

BOARDSPORT

#86 APRIL / MAY 2017 €5

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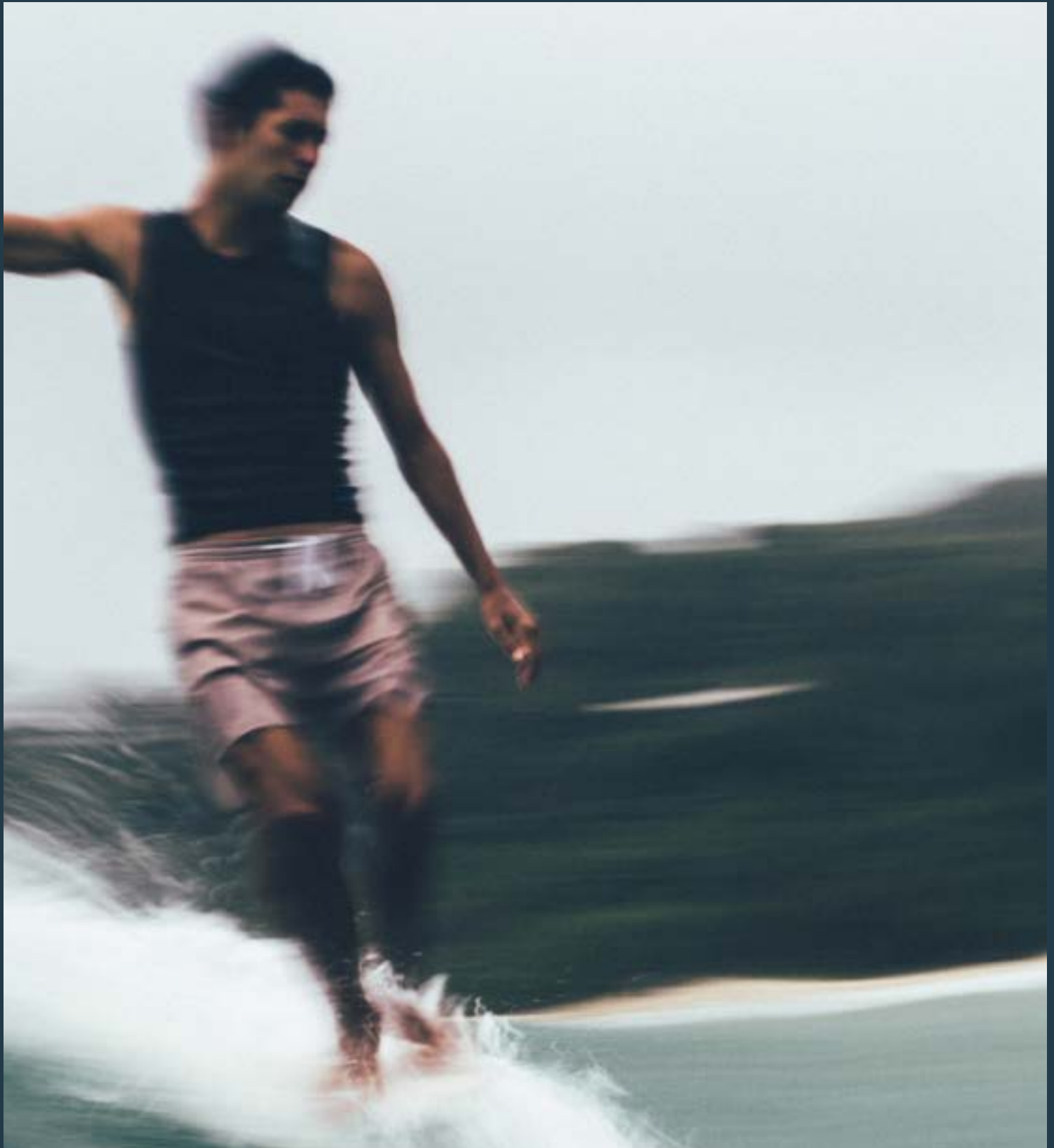
EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

FRANK HEISSAT, DAKINE EMEA G.M

WORLD SURF LEAGUE COMPANY UPDATE

REGIONAL MARKET INTELLIGENCE

BRAND PROFILES, BUYER SCIENCE & MORE



TREND REPORTS: SURFBOARDS, LONGBOARDS, SUNGLASSES, SUP, UNDERWEAR

THE AUTHENTICTM CHINO

DURABILITY MEETS ALL DAY COMFORT.



ELIJAH BERLE
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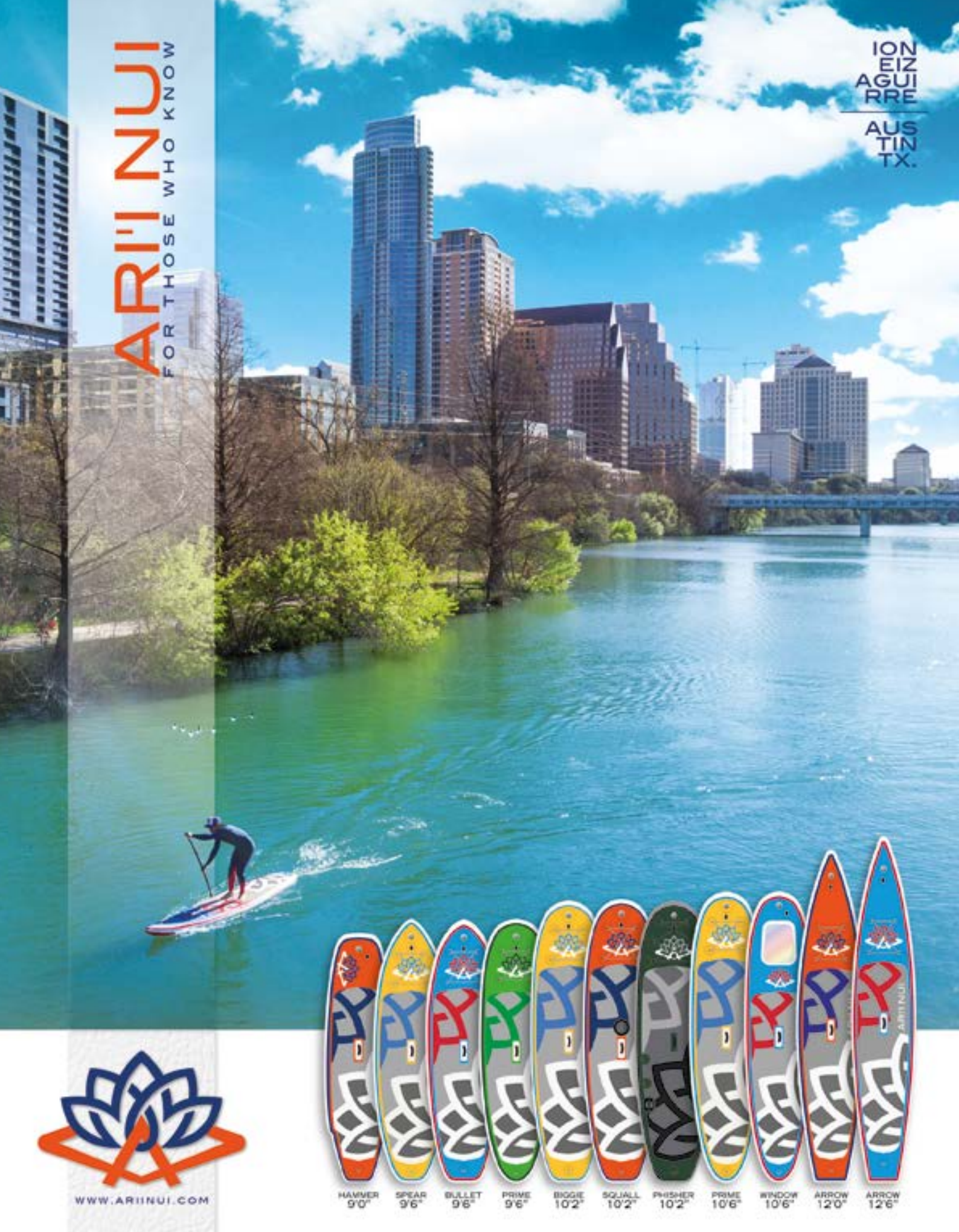
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US

Editor Harry Mitchell Thompson
harry@boardsportsource.com

French Editor Iker Aguirre
iker@boardsportsource.com

Senior Surf Contributor David Bianic
david@boardsportsource.com

Senior Snowboard Contributor
Tom Wilson-North
tom@boardsportsource.com

Skate Editor Dirk Vogel
dirk@boardsportsource.com

German Editor Anna Langer
anna@boardsportsource.com

Graphic Design Séréna Lutton
serena@boardsportsource.com

Web Media Manager Denis Houillé
denis@boardsportsource.com

Proofreaders
Insa Muth, Marie-Laure Ducos, Sam Grant

Contributors
Jokin Arroyo, Benoît Brecq, Gordon Way, Fabien Grisel, Franz Holler, Anna Langer, David Bianic, Joanne Clarke, Megan Dunbar, Ruth Cutts

Advertising & Marketing
clive@boardsportsource.com

Accounts Manager
accounts@boardsportsource.com

To Subscribe
www.boardsportsource.com
subs@boardsportsource.com

Publisher
clive@boardsportsource.com

Published by
ESB
22 Friars Street, Sudbury
Suffolk, CO10 2AA. UK

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HELLO #86

Winter is drawing to a close on what many retailers have called their best in years; it seems shops across Europe have learned their lessons, placed sensible orders, invested in the community and have reaped the rewards. Macro factors such as the weaker pound making UK trading conditions more favourable and the strong dollar meaning increased market share for European surfboard manufacturers and licensees have also shone brightly on the old continent.

Our April/May issue focuses on surf and our annual surfboard trend report by Senior Surf Contributor, David Bianic delves into what's trending and confirms the aforementioned positivity, revealing talk of double-digit increases in surfboard sales. The new surf season spells the end in CEO Paul Speaker's chapter at the World Surf League and we feature our first ever interview with the WSL, as SOURCE talks with the company's VP of Communications, Dave Prodan on the future of competitive surfing.

Skate Editor, Dirk Vogel takes a look at what's going down in the longboard market, with reports of stabilisation filtering through

as most of the bad product finally exits the market, leaving only those serious about the business left to contend, and doing so with decent product.

And it's not just the longboard sector we're seeing lessons learnt; the wider boardsports market is seeing its brands being (more) sensible with sales periods and discounting and shops are becoming more savvy with their buys resulting in better sell-through. Brands have cleaned up their distribution and are realizing they need to protect their cyber distribution just as much as their bricks and mortar channels in order to protect their margins.

With a decent winter of trading under our belts, we now need to come together as an industry and figure out collectively how to strengthen going forward. SOURCE will be assisting the industry with our new snowboard retail survey where we'll collect and present information to help the industry make more informed decisions.

Always Sideways,
Harry Mitchell Thompson
Editor

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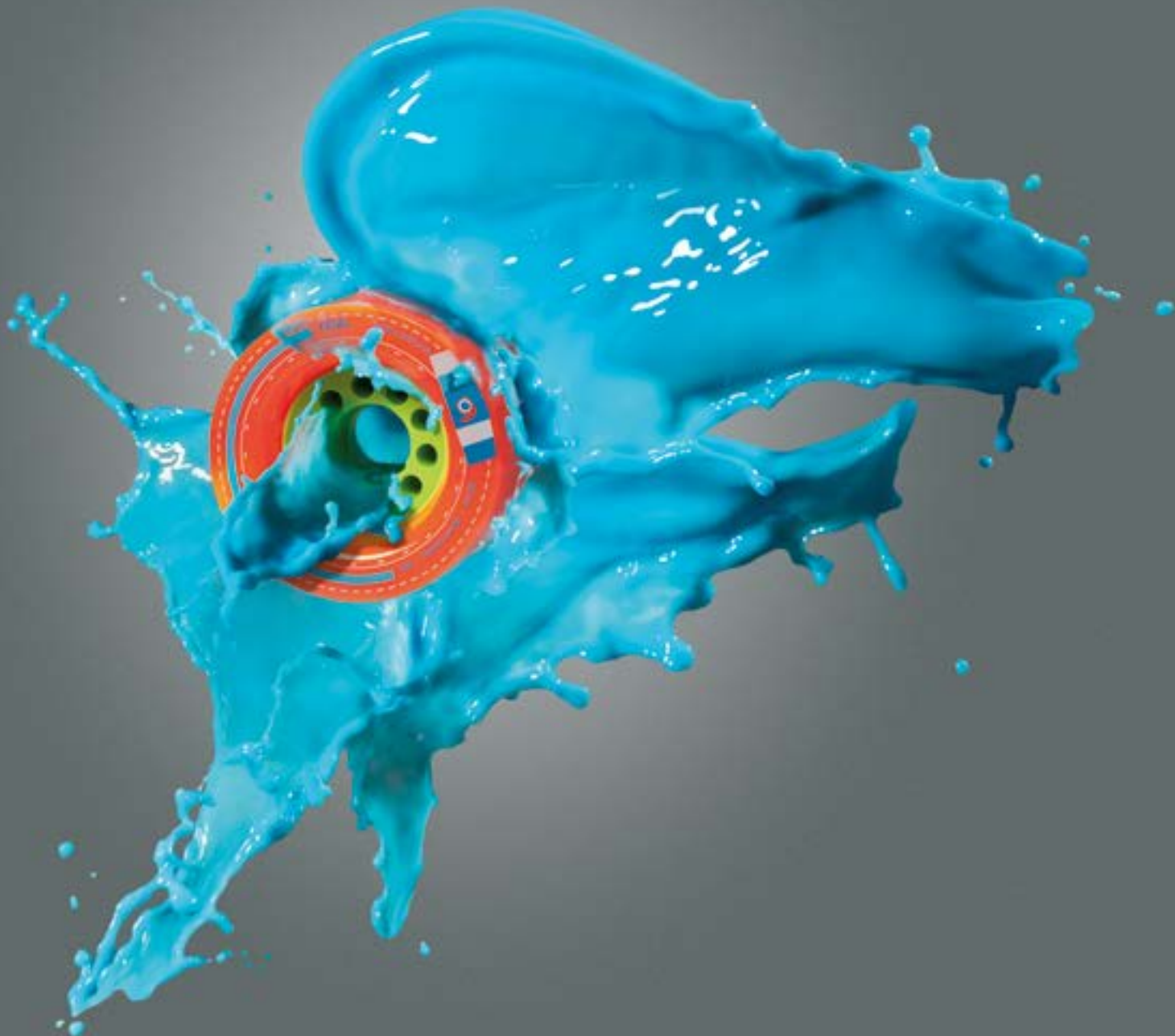
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On the cover: Portuguese shaper Diogo Appleton. Photo by Nick Pumphrey

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VANS FORECASTING 6-8% EUROPEAN GROWTH BY 2021

VF Corp recently announced Vans as the biggest brand under their umbrella and the second \$2 billion dollar entity at VF and now the Greensboro-company have announced ambitious plans for Vans for the coming five years. Vans Global Brand President Doug Palladini presented Vans’ brand vision for the coming five years to a panel of analysts and investors in Boston on March 30, 2017. Palladini stated that their sales would increase (compound annual growth rate (CAGR)) by 8-10% by 2021. Breaking it down by region, Vans are expecting the following CAGR per region: EMEA: 6-8%, US: 5-7%, APAC: 17-19%, Non US Americas: 12-14%. Looking at their expected performance across their different channels, Vans is expecting to grow their wholesale business between 3-5% (CAGR); DTD (stores) by 8-10%(CAGR) and the company is expecting a growth of between 28-30% in their DTC channels. And finally, looking at their different categories, Vans are expecting to see heritage footwear grow by 3-5% (CAGR) by 2021, progression footwear 12-14% and apparel by 13-15%.

ISA WORLD SURFING GAMES BIARRITZ PART OF PARIS 2024 OLYMPIC BID

The French surfing Federation expects 300,000 spectators to descend on Biarritz to see more than 40 nations battle out the ISA World Surfing Games from May 20-28. Titles up for grabs are a men’s champ, women’s champ, team title and a tag team title. The France Televisions group has the exclusive broadcasting rights to the event and will air a daily roundup on its national channel of France O at the end of each day’s competition. France is bidding to host the 2024 Olympic games in Paris and the ISA is the second of five sporting World Championships the nation will host in 2017 as part of that bid. Pro surfers Jeremy Flores & Joan Duru from the men’s tour and Johanne Defay and Pauline Ado have all confirmed their places on the French national team.

GREG DACYSHYN STEPS DOWN FROM BURTON, WILL CONTINUE TO SERVICE BRAND THROUGH NEW CREATIVE AGENCY

Greg Dacyshyn has been with Burton for almost twenty years and has long since been the leading man behind the brand’s creative direction and marketing efforts as the Chief Creative Officer. Burton has now announced that Dacyshyn is leaving Burton but will continue to work with company via his own creative agency called ‘Camp High’.

QUIKSILVER INC CHANGES NAME, EXPANDS IN HOSPITALITY

Quiksilver Inc. has changed its corporate name to Boardriders Inc but the brand name will name remain the same. The change in name signifies the full range of action sports brands that the company represents – Quiksilver, Roxy and DC Shoes. Quiksilver and Roxy have also partnered with Accorhotels for their ‘Jo and Joe’ hotel concept, which looks to target millenials as a more affordable hospitality brand.

SNOW + ROCK PARENT COMPANY APPOINTS CANOE TO HANDLE U.K PR ACTIVITY

Canoe Inc will now oversee all of the UK’s PR activity for Outdoor and Cycle Concepts Ltd (O&CC), parent company of Snow + Rock, Cotswold Outdoor, Cycle Surgery and Runners Need. O&CC is the largest outdoor retailer in the UK, with a combined turnover of £210m

EX-PRO SNOWBOARDER WINS OSCAR FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY

Ex-professional snowboarder, Orlando von Einsiedel of London-based Grain media has just won the Oscar for best short subject documentary at the 89th annual Academy Awards on February 26, 2017. Von Einsiedel has worked on films such as ‘Skateistan: To Live and Skate Kabul’ (2010) and ‘We Ride: The Story of Snowboarding’ (2013), and is now revered as one of the world’s leading documentarians thanks to the tough social issues his films tackle. The Oscar was won for the film White Helmets, a film centred around a group in Syria who have saved more than 82,000 lives by combing the rubble after bombings to rescue survivors.

BILLABONG SELLS TIGERLILY SWIMWEAR BRAND

Billabong has sold its Tigertily swimwear business to Crescent Capital for \$60 million in a bid to streamline its brand portfolio and is part of Billabong’s efforts to pay down debt

CRAIG ANDERSON, DANE REYNOLDS & AUSTYN GILLETTE OFFICIALLY LAUNCH FORMER

After months of speculation and the release of their brand name a couple of months back, pro surfers Craig Anderson & Dane Reynolds have officially launched their new brand, Former. The website, former.xxx is stocked with a selection of tees, jumpers, a shirt, jacket and accessories and also features a new film starring Anderson. Former is a surf-skate brand put together by Reynolds, Anderson (and skater Austyn Gillette) after both surfers parted ways with Quiksilver at the end of 2015.

VANS IS NOW VF CORP’S BIGGEST BRAND

Vans continues to have a strong global footprint as the VF Corp’s second \$2-billion brand, now even bigger than The North Face. Vans brand revenue for Q4 2016 was up 14%, driven by a mid-teen increase in the Americas business.

WASTED TALENT ADDS THE CRITICAL SLIDE SOCIETY TO ROSTER

Hossegor-based Wasted Talent have announced that they will now be representing Australian apparel brand, The Critical Slide Society in Europe. TCSS will be one of the first brands that will benefit from Wasted Talent’s new distribution partnership with Olatu in the Spanish Basque country. Wasted Talent’s portfolio now includes: Afends, Epøkhe, Slowtide, Octopus & TCSS.

ELEMENT APPOINTS ACTION SPORTS MARKETING VET AS NEW GENERAL MANAGER

Element have appointed David Brooks as their new GM. Brooks replaces Franck Voit who stepped down from the position in January, although still holds a position with Element’s parent company, Billabong. Brooks comes from an action sports marketing background having most recently served as Senior VP for Action Sports & Olympic at Wasserman Media Group. In a statement Billabong CEO, Neil Fiske says Brooks has good connections to the skate community, and says it’s his experience in content creation, athlete marketing, and digital activation that will help the brand to “better capitalize on our brand assets and convert followership into sales.”

CONNER COFFIN, BRIAN BIELMANN & CLAY MARZO
FRONT THE LAUNCH OF TOWEL BRAND LEUS

LEUS towels are now available to US customers and are due for release in Europe and Australia later in the year. The brand, run by Scott Huffman, Keith Asher & Dorig Bocquet is being fronted by ambassador surfers Conner Coffin and Clay Marzo as well as photographer Brian Biemann and is focused on creating a top-quality towel collection with individual and fun designs.

ALL CONDITIONS MEDIA WINS PACSAFE,
BERN & MONS ROYALE ACCOUNTS

UK action sports PR company, All Conditions Media have started 2017 in fine fettle with the addition of three new clients to their books. Bern Unlited, Mons Royale and Pacsafe join a strong list of clients including Arc'teryx, Glidesoul, Finisterre, France Montagnes, Surfdome, Dragon, GB Park & Pipe, Heimplanet, Picture, TSA and Jones.

VF CORPORATION ANNOUNCE ROGER SPATZ
AS REEF BRAND PRESIDENT

Roger Spatz has worked at VF Corporation for 12 years in a range of senior leadership roles and he has now been announced as Brand President for Reef.

MAKIA HAS RECORD YEAR 2016, TURNOVER
GROWS OVER 40% & WILL STOP DISCOUNTED
SALES

Makia have just posted their 2016 results and their turnover was up over 40% and sales were up over 60%. The company has also announced it will stop discounting sales. The company has grown to a level in it's business, where it says it doesn't need to produce more than there is demand for - the pre-orders will cover production minimums. Makia say this will mean more ethical, ecological and economic production processes.

CHANGES AT THE TOP FOR BLUE TOMATO AS
FOUNDER SCHULLER STANDS DOWN

Adam Ellis is set to be the new CEO of Blue Tomato following founder Gerfried Schuller's decision to resign from his position - Schuller will stay at the company as a Strategic Adviser. Working alongside Blue Tomato's new CEO will be Heinz Tritscher - current director of operations, as company secretary.

NEFF MAKES STRATEGIC CHANGES TO ITS
SALES TEAM

Neff has made the decision to handle its own distribution in Germany and France. Starting Fall17, the brand will be direct in its four biggest markets with Fresco Agency, Italy, Indusnow, Spain and What's up agency, Belgium & Netherlands .In Germany, FourSeasonsAgency will cover brand representation in Köln, Berlin, Munich and Stuttgart. In France, independent agents have been appointed including Agence

Meylaco (Fabrice Chardon) for the Alps, Untitled company (Flo Poirier) for the south east, Stephane Iraola in the south west, VL lowrider (JP Redon) in the west and What's up agency for the north, east of France.

LUXOTTICA TO MERGE WITH ESSILOR:
ESSILORLUXOTTICA

Luxottica, the owner of Oakley, Ray-Ban, and Sunglass Hut, will be merging with optical lens giants Essilor making a combined company that is predicted to generate an annual revenue of €15 billion.

LOW PRESSURE STUDIO TO HANDLE
THEIR OWN DISTRIBUTION IN GERMANY &
AUSTRIA

Low Pressure Studio (Bataleon, Lobster & Switchback) has recently reached an agreement with Beatnuts GMBH, whereby they will take back the distribution of their brands for Germany and Austria starting from the 17/18 pre-order season.

WORLD SURF LEAGUE CEO PAUL SPEAKER
TO STAND DOWN FROM POSITION

Paul Speaker, CEO of the World Surf League is to stand down from his position. Speaker joined what was then known as the ASP back in 2012 and has helped transition the sport's internet broadcast to a single platform. Speaker will remain an advisor to the company and WSL parent company, Zosea's owner, Dirk Ziff will serve as interim CEO until a permanent hire is found.

SURFILMFESTIBAL TO TAKE A BREAK IN 2017
AFTER A RUN OF 14 CONSECUTIVE YEARS

Surfilmfestival is taking a break in 2017 for the first time in 14 years but the spirit of the festival will continue this year with their Savage Cinema programme and exciting collab with Wheels and Waves for the ArtRide exhibition.

COFFIN ON CAKE'S NEW PARENT COMPANY
APPOINTS NEW MANAGING DIRECTOR

GUNG HO, the new owners of London-based action sports PR agency, Coffin On Cake have appointed Sophie Hadded as their new Managing Director in a move that signifies the company's expansion in the new year. Established over 15 years, GUNG HO is a full-service communications agency specialising in PR, social and experiential services, across lifestyle, sport, fashion and retail sectors. They acquired Coffin on Cake in April 2016.

NIKWAX CELEBRATES 40 YEARS
OF OUTDOOR INNOVATION

Nikwax is committed to creating waterproofing products for outdoor gear that adhere to a strict set of environmental guidelines to reduce adverse environmental impact whilst still performing to a high standard. 2017 marks the 40 year anniversary of the company's inception by Nick Brown in 1977. 🍷

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RIDER **AIRTON COZZOLINO**

PHOTO **JOHN CARTER**




WWW.FANATIC.COM/SUP



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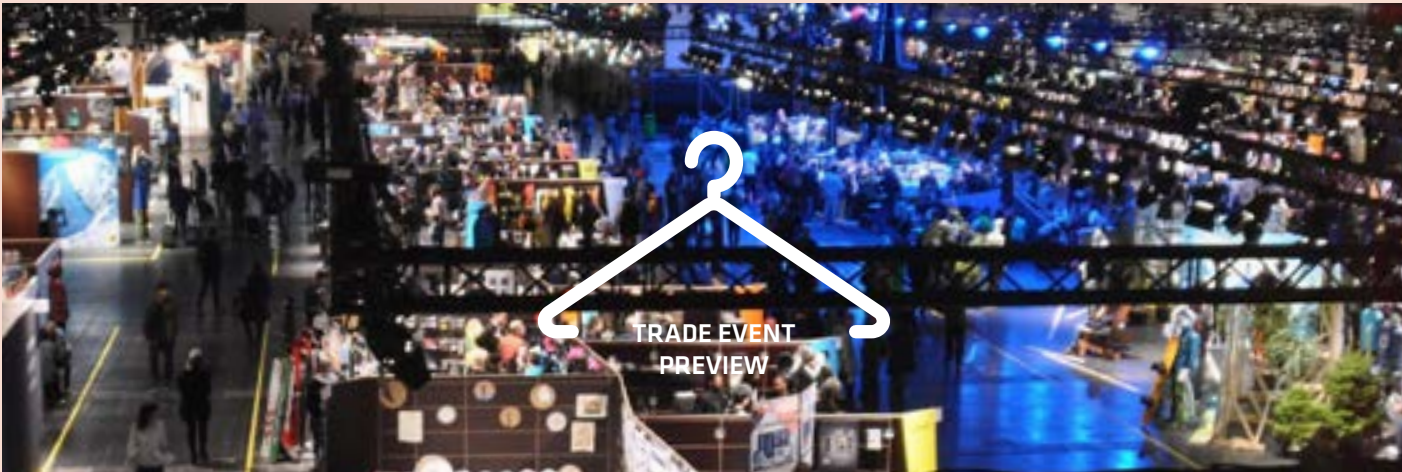
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Rider: Marine Lucas | Photo: Johanna Rolland



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TRADE EVENT
PREVIEW

ISPO, MUNICH, GERMANY, FEBRUARY 5-8 2017

ISPO returned to its early February slot for 2017 with its traditional Sunday to Wednesday schedule. The action sports halls remained in their new home at the east side of the complex in halls B5, B6 and A6 where they moved to last year. Overall the show continues to be the giant go-to show for global winter sports with a further two exhibition halls to be added in 2018. This year more than 85,000 visitors from 120 countries attended, an increase of approximately six per cent over last year. The attendance was also more international with the largest increases from Italy, Russia, Great Britain, China and the United States. A total of 2,732 exhibitors, also a record, presented their products and innovations at the fair, an increase of three per cent compared to 2016. Of these, 89% of exhibitors were from abroad and new brands were to be found in all exhibition sectors, with the outdoor sector seeing exceptional growth with 40 new exhibitors.

In line with the motto “back to the roots”, the new Polygon booth structure made its debut in the boardsports hall. When entering the hall, the most noticeable change was the ability to see from one side of the hall to the next, with no large booths obstructing the view. As with all new concepts there are some teething problems with the low spotlights making it difficult for products to stand out. Brands had mixed feelings with the smaller brands saying the concept was more expensive for them than the more traditional booth offering, whilst the bigger brands in the hall still felt that ISPO offered them opportunities they still did not get elsewhere. Unfortunately, the new concept did not as planned, bring back the snowboard brands, who had not been at the show for a number of years and so some of the booth spaces were empty and a basketball pitch and influencers/bloggers lounge were introduced into the hall. Also in the hall were the community platforms the Longboard Embassy, ISPO Inspire and Tailgate Munich. The Longboard Embassy, which was downsized this year, reflecting the tough state of the market, had its own small skateable track. Meanwhile Tailgate Munich grew in size to meet demand for its core offering and with more than 50 partners ISPO Inspire run by Brands for Good and Greenroom Voice was bigger than ever. With no beer at the booth parties in the hall, the atmosphere was much more subdued compared to prior years even though overall visitor traffic was pretty good, though not as good as the other halls in the show

In hall B5 the focus was on apparel, accessories, scooters, helmets and the ISPO Brandnew Awards. The apparel brands were concentrated around the front of the hall with accessories, scooters, helmets in the centre and ISPO Brandnew, the biggest platform for sport startups worldwide, at the far end. Many of today’s successful sports brands started here and this was again a busy destination. Hall A6 focused on optics, water sports, freeski and apparel. The ISPO Water Sports Village, the platform for all water sports at the show had changed locations within the hall and Kayaking, stand up paddling, wakeboarding, swimming, diving and surfing exhibitors were all grouped around a busy 200 sq metre heated pool. The Cold Water Surfing platform was also relocated closer to the Watersports Village and on top of its brand presentations offered a busy daily surf-specific program with expert talks, presentations and discussions followed by beer and movie sessions. The Camp de Base presented by Outdoor Sports Valley, in partnership with Sporaltec, the Auvergne Rhône-Alpes Region, and Union Sport & Cycle, saw 21 French brands clustered together in a hive of activity with its popular food and bar area. The Snow Summit continued to be the focus for industry, bloggers, designers, artists, athletes and journalists and new brands from this community.

A number of the snowboard brands belonging to larger winter sports groups exhibited in others halls with K2, Head and Salomon integrating their snowboard offering into their winter sports stands, whilst Ride was positioned adjacent to their owners. All these brands were happy with their locations saying they were picking up new cross over retailers as well as their existing stockists. Overall the show continues to deliver for the vast majority of winter sports and their communities. With all these different sport communities and nationalities congregated in one place ISPO uniquely offers opportunities and connections to develop business face to face. The snowboard industry needs to work out how it too can benefit from the synergies of being at the big daddy of the winters sports shows, meanwhile ISPO have already started reviewing their action sports offering for the next show. Next year’s show dates: January 28-31 www.ispo.com

SLIDE TRADESHOW, TELFORD UK, JANUARY 24-26 2017

The UK snowsports industry were welcomed to Telford in the English Midlands from January 24 - 26 and were once again treated to previews of next season’s line before anyone else in Europe. With the event being sandwiched between on-snow demos and ISPO, it makes it a crucial show for UK retailers. Slide is a little different from the other shows in the diary, with the vast majority of visitors being retail buyers and not the swathes of bloggers, consumers and industry personnel at other shows. It’s this that makes Slide an extremely productive show, with all brands spoken to being fully booked all three days.

It’s been a particularly good year for UK retail, with the weakness of the pound making purchasing in the UK attractive to both domestic and international shoppers. This compounded by the extra cold weather and the success of GB Park & Pipe riders on the international scene makes for positive vibrations in the UK snowsports world. At the end of 2016 many brands were unsure of where to price things for FW17/18 product due to uncertainty caused by Brexit, however after speaking with a number of brands at Slide it seems things aren’t as bad as were first feared. Initial projections of 15-20% hikes across the board have been scaled back to more modest rises somewhere in the 5-10% range. www.slideuk.co.uk



SPORT-ACHAT WINTER, LYON, FRANCE, MARCH 6-8 2017

Now in its sixth year, Sport-Achat was held in Lyon at Hall 2 of Euroexpo and was perfectly located to allow retailers from the Alps and Pyrennes to attend. The show is designed to work alongside Sport Air’s other earlier business-to-business events ASAP (a clothing specific event held in Annecy) and Snow Avant Premiere (the on snow demo test). After attending these earlier events retailers went to Sport-Achat, the linchpin of the French winter sport trade calendar, to finalize their orders. This year 620 brands, including 61 first timers, covered 20,000 square meters of exhibition space and 3600 visitors took part in the show. Even though visitor number were slightly down on the year before as the late winter has again impacted on sales, all the key retailers attended. The show is divided into four category areas: Ski, Snow, Outdoor and Sportswear with the ‘Crème Fraiche’, the space for new brands supported by FIFAS, OSV and EuroSIMA. The Twelve companies exhibiting at Crème Fraiche this year were

Duoo, Endur’Activ, Kle Cosmetique, The Adapted Sole, Snooc, Natural Peak, Raccoon, Soft’in, Ylle, The True Koudou Zelup. During the show 37 products received prestigious winter awards and conference topics included Performance in innovation: the start-up mode in sport by Sébastien Deschaux of Dynergie, Flash Innovation in 30 minutes by Frédéric Tain editor of Sport Guide and Creating the Job of Your Dreams by Aleksandra Liberatore, Head of Training Sports Design & Communications and Guillaume Bouvaist, Head of Incubator Annecy Base Camp, OSV. For the summer there are two Sport Achat shows, 11-12 September for Lyon and 18-19 for Nantes. Last year was the first Nantes show and this second edition will continue to revolve around the water sports whilst the Lyon show will concentrate more on mountain sports.

www.sport-achat.com

BRIGHT/SEEK, BERLIN, GERMANY, JANUARY 17-19 2017

The Bright/Seek combination during Berlin Fashion Week has become Europe’s key destination for streetwear and contemporary men’s fashion. The two shows are now almost seamlessly joined together into one experience with the introduction of two internal walkways connecting the shows to each other and via better show signage. The result was much more traffic flowing between the shows. The floor layout at Bright has also been altered to help with the visitor flow with a definite path to walk around the show and with all the food stalls moved to near the Bright entrance. The stands closest to this path were definitely busier than those in the rest of the hall. Much of the stand build is now standardized 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 exhibitors are now placed in key segments areas according to product category, with each easily distinguishable from the other. The existing Urban Wear & Street Fashion, Streetwear and Skateboarding and Sneaker sections

are now joined by Accessories and Outdoor Aesthetics and a revamped version of the Sneaker market. The new section called Outdoor Aesthetics brought brands from this marketplace together for the first time in Europe pointing the way ahead with its focus on sustainability, techwear and a successful link between design and function and was well received. The winners at this year’s European Skateboard Awards held in co-operation with Vans and Free mag during Bright included, Daan Van Der Linden for European skater of the year, Josie Millard for European female skater of the year, Sour Skateboards for brand of the year, FTC Barcelona for shop of the year, Ben Chadourne for videographer of the year and Polar’s: “I like it here inside my mind. Don’t wake me up this time” won video of the year.

All in all, visitor numbers to the show seem to have increased compared to the last two shows, so a good job done by Bright’s Marco and Thomas. BRIGHT and SEEK will return to Berlin’s Arena for the forthcoming Summer 2017 edition from July 4-6, 2017

www.brighttradeshows.com

JACKET REQUIRED, LONDON UK, JANUARY 26-27 2017

January 2017’s edition of Jacket Required went down in London’s fashion district of Shoreditch with a number of action sports brands finding relevance in the show for their FW17/18 collections. It’s always interesting to see the juxtaposition of London gentlemen with tweaked moustaches and waistcoats next to the more relaxed vibe of our endemic action sports brands. Notable additions to this January’s show were Quiksilver and DC, who with their street-inspired aesthetics sat comfortably at the back of the regular action sports hall opposite Dickies and WeSC. Nixon took up the same spot again and showed typically classic styling next to their innovative Mission smartwatch. Hectic’s brands – Stance, Poler Stuff and Deus – upped sticks and moved round the corner and into the main hall, changing from their usual position in the action sports hall and opening them up to more of a diverse crowd. Poler Stuff’s collection of luggage in interesting

collabs/finishings will without doubt do well next autumn, while Stance leave no stone unturned with a plethora of functionality features in their socks and underwear. Globe and Element set up shop directly in front of the entrance to the action sports segment and both showed interesting collections with Globe making a big push on pro surfer, Dion Agius’ +/- collection. Element have an interesting collab with their Griffin collection – a Devon- (SW England) based high end military style designer who has lent his name for this collection. Finally, it was refreshing to see small start-up Surf Perimeters, the brainchild of Jim Storey taking up situ at the back of the action sports hall. Jim, a surfer who now does the London city thing, has started the brand to cater for more like-minded men who are landlocked surfers that require a more mature aesthetic for their apparel.

www.jacket-required.com



SNOW SHOP TEST, ANDALO, ITALY, JANUARY 29-31

The Snow Shop Test, the number one B2B test event in Italy for the ski and snowboard market moved back to Andalo between Trento and Bolzano, for this January’s event for two and a half-days of networking and testing. This year the event moved back to its traditional date in the calendar before ISPO, so retailers tested on snow and then finalized their orders a week later at ISPO. 90 plus retailers participated in the seventh edition of the Snow Shop Test, divided equally between shops specializing in ski and snowboarding equipment, with Monday being the busier of the two days. Sunday saw a meeting to discuss a new format for next year with the idea to hold two on-snow tests on two consecutive Mondays, one in the North West and one in the North East.

The Monday evening started with a welcome drink from ISPO and was followed by the annual Snow Shop awards ceremony, the traditional Grappa tasting and then the party. This year’s award winners were: Best Shop Promotion award presented by BoardSport Source went to 100-one for its family and furious promotion, the Best Snowboard Shop 2016 presented by Pointbreak went to Maxi Sport, the Best Freeski/ Freeride Shop 2016 presented by Prowinter went to Sportmarket and the Lifetime Achievement award presented by ISPO went to Minoia as the outstanding shop owner over the last decade. The date and format of next year’s event is be confirmed

www.snowshoptest.com

SNOW AVANT-PREMIÈRE, LA CLUSAZ, FRANCE, JANUARY 15-17

Sportair invited retailers from across Europe to la Clusaz to meet more than 50 brands. This was the first on-snow test of 17/18 winter products, where retailers, media and brands descended upon an icy cold La Clusaz in France for the 16th edition of SAP. Despite a slow start to the winter season, testers were greeted on the first morning of testing with up to a metre (in places) of the white stuff and blue skies, putting a smile on everyone’s face. The good snow made for great testing conditions and despite the cold, retailers were able to squeeze in three solid days of bluebird snowboard testing before getting back to their stores. The demo is divided into two parts, the outdoor Popup village where the exhibiting brands have everything you want to test on snow, and the 450m² showroom tent in which visitors found not only soft goods, boots and accessories brands but also an exhibition wall with the highlights from all the snowboard brands as well. The brand count was clearly up on previous years, with the centre of the test village now containing a third row of popup tents instead of the previous two rows. Nine brands joined the SAP snowboarding community for the first time. A total of 298 stores attended over these 3 days, with a flow of 760 visitors, Tuesday being the busiest day. Though

French retailers make up the majority of visitors, key retailers from the UK, Switzerland, Benelux, Spain and Scandinavia also attended. 3,300 tests were recorded in real time thanks to the new application launched by the organiser Sportair. This Android and IOS app allows retailers to note all the products they test in real time and exchange pdf files with exhibitors. This is all saved on a personal account for every visitor, meaning they’ll have a personal record of what they tested at the trade show. This works in conjunction with the simple data recording system based at the entrance to the outdoor tent park. In the tent a bar was open all day and a hot lunch was available in the main tent for all the ravenous attendees, and from 5pm each evening there was a ‘happy hour’. On the first evening the Snow Avant Première party was held downtown in La Clusaz. Retailers also took the opportunity to visit ASAP, Sportair’s soft goods show which was held in Annecy over the same time in brand stores and an ASAP specific showroom and was rounded off with an early evening fashion show at the Imperial Palace. Next year’s dates are to be confirmed at time of going to press

www.sportair.fr

SHOPS 1ST TRY- SKI JUWEL ALPBACHTAL-WILDSCHÖNAU AUSTRIA, 22-24 JANUARY 2017

Blessed with three days of blue skies and good riding, Shops 1st Try cemented its position in Europe’s January test calendar. Industry and retailers turned up in force to create a great positive vibe with a test village significantly larger than last year. The doubling up of the exhibition dinner in the evening, now held in a much bigger hall in the expanded Congress Centre in Alpbach, were a great success with all brands taking time to make their booths as attractive as possible. ‘ONE FOR ALL’ was the motto of this year’s event as in previous years Shops 1ST Try was only open to Germanic retailers, but for this, its 8th edition, the event opened its doors to retailers from all over Europe. On Saturday the traditional industry dinner for exhibitors setting up their booths was held, where Muck for the first time presented both in German and faultless English to introduce the new international flavour of the show. The following morning the spacious test compound opened with 60 plus brands offering products to test across Alpbachtal’s wide and varied terrain. A record-breaking 185 Shops and 849 visitors from 13 countries attended the event to meet a total of 72 brands. In The Microbrand tent launched this year, a number of the newest brands in snowboarding each had a table providing a cost effective way of

introducing them to the event. Brands in the tent included Yunika, Melon, Vimana and Plum. After the successful launch of the Highlight Exhibition Dinner at last year’s show, the organisers decided to add a second evening to the schedule. The dinners are a combination of eating, drinking and chatting against a backdrop of wall stands from every single brand at the event. In particular, this year the outerwear brands were there in force, as this was the time of day when retailers had the time to talk about this product category after a full day of testing hardgoods. Winner of this year’s Source design award was Ride followed by Goodboards and DC. New this year was an early evening program of three free training sessions held in the Exhibition Dinners area with presentations on Boa Repair Training, a Board Shapes & Technology Workshop by Andi Abel, TRIAAA Custom Snow Shapes head shaper, and a presentation on effective customer loyalty tools for brick-and-mortar dealers by Tassilo Hager, editor in chief of the Pleasure Product Special. The evenings were rounded off with DJ sessions at the Jakober Pub. Next year’s dates are January 21-23, 2018

www.shops-1st-try.com



HAWAII SURF, PARIS

Hawaii Surf has been selling action sports goods since 1976 from their location in Ivry-sur-Seine near Paris. Initially focusing on skateboards, it has since evolved into a multifaceted destination store selling products across a range of disciplines. For the team at Hawaii Surf the focus has always been about providing a passionate and informative service to all customers through their team of knowledgeable consultants. SOURCE has profiled the store with Founder, Eric Gros.

Please give a brief history of your store.
I had just failed my Baccalaureat, I was skateboarding and didn't want to work in an office calculating water flow or dilation coefficients so I set up a little skate shop called Skateboarder's House where I started off selling French Rollet and Banzai skateboards. Then I went to the USA and started importing brands like Ampul, G&S, Kryptonics and Alva. We quickly opened up to rollerskating and three or four years later we were selling speed sails, skateboard sails and brought in windsurfing equipment too. We then changed the name of the shop to Hawaii Surf to create more of an action sports image and bit by bit the shop grew.

I was snowboarding and brought my board to the shop and customers wanted to know what it was, so we naturally expanded our range of sports gear while maintaining this common action sports thread that I myself was following and that I was passionate about. In 1983 we imported the first Burtons and quickly moved onto manufacturing Hawaii Surf snowboards. 1997 marked the creation of our very first Internet site and still today we have the same passion and I am still snowboarding, rolling and surfing at almost 60 years old.

What percentage of your sales are from online business compared to your brick-and-mortar sales?
It's almost equal between the shop's turnover and the website's turnover (50:50).

What are five products couldn't you live without right now?
The quad roller, snowboards (small brands), freestyle skis, carving skateboards, Picture.

Did your store's sales increase or decrease over last year?
Our turnover is pretty stable thanks to a huge amount of effort on the internet side (6th website version) and on retail prices (internet and shop).

What makes your store different and in what ways does your store excel beyond your competition?
We are all passionate riders and we know what we are talking about. We have real credibility. Hawaii Surf is like a toy shop for adults.

Please could you explain how different categories are performing for you.
We are recognised as hardgoods specialists, unlike many of our competitors. The rest are accessories for us. We will forever be a boardshop!

Which brands do you expect to perform best this summer?
Catch Surf, DC, Jart, Skate Yow.

What kind of advice can you give other independent retailers who are trying to compete against the big box megastores?
Small is beautiful, be passionate, and get involved in the local scene.

Does your store sponsor athletes and competitions?
We sponsor quite a few riders, which has knock-on benefits for the shop because they get loads of people to come down. Alongside this, they advise us on purchasing which helps us to target the good stuff to stock.

If you could go back five years what would you do differently?
I would have gone to Japan to snowboard in Hokkaido. I'd have gone surfing in Raglan, New Zealand and I would have gone to Woodward in Tahoe to skate - I've spent too much time working instead of riding! My motto is, "If you slow down you are a coward."

Which trade shows do you attend, and why do you find these shows important?
In my opinion, trade shows don't bring anything other than wasted time and money for shops and distributors! Having meetings with brands is much more interesting and it means they get to spend decent time and efforts on their customers to really build relationships.

If you could ask brands for more support - what would it be for?
We can no longer sell at the recommended retail price, we have to establish a new pricing policy with our suppliers. Customers aren't buying products - they are buying discounts and we have to assimilate the discount into the recommended retail price. E.g. a product at €199 retail, put it at €239-20% = €199. We are all being strangled by discounts and we have no margin left, which means no more cash flow. This is the demise of the small retailer and importers in the medium term.🙄

THE SYMP-TO





www.glassingmonkey.com
nuno@glassingmonkey.com
0034 - 955 986 692



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photo: Euroglass

SURFBOARD 2017 TREND REPORT

The Euro has never smiled so fondly upon the surfboard manufacturers of the Old Continent. Both brands that were born in Europe as well as American/Australian licenses are enjoying unprecedented momentum, driven by the success of top-of-the-range boards. Manufacturers now have the confidence to innovate in terms of construction. And customers are following! **By David Bianic.**

If you ask any surf shop manager or brand rep if business is good at the moment and the reply is "not too bad", it should be understood as "sales are good". So when we interviewed our panel of European surf industry players, their enthusiasm was a way of saying that "business is going better than we want to admit. Surfboard sales are continuing to grow in double figures," reveals Nuno Viegas, Brand Manager for Aloha Europe from Glassing Monkey workshop in Portugal. Others prefer a more nuanced answer: "We operate on various board categories, different technologies, different disciplines..." declares Jaime Azpiroz at Olatu (Pukas, Channel Islands, ...Lost, McTavish), before quickly confessing that "sales are up overall and especially on traditional high-performance PU boards."

Euroglass have made a decision to stop putting their range of softboards for surf schools on the market. "This was a logical decision since we were losing money due to the US Dollar/Euro exchange rate," says Darren Broadbridge, Logistics & Operations Manager at Euroglass (Quiksilver Surfboards, C. Bradley, M. Phipps, S. Anderson, P. Grace)

*"Business is going better than we want to admit. Surfboard sales are continuing to grow in double figures." **Nuno Viegas**, Brand Manager for Aloha Europe (Glassing Monkey)*

in Hossegor. On the other hand, Euroglass have confirmed a 15% rise in sales of boards manufactured in Europe." Other examples are in line with this and have a similar sound: surfboard sales in Europe are continually on the rise. The margins? We'll get to that...

THE SHAPES OF THE MOMENT

After at least two years summarised by the emergence of the 'hybrid-performance' shortboard embodied by the best-seller at Haydenshapes, the Hypto Krypto model, a new design will probably claim the throne in 2017. Or maybe not. "No, this type of board is here to stay", asserts Darren from Euroglass, although "we look for any kind of board that can take waves easily and prove to be of the highest performance." The perfect equation? Without doubt for Rémi Chaussemiche, Commercial and Marketing Director of Superbrand Europe: "People want to get up easily so there needs to be volume, but they also want to make tight turns and surf radically so they need shorter boards." The variations of this hybrid-perf concept are so subtle they serve as proof that this kind of board will take a permanent place in surfshop racks, as Jaime from Olatu explains: "The trend these days is to go for a bit longer hybrid shortboard, by two or three inches. The 5'6" of yesterday is now a 5'8" and the 5'8" is now a 5'10" generally speaking."

Some shapers have made a speciality out of it like the South African Kevin Olsen, established in Capbreton in Landes and whose 2007 Plonka foreshadowed the success of the hybrid-perf model: "All my boards are hybrid shortboards." For him, it's just as much a board for the ex-

“The old funboard is no longer the only weapon for a beginner. They can surf on a longboard, a hybrid, a big fish made of resin or foam...” **Benoît Brecq** from Hoff/Torq.

beginner in full progression as for the accomplished surfer. “You just have to put the adage foam is your friend into the equation and everyone surfs better.”

Better still, the magic recipe is spreading into other surfboard categories, as Nuno at Aloha Europe points out: “We are witnessing a return of shorter versions of high-performance boards. They have the same volume as performance boards but with just a bit more float surface and a reduced amount of drag with shorter rails.”

Nevertheless, the omnipresence of shortboard hybrids could become a concern at a commercial level as “everyone is launching models called ‘hybrids’, so much so that customers are bombarded and have difficulty finding the right board for them,” reckons Richard Preistley from Surftech.



photo: Torq

QUIVER

The paradox of such a popular shape as the hybrid shortboard resides in its versatility, capable of dampening a customer’s desire to expand their quiver. On one side, as Rémi (Superbrand) believes, the general trend is “to reduce the number of boards in the quiver as much as possible. Our Pig Dog and Pig Dog S models subscribe to this model perfectly. With these two boards, you can surf 1 to 10 feet.” Of course, this is assuming surfers are rational creatures... “One board is never enough”, notices Andreas Mencke, Commercial Director and marketing expert at NSP. Even beginner boards are subject to this phenomenon as “beginners of today are not the beginners of yesterday”, affirms Benoît Brecq from Hoff/Torq. “The old funboard is no longer the only

weapon for a beginner. They can surf on a longboard, a hybrid, a big fish made of resin or foam...”

For Mikel Agote and Johnny Cabianca from the Basque Country Surf workshop in Zarautz in Spain, “the sport and its marketing have advanced so much that surfers think they need 3-4 boards according to the conditions. And every year people think they need a new board because new models and constructions have appeared.” Let’s leave the last word on quivers to Darren (Euroglass): “Quivers will never die.” Amen.

The dominance of the hybrid-perf concept hasn’t managed to hide the emergence in recent years of a disruptive design incarnated by the shapes of Daniel “Tomo” Thomson, popularised through Firewire and now Kelly Slater Designs. The strangely square outlines, “no noses” and parallel rails: OVNI boards that are highly emulated and copied. Such a simple design that you have to wonder whether the stranger the board is, the more appealing it is. The Portuguese shaper Nuno Matta of Mattashapes wonders “if this type of board is so good why don’t we see more surfers on the CT using them?”

These unusual boards do posses one significant virtue as real “shop window” products that spark curiosity and generate traffic in the shop as Rémi from Superbrand explains: “From a commercial viewpoint, I think the customer wants to see these strange boards in the shop but is not prepared to wax his budget on this kind of model. They inspect them, think about buying before turning back towards more traditional shapes.”

“Clinical standards” are Euroglass’ MO, who want to become the cleanest factory in the world: “Honestly, we are almost sure that this is the case already but we want to do even better.” **Darren Broadridge**, Logistics & Operations Manager at Euroglass.

CONSTRUCTIONS

While the PU board is not quite ready to step down from its pedestal (“95% of our sales are PU/Polyester”, confirms Basque Country Surf), clients are opening up in big numbers to new foams and other sophisticated stratifications. “In 2017 we are heading towards more developed torsional flex on performance boards, combined with new and improved epoxy and new proportions of fibre and carbon,” explains John Isaac from Seabase in Cornwall.

Also, at Olatu, the European manufacturer of ...Lost and Channel Islands, we find Carbon Wrap technologies (Lost) and Flex Bar (CI). At Superbrand they aren’t changing a winning formula and Superflex will again be order of the day in 2017, assures Rémi Chaussemiche: “We are using a foam without an EPS stringer, layered with 4 types of material orientated in 6 directions to spread the flex and solidity over the surface of the board.” While cautious last year, Euroglass have incorporated the new tech with their LC6 epoxy range, “ultra-light boards with layers of carbon to manage the flex,” explains Darren, “able to generate projection by pumping and in the turn,” while admitting the limitations of epoxy in the wind and on bigger waves. Amongst the biggest innovations yet, we can count PC8 technology from the Germans at Pump Surfboards, “the first handmade board stratified with polycarbonate,” affirms Brand Manager Toby Atkins, “a material used to make bulletproof glass for its strength.” So this added ‘tech’ value is also spreading to the mid-range bracket like at Torq who are introducing Torq XLite technology into models and cobranding with Channel Islands: “A mix between our TET and TEC technology combining carbon/epoxy/ biaxial fibreglass and Impact Mesh”, explains Benoît Brecq.

An advertisement for NSP surfboards. The top half features a large image of a surfer in red shorts riding a wave on a blue and white surfboard. The NSP logo is in the top right corner. Below the main image, there are four groups of surfboards standing upright, labeled 'Longboard', 'Funboard', 'Fish', and 'Hybrid'. Each group shows different board shapes and colors. At the bottom, there are logos for 'Elements' and 'HDT HI-DEF'. The website 'www.nspsurfboards.com' is at the very bottom.

“We are studying a mix between direct online sales and placement in core shops.” **Jaime Azpiroz, Olatu**

Innovation often goes hand in hand with eco-construction. The use of bio-resins is spreading in the same form as SMARTech technology at Mattashapes who use “EPS foams recycled from their own manufacturing as well as cellulose fibre,” in their Eco range. In 2017, Mattashapes will even introduce a waterproof solution, hermetic foam, which means: “you don’t need to repair dings on your surf trip.”

Beyond the board itself, environmental and sanitary efforts are now a high priority for all brands we talked to. Sanding workshops are now so clean at Glassing Monkey (Aloha) that “we can hold business meetings in there,” says Nuno Viegas. “Clinical standards” are Euroglass’ MO, who want to become the cleanest factory in the world: “Honestly, we are almost sure that this is the case already but we want to do even better,” assures Darren. Just as willing on the eco-friendly front, Firewire have built an enviable brand image. Listing all their drives would require a whole binder in itself but we’ll settle for “a zero waste objective for 2020,” as quoted by Mark Price. In the same vein, Torq are using “foams injected into moulds so there are no off-cuts and nothing thrown away,” assures Benoît Brecq while in their lamination “the quantity of resin needed is calculated and provided by computer for unique precision and almost non-existent loss.” Even the final packaging is subject to special attention with “specific boxes, fitted to the size of the board to limit the materials used and the carbon impact of transportation as much as possible.”



Photo: Glassing Monkey

SOFTPOWER

Alongside hardware consisting of hard boards, a “software” market has exploded in the last two to three years, that of softboards not only destined for beginners and schools but also for accomplished surfers. The two brands involved are determined to become much more than a flash in the pan. Toys used as crash tests in the shorebreak are heading out back: “We have seen that our Softech range is now used in summer to surf the main peak,” notes Franck Besse, Commercial and Marketing Director at Surf Hardware International. It’s the same story at the competition: “You’d be surprised to see what kinds of conditions these boards are able to go out in!” rejoices Andreas “Maui” Maurmeir, European distributor for Catch Surf, the brand behind the Beater phenomenon. 5 foot micro boards with bodyboard shapes are now joined by a whole range “from 5’8” to 7’6”” with different shapes,” (Softech) at the express request of retailers.

Similar steps were taken by Catch Surf with 4-9’ models with traditional shapes (single-fin retro and longboard), but not only that... “Wake Surfer models are aimed at being pulled by a cable or riding the wake behind a boat.” Ultra-strong boards, “even when they crash into the hull of a boat.”

PRICES AND POSITIONING

Now we’re a bit more clued up, we wondered why shortboards haven’t dropped in price given that their size has somewhat diminished over the last five years or so. Is the fact that they use smaller foams and less materials not enough to warrant a reduction to the final price? With his skill at finding the right expression, Darren at Euroglass reminds us that: “It’s in the best restaurants that we find the smallest dishes and they are the most expensive.” While the boards are shorter overall, they are also wider: “The volume of the boards has not changed much in the last five years, this is a good indicator of the quantity of materials used,” explains Mark Price (Firewire) before adding that “labour costs are continually increasing and lots of shapes require complex work on the keel and outlines, which bumps up the cost.” And this is not just a case specific to the United States; John Isaac from Seabase confirms that “the cost of the foams just like other raw materials has increased; economies made on smaller boards are so negligible that they don’t affect the price.”

Even for Craig Butcher from the originally South African brand Hurricane Surf, the advantage provided by the Rand vs US Dollar is no longer of consequence: “We import the majority of our raw materials to maintain the highest quality international standards.”

Just like for any widely distributed product, the price of surfboards is not just the sum of the manufacturing costs: “We all have to spend more on marketing, transportation, packaging and design”, reminds Andreas from NSP.

However, this race for excellence has killed off a previously prosperous category; that of mid-range boards sold for between 450-550 Euros. “There are workshops all over the world who sell directly and can release honest boards in this price range,” reminds Mark from Firewire but “going through retail commerce, it is impossible for big manufacturers like us to be competitive at this price.” Perhaps there’s a niche for retailers to fill, suggests Surftech through Richard Prestley, “by selling their own brand or that of a local shaper.” Replicas of popular shapes but at a more affordable price.

DISTRIBUTION

In contrast to skateboards and snowboards, surfboards are not seeing larger quantities of online sales and this is not about to change, reminds John at Seabase: “The best way of judging is still about putting it under your arm!” Getting good advice as well is a bonus, as Richard from Surftech reminds us: “When you are selling a highly technical product, you should be able to count on a surfer that knows all about it to sell it.”

Nevertheless, some are seriously studying the topic of e-commerce. “We are studying a mix between direct online sales and placement in core shops”, reveals Jaime from Olatu. “If we can expect more online sales in future, it will only be because the physical shops are supplementing their supply with online sales to create a hybrid model where we find the best of both worlds, a win-win situation for all,” suggests Andreas from NSP. Euroglass are also checking out the Internet, “but it’s a complicated process and we don’t wish to put our current partnerships at risk,” insists Darren Broadbridge. “The only thing I can promise is that you will not find a reduced button.” There’s also a revolution taking place at Firewire with Mark Price announcing the start of an e-commerce platform, “in which retailers are involved.” To be continued... ⑤

HIGHLIGHTS

- Shortboard hybrid-perf
- Epoxy + carbon + without stringer
- Soft tops of all sizes/shapes
- Everyone’s going eco

A large advertisement for Torq Surfboards. The background is a vibrant blue with a white wave. A surfer is riding the wave. In the foreground, several white surfboards are displayed, each with a different shape and a black Torq logo. The text "CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY" is written in large, white, outlined letters. The Torq logo is prominently displayed at the bottom right. The website "TORQ-SURFBOARDS.COM" is at the bottom left. A small TEC logo is in the top left corner of the ad.

WORLD SURF LEAGUE INTERVIEW

As the 2017 surf season kicks off in Australia the World Surf League starts the new campaign without former CEO, Paul Speaker. Speaker served the company through its transition from the ASP to its current WSL moniker and even though he came in for some criticism during his tenure, the transformation professional surfing’s elite platform went through under his control was impressive.

As the WSL turns a new chapter, SOURCE thought it high time we got up to speed with their evolution. The WSL’s VP of Communications, Dave Prodan has been at the company for 11 seasons and we spoke with him to see what’s next for the WSL. We talk Kelly Slater’s Wave Pool, discuss the change of involvement from endemic surf brands as tour sponsors, the WSL & the Olympics and much more.

Interview by Harry Mitchell Thompson.



Photo : Dave Prodan, WSL VP of Communications

Former CEO, Paul Speaker didn’t have the best reputation with core surf media, but despite not being a surfer’s favourite, he did implement some pretty significant operational changes to the WSL and the broadcast platform. Did Speaker have a number of goals he set out to achieve and after doing so he left? I wouldn’t speak for Paul, but I think his achievement of converging all the previously-disparate mechanisms of professional surfing - sponsorship, marketing, content, communications, broadcast, event production, athlete servicing, etc. - under a singular ASP/

WSL banner changed the sport in an unprecedented way. Combined with the acquisitions of the Big Wave Tour, the Big Wave Awards and the Kelly Slater Wave Company, the ASP/WSL is in an excellent position to commence the next chapter for the sport and community of surfing.

Could you give us some info on who the replacement for Paul Speaker will be? I understand it’s Zosea’s Dirk Ziff to serve as interim CEO - do you have concrete plans for the long term? Dirk Ziff is currently serving as Interim CEO for the WSL while an active search for the company’s next CEO is well underway.

There’s been an influx of staff from outside the surf industry since the ASP was acquired and turned to WSL. How has this changed the dynamic, daily operations and the overall feel of the company? As someone who is commencing their 12th season with the ASP/WSL, the balance of having employees with years of institutional knowledge working alongside top-of-class individuals from outside of surfing has been really enjoyable and essential to the sport’s growth. Both groups are able to learn from one another with a singular goal - champion the world’s best surfing.

“Having employees with years of institutional knowledge working alongside top-of-class individuals from outside of surfing has been really enjoyable and essential to the sport’s growth.”

How has the ASP/WSL’s relationship with endemic surf brands changed in your time there? In my opinion, the biggest change for the endemic brands has been transitioning from event licensees to event sponsors. As event licensees, in the pre-acquisition era, the brands were spending a considerable amount of money activating their respective events across a broken and disparate platform. Today, as event sponsors their spend has decreased while their return is considerably higher due to the evolution of the sport and platform. I wouldn’t speak for them, but the long-term endemic partners we’ve had at the CT level - Rip Curl, Quiksilver, Billabong, Vans and Hurley - all seem to have positive relationships with the WSL. Additionally, they’ve been very

“I think there’s been this myth in the surfing world (that pre-dates the WSL) that if you create something for new fans, it will turn off core fans - and vice versa. I don’t buy that.”

supportive and able to harmonize with a number of new traditionally non-endemic brands that have entered the sport in recent years - Samsung, Jeep, AirBnb, Corona, Swatch, Target, etc.

What exactly are the WSL looking for in terms of title sponsors of not only the tour, but individual events? If you can’t talk figures, then please could you talk strategy and the type of companies the WSL would like to attract. I’m not in a position to outline our entire revenue model for the company, but (like all parts of the WSL) it continues to evolve. Building off the balance of endemic and non-endemic brands in terms of title and presenting sponsorship of tours and events as well as media partnerships will have a considerable role for the model in future years.

“For now, the primary site in Lemoore - the Surf Ranch - remains a high-performance testing facility. Watch this space though...”

What is the WSL’s plan with Wavegarden? Can we expect to see a CT stop at a KS Wave Pool, or maybe a QT stop? The KSWC accomplished something revolutionary when they dropped their initial edit in December 2015. Since then, their technology continues to evolve and the WSL is excited about the potential applications of this in future. For now, the primary site in Lemoore - the Surf Ranch - remains a high-performance testing facility. Watch this space though...

With surfing now in the Olympics, one of the main objectives must be to ensure the mainstream understands what’s going on in heats with regards to priority, scoring etc. I’ve heard some interesting ideas for a split commentary, one which caters for the in-the-know surfer and then a different one for those new to the sport... Or how about a 15 min WSL video piece that explains surfing, heat setups, scoring, priority etc and all a newbie surf enthusiast would need to know before tuning into a broadcast? This is a good point to raise and one that the WSL acknowledges it needs to improve upon. We don’t do enough to welcome fans to the sport, to educate and on-board them. I think there’s been this myth in the surfing world (that pre-dates the WSL) that if you create something for new fans, it will turn off core fans - and vice versa. I don’t buy that. I think if you create engaging content (or marketing or product or stories) and it’s educational and helpful, everyone benefits. This is something we need to build on in the coming years.

The ISA are debuting their national champs this spring in Biarritz. Can we expect the WSL to follow suit with an International Championships, and what would its format look like? At its core, from a product philosophy standpoint, the WSL is about creating a platform for the world’s best surfing. Our former

President, Wayne “Rabbit” Bartholomew, put it simply to me the first time I met him: “What we do is take the best surfers we can find, put them in the best waves we can find, and that’s a formula to create something spectacular.” The world’s best surfing happens on the elite Championship Tour. Equally important to this equation are the development tiers - the Pro Juniors and the Qualifying Series - and our ability to encourage and matriculate world-class surfing through the system. Within those development tiers, we have our regional champions and I don’t see that changing to a national champions focus in the near future. However, as with everything in the sport, ensuring that we’re delivering the best possible product to our surfers, fans and partners means constant refinement.

Working across surf, skate and snowboarding, it’s funny for me to see how the snowboard industry looks at the WSL and dream of having a unified platform/association for broadcasting and running events, and then people in the surf industry look to snowboarding and the precedent it’s set by already being an Olympic sport. Inside the WSL, which sports/tours do you look at as potential models for the future of the WSL? Surfing, in and of itself, is a unique sport and culture. We have the most dynamic field of play in all of sports - the ocean - and it has developed individuals, communities, industries, organizations and innovation uniquely special within the world of sport and entertainment. That said, our modelling case studies run the gamut of international and national sports, team and individual sports as well as non-sport entertainment properties.

Can you tell us any more about the selection process for the Olympics and how involved will the WSL be in the organisational and operational side of things? The WSL is working closely with the IOC and the ISA in determining the selection process for the 2020 Olympic Games. The collective goal is to ensure the world’s best surfers from the Championship Tour are represented and have the opportunity to represent their countries. We’re all very excited about the opportunity that the Olympic platform presents for the surfing community at large.

Finally, what are your views on the European surf community? I believe in the “if you build it, they will come” philosophy. We’ve seen it in Brazil and we’re now seeing it in Europe. The investment and infrastructure that the European boardsports community - retailers, companies, organizations, etc. - has put in place over the past several years laid the foundation for young European surfers to come through the ranks and make an impact on the world stage. In 2017 alone, we have Johanne Defay, Pauline Ado, Frederico Morais, Joan Duru, Leonardo Fioravanti and Jeremy Flores all competing for the WSL Title. It’s a testament to the support and commitment the European community has given them in recent years and one that will benefit from the elevated global platform found at the World Surf League. It’s a platform that is the sum of the parts, where informally or formally every component of the surf community contributes to it. We’re all in this together. 🌐

THE *Wild Life* LENS



VZ VONZIPPER

..... THE LEVEE | WILD VINTAGE GREY
POLARIZED.... ONLY BETTER



photo: Carve

SUNGLASSES 2017 TREND REPORT

After years of going to the extremes, the current trend in eyewear is heading into calmer realms of more understated, sophisticated styles that rule the shelves with clever details and unexpected features. **Anna Langer** took a close look into the sunglasses trends you need to be aware of in 2017.

TRENDS

In our digital world that offers anything to anyone at anytime, "variety is going to be THE key trend of 2017," says Melon's Marketing Manager David Cowan. "Gone are the days of the overwhelmingly majority sporting Wayfarers and the Aviator being the most popular metal frame shape - it's all about the round lens," which can be found in collections from Spy, Proof, Sinner, Quiksilver, Roxy and Revo. The latter also feature "angular versions of Aviator and Cat-Eye shapes," Ashbury play with modern variations of 90s style frames, Carve reinvent some of their most successful styles from the past with "interesting combinations colours and finishes", Electric update "vintage inspired styles in round, square, and aviator with polarized and specialty lenses," and Dragon release four new models that "pay homage to Dragon's DNA of being bold and trendsetting."

Pepe Šetele, Head of Design at Horsefeathers says: "After the huge success of the pilot collection, we decided to expand the range with several new models and add new colours, prints and finishes to current bestsellers," and Quiksilver also see a "huge come back of the metal shapes (pilot, square or round shapes)," states JP Bonnemason, Global Eyewear Product Manager. Proof and Sinner add "double bars" and "browline" to the mix, while Dirty Dog introduce "double wire rims and flat wayfarer models," and Epokhe "focus on small details and weight."

VonZipper agree that "Retro Modern with a fashion touch is a reality" that is supported by the increasing popularity of mixing materials, like

their combo of Nylon Grilamid and metal that delivers "a wild retro modern look". With its inherit lightness, this combo is "hard to beat" as Spektrum notes. Quiksilver add flat lenses to their metal acetate combos, Ovan pair acetate and wire "with exclusive trim detailing" and Proof mix metal with wood or acetate to make a statement.

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David Cowan, Melon Marketing Manager

The second key trend for 2017 is versatility. "Consumers don't want to carry around two different pairs of eyewear for their performance and lifestyle needs - they are seeking a blend," says Oakley Category and Product Line Director, Will Conk. They are catering for this with their new Crossrange™ that "bridges the gap between lifestyle and sport," with interchangeable lifestyle and sport nose pads and temples. Austrian brand gloryfy agree that "consumers keep on asking for models that combine a stylish look with high-tech features," Poc see a "continuing trend towards sunglasses that are activity-specific but can also fit a lifestyle perspective," which they answer by "incorporating lenses which are specific to activity and the environment use," explains Head of PR, Damian Phillips. while Spy also develop more "crossover

“Consumers don’t want to carry around two different pairs of eyewear for their performance and lifestyle needs – they are seeking a blend.” **Will Conk, Oakley Category and Product Line Director**

sunglasses that merge fashion with function,” like the retro-inspired Hunt with thin temples. Smith add “megol nose and temple tip pads for a secure, precise fit,” and Bliz use “rubber coated materials for a sporty feel with a trendy look”, offering more hybrid styles than ever before.

And while Neff find that “customers are definitely looking at more stylish products nowadays,” VonZipper also see “more purely technological developments, especially on lenses to deliver more performance and permit the expansion to other markets like golf and fishing.” Other sub-trends for 2017 include frameless models (Revo & VonZipper), semi-rimless (Melon), smaller (Ashbury) and thinner frames (Proof, Quiksilver, Roxy) as well as ultra-light (Sinner) and floatable sunglasses from Dragon, Quiksilver and Roxy.

LENS TECH

With their amazing benefits for our sports, polarized lenses have seen good growth and are almost a standard. Horsefeathers and Revo offer their collection polarized, Spektrum “dive deeper into polarized” and Dragon have polarized lenses in a number of their frames. Zeal feature polarization on their plant-based Ellume lens while Ovan have their “polarization fused inside the material itself, it is not sandwiched in, and it is not a polarized coating.” Roxy are adding more polarized styles for females: “The women consumers are now educated on the benefits of polarized lenses so being an outdoor and surfing brand we have to propose more polarized shades,” explains JP. Quiksilver use polarized lenses in their floatable collection, mineral glass polarized lenses in the Waterman collection and High Definition Polarized next to Photochromic Polarized lenses with variable tint.



photo: Neff

Sinner use a similar combination of their Polarized SINTEC® lens, which eliminates reflections from flat surfaces with their Photochromic TRANS+® lenses, “that react to changes in light conditions, constantly adjusting its colour to optimize visual experience and reducing eye fatigue.” Dirty Dog’s Photo+ lenses also offers photo-chromic properties, as does Dragon’s Lumalens, the colour filtering technology used for their snow goggles, and gloryfy offer various photochromatic lenses as well, as do Bliz with their Ultra Lens Science™.

Oakley’s leading lens technology is Prizm: “A breakthrough development in contrast technology that dramatically enhances detail for an optimized experience.” Electric use synthetic melanin for their proprietary technology called OHM lens to maximize clarity and protection, Spy expand their premium Happy Lens™ technology, “which is a colour and contrast enhancing lens that increases clarity and improves mood and alertness,” to their entire line and Smith continue their ChromaPop lens technology for enhanced clarity and more details.

VonZipper expand their new patented “Wild Life Lenses” technology that selectively absorbs light in the area where the eye is more sensitive, creating an energy boost as well as a higher comfort in terms of comfort and clarity while Melon’s Amplify Lens™ technology that is implemented in their Design-Your-Own Collection, ensures that only the right colours of light reach the eyes, creating an optical experience of unparalleled clarity and vibrancy. Gloryfy combine “the unparalleled optical qualities of the gloryfy I-Flex ENERGIZER lenses and the I-Flex TRIPOL lenses,” for their CONTOUR lens technology that “creates contrasts where there doesn’t appear to be any.”

With their focus on “keeping things simple and wearable,” Ashbury count on high quality lenses from Carl Zeiss. Melon feature them in their premium collection, Quiksilver in their Originals Collection and Roxy in the lifestyle models. Spektrum use “high quality polycarbonate lenses that are very optically pure and scratch resistant,” Carve combine polycarbonate technology with coordinating lens colours, Dragon use a specialized and lightweight Nylon lens construction in the H2OFloatable and Ovan have “high grade optically true nylon 6 based Polyamide injection with fused polarization,” taking “the best features of a mineral glass lens, and the best features of a synthetic lens and combining them into one.”

Last but not least, Cyclops Gear gets a special mention for adding the most technology possible to their sunglasses: built in video recording capability with 67 degree CMOS sensor, 1920*1080 video image resolution, and 32GB class 10 memory card.

LENS TINTS

In the overall trend of variety and modern interpretations, classic tints like black, grey, green and brown are staying popular while getting an overhaul at the same time. Proof just started offering brown and green tints on a lot of their lenses, “and the response has been great so far,” while VonZipper aim for a “good balance between grey/vintage greys and chromes.” Oakley have some of their most popular lens colours now available with Prizm technology, “with the option of black iridium for customers who prefer a neutral grey tone.”

“Iridium reflective lenses have been popular, but we see a move to a more subtle approach to colour in this area,” notice Carve, which is catered for by new, less flashy variations. Zeal have a new copper mirror coating, Electric work with bronze, Spy with gold, Quiksilver pair pink with silver, VonZipper add a pink chrome and Revo offer Champagne next to brighter options like green water (Revo), Dark Blue Spectra™ (Spy), red chrome (Melon), as well as tungsten, ruby, sapphire, and jade with Prizm (Oakley).

Spektrum add a “light brown/rose tint with anti-fog treatment aimed at outdoor activity,” that is great for quick transitions from dark to light. Epøkhe work with “slightly coloured lenses” in warm shades like red and Electric offer rose next to “some other exciting fades.” VonZipper and Sinner also play with gradients, that are “clearly a market trend” (VZ) and give a “fashionable look” (Sinner).



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SINNER AS I AM

***Dragon** feature custom designs on various frames, from Clark Little's signature to Hawaiian flowers*

Dragon create their lenses “with a specific light range in mind, so there is something for every lighting situation. From low light Transitions lenses in our EnduroX to polarized lenses in a Monarch to Blue Ion in a Profect, there is a style and lens to meet your needs.” Poc tailor the tints to the respective activity: “The importance is more on choice within a category of riding condition and having sunglasses that allow different lenses to be used dependent on the conditions of the day,” explains Damian.



Photo: VonZipper

FRAME COLOURS

“Blacks and torts still rule the preferences of the consumers,” according to VonZipper and can be found in all collections and various variations, including more and more matte options, which are doing very well with consumers too (Proof). Ashbury rely on black and brown tortoise for wearability, Epøkhe feature “deep dark and rich colours, nothing too flashy,” Revo have a “sophisticated palate ranging from dark tort, matte tort, honey tort, matte honey tort, ivory/black tort, and blue tort.” Spektrum sport “timeless and stylish black and Havana tortoise, timeless and stylish,” Quiksilver show a matte brown/green tortoise and black Havana option, Roxy go for matte black or vintage tortoise while Spy pair a black frame front with navy tort patterned temples with a “luxuriously soft texture.”

Smith’s collection is “grounded with traditional black and tortoise frame colorations and then complimented with seasonal and trend colours”, like blush tort from Revo that accompanies their best-selling Blush opalescent frames for the women’s collection. Electric agree that “vintage torts remain very important and are set off nicely when combined with flash coatings and mirrors.” Horsefeathers offer their most successful colours in both glossy and matt finish, Ovan introduce a new series of matte frames and Zeal focus on earth-tones for their plant-based line while Carve find that “organic colours work well with matte finishes and metal details.” Melon report the highest demand in their Matte Rootbeer, Terrapin and Orca colourways and Dragon also opt for a “muted colour palette” with black, grey, tortoise and steel.

After their entrance last year, transparent frames are becoming more popular again as well, with brown, char, olives and blacks from Carve, “translucent acetate material on the temple arms so you can see the core wiring” from Dragon, crystal from Sinner and crystal split with Red Sol-x lens from Smith. Neff offer “any’ kind of colour from tennis

rubber (neon yellow) to blue rubber,” while Poc ensure that their eyewear seamlessly works with the helmets they tend to be used with and Spektrum adapt their sunnies to match their goggles.

PATTERNS

For all those who want to go really crazy, there are some interesting patterns in stores for 2017. Neff match their prints to their apparel line, offering a “very large colour pallet especially on the Daily and Chip. We really offer any kind of colours from tennis rubber (neon yellow) to blue rubber.”

Horsefeathers match their colour palette with their SS17 streetwear collection too and feature “special prints like transparent zebra or camo.” Roxy also use artwork from their apparel, especially the Pop Surf collection, while Sinner take inspiration from nature with prints of wood and cork. Dragon feature custom designs on various frames, from Clark Little’s signature to Hawaiian flowers, and DirtyDog introduce Marble.

PRESCRIPTION

Overall these trends also apply for ophthalmic RX ranges, yet since they’re worn all day, the main focus here is on “keeping them as comfortable as possible and complementing,” as Epokhe explain.

“In addition to our sun Rx collection, Smith offers a complete prescription frame/eyewear collection, exclusively developed and created for everyday prescription eyewear customers,” consisting of 34 unique and dedicated prescription models. Spy cater towards “those with an active lifestyle” with new frames that are “incredibly lightweight” and offer all day comfort and grip through over-moulded temples in different colours: “We want your eyewear to fit your style, but perform for whatever the day has in store for you.” Oakley set out to “solve the problem of frames not fitting all face shapes; the result was the development of TruBridge™ Technology. A frame fitting system consisting of four different size nose pads, available in a selection of Oakley’s best-selling prescription frames.”

Dragon also offer an “entire RX line of both optical and optical suns. They are all high-quality acetate frames, that feature a more fashion-forward design sensibility, yet still offer 100% UV protection.”

Horsefeathers build their RX collection on “distinctive colours” that “work great as they are not as common in classic prescription glasses. Regarding the shapes, it’s a very diverse collection. From distinctive closed acetate frames to classic open metal ones,” explains Pepe. Carve also look into “new versions of retro shapes with interesting combinations colours and finishes,” while VonZipper play with various styles “from strong bulky models, to mixed combos of classic acetate and metal frames,” to their “pure women’s model, a classic reinvented cat eye model frame.” The Roxy optical range is “becoming more fashion-forward as the Roxy consumers are changing and becoming older and more trendy,” with “thin round acetate still on trend.” Proof also move to thinner frames and mix materials: “When you can offer something different than just a standard black acetate frame, it gets people excited.” Roxy and Quiksilver pair acetate with metal, injected plastic with rubber or metal with Grilamid. Gloryfy on the other hand rely on the same technological idea as their sunglasses: “Due to the memory effect of our material NBFX, the frame and lenses always return to their original shape and are unbreakable.” 🌀

HIGHLIGHTS

- Polarization
- Mirrors – less flashy
- Bronze, gold, rose
- Matte frames
- Gradient lenses
- Tortoise – classic, coloured, matte



SUNGLASSES 2017 PICTORIAL



Ashbury - ACE



Ashbury - Holiday



Ashbury - Stockton



Bliz - Luna



Bliz - Nitro



Bliz - Targa



Brunotti - Baraha



Brunotti - Denali



Brunotti - Kibo



Carve - King Cobra



Carve - Montego



Carve - Switchback



Cheapo - Copenhagen



Cheapo - Swamis



Cheapo - Vista



Dirty Dog - Edge



Dirty Dog - Ranger



Dirty Dog - Shadow



Dragon - Blindsight



Dragon - Monarch



Dragon - Proflect



Electric - Knoxville pro



Electric - Lunar



Electric - Zombie



Epokhe - Candy



Epokhe - Non



Epokhe - Notomy



Gloryfy - G14



Gloryfy - Gi8



Gloryfy - Gi15



Horsefeathers - Keaton



Horsefeathers - Foster



Horsefeathers - Trevor

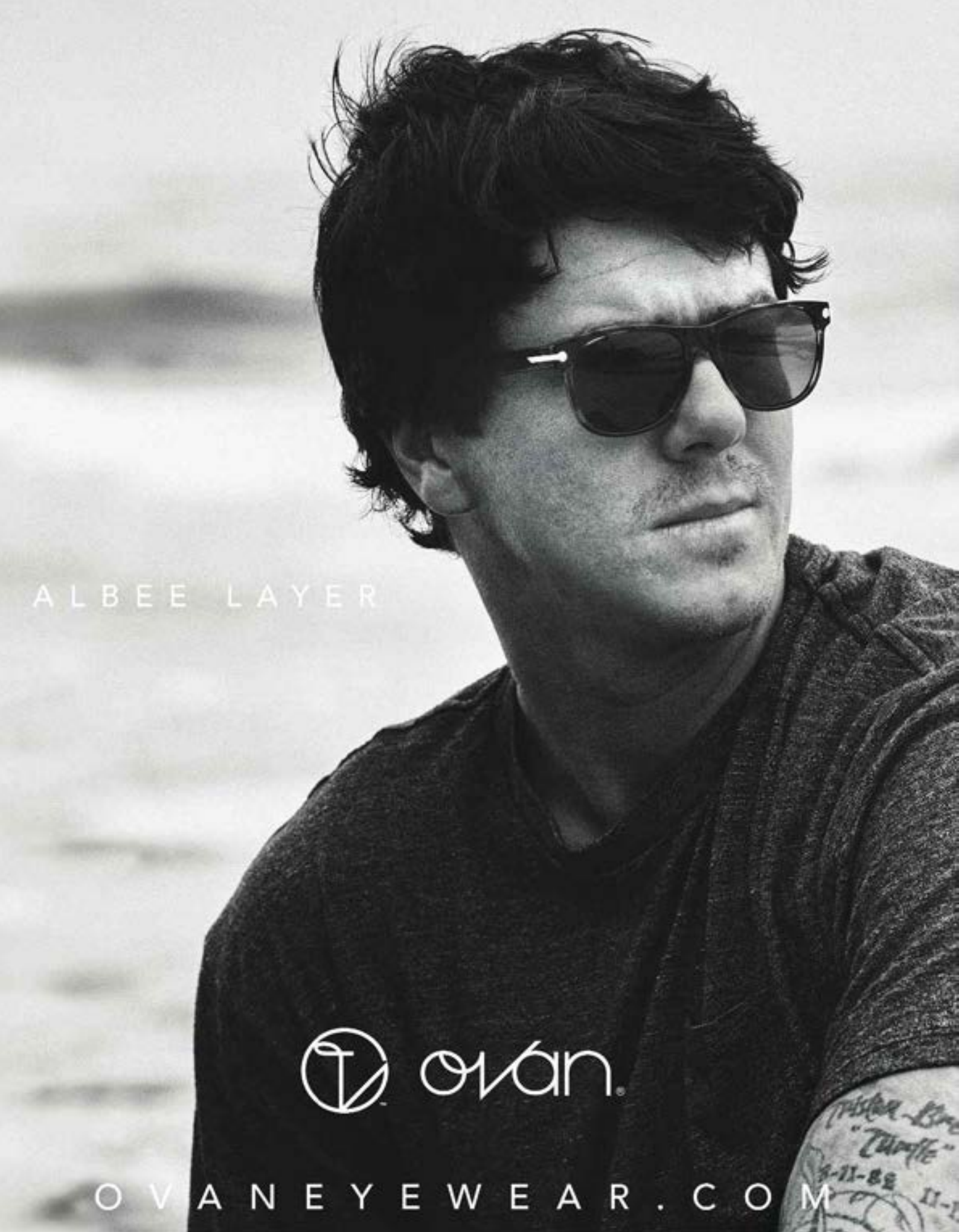


Melon - Echo Ball



Melon - Laguna

				
Melon - Nomad	Neff - Daily	Neff - Murphy	Neff - Spell	Oakley - CROSSRANGE
				
Oakley - Fin Box	Oakley - Holbrook Metal	Ovan - Bragi	Ovan - Le Billebeino collab	Ovan - Mani
				
Proof - The Butte	Proof - The Groove	Proof - The State	Quiksilver - Brigade	Quiksilver - Bruiser
				
Quiksilver - hideout floatable	Revo - Archer	Revo - Crowler	Revo - Dalton	Roxy - Blossom
				
Roxy - Coachella	Roxy - Runaway	Sinner - Kecil	Sinner - Palaui	Sinner - Patnem
				
Smith - Founder	Smith - Pivlock Arena	Smith - Workshop	Spectrum - S001	Spectrum - S003
				
Spectrum - S004	Spy - Deco	Spy - Hunt	Spy - Montana	VonZipper - ALT
				
VonZipper - Hitsville	VonZipper - Lomax	Zeal - Capitol	Zeal - Drifter	Zeal - Isabelle



ALBEE LAYER



OVANEYEWEAR.COM

Photo : Vanessa Andrieux



BIG WIG: DAKINE’S FRANK HEISSAT

Frank Heissat joined Dakine in December 2015 and has helped accelerate the EMEA division of the company’s business since the sale of the company from Billabong to Altamont Capital Partners (ACP) back in July of 2013. Frank has worked in the wider sports industry for 24 years and for this issue’s Big Wig interview, we find out more about his background and where the company is headed. We also cover a range of different topics including synergies shared with ACP, reducing and re-focusing initiatives and Frank breaks some exclusive news of a collab with Äsmo. **By Harry Mitchell Thompson.**

Frank, please tell us about your career before Dakine.
I’ve been working for 24 years in the sporting goods industry, with the exception of a three year venture in the video games business. I started my career at Nike, then joined several companies such as Oxbow, Puma, Oakley and Le Coq Sportif, fulfilling various positions from Tech Rep to CEO, in France, Germany, Switzerland the UK and the USA. I consider myself very lucky to make a living from my passion for all sorts of sports.

Could you give us a brief overview of the company.
Dakine was born in 1979 in Maui, Hawaii, when founder Rob Kaplan created a surf leash allowing local surfers to ride bigger waves, safer. That approach was then brought to windsurfing, with tremendous success in the 80s. Our headquarters were then transferred to mainland USA’s best windsurfing spot: Hood River, Oregon in 1986.

Right behind Hood River is Mt Hood, so it didn’t take long for Dakine to venture into snowboarding accessories (1989). Our first winter gloves were launched in 1993 and then the iconic Heli Pack backpack in 1996. Since then we added skateboarding specific backpacks in 1999, bike accessories in 2000 and finally kiteboarding accessories in 2001. In 2013 Dakine was acquired by Altamont Capital partners from Billabong, who owned it since 2008.

How has the way in which the company is run changed since being sold by Billabong ?
Dakine benefits from all sorts of support from Altamont Capital partners. They know the market, they respect the brands and they are in full support when it comes to help bringing the business to the next step. We also share some things with the other sport brands from the ACP portfolio (Lib tech, Gnu etc).

“The combination of weak snow conditions, the change in consumer behaviour, the intense competition and the rise of digital is forcing brands to adjust and change the way they approach the market.”

How are your financial results looking ?
Dakine belongs to a private equity firm. From that point of view Dakine doesn’t report its financials publicly. That said the outlook looks very positive especially in the North American market. In Europe we started yielding the fruits of our initiatives in the last 12 months. We are confident that Europe is going to soon be a key contributor to the international growth of Dakine.

Could you tell us some of the major adjustments Dakine has made recently.
We have optimised a lot of things in the last 12 months. Some of the key adjustments have included: Setting up a distribution segmentation in order to better service each type of account, through dedicated sales, marketing and product assortment plans. We have reduced the number of initiatives and focused our resources behind what matters to the end consumer and what supports the business of our partners. Finally, we have shifted marketing investments with a clear focus on digital, trade marketing and grass roots action sports.

Please could you explain the European setup of the brand, including any recent hires in the region.
The European HQ of Dakine is located in Annecy, France. It is a great eco system there, with a lot of companies operating in the outdoor and action sports industries. It also gives us access to great spots there, where we can test new products in close collaboration with some of the best riders and with our key business partners.

We have added a lot of new talent to the team. Flavien Foucher is in charge of the Product, Merchandising and Go to Market. He gained solid experience in action sports accessories at Rossignol. Pierre-Jean Rueda is in charge of Digital, Sport Marketing and Communications. He comes from a digital media background. Markus Otto has been promoted to Marketing Manager, and Anthony Alvin is Sales Manager for southern Europe. We have made additional adjustments to the sales team as well.

Which are your strongest territories in Europe ?
Germany and Switzerland are the heavyweights in the mix. In the near future, France and the UK have arguably the largest potential for growth given the size of these markets and the current presence of Dakine. There are still plenty of growth opportunities, either from a country, product category or channel perspective. We are also adjusting to the evolution of consumer behaviour. With the rise of the omni-channel model, we want to engage further with the end consumer and offer them the best of the Dakine experience. This will be done in the coming months through a new ecommerce platform and the development of shop-in-shops with our most strategic partners. In addition we also see opportunities for growth across Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa, in countries where participation in action sports is developed but the presence of Dakine is not yet maximized.

In general, it’s been a tough couple of years for action sports apparel. What lessons have you learned and what are you doing to safeguard against any future problems ?
Our core business is still rooted in action sports accessories, with a large chunk of our mix represented by bags. For that reason, we have not been deeply impacted by the difficulties encountered by the apparel business. That said; apparel is important for the future of Dakine. We are not overly dependent on this product category, which means we can take the right approach. In Europe, we are still testing the market with some key partners. The key here is to take the right steps from the get go and grow sustainably.

For instance we have landed our outerwear connection at some strategic point of sales. We then gauge the reaction of the market, give a distinctive edge to our partners, and take the necessary time to learn and adjust our strategy. One of the potential mistakes is to rush things through, load the market with too many products, and have to deal with left overs at the end of the season. The combination of weak snow conditions, the change in consumer behaviour, the intense competition and the rise of digital is forcing brands to adjust and change the way they approach the market.

Where do you see the future of action sports retail? How important are bricks and mortar in Dakine’s long-term plans ?
We strongly believe in the convergence of the various channels of trade. We believe that the consumer and the experience we deliver to them should be at the epicentre of everything we do. As far as Dakine; authenticity, quality and consistency prevail. There are more than 300 points of contact for the consumer. It is a challenge to remain meaningful and consistent across all these points of contacts. The mission purpose of Dakine is to enhance and celebrate the ride. That mission purpose needs to translate in everything we do, on and off-line. Omni-channel is a winning retail evolution. Online allows a global reach, the easy access to a wide range of products wherever you are, while bricks and mortar allows the consumers to interact physically with the products, get recommendations and service from knowledgeable store staff. The way the consumer receives information, reviews, buys, picks up the products and makes recommendations doesn’t matter much as long as the brand experience is consistent with your mission purpose and positioning.

We can’t mention future trends without addressing eco innovations and sustainability. What are Dakine doing along these lines ?
We have many backpacks and accessories made out of recycled materials. The environment matters for Dakine, as it does for our athletes. John John Florence’s most important requirement was that his signature line’s packaging would be eco-friendly. He simply wouldn’t accept any product on the market without it. We had to review our packaging process to meet his requirements, and we are grateful that he inspired that change.

What are Dakine’s main marketing pushes for 2017 ?
We are starting 2017 full speed with bike. Yoann Barelli joined the team, and we are tying links with Commencal Bikes. Our award winning protection is a key category. Warmer months means surfing for us... John John Florence joined the team in December 2016 and his signature line of products will hit the shelves in spring. Watch out for it, those limited editions will fly fast!

Gloves and backpacks are going to be at the epicentre of our marketing efforts for next winter. Our riders Elias Elhardt and Victor Daviet are out there filming everyday, and will be key in our Cold Transmissions. It’s still a secret but we developed a super limited edition of products with Äsmo, only available at some key specialty stores. Can you believe that Äsmo’s founder, Wolle Nyvelt, has been riding for Dakine for 14 years ?

And what are your key product categories ?
The core business of Dakine is still rooted in action sport accessories, with a large portion of the mix represented by packs and bags. Currently our fastest growing categories are snow gloves and mountain bike. Speaking about mid-term development, apparel should be a key component of the Dakine product mix in the coming years, with a strong focus on the technical surf, snow and mountain bike categories. 📌

“We have reduced the number of initiatives and focused our resources behind what matters to the end consumer and what supports the business of our partners.”



NOT ALL INFLATABLE SUP'S
ARE CREATED EQUAL

WE GO BEYOND PADDLEBOARD REVIEWS, WE DO OUR BOARD VS...



There are an awful lot of inflatable SUP boards on the market and admittedly, it can often be confusing on what board to buy. Thanks to extensive research and development from the Red Paddle Co team, we have been able to produce some of the best quality inflatable boards made with high technical-precision. To prove how durable our boards really are, we have put one board through 10 greuelling challenges to see if anything is able to beat it.

To see how our 10'6" Ride MSL handled the 10 challenges head over to

WWW.REDPADDECO.COM



photo: JP Australia

SUP 2017 TREND REPORT

SUP is perhaps the most striking market in the boardsports world, boasting a super-wide array of uses that are in a constant state of flux. For retailers this means an opportunity for future sales, but at the same time there is a chance you can get lost in it all. So to stop your head from spinning, dear retailers, please follow this guide. **By David Bianic.**

City, ocean and even mountain, the SUP is a surfboard for all environments, free from the limitations of traditional boardsports. It's up to retailers to show an open mind when it comes to stocking SUPs, which goes beyond the remit of surf shops alone. The proof? You just have to see which markets are the leaders in Europe: "Our biggest market is Germany by a long way," enlightens Lars Ermisch, Brand Manager Europe at JP Australia, "followed by France, the U.K. and Austria." Even more surprisingly, Lars affirms that the commercial future of SUP "is in the North (of Europe), especially on the coast and in cities." It's a similar story at Fanatic with the German/Austrian duo leading sales, reveals Marketing Manager Karin Gertenbach. This is not just two isolated cases either given that we find strong markets in countries like Sweden (Lokahi), Czech Republic (Hala), Denmark (Norden), The Netherlands (Norden, Riber), Benelux (Surftech), Switzerland (Tripstix), Croatia (Indiana) and Serbia (Sol Paddle). This divide between northern and southern countries also matches with what the brands are supplying there: "Markets like France and Great Britain with more coastline sell more EPS surf models while in central Europe - Germany, Austria or Switzerland, it's more inflatables," explains Lars from JP Australia.

LEISURE VS. CORE

When it comes to the distribution of use, inflatables remain mostly for recreational use, while the more athletic dimension is of course represented by the more performance-based hardboards...although "Coming from the world of surfing, Surftech are attracting a core of

watermen/waterwomen," points out Richard Prestley, commercial director for Europe at Surf Commission, "and we are seeing success in surf, race and prone (paddleboards) categories." While in most parts of the world, "50% of SUP activity revolves around downwind, touring and surfing," reckons Lars from JP Australia.

"There's a lot of poor quality equipment on the market and people are now looking for a secure, reliable, strong board that also has performance."
John Hibbard, Director of Red Paddle Co

The good health of the SUP market in Europe is not exempt from metastases, notably competition from brands that don't exist and so are deemed disloyal - "no-name products of bad quality," cites Maurus Strobel, CEO of Indiana SUP. Often labelled as guilty are Asian manufacturers who bypass traditional distribution by selling directly, regrets Karin from Fanatic: "Most of them are not offering good quality products or good service, which can be harmful to the market." The same concerns are felt by Daniel Hunter from Riber SUP who indicates that "anyone can go on ebay and get an inflatable SUP for £250, which is a huge worry because these brands represent a first point of contact with SUP for a large number of people and through products that are questionable at best..."



photo: Hala Gear

TO THE RETAILERS’ RESCUE

To combat this race to lowest price, brands are communicating about quality, most of all in shops where they are training their sales people, especially if they are not able to transmit this information to the potential client directly - on the inflatables’ bags at JP Australia for example, or through the POS, “which explains how resistant our products are,” indicates Benoît from Ari’i Nui. Also, most people are going to test centres, sometimes taking place in conjunction with big competitions, explains Phil Mandeau, commercial agent for the American brand Focus SUP, who is joined on this point by Naish who insist on the importance of “holding little events within the framework of bigger events”. This support can also be dematerialised, in the same way that Starboard have marketed on social media “because in high season, most sales are made online,” reveals Svein Rasmussen, creator of the brand. This influx of new occasional participants also provides a big opportunity for growth, which is not dissimilar to that of rentals in the world of snowboarding where “the majority of newcomers are customers who prefer to rent rather than buy,” affirms Thierry Kunz, Brand Lead at Laird SUP. This “SUP on demand” angle could however ramp up the already prevalent phenomenon of weather dependence since “the weather, and especially low temperatures, have a direct impact on sales”, warns Siren SUP.

INFLATABLE TRENDS: CONSTRUCTION

Too often associated with the entry-level, the inflatable SUP category (or iSUP) is more diverse at first sight. While these models are put on the market at more attractive prices than “hardboards” thanks to their construction, there is a clear segmentation between usages (and therefore price). At Lokahi, the entry-levels (“I didn’t say bad quality!”

insists Sylvain Aurenche, Commercial and Communications Director) are distinctly separated from the high-end constructions of the Fusion series. Even more fleshed out, the inflatable range at JP Australia is characterised by three different constructions: “The Superior Edition (SE) and Superior Stringer Editions (SSE) models have a pre-laminated construction made of three layers of composite,” explains Lars Ermisch, while the Light Edition boards (LE and LEC) only have two. At his counterparts from Fanatic we find the same segmentation, with three technologies in the Ray Air model.

Newcomers to the European market, the Americans from the brand Hala place the bar pretty high with a carbon construction that will hit the shops this season: “Basically, you get the same sensations and performance as a hardboard but with all the freedoms of an inflatable board, portable and ready to travel,” summarises Brand Manager Jen Howland. “Inflatable SUPs are normally limited to certain activities. Hala wants to overcome these limitations whether it be on the river or surfing in the ocean.” It’s the same technical ideas from the Italians at RRD who have reinforced the structure of their inflatables with a technology baptised SDB standing for Sandwich Dyneema Belt, an ultra-resistant polyethylene band of fibre providing the board with “30% more rigidity than a conventional model,” confirms Jacopo Guisti, SUP marketing manager. To simplify, the trend for inflatables at the main brands is not a race to the lowest price but to quality, as pointed out by John Hibbard, Director of Red Paddle Co.: “There’s a lot of poor quality equipment on the market and people are now looking for a secure, reliable, strong board that also has performance.” Still, there’s a little dampener from Starboard with Svein Rasmussen anticipating “a diminishing market share for inflatables in favour of hardboards,” because of the lower standard of performance: “If you see someone with an inflatable SUP strapped to the top of their vehicle, it means they have not made the right choice in terms of technology...” Just as pessimistic, Benoît Tréguilly and Peter Durham from BIC are “not convinced of the long term success of the inflatable market and for a variety of reasons: low longevity and the mediocre performance of made in China products and other bad quality SUPs sold in shops as well as online...”

“The majority of newcomers are customers who prefer to rent rather than buy.” **Thierry Kunz, Laird SUP**

INFLATABLE TRENDS: DESIGNS

In terms of shape, the vast majority of iSUP sales come from versatile and easy to use models, ‘all-round’ boards: “When it comes to shape, demand mainly consists of 10’6” x 33” all-rounds and 12’6” x 30” for touring”, indicates Sylvain from Lokahi. Inflatables are no longer the ‘lower class’ and this message is clear at SIC Maui where “designs are borrowed from their hard model equivalents”, insists Helgo Wilhelm Lass, Commercial Director for Europe. “This means that we find geometries that are already tested elsewhere and have proven performance.” To add rigidity and to guarantee a uniform rocker line, SIC have also introduced a stringer into these inflatables through Dyneema Stringer Technology (DST) and are proud to be “the first brand to offer a real downwind inflatable board.” The iSUP’s scope of use is continually expanding, as Benoît Brecq from Ari’l Nui Stand Up Paddle confirms: “We are finding more and more different uses for inflatables. Unsurprisingly, touring and leisure remain at the heart of the market but we can also see new uses such as fishing and yoga growing this season.” That’s why NSP has approached the Canadian outfitter Scotty, a specialist in fishing products: “We have equipped lots of our inflatables with fishing rod holders, like on the Fisherman and the Touring models,” reports Andreas Mencke, the brand’s Commercial Director and Marketing Specialist.

Another big trend is the emergence of river boards, a phenomenon that’s already huge in the States as Karin from Fanatic explains and to which the brand responds to with two specific models: “The Rapid Air is designed to get everyone on board, from the newbie to the experienced rider, while the Rapid Air Touring is its longer, more tapered equivalent, destined to cover long distances for enthusiasts of rivers and touring.”

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KEAHI DE ABOITIZ

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“Anyone can go on ebay and get an inflatable SUP for £250, which is a huge worry because these brands represent a first point of contact with SUP for a large number of people and through products that are questionable at best...” **Daniel Hunter, Riber SUP**

Just about everyone owes it to themselves to get into a niche (or more than one), such as SUP Yoga/Fitness. A good example of this is the central platform from Fanatic for making a group of eight boards in a star formation for yoga or fitness classes. This fitness market is closely linked to a female clientele and brands are doubling their efforts to offer boards that are easy to handle, explains Lars from JP Australia: “Women represent almost half of our clientele and for them, having to either carry a 13kg board or a 7.5kg board to the water is not the same thing.”

Speaking of effort, having to pump up the SUP is still a hindrance to the discipline. Even though electric pumps that connect to a car’s cigarette lighter are widely available, the last PSIs that provide the full rigidity must still be put in manually. To overcome this constraint, the SipaBoard AIR claims to be the first auto-inflatable SUP in the world and won the gold medal at the ISPO Awards 2017/18. Further still, SipaBoards hope to offer “a SUP propelled by turbine engine”, to extend participation potential even further...



Photo: Red Paddle Co.

HARDBOARD TRENDS

In the mould of windsurfing in the 90s, surfing SUP over the last five years has seen a real call to arms with boards of higher performance but less and less accessibility: shorter (around 7 foot), narrower (up to 24”) and thinner (volumes of less than 80 litres!). In 2017, brands are promoting models to please a larger audience. “One shape that sells well for us is the Hybrid model. This combines the advantages of a touring board with the characteristics of a Surfing SUP”, explains Lars from JP Australia. With its displacement hull at the front and manoeuvrable pintail and the back, this model is designed to combine the best of the two worlds. The same steps were taken at SIC Maui whose Feelgood range “is destined for leisure surfing,” as is the Agent model, which comes in five sizes, says Helgo Wilhelm Lass. We are also witnessing a return of the longboarding style with the high-performance nose-riders like the Stylemaster at Fanatic: “Easy to paddle and super high-performance in the surf, allowing for really fluid deep curves as well as styled out footwork on the front and back with your toes hanging over the nose”, boasts Karin Gertenbach. Still in surfing SUP, constructions are mimicking shortboard surfing, with technologies like Surf Glass at Norden, “who offer flex

characteristics similar to that of normal surf boards”, coming with “a transparent glass and an EPS core reinforced with carbon inserts,” adds CEO Andy Wirtz. These really “surfy” finishes diverge from the previously “windsurfy” aesthetics of SUPs and for good reason, proposes Sylvain from Lokahi: “When people buy a hardboard, they want a sexy board”, like their CustomPro model which leaves nothing to the imagination with its transparent glass exposing the central stringer.

Perhaps even more rewarding than surf models in terms of image, race/ downwind boards allow brands to show off all their technical know-how; real race beasts that only concern a limited audience but represent the driving force of the sport. “The race market is limited but that’s where the real enthusiasts are”, affirms Benoît Brecq (Ari’i Nui). At Surftech, Richard reveals how much effort is put into race boards, “with the new Bark Vapor Ghost Carbon,” a board reserved for the elite...of bank accounts, selling for 2800 dollars. As an alternative to carbon, JP Australia’s race models have a BIAx construction that “benefits from the same machine shape as the carbon versions but at a favourable price,” informs Lars Ermisch, with a lower weight than some “full carbon” competition boards. We should also note the exclusive rudder system from SIC Maui, the F.A.S.T. or Foot Accentuated Steering Technology which will not only equip race boards but also “downwind and touring models”, adds Helgo.

Still in hardboards, the third axis of evolution after surfing and downwind/racing is touring, an aquatic version of hiking, long hours out on boards capable of carrying other equipment (waterproof bags, fishing equipment, etc) and that are fast and stable. A good example of this trend comes from the new Outback from JP Australia: “This is a multifunction touring board; to be used by the whole family, for lengthy jaunts or fishing trips. It has ‘Light Capsule’ storage, which has a see-through underside so that you can put a torch in there, for example, and light up the water under the surface during night time sessions”, explains Lars Ermisch. At the same time, you should not see these models as ‘utility’ vehicles, they must also be “styled” like at Indians who are offering “touring boards with wooden veneers and carbon-innegra construction”, reports Maurus Strobel, the brand’s CEO. “People like gliding fast!” The same attention to the finish is paid to the hard Ray model from Fanatic, a touring board that looks like a race board.

“Women represent almost half of our clientele and for them, having to carry either a 13kg board or a 7.5kg board to the water is not the same thing.”
Lars Ermisch, JP Australia

For the SUP market, 2017 will be a year of consolidation and of more-solid-than-ever brand/retailer partnerships. Competition from “straight to consumer” business has pushed brands to attend to their dealers so that they are able to promote quality ahead of price, supported by storytelling and technical discourse. “All budgets should be able to find a suitable product but customers have to understand the benefits of real commercial advice, real customer service and high-quality products. It’s not always a question of price,” reminds Lars from JP Australia. In other words, the added value of “branded” SUPs also resides in the work of retailers. ⑤

HIGHLIGHTS

- Northern countries
- High-tech iSup
- Touring boards
- More accessible Surfing SUP



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Bottom Photo: Angélique Valdez Team Rider: Mark Tyler Location: Palguin River, Chile

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BUYER SCIENCE

Hawaii Donostia is a chain of three surf shops in San Sebastian in the Basque Country. Founder and owner, Tito Moro first opened his doors in 1980 simply as a way of importing from Australia the essentials he and his buds needed to surf. Fast forward nearly four decades and Tito now runs the three stores with his son Diego and SOURCE has caught up with the pair for this issue's Buyer Science feature.

Please give us some background info on Hawaii Donostia.

We've operated in San Sebastian, Basque Country since 1980 and now operate three stores. The first one is in San Bartolomé 12 Street, the second is on Legazpi Street and here we have a beautiful backyard with a great collection of different surfboards. And last year we opened a new surf shop in front of the beach in La Zurriola. These shops are our passion!

Tito: Surfing is my whole life. My brother, Jaime was a surfer and there have always been surfboards at home. I started surfing when I was 16. I used to windsurf, but here in San Sebastian the conditions lack wind, so I found an alternative - surfing.

At the end of the 70s, surf brands didn't exist here in the Basque Country - they were something totally new for us. We needed to figure out a way of getting hold of surfboards and boardshorts. Australian brands like Rip Curl were just beginning to arrive in France and we tried to find a way to bring them to Spain. We opened a screen-printing company and then we decided to launch our brand, HWaves. And following on from this we realized that we should open a store in order to share our passion and our products with everyone else.

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

We believe that we always have to be the best advisor to our client, in order for them to trust you and be satisfied with their purchase. This way you create a loyalty with your client, which we consider to be one of the keys to our success after 30 years. This, and to simply live surfing.

First up we analyze the overall market offering in order to make the best possible selection at the time of purchase. We always picture ourselves as the end customer to envisage the products we would want and use. And then we give credence to the quality of the product and level of customer service we'll be able to deliver along with it.

Looking at sales figures, what have you learned from specific surf product categories in the last two years?

The biggest change we've found in the last two years has been in the construction, shapes and materials of surfboards. We are returning to EPS constructions and are looking for lighter, durable and more



flexible surfboards. We're also stoked on new shapes, like the OMNI and Sci-Fi from Slater Designs. We're big on surfboards that are concerned with the environment, such as the Timbertek construction by Firewire.

As for wetsuits, we've seen a great change towards warmer, stretchier and lighter suits. But we're not just all about the stretch in wetsuits, we are really into recycled materials and wetsuits where neoprene and inner fibres are combined to give us warmer suits that dry faster.

And if we were to talk about our least favourite category, for us, that would be beginner boards. We believe that low quality surfboards are sold at an excessively low price and aren't the correct shape to learn to surf with. Going up in price, although not massively, you have access to a better product, which is much better suited to the needs of a beginner made from materials much more suitable for learning to surf.

Over the past years, have you changed your brand line-up and main brands?

No, we continue to support the market leading brands and work with them. A few years ago we began to manufacture our own products. We decided to do this because we wanted to offer high quality products, manufactured in Europe and at a good price.

Which tradeshow do you attend, how important are they for your decision-making and how much product do you actually get to test before buying?

Tradeshows are very important to us. We have been to Surf Expo in Orlando, Agenda in California and Expo & Bright in Germany. Before we purchase products for our stores, we test it and let our clients to try it. Their feedback is vital for us. 📍



photo: Stance

UNDERWEAR 2017 TREND REPORT

Boxers or briefs? Cotton or wool? Nut-hugging or free-balling? Men have lots of choices in boardsports-specific underwear – and the party’s just getting started. Our first-ever trend report in this emerging category presents key products and commentary from leading brands. Report by Boardsport SOURCE skateboarding editor **Dirk Vogel**.

Anyone who’s ever done the splits on a handrail knows that boardsports can deal some painful hits below the belt. Especially for men. But although it makes sense to shield the family jewels in some kind of functional men’s underwear – or at least address unpleasantness such as chaffing or moisture – the category has not exactly been a hotbed of innovation. At least until now.

While socks have already proven strong performers, a new wave of boardsports-specific undergarments may be the next big thing in soft goods. “There’s a trend for niche category, mono-product brands in action sports, and underwear and socks has become one of them. Moskova saw that niche seven years ago and many brands have followed, some of them very successfully,” said Juan Gonzalez-Vega, CEO and Co-Founder of Moskova Underwear. “In boardsports, individuality is a key driving force of the cultural development. Underwear or technical layering should reflect this in a similar way as outerwear. At Pally’Hi, the mix of functional fabrics and streetwear-inspired aesthetics makes for a very individual style with superior comfort,” said Johannes Ritter at merino wool specialists Pally’Hi.

“There’s a trend for niche category, mono-product brands in action sports, and underwear and socks has become one of them.” **Juan Gonzalez-Vega, CEO and Co-Founder of Moskova Underwear**

Blending rider-approved stylistics with advanced materials and next-level tech – all the way to built-in harnesses – this new generation of underpants is built for action. And that includes sales action, if retailers play their cards right. “Retailers have to understand that they can make easy money with underwear. It’s a small product, easy to sell because

the customer knows his size. Everybody wears underwear, so you can touch everybody!” said Emmanuel Loheac, who founded category starters Pull-in underwear 17 years ago.

PRICING & MARKET

How much are customers willing to shell out for a pair of underwear at board stores these days? The main price window for fun-oriented boxer shorts with cool graphics is €14.99 to €29.99. Bawbags carved out a niche by offering fun graphics and performance materials at £10 and £15. Shorts with advanced materials such as polyamide, fabric blends, and compression sell between €29.99 to €39.99. Premium materials such as merino wool – offering natural antibacterial and moisture-wicking properties – elevate prices up to €59.99.

“There remains a significant price difference between premium merino underwear and lower wool quantity ‘merino’ developed to hit a price. That also reflects in the quality of manufacturing and design,” said Richard Birkby, Head of Brand and Marketing at Mons Royale. Then again, how quality-conscious are boardsports customers – especially when a pair of boxers costs more than a set of trucks? “Men are starting to notice that high quality underwear is a game changer and are willing to spend more for a pair that makes them look and feel confident,” said Adam Chuntz, Director of Integrated Marketing at MyPackage Apparel.

CUTS & CONSTRUCTIONS

Never will a style-conscious boarder be caught wearing generic, close-cropped briefs, also known as “tighty whities” (unless Supreme starts making them). The most popular cuts fall into three categories: boxer shorts, boxer briefs, and – especially for snowboarders – leggings. Boxers are the go-to staple for guys, and comfort is key. “Our Lousy Livin Boxershort is a classic boxer short fit with a design front label and a hidden button. Beside this fit, we have a boxer short trunk with

„Händler müssen sich klar machen, dass Unterwäsche leicht verdientes Geld bedeutet. Die Produkte sind relativ kompakt und der Kunde kennt bereits seine Größe. Jeder trägt Unterwäsche, also berührt die Kategorie uns alle!“ **Emmanuel Loheac, Gründer von Pull-in**

an elastic design waistband,” said Pitt Feil, Co-founder at Lousy Livin, the graphics-driven underwear company established in 2012 out of Cleptomanicx clothing in Hamburg.

Boxers offer great flexibility but lack support around the “package” (more on that later). Enter boxer briefs, which strike a compromise between close fit, anatomical support and range of motion. “Our Master Fit is our best seller. It’s a fitted boxer brief in lycra fabric, with a Pull-in branded waistband, printed in France and carefully assembled in Portugal,” said Emmanuel at Pull-in. “We have our cuts pretty well-honed with our boxer-brief style and we will be introducing one new style this year with a slightly longer cut in the leg,” said Robbie Kerr-Dineen, Designer at UK-based Bawbags, who put their money behind a good cause by supporting male cancer charities such as Orchid.

Longer cuts are trending in snow or surf – some conditions call for full leg coverage – which is where leggings come in. As Richard at Mons Royale explains: “Our SS17 range of leggings for guys include a regular full length long john and a three-quarter leg version that’s popular with people who don’t like their legging inside their boot or rolled up above it.” SAXX offers the full spectrum from boxer briefs to longer styles built for performance. “Taking our best selling fit and added length for comfort and coverage, the Vibe and Fuse Long Leg [leggings] are slim-fitting for smooth layering,” said Julia Reis, Marketing Manager at SAXX. Several brands, including Pally’Hi, Bawbags, Mons Royale, and MyPackage also offer undershirts with functional aspects to bring comfort and performance full-circle. Richard at Mons Royale pointed out cross-selling opportunities: “We also see great success in pairing performance underwear with high end technical outerwear. After all, there’s little point in a ‘breathable’ jacket that isn’t able to function because the underwear beneath isn’t functional!”

MATERIALS & STYLE

When it comes to materials, purists keep it classic. “Our main material is 100% cotton to provide a perfect fit and feeling. It’s also a perfect surface for our design prints,” said Stefan Marx, Co-Founder and Designer at Lousy Livin. At Pull-in, Emmanuel Loheac mainly relies on a blend of polyester and elastane lycra, while all their cotton is organic. The team at Supernatural addresses the needs of winter sports with “a unique fibre mixture which combines benefits of merino wool and polyester.” SAXX is big on material innovations, including 90% nylon / 10% Spandex in the Kinetic and 77% Nylon / 14% Spandex / 9% Polyester in the Quest 2.0 range. Materials at Stance include Poly Blend, Combed Cotton and premium Butter Blend material, which “nourishes the skin, is odour resistant and luxuriously soft,” said Nathan Hill at Stance. Nathan continued: “Our key features include a core flex waistband and a feather-seam panel construction that eliminates stitch irritation, both of which are incorporated across the whole line. We also offer models with a wholester (our internal support pouch),” more about this later. And Bawbags keeps ‘em dry by implementing Thermal Wicking Active Technology (TWAT) fabric.

Adam at MyPackage implements tech such as MyDry and MyModal for moisture-wicking and breathability, and also likes the properties of the season’s hottest material trend: Merino! “It is naturally temperature regulating, odour resistant, naturally anti-microbial and moisture-wicking.” Pally Hi uses, “super fine 16.5 micron Merino wool is the back bone of the range. Bamboo is the second major ingredient. The low impact on the environment growing bamboo and the silky touch of fabrics containing bamboo made us choose this material.” Mons Royale innovates with Merino Air-Con. “We’ve focused on the climate control capability that merino offers the wearer in all conditions. It’s not about being warm or cool, but about being able to maintain a comfortable temperature to allow you to perform.”

In stylistic terms, performance brands pursue an understated style, blending visible logo placement on the waistband – a look pioneered by Calvin Klein and Mark Wahlberg – with muted colours such as black, navy, and darker greys plus the occasional splash of neon for colour pop. Design-driven brands such as Lousy Livin turn up the volume with bold

flamingo prints and street-inspired graphics, while MyPackage features abstract patterns, camo and plaids. Moskova’s SS17 collection includes a cool woods camo and vector graphics, Bawbags has cool rooster and cactus prints, while SAXX draws on surf inspirations with ocean waves and pineapple patterns. Pally’Hi sees great success with melange fabrics and natural colours, while “being able to realize digital prints on merino wool fabrics made Pally’Hi offer photorealistic graphics.”



photo: Saxx

PERFORMANCE & INNOVATION

Next-level underwear tech addresses issues such as ventilation, moisture, and anatomical support. “Our performance products are designed for high-output activities that feature anti-microbial, moisture wicking technology. From merino wool tights when you’re riding the mountain, to ultra-breathable micro-mesh boxer briefs when you’re ripping waves, we’ve got you covered,” said Julia at SAXX. Most brands featured in this report sponsor athlete teams in boardsports and Juan Gonzalez-Vega at Moskova explains one team-inspired innovation: “Moskova believes that a multi-panel construction offers better support and using different technical fabrics within those panels gives flexibility where it’s needed. Our polyamide horizontal back panel gives that extra stretch that keeps your underwear up, never showing your ‘crack’ when leaning down.” Meanwhile, Richard at Mons Royale points out: “Our boxer short is longer to give good coverage under winter outerwear. It also has a reinforced gusset for support – useful on big landings!”

Speaking of big landings, this is where boxers, in all their free-balling glory, offer zero support. Brands such as SAXX, Stance, Bawbags, MyPackage, and others solve the problem with sewn-in pouch compartments, cradling a man’s best friend ever so snugly. “Our Keyhole Comfort Technology keeps your ‘Package’ supported and contained so that you can pursue all of your athletic endeavours comfortably and confidently,” said Adam at MyPackage. Stance offers the Wholester internal support pouch, while Bawbags implements the Bamboo Baw Pouch and SAXX relies on BallPark Pouch construction, “a 3D hammock-shaped pouch [that] keeps everything in place.” Performance brands also offer concealed stitching or seamless construction to avoid chafing, which as we all know, is just a pain in the rear. 🍑

HIGHLIGHTS

- Growth in premium segment
- Performance construction, materials
- “Package” support pouches
- Tighter fits, flexible stretch
- Full-length tights
- Hot trend: Merino wool
- Culture-inspired graphics



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photo: Jucker Hawaii

LONGBOARD 2017 TREND REPORT

With lots of talk in the industry about the health of the longboard market, where's the segment really at? And where is it heading next season? Here's our Longboard SS18 Trend Report by SOURCE Skateboard Editor **Dirk Vogel**.

People at tradeshow and other industry events have been discussing the health of the longboard market quite a lot recently. But what market, specifically, are they talking about? Because at this point, longboarding has matured and specialized so much, it actually consists of several markets, all with their own product preferences and customers. Longboarders are out there gunning downhills at over 60 mph, but they're also cruising to the store, popping ollies in a ditch or pushing through the 'hood with an SUP paddle.

All of these riders pursue completely different riding styles, the only common denominator being their preference for slightly "longer" boards – but not the same boards. "I don't believe there is one specific thing customers are looking for today, as skateboarders are becoming more and more diverse," said Shane Maloney at Madrid Skateboards. Much like "regular" skateboarding can be divided into street, park, freestyle, and vert, the "longboard" contingent breaks down into three groups: downhill/race, street style, and cruising.

Cruising has been the focus of longboarding's mainstream appeal. It's made a lot of money, seen a lot of growth, but now it's taken a dip in participation (with only female skaters bucking the trend). On the flipside, hardcore participants in the downhill/race segment have been

keeping the faith, and while they represent a smaller fraction of the market, they are also the ones willing to pay for premium product. "I think that quality, materials and innovation are the key in the market now," said Joel Raivio at Nordic upstarts Uitto Boards, adding: "Riders are finding better options and are willing to pay more for quality and durability."

*"I don't believe there is one specific thing customers are looking for today, as skateboarders are becoming more and more diverse," said **Shane Maloney at Madrid Skateboards**.*

Understanding these groups and audiences and serving their specific needs is the key to future success. With that said, here's what's trending in the Three Schools of Longboarding:

1. RACING & DOWNHILL

Audience: Core riders; speed freaks

Trending shapes: Drop-throughs, longer wheelbases

Really, no casual customer is going to strap on a helmet and hoist himself down a steep mountain pass at breakneck speeds like those

A lot of kids want a combination of a normal cruiser with the option of a surf trainer. You can do more turns on a surf skate in ten minutes than you can in a two hour surf." **Kris O'Brien Founder/Director at OB Five**

guys on YouTube. Downhill and racing require some serious skills, and also serious equipment. Drop-through shapes continue to be in high demand, also since they offer a low centre of gravity, and most shapes allow conversion to top-mounting of trucks. Current downhill board constructions also make interesting use of dips and rocker segments in the concave, while next-gen fibre, sandwich, and hollow constructions by major brands are pushing the boundaries.



Photo: Dusters

As opposed to casual riders, customers in this segment purchase individual components such as decks, wheels, trucks. But all premium manufacturers also serve complete downhill boards, including Madrid, Landyachtz (Hollow Tech Stratus model), Hydroponic (DT Kick 3.0), Loaded (Icarus), Lush (Machine 3D X-Tuff), and Dusters. "Our brand-new downhill complete longboard introduces a new shape, new mould, heavier grip tape and brand new wheels that we developed with our rider Malachi Greene," said Dusters California Creative Director Nano Nobrega. And as mentioned earlier, these core customers are willing to pay for top-shelf quality. "We've seen high demand for our \$600 retail foam core carbon fibre downhill/race board, the Triple Beam," said Dave Price, International Sales Manager at Landyachtz.

2. FREESTYLE & STREET

Audience: Core; street skaters
Shapes: Hybrid shapes 36 to 38 inches; kicktail and nose The most innovative in terms of riding technique, freestyle longboarding attracts a core audience, including "regular" street skaters in search of new kicks. These customers demand hybrid shapes that are "longboards with skateboard trucks as a crossover, trying to wipe away the line between skateboard and longboard," said Christoffer Stivén at Urskog, makers of the Gren Jacaranda all-terrain board. Trending shapes feature a kicktail (kicknose optional) with straight rails, mellow concave, and the occasional rocker. Also going strong for many brands, street-oriented mini cruisers are basically longboards for kids: "They help learn the tricks of the trade early, and riders will later switch to a full long board," said Christof Peller at Indiana.

Sector 9, who basically started the category of trick-ready longboards, barge ahead with several SS18 entries such as the Heffer, Orbit, and Royal Flush models. Almost all major brands feed the need with heavy-hitting hybrid shapes next season, including Lush (Samba model), Sector 9, Jucker Hawaii (Skowl Bottom), Arbor, GoldCoast, Madrid, Indiana, Flying Wheels, Quiksilver (Repeater), Loaded, Landyachtz (Revival Series), Mindless (Hamu), Moonshine MFG (Elixir), Uitto (Bark), and Dusters California. Freestyle wheel sizes have been trending down and now range between 62-67mm.

3. SURF SKATE & CRUISING

Shapes: Wide-bellied, pointed nose, reverse front truck
Audience: Mainstream consumers; surfers and other 'boarders The category with the strongest mainstream following, Cruising is currently trending hard towards "surfing on land" with lots of cross-over appeal. "The carving front truck is the real trend in the longboard market right now. People want to find the same sensation as in surfing or snowboarding," said Benoit Brecq at HOFF/Flying Wheels, who just released their Surfin'Series with the new Cut Back Surf Truck. Surf training is also a growing trend: "A lot of kids want a combination of a normal cruiser with the option of a surf trainer. You can do more turns on a surf skate in ten minutes than you can in a two hour surf," said Kris O'Brien Founder/Director at OB Five, adding that many young girls on Australia's Gold Coast aspire to the "Surf Skate Lifestyle." Arbor is also serving the growing women's market with boards like the Axis model, "now offered in a slightly shorter 37 inch version," said Christian Siebrecht at Arbor.

Spanish outfit, Miller Division are big on carving and that "surfy" feel and for this season go heavy on late-80s themed graphics to complement their front-truck pivoting model with RKP truck technology. Miller Division also have a collab with Jimmy'Z to shout about: "We're really proud to give our customers this throwback to the epic late 80s and our collab with JIMMY'Z helps to elevate Miller Division to the global stage," says Miller Division's Kote Olaskoaga. Quiksilver teamed up with Euroglass for a line of surf-inspired longboards, explains Darren Broadbridge, Manager at Euroglass: "We are at the base a surfboard company but the link between skating and surfing is so strong that we were never afraid when Quiksilver asked us to step in and look after this product segment." For next season, Carver Skateboards introduces the eco-designed Proteus surfboard/skateboard pair, "a two-board set with similar functional characteristics for seamless transition between land and sea," said Peter Shu, Marketing & Operations at Carver. German board makers



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Photo: Miller Divison

“I know too many people with injuries because the did not wear a helmet or pads. If you are a first time buyer you must buy protective gear. If you are a shop you should encourage everybody to wear protective gear.” Mike at Jucker Hawaii

Pogo transition into snow sports with the Asueto, “a bindingless powdersurf excitement device.” And finally, Spanish mainstays HLC deliver a tune-up kit to add surf-like turns to any set-up with the YOW truck/suspension system (short for “Your Own Wave”). A quick word on graphics by GoldCoast European manager Mike van Mosel: “The era of wild screaming graphics is over in the mainstream audience and they are looking for high quality graphic designs, relevant for multiple years.”

HOT TREND: PADDLING ON CONCRETE

For this season’s hot trend, the folks at Indiana are taking their stand-up paddle surf expertise into the streets. Used alongside a carving board much like a SUP paddle on the water, their new Skate Pole comes in two versions: Fibreglass (149 SFR) and Carbon (279 SFR). The Poles feature telescopic action and can be adjusted for height, while the rubber Pusher Tip is replaceable to accommodate wear and tear on concrete. Also catching the SUP wave, Pogo longboards offer the Sk8Pole Landpaddle for an extra boost, and other manufacturers are bound to follow.

HOT TREND: SUSTAINABILITY & RECYCLING

In search of new materials, Globe unlocked a new sustainable resource with coconut: “The natural coconut fibres we’ve pressed into exterior plys allow us to use less maple wood and have a little more eco-friendly deck,” said the team at Globe Europe, adding: “Coconuts are readily available, self-sustaining crops, being farmed for their many uses, including coconut milk.” Another growing trend is recycling, which is built into the brand DNA of Aluminati: “Our boards are made in

the USA out of recycled aluminium, making us very eco-friendly, which is currently an important selling point,” said Jimbo Gaskin, General Manager of Aluminati.

Carver is working with Bureo to introduce a composite plastic deck using recycled fishing nets next season. At Landyachtz, the “the Revival Series is about finding lost and forgotten timbers and repurposing them into high quality skateboards,” said Dave Price. The crew at Uitto went deep into product development to make the entire deck recyclable out of biocomposite material, using sustainable wood fibres from Finland: “The Uitto Biocomposite Skateboard was created because we felt guilty throwing warped and delaminated decks to the landfill,” said Joel at Uitto, finalist for ISPO’s BrandNew Award (decks hit shops this summer). Swiss-based Indiana are going the DIY-route by recycling salvaged snowboards into mini cruisers.

“The current FX rate has been a burden on all brands for the past 18 months. We have adjusted our pricing where it is possible. However, unfortunately it is just not possible for retail to remain flat given the FX fluctuation.”
Bod Boyle, Dwindle President

ACCESSORIES: TUNE-UP YOUR RIDE

As participation evolves from casual to mature riders, the level of risk-taking increases. Consequently, “helmets and gloves are accessories that more and more people use,” said Benoit at HOFF. Mike at Jucker Hawaii is outspoken about the issue: “I know too many people with



Team Rider: Malachi Greene



BONES

37" x 9.5"
29.5"/30"/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:

UK – Dwindle Distribution – steven.crawford@dwindle.com - www.dwindle.com | Spain – Dwindle Distribution – luigi.s@dwindle.com - www.dwindle.com
France – V7 – v7@v7distribution.com – www.v7distribution.com | Germany – Urban Supplies – info@urbansupplies.com – www.urbansupplies.com



/dusterscalifornia
@dusterscalifornia
DUSTERSCALIFORNIA.COM

“Only real passionate brands are going to stay, the rest of opportunistic board sellers are going out of business.”

Jordi Quinto Head of Skate Marketing at Hydroponic

injuries because the did not wear a helmet or pads. If you are a first time buyer you must buy protective gear. If you are a shop you should encourage everybody to wear protective gear.” Serious riders keep their boards longer and like to tune-up their gear: “Longboard wheels and bearings are the biggest consumables once skaters are set with a complete. A good selection of bushings also allows retailers to tune a complete to suit the customer’s weight – a big difference to end-user’s enjoyment,” said Richard Auden at Lush longboards. Manufacturers have re-engineered their wheels from the ground up, offering real benefits such as the extra-grippy Carver Roundhouse wheels with centre-set lips with an hourglass surface patch: “You get way more surface area on the road. This allows you to lean into your carves harder than ever before, just like you do when you engage the rail of your surfboard in the water,” said Peter at Carver. Madrid heads into SS18 with the Venom Hard in the Paint Series wheels for massive slides, Flying Wheels has the Forward model, while Penny has been going for smaller sizes: “The double conical 83A durometer wheel has been reduced in size by 3mm to 66mm providing greater acceleration without compromising top speed,” said Becky Dimelow, Trade Marketing Manager at Absolute Board Co.



Photo: Mindless

Truck innovations for next season include the new Mindless Talisman II truck featuring, “improved castings, a strengthened hanger and precision bushing mounts.” Penny has re-tooled their recessed trucks for a lower centre of gravity and increased stability. The Bolzen inverted truck is winning new followers, while Carver Trucks emerge

as a popular choice on complete boards, offering adjustable turns and reverse geometry. The Carver brand is also backing its “adjust-and-repair philosophy” with the multi-use Pipewrench tool. Other must-have accessories for SS18? Definitely stock up on sliding gloves, those SUP land paddles, and some solid POS brand displays, or even better, the Landyachtz Pretty Good Chair as a welcome chill zone in every shop.

MARKET: CURRENCY EFFECTS, OPTIMISM

Speaking of shops, how is the current retail situation in Europe? “About two years ago we saw the longboard market in Europe take a pretty serious dip. Since then it appears that most brick-and-mortar stores have cleared up their old stock issues, and are hopefully a bit more stable,” said the team at Globe Europe. While this is true for stationary retail, the online channel is still under pressure. “Bad news is that the Chinese get more and more aggressive on the market with their own stuff at very little tested quality. They profit from the current mess and try to take over the online market via algorithms and e-commerce,” said Andreas “Maui” Maurmeir at Sector 9.

For added pressure, recent US dollar exchange rates are forcing brands into price changes. “The current FX rate has been a burden on all brands for the past 18 months,” said Dwindle President Bod Boyle, adding: “We have adjusted our pricing where it is possible. However, unfortunately it is just not possible for retail to remain flat given the FX fluctuation.” Benoit at HOFF/Flying Wheels concurs: “All the materials for producing longboards are bought in dollars and with the rate changes to the euro, end prices have increased around 20 per cent.” Deb Fuller at Moonshine MFG suggests: “This is a good time to re-set pricing and level the playing field.”

European manufacturing promises at least some independence from exchange rates. Jucker Hawaii recently shifted production of two dancer models to Cologne: “We are very happy that we were able to work with people in the neighbourhood of our German HQ,” said Mike Jucker. Indiana, Pogo, HLC and other home-grown outfits are still flying the “Made in Europe” flag, joined by newcomers such as Uitto and Urskog.

OUTLOOK

It’s still a not-so-smooth ride, but Jogi Maerz at Pogo expects the rough patch to end soon: “The serious users will remain. Those people will look for quality and buy more expensive boards, like we have seen after the windsurfing, snowboarding- and many other so called ‘fashion’ waves.” Inevitably, this consumer shift will also affect the brand landscape in the long run, said Jordi Quinto, in charge of skate marketing at Hydroponic: “Only real passionate brands are going to stay, the rest of opportunistic board sellers are going out of business.”

HIGHLIGHTS

- Specialization: Street, Cruise, Race
- Price changes inevitable
- Reverse geometry trucks
- Coconut, cork, bamboo
- Hot trend: Recycled materials
- Growth in female segment
- Hot trend: SUP-style paddles

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ARCADE BELTS

All too often, belt displays in stores are not given the attention that they deserve. They can be hidden from plain view in between clothing racks or destined to a life at the back of the store and Arcade belts want to rectify this by providing dedicated fixture units for stores to display their durable and stylish belts. Arcade seeks to provide products that are the antithesis to the cheap belts that they were finding in the market as Co-Founder& Managing Director, Tristan Queen, explains.

Please give an overview of how and why the company began.

Arcade was founded because we wanted a lighter, more versatile, better-performing belt. The designs we were finding at retail were low quality and out-dated, so we redesigned the belt from the ground up with materials and features that are meant for travel, adventure and good times. We started by trying to solve the problem and have let the Arcade belt lead the way from there.

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

David Bronkie- Finance and Operations, Cody Townsend- Professional Athlete (Marketing), Chad Foreman- General Manager (Formerly of Blackbox Distribution- Zero, Fallen, Etc) and Peter Caldwell & Myles Hutchins from Hectic.

What is the company MO ?

Strap in. Venture out. If we reinvest into the people, places and products that make our lives better, we'll be able to create the future for Arcade that we want to see. We really just want every belt we sell to have a good life.

What sets you apart from your competitors ?

Arcade is committed to building better products, not simply redressing an already existing model or looking to fill an underperforming category. We use athlete input to identify progressive materials and design concepts that help us continue to make the best product on the

market.
What marketing are you investing in ?
We invest in people. We have great partnerships with athletes, ambassadors and media around the world. We want to be a good partner for them, so if they believe in what we're doing and they wave the flag for us we then try to help support their projects. This might mean providing free curated content to a media outlet instead of going for a traditional ad buy. Our retailers are very similar, they are investing in our brand and we are committed to returning the favour.

Are you limiting yourself to purely boardsports retailers ?

Not at all. The strength of our company lies in the diversity of our distribution. Many of us that have built lives around boardsports and also love travelling, doing different sports in the off-season, camping and wandering and things like that. Arcade belts live happily in stores that cater to this lifestyle whether the retailer focuses on outdoor, snow, surf, skate or fashion.

Please could you explain a little about the packaging and POS.

The belts are packaged to be hung on one of our fixture solutions while keeping the design aesthetic visible. In addition to this, the packaging is designed in such a way that means belts can be easily tried on and repackaged without damaging the belt or the packaging.

All too often we see belts as a category at the

back of the store on a hidden pillar. From our perspective, a dedicated fixture unit is key to elevating the category in store and driving sell-through. It also enables us to educate and communicate with the customer walking in the door due to the fact we have product call outs incorporated within the unit.

What do you see for the future of your company ?

We want to double down on the things that are working for us and continue to grow the army of people that are part of this brand. Arcade will continue to invest in our product, our industry and our people. The future will take care of itself if we follow this path.

What do you see for the future of the industry ?

I'm very optimistic simply because we are poised for constant change. There are a lot of forward-thinking people out there we look up to who know how to do business in the right way that is sustainable for both them and their partners. This goes for brands, retailers and athletes.

Surfing, skating and snowboarding are not going to all of a sudden stop being fun. As long as the magic that these activities provide remains, there will continue to be an industry. It will evolve and consolidate and morph and it might not look familiar to everyone, but it will remain. There will be brands, retailers and media around to help shape the story. 📢



STATE

State was founded by three skate industry vets in 2016 in order to deliver shoes designed 100% for skateboarding, while focusing purely on core skate retailers. SOURCE has spoken to Founder, Kevin Furtado, formerly of Dekline footwear to profile the brand.

Please give an overview of the State brand.

The Free and Liberated State was founded in January 2016 with the purpose of creating a brand focused on making classic, durable, and affordable skate footwear. With a skateboard team that mirrors the product focus, State has been growing while maintaining our original focus every step of the way. Years of industry experience have led to crafting footwear that we're proud of. All of our shoes are made for skateboarding. We've spared no expense when it comes to making a quality shoe that looks great and can take a beating.

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

The company is 100% skater owned by me, Kevin Furtado with Philip Valois as Art Director and Dustin Deardorff in Footwear Development.

Kevin Furtado: I helped start Dekline Footwear in 2003 with Tum Yeto Inc. I worked for Tum Yeto and was the brand manager for Dekline for 12 years. During my time at Tum Yeto I helped out with other brands under their umbrella in a sales manager position. I left Tum Yeto in 2015 and started State in 2016.

Philip Valois: Working for State is my first foray into the role of an Art Director. Previously, I worked as a designer for Alien Workshop from 2011. In January of 2016 I amicably parted ways with AWS and focused my energy on State.

Dustin Deardorff: My career in footwear began in 1996 when I helped to create the Kastel shoes brand. From 2000 to 2013 I worked for C1rca Footwear as lead footwear designer

where I designed many pro model shoes for some of the best and most well-known professional skateboarders. For the past few years I've been working with various brands as an independent designer. I'm currently very excited to be focusing my efforts with State Footwear.

Who do you have running operations for you in Europe?

Shiner Ltd, based in the UK, handles all aspects of State Footwear's European operations - Sales, distribution, marketing, flow team, etc.

What do you find important about the European market?

EU market is parallel in importance to U.S. market to us. The main goal is be unified in product, voice and marketing. We're starting to sponsor some European flow riders and have had a great response from European shops with some requesting re-stocks already after the Spring '17 European launch.

You're gearing fully towards core skate shops – please explain how.

None of the people involved are interested in creating the brand to exist in anything other than skateboarding. We want to stay with what we know, and that is skateboarding. Because of this, we want to work with retailers whose business is built in skateboarding.

How do you support athletes and boardsports?

State has a skateboard team, we run print and online ads in skateboard media that promote the team and brand. The U.S team consists of Ben Gore, Christian Maalouf, Jordan Sanchez, Kevin Coakely, John Nguyen and Jason Spivey.

We have filming trips with the U.S. team and are looking to create content with European flow riders as time progresses. We're currently flowing regular packages to Conor Charleson (UK), Sondre Mortensen (SWE) and Malte Spitz (GER) and are looking for more EU riders.

Please tell us about your staple shapes and silhouettes.

I am very much a fan of the classic silhouettes so this is where we usually start when conceptualizing the next design. Panels are geared towards skateboarding 100%. The shape of our shoes is built on one 'last' that we developed. The 'last' is slightly more narrow.

What technological innovations/features are you working with to make State shoes skate and last well?

Poly urethane in the sole retains rebound for long lasting comfort and shock absorption. Duraflck is a thin perforated rubber layer underneath the toe and ollie area helps withstand the wear from grip tape. HT Drag is extra rubber used in the heel and toe areas of the outsole to reduce wear cause by drag stops. And finally, Double Wrap is a think layer of rubber that wraps the upper prior to the outer foxing tape wrap, which makes for a stronger and more durable shoe.

Can we expect to see State enter any other product categories?

Footwear is our primary category focus for the initial year or two. However, yes we plan to develop an apparel offering as the brand grows. The focus will be on prints, and accessories. We feel this will happen naturally. 📢



PACSAFE

Having gear stolen is one of the most frustrating experiences for travellers on the road, especially if carrying expensive equipment as is often the case for many boardsports enthusiasts. In 1998 Rob Schlipper had been scouring the globe for the previous decade and noticed a significant gap in the market for anti-theft equipment for travellers - thus Pacsafe was born.

SOURCE spoke to Simon MacGregor, VP of Global Marketing and Ecommerce, about the brand.

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

Pacsafe is by travellers for travellers, ensuring peace of mind for your gear when on the go.

The brand was founded by two intrepid explorers, who after 10+ years of roaming the globe via any form of transport imaginable and staying anywhere from under the stars in deserts to boats across the oceans and through some of the biggest metropolises in the world saw a gap in the travel space for bags that offered peace of mind and protection to your gear when on the go.

The idea behind the brand was actually born from a confluence of events. Whilst skipping yachts, Founder Rob Schlipper's voyage took him to South America and the Galapagos Islands. Whilst on the Galapagos Islands Rob climbed inside the shell of a giant tortoise and an idea was seeded around turtles being world travellers that carry everything on their backs in a protective case and what could this mean for travellers with their gear.

The second came from actually seeing a fellow backpacker's bag wrapped in chicken wire with a lock on it in a seedy hostel in some part of South America. From here Rob engaged friend and fellow traveller Magnus McGlashan with the idea.

After much vetting and design rounds, the two took the leap of faith and headed to Hong Kong and China with an idea that fuelled the birth of the first Pacsafe product, the lockable net bag protector. Called eXomesh, the cut resistant, lightweight, strong, stainless steel wire remains a key innovation and IP of Pacsafe

Anti-Theft Technology offerings today and was a first for the industry.

In 1999 the Pacsafe was awarded the Editor's Choice Award for Backpacker Magazine which helped open the door for the brand and highlight the innovation to the world stage. As Pacsafe started picking up speed further applications, were dreamed up with the eXomesh technology and how other locking systems could be incorporated into a bag. As ideas kept brewing and more demand of time for development was needed in China, the two founders thought Hong Kong seemed like the ideal location due to its close proximity to China for further product development and QC efforts as well as being at the confluence of East meets West and access to the world. From here Rob and Magnus could easily develop products and jump on a plane to anywhere to test them.

The expansion of the product line by Pacsafe in the initial years saw the introduction of the first bag that featured the full wrapping technology and lockable technology of eXomesh in a bag. Named the Travelsafe it was the first bag to really feature robust anti-theft technology.

Today Pacsafe is the pioneer and world leader in Anti-Theft Technology. With over 40 patents and 15 pending technologies in securing your stuff when on the go, Pacsafe is often emulated but never imitated.

Pacsafe is distributed in over 80 countries worldwide with its foundation still in quality gear by travellers for travellers, delivering peace of mind solutions so you can just go!

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

Pacsafe has recently made some major hiring to support its global expansion with an experienced key management team recruited and put in place. This is made up of;

Rob Schliper Founder and CEO – Global traveller with a foundation from an engineering background.

Magnus McGlashan Founder and MD & APAC GM – Global traveller with a foundation in a sales/marketing background.

Thomas Rhyll – GM of EMEA ex VF Corp with Eagle Creek.

Phil Hayes - SVP Product and Marketing ex Quiksilver and Animal.

Tim Corliss – GM of America's ex-Incase and Adidas.

Sean Wu – CFO / COO ex-Incase.

Simon Macgregor – VP of Marketing and Ecommerce ex-Quiksilver and EMU Australia.

What do you see for the future of your company?

Our focus is to grow our brand recognition and visibility in the marketplace. We are re-launching our online platform in 2017. We have some great innovative product and technology coming down the pipeline for 2018 that will further enable the consumer to be able to do more on the go with peace of mind, which is very exciting. 📍



SURF PERIMETERS

Jim Storey knows the struggle that many surfers suffer at the hands of the work/play scenario. Those that work in landlocked urban areas regularly long to escape the city for a slice of adventure but work commitments so often leave little time for such activities. With his Surf Perimeters apparel brand, Jim actually celebrates this dual role with minimal, clean pieces that are suitable in the city and on the beach.

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

Working in London for the last 20 years or so, I've really struggled to connect to mainstream surf and lifestyle brands – the designs and styling can be (for me) a bit too gnarly to wear in my everyday life and the brand imagery and lifestyle shots often feel intangible. Almost unreachable for someone who spends most of his time in big cities, long distances from the nearest break. So I've always found it difficult buying into the ethos and culture which they represent because it's not my reality.

I strongly believe that surfers are not defined by location or vocation. It is the shared spirit which unites us. And I've longed for a brand which really understands this. A brand for the slightly more discerning surfer who navigates different environments in their daily life and wants to weave a more minimalist, contemporary saltwater brand into his wardrobe each day in order to keep the fire burning.

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

Just me at the moment! I was born in Cornwall and then moved around the world a bit when I was younger, ending up back in the UK from the age of about 10.

The ocean has always been a big part of my life despite the fact that I've spend most of my

working career in landlocked locations! My wife and I actually moved back to Cornwall in 2008 because I longed for that proximity to the surf again – I was flying to London from Newquay Airport every week but then the financial crisis hit and I ended up having to stay in London over weekends so, after about a year, we had to move back. In retrospect, I think having to return to the big city environment and lose that connectivity with the sea again really affected me and probably ignited my thinking behind Surf Perimeters.

Career-wise, after finishing my degree at Exeter University, I kind of gravitated to London with my mates to find a job and ended up working in Management Consulting which is what I still do today, albeit on a freelance basis now. It means I can pay the bills and also have some flexibility in between pieces of work to dedicate to SP as well as spend time with my amazing family.

What sets you apart from your competitors ?

Our identity is quite unique. I mean, there are some brands which use surfing and its associated imagery to sell products to city-based people. But most lack authenticity. We are a real, genuine surf brand with saltwater spirit embedded in our soul.

The product styles are extremely high quality across the entire collection as we've sought to raise the bar to offer a more premium product proposition. I guess it comes down

to the details, fabric selection and meticulous attention to the manufacturing process.

The branding itself is sharper and more minimalist compared to other surf brands. Our surfboard icon speaks immediately to saltwater spirit and is very 'clean' in its design. This is really important for us and our brand identity – being able to showcase surfing authenticity in a refined, minimalist way through our branding. Straight away I want people to notice the branding as being surf-related. But equally I want it to be subtle and minimalist. This is a tricky balance to get right but I think we've done it & the feedback received so far has been immensely positive which is great.

You're working with some top athletes/ industry professionals, please tell us about this.

I've sought out advice and guidance along the way to ensure that the products are as technically proficient and stylistically appealing as possible. This has ranged from people who used to work at some of the mainstream surf brands in menswear design to professional surfers & snowboarders, freeride backcountry riders and also a selection of people from other action sports. I've also focused on getting input from our target market – people who I snowboard / splitboard with, city-based folk who have saltwater spirit in their soul and want to showcase that in a sharper way, and also regular surfers who are interested in adopting a more refined look. 📍

NEW PRODUCT

01 -LEUS X CONNER COFFIN SIGNATURE TOWEL, YWT EXPRESS

WSL surfer and Co-Founder, Conner Coffin, takes you on a Californian journey with his signature Young Wise Tails Express towel. Designed with LEUS co-founder, Conner Coffin, creating the ultimate surf towel. The perfect size to change in and out of your wetsuit/trunks, extra soft, and a stylish nod to his California roots. Printed on 100% Cotton.

www.leustowels.com

02-SPARK R&D ARC SPLITBOARD BINDING

The Arc splitboard binding is an ultra-light, pow-chasing machine. Built with their pin-less Tesla T1 System, it's the most user-friendly and proven backcountry binding in the industry. For 17/18 the Arc features Spark's new Pillow Line injection moulded ankle and toe straps – lightweight, comfortable, and extremely durable.

www.sparkrandd.com

03-PRO-TEC FULLCUT HELMET

Stand out from the crowd with this retro masterpiece. Raised by the godfathers of skateboarding the Fullcut helmet is back and better than ever in it's CE & CPSC certified version in flash gold flake or more subdued black or white. Also in the Spring 2017 lineup are more colours across the whole Pro-Tec line.

www.protecbrand.com

04-ELLIOT BROWN CANFORD

Elliot Brown's virtually indestructible Canford re-launches in six new colourways. Setting the bar high is this '021 with distinctive gold detailing set off on fitted textured black leather.

www.elliottbrownwatches.com

05-REVOLWE™ SURF LEASH

Revolwe™ Surf Leash is the world's most sustainable/eco-friendly leash without compromising on performance. Using fabric made of a unique combination of Yulex® natural rubber, recycled PET-bottles and recycled TPU. This saves a great amount of energy and CO2 emissions.

www.revolwe.com

06-LIB TECH ROUND NOSE FISH REDUX SURFBOARD

The RNF REDUX hybrid features a very low overall centreline rocker, with modest single concave under the front foot, to keep the board planing at low speeds. The concave gradually reduces to flat up in the nose, allowing forgiving entry into waves and in and out of turns. The radical change from concave in the centre, to vee in the tail creates an aggressive rail rocker that engages when the board is rolled onto an rail, thus allowing tight radius turns on the face, and in the lip.

www.lib-tech.com/surfboards

07-Z-FLEX BLACK HEX SKATEBOARD

Since 1976, Z-Flex has been dedicated to creating the world's best skateboards. The new Black Hex complete in 8" features the classic Z round logo and includes Z-Flex trucks, 100a 52mm wheels and Z-Speed bearings. Also available in Red 7.75 and Blue 8.25.

www.zflex.com/eu

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07





MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY	UK	FRENCH	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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Those of you who read this article in the print editions may have noticed a little gremlin that crept into the last issue where it was a repeat of the previous month. Apologies for that - hopefully this month you'll get the real thing.

The winter season is all but over (at the time of writing this) and it's fair to say that it has been way better than we could possibly have dreamt of back in the autumn. Shelves are cleaner, stock is lower, turnover has been healthy, business previously lost to the EU has been recaptured. All in all, we have relatively happy people.

Sadly this is not necessarily transferring through to confidence when it comes to buying. UK business as a whole lacks confidence and the boardsports industry is no different. Just where is Brexit going to take us? Just how low can the pound go? The impact on re-tail prices (everywhere) is now becoming evident and it is safe to assume that consumer confidence will continue to be hit. This translates through to the buyers who are being über-cautious.

So how are our retailers feeling?

I thought I should start with a certain Ross from Freeze Edinburgh who I bumped into at ISPO. You may recall that Ross does not (did not!) believe in attending trade shows. So what was he doing at ISPO? "I didn't change my mind - although I guess you would say that I have - I still think that these trade shows are 'swagging' exercises (Ross actually used another expression!) and there's not a whole lot to be gained by seeing our estab-lished brands. But our business is undergoing massive growth and we need new brands. We need to be first to those brands - that's why I went."

Talking further to Ross I did not appreciate that he was, in fact, an ISPO Virgin - would he go back? "Nah. I don't think so. One of the issues was that my time was taken up with loads of brands that I already do business with - and that's not my intention. I can do all those from the comfort of my home with a good PDF catalogue."

So apart from ISPO how has the season been? And we get Ross's favourite description: "Banging. Absolutely Banging". He continues in the same vein: "Amazing. No complaints. Next season will not be so easy but as long as we get parity pricing with the EU then I'm confident we will continue to grow." What about surf? "Again we have had an insane winter season and we're lining up to repeat last summer's performance. Coming out of such a strong winter (for surf) we're confident that summer will follow through." Ever the optimist, with good reason, I leave Ross to it.

This time around, unusually, the phone calls appear to be a pleasure to make. So often you pick up the phone with a bit of dread expecting to hear how bad things are. Chris from Snowfit in Norwich may well be reaping some benefit from how bad things have been. "Snowboarding is stronger than it has been for a long time which could be put down to a number of reasons but we cannot ignore the fact that two of our major snow-board competitors have gone out of business." Every cloud..."but the business is still 70/30 ski/board and it's been pretty good overall with ski continuing to be steady all the way through the season. There's only been about five weeks where we were either on par or a little down on the previous year and every other week has been up. Some significantly. So we're happy." What's made it such a good season? "Strangely enough the stupid Brexit decision has certainly helped. The weak pound encouraged overseas sales whilst, at the same time, the

home market remained buoyant." How about the tail end of the season? "We're a little later going into 'sale' mode this year - not by design - but it's not adversely affected us at all and business is holding up well."

Snowfit is a rare breed of shop in this day and age. Hitting their 20th birthday next year they are staying true to their roots as a pure winter sports shop. "We do not have a wa-tersports or outdoorsy shift in the summer. We focus on the local dryslope and we also service customers in the Southern Hemisphere - that's our MO and we're sticking to it," Chris concludes.

Writing this article is always a bit of a struggle - mostly because when you call a store or a buyer they're always busy and they don't have time. That said, just about everyone will talk to you eventually. But trying to get hold of someone from one of the 'giants' in the industry is virtually impossible. This month I was lucky enough to catch up with Sam Taylor, Buying Manager at Surfdomo. It's no secret that Surfdomo has gone through some pretty enormous changes in the past couple of years so how are things now? "It's all good...mostly. We had a strong end to 2016 and whilst demand has been a little weaker so far this year the winter category is well up. We've also consolidated a lot pull-ing back from around 450 brands to 220, interestingly though if you look at the sales of these remaining brands then we are seeing positive growth. Our attention is focused on the hardware customer where we can achieve a higher sales value. By being more niche we will hopefully avoid what we see as the weaker mass market".

What about the buy-in for next winter? "We've kept it tight and are not anticipating any huge growth. Everyone in the market is really uncertain about how the consumer is go-ing to react to the price rises which, in some cases, are significant."

"One area of focus is our headline sustainability effort focused around marine lit-ter. We've now cut out almost all plastics from our own outbound packaging and use recycled cardboard, paper and gum tape for most packaging. The next stage is to work with suppliers and help them do the same. The bottom line is that our customers care, as do we, so we feel it's important to promote and educate. If a product comes to us with green credentials then it is immediately of interest".

Check out 'The Plastic Project' (plastic-project.com) it's worth a look and is something we should all be passionate about.

Finally - I went wakeboarding last weekend - it was bloody cold. So I thought I'd dip my toe in the water and have a chat to Russ from Box End Park (one of the best cable parks in the UK). "Hibernation is almost over, the maintenance and repairs have all been car-ried out and we're just waiting for the weather to break." But you do run through the winter? "Yes we have a hard core of weekend riders but I cannot pretend it's busy - the restaurant and bar are open which means that it is not a big deal to open the cable as well. Understandably momentum slowed when we had snow on the ground for three weeks - even the hardcore riders broke the habit. All that said, we're optimistic for the season ahead and have a positive feeling that it's going to be a good one."

You know what? I think he is right. We've got lots to bitch and moan about in the UK and we can all bleat and bemoan (or not) about Brexit. But I have a feeling - it IS going to be a good one.

Gordon Way



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY	UK	FRENCH	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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Comparisons to the "good old times" are rife thanks to one of the best winters in recent times, with great results for core snowboard shops in Germany - "sensational" even, for those very close or in the mountains, as Tobi Hammer from Ridersheaven in the Allgäu reports. He calls it the best winter since they opened their shop. With a range of ski resorts in Germany and Austria close by, they sell a lot to tourists who need to buy stuff for their holidays and are not as price sensitive as customers in big cities, where high street stores start reducing from the beginning of December.

Ridersheaven didn't start their sales period before the middle of March, leaving them a lot of turnover with regular price tags. "When the tourists need a new boot for their holiday, they have to buy one," Tobi says, but adds that boots have been a huge success for them this year in general. "Snowboard boots are a great category as they bring customers back into the shop. You can't really buy them online, like a board. We actively promote proper boot fitting with extra soles and really take our time with this, instead of just selling boots out of the box. Customers can make an appointment where we then bake the boots so they perfectly fit their feet." More marketing and active support from brands would be a great help for a category as consultation-intensive as this, Tobi says. Especially because it has a complimentary side effect a lot of shops could benefit from: "As the fitting process takes about an hour, a lot of people bring their whole family along for the shopping trip. Which means that a lot of fashion items and accessories can be sold as well." Such a service is so popular that even people who have to drive a fair distance make use of it.

Service is also the number one tool for the Blowout shop in Würzburg, who are proud to have a really strong sales team who know their business. In the digital age with online shops sprouting up everywhere, there will always be those profiting from advice without giving back, yet co-owner Emi is not too fussed about them: "If they sink so low ethically, you just have to let them go," he says chuckling. The first, initial sale is often lost to cheaper offers, he admits, yet a lot of those customers come back once they realize that their cheap gear really doesn't work as well. "They remember what we told them and when they come back, they're back for life."

Low rise rocker boards are among the favourites of sales team and customers in Würzburg, as they "redefine the All Mountain category with great riding properties on slopes and in powder," says Emi, "but nothing too crazy, we've always made sensible choices here and opted for moderate versions that stay around much longer than the extremes." He'd generally wish for less "crazy" innovations that are mainly driven by marketing purposes and tend to contradict efforts from previous years, and more constant development of technologies that really work. He gives a special mention to Ride Snowboards and their kids boards here, "that are just as good as the regular boards, yet subsidised in order to offer parents good value for their money." Emi has huge respect for anyone still going through the efforts of teaching their kids to snowboard, as most ski schools still don't allow kids on a board from an early age.

Next to strong hardware sales, Blowout reports surprisingly good turnover with outerwear, which had been especially difficult in previous

seasons. "A bit of colour blocking works really well, as Horsefeathers are showing, and a classic look - not too tight yet not too baggy. Fit is the most important factor," Emi states and is stunned at how much people can fuss about that these days. "Even with a classic t-shirt they can spend hours in front of the mirror, debating whether the sleeves are a tiny bit too long or the seam is a bit too high..."

Streetwear fashion was also a big issue at Ridersheaven, who report especially great sales in the women's sector. "There are only a few shops really into that anymore and we have a strong advantage with three girls in our sales team." Reason enough to actively pursue female customers with a wider assortment: "We will actively expand this with more girl-specific brands and items from brands like Pull-in, Kari Traa and Rip Curl, who have a great women's range. Activewear from brands like Roxy works really well too." With womenswear accounting for 50% of revenue in the shop already, they're looking to move even further into SUP, SUP yoga and fitness this year.

Tobi also mentions that fair trade organic clothes are picking up speed as well. "You totally feel the difference in touch and quality, and customers are ready to spend 10 euros more for something that is not the usual 0815 shirt." Sustainable brands and products are an important category for the Saltwater Shop as well, a fairly young online store, now with two brick and mortar subsidies in the north of Germany. "We concentrate on various products from smaller brands that share our love for boardsports and convince with top quality, as well as products from foreign brands that are difficult to get over here," Florian Laudon explains. "Our concept store in Hamburg offers customers a chance to see and try products and brands, while the store in Heiligenhafen supplies the greater area close to the Baltic Sea with surf equipment." They also feel a growing demand for women's and kid's products again, as well as "products that tell a story, are authentic and based on sustainability."

With the rise of cold water surfing, the Saltwater Shop didn't "really feel a 'winter' in the surf sector, certain categories like sun screen are sold all year around," Florian says. With a strong focus on summer products for windsurfing, kiteboarding and SUP, winter has always been a bit low for the Surfshop Fehmarn on the most north-eastern tip of the country, as Basti reports. "Yet with SUP the season lasted considerably longer, until the end of Autumn." In order to enable their customers a "warm start to their season" they adjust their range of neoprene according to seasons: "This winter the trend to brave the cold with a 5-6mm wetsuit with integrated hood has continued. We work with Xcel who convince almost anyone with their features and material."

He's not so convinced about the way that product cycles are speeding up, which is prevalent in all of our industries. "We always wonder about manufacturers complaining about numbers, as they all play their part in the over production. This leads to reductions of current collections when we're already confronted with new products in peak season. What sense does it make in 2017 to already be looking forward to 2019's products?" If anyone has a valid answer to that, please let us know.

Anna Langer



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY

UK

FRENCH

ITALY

SPAIN

AUSTRIA

SWISS

At the time of writing this, France is in the middle of a presidential race. Throughout its whole history, the fifth republic has never seen so many twists and turns. This crazy presidential campaign surpasses even the most far-fetched works of political fiction. We often wonder why France is incapable of creating a political series with the quality of The West Wing or House of Cards from America, Borgen from Denmark or The Thick of It from Britain. The reason is simple: reality goes way beyond fiction. A screenplay recounting the political events since 2012 would have to be toned down by producers for being too unbelievable.

In the years to come, political scientists will study the 2017 presidential election and will notice that there was no campaign, that the favourites, Duflot, Juppé and Valls were all eliminated in the primary, that the two leading candidates in the polls, Le Pen and Macron were the only to not have been selected by a primary election, that the right's candidate was subject of an investigation and that there was a chance that an ex advisor and minister of François Hollande could be the incarnation of change, after five years in power, by being elected President of the Republic in his first attempt at the age of 40. This non-campaign is not a crisis of the institutions of the 5th Republic, it is a crisis of the current political personnel. It's customary to say that if they are elected they deserve it but hasn't the time come to ask whether France deserves better?

But is this stormy political climate favourable to our boardsports market? How do our retailers feel? While most shops we asked said that Winter 2017 was in line with previous years, half of them said it was actually better. For Cyril from the shop Tamarindo in Oléron it was even "more active than last year." In particular he noticed, "a rise in foreign tourist numbers this year, which contributed to the success of this winter season." Zaz from Uncle Zaz Surf shop in Anglet confirms this sensation with "a better start than last year at the same period." At Ride and Style in Val Thorens, "there are always people around, we are well located at altitude and during the season we had lots of visitors." They even had a, "rise in hardware and street clothing sales," on winter 2016. At Sport Adventure in Bordeaux, it's a bit more reserved. "Although the passionate riders were around at the start of the season looking for specific products, the rest of the winter was more difficult." There was a delay to the real start of the season, undoubtedly because of a lack of snow around Christmas and the generally high temperatures throughout the winter. For shops in the cities, business seems to be flat on last year, as Terre de Glisse in Nantes confirms: "the frequency and the sales in store has been pretty stable over the last few months compared to last year in the same period."

"Above average temperatures for the season had noticeable consequences on technical clothing compared to last year," confide Ride and Style. This is a range of products that sold quite well last year but didn't seem to go so well this season because of the weather. In terms of material and more specifically boards, Ride and Style adds: "Brands like Jones, Lib Tech and Gnu were more sought after by customers," and they also noticed an increase in women's ranges, especially clothing, boots and bindings. On the other hand, mainstream brands like Burton in snowboarding seem to have seen less success this season compared to previous years. But globally the winter season is a little bit

better than last year. The snow arrived a little late this season and as we all know, the level of snow is important to help the resorts to stay open longer in the season. This directly impacts in retails. Ride and style confirm: "This season is pretty good, we've improve our sales in hardgoods and the street wear is on a level with 2016."

In Streetwear, for Le Cri Du Kangourou in Lyon, "skateboarding and especially cruiser and surf skates are popular products right now." The popularity of surf skate is steadily growing and seems to be the 'in' product this spring with brands like Carve, Yow and FlyingWheels. One thing seems clear to everyone, as confirmed by the shop CDK, the plastic cruiser seems to be really in decline in specialised shops. As for textiles at Grand Central in Valette du Vars, brands that stood out already last year seem to be being requested by customers again this spring. The manager is talking in particular about brands like Thrasher, Stussy and Palace. "Our customers are looking for less mainstream brands with their own identity, they also like all the high-end products, in particular artist collab series."

On the coast surf conditions were pretty decent. At Tamarindo in Oléron, Cyril confirms that, "the good conditions turned customers towards buying wetsuits and boards." And it's the same reality further north in Terre de Glisse, Nantes: "The weather was really good and the temperature was also good for the season, people came into the shop to buy surfboards due to the really good surf conditions."

Cyril adds, "neoprene and accessory ranges worked pretty well this winter and spring with brands like Vissla thanks to their good value for money or Patagonia for their environmental appeal." In surfboards, Cyril highlights: "The trend for retro/modern seems to be established this season, as is the return of the twin as well as new shapes from Rusty, DHD and Hayden." Zaz from Uncle Zaz Surf shop in Anglet have another analysis regarding surfboards and more specifically constructions: "People are more and more interested in technologies. Brands like Surftech started out with variations on Epoxy construction. Now brands like Firewire, Torq and Lib Tech are the most in demand brands in this sector. They are constantly working on creating new performance boards for everyone."

Everyone agrees in saying that the unquestionable strength of shops lies in advice above anything else. More often, clients are coming into shops to see the products and to obtain informed advice that is tailored to their needs. It's this professional, trust-based relationship that customers are coming in for and shops have to work harder than ever to build the loyalty of their clientele.

Spring 2017 seems to be gradually creeping into retailers' floor space and the preliminary signs are encouraging. Despite the topsy-turvy political climate in France, our market seems to be gliding through the current turmoil and the horizon of spring 2017 is providing glimpses into quite promising trends. The presidential election in May is sure to tell us more about it...

Benoit Brecq

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MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY	UK	FRENCH	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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Supposedly, in Austria, it ‘s been the coldest January in the last 30 years. It was -3.3 degrees Celsius lower than the long-term average between 1981 and 2010, with the lowest temperature being an icy -26.4 degrees. But the cold months are finally changing over to longer and warmer days, and spring collections are finding their way onto shop racks.

We spoke to Hannes from Conny’s Boardshop in Brixlegg about this year’s ISPO: “For a core skate and snowboard shop like us there were nearly no brands over there, which made ISPO more of a show to see and to be seen at - it’s not that crucial for our shop anymore.” Still, he liked the new concept: “You could feel the concept behind it, it was super-stylish and I personally liked it very much - everything at the same height, everything coherent; it was really pleasant and reminded me of Bright.”

Though the long and cold winters may frustrate skateboarders, it was a blessing for snowboard dealers: “For the first time in a long while, we were having real fun again during the winter season. It hasn’t been very rich in snow here in Alpbach, we didn’t have a lot of powder days, but it has been very cold the whole time and our sales mirrored that. Anyone saying that they didn’t sell well this year is either lying or did something wrong.” Besides outerwear - “which will always sell when it’s -15, -20 degrees for three weeks in a row,” - snowboard hardware was the best seller at Conny’s Boardshop: “There really shouldn’t be too many more people coming to the shop, they’ve bought it all! We’re out of stock, especially when it comes to bindings and boards,” Hannes reports. The new carvers and powder sticks were well-received by his customers, too. “The whole new shape thing is clearly trending right now. The older generation still likes the classics, but anyone else is asking

for other shapes.” Carmelo from Pipeline shop in Bregenz is also content with this winter, but for another reason: “For two years now, we’ve renounced seasonal winter products, so it doesn’t matter if it’s winter or off-season.”

At Pipeline shop, accessories, caps, beanies and hoodies were selling especially well, “as well as products that are hard to find, for example, brands that are not sold by all the big dealers. The price doesn’t matter at all; brands like RipnDip, Thrasher and Huf are killing it.”

For spring at Pipeline it’s all about, “colours (pink, pale pink and white) as well as products that are sustainably produced (Toms shoes, Dedicated brand). We want to clothe our customers according to their budget - from urban classics for 12 euros for a t-shirt to RipNDip jumpers for 120 euros. It’s important that we have something on offer for any budget.” Hannes from Conny’s Boardshop is stoked on skateboarding: “The Cradle skatepark is just around the corner from our store and we work together quite a lot and do many events to push the local skate scene as much as possible.” It’s also because of the Cradle skatepark that, for Conny’s Boardshop, longboarding has never been a big thing. “I clearly sell more skateboards than longboards and I think there are not many shops out there that will tell you that.” Carmelo from Pipeline underlines that his “customers know exactly what they want and brands that understand this will sell well. Brands like Supreme and Palace that don’t supply shops at all manage to distribute their products without any help - respect! Those brands who don’t support retailers like us - no respect!”

Barbara Mayer

GERMANY	UK	FRENCH	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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The final months of 2016 and early 2017 witnessed continued significant economic progress in Spain. Specifically, continued intensive new job creation and a positive financial climate has led to sustained household spending on consumer services and goods, at a similar rate to that experienced of late.

Employment remains on the rise, leading to notable consumption implications. According to a number of business managers, sales are stabilising, times of uncertainty when it comes to placing orders have passed, although we are far from out of the woods, just yet.

Milo Castelo, one of the top surfers to have hailed from Galicia, and manager of the surf school and store Mission Surf Shop, in Pontevedra affirms, “sales have seen a gradual increase over the course of the year. Generally speaking, a slight market climate change is afoot, with the footwear sector having reached a peak and textile sales now on the rise. The female lines also looks to be making a gradual comeback. In terms of technical board material, the market is responding positively to cutting edge technology and new top tier product price tags. In terms of softgoods, the top sellers are mid-season clothes lines: sweaters, trousers, jumpers, hoodies, etc., whilst top selling hardgoods have been mid-range wetsuits, accessories such as ponchos, gloves, hats, boots - currently proving particularly popular - and the surfboard stalwarts (HadenShapes, JS).

Milo is concerned in the light of such an extensive online offering for most brands as well as brands’ own websites, which has ultimately led to a drop in sales at physical stores. This concern is shared by Sergio Martin, of the skate, clothing, footwear and accessory store VSD in Vitoria-Gasteiz, the capital of the Basque Country. Open to the public since 1996, “the market is complex, marred by the internet and brands, with customers getting all too familiar with unrealistic

prices which fall well below margins. Our strongest competitors are the brands themselves.” In his particular case, Sergio suggests that shoe sales are dropping whilst the opposite is true for clothing. “It was the other way round until recently. There’s been a slight shift.”

In terms of the skiing industry, this season has been a prosperous one, despite a sluggish start due to little snow. But in Baqueira Beret, for example, one of the most popular ski resorts, the season began with the use of artificial snow, and according to Maria España, manager of the Cuylás stores in Madrid, Barcelona and Baqueira, this year has seen significant accessory and textile sales. “One thing that’s clear is that you always have to be in overdrive. Online shopping has always been a factor. First it was competition with Andorra, and then came Decathlon. A clear vision and specialisation are key. Online is a must - after all, it’s another route - but reinventing oneself is becoming even more important. Market prices have to be met. Customers are increasingly knowledgeable and are becoming even more demanding: They want the best, they want to be fashionable and they want the latest when it comes to the technical side of sport. Our customers are passionate about sport. Mountain sports are the current fad: the mixed mountaineer, the timeless skier who enjoys and practices mountain sports with running, trail running, etc.”

Sport is most definitely the in thing, regardless of age. Sliding sports and the big outdoors go hand in hand and appeal to an extremely wide audience, which, accordingly, has a positive impact on sales. The imminent future for stores is that of specialisation, and regard for customers who are increasingly more aware, demanding, and who want the best and the latest when it comes to practising their favourite sports. It seems low cost fever is on the way out.

Jokin Arroyo



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY	UK	FRENCH	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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Surprise surprise, another prime minister has had to vacate their position early; Mr Matteo Renzi has left after losing his last referendum regarding a constitutional law change. Mr Paolo Gentiloni takes over as our new PM after previously serving as Minister for Foreign Affairs. The masses aren’t overjoyed as it means that we’ve once again been left with a new prime minister we didn’t vote for. As we have a lot of issues to solve right now such as state debt, unemployment, refugee crisis, slow (and low) GDP growth, it’s crucial that the population feels represented well as the overall mood isn’t great.

For boardsport business, winter came late and it came in the southern area so a lot of retailers struggled once again with outerwear and hardgood sales. Speaking to Edo Sgarbossa, General Manager for Nitro Italy, the main problem in hardgoods sales is that old snowboards still in stores from last season are stealing a lot of sales from new boards - the old ones are on sale and still offer good quality and designs. The rental segment is growing little by little but overall the market has reduced as stores take less stock, with the risk being too high. Edo says that dealers need a lot of support from suppliers, as otherwise it’s impossible for them to offer a decent selection. Other than this, Nitro are really happy with their boot sales and are looking confidently into another new season of pre-books.

Overall, Union seems to be the market leader in bindings and Capita is showing good signs of growth - the Mothership seems to be paying off! Having so much snow in the south was actually detrimental to some businesses in regions where it doesn’t normally snow as they were forced to close their doors and suffered from missed sales opportunities.

The Seiser Alm Snowpark saw its first freestyle snowboard and

GERMANY	UK	FRENCH	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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Please allow me to start this little article with a small erratum for my piece in issue 84 where I stated that Nitro sales were slightly down. After more in-depth discussion with retailers and more investigation, it appears that Nitro have actually had a good 16/17 season with sales slightly up on the previous year. I apologize for this overly hasty analysis.

It’s difficult to talk about business in Switzerland without citing the complicated winter we’ve had; the snow arrived too late and that took its toll, even more so as it was the same throughout almost the whole of Europe, which created a surplus of stock just about everywhere and the price war that ensued was worse than we’ve ever seen before. This type of issue forces retailers to rethink their price strategies. It’s clear that the times of calculating a 2.0 mark-up on hardgoods are over if we want to keep enticing visitors. Obviously no one likes it but these days it’s imperative to make these kinds of considerations.

In general, the noticeable trend in recent years for an increase in snowboard rentals and a drop in sales is confirmed. So the brands that are already strong in this area can benefit from this, as is the case for Burton, Head, Salomon and K2. As for sales, it seems as though boards have sold a bit better than boots and bindings. This is exactly what Matt Rouiller from Levitation in Martigny explains as well as Reto Aerni from Pipeline in Solothurn and Biel, for whom Nitro and Lib Tech boards sold well.

When it comes to skateboarding, the market is always somewhat slower in winter and is picking back up again now. For Matt Rouiller from Levitation in Martigny, the market in his region diverges into

ski slopestyle World Cup this past January and it was a big success with a lot of riders and visitors attending. New Italian young guns showcased their talent and the whole event was broadcasted live on TV, exposing snowboarding to a big mainstream audience in Italy.

The skate and streetwear market is still thriving off the Thrasher magazine trend. Thrasher is (still) the hottest thing right now, but core skateboarding labels in general are celebrating a big revival and (high street) stores are once again paying more attention to the clothing collections from skateboarding companies. Mostly because consumers know exactly what they want to buy and the Hypebeast movement is rife and retailers really have to adapt and offer the right selection that kids are asking for. Reacting fast is very important nowadays as younger generations don’t care so much about where they buy from, but instead they simply want the exact brand and style they are searching for. This provides an opportunity for smaller stores as they can react quicker and be more innovative than big box stores, thus giving them the ability to stock smaller and more exclusive labels.

On the footwear side, running shoes are still a big trend for the young audience, but skateshoes are slowly coming back and the trend of good looking tech-shoes is the next thing, especially for skaters. NB Numeric is the latest brand to find its way into Italian skate shops and streetwear stores and the guys are currently setting up a team and plan to do their first Italian tour in 2017.

Skateboarding is seeing more exposure than ever before, so let’s hope our industry and especially the core retailers can profit from this movement as they are the ones who are the most stoked when a new skater is born.

Franz Josef Holler

two categories: that of classic skateboarding (used for tricks) and that of the cruiser (used to get around on). Adepts of these two sports are not generally the same people; classic skaters are brand and image orientated, younger and need cheaper and more frequently replaced products. The cruiser market has an older demographic who use skateboarding as a means of transport, they buy less frequently and are less affected by price issues. It’s important to realise that in equal volumes the cruiser market is more lucrative because the margins are better. On the contrary, it’s clearly tough to draw decent margins from the classic skate sector, even if it is improving thanks to European brands occupying a healthy place in the Swiss market today. For Matt, the brands that are doing well right now are mostly these European brands such as Magenta, for example. The types of boards are more often wide boards ideal for bowls, which we find more and more frequently in Swiss skateparks.

The Swiss surfing hardgoods market seems to be growing slowly but surely and although the Swiss are tireless mountain people, they are travelling in search of waves more frequently. That’s why interest in surfing is increasing here. Another Rouiller, Blaise this time from the shop DPM-Shop in Les Diablerets, being the wise old man of the ocean that he is after twenty-odd summers, is being asked for advice on surfing more and more each year. With the help of some social networking adverts and a well-established network in place, he is able to sell an increasing number of boards to Swiss surfers at the end of each winter.

Fabien Grisel

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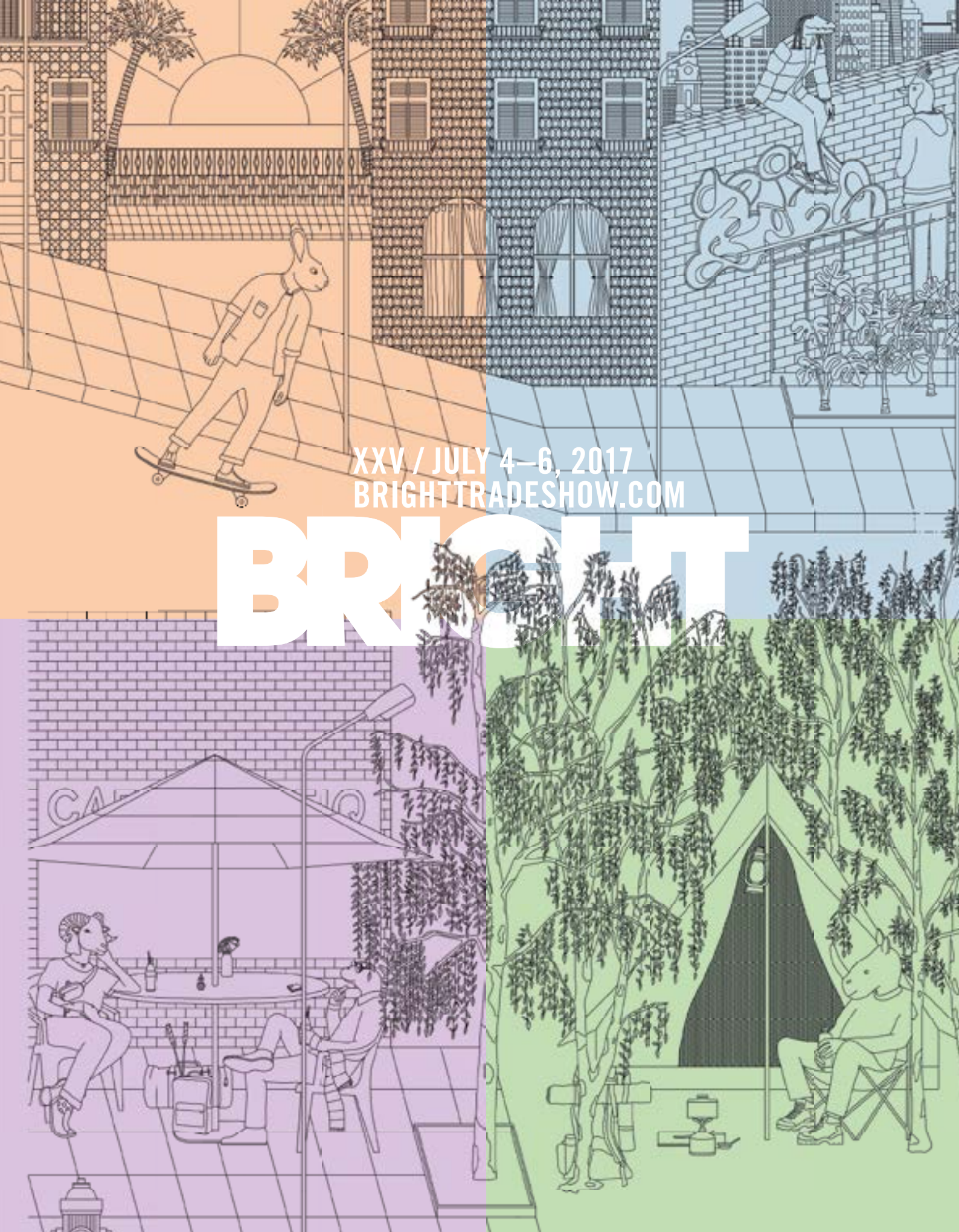
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BRIGHT

BATALEON MOUNTAIN LODGE * TSA WEEK



Bataleon Mountain Lodge



Dennis getting the schnapps in



Schnapps !



TSA crew and Bataleon's Dennis

LIVING ROOM BANKED SLALOM



Gregor Common, Amplid and Pommès, Headshaper Livingroom



Johannes Ritter, Pally'Hi and Peter Bauer from Amplid



Paul Lambersens winner and Matthieu Perez, Deeluxe



Robert Longin, SP Gadgets and Otto Lorenz.

VANS SNOWBOARDING DAYS, LES ARCS



Attack Attack (Morzine, France)'s Stew Monk & Jamie Lynn shredd ready



Glissshop crew, Grenoble with Attack Attack (Morzine, France)'s Stew Monk



Gondola selfie. L-R - Van's Fred, Jamie Lynn (above), Attack Attack's Stew (below), Pacome Allouis (686, Mizu & Vans), filmer Mayol & team rider, Victor de Le Rue



Method's Chriso McAlpine & Jamie Lynn comparing notes on Mike Ranquet's shred stick



s'No Control (Austria)'s Max Alber, Subvert (UK)'s Jack Isherwood & TSA(UK)'s Tom Clinton



Vans European TM, Bruno Rivoire and team rider, Sparrow Knox



Vans' Alexis Jauizon & Bobby Gascon



Vans' Kevin Casillo (Sports Marketing Manager for Snow), Bobby Gascon (Director, Global Marketing- Action Sports) & new Global Category Manager for Snow, Matt Patti.

JONES SNOWBOARDS SPLIT TOGETHER TRIP



Cedric & Xavier Nidecker



Group Shot
photo by Bernhard Altmanninger



Addicted Lyon's Mathieu Garret



Jones staffers Seth Lightcap & Jeremy Jones

MONTAFON BANKED SLALOM



Marc Andre Tarte (Acrobag) and Stephane Grenet (686)



Maximilian Sander (Starter) and Svenja Schallner (the Schnaps Lady) and Michael Lippitsch (Chief Organizer)



Philipp Kämmerer (Rome Snowboards) and Tobi Leyendecker



Tobi Leyendecker and Ferdi from Lib Tech



Stanley
Black &
Decker



STANLEY



BLACK+
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DEWALT

STANLEY BLACK & DECKER CASE STUDY
6 MONTH CAMPAIGN

Engaging a new audience through EXTREME

AMBASSADORS // EVENTS // STORY-LED CONTENT // SOCIAL MEDIA

THE BRIEF

EXTREME to introduce STANLEY, BLACK + DECKER and DEWALT to a younger demographic to drive brand recognition and increase sales.

THE ACTIVATION

EXTREME delivered a marketing program through the sponsorship of 18 EXTREME action sports athletes, 5 event properties, the creation of 4 story-led films and utilising our digital media platforms.

THE RESULT

The partnership saw, STANLEY BLACK & DECKER's brands aligned with action sports, achieve 3809 social media posts, 24 million video views and 102 million brand impressions through EXTREME's media platforms.

MARKETING & CREATIVE SERVICES

//

BRAND LICENSING

EVENTS

//

STUDIO

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