally we've had a good year so far. This follows on from last year where we finished 25% up. April was crazy - our biggest on record and about 35% up on last year." What is hot and what is not? "SUP of course is doing well – and we did well over the winter with the real hardcore enthusiasts – but now it's moving towards the inflatable leisure end of the market. Kite has held up well and it's been a good season for us – as a result windsurfing has taken another knock and wakeboarding has not really started yet – but the cables are open and we're stocked and ready for the rush."

H2O have been around since 2004 so they have a lot of history in what is one of the most active watersports areas in the UK. What of soft goods, fashion and wetsuits? "Fashion is poor – we don't really focus on it and I am sure we could do better but we just don't have the time." And neoprene? "Again – we could do better – loads of the business has gone online and it's a declining market for us – we have really not grasped that nettle and perhaps we should." Finally the conversation turned to the inevitable Election: "I just want it out of the way, I want some stability. I'm really optimistic about the future but I just want some stability for the UK." (I spoke to Matt before the Election).

Less than a mile away and over to Chris at Poole Harbour Watersports. The business has been around since 1980 with Chris taking over in 1993 having done his grounding as an Engineer (!) and then, more sensibly, a windsurfing instructor. How is business? "Generally OK," I noted some caution in the voice so pressed for more information and found a very similar story to H2O: "SUP is strong, kite is good and windsurf is sketchy but wind SUP is growing so we hope that

eventually this may translate to some growth in windsurfing." But why the caution? "It's not so much the sales that concern me but more the 'business' side of things – our business rates are horrific and look likely to go up and it's really hard to maintain our margin. So whilst turnover is up, the overheads are up as well. It's tough."

Chris mentioned foiling with a positive hint: "Foiling everything is happening and it's really exciting." I guess as an Engineer this may be of particular interest to Chris but 'foiling' does appear to be breathing new life into many sports – particularly kite and windsurf... with no doubt many others to follow. But SUP appears to be keeping many businesses alive at the moment: "Quite what we will do when it drops off I'm not sure – but something will come along. SUP has taken seven or eight years to really take hold and long may it continue."

A hop-skip and a jump to Bournemouth and I caught up with Sean from Sorted – The Wetsuit Warehouse. The business has evolved and changed over the past few years. From a well-established surf shop (est 2001) it has now become one of the largest online retailers of wetsuits: "The bottom line is that the new millennials are less and less interested in visiting a store. They will use their phones and expect delivery the next day – we have to offer them that service and I am glad we chose to focus on a niche area in which we excel. But it still amazes me that we get online orders from people who are two or three streets away. They simply cannot be bothered to visit the store." So is the store going to disappear eventually? "I don't think so and I really hope not. We're lucky – we have a beach store, a hardware store and the warehouse – so we've got it covered. And no – I really don't think the stores will disappear"

I could not raise anyone else in the area so I had to take a hike to get a comment from a skate store, so I nipped 'up the road' to Bristol and spoke to Nick from Route One – they have a chain of seven stores. Nick was in fine form, although he almost always is. "Good, good. Business is good. Stores are all doing fine and online is OK." Only OK? "Yeah – online is tough as we all know but we're holding our own and we're happy enough. Not content, but happy enough. Then again anyone in this business who says they are content should not be in the business should they?" Route One are as much about shoes and soft goods as they are about skate shoes: "Footwear is good for us. People are always going to need a new pair of shoes whereas they can make a deck last a bit longer if needs be and with the price hikes already in the system that's what people are doing – so hardware is only OK." It is also down to predictability that makes the clothing and footwear an easier business. "There's still a lot to play for but it is the lack of predictability that makes the hardware so tough. Whilst I'm really happy and confident with our winter buy who really knows how the consumer is going to react to the new seasons prices. That said I do feel confident going forward – let's get through this Brexit and election nightmare and hopefully we can get on to a stable footing."

I wonder if any politicians are reading this? Doubt it very much. This funny world is probably going to get funnier before it gets easier!

Gordon Way



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY

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On May 7, at just 39 years old, Emmanuel Macron was elected President of the Republic with 66.10% of the votes ahead of Marine Le Pen. The French have chosen after a campaign full of twists and turns. The most striking thing is the speed of his accession to power. Administrative elite, banker, minister, political leader and now head of State, Emmanuel Macron has skipped up the ladder in just 14 years.

A few weeks after being elected, Emmanuel Macron is pretty well received overall in France with the president's popularity now reaching 62% and that of the Prime Minister, Edouard Philippe touching on 55%. These figures are pretty much the same as in the presidential elections of 2012 and 2007. François Hollande gathered 61% of favour and Nicolas Sarkozy 65%.

The economic situation in France has actually been better than we thought. INSEE has increased the first quarter's growth figures by 0.1 point in their second Gross Domestic Product estimate, which was set at +0.4%.

In the last quarter GDP rose by 0.5% and for the second quarter Banque de France and INSEE again showed growth of 0.5%. These encouraging figures seem to show glimpses of a positive outlook.

With the presidential elections, political developments throughout the months of April and May seem to have had an effect on numbers in French shops. From north to south, everyone agrees that despite the bank holiday weekends in May, which are normally synonymous with affluence and good results, politics seem to have limited their positive effects somewhat this year.

However, the end result is once again quite positive overall, at Nico Beach in Cap Ferret: "Visitations and in-shop sales were rather good at the start of April/end of May." It's the same story a bit further south in Biarritz at Hastea who add: "We had super nice weather in April which brought good sales and people into the shop, but the election did steal people's attention for a few weeks, which slowed things down a bit." In the south east in Six-Fours at Aloha, the same thing happened: "The good weather and long weekends coincided and brought customers through the door and had an impact on sales." In town, whether at Empire in Pau or at Skate n Roll in Besançon, it was a similar story, nice weather in April and once the elections had finished at the start of May, sales went pretty well. Surprise, surprise in the north of France at Opale Ride in Berk Plage: "As a seaside resort, the nice weather in April and May combined with the extended weekends were encouraging factors at the start of the season."

On the coast, despite an abundance of good weather, it seems like the lack of waves had a slight impact on the direction of customer spending. According to Pol Plantec from Hastea: "We had really small waves so our turnover on rentals was slightly down on last year in this period and the same goes for the technical department. Nevertheless the nice weather meant that we could improve on clothing and surf

lesson sales." He adds: "We also cater well for females and we sold quite a lot of swimsuits and girls' fashion outfits." For Nico Beach in Cap Ferret: "The good weather directed sales towards boardshorts, flip flops and sunglasses for immediate use on the beach. To that we can also add decent sales of neoprene products, notably 3/2s." At SB3 in Soorts Hossegor, clothing seems to have worked pretty well through the period: "Customers quite often headed to clothing, trainers and fashion accessories, even though during this period the annual Hossegor liquidation sale comprises about 80% of turnover." On the Mediterranean, Pat from Aloha in Six Fours relays that: "The favourable weather and long weekend holidays in May were pretty beneficial to us, especially for the technical section which worked well at the start of this season." He adds: "We had good rates of sale in neoprene, boards and accessories." As for brands, even though the big guns like Rip Curl, Quiksilver and Roxy are often mentioned by retailers as being brands with noteworthy rates of sale in neoprene and clothing, other more core labels like Roark and Thrasher are also sought after in shops. In the technicals, and more specifically boards, the shops are citing Torq and Clayton as movers. At the same time, the lack of waves undoubtedly influenced the slight decline in sales of certain product ranges like performance shortboards for Nico Beach and bodyboards for Hastea.

In street, clothing appears to have worked well in this period, a trend confirmed by Empire in Pau: "Our clothing department has done pretty well at the start of this season," adding that, "generally the core brands are the most sought after like Thrasher; customers are less attracted by the big brands at the moment and so prefer small labels". At SB3 in Soorts Hossegor, it's a bit less black and white: "Clothing made up most of our sales with brands like Nike, Adidas and Volcom. It would appear as though the major surfwear brands have seen a slight decline in this period." One trend that started in recent months seems to have established itself in skateboarding - longboarding is now a high point at Aloha as well as at SB3 even if surf skates seem to be the street trend of this summer.

When asked about their added value for customers, shops are once again unanimous. While new products and a good range are important for attracting customers and filling them with stoke, people are still coming into shops for advice, especially when it comes to technical products. That's where shops can position themselves as experts and set themselves apart. Even though value for money is at the forefront at the start of this season, customers are open to advice and need to be guided in their choices.

The start of this season was marked by intense political developments in France as well as really nice weather with high temperatures, which were really helpful to shop visitation numbers. A promising omen for the fresh new 2017 season.

Benoit Brecq



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Winter came late last year and had a negative impact on retail due to lack of snow until January. A few months later there was a seamless change from winter to summer – however it was May already! While there was still snow in the mountains until the end of April, the situation in the cities was different: moody weather, low temperatures and high humidity. So consumers' motivation to walk into stores for new hardware and softgoods was relatively low. Therefore the spring season started later than expected and caused extra problems for some stationary dealers, which had already been struggling because of the competition against growing e-commerce. One who is able, already uses both channels, in store and the world wide web. However, staying up to date and swimming with the multichannel strategy the big players use can very soon become expensive and cost a lot of time and energy. Many of the old-established retailers in Germany remember the good old days of the skate- and snowboard business in the 90s and 00s and are now forced to give in and close their shop-doors forever. Germany is a country of discounters and it is trending to order bargains online. These are the two things that give the local retailers a hard time. In some places the shop extinctions will go on in 2017 and the industry has to wave farewell to a couple of well-respected shops.

"Sure online shopping is the current trend, but I think that there could be another change in a few years. I can imagine that customers enjoy going to a shop and appreciate the service there. Stand up paddling is a big thing now, but even this sector gets riskier because of discounters like Norma or hardware stores who flood Germany with the lowest prices. Therefore we offer events, workshops and so on... and are able to boost something. Overall we are focused on hardware and offer proper service and support to our customers. Adjusting boots and tuning snowboard edges are things that online shops can't provide. The local dealers will stand out due to expert consulting," says Stefan Zeibig, owner of Switch Boardershop in Straubing (Southeast Germany).

Emanuel Thurneysen from Blowout in Würzburg (South Germany) notices that by the beginning of the summer streetwear sales increase and people start asking for all kinds of skate shoes and not just the ones from adidas, Nike or Vans. A Blowout online shop exists, but "e-commerce is not only highly competitive but expensive! You pay dearly for volume of sales."

"The actual online ordering process is pretty strange. You choose your items while you are not directly influenced by your surroundings. You always have certain expectations if you are shopping online," and it's because of this that Nino Schöneweis wants to keep Mantis Shop in Hamburg (North Germany) familiar and cozy: "The people passing the shop should get inspired – by the flair, the staff or the skate videos playing in the background. With this we want to tempt people to come in and give them the feeling that we are worth a visit." Nino sees skateboarding as trending and is expecting good hardware sales. He's more concerned about selling skate apparel, and also says the longboard trend has clearly lost popularity in 2017. "It did not collapse entirely because of a established scene that grew through the last few years. One can see this in the number of longboard sales and the fact that hardware is still selling, which is an indicator that people still ride longboards. The summer just started and therefore the outdoors has once again become an option..." The weather has an increasing impact on retail and in order to react to this, the Mantis crew focuses

on reorders, to balance shortages or to restock the store with highly demanded items. According to this they reduced pre-orders.

Twigger from the Search & Destroy skate shop in Berlin Kreuzberg (Northeast Germany) sees a new generation, with a lot of people asking for skateboards yet lacking in individuality and a trend towards the mainstream. Deck-wise the Kreuzbergers are all in with European brands, because they know the people behind the companies and want to support them. "The European skate scene is too good – we only offer American brands when on sale," Twigger explains.

For Yaw Kyeremeh from Arrow & Beast (Stuttgart, Southwest Germany) the spring season worked out pretty well and skateboarding is also doing well. "There are more people who are grabbing a skateboard for the first time and in general there are more skateboarders out there than last year. Recently a new indoor skate park opened in Stuttgart (Stuttpark in Bad Cannstadt), which provided the opportunity to continue skating throughout the winter. Of course this helped."

Arrow & Beast operates both in-store and online. Yaw wants to draw contrast to the big business players in terms of skate teams, range of goods and service. Therefore they target brands that stand out. "If the whole story fits, you can sell a board for 70€, no problem. It just has to be clear to the brands that you can't just press boards and wait for them to sell themselves but they must deliver the background that makes people buy – this is important."

For Andreas Gniadek from Boneless Skateshop in Munich the hype for longboards collapsed and the freak weather did its best in the first quarter of the year. Luckily the good weather in May also did its best. "We started with longboards ten years ago and even back then you could predict the impact of longboarding on the subculture. You can't imagine the urban image of bigger cities without them. The big beginner hype just to own a board rather than to skate it, because it's a trend item to have is now long gone! Now it is just like before the trend and we as a specialist dealer have no problem with this, because now we get the customers we want. People that want to get advice, have a clear idea of what they want and they buy legitimate stuff. Therefore we are now selling more interesting and better boards compared to the times of the hype. Skateboarding is on the upswing. The new Wacker Skatepark at Harras turned into a central place for street skating with an extremely high level. All the new bowls in town are very popular and bring new customers. Of course a skate hall would be a good thing for the winter (after they shut down the Euroskatehalle a few years back, Munich has no indoor skatepark – besides the Gravity Lab. Skateboarding München e.V. is working on this project). Considering Munich is a provincial capital and city of this size, a hall would be great. Regensburg saw a non-profit association and the city create a BMX and skate hall, something Munich needs to learn from."

Street League is also returning to Munich in 2017 and will see pros cruise the city and leave a big impression again. As a shop owner you have to do your homework carefully and be active in many ways – more than ever. All the new skate parks emerging in Germany will ensure that a new generation of skateboarders will begin rolling. With this in mind, I wish everyone a good summer business.

Jochen Bauer



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Economically not much has changed; we had a little visit from Mr Trump in late May 2017. He visited the Pope and made the statement that our government has all the possibility to do well but says we just aren't represented by the right people (politicians) to make it happen. We do need to do better, as we still lack growth in GDP, which is crucial for us as our state debt is growing and the economy still struggles with external competition.

Summer is now in full swing and we've already see temperatures over 30 degrees, which has been good for the surf category. Alessandro Ricci Picciloni from action sport agency and Boardy.it surf hardgoods web store is happy: "Retro styles for boardshorts are doing very well and Vissla is growing well as surfers are searching for the new."

Hardgoods stores don't complain and instead do not stock big offerings and rely on good re-order options from brands or distributors to minimize their risk and so avoid having a cash flow problem. Al Merrick, Tomo / FireWire and Haydenshapes are all performing well.

The snow business suffered from a difficult winter again. Only very few snowboard stores carry a wide selection of boards, bindings, accessories and outerwear anymore. Fabio Degasperi from 100-one Stores in Rovereto and Trento says: "You have to be very active and be in constant contact with your customer, you have to offer the experience and you have to be in it for the love of it, otherwise looking at the figures isn't so rewarding."

Skateboarding is the most hyped boardsport right now; GQ Italy is going to run a five page article on skate lifestyle and the trend behind wearing skate branded clothing. The fashion and streetwear tradeshow PITTI IMMAGINE UOMO follows suit with skaters adorning their ad campaign for the upcoming show in Florence this June. Skateboarding is hotter than ever but unfortunately most of the

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The price war is raging in Switzerland and it's putting our retailers through the mill if it hasn't already brought them to their knees. The difficulties are well-documented: open access to information and to the products themselves across our borders has contributed significantly to the drop in prices, the worry being that costs haven't dropped, quite the opposite. These days Swiss retailers are constantly having to deal with customers who are bargaining with them, going as far as showing them their stocked items at lower prices on their mobile phones to force them to match it or lose the sale. This type of situation is an almost everyday occurrence and it's starting to take its toll on some who say it's hard enough to do "their work", let alone make a living.

But the Internet and open market are not the only reason for this price war. It seems quite clear that, for the majority of products that concern us, we are in a state of overproduction. This is the case for the winter market (outerwear, snowboards and even more so for skiing) as well as shoes and skateboarding. Aiming for an economy of scale and the constant growth insisted on by brand managers and owners, much more is supplied than demanded which automatically creates leftovers, sales and a parallel market, making it impossible to maintain price levels.

Because of dwindling means, ideas or simply to take fewer risks, many shops are asking their suppliers to help them by working on a consignment or right to return basis. These practices are more and more common, especially because often the shops don't even have to ask as the supplier offers it from the get-go. Consignment has a direct correlation with overproduction since "orders" are made without risk and even more stock is taken than needed. Another common phenomenon is clear to see, online shops minimising their

core skateboarding brands aren't making profit from it. Lukas Höller owner of Sub skate shop and Sublime menswear boutique out of Bolzano says: "Skateboarding is trending but beside Thrasher and a few others, the younger audience only follows the hype, the standard teenager dresses in some of the latest kicks (running shoes) paired with shorts from different brands (including H&M) and adds some flavour with some hyped product like Thrasher, Huf, Supreme, Palace, Stussy and so on. The traditional skate brands that missed the hype train are really struggling and are losing more ground season after season.

Skate hardware is growing but online business seems to see the largest chunk of sales with wider selections and more aggressive pricing. Alex Berger from Fakieshop Merano and Silandro says that older skaters are more selective with brands and graphics and the younger audience places more attention on pricing, shape and quality of the decks. As skateboarding is doing well, a lot of US brands are becoming stronger again and especially brands like Fucking Awesome or Deluxe are on the top of many stores' priority lists.

Guided by Italian federation of skating sports, more and more skate schools are opening nationwide where older or sponsored skaters offer courses for beginners. Instructors go through a training program to become an official training and this together with more and more skate parks opening, the latest in Sicily (Palermo), brings more skaters to our streets and will hopefully benefit the whole industry.

On the brand and distribution side, Sex skateboards found their home at Blue Distribution from Verona and in streetwear Rip n Dip is now distributed by 7 Hills out of Rome and is gaining some ground, while being well received by the hype kids community, which is also growing rapidly in Italy.

Franz Josef Holler

Finally, summer has arrived in Austria, so let's talk about how the spring/summer collections are performing in the stores. Thomas Alton from Alton Premium Board Store in Feldkirch has mixed feelings so far: "We bridged the rainy period quite well and finished positive, but it could have been better." Yet they saw a little increase in May and overall it has been as good as last year. Softgoods are crucial in summer, Thomas tells us: "We are a boardsports store so naturally we have skateboards here and they sell well as a sideline, but you have to keep in mind that the longboarding thing is completely over. We compensate for that with softgoods." And is skate still going well? "Definitely! We do a lot for the skate scene. We had a big festival last weekend and we have a skate contest at the end of summer - all of this reflects in our sales. We also do a lot in winter, such as building parks and organising events, because if you don't do these things, it won't work."

At Skateshop Hammerschmid in Gmunden, softgoods prove popular, too. Christine "Nini" Hammerschmid tells us: "We sold women's summer styles as soon as we got them, even before Christmas. The girls know that the good pieces will be sold out later on." Also, "Prosecco shopping is received well and we saw good momentum with events such as these." The warmer weather finally attracts the men as well, as Nini analyses: "Men's shopping needs are much more need-oriented. It's not until they feel it's getting hot that they go out and buy their summer outfit. But when they go shopping, they buy the whole thing."

And which brands or products are the most sought after, apart from the Thrasher and Vans Old Skool hype? "Many of our customers are looking for something special, like short-sleeved Neff hoodies in bright retro looks," Nini says. She is happy "that a certain trend towards individuality is more and more popular with young skaters.

After a long period of black and/or white, we are selling colours again. Especially pastels, like the Vans Kyle Walker in Zephyr, shirts by Quiet Life, Boo Johnson decks," and Grizzly grip tapes are going well. Also, they added new brands to their portfolio, the newest being "TAS (Take a shot) sunglasses, they are very well received."

Skateshop Hammerschmid doesn't only cater for skateboarding, longboarding and snowboarding, but also for a youth culture inspired by the surf spirit. Yogawear, reusable drinking bottles, fair-trade soaps and vegan fair-trade clothing are part of that as well. Here, the shop offers brands like bleed, OGNX, Picture, ethletic, and Dr. Bronner. "In this segment, the demand is increasing, with customers becoming more and more discerning. But the most important thing is still style, which has to appeal, and it's only then that sustainability is seen as a bonus," Nini says.

Surf is growing in importance for Thomas: "We have more and more surf customers and last month, for example, we sold three surfboards. We offer leashes, wax, sunscreen and to go with it we have pads, screws and fins in stock, but we sell surfboards exclusively to order. It's going well at the moment and is something close to our hearts." Naturally, in Vorarlberg people are not only passionate surfers, but also mountaineers: "Outdoor is a part of our product line and is selling very, very well. The summer is coming to the mountains, the lifts are opening again, and in fall, it's selling anyway." Thomas thinks: "The outdoor topic is becoming more interesting next to the board business. People are getting older, hike up the mountains and also in winter, and it's easy to combine these two."

Barbara Mayer

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Spanish financial indicators as a whole continue to rise. Whilst this rise is moderate, it has persisted for more than a year now. This is the outcome of the efforts made by families, companies and a population which, astonished and permissively, witness cases of political corruption involving thousands upon millions of euros, scandals involving major electrical companies which invoice deceitfully, banks being rescued, banks that have performed illegal operations applying abusive clauses to their mortgage loans and shamelessly evicting thousands of families over the past few years. The fact that the country's financial indicators rise in spite of all these inanities, makes us feel optimistic. There are resources and richness; it all just requires more appropriate management.

Accordingly, based on the most recent circumstantial data, the GDP growth rate in the first quarter of the year amounts to somewhere in excess of the 0.7% recorded in the previous quarter, and employment has progressed at a greater rate in the first quarter. In terms of wages, the data concerning wage bargaining progress until February point at a 1.2% year-on-year wage rate increase in the bargaining agreements signed until said month; an increase slightly up on the previously agreed rate of 1.1% for 2016 as a whole.

In relation to sliding sports professionals, these indicators relate to consumption. According to Joaquin Vinaza Garcia from Surf Shop H2O & Surf School in San Vicente de la Barquera, Cantabria, "after all these years of economic crisis, sales are beginning to stabilise, with sales figures resembling those recorded before the crisis. Best selling products are technical surf materials as well as beach accessories, while textile sales have receded further. The number of people surfing and paddle surfing is constantly increasing and sport tourism is growing in every field.

Regarding his customers, Joaquin said, "our target is very well distributed into two groups: national and foreign people of all ages seeking to practice sport while on holiday; and those who are there all year looking for a more professional sport. Everyday

our customers are more demanding regarding knowledge of new materials as well as practising multiple sports; today sporty people look for different destinations to practice their sport. There are also many customers who do not surf but actually purchase surf-related textile trends and accessories.

Focusing more on brand and market progress, according to Lombok XXI's Javier Burón, Cádiz, who has amassed over 30 years of experience in the distribution and sales of boardsport products and brands, an important consolidated change has taken place: "This last period has witnessed a demand for emerging brands, new brands gaining importance over established brands. Also, the sale of all types of accessories and technical materials is gaining impetus, to the detriment of clothing, which has experienced a significant dive." "This year looks to be heading in the same direction in the light of the strong growth of surf and skate schools as well as stores which are adapting to focus on selling more technical material and less fashion wear. Even so, it should be pointed out that we have left the hardest years in this sector behind us and the outlook for the immediate future is looking particularly bright," Javier confirms.

Ahead of the summer, there is a consolidated reality already apparent in the surfing sector. The number of non-habitual surfers jumping on board the trend, and accordingly production consumption, continues to grow incessantly. In the Basque Country, one of the most renowned surf destinations, according to data provided by the Basque Tourism Agency, it is estimated that 45,000 non-habitual surfers take classes or hire surf-related services each year. Accordingly, we are dealing with a new type of surfer, who is much more timely in their activities, with their own rhythm and requirements. This opens a new niche for brands.

Jokin Arroyo

stock risks by only purchasing the bare minimum while offering a more complete range on their site and working off their supplier's stock. Some are properly synchronising their site with the supplier's stock and only use their platform as a sales intermediary. Obviously this minimises risk and suits the retailer but in turn also raises legitimate questions from the supplier about the merits of this intermediary when they themselves could be benefitting from the margins that are left. To ponder...

One area that doesn't seem to be suffering too much from the price war in Switzerland is surf equipment (not surfwear). Indeed, the prices of boards, wetsuits and other surf accessories are stable and this is probably due to the fact the market is very small and competition is very limited in our country.

Skate shoes are selling quite well this spring, the main brands being Nike SB, Vans, Globe and a bit of DC. Matiheu Rouiller from Lévitation in Martigny for his part is mostly selling Vans, which constitutes over 80% of his shoe sales volumes.

The skate market also seems to be holding up OK. According to Manu from Escape Shop in Lausanne, the skateboard market is going well, equipment is constantly flowing and the appeal of cruisers (wooden ones) continues. According to Raúl at Doodah in Lausanne, skateboarding as a boardsport is appealing to your average consumer once again and of course even more so to the connoisseur. This means that sales have momentum and skateparks have been repopulated by boards and deserted by scooters and rollers.

Fabien Grisel

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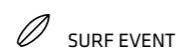
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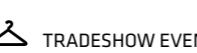
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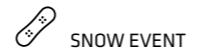
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24-26		4-6	4-6	7-8
CAPSULE PARIS PARIS WWW.CAPSULESHOW.COM		SEEK BERLIN WWW.SEEKEXHIBITIONS.COM		BRIGHT BERLIN WWW.BRIGHTTRADESHOW.COM
				VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES QUALIFIER VANCOUVER, CANADA WWW.VANSPARKSERIES.COM
12-23		6-9	8-9	10-13
CORONA J-BAY OPEN JEFFREYS BAY, SOUTH AFRICA WWW.WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM		NASS FESTIVAL SOMERSET, UK WWW.NASSFESTIVAL.COM		VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES QUALIFIER VANCOUVER, CANADA WWW.VANSPARKSERIES.COM
				INTERNATIONAL SURF FILM FESTIVAL ANGLET - FRANCE WWW.SURF-FILM.COM
13-15		21-23	26-27	29-30
AGENDA LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA WWW.AGENDASHOW.COM		ITALIAN SURF EXPO SPIAGGIA DI SANTA SEVERA WWW.ITALIASURFEXPO.IT		JACKET REQUIRED LONDON, UK WWW.JACKET-REQUIRED.COM
				VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES QUALIFIER HUNTINGTON BEACH WWW.VANSPARKSERIES.COM
1-5	AUGUST	9-11	9-13	14-16
VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES QUALIFIER HUNTINGTON BEACH WWW.VANSPARKSERIES.COM		REVOLVER COPENHAGEN WWW.REVOLVER.DK		AGENDA LAS VEGAS, NEVADA WWW.AGENDASHOW.COM
11-22		SEPTEMBER	6-17	7-9
BILLABONG PRO TAHITI FRENCH POLYNESIA WWW.WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM		VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES FINALS CHICAGO WWW.VANSPARKSERIES.COM		HURLEY PRO AT TRESTLES CALIFORNIA WWW.WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM
				SURF EXPO ORLANDO, FLORIDA WWW.SURFEXPO.COM
11-12		18-19	19-21	5-6
SPORT-CHAT LYON, FRANCE WWW.SPORTAIR.FR		SPORT-CHAT NANTES, FRANCE WWW.SPORTAIR.FR		OCTOBER
6-9		7-18	20-31	21-22
SILMO PARIS, FRANCE WWW.SILMOPARIS.COM		QUIKSILVER PRO HOSSEGOR FRANCE WWW.WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM		MEO RIP CURL PRO PORTUGAL PORTUGAL WWW.WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM
				MOREBOARDS STUBAI PREMIERE STUBAI - AUSTRIA WWW.STUBAI-PREMIERE.COM



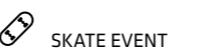
SURF EVENT



TRADESHOW EVENT



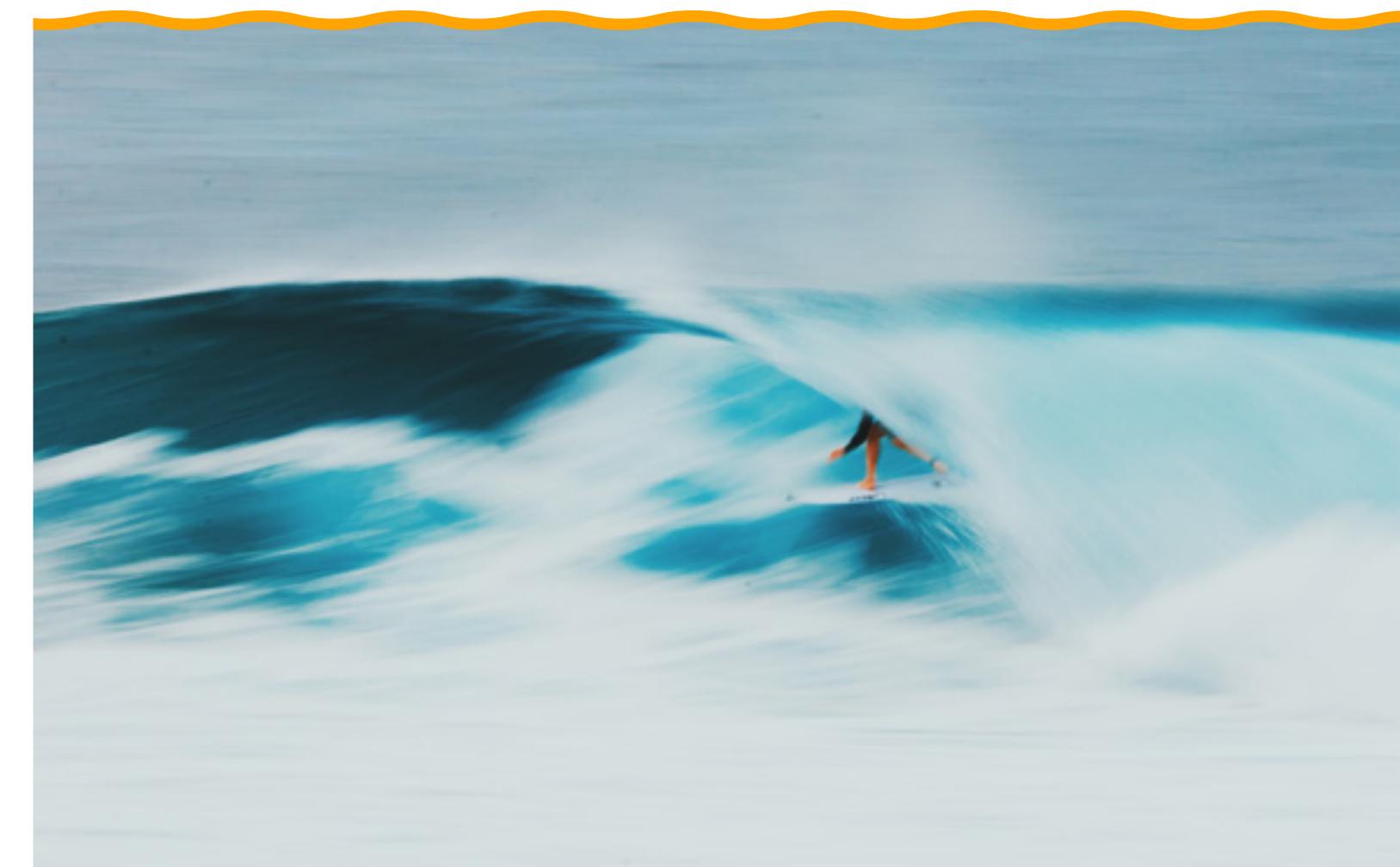
SNOW EVENT



SKATE EVENT

SURF
E X P O

SEPTEMBER 7-9, 2017
DEMO DAY SEPTEMBER 6
ORLANDO, FL



The Global Watersports and Beach Lifestyle Tradeshow



Paddle Life



Board Sports



Coastal Life

Register to attend at surfexpo.com
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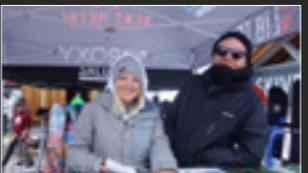
SPRING BREAK, KAUNERTAL, AUSTRIA



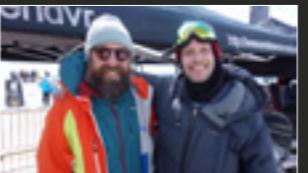
Burton UK's Tom Smith, Lizzie Holloway, Dan Crichton & Chris Also



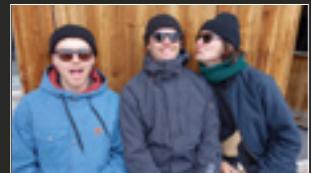
Dragon's Rhythical Radness - The money man (Sam Nelson), Paul Vines, Si Belson & Will Radula-Scott



Holysport (Lib Tech)'s Lauren Lidford & TSA's Chris Orchard



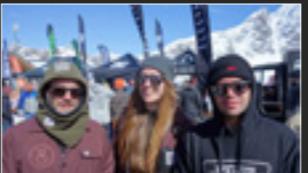
Noble Custom's Sam Noble (Endeavor, West, Airhole, Ortovox) & Duncan Craig



Prime Agency's Ollie Plumley, Dale Taylor & Sam Nelson



Salomon's James Fuller



Spring Break management team - Ian San-som, Harri & James "Northy" North



Ride & atrip's Matt Burt with Steve Terry

VOLCOM BANKED SLALOM KITZSTEINHORN, AUSTRIA



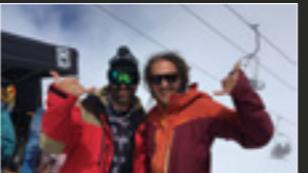
Björn Hartweger and Muck Müller (munchie Konsilium)



Chloé Sillieres and Emilie Desbottes - Volcom European Women Sales and Marketing Manager



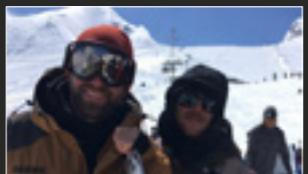
Jan Prokes (Volcom)



Peter Bauer (Amplid) and Harry Putz (Freeride Film Festival)



The ultimate speaker Duo - Ernie and Bert no, Julien Harricot (Bataleon) and Stephane Grenet (686)



Tobi Leyendecker and Pete Rossner (Deeluxe)



Wolle Nyvelt, Beckna and Paul Popp



Manu Groiss and Anna Eschwey (both Nitro)

VANS SHOP RIOT



Belgian Winners - Skateboutique



Dutch Winners - Burnside



Israel Winners - Gili's Skate Shop



Spanish Winners - Welcome Skate Shop



German Winners - Team Titus



Germany



Israel



Spanish Best Trick winner - Cristian Estrada (Ola Skate Shop)

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MIRAGE

THE SURFER'S BIKINI

