

BOARDSPORT

#89 DECEMBER/JANUARY 2018 €5

source.

EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

BURTON SNOWBOARDS' FRANCK WATERLOT

BUSINESS OF WAVE POOLS

BRAND PROFILES, BUYER SCIENCE & MUCH MORE



TREND REPORTS: FW18/19 SNOWBOARD BOOTS & BINDINGS, HELMETS & PROTECTION,
SURF APPAREL, STREETWEAR, BACKPACKS, CRUISERS, SKATESHOES & SOCKS



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IN ALPBACHTAL (AUT) JAN. 21ST-23RD

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HELLO #89

In this, the age of the influencer, *shudders*, a brand's message is now entrusted upon the distribution network/channels of these self-made pariahs. But is there anyone more influential than the independent retailer? They are the key opinion leaders and have authentic, real tribes of consumers who rely on their expertise and wisdom. When they talk, their customers listen - they don't just simply click 'like'. Yes, internet shopping is here to stay and those who haven't adapted have (sadly) fallen by the wayside, but a physical presence is more valuable than ever. In this issue's Big Wig interview (p36) we speak with Burton's VP of Sales & Marketing, Franck Waterlot where he underlines the importance of customer 'touch points', with the opening of the brand's new Hub concept.

Facebook marketing can only do so much and brands are now more than ever looking for ways to see, touch and engage with the consumer. It's inevitable, the writing has been on the wall for years; brands will (if they haven't already) invest in slick D2C websites to quench their consumers' need to see-it-want-it. But how this is executed is what defines a brand's DNA and will ultimately secure their longevity both with the customer and their retail partners. Done correctly a brand will sell their products directly through their own website, but they will do so at full price and drive consumers to their local retailers to buy exclusive products, collabs etc.

Brands and retailers now have access to so much customer data, which means

that working together to elevate customer experience is easier than ever before. We look forward to hearing of the next brands to embrace bricks and mortar and work on building innovative relationships with retailers fit for 2018.

Returning for his annual outing, our snowboard expert Tom Wilson-North slices 'n' dices the FW18/19 snowboard boots & binding offer. Our Skateboard Editor, Dirk Vogel looks into the trends that'll be popping at Bright/SEEK & Jacket Required for the men, while our German Editor, Anna Langer susses out streetwear hype for the ladies as well as snow helmets and protection. Dave Mailman delivers the second in his three-part series on wave pools, this time examining the business model at a time where the wave pool arms race is in full swing.

The 17/18 Winter has started cold and snowy, with some excellent early conditions. And it's a Winter Olympic year, which means snowboarding shall be thrust into the mainstream spotlight for a three-week period, providing brands, retailers and the industry as a whole with the perfect shop window. Organise events to help share the stoke and while you've got those newbies in, shake them down, upsell those returners with deep pockets and let's keep our fingers crossed that our athletes do us proud and that the white stuff keeps on falling.

Always Sideways
Harry Mitchell Thompson
Editor

CONTENT

PAGE 7 - CONTENTS / EDITORIAL
PAGE 8 - NEWS
PAGE 11 - ON SNOW DEMOS PREVIEWS
PAGE 12 - TRADESHOW PREVIEWS
PAGE 15 - RETAILER PROFILE - UNFAMILIAR, STUTTGART
PAGE 17 - SNOWBOARD BOOTS RETAILER BUYER'S GUIDE
PAGE 21 - SNOWBOARD BINDINGS RETAILER BUYER'S GUIDE
PAGE 24 - BUSINESS OF WAVE PARKS
PAGE 27 - SKATE SHOES RETAILER BUYER'S GUIDE
PAGE 31 - TECHNICAL BACKPACKS RETAILER BUYER'S GUIDE
PAGE 32- BIG WIG: BURTON'S FRANCK WATERLOT
PAGE 35 - MEN'S STREETWEAR RETAILER BUYER'S GUIDE
PAGE 39 - WOMEN'S STREETWEAR RETAILER BUYER'S GUIDE

PAGE 41 - SNOW HELMETS RETAILER BUYER'S GUIDE
PAGE 45 - BUYER SCIENCE: SURFDOME'S TOBIAS ANDERSSON
PAGE 47 - SNOW PROTECTION RETAILER BUYER'S GUIDE
PAGE 49- PERFORMANCE SOCKS RETAILER BUYER'S GUIDE
PAGE 50 - MEN'S COLD WATER SURF APPAREL RETAILER BUYER'S GUIDE
PAGE 53 - CRUISERS RETAILER BUYER'S GUIDE
PAGE 56 - BRAND PROFILE - BRAVO PUMPS
PAGE 57 - BRAND PROFILE - FAM
PAGE 58 - BRAND PROFILE - VOLTE
PAGE 59 - BRAND PROFILE - POETIC COLLECTIVE
PAGE 60 - NEW PRODUCTS
PAGE 63- MARKET INTELLIGENCE
PAGE 70 - EVENTS
PAGE 79 - ONE EYED MONSTER

On the cover: Markus "Fischi" Fischer, GoPro's EMEA Photo Manager

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VANS PROMOTE GEORGE PEDRICK TO PR & MEDIA MANAGER EMEA

George Pedrick continues his growth through the VF Corp as PR & Media Manager for Vans EMEA. George previously worked at Vans’ UK PR agency, Canoe Inc where he joined the company from the starting point of his career as a intern and progressed through the ranks to become Senior Account Manager working across a brand portfolio including Vans, Oakley, Nitro Circus, Patagonia and Burton Snowboards. After a successful stint as JNR PR & Media Manager for Vans EMEA, George now steps into the role of PR & Media Manager to help cement the brand’s PR strategy frame work moving into 2018 whilst reinforcing brand image and awareness. George takes over from Silke Artner, who left the company in May 2017.

SURF PARK SUMMIT 3 GATHERS INDUSTRY LEADERS AT SURF SNOWDONIA, WALES

The Surf Park Summit made its first outing on European soil for its third annual event, which gathers stakeholders from across the world of man-made waves. Hosted at Surf Snowdonia, in Wales (the world’s first fully operational wave pool open to the public) Surf Park Summit III attracted investors, suppliers, representatives from different manmade wave technologies, academics and more for two days of surfing, presentations and networking. Read the full report on the SOURCE website, and be sure to read The Business Of Surf Parks Article, 28.

CHEMISTRY SURFBOARDS TO BE DISTRIBUTED IN EUROPE THROUGH OCEANPLEASURE SURF INDUSTRIES

Portuguese-based Oceanpleasure Surf Industries surfboard factory have announced their new surfboard brand production and distribution for Europe direct from Oceanside, California – Chemistry Surfboards.

SUPRA APPOINTS SASCHA WEIL AS BRAND DIRECTOR EMEA

SUPRA has appointed Sascha Weil as Brand Director for the EMEA region where he is tasked with leading the brand to further growth and commercial success and underlining SUPRA’s roots as a maverick in the footwear business. Previous to his new role at SUPRA, Sascha spent four years as General Manager of Buddha to Buddha, an Amsterdam-based lifestyle brand and prior to that served as EMEA Marketing Manager for O’Neill for 11 years. In the months before joining Supra, Weil took some time with his wife and three kids traveling around the South Pacific: “I couldn’t be more thrilled to join the Supra team, an iconic brand with the same values that I share. We will bring SUPRA to its full potential over the next period and for sure I’ll enjoy the ride!”

WSL MAKES HUGE CHANGES TO 2018 CHAMPIONSHIP TOUR SCHEDULE

The WSL has just released full details of their official 2018 tour schedules with some huge changes being made to accommodate new tour stops. Headline news is the inclusion of a CT event at Kelly Slater’s Surf Ranch, which will replace the Hurley Pro at Trestles and the Portuguese stop of the women’s tour also gets the chop. Fiji will be replaced by a stop at Keramas in Bali and women will now compete at Jeffrey’s Bay in South Africa.

OUTSIDERS STORE, LIVERPOOL: NEW OUTDOOR/LIFESTYLE RETAILER LAUNCHES IN THE UK

A new outdoor lifestyle retailer has launched in the northern English city of Liverpool. Outsiders Store is the brainchild of industry vet Fred Royle and Ellis Brigham’s Robert Brigham and stocks brands including the North Face, Poler Stuff, Fjällräven, Patagonia, Dickies, Danner and more.

VF CORP ACQUIRES ICEBREAKER

VF Corp, owner of Vans, The North Face, Dickies, Reef and more has agreed a deal to acquire New Zealand-based merino specialists Icebreaker. VFC also owns SmartWool who are active in the same market as icebreaker.

WORLD SNOWBOARD FEDERATION ANNOUNCES NEW STRATEGY & LAUNCHES WORLD SNOWBOARDING

The World Snowboard Federation (WSF has announced the completion of the merger with TTR Pro Snowboarding (TTR). All business operations and commercial activities will be provided by the World Snowboarding Marketing & Services GmbH, a company registered in Switzerland since 2011 and wholly owned by the WSF. This step marks the end of an era that began with the foundation of the WSF and the TTR in 2002 and the beginning of a new one with combined inherited values and culture ensuring the history of the sport will live on within its future framework.

SHAPERS AUSTRALIA APPOINTS SURFCLOUD LDA AS EUROPEAN DISTRIBUTOR FOR SEVERAL COUNTRIES

Shapers Australia will be extending their global reach to key countries in Europe (Portugal, Italy, Germany, Austria and Denmark) having announced their collaboration with Portuguese surf distributors Surfcloud Lda. Shapers® have been prominent in the surf industry for over 30 years, using innovative materials and techniques to push surfboard design.

ISPO LAUNCHES NEW CROSS-MEDIA BRAND PRESENCE: “ACCELERATING SPORTS”

ISPO are highlighting their position going forward as a full-service provider to both businesses and end customers in the sports industry with its new brand mission. “Accelerating Sports” is ISPO’s new brand claim as part of their re-launched cross-media image, which is also echoed in their mission statement: “To accelerate the global evolution of sports.”

MAGICSEAWEED ACQUIRED BY SURFLINE

Surf forecasting website and online retailer Magicseaweed has been acquired by Surfline. UK-based Magicseaweed were acquired by Australian online surf retailer SurfStitch last year and Magicseaweed will keep its staff in the UK. Surfline CEO & Chairman Jeff Berg “Our promise is connecting surfers with their passion, and the addition of Magicseaweed to our stable of brands will ensure we do that for millions of surfers around the world.”

SURFDOME ACQUIRED BY INTERNET FUSION LTD

Surfdome has been acquired by online apparel retail group, Internet Fusion Ltd for a reported £7 million. Internet Fusion Ltd own a number of action/outdoor sports, equestrian and other apparel retail websites including: Blackleaf, Extremepie, Webtogs, Ride-away equestrian, Derby House, Priory, FF, Nightgear, sad.co.uk.

SURFLINE ESTABLISH RETAIL PARTNERSHIP WITH SURFDOME & MAGICSEAWEED

Following the acquisition of Surfdome by online retail group, Internet Fusion Ltd, there is more interesting news for Surfdome with the announcement that they will power and administer the Magicseaweed store on a global scale going forward.

SUPERBRAND PARTNERS WITH GLOBAL SURF INDUSTRIES

Global Surf Industries (GSI) are to manufacture and distribute Superbrand Epoxy surfboards, featuring their innovative SUPERflex technology, to expand the brand’s global distribution.

MAVERICKS JOINS THE WSL BIG WAVE TOUR

The infamous Californian big wave spot, Mavericks has now been added to the WSL Big Wave Tour for the 2017/2018 season through till 2021. The tour already includes world-famous waves such as Puerto Escondido in Mexico, Nazaré in Portugal and Pe’ahi in Maui and now this Californian wave has been added to the roster following an agreement with Titans of Mavericks and Cartel Management.

SUPRA & KR3W APPOINT NEW PRESIDENT

Steve Harden has been appointed as President of SUPRA Footwear and KR3W Denim Co. Harden will work from SUPRA & KR3W’s parent company (K-Swiss Global Brands) HQ in Los Angeles and brings a wealth of experience with him. Harden most recently served as VP North American Sales for footwear and personal protection equipment at Honeywell and prior to that was VP Sales and Operations for Oakley’s wholesale sports division and has also held positions at VF Corporation and Adidas.

‘SKATEBOARDING IS NOT A FASHION’ TO BE RELEASED FEBRUARY 2018

Boardsport SOURCE’s very own Skateboard Editor Dirk Vogel and Jürgen Blümlein are releasing Skateboarding Is NOT A Fashion, in February 2018. The book is an illustrated history of skateboard apparel 1950’s to 1984 and looks at how it has impacted pop culture.

MEDINA & MOORE WIN WSL TEST EVENT AT KELLY SLATER WAVE COMPANY, CALIFORNIA

The World Surf League invited a select few CT surfers to compete in their first test event, the ‘Future Classic’ at Kelly Slater’s Wave Company in Lemoore, California on September 19. The event was closed to media, serving as a test for the WSL and its broadcast team to examine logistics before they open the doors to the media. Brazilian Gabriel Medina and Hawaiian Carissa Moore claimed victory on the day, where surfers rode two waves in each direction, the best wave from each direction creating the score (best left + best right = total score). Brazilian Felipe Toldeo was the first person to land an aerial in the comp, scoring 9.8 for his efforts.

BURTON OPENS HUB IN ZURICH, MUNICH TO FOLLOW SHORTLY

Burton Europe had a busy summer with the retirement of their former GM, a new sales model in Germany and growth into Zurich, Switzerland. In Germany, the team are in the process of shifting sales to a direct model, with a new Country Manager in place named Benjamin Schwarz who will be based in Munich. The Burton ‘hub’, in Munich, is a result of this plan which will act as the gateway to the German outdoor market. This new Munich home base will include a storefront, office space and a sales showroom. Burton Europe also expanded into Zurich, Switzerland with the opening of another ‘hub’, which acts as the flagship store, showroom and office space. Read more in this issue’s Big Wig interview. (p36).

THE FREERIDE WORLD TOUR ADDS KICKING HORSE & HAKUBA TO 2018 CALENDAR

The Freeride World Tour (FWT) 2018 calendar is out, and has expanded to 3 continents with new stops in Japan and Canada and the removal of Chamonix and Alaska.

BOARDWORKS SURF ACQUIRES GLOBAL LICENSE AGREEMENT TO ROGUE SUP AND SURF BRAND

As part of their new identity, Boardworks have announced their global license agreement with SUP and surf brand Rogue. This move will see Boardwalks debuting their new board collection strategy including the Rogue Performance line.

WSL APPOINTS FORMER UFC STRATEGY & CONTENT EXPERT TO IMPROVE INTERNATIONAL GROWTH

World Surf League has appointed Joseph Carr as Chief Strategy Officer and Head of International. Carr most recently served as Senior Vice President and Head of International and Content at the UFC, where he oversaw a sustainable subscription model.

MICK FANNING JOINS OWNERSHIP GROUP OF CREATURES OF LEISURE

Mick Fanning has joined the ownership group of Creatures of Leisure. Fanning’s contract was up for renewal and instead of continuing as a professional, he’ll now be stepping upstairs to “get his hands dirty.” Fanning has also alluded to the inclusion of new product categories for the company under his new role.

NIXON APPOINTS SCOTT KERSLAKE AS NEW CEO

California based Nixon have appointed Scott Kerslake as their new Cheif Executive Officer effective from August 21, 2017. Kerslake previously worked at yoga, travel, & outdoor adventure brand, prAna where he was CEO since 2009.

WSL AND THE CITY OF ANGLET, FRANCE SIGN THREE-YEAR EXTENSION ON PARTNERSHIP

The announcement that the World Surf League (WSL) Europe and the city of Anglet, France have agreed on a three-year partnership deal ensures that the Pro Anglet QS event and the exciting Surf de Nuit (night surf) event will continue until at least 2020.

SURF LAKES ADDS FORMER WORLD CHAMP BARTON LYNCH AS AMBASSADOR

Brisbane startup, Surf Lakes Holdings Ltd, officially joined the global wave pool battle when former World Champion Mark Occhilupo announced his position as financial backer and advisor to the business. Earlier this week another former World Champ, Barton Lynch also joined the Surf Lakes team as a brand ambassador.

KELLY SLATER WAVE CO GRANTED APPROVAL FOR SURF RANCH FLORIDA

Palm Beach County commissioners unanimously approved zoning for Surf Ranch Florida in November, a wave park planned by Kelly Slater and billionaire Dirk Ziff. Slater said construction should begin in 2018 with the pool to begin producing waves sometime in 2019.

FINISTERRE OPENS NEW STORE IN EXETER, ENGLAND

UK outdoor and surf clothing outfit, Finisterre opened a new store in Exeter on Sunday November 11, 2017. The brand already has stores in St Agnes and Falmouth in Cornwall, plus Bristol and London too.

JACKET REQUIRED PARTNERS WITH TROUVA

Trouva is the world’s leading marketplace for bricks-and-mortar boutiques allowing online visitors to find products that are more distinctive than those found on the high street. Coming into its second year now, Trouva has partnered with Jacket Required to present the platform to key fashion retailers at the upcoming autumn/winter edition.

NIKE SB LAUNCHES SUNGLASS & FIRST-EVER OPTICAL COLLECTION

NIKE VISION have just dropped their new SB Sunglass styles with pro skateboarders Justin Brock, Sean Malto, Trevor Colden and more. In addition to the sunglass collection, the brand is also dropping the first-ever Nike SB Optical collection – designed for action sports athletes who wear prescription glasses.

MOUNTAINS & WAVES NEW FRENCH SALES AGENCY FOR ARBOR SNOWBOARDS

As of January 1, 2018 there will be a change in the representation of ARBOR SNOWBOARDS on the French market. Sebastien Lepine will no longer continue his work with his agency PSL and he will pass on the responsibilities for the French territory to David Picamoles and his agency Mountains & Waves.

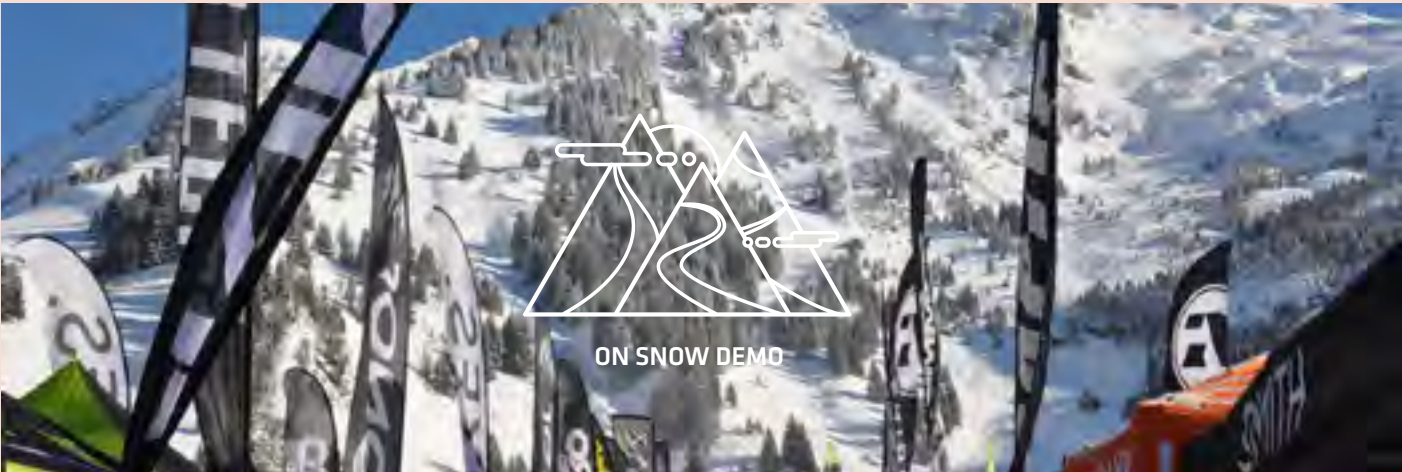
NO BACKPACKS. NO BOTTLES. NO HANDS. NO NONSENSE.



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Featured Rider: Forest Bailey | Available Winter 2018 at select stockists | For more information visit Hydrastash.com



SNOW AVANT-PREMIÈRE, LA CLUSAZ, FRANCE, JANUARY 14-16, 2018

For the launch event of the on-snow demo season Sportair invites European retailers from the UK, Switzerland, Benelux, Spain and Scandinavia to La Clusaz to meet more than 50 brands and to discover for the first time their new range of snowboard products for the 2018/19 season. Last year's event, which was the 16th anniversary of the test, saw 416 retailers and 760 people attend from all over Europe and partake in 3323 tests over the 3 days.

The demo is divided into two parts, firstly the outdoor test village where the exhibiting brands have everything you want to test on snow in a considerably expanded area with a third row of popup tents added last year and the 450m2 showroom tent in which visitors can find not only soft goods, boots and accessories brands but also an exhibition wall with the highlights from all the snowboard brands. Brands registered at time of going to press include: Amplid, Anon, Bataleon, Bent Metal, Boa, Burton, Capita, CLWR, Deeluxe, Drake, Dragon, Dupraz, Flow, Giro, Gnu, Jones, K2, Karakoam, Lib-Tech, Lobster, Melon Optics, Never Summer, Nidecker, Nitro, Northwave, Now, Picture, Pow, Ride, Rome, Rossignol, Roxy, Salomon, Sims, Slash, Smith, Stance, Switchback Bindings, Union and Yes. New this year following the increasing trend towards renting snowboards will be a Rental Corner, where retailers can discover the best rental snowboards, bindings and boots for their shop. Each day in the showroom tent the bar is open and a free hot lunch is available for all the ravenous attendees. This is also the place to relax between rides and grab a cup of coffee. From 5pm each evening there's a 'happy hour', which is the best time to debrief

your riding day, speak with reps, retailers and press and have a look at the exhibition wall to choose which board you will test the next day. On Sunday night, visitors and exhibitors are welcomed to the Snow Avant-Première party in downtown La Clusaz.

Retailers should download the Sportair Mobile App, which was successfully introduced last year and allows retailers to mark their product testing, in real time, and to exchange files with exhibitors on the spot. This is all saved on a personal account for every visitor, meaning they'll have a record of what they tested at the show. This works in conjunction with the simple data recording system based at the entrance to the outdoor test park. Retailers should also take the opportunity to visit ASAP, Sportair's soft goods show which is held in Annecy over the same time period, in brand stores and an ASAP specific showroom and is followed by an early evening cocktail dinner and accompanying fashion show at the Imperial Palace. Two people per shop are invited and each invitation includes: 2 access badges, 2 ski passes for the La Clusaz resort, 2 breakfasts and 2 lunches. If you are more than two or if you wish to extend your journey, there is a special offer of 50 euros extra per person, per day. For people coming from abroad, the organizers provide a return trip shuttle service from Geneva Airport to La Clusaz and preferential prices on accommodation. Looking forward to seeing you at the on-snow season opener.

www.sportair.fr

SHOPS 1ST TRY, ALPBACHTAL-WILDSCHÖNAU, AUSTRIA, JANUARY 21-23

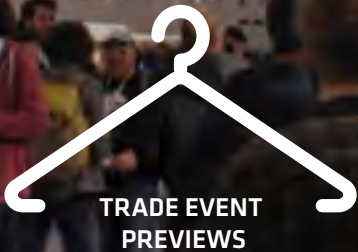
Alpbachtal is again the location for Shops 1st Try with its spacious test area with varied terrain, including the snow park. Last January was the busiest Shops 1st try yet with 185 shops and 849 visitors from 13 countries attending the event and this year a record 80 brands have registered. As always this is mostly hardgoods brands but now also a significant number of goggles, accessories and outerwear brands will have products on display and available to test. Brands include 686, adidas Snowboarding, Amplid, Amplifi, Anon, Arbor, Bataleon Snowboards, Bent Metal, Bern, Boa Technology, Bonfire, Burton, Capita, Dakine, DC, Deeluxe, Dinosaurs Will Die, Drake, Dupraz, Eivy, Electric, Fix Bindings, Flow Snowboarding, Flux Bindings, Giro, Gnu, Goodboards, Horsefeathers, Icetools, Jones, K2, Karakoram, L1, Lib-Tech, Lobster Snowboards, Melon Optics, Never Summer Industries, Nidecker, Nikita, Now, Northwave, Nitro Bags, Nitro Snowboards, Oakley, Now, Picture Organic Clothing, Plum, POW, Ride Snowboards, Rip Curl, Rome SDS, Rossignol Snowboards, Roxy, Salomon Snowboards, Sandbox, Sessions, Sims Snowboards, Smith, SP, Switchback Bindings, Thirtytwo, TSG Protection, Union, Vans, Vimana, Volcom and Yes. New to the show brands include ABS, Airblaster, Borealis Snowboards, Haglofs, O'Neill, Slash, Spark R&D, Stance, Transform Gloves, WeeDo Childrens Clothes, WEST Snowboarding, WOO Sports.

Everything kicks off on Saturday at 7pm with the Industry Welcome Dinner with Muck's bilingual introduction. Next morning, as on all 3 days, registration starts at 7.45am at the Pöglbahn Parking test area in Inneralpbach, with the snow test opening at 8.15 am and closing at 3.30pm. This year's test village will be similar in size to last year's

expanded format, which provides space for the additional brands and means that after the Dakine waffle and coffee breakfast, the test arena will now have its very own snack station from the good people at Stance. And on hand to accompany you on your trip up and down the hill will be a full roster of Shred Buddies (brand Ambassadors and Pros). Reichmann snowboard service equipment will be on site so you can grind and wax your boards in situ.

At the Congress Center Alpbach, the Highlight Exhibition Area opens at 4pm and is followed by the Exhibition Dinner in the Congress Center in Alpbach on both Sunday and Monday nights. The dinners are a combination of eating, drinking and chatting against a backdrop of wall stands from every single brand at the event. As last year the outerwear brands will be 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. During dinner a Snowboard History Quiz will be held (you get free beer) and you get to cast your vote for the winner of this year's Source design award. The evening ends on Sunday with the after show party with DJ Selecta Marcin at Jakober Pub from 10pm to 1am and on Monday with DJ Brix & DJ Julle at the same time and venue. On Tuesday, the final day, the event closes at 3.30 pm. With this heavily packed schedule Shops 1st Try is a very attractive proposition for all retailers wanting to test product on snow, so don't wait too long to register, if you sign on before December 5 you will get lift tickets and dinner for free. For more information go to

www.shops-1st-try.com



The Bright/Seek combination during Berlin Fashion Week remains a key destination in Europe for streetwear and contemporary men's fashion, with more than more than 500 contemporary brands exhibiting. The winter show has for the last two years been stronger than the summer's so good attendance is expected with 50,000 trade visitors making the trip to Berlin last year. Bright's historical core segments, skateboarding and streetwear are in the centre of the main hall with a community hub including a cafe, media lounge, a skate spot with a wall ride and obstacles, charity projects and an art installation. This season Bright has attracted more skateboarding brands than in the past five years. The growing Outdoor Aesthetics segment will have almost 30% more space as performance wear and sustainability becomes more and more important for retail and consumers alike. The Urban segment is in the transition to Seek and contains a mixture of American Sportswear, European Urban culture and Hip-hop influenced labels. The two shows are now almost seamlessly joined with two internal walkways connecting the shows that keep you warm as you walk from one show to the other and the food court of the whole Arena area will be hosted in Glashaus.

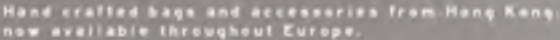
SLIDE, TELFORD, ENGLAND, JANUARY 23-25

This year The Slide Awards have been extended to include a best fresh brand award. This is to support newcomers to the show. So all the finalists

Bright has a special offer for skate shops who want to attend, so if you haven't been approached then please contact the organisers. Retailers should download the Premium group app to get the most out of the show. Regular shuttle buses will be running between all the exhibition locations to enable quick transfer from one show to another and tickets are valid for all Premium events, speeding up show access. With so much on offer retailers who stock skate or streetwear products should not miss out and take the time out of store to visit the show in Berlin.

for the three category awards, Hardware, Software and Accessories, will be on display, while the winners will be announced on Wednesday evening after a vote by retailers, media and industry experts. On day one, following the success of last year's bowling night, a social gathering will take place from 6.30-8pm. Details at time of going to press are still to be confirmed. On Wednesday evening it will be busy with the SIGB annual general meeting followed by the Slide Awards Presentation and an Open Forum Industry discussion.

www.slideuk.co.uk



DOUGHNUTOFFICIAL.CO.UK



BRINGING THE NEW GOLDEN AGE OF SNOWBOARDING



UNFAMILIAR, STUTTGART

Unfamiliar snowboard shop in Stuttgart are celebrating 10 years of business in 2018, after setting out to give the snowboarding community in Stuttgart something different from the big brands on offer at their competitors. Working with small brands such as Dinosaurs Will Die, Korua, Airblaster and Crab Grab to good effect, Unfamiliiar are the essence of a legitimate local snowboard shop.

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

At the end of 2007 we were waiting for snow and we walked through all the snowboard shops around our hometown of Stuttgart to get the feeling for the upcoming season. We realized that all the shops carried the same brands and pretty much the same products. We found it boring and for the snowboarding community around Stuttgart it was difficult to get products from smaller or newer brands. Then we, Konstanze, Jens and Matthias founded our business in February 2008 and made our first order for the season 08/09. We started our shop carrying exclusive brands like Dinosaurs Will Die and Academy Snowboards. If there a brand didn't have distributor we just imported it ourselves and brands like Automaton, No Way! and Smokin Snowboards became available in Germany through us. Today we carry a few more brands but we still try to find and push new, smaller or local companies like Grotesque and Korua Snowboards.

What's the most challenging aspect of the snowboard business at present?

Customers don't buy snowboard products when there is no snow. Especially before Christmas. So it's very difficult to sell products before the sale period.

How could brands help with this?

That's a difficult question. Perhaps the brands need to control their distribution better. There are some canny distributors who have an empty warehouse in January, which is the way to do things as then there is no need to reduce price because customers have to hurry to get their stuff.

What are you doing to help involve kids in snowboarding?

We are always looking out for young talent to join our little shop team. Some of our team riders work in resorts or snow parks, so we are always in touch with the local shredders and support their ideas for events and contests.

What five products couldn't you live without right now?

We love to sell snowboard hardware from small core brands, so we couldn't live without boards from Dinosaurs Will Die. We also love

the Ninja Suits from Airblaster because there is no better underwear on the planet, and don't forget Crab Grab because snowboarding needs stuff like that.

What are your secrets for selling high-end products?

It's difficult to say but you should know which high-end products make sense. For example, outerwear should have high quality. All the park kids shred wearing hoodies or a coach jacket. But the customer who wants to wear a snowboard jacket expects a high functionality and high quality in the product. On the other side you don't need an expensive jib board.

Are new lines important to your product mix?

Yes we always add the new lines. We want to keep our shop up to date and want to always stay one foot ahead of the shops I talked about in the first answer.

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

Our sales increased in recent years. There aren't many snowboard stores left in our region and some skate shops which stopped selling snowboard stuff are recommending us to their customers because they don't want to support the big snowboard retailers.

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

We want to go our own way and try to stay authentic by continuing like we started almost 10 years ago. We'll go about finding fresh brands for every new season, push "core" snowboarding and avoid the big names. And we'll never forget to go snowboarding as often as possible.

How do you stay in touch with the wants and needs of your customers?

It's important for us that we give our customers good advice in long conversations. It's easy in our store and we realized, contrary to our expectations, that you can give very good customers service online, by email or by phone, too. So we always get to know what the customer wants, what their preferred riding style and terrain is and we find the products they really need 🤝

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#RUNTOTHEHILLS



photo : Head

SNOWBOARD BOOT FW18/19

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Strobel or Norwegian Welting? Full-Grain or Nubuck? Whilst the terms in the footwear industry are baffling to us shop guys, the process of selling snowboard boots is definitely not; get the size, get the support, try a few different models, throw in a free pair of cheap socks and high-five the boss as the customer pummels their PIN into the credit card machine. **Tom Wilson-North** investigates ways the industry is making this scenario a frequent reality in our FW18/19 Snowboard Boots Retail Buyer's Guide.

TREND OVERVIEWS

Got a couple of vintage boards hanging in the spare room? Ordered an Åsmo as part of your mid-life crisis? You'll be stoked to hear that now the retro boot trend is gaining traction. Since Deeluxe released their Footloose throwback powsurf boot last year, there are a couple of softer, rootsy models hitting the market next year. DC's focus is on the all-new Tucknee, which is all about the tweak with asymmetrical lacing for maximum poke without sacrificing support. In a similar vein, Flux's MX-Lace is a premium soft boot designed for backcountry powsurfing.

We also found a curious and pioneering deviation from the norm in Head's offer next year. Over to Head's Max Thurner to explain: "Our new Operator is the SUV of snowboard boots, the one you can do it all with. We've seen many changes in winter sports recently - late snowfalls mean tourist offices are having to get creative by offering a "hybrid service package" which is more about spending quality time in the mountains than visiting the white and snowy slopes of the wonderland. So the Operator is the boot everyone needs for today's winter trips. It is built to go riding, but also flexible enough to walk around town, be used for hiking, sledging, snow shoeing, working, playing, fishing, hunting, riding a motor bike... everything. Oh, and it's rated down to -40°C". An impressive and optimistic cross-category approach from Head.

"People love Boa as it is easy to adjust. We love it too, so we are just working on making Boa better. But...in the core scene, laces are definitely experiencing a comeback"
Joerg Schramm, Ride

Pro models continue to be well established within our industry and 32 are leading the way next year with JP Walker & Desiree Melancon signature boots. It's JP's tenth year with them, so the clean and modern anniversary boot has references to his first ever black and white gingham Prospect from day one. For the Desiree, expect pink and mint pops, as well as flame graphics on the quarter panel and tongue. Deeluxe also has a quality top end girl's model with their Team ID Lara, which is their first ever team boot for girls and has enhanced heel hold and premium materials from top to bottom.

DEFINING AESTHETICS

Well, clearly black sells, but which pops are we going to see, and which poor second colours are going to be left on the shelves when the discounts kick in? "Our colours are clean and classy, period. No more poppy colours, just natural and tone on tone graphics", says

Got a couple of vintage boards hanging in the spare room? Ordered an Äsmo as part of your mid-life crisis? You'll be stoked to hear that now the retro boot trend is gaining traction

Northwave's Marketing and Product Manager Davide Smania. It's the same story at Vimana, with a clean and bullshit-free Scandinavian monochrome aesthetic. Things are a bit more upbeat at Deeluxe, who see brights slowly coming back, but earth tones continue to dominate design palettes everywhere - particularly dark camo prints and florals, sand, khaki green and sweet grey.



photo : DC

Texture-wise, nubuck (that means soft brushed leather, incidentally) is still very popular as well as soft-touch materials, which have moved in via the skateshoe scene and catwalks. Overall, clean, minimal aesthetics dominate. Think Common Projects sneakers, or white-on-white Stan Smiths, with panelling, ultrasonic welds and fewer visible stitching lines. This is functional design, as smoother boots interface better with binding straps. "Since our acquisition of Flow", says Nidecker Designer Margaux De Mercurio, "we redefined the overall Nidecker boot branding and aesthetics towards a really clean, performance, sporty technical driven product range. The whole range is unified by clean branding like the new N-logos on the toe-boxes and the pull-handles, as well as recurring asymmetrical technology. The history of Flow boots still lives on in Nidecker boots too in what we call FlowFit - the ultimate focus on making the best fitting and feeling boots shaped and customizable to hug and support your feet, and of course the balanced fit and connection with Flow bindings."

Also in aesthetics there are some dope-ass collabs next year; look out for the Santa Cruz vs 32 Lashed, and the banging WOW Crew link-up on the ID from Deeluxe. The left and right boots are different colours in a move reminiscent of the well-remembered Vans Danny Kass V pro

model from back in 2008. Meanwhile, there is an all-new capsule with artist, Schoph at Vans on the High Standard OG, and an intriguing partnership with VF stable mates The North Face on the liner of their new Verse. "While our team rider Blake Paul brought colorways and personal artwork to the Verse project, TNF provided its patented FlashDry™ technology to the boot liner, allowing Vans to offer the first FlashDry™ snowboard boot liner," says Vans' Global Category Manager Matt Patti.

LACING

Well, this in an easy one. It's all about Boa with a small core revival towards trad lacing. Over to Ride's Joerg Schramm: "People love Boa as it is easy to adjust. We love it too, so we are just working on making Boa better. But we have still some trad boots in the programme for those who love to lace their boots. In the core scene, laces are definitely experiencing a comeback." The new Boa model at Rome looked legit; it's called the Inferno SRT and combines their Boa AnkleLock, unique PowerStay strap and Vibram GripLight outsole in a pure BOA-closure construction.

Elsewhere, we saw a cool lacing solution on the Rossignol Document, which makes up a third of their new and promising-looking retail boot line. There's a giant pull-strap on the upper and Boa on the lower. We love the tacticity of pullstraps. Clunk. Inside, there's a high-tech and unique snowboard boot liner developed by Rossignol's chums in the ski boot department.

SPLITBOARDING

Splitboard boots are an easy margin grab due to their high MSRP, though you'll need some decent staff to sell this very niche and rapidly developing subcategory. Don't get left behind. Salomon are first past the post here with the new Trek S-Lab, a brand new touring boot packed full of firsts. The articulated cuff has a guitar-esque lineup of Boa cables which provide full range of movement for skinning, then lock all the way down to become a regular boot for shredding. The lower part has a traditional lace system that is easy to use and adjust, and has a cover to keep it dry and protected from snow.

Elsewhere, there are useful line updates abound, like the new survival laces and lace lock on K2's crampon-compatible Aspect, and the new flex collar for easier skinning on the Jones TM-XLT. Nitro are teaming up with Vibram to bring their Arctic Grip cold-weather compound to snowboarding - it's optimised to provide grip on wet ice, so sounds promising. Finally, Rome's Guide, which has long been a splitboarding staple due to the bomber leather construction, gets their top-end SRT componentry package.

CONCLUSION

Well, that's it. A bunch of cool new models, some colour updates and a few innovations will keep the FW18/19 buy tight, light and not too much of a fight. And, of course, your excellent and experienced salespeople will ensure the path to that long-suffering credit card machine is very well travelled. 📍

HIGHLIGHTS

- Splitboard boot innovations
- Boa dominates lacing
- Dark colours rule



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ALL MODELS are NOBACK compatible



photo : Switchback

SNOWBOARD BINDINGS FW18/19 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Snowboard bindings get a bad deal. Not as touchy-feely as boots, not as interesting as a snowboard... but a key part of the control and steering of the setup. After Burton disrupted the market last year with the well-received Step On system, next year is going to be an interesting one for the humble foot-clamp. **Tom Wilson-North** investigates in our FW18/19 Snowboard Binding Preview.

TREND OVERVIEWS

Like elsewhere in snowboarding, the high end is seeing the most action and development as riders buying new stuff seek no-compromise durability, reliability and performance. Flow - newly run by the Nidecker group - have a new model out called the NX2-CX which we really liked; it uses a carbon infused nylon highback and an aluminium base for a really stiff and lightweight feel. There's more use of carbon than usual next year, with Spark R&D injecting it into their highbacks, and K2's new carbon chassis underneath the Formula C.

Elsewhere, Flux's stiff and responsive XF booster looks like it'll be well received in the premium segment, and Rome's brand new Black Label has a significant and interesting new construction in the highback; it's an overmoulded thermoplastic with an injected element at the bottom. The injected part provides feel while the upper thermoplastic drives power. Tidy. Also in highbacks, there's a new blended urethane shape on Switchback's new Smith. And, naturally, innovators Union drop a 100%-new one-to-beat model called the Strata, with a brand new waterproof closed-cell foam which "is good as it gets for vibration dampening and long term durability," according to Marketing Director, George Kleckner. Salomon have a new dampening solution called VIBE borrowed from their running shoe department. It's a polyolefin EVA blend which will appear on Shadow Fit bindings, and is lightweight, soft, and comfortable. It's very possible all this action at the high end is due to lifelong, ageing snowboarders having a bit more disposable income to throw at their sport, as well as the frequent - yet often disproven - assumption that "pricier means better".

In aesthetics, the biggest trend in bindings - apart from black, as usual - is about precision matching graphics to boards more than ever before. Arbor are putting wood inlays alongside their carbon fibre to match the topsheets of their boards, and Bent Metal are releasing a new model called the Joint with high resolution photography which

syncs perfectly with the photo topsheet of the Lib Tech Cold Brew. And in collabs - because collabs are always cool - you'll see Nitro doing a Drink Water binding, and Now doing a Yes collab, "because friendship is at the heart of it all," explains an emotional JF Pelchat.

...the high end is seeing the most action and development as riders buying new stuff seek no-compromise durability, reliability and performance...

STRAP UPDATES

Whilst you're not going to see anything mind-blowingly new next year, incremental upgrades to straps will make the season's bindings work better than ever. Straps get the most attention, with even further use of the lightweight, cheap, durable and now ubiquitous injection moulded strap. People like them. "Our straps are moulded rubber", says Vimana's Tronna Husvaeg. "You feel strapped in without actually feeling the straps." Over at Ride, there's a nice new injected two-piece strap that we saw on the LTD and a funky pad-less system on the El Hefe, whereas Flux will be showing a brand new component called the Honeycomb Strap. Bent Metal have a new strap on their Joint, Logic and Upshot models. "It is made with a variable thickness construction with multiple flex windows and a detailed multi-dimensional surface, then uses an intricate structure to create comfort and support," explains Bent Metal PLM (& former Mt Baker Banked Slalom winner), Paul Ferrel.

COLOUR PALETTE

Well, there's clearly lots of black, but what other retina-ticklers does the industry have for us next year? There are retro neons and pastels from Now and metallic purple (wut?) on Rossignol's magnificent Cuda, while Nitro have a whole line called Muted Brights which use neons

*“We realised that riders who normally use soft boots prefer hard boots for splitboarding for performance reasons - weight, stability and precision” **Tal**, Plum Bindings*

across four different models. Technine have a cool palette too, with the industry-beloved military green and a few hot reds on highlight duties. The process of graphical application is advancing too - Ride have a cool waterdip treatment next year which delivers a high-definition, high-gloss finish and looks the business. We're also looking forward to seeing the Nidecker Glam: "We changed the aesthetics around this year for a more bad-ass overall matte black finish, then added this cool and trippy holographic footstrap material to set the tone for some serious and stylish shredding. And ladies beware; matching Nidecker Onyx snowboard boots are available!!," enthuses Nidecker Product Manager & Designer, Margaux De Mercurio.



photo : Plum

PRICE-POINTING

Everyone we asked kind of agreed on one thing - they're trying to keep prices reasonable in the face of tough market conditions, exchange rates which always seem to be going the wrong way and spiralling raw material costs. That said, there are indications from various brands that the top end is becoming slightly more reasonable - whilst that won't mean price drops any time soon, it will mean prices flatten out despite those factors. And what of the bottom end? "Well, one issue we see across the industry is brands competing to offer the lowest price, no matter what. When price is the main concern, there is a lack of creativity and progression leading to sub-par offerings across the market," claims Switchback's Dennis Dusseldorp. It's true, there's a lot of junk out there at the bottom end. Our advice? Avoid the entry level completely until something that truly gives you confidence pops up.

To keep prices under control, splitboard binding company Spark R&D have been quietly investing in their own premises and machines over the last few years to become more of a production company than a marketing company. This allows rapid flexibility and prototyping, and - long term - has cost advantages. "While the development costs and in-house labour used to produce our bindings and straps have been considerable, we saved a lot of money by producing the moulds for our new Pillow Line straps in-house and not paying to ship Chinese made straps across the ocean. The remaining costs we make up for by being efficient and having total control over quality, which eliminates waste. We have worked hard to keep our bindings at a steady price" says Spark's marketing guy, Dan Ventura.

EASY IN: EASY OUT

Burton's reboot of the fast-entry category turned heads this year, and the market's favourable uptake of the innovation has provoked investment development by competitors. What's everyone doing next year then? Drake confirmed that they are working on their own solution, and Nitro will be reuniting with Clicker - the proprietary K2 system - for an easy-in boot/binding interface. Fix also have a quick-release system called Simple which provides an alternative to slow-mounting discs for rentals and quivers. Otherwise, regular strap bindings see incremental upgrades for faster buckling, such as Head's proven Auto Open system, which folds the straps away to the side when you open the buckles.

FIT

Whilst technical innovation is important, if the binding doesn't fit the boot right, with slop and lateral play, the binding is going to suck whatever the marketing blurb says. "Totally," agrees Bent Metal's Paul Ferrell, "riders need be able to choose a boot for their unique foot shape and preferred support level. We have a data library of the market's boot shapes and sizes that we use to build our binding components for the ideal fit. This process is key." Union take things a step further and work directly with what they refer to as "compatible" brands (that don't make bindings) to get a wide variety of models and sizes. "For the non-compatible brands who do make bindings, we go and buy sample pairs from our local snowboard shop. We have a room dedicated to our boot library and have developed a system based on which models are most popular, and what kind of footprint and volume they have. The Union fit is based on all this compiled information," explains Union's George Kleckner.

SPLITBOARD BINDINGS

The splitboard binding segment is showing so much growth and innovation that it practically merits its own article, but we'll deal with the evolutions from the primary players here. Leading the way is Plum, with big steps forward. They're rounding out their line with a hardboot system, a rear entry softboot system and a direct-mount low-tech toe piece. "The hard boots project was tricky because this isn't just for core hardbooters who ride hard boots on their solid boards. We realised that riders who normally use soft boots prefer hard boots for splitboarding for performance reasons - weight, stability and precision. So our hard boot binding includes a base plate that you can use with our current interface line. This way, splitboarders can choose. Soft boots or hard boots depending on the run or conditions", explains Plum's Tal. The rear entry system for soft boots uses SP Fastec highbacks, and the toe pieces are stiff, minimal and lightweight.

Rossignol have done some smoothing out on their Xavier de le Rue split binding, with lighter buckles and pre-curved ratchets. They're also adding a new, narrower 130mm crampon for the skinnier Xavier splits and the women's Diva 52. "Split is always a matter of fit-to-weight-to-function ratio," says Rossignol's Arnaud Repa, "and we believe we've now come full circle." Meanwhile, product year #2 of the Union Expedition series sees a new lighter highback design, new ankle and toe straps and a new EVA coating called Non-Stick which stops the snow...well, you can guess. Karakoram are promising a couple of new products around tradeshow time, so their booth will be worth a visit to check those out. But Fix were the surprise contenders here, showing us an overmoulded plastic injection binding with new interface called, simply the X. At 280€ MSRP, this one's going to shake things up.

Finally, we were very excited to hear about K2 who will be bringing out their own brand new splitboard binding. It's going to be called the Far Out and will use the tried-and-tested Voilé puck system. It'll feature an aluminium chassis with pinless mounting system, waterproof K2 Sender straps and the possibility to add a powerstrap for skinning. Sounds intriguing: we can't wait to try it at the demos.

CONCLUSION

There it is. A bunch of tweaks to proven performers, some interesting new models, and quite a lot going on in both the high end and splitboard segments. Lots of black, some mad new treatments and print processes, and further use of those injected straps will consolidate consumer confidence and make next year's binding buy-in one of the easiest in the order book. ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- Earth tones dominate
- New liner technologies
- Black still sells
- Premium segment dominates
- Increasing splitboard action



The Select Pro.

photo: Wavegarden / Pacotwo



THE SURF PARK BUSINESS

THE NEXT BIG SURF BOOM?

‘The State of Wave Pools’ (Issue 88), the first article in this series on wave pool technology and the surf park industry couldn’t have come at a more perfect moment, published just days before the first professional competition was held at the WSL Surf Ranch. Since then surfing and

non-surfing, mainstream and social media alike have been buzzing about the impact that wave pools will have on the future of surfing. This is an up-close look at how the surf park business plans to monetize bringing surfing to the masses. **By Dave Mailman.**

“We’re not just creating a surf park. We’re creating a visitor destination. We are going to attract 4 or 5 times more non-surfers than surfers to our surf destination and surf park if we do it right. And it’s those 3, 4, 5 times extra people that are going to bring us the revenue that is needed to help this destination be sustainable and be successful in the long term.” - Seán Young – Founder and Head of Colliers International Destination Consulting

The first hurdle in developing a surf park is the wave technology and the pool itself. To be profitable it must not cost too much to build and run. Also, it must produce a large enough quantity of waves and of a high enough quality for all different levels of surfers to want to pay to surf there. Once the mechanics and basic infrastructure are working, other amenities and attractions are needed to keep surfing and non-surfing visitors entertained and spending money after they’ve paid the price of admission. All the activities must be varied and enjoyable enough for visitors to want to come back again or at least tell others they had a good time while they were there.

That is easier said than done. Proving just how difficult it’s been to develop a profitable business around a wave pool, the world’s

first commercial surf park opened almost half a century after the first artificial wave was ever surfed. Located in Conwy, Wales, Surf Snowdonia uses the original Lagoon technology developed by Wavegarden and has only been operating for three years. However, with a second Lagoon installed and open for business at the NLand Surf Park in Austin, Texas, added to the success of the WSL Future Classic in California, and the recent announcement of a second Surf Ranch facility to be built in Florida, alongside a list of at least another 15 surf parks contracted or under construction worldwide using systems from no less than 5 different wave pool manufacturers, it seems the surf park industry has finally found the formula for success.

A handful of companies are vying for shares of a market with major growth potential, each with its own technology and interpretation of the established business model. However, following the advice of Hawaiian surf resort consultancy Honokea, “It’s all talk ‘til you can surf it”, our focus will be on the three surf parks currently in operation, which use technology from Wavegarden and the Kelly Slater Wave Company. Surf Snowdonia and NLand follow the aforementioned formula to the letter. They offer surf sessions, lessons, training courses, and equipment hire, along with restaurants, bars and public viewing areas.

Both parks also cater to the needs of large groups, corporate retreats and special occasions like birthdays, hen dos and stag parties. The Welsh park also features an obstacle course and water slide, kids area, fitness training centre, and different accommodation options.

The owner and Managing Director of Surf Snowdownia, Andy Ainscough confirms the model works and that the park sees “around 70,000 water users and almost double that in actual visitors,” per 10-month season, which means visitor numbers are exceeding original expectations, but “not far off what we projected”. Of the surfing public, Andy says: “Experienced surfers are a small part of our business. The real business is in beginners and introducing surfing to people”. Both parks also do special events on a regular basis, like a Lost... team demo in Austin, and the Red Bull Unleashed and UK Pro Surf Tour contests, as well as an O’Neill retail event with Jordy Smith and Surf Park Summit 3 recently in Snowdonia, because as Andy says, “it keeps people interested and the place fresh, plus adding some extra revenue”.

The second case study is the WSL Surf Ranch, developed by the Kelly Slater Wave Company, a majority stake of which has been purchased by the World Surf League’s parent company, WSL Holdings. The only working model currently is the R&D test centre in Lemoore, California. It is a private facility, which up to this point has only been visited by a selection of WSL competitors, staff, and a few, very lucky guests.

The owners and management of WSL Holdings are taking a two-pronged approach to recoup their investment: the already tested and verified public-entry option, and what the World Surf League does best, organizing professional surfing events.

The first priority is organizing professional surfing competitions. The organization’s new CEO Sophie Goldschmidt says she “will focus on leveraging the once-in-a-generation opportunity to evolve the landscape of competitive surfing around the world with the Kelly Slater Wave Company and its ground-breaking technology, in addition to the inclusion of surfing in the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games.”

They proved the validity of the Surf Ranch as a contest venue at their first event. Held this September, the Future Classic was closed to the public and members of the surf media, but ingeniously covered by competitors via social media as #TheTest. Many of professional surfing’s founding fathers received invitations as a gesture of thanks for their service to the sport. There were also potential investors and people involved in one way or another with the Olympic movement who were invited in the hopes of selling the Surf Ranch concept to host cities of future Summer Olympics and to other interested parties.

Within weeks, the WSL announced an official event is to be held at the Surf Ranch in May 2018, which has now been confirmed as a World Championship Tour contest. A permit request submitted to local authorities mentions hosting “up to six events per calendar year, including recreational and competitive surfing events, and ancillary music performances during a two-to-four day period. Attendance is estimated to be up to 8,000 guests per day”. Therefore, alongside their existing business model of selling event sponsorship and advertising slots during the event broadcast, the WSL can profit additionally from paid public entry to events, both stand alone surf contests and lifestyle festivals that mix surfing, music and more. They also have the option of offering a pay-per-view broadcast online, on television or both as an additional source of revenue.

Since the release of the first video of Kelly surfing the world’s most perfect artificial wave, there has been much speculation about whether or not the Surf Ranch fits the criteria to be a profitable surf experience for the general public. At Surf Summit 2 last year, Skip Taylor an Experience Creator at Replay Resorts, a company that played an integral part in developing the modern ski resort business model said in his presentation: “I look at the Kelly Slater wave pool and... my first thought is who’s your customer?” His opinion? It’s definitely “wealthy people” who would be interested in something “like the private golf course model”. Nevertheless, the end goal is to open the pool to the public as Kelly stated in an October 24 Instagram post: “We hope to

share it with everyone who wants to ride it one day soon so we’ll keep working to make that a reality.” To do that the engineers at the Kelly Slater Wave Company have been working hard to increase wave frequency and reduce costs, which are the two problems they need to solve to be able to make the Surf Ranch concept viable as a public-entry surf park. If they haven’t already succeeded, they think they’re getting close at least, confirmed by another Instagram post from Kelly two days later: “Well...it’s official...we have a building permit in Palm Beach County for #SurfRanchFlorida. I’m beyond proud and stoked to see the first of our developments at @kswaveco going to my home state of #Florida... Cannot wait to see a bunch more stoked people riding waves.”



photo: WSL

How will the success of either or both business plans help surf retailers and the surf industry specifically? As discussed in first article in this series, there are various answers to that question, depending on the extent to which the expansion of the surf park business drives demand for hardware, and whether or not the growth of surfing ends up killing the mystique around what surf historian Matt Warshaw described in an interview with Beach Grit as “the unicorn of sports”.

One way wave pools can affect local economies from a surf standpoint is by raising the notoriety of the sport in landlocked locations, thereby creating surfing microcosms, with a few shops, brands or shapers taking advantage of being located in close proximity to a park. As Willy McFarland from American Wave Machines said about areas where that company has sold standing waves: “We have seen regular riders of our locations transition to ocean surf, go on surf travel and make purchases of surf clothes and equipment. Our venues have also spawned hometown board and product development. So, of course surfing outside of the ocean will definitely help promote the industry and retailers.”

The exclusive, private club option won’t help much locally since members or visitors will already have all the gear or will buy or rent it from the fully stocked pro shop. However, it will contribute to the overall demand for surf products.

As for the WSL staging events at Surf Ranch facilities around the world, it will definitely help raise the visibility of the sport. This will obviously have some kind of trickle down effect for the industry. It will undoubtedly increase demand for technical products, but the extent to which it will affect apparel sales, and whether it will benefit mature markets as well as emerging markets remains to be seen.

No matter how the formula evolves, there is plenty of room for the surf park industry to grow, and as a result give a boost to the surf industry one way or another. My guess is we haven’t seen anything, yet. 🌀



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SKATEBOARD FOOTWEAR FW18/19 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Weatherized, technical and back to the nineties: See all current trends in our Skateboard Footwear Retail Buyer's Guide for Fall/Winter 18/19 by SOURCE Skateboard Editor **Dirk Vogel**.

High fashion's love affair with skateboard style continues, and designers currently can't get enough of chunky, technical skate shoes from the mid-1990s. During Paris Fashion Week, DVS Shoes was approached by a major fashion house to supply some of their original teched-out shoes for a runway show and customer demand is trending the same way. "The '90s resurgence is coming. Our more heritage and chubby styles are already beginning to pick up," said Brent Phelps, DVS Product Director, adding: "We're seeing indicators from everything as aspirational as the new Yeezy Wave Runner to something as random as core sneaker head shops actively searching us out for our chunky styles."

In the bigger picture, the 1990s revival is shifting the focus to core brands who created the blueprint for modern-day technical skate shoes. "We're seeing mainstream brands creating shoes inspired by the classic éS silhouettes. It's funny as we have been tagged so many times with the new Yeezy 6 and its closeness to the éS Scheme," said Don Brown, Chief Brand Strategist at Sole Technology (éS, Etnies, Emerica), adding: "We're definitely hearing from the market that the bigger non-endemic athletic brands are slowing down in demand. Based on the cycle of trends we're seeing kids are looking for more authentic skate brands again."

As we move into winter season in Europe, authentic brands – not mainstream fashion houses – are also the ones actively supporting the skate scene with more than just products. "We recently re-designed the indoor skate park in House of Vans in rainy London and it is still always completely free. We will be opening more pop-up House of Vans spaces in different European cities as well," said David Atkinson, Vans Product Merchandising Manager, Pro Skate, EMEA.

SEASON TREND: WEATHERIZATION 2.0

Speaking of winter, this season's main trend sees weatherization move from "nice to have" to bedrock staple in FW18/19 collections. Brands implement their latest tech in outdoor-ready versions of fan favourites such as the Supra Vaider CW and Tom Penny "Bandit" model featuring synthetic fur and gunmetal hardware, and the éS "Accel Slim" low- and mid-tops with warm micro fleece liners, gusseted tongues, waxed lacing, and weather treated uppers. Lakai is keeping feet warm in the "Griffin Mid Weather Treated" model, C1RCA weather-proofs the "AL50" model, while Emerica introduces black sherpa lining in the "Indicator Hi" and "Romero Laced High", and tapped skate legend Heath Kirchart in a premium leather re-boot of the "Shifter High" boot. Etnies piles on tech like 3M Thinsulate, 3M Scotchgard and a Michelin outsole featuring "Ice Grip" traction in the Cyprus SCW model. Also trending this season: Weatherization is not just for after-skate shoes, but built into performance models. "The Jameson Mid has a completely skateable outsole and a weather-treated upper to accommodate the cold weather," said Rick Marmolijo, Design Director at Etnies.

"The '90s resurgence is coming. Our more heritage and chubby styles are already beginning to pick up. We're seeing indicators from everything as aspirational as the new Yeezy Wave Runner to something as random as core sneaker head shops actively searching us out for our chunky styles." **Brent Phelps**, DVS Product Director

“We’re definitely hearing from the market that the bigger non-endemic athletic brands are slowing down in demand. Based on the cycle of trends we’re seeing kids are looking for more authentic skate brands again.” **Don Brown,** Chief Brand Strategist at Sole Technology (éS, Etnies, Emerica).

SILHOUETTES: TECHED-OUT PERFORMANCE

Aside from the current surge in mid-top styles, the main silhouette that core skateboarders want next season remains unchanged: A tech-loaded, contour-fitted low top featuring a suede or synthetic upper with a seamless toe box, cushioned midsole, and extra-grip durable outsole. FW18/19 season standouts include the Emerica “Figgy Dose”, éS “Accel Plus”, DVS “Switch” and “Versa Fire”, OSIRIS “Techniq VLC”, C1RCA “Salix”, ADE Shoes “Rever”, Lakai “Bristol”, Supra “Saint”, Vans “Chima 2”, “TNT Advanced Prototype” and “AVE Rapidweld” models. Justin Nicot, Retail Marketing Coordinator at SUPRA is stoked on “our special cupssole system with internal EVA crash pad for peak impact protection featured in the Shifter and Saint models.” Fabio Di Molfetta, owner of European brand ADE Shoes is pushing, “Capsole technology outsole, with strategically placed cushioning to absorb impact and comfortable EVA materials with silicon gel inserts on the heel.”

With that said, tech is also becoming a stronger focus in brand marketing, so watch out for FW18/19 foot beds featuring impact protection via Ultracush Lite 3D (Vans), AeroCush (C1RCA), PU Insole (State), . Soles are grippier thanks to Wafflegrip (Vans), FusionGrip (C1RCA), and Formula G (Emerica). Shoes fit more comfortably thanks to Vaporcell (DVS), SureFit sockliner and UltraFlex (C1RCA), and Deluxlite liner (Lakai). And finally, shoes last longer with Duracap (Vans), Duraflip and HT Drag (State), Para-mount outsole (Lakai), Everstitch (éS), and FusionGrip (C1RCA). Aside from technical shoes, the classic formula of a suede low-top on a natural gum rubber cup or vulcanized outsole is alive and well across the board. For an update on the formula, State Footwear head Kevin Furtado is stoked on the slip-on “Felton Walnut Suede” model, “a mid ‘Chelsea Boot’ style that is much lower, on a vulc sole and fully skateboard use in mind.” Skateable slip-ons might be next season’s sleeper trend, as Brent at DVS also points out the “lace optional” Walker Ryan “Switch” model.



photo : SUPRA

COLOURS & STYLING: POPS OF COLOUR

Black will always be the skaters’ go-to colourway, but Nick Pappas, Product Manager at New Balance Numeric sees movement. “Colour seems to be trending up, the days of skate shop shoe walls only having black and white vulcanized styles seems to be waning. Replacements for black, like Burgundies or shades of Navy or Military green has worked well.” éS footwear Designer Rick Marmolijo “got a lot of his inspiration from vintage 90s hiking outerwear colours like washed-out forest greens and faded yellows.” Also look forward to heather grey and next season’s trending colourway, magenta, seen in several key pieces. “We have used the colour Magenta across the line as well as ‘Cub’, a military green colour and you will also see black and gum midsoles which are trending,” said David Atkinson at Vans. In terms of stylistics, the season trends towards 1990s accents and prominent tech leads to an influx of generously placed brand logos. From rubber heel bumpers, outsoles, tongues, laces (hot, hot, hot in that OFF-White print style), nylon heel loops, and insoles – brand insignia loom large next season. “Prominent branding is continually gaining strength,” said Scott Sentianin at Lakai while pointing out: “Kids shoes are on the rise!”

MATERIALS: RUGGED AND ECO-CONSCIOUS

As we shift gears into cold weather season, New Balance Numeric will be “using more suedes and leathers this season as opposed to the canvas and textiles we use during the warmer months, coated suedes which we call NDure,” said Nick Pappas. Overall, synthetic materials are on the rise, but Brian Reid at OSIRIS offers some perspective: “We love animals and try to not exploit the planet, but also understand that there is a need for synthetic and real materials. Skaters demand suede and its the best for skating, so all our skate specific models have suede version.”

Speaking of loving the planet, David Atkinson at Vans points out: “Our shoe boxes are made from recycled materials, and we source all of our cotton using the Better Cotton Initiative (BCI). BCI works to reduce the environmental impact of cotton production. We also set our standard very high for our own facilities, our goal is to power all our owned and operated facilities globally with renewable energy by 2025.” Etnies continue their partnership with Michelin – after the “world’s toughest skate shoe” Marena Michelin sold out in retail – on some of the toughest outsoles skateboarding has seen to date.

HOT TREND: CLASSIC 1990S LOOKS

While last season brought non-bulky shoes with a 1990s aesthetic, FW18/19 is going full retro as “puffy” shoes return to shop walls: “There’s also a lot of fashion brands such as Balenciaga that have inspiration from the puffier skate shoes that we pioneered. In general we’re seeing taller cup soles with slightly larger silhouettes inspired by the late 90s and early 2000s. We have a lot of great éS heritage styles coming in 2018,” said Don Brown at éS. Pointing to the “Comanche” model, Brent Phelps at DVS calls it “chub tech”, marked by “forward construction trends becoming more stacked and billowy. Uppers are beefier. Chubby is back.” OSIRIS is backing the trend with the “Peril”, “PXL”, and “D3 2001” models in 1990s-style colorways such as snow camo. “The D3 2001 is making some major strides here in the States. I have been tagged on Insta by sneaker freaker companies saying that they think that our shoe inspired the new Yeezy! That’s a huge honour as that shoe was designed over 16 years ago and it’s nice that people know their footwear history,” said OSIRIS designer Brian Reid.👍

HIGHLIGHTS

- Resurgence of core brands
- Weatherized functionality
- Sleeper trend: Slip-on constructions
- Rise in kids shoes
- Heel straps and bumper logos
- Bulky 1990s styles

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photo: Dakine

TECHNICAL SNOW BACKPACKS FW18 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Next year's performance backpacks combine advanced technology with urban styling, supported by rider-approved performance. It's all in our 18/19 Technical Snow Backpacks Retail Buyer's Guide by **Dirk Vogel**.

Trusted companions on backcountry and park missions, technical snow backpacks have grown by leaps and bounds over the past 20 years. Looking back, the Dakine Heli series created the blueprint for things to come. "It made snowboarding history by opening the minimal technical backpack category with the creation of the Heli Pack in 1996. The Heli family has grown a lot since then," said PJ Rueda, Sports Marketing and Communication at Dakine. Today, the level of tech and performance offered by core backpack brands is at an all-time high while the category continues to expand its appeal. "Technical backpacks have always been for the hardcore backcountry riders, but we're finding that weekenders and less hardcore segments are moving away from repurposing their 'every day' or hiking packs for snow, and finding the advantages that a dedicated snow pack can give you," said Tom Howells, Head of Design at Amplifi. "Customers demand comfort and lightness without compromise on safety access," said Julien Durant, Co-founder at Picture Organic Clothing.

With that said, customer expectations regarding price points can be unrealistic at times. "Where it's absolutely no problem to pay €600 or €700 for a technical jacket, a backpack for more than €300 is very difficult to sell although the production effort and costs are almost the same," said Holger Feist, CEO at EVOC. In order to justify higher price points, retailers need to communicate the benefits of performance-built, certified backpacks. Brands featured in this Buyer's Guide are ready to help with POS materials as well as online media.

PRICE POINTS & MARKET

The action in technical snow backpacks currently revolves around a pricing sweet spot between €140 and €180. Most brands have segmented their lines by applications – mainly freeride, touring, light packs and avalanche – as well as technical features. As a result, one single brand may offer packs from €60 to €300, with tech such as avalanche and back protection slanted towards the middle of the pricing spectrum. But going into 2018, more and more brands otherwise known for high-to-mid priced products will launch budget-friendly options, including Amplifi: "We will offer a new entry level model not sacrificing the material selection and hardware."

SEASON TREND: POD-SHAPED PACKS

Next season's packs are abandoning exterior pockets and straps for a streamlined aesthetic also seen in lifestyle packs. "Top riders demand a cutting edge feature set in a clean, modern package. Our new DSCNT series packs represent that trend. We've matched all the important features of a backcountry snow pack with the look of a lifestyle pack," said Seth Lightcap, Global Marketing Director at Jones. Holger at EVOC calls it "Urban Outdoor" while pointing out, "the packs need to speak a certain design language that ideally strengthens the self-perception of the customer – even if they don't actually use the

pack in the mountains." Look for the pod-shaped, clamshell look in 2018 packs of all sizes, from light day packs to 55L avalanche packs.


TECH & FEATURES

Next season's packs boast technology such as lightweight back protection (for instance EVOC Liteshield, Nitro KOROYD® EOP1.0 or Sas-Tec protectors in Amplifi's collection), hydration channels in shoulder straps, board and ski carry, dry gear pockets, air flow systems, and weight-distribution. Andi Aurhammer, International Marketing at NITRO is also proud of their, "size-adjustable back panel system to custom fit the bag for everybody from 1.6m-2.1m tall." Brands such as Dakine offer specific women's versions of their packs, while the majority of manufacturers is backing their products with CE and TÜV/GS certification. Airbags are also becoming a standard feature, with a notable trend towards detachable airbag systems, including Dakine's top-access Airbag 3.0 and EVOC's collaboration with ABS.

COLOURS & MATERIALS

The urban aesthetic sees colorways trending towards more neutral hues such as black, olive, grey, and navy. As PJ Rueda at Dakine said: "Snowboarders do not want to look like mountain climbers! Colours are simple and bold, and match outerwear." Materials include heavy-duty rip stop, HD foams, PVC-free materials, and strategically placed reinforcements. Amplifi is stoked on a "new technical fabric that has a more urban denim-y look," which echoes next season's trends towards tech materials with bleached and natural finishes. Picture Organic is using "an ergonomic thermo foam back zone which adapt its shape to your back" and "recycled Polyester 600D which has a high resistance against abrasion and which is very sustainable."

HOT TREND: LIGHT PACKS

All 2018 collections include versatile day packs, light in terms of weight but big on technical performance. Standouts include Dakine's 14L "Poacher" (18L with RAS), Patagonia's 18L "Linked", Nitro's 14L "Rover", and EVOC's body-hugging 18L "Line" series. Seth at Jones is stoked on the DSCNT 19L, "a side-country and quick tour pack that's the perfect size for the bare essentials – avalanche tools, water, snacks and a layer." 

HIGHLIGHTS

- SEASON TREND: Streamlined pod designs
- Built-in hydration
- Lightweight back protection
- Entry-level prices



Photo : Harry Mitchell Thompson

BIG WIG: FRANCK WATERLOT, BURTON EUROPE

It's been a huge year for Burton Europe, with the launch of the revolutionary Step On system, former General Manager, Hermann Kapferer retiring and with the opening of a new Hub retail concept in Zurich. Franck Waterlot, Burton's VP of Sales and Marketing in Europe fills this issue's Big Wig spot to talk through all of the above and gives some great insight into how the brand is seeing mid-single digit growth year on year across all hardgoods categories. We caught up at the launch party for the Zurich Hub and Franck, who joined Burton from Oakley in 2015, explains how his idea of the Hub came to fruition. **By Harry Mitchell Thompson.**

Please tell us your background, Franck

I did business studies, with a sales and marketing specialisation and I started working 25 years ago. The first part of my life was working in the apparel and fashion business, including some years at Calvin Klein as French Country Manager. I decided to join Oakley back in 2007, and this is when I started to work in the sports environment – mixing my passion for sports with business.

Have you always snowboarded?

I love sports – snowboarding, hiking, running. I enjoy spending time in the outdoors, in general. I joined Oakley because I wanted to mix my passion for sports with my business development skills. The Oakley project was a great opportunity, it allowed me to move to Zurich with my family and settle there.

I've spent the last ten years between Paris, Zurich and now Innsbruck, where I joined Burton back in 2015 as VP of Sales & Marketing. I got immediately involved with the transition project of taking over the leadership from Hermann Kapferer (former European GM).

And how's that been?

Really good, actually. We organized it in a very smooth and transparent manner. Hermann worked as an external consultant for six months from January to July of 2017, helping us out with the transition – basically telling us everything he knows. Hermann served as a side support for Oliver Zaletel (MD Human Resources, Finance and Operations) and myself to take over the responsibility of the subsidiary.

It sounds like it's been a well thought out, smooth transition.

Exactly. I mean, it would be impossible to take over the business from a figure like Hermann without taking great care. And Hermann, as well as the global management and the Innsbruck office, always gave great support.

How long have the plans for these new Hubs in Zurich and later Munich been in place?

It took me a few months to assess the situation and understand the business, the model and where the brand was coming from. And

The wholesale side still represents the main part of our business and we are investing a lot to offer a premium end consumer experience in this sector.

also to define what the new retail landscape holds and what the expectations are. 18 months ago I presented the plan to Hermann and the global management, explaining to them how I saw the business going forward with a long-term strategy in Europe.

The Hub concept breaks down the silos, the barriers across channels of trade and borders by being more local with the end consumer in mind. Getting closer to the end consumers, getting involved with them on a local level – this is key.

Nike have used Niketown as a great way of communicating with consumers on a local level. Did you take inspiration from this?

No, not really. When we worked on this strategy and approach, we weren't looking at the competition. We really focused on our needs – what did Burton need as a brand. The challenges; what to amend and what to upgrade. We realized that we had to get closer to the consumer and act more local instead of as a centralized business. Seeing that the biggest sports brands in the world are doing something similar, is very encouraging for us.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of D2C?

You learn much more about the consumer, you see how they react and behave, what they need and what they buy. Growing the D2C part of our business is a way for us to understand and monitor better, while having some direct return on our investment and one-on-one marketing activity.

However, D2C is still a very small part of our business. The wholesale side still represents the main part of our business and we are investing a lot to offer a premium end consumer experience in this sector.

we will make it more accessible but we'll still be very selective with the retailers we choose – while going deeper with the ones who already carrying it.

And the disadvantages for core snowboard retailers?

Physical stores put the brand front of mind, allowing a better presence in a premium manner: everyone benefits from this. I'm pretty sure that stronger footfall in our stores will generate traffic to other retailers too.

Did last year's good snowfall in the States make the European arm of the business more buoyant?

Simply put, in Europe we focus on Europe. We've been busy thinking about the future of the European business and how to engage with end consumers. We are seeing the first results of this and the first rewards. The fact that US had a good snow season is an added bonus for us, but as far as Europe is concerned, we make our plans regardless of a good or bad snow season.

And talking of snowfall – is there anything you can do to future proof the business for bad snow seasons?

We invest big time in snowboard products with new innovations and technology – such as Step On for example – but we are also investing in our Durable Goods collection, and "shoulder-season" line (apparel jackets with insulators). It's a dual move to protect the brand and the sport with new innovations and technology, and increase our presence in the off-snow season.

From walking around the Hub the women's activewear looks to play an important role?

Not specifically. We focus more on what we call "alternative outdoor". Some people call it urban outdoor, but we prefer the concept of being outdoor oriented – in an alternative manner. It's not far from what snowboarding really is about: enjoying nature, spending time outside with a couple of good friends, getting creative with the natural landscape. This our DNA, it is in our roots. No matter the season, no matter where you live, if you share these values you will find affinity

with our products – on snow, but also during your daily commute.

What is needed to make a sustainable, profitable snowboard company?

It's about staying true to ourselves, it's about celebrating the heritage but still being on track with trends and innovations. We celebrated "40 years forward" last season, 40 years of Burton: "honour the past and celebrate the future, always move forward". I think it is fundamental to invite new audiences to join the sport. Snowboarding has been somehow exclusive in the past, what will make a brand more sustainable is inviting those who are above and beyond the snowboard community.

It's always good to mix ideas, distribution and consumers to influence each other. It's like regenerating your business and your reservoir. This is the main inspiration behind the hub-concept. A physical location to invite people to experience the lifestyle.

So, turning to Step On. How has it been received?

We launched its first pre-order program on our DTC channels (site and Flagship Stores), on October 5. Pre-order quantities got globally sold out within a few hours. Generally speaking, it has been incredibly well received, the only complaint is that we didn't make enough. It is actually part of our strategy, we want to make sure that consumers understand the product, see it and try it – and like it or not. But we don't want to flood the market, it's a complete new system and we need to give everyone enough time to digest it. Let's see if consumers see it the same way our retailers did.

How will you innovate the Step On each year?

We are carrying over for Winter 18/19 what we are launching this year, but with some tweaks and a couple of new colourways. We'll also offer a youth collection. A rental model will be available for Winter 19/20. But again, we want to see the acceptance in the market before growing too fast. In terms of distribution, we will make it more accessible but we'll still be very selective with the retailers we choose – while going deeper with the ones who already carrying it.

If you were to predict the total number of snowboards sold each year in Europe, what would you estimate?

It's hard to give you a number, since there is no official market data available in Europe. What I can tell is that we are increasing the number of the boards we sell, year on year. It's a mid-single digit growth on all boards, boots and bindings – by value.

What marketing do you have planned for this year?

We just opened the Zurich hub, Munich will follow in Spring. Now we need to activate these hubs year-round and connect with the surrounding resorts for on-snow activations. We have great partnerships with Laax, Avoriaz and Verbier and we will leverage these resort partnerships with our hubs from a retailer, consumer and marketing standpoint.

The Step On launch is a big focus, and a strong highlight for our digital marketing plan. And last but not least, we are also expanding our branded spaces either in partner stores or shop corners. This is extra money we are putting at point of sale to deliver a more engaging and premium experience while activating these retailers. It's about growing consistency in delivering our brand message and product stories. We want to lead with direct but also offer these experiences to our retailers and send the same message to all channels of trade.

Our retailers are part of the family. We don't want them just to sell more, we want them to be part of the Burton project and participate to this push we're making.

The L.A.M.B X Burton collab was very well received last year. What direction will Burton go with collaborations in the future?

It's about quality over quantity. L.A.M.B. was a perfect mix in terms of visibility and execution; going forward, we'll be very selective but also more focused on Europe – most of the past collabs were developed for the US market. The collab component will be part of our game here. **👊**



photo : DC

MEN'S STREETWEAR FW18/19

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Everybody wants a slice of skateboard chic these days, but endemic companies are banking on authenticity to maintain their edge during the cold weather season.
Fall/Winter 2018/19 Men's Streetwear Retail Buyer's Guide by **Dirk Vogel**.

As the old saying goes: What goes up, must come down. The current hype around skateboarding in high fashion and streetwear keeps reaching new heights, but how soon will everyone and their girlfriend have enough Thrasher tees in their closet? How many hip bags for slinging over the shoulder can we sell? And does the current SUPREME and Louis Vuitton collab signal the peak before an inevitable plunge?

Many in our industry are already raging against the (hype) machine, including masterminds of original 1980s streetwear brands that set the blueprint for today's status quo. "Streetwear is on everyone's minds right now, and many brands are suddenly claiming to be streetwear. Even those luxury sissies at Gucci or Louis Vuitton. Now the kids of rich bankers are running around with SUPREME, not to mention son of an Arabic sheik covering his Ferrari in SUPREME logos," said Jürgen Wolf, creator of the recently re-launched Homeboy label, adding an appeal to the industry: "We are ALL streetwear! And it includes a connection to action sports. So we shouldn't let anyone take it away from us and work together to push this trend forward for the next ten years!"

Other streetwear trailblazers are back to add their distinct voices to the current mix, including Damon Way, co-creator of Droors Clothing and DC Shoes, who captures a DIY and punk aesthetic with his FACT label. FOR FW 18/19, original 1990s skateboard shoe brand éS Footwear is making a strong push into apparel, also built on strong roots. "Our key USP is our brand heritage, authenticity and being privately owned by skateboarders. We've been 100 per cent pure to skateboarding for over 20 years, and the market is looking for authentic stories right now and into the future," said Don Brown, Chief Brand Strategist, Sole Technology.

THE MARKET: FOCUS ON VALUE

Any way you slice it, streetwear is big business these days. Following a deal with the Carlyle Group, the SUPREME brand is now valued at \$1 billion – not bad for an operation started in a blunt-scented New York City skate shop. And at the time of writing, a bid for a 90 per cent stake in streetwear brand HUF, created in 2002 by San Francisco skateboard icon Keith Hufnagel, has been made by Tadashi Saito and Tsi Holdings, worth \$63 million.

"We are ALL streetwear! And it includes a connection to action sports. So we shouldn't let anyone take it away from us and work together to push this trend forward for the next ten years!" **Jürgen Wolf, Homeboy**

At the same time, customers are becoming increasingly sensitive to the negative effects of "big" businesses, most of all toxic mass-market wholesale brands. And it's hurting the bottom line: H&M's third-quarter net profits have taken a 20 per cent dip, and the fast-fashion retailer is already curtailing new store openings. Instead of catering to ultra-fast release cycles, many endemic streetwear brands are focusing on staying power. "Makia is offering minimalistic products that leave room for the person's own style. Our products are also easy to mix and match with a lot of different styles. We are not really going for the trendiest stuff," said Jesse Hyvärä.

Looking at FW18/19 retail pricing reveals a drop in entry level price points and more added value in terms of quality and features across the spectrum. Quality t-shirts from boardsports brands start as low as

*“We’ve been inspired by work wear, clothing with function at its heart - what better place to look for functional inspiration? The rugged fabrics, the buckles and belts all give ideas for improved functionality in design,” said the team at **Protest***

€25, pants at €55, sweatshirts at €65, and jackets at €79. Dan Preston, Design Manager at Globe International noted a trend towards, “items with more bang for buck. Affordable items that have a few tricks in the way of performance.” At the same time, demand for rarefied, elevated, and limited garments continues at price points well into the lower triple digits. However, it’s an easier sale when higher prices are justified by performance: “Men are a strange target group. First of all a lot of them do not see aesthetics as a value. They value functions more, so we often try to make our range easily understandable,” said Palle Bruun Rasmussen, Design Director/Partner at RVL.T.

SEASON TREND: WORK WEAR

The 1990s style revival still looms large over men’s footwear and streetwear, but takes a step back as the pendulum swings into cold season. As the leading FW18/19 aesthetic, HippyTree’s Director of International Sales Josh Sweeney identifies, “a more mature work wear-meets-outdoors look that goes back to clean and simple lines and away from louder exterior logos.” It’s a logical choice, because work wear not only constitutes the bedrock of streetwear – next to military surplus garments – but also provides the kind of rugged, weather-proof protection needed during winter time. “We’ve been inspired by work wear, clothing with function at its heart - what better place to look for functional inspiration? The rugged fabrics, the buckles and belts all give ideas for improved functionality in design,” said the team at Protest. In terms of materials, work wear mainstays Dickies – now part of the VF Group – play with, “cord and pinstripe are big features for next season,” said Marketing Manager Kev Penney. At Santa Cruz Apparel, Senior Apparel Designer Nathaniel Jones implements, “heavy weight jersey, pique, loopback fleece. Some heavyweight brushed twill work shirts and brushed plaid with some stretch.”



photo : Globe

MATERIALS: RUGGED AND WEATHERIZED

Next season’s protective shells borrow from outerwear innovations when it comes to insulation, water-proofing and breathability. Speaking on trending FW18/19 materials in pants and tops, Stacy Dye, Director of Merchandising and Design at HUF points out, “corduroy and polar fleece.” Fleece will feature front and centre next season due to its versatility. Originally created by Helly Hansen in the 1960s and advanced by Polartec in the 1980s, fleece is implemented as an outer layer on zip-up sweaters, cardigans, and vests. Fleece also lines the insides of pieces for added warmth, including 280GSM lining on the éS Footwear “Main Block” hooded sweater. According to Patrick Kressner, Men’s Designer at Iriedaily, “sweat and jersey fabrics are getting more heavy and colours more bright. The main trending fabric textures are crinkles or rip-stops.” The Protest crew is huge on Sherpa fleece that has, “loads of the qualities of wool while being lighter and easier to care for.” Nevertheless, wool still reigns supreme in layering pieces. “Wool is one of the few natural fibres known to man

to function in the cold as well as in the warm weather,” said Danny at Roark Revival while pointing out their Nordsman knit top.

FITS & SILHOUETTES: ROOM FOR MOVEMENT

Fits are a mixed bag in FW18/19: “We are seeing a mix of standard or closer to body fit, but simultaneously there are kids wearing oversized gear as well,” said Stacy at HUF. Brands tend to stay in their own lane, with Jürgen Wolf at Homeboy convinced that, “joggers are over. These are styles for the older generation now. The young ones want it baggy.” Next season’s trending pant is a relaxed chino or twill pant featuring stretch in the right places and a cropped but not tight leg opening. As a sleeper trend, baggy 1990s style cargo pants are making a comeback among core skaters, after mainstream fashion houses have been serving up cargo pants in slim, contoured fits for decades. At the same time, “the tops are getting fluffy and thicker but the longer silhouettes is more or less replaced but the regular waist silhouette, that even counts the jackets,” said Palle Bruun Rasmussen at RVL.T. Speaking of jackets, the trending styles for transitioning into winter are coaches jackets – which Homeboy brought into streetwear in 1988 – and bombers including the Brixton Arlo jacket. For colder weather, parkas are the big ticket next season, with highlights such as the Goodstock Utility Jacket (Globe), Santos Jacket (HippyTree), Monte Jacket (Brixton), and Form Parka (Makia). Also keep an eye out for sleeveless puffer vests in a workwear style (see season trend).

COLOURS & STYLING: KEEPING IT HOT

As the days get shorter, colourways take a step into understated territory. But FW18/19 packs some surprises, as brands implement vivid contrasts next to proven fall/winter colour staples. As Dan Preston at Globe International explained: “Orange and fire red are dominant statement brights for A/W18. Playing on associations with high-visibility work wear and military staples this balances out our essential colours of navy, stone, and black, with deeper bottle greens elevating fatigue-inspired olives with a modern edge.” Patrick at Iriedaily is on the same page, stating that, “FW 2018 collections will be much more colourful than in the past years,” thanks to “colour blocking in a ‘90s retro look.” Graphical styles for next season feed off a DIY, photo-copied aesthetic, and an influx of heritage skateboard graphics, for instance in the Santa Cruz OGSC collection on hooded coach jackets and rugby shirts. At ETHIK, graphics “maintain the grittiness of NEW YORK CITY,” said Public Relations Manager, Matthew Garrett. Meanwhile, the new HUF collection, The Last Resort puts, “an emphasis on an adventure through Tokyo with neon signs, Japanese fashion, and Neo Tokyo.”

Despite the overall resurgence of work wear, 1990s athletic style will also be a pacemaker for FW18/19 collections, kicked into high gear by éS Footwear with the gorgeous nylon taffeta “Laps” tracksuit ensemble and Iriedaily’s “Get Down Jacket & Pant” and “Block Steady Trainer & Pant”. Dan at Globe sees the aesthetic move beyond athletics: “The ‘90s attitude is subtly reinterpreted, through bold colour-blocking, stripes, silhouettes such as layered oversized tees, wider ribs, and roomy chinos.” And while logos are on the decline next season, bold print statements – like Iriedaily’s “STAY DIFFERENT” – in unexpected places keep things interesting. On that note, retailers need to stock up on accessories with maximum colour pop like orange or bright red beanies to help customers keep the fire burning in those long winter months ahead.🔥

HIGHLIGHTS

- Backlash against “fast fashion”
- Weatherized fabrics, fleece
- Work wear
- 1990s athletic style
- Return of OG streetwear brands



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photo: Iriedaily

WOMEN'S STREETWEAR FW 18/19

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

After a couple of difficult seasons women's streetwear is picking up again in Fall/Winter 2018/19. Boardsports brands gain ground against cheap and interchangeable high street chain stores by offering true value and roots in the communities they stem from and inspire. Retail Buyer's Guide by **Anna Langer**.

"The rise of streetwear fashion at the moment has meant that clothing from certain core skate/surf brands is being featured alongside high street fashion," says Sophie Harris, Apparel Designer at Santa Cruz Women's, with "high-street stores and even high-end designers taking influence from boardsports brands to gain a bigger streetwear following." Due to this "streetwear renaissance and hype", Ines Schwitzky, Category Manager Womens & Denise Graff, Brand Marketing Manager at Iriedaily believe that "women are willing to spend more for the 'original' than for the fake variation from the big fast fashion chain stores." And Jenna Kuklinski Marketing Manager at Nikita Clothing agrees: "Women are ready to pay for things that they connect with. If they perceive a value and a genuine voice coming from a brand saying, 'I hear you - you're like us!' they want to be a part of it and represent what the brand stands for."

So after two years of prices being "flat", as Billabong Women's Design Manager Isabelle Weppe puts it, "turnover is very positive" again. Of course there are a lot of different factors and views to be considered, adds Makia Clothing Designer Elina, who sees sustainability of collections and brands among key issues in consumers choices when purchasing items for the future.

TRENDS

Staying true to their roots, there's a lot of sporty inspiration in streetwear from boardsports brands, with 90s colour blocking, big logos, mini patches and sleeve prints from Iriedaily, iconic graphics from vintage magazine adverts from the 80s, photo prints and neons from Santa Cruz and sporty details in easy and comfortable styles for every day life from Makia.

"Nikita is about having fun with your friends and being a strong female who isn't afraid to get out of her comfort zone. That attitude is so much a part of the action sports/boardsports market and we make sure that everything we do in our streetwear line carries the same vibe with it. The Nikita girl is wild and raw - but not afraid to be feminine." Jenna summarizes the theme for their FW18/19 collection. With "free spirit inspiration" including Asian influence and wild floral patterns, Billabong create a "dark look with a hint of sweetness to light up" with "modern loose" shapes that are comfy yet stylish.

FITS & SILHOUETTES

Fitting the shapes of modern women who are tough and strong without loosing their soft side, we find everything from unisex fits, boyfriend cuts (Iriedaily), oversized (Nikita) and loose, easy-to-wear pieces (Santa Cruz) to more "streamlined" and slimmer cuts (Nikita), maxi dresses (Billabong), long sleeve dresses (Makia) and an "a-line dress with open back and embroidered sleeves" (Santa Cruz) to span every facet the female customers may want to show of themselves. "Our silhouettes vary, some get shorter and boxy while others, get longer, reflecting the growing trend in long Parka-style jackets" says Protest, referring to a "growing trend on the street, providing more length for warmth and protection and style" that is also showing in collections from Billabong and Nikita. Puffy jackets are also big next winter, in an oversized 90's inspired look from Iriedaily, a longer version with huge hood from Makia and a mini-version from Billabong. Makia find "trousers are making their way to be the key element" and so we see "wild legs, high waist, classic skinny denim pant and relax denim jumpsuit" from Billabong, Chino pants and a new skinny fit jean from Nikita.

MATERIALS, COLOURS & PATTERNS

Accommodating cold Autumn and Winter days, Nikita employ "cozy fabrics" like brushed fleece, an all-over Sherpa Hoody and flannel linings on jackets, Santa Cruz sport French Terry Loopback, Billabong have velvet as well as crinkle rib fabrics and Makia play with soft merino knits. Dickies also base their stories "around fabric and materials, such as cord and pinstripes" states Kev Penney, Marketing Manager. Colours range from muted brights (Makia), through "whispery shades of wild lavender and nudes" (Billabong) to "pops of warm colour alongside darker shades" (Santa Cruz) and clear, expressive colour combinations (Iriedaily). Mélange colours are "becoming less prominent and are more supporting the look" for Iriedaily, while Nikita use "heathers, plaids and sailor stripes" in interesting and updated applications." Billabong play with wild, ditsy and Asian inspired florals, next to stripes and 70s rock graphics, which also play a big role in Santa Cruz's collection. Iriedaily feature logos in different variations, "from small embroidery and mini patches to big print" while Nikita continue a "strong presence of animal and nature-inspired graphics and prints" but with "more of an edge." 

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Emerge

Sebbe De Buck

The Emerge MIPS

Artwork by

Lucas Braefit



photo: Head

HELMETS FW 18/19 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Riders are getting bolder and riding faster than ever before thanks to better edges, board tech and more, meaning safety equipment has to keep up as well. Days of bulky black helmets are long gone and nowadays new stylish lids match each rider's personal style while packing plenty of safety under the hood. Pick your choice among the trends for FW18/19. Retail Buyer's Guide by **Anna Langer**.

Varying studies suggest that between 40-70% of winter sports participants protect their heads with helmets. So it's no great surprise that consumers are getting more educated, which in turn affects the market for protective headwear. "We see an increase in consumers interest in higher price points, with more features - riders tend to have a clear picture of what they expect from their protective gear, other than 'only needing a helmet' - which was the case in previous years," states Max Thurner, International Marketing Manager at Head. Since "customers are becoming much more aware of the level of protection they need for their style of riding, it's important to explain this clearly with packaging and marketing," says Pro-Tec Brand Director R.P. Bess. Smith notice that "MIPS is a major conversation piece as snow consumers' technology awareness increases," and sells better than ever.

With riders being "much more demanding on technical features, comfort, fit, design and are not willing to make compromises," Rossignol find the market "extremely competitive", offering "different concepts and technologies in order to provide high performance products," says Aurélie Zucco, Business Unit Manager of Technical Equipment.

TRENDS

Combining technical features with a "sober and smart design," (Rossignol) results as main trend, with lighter, more comfortable helmets (Bern) that are better performing (Sweet) and lower profile (Sandbox). "A helmet must fit great, be light and safe. These are the key trends - all the rest are individual preferences," argues Ruedi Herger, CEO of TSG. "Safety is on the table for all helmet brands. MIPS and other solutions to manage rotational forces is becoming standard in the upper price ranges," adds Tove Fritzell, Head of Product Development at Bolle.

Visors make a comeback for Bolle, Head, Mivida and Brunotti, especially for "people who wear prescription glasses, or just don't like the feeling on their face of having to wear a goggle," as Max from Head mentions. Looks start to crossover from urban (Egg) and skate

markets (Pro-Tec), while colours are matched with outerwear trends. With the range of choice, no one is satisfied with just being safe, they also want to express their personality with their lid.

TECHNOLOGY

Evolving technologies also increase the choice for protective features. Still, "in terms of safety, addressing rotational energies seems to stay the main focus in the helmets industry," finds Giro Product Line Manager for Snow Helmets, Mattia Berardi, who says the brand offers MIPS in all of their in-line models and add their own version, MIPS Spherical, for more commercial models and their "ultimate freestyle helmet, Emerge MIPS." Bolle add MIPS to their Instinct freeride helmet: "Pairing the AViD progressive EPS with the extra protection provided by MIPS in a lightweight, big mountain friendly lid was a logical step" argues Tove. Sweet also feature MIPS in all helmets and Varying studies suggest that between 40-70% of winter sports participants protect their heads with helmets. So it's no great surprise that consumers are getting more educated, which in turn affects the market for protective headwear. "We see an increase in consumers interest in higher price points, with more features - riders tend to have a clear picture of what they expect from their protective gear, other than 'only needing a helmet' - which was the case in previous years," states Max Thurner, International Marketing Manager at Head. Since "customers are becoming much more aware of the level of protection they need for their style of riding, it's important to explain this clearly with packaging and marketing," says Pro-Tec Brand Director R.P. Bess. Smith notice that "MIPS is a major conversation piece as snow consumers' technology awareness increases," and sells better than ever.

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POC introduce SPIN (Shearing Pad INside), a brand-new patent-pending rotational impact protection system in their new Auric Cut Backcountry: “To counter oblique impacts, we have created SPIN pads, which are optimized to provide rotational impact protection based on the precise location inside the helmet,” thus minimizing the effects of oblique falls by allowing the helmet to move relative to the head, explains Damian Phillips, Head of PR. The “IMPACTS Technology” from Rossignol offers long-term protection against multiple impacts, “even from low-intensity shocks that leave no visible trace but can alter the protection helmets provide and negatively affect resistance to future impacts,” and is implied in the Templar and Progress.

Brunotti focus on lightweight in-mould helmets with a new sturdy hybrid model that combines safety and wearing comfort. Dirty Dog also have two new helmets with Hybrid Shell Construction, that “target areas of the helmet for ultra protection, whilst making other areas of the helmet as light as necessary,” as Tom Lazarus, Operations Manager UK & Europe explains. Sinner combine lightweight in-mould technology with a hard ABS top shell for maximum protection in their new hybrid Stoneham helmet and Picture Organic Clothing also introduce a hybrid: “the Omega Helmet, a mix between in-mould construction and hardshell for double the shock absorption,” with minimal weight. Similar to the new TSG Vertice in-mould construction with extra strong EPS and a clean, sleek design. Last but not least, Bolle introduce two new helmets to their kids range and Head introduce the MOJO (unisex) and MAJA (girls) that are the super low weight, size adjustability and “REAL junior and kids models, with their own moulds and sizes,” as Max emphasizes.

MATERIALS

The new Smith Mission and Mirage snow helmets improve impact performance and technology to help aid in rotational impacts with “Koroyd®, whose crumple-zone cylinders crush uniformly on impact, converting and absorbing more kinetic energy than traditional materials, leading to extremely efficient and consistent energy absorption. Upon impact, the cores crush in a controlled manner, decelerating the energy from the impact and reducing the final trauma levels,” explains Graham Sours, Snow Category Manager.

Egg pioneer Cato Thermoplastic Composite Technology (Cato TCT ®), “a self reinforced polypropylene that is ultra strong, ultra lightweight and extremely impact resistant,” and paired with an EPP multi-impact core, which is strong and durable for multisport purposes like snowboarding, skateboarding and biking. Managing Partner, Charly Heusschen even claims these to be “lighter and stronger than carbon fibre.” Carbon paired with high tensile nylon fibres still finds use in

the shell of both Sweet & Bolle’s top of the line racing helmets.

Bern maintain their proprietary Liquid Foam technology Zipmold+®, “a PC microshell lined with Zipmold+® liquid injected foam to create a super low profile finish,” that is also used in the kids category. K2 continue their tried and tested construction methods of EPS foam combined with in-mould, hardshell, or hybrid shell technology, Head alternate between lightweight in-mould and heavy-duty ABS models and TSG combine in-mould as well as hardshell helmets with EPS foam for the TSG Snug Fit that is “modelled around all four sides of the head for best fit and maximum comfort.” True to their ethos, Picture Organic Clothing developed the “first & most eco-friendly helmet ever made in the industry together with KALI, featuring a lining that is 100% made of recycled EPS collected from Japanese automobile manufacturing industry leaders and ear pads made from recycled PET bottles,” says Julien Durant, Co-Founder. Mivida plan to join the eco-friendly sector as well with a “different kind of plastic, taking care about nature” but are not ready to release details yet.

LINERS

Since the inside of the helmet is crucial not just for comfort but also for safety, as only something you enjoy wearing all day actually protects you, liners are updated as well. Head cover their helmets with a “full beanie lining” that can be taken out to be washed or replaced with your own. K2 feature a range of liners “from the minimalist pad set of the backcountry specific Route, to our moisture wicking Tech Form Wrap, to the plush Full Wrap.” Sandbox introduce a super cozy removable/washable comfort liner that works in conjunction with the BOA fit system to give you ultimate fit and comfort while riding in their new Apex line.

COLOURS, PATTERNS & DESIGN

In terms of look, compatibility is key. “Like it or not, everyone cares about how they look, whether they want to admit it or not,” says Andy Steel, Bern International Sales Manager, aiming for their products to match any outfit. Rossignol offer “highly technical products in a smart and sober design, with discrete but contrasting colours,” and Sweet swear by black and white as big sellers while launching a completely new visual identity.

K2 “pull back graphically and let the smooth shapes and on-trend matte colours do the talking,” Smith add more matte finishes as well, especially for the women’s line, Dirty Dog pair matte with pastels, Picture mix matte and shining colours and Pro-Tec work with neutrals in matte next to “flashier colours in the more traditional snow silhouettes.” Head stick to clean designs and earthy colours like olive and petrol and TSG continue to explore gradients, cutting back on graphics. For Bolle, the improvement in manufacturing results in “greater artistic freedom” with inspiration from retro motor culture in earthy tones and pastels. Giro feature four different colour stories including earth tones (Outdoor Classics), unique patterns (Morockin’), technical materials and basic colours (Performance) as well as organic, street and fashion influences (Natural Rhythm). Sandbox use natural elements as well, while Bolle and Brunotti bring Camouflage back. Sinner opt for the brighter side of things with “bright, light and navy blue, moss green, dark grey, brights like neon pink and neon orange and a touch of gold.”

GOGGLE & AUDIO INTEGRATION

Both features have become standards. Brands manufacturing both helmets and goggles mostly co-develop them for seamless fit without gaps, pinch or pressure points as well as coordinated colourways and designs. Audio integration is solved through ear pad pockets that are compatible with the brands’ own devices as well as Outdoor Tech Chips, which have evolved as an industry standard. 🎧

HIGHLIGHTS

- Rotational Impact Protection
- lightweight Hybrid Constructions
- comfort increasing, washable liners
- seamless Goggle compatibility
- standard Audio Integration



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ORGANIC & RECYCLED PRODUCTS

BUYER SCIENCE SURFDOME TOBIAS ANDERSSON

A legend within the UK snowboarding industry, Tobias Andersson has been working at UK online retailer Surfdome for seven years now where he's currently the man responsible for snowboard (and skate) buying. For our first snowboard issue of the 17/18 winter, we sat down with Tobias, who originally from Sweden, has lived in his adopted home of England for almost 20 years now and knows a thing or two about snowboard retail...

How long have you been a snowboard/skateboard buyer for Surfdome and how did you end up in this position?

It's just gone past the seven-year mark now working at Surfdome. I wanted to move from bricks 'n' mortar towards the online part of retail. Surfdome was hiring and it all went on from there really.

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

Everything goes in cycles and you just have to do your best to predict or react to them. We still have growth in all product categories for snowboarding but this is not necessarily due to snowboarding growing as a sport and more to do with less competition. For us the last two years has seen growth or a stable sales curve across all snowboard/snow categories and long may that continue!

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

What I tend to ask for is access to all necessary info to place an order (line lists/price lists, catalogues) well ahead of deadline day. Time is always of the essence so the more time a brand can give me to pick my range and plan for the coming season the better. For marketing it's normally better to just have an open dialogue on how to best push a certain brand, our marketing guys do a great job working closely with brands to the benefit of both sides for sure.

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

Brand line-up constantly evolves but yes we have made some changes, mainly reducing the brand count (and SKU count) a bit so we can work better and closer with the brands remaining. This is of course not just Surfdome but the snow industry as a whole seems to be on the same page with this one.

What's your process for finding new brands?

No set process as such, I get influences and ideas as to what might work in our brand line up from various things. On-snow tests,



photo : Chris Pollard

tradeshows, social media, friends and just being aware of the products people around me (in the city or on the mountain) are using or buy into.

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

Unless you are lucky enough to have a ground-breaking product that will pretty much sell itself you need to clearly state your case as to why I should buy your product instead of the more established equivalent brands. There always needs to be a good quality product to start it all off, but also something that makes them clearly stand out which is not always just the actual product.

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

For snow it's Avant Premiere, Shops 1st Try, Slide and ISPO. The first two are on-snow tests where I can try out pretty much all I would want, which is a huge help. Actually getting to ride and try product is key, without that my job would be very much harder - and less fun. Tradeshows (on-snow or not) are still hugely important for my decision-making and I can't see that changing.

Could you give us a brief overview of what your deadlines look like for each category. How have these changed over recent years?

Hahaha, yeah sure! Per product category they are pretty much bunched up in the same week. Clothing comes first, goggles/helmets after that and hardware shortly after that. Deadlines are earlier than previous years, which I don't mind as such, it's just that within the same product category they are all in the same week if not the same day! The workload and stress that comes with that sort of schedule would probably be horrible if you didn't work with something you love, which luckily I do. 🙌



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photo: Amplifi

PROTECTION FW18/19 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

A quick glance around today's slopes proves that helmets have reached the mainstream and become a standard on the hill. Protection for the rest of the body isn't quite as visible - which is not necessarily an indicator for its prevalence, but more the subtleness of state of the art protective gear which is getting more and more attention from customers as well. Retail Buyer's Guide **by Anna Langer.**

"Safety gear is a must and can allow you to look still cool," states Dainese Junior Product Manager, Davide Brugnoli and Evoc agree to an increase in snow protection over recent years: "Body protection slowly finds its way from the pro level to the mainstream user. As snowboards get more and more capable of higher speeds and more technical manoeuvres we see a growing demand for back protection, especially," says Jan Sallawitz, Marketing Manager. Forcefield add: "Protective body armour that conforms to CE standards is proven to reduce the incidence and severity of injury sustained during winter sports. Consumers understand this and demand maximum protection for their chosen discipline but with flexibility and comfort to give them more freedom of movement." Valid reason to make sure the shelves are stocked with the respective products!

TRENDS

The "continuing trend is for high tech softer materials, that conform to the body shape and protect - but are breathable and super comfortable," says Amplifi's Head of Design Tom Howells and Bliss expand, saying "protection has to be invisible and shouldn't restrict the user when it comes down to movement." Evoc implement this in their Protection Wear concept that combines functional sports underwear (first or second layer) with protective qualities, which Forcefield mention as a growing trend as well. Freedom of movement and lightweight are also main objectives for POC, Rossignol, Icetools Protection and TSG as well, who additionally see a high demand in "protective gear that can be used for multiple sports." Which makes sense, as "most snowboarders are also outdoor activity lovers," as Dainese argue, making "technology durable for both winter and summer activities," one of their main marketing stories.

TECHNOLOGY & MATERIAL

In the quest for ever-slimmer padding, 3D moulds (Bliss) and 3D knitting are especially "hot" (Amplifi). Komperdell introduce "specially developed dual density foam materials which are combined in a multi-layer, multi chamber system," and G-Form launch a proprietary technology called RPT (Reactive Protection Technology) that allows for "Body-Mapped" foam moulding: "By doing so we cover the most vulnerable areas and ensure the most comfortable fit where you forget you're even wearing protection."

Dainese developed "an evolution of our well-known technology, the Flexagon" and TSG expand the use of Arti-Lage foam in their collection, based on "really good test results compared to similar visco-elastic foams," explains CEO Ruedi Herger. Despite its "soft feel and incredible flexibility" POC's VPD (Viscoelastic Polymer

Dough) also stiffens upon impact to offer certified levels of protection. Forcefield utilise different materials "to do the very best job given which part of the body they are protecting," including a "mix of nitrile based layering protection for the spine, and a mix of special memory material for the Isolator range that covers limbs."

Next to protection, breathability is key for gear worn very close to the body during a sweaty activity like snowboarding and tackled with bamboo charcoal fabrics (Amplifi), Airbreath and 3D Mesh materials (Evoc) and BeCool: "A unique fibre with a greater diffusive area than standard fibre," from Forcefield.

More innovative materials result in slightly higher price points, argue Bliss and Forcefield, yet Evoc notice that "people seem to be more and more willing to pay for quality." In general there is room for all price points though, with a big offering for mainstream customers from many brands next to more advanced pieces for specialised uses, spanning a "wide range of products with different price points. From high end rocket science pads to your daily shred buddy," as Andi Nitsche puts it, Global Marketing & PR for Bliss.

OUTLOOK

With so many riders already using helmets, the protection sector as a whole bears a lot of potential. "The next important area to be considered should be the back," explain Dainese, "with proper education of the consumer from the retail and industry side, this category bears a big growth potential". Komperdell think so as well and Forcefield add: "As people become more aware that protection is a great thing, and especially now that it is comfortable, and can be worn as part of a base layer system, the growth will be widespread."

Besides this, "the kids category is really taking off. Parents want to protect their little rippers, and up until now the offers have been really uninspiring," says Amplifi. They, along with Evoc, TSG and POC are all launching new models in this category for FW18/19, making sure the future of snowboarding is in safe hands! 🏆

HIGHLIGHTS

- slim & invisible padding
- protection integrated in 1st & 2nd layers
- flexible back protectors for freedom of movement
- protection for kids & juniors



Rider: Brian Fox

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BOARDSPORTS SOCKS SS18 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Popular accessories with attractive margins, boardsports-inspired socks can really pull an outfit together.
2018 Buyer's Guide by Boardsport SOURCE Skateboarding Editor **Dirk Vogel**.

Leave it to skateboarders to turn drab wardrobe staples into hot fashion trends: In the late 1970s, knee-high tube socks with horizontal stripes were all the rage at skate parks across the world. When punk rock rolled around in the early eighties, argyle-pattern socks became emblems of youthful rebellion. Athletic brand socks featured prominently throughout the 1990s, before California brand Stance jump-started "boardsports socks" as a lucrative category in 2009, and HUF's weed-patterned socks raked in some major green.

Fast-forward to 2018 and socks have become fixtures at board shops around the world, backed by a number of pure-play socks and underwear brands. Stance has already sold over 36 million pairs of socks and raised over \$115 million from investors (SneakerShouts) to keep pushing forward. "Socks are the foundation of the Stance brand and was our only product category until we launched men's underwear two years ago," said Nathan Hill, Head of Sales EMEA, adding: "We have a SHRED lab (Sock, Hosiery, Research, Engineering & Development) incorporated within our HQ where the team are continually testing and developing product." Team-tested product gives boardsports brands the extra edge in the socks game. For premium brand Smartwool, the motto for serving athletes with advanced fits, cushioning, and high-grade materials is Comfort is Confidence, explains Simon Mur, EMEA Marketing: "Comfort gives you the confidence to go further and do more. Your feet are critical in having the confidence to do what you love. If your feet don't feel good, your day is done."

PRICING & MARKET

How much are customers willing to pay for comfy feet? Lifestyle-oriented socks start around €12.00 per pair, followed by longer-cut snowboard socks between €15.00 and €20.00, and premium material socks up to €25.00. "Despite a higher price point, consumers are still willing to make the investment in a sock that is special or unique and demands the higher price," said Chris McGuire, UK Sales Rep for HUF. And speaking of "special", Smartwool is limiting sales of their Smartwool PhD Slopestyle socks to select core retailers.

SEASON TREND: SHOW SOME ANKLE

The continuing demand for specialty socks is buoyed by a larger menswear trend for showing some ankle. Trend-savvy boarders wear hemmed or rolled-up pant/trouser legs, while some tuck their athletic pants into their socks, thereby transforming socks from underwear to streetwear. Get ready for bold designs, vibrant colours, generously applied branding, and elaborate materialization in lifestyle and performance-oriented 2018 sock collections. "Our boldest and most eye-catching designs have been among the most popular," said Chris at HUF.

LIFESTYLE SOCKS

Next season's lifestyle-oriented socks come super-charged with boardsports style and storytelling. HUF's Electric Dreams line splashes into the summer with "melange fabrics, tie-dyes and digital prints. Our colour story ties into our seasonal theme with a bright and bold palette." European brand Stinky Socks offers a nice riff on 1970s tube socks with their "Wings" skate socks, and will drop collabs with Ashbury Eyewear, Lucas Magoon and YoBeat next season. Stance partnered with iconic skateboard photographer Skin Phillips and Hawaiian-born artist Mark Oblow, while bringing serious punk rock heat with album art prints by Bad Brains, the Descendants, and the Dead Kennedys.

PERFORMANCE SOCKS

What constitutes a "performance" sock in 2018? Basically, a combination of elevated materials and athletic construction. "We've spent a lot of time getting a well-constructed fit for our socks. The toe box is seamlessly linked, there are strategically positioned cushion areas and mesh panels for breathability and the elastic component is engineered to give really good hold," said Richard Birkby, Head of Brand and Marketing at premium brand Mons Royale, whose offering is focused on next season's trending material, merino wool. "All of our socks are made with merino wool, mother nature's original performance fibre," said Simon Mur at Smartwool, while pointing out advanced tech such as the 4-Degree Elite Fit System.

At Stinky Socks, owner Risto introduced, "a special treatment where the cotton can absorb moisture three times more than its own weight before you actually would start and feel it on your feet. Then we have a special silver treatment that keeps your feet fresh for a longer time." HUF's "weed" pattern goes premium in their Melange Plantlife Socks. Stance is toughing up the fabric in their Skate Fusion line with Deathless Thread and – retailers will love this – doubling their SKU-count per POS-display with the new Cling On's fixture. On that note: Order up and get with the boardsports sock trend, because even if the socks are stinky, the money ain't! **👟**

HIGHLIGHTS

- Anatomical panel construction
- Elaborate knit patterns
- Hot trend: Merino wool
- Collabs and culture-inspired storytelling

photo : Lightning Bolt



MEN’S SURF APPAREL FW18/19

RETAIL BUYER’S GUIDE

True to their roots, the winter surf apparel collections continue to be crowd pleasers, and full of surprises. Without being too introspective, they've picked diverse paths and kept people guessing with looks ranging from retro to contemporary, minimalist to colourful, and functional to elegant. This is an in-depth look at trends in surf apparel for Fall/Winter 18/19 by **Denis Houillé**.

EXPLORATION & TRAVELS

Performance and style seem to shape the surf look of the 21st century man, a citizen of the world whose wardrobe demands multi-functionality and innovation. From urban centres to the mountains, and by way of many surf spots, these winter collections are designed to accompany him in his day-to-day life and to wherever his travels may take him: Bundoran, Ireland; Montauk, New York; Tofino, Canada; Kamchatka, Russia; or Yakutat, Alaska. The cold climates of these northern latitudes with an endless supply of virgin spots may be deserted but are no longer a problem as far as temperature is concerned. “With today’s globalisation, distance and time no longer hold us back from doing what we love”, says Hanna Verweij, Marketing & PR Manager at Brunotti Europe. Borders and weather conditions are no longer a hindrance and the possibilities are endless. No matter the time, the context or the weather report, these looks have to stand up every test and go unnoticed. The practical side of workwear is also in favour this season and Product Designer at Salty Crew, Andrew Hartshorne specifies, “men are looking for something with a utilitarian function.”

At Lightning Bolt it’s got to the point that they’re creating “clothes inspired by cities of the world”. The brand’s offering has “a sophisticated look, with a touch of eccentricity and coastal disconnect”. It’s all about how to get lost in the crowd, while still holding onto your authenticity. At Finisterre the entire artistic direction uses elements from very cold climates and the idea of exploration. At Billabong, the waterproof and breathable materials are the cornerstones of the Adventure Division line. Travel is also a major theme at Dakine whose line is designed for covering thousands of kilometres with ease thanks to zipped pockets, as well as light and

“With today's globalisation, distance and time no longer holds us back from doing what we love?” **Hanna Verweij** – Marketing & PR Manager Brunotti Europe

comfortable materials. A backpack and camera are integral parts of the silhouette of a modern day surf explorer. O’Neill is making sure they’re ready for the transition to winter by focusing on / taking aim at the early autumn climate with an ideal “hybrid” line, the Men’s Category Manager, Jan Lindeboom assures us.

90S DOMINATION

The 90s theme seems to have undeniably cemented its influence, as much in prints as in typography and logos. Just like that, it has brought back embroideries, central logo positioning, and out-of-date neon colours.

Rip Curl has announced two strong trends. The first is the universe of sports-influenced 90s products (revisited with their surf style and experience), and the second is that of their historical logos inspired by Australia, California and Hawaii in the 70s. In the O’Neill design department Jan Lindeboom can’t stop talking about the 90s, “when snowboarding come onto the scene and boardsports made a name for themselves in fashion”. As for Quiksilver, they’re changing up their logo iconography with typical Japanese-style illustrations using images of the Kamakura Banzai Bar, local pin-ups, dragons and sake. Elegant and functional, the Lightning Bolt silhouette is continually reinterpreting and playing with retro influences in which “surf styles

“Workwear has indeed been on the rise. Men are looking for something with a utilitarian function.”
Andrew Hartshorne, Salty Crew, Product Designer

from the archives and iconic branding have been dusted off and given a new look, with a kind of cultural nostalgia that fluctuates between old and new, real and imaginary”, specifies designer Maria Joao. The designers at Brunotti went looking for inspiration in outer space, mutants and space suits with high-collared down coats, detachable patches, electric graphic designs, which all help us relive this important era of space exploration.

REVIVALS & RE-EDITIONS

The surf world seems to always keep an eye on the past to better anticipate the future, and these upcoming collections are no exception to that rule. With a history that left its mark on the 80s and 90s as much through styles as outlines designers of surf clothing would be wrong to do any differently. The “re-issues” series from Billabong update the brand’s most iconic products, which will awaken an uncontrollable feeling of nostalgia in true surfers. At Quiksilver, the legend of the mountain and wave is once again being illustrated in a very artistic fashion, with several astonishing colour assortments. To celebrate its 15th anniversary next year, Finisterre is planning a special anniversary limited-edition series, which will highlight the classic colours of the brand with a subtle nod to retro outdoor style.

Also, outside of the four regular delivery seasons, it’s not uncommon to see a new products pop up in the form of limited-edition lines, which are always a hit with the core surf clientele, and due to their small quantities create a rarity that guarantees their popularity. There are plenty of examples, including artist series, and brand or celebrity collaborations (often from very diverse backgrounds). That was definitely the case this season with the JM BASQUIAT and WARHOL artist series that were standouts in the Billabong product offering, and give a sneaking suspicion that there is more and better to come next year. Still speaking outside of traditional delivery seasons, Lightning Bolt is getting ready for a mid-winter release of a series conceived in conjunction with Portuguese urbanwear brand Daily Day well known for lending its manufacturing knowledge to multidisciplinary cultural projects.

NOBLE & HIGH-PERFORMANCE MATERIALS

This season materials are becoming more beautiful with brushed jerseys, different textures, waffle fabrics and definitely lots of high-tech treatments (notably water-repellent and breathable). Plenty of brands are going back to their roots too, with thick corduroys, heavy twills and robust flannels. There are lots of assorted pieces on offer as well, because as Jan from O’Neill reminds us, “winter is all about layers”.

O’Neill is releasing an especially insulating, 3D kinetic stitching technique that will be found on its mid-layers. Not only are they elastic and prevent unpleasant odours, these thermoregulatory materials help retain up to 25% extra body heat.

Also on the insulation front, Brunotti is rereleasing models with Clo Insulation, one of the most breathable, lightest linings in the world. In addition, it’s water resistant and heat retentive due to the special fibre shape, used in commercial freezer manufacturing, which should reassure you for your winter surf trips.

Still on the topic of manufacturing methods, the eco-design variant is making more and more sense in terms of offer and of demand. “Clients are more knowledgeable than ever about environmental pollution”, observes Hennie from Finisterre, which confirms their engagement: “So it’s our duty to adopt environmentally friendly practices”. Transparency of manufacturing methods and material traceability are being highlighted in order to better inform customers about the environmental impact of different products. Last but not least, be it in summer or in winter, there is one product that appears in every lookbook, the t-shirt. Not just any old t-shirt, though! Quiksilver goes so far as to differentiate between four different types of t-shirt: the anti-UV, anti-humidity technical t-shirt; the anti-allergy, 100% organic t-shirt; the artistic t-shirt with graphic designs from the past, present and future; and the deluxe t-shirt with high-end materials and designer cuts. Now, there’s no more getting mixed up...

SEASONAL TONES

On the programme for 2018/19 at Finisterre, the colour palette is more subdued, raw and natural influenced by arctic landscapes, rock surfaces, autumn leaves and tree bark. Punctuated by touches of vintage colours, these organic tones are easy to mix, match and wear. At Billabong, Baja California and Mexican themes dominate the collection. Over at Lightning Bolt, it’s all about celebrating vintage Americana, from the eternally laid-back Southern California attitude to urban New York surf style.



photo : Rusty

STRONG SILHOUETTES

From head to toe, some very indulging designers accepted our invitation to talk us through the strongest silhouettes for next season.

BILLABONG: Daddy cap / washed corduroy jacket / long sleeve t-shirt with jacquard sides / cut-off jeans.
QUIKSILVER: Rolled-up chinos, vintage t-shirt, stretch flannel shirt / 5K parka / camera and bag
O’NEILL: Light rain jacket / intermediary hooded sweatshirt / t-shirt / jogger pant
FINISTERRE: Merino wool-mix technical under layer / technical overshirt / down-style featherless jacket / waterproof DWR jog pant / waterproof boots.
BRAKEBURN: brushed flannel overshirt / printed t-shirt / insulated hooded jacket / chinos with pockets / leather boots.
SALTY CREW: 5-panel cap with vintage tuna drawing / logo t-shirt logo nautical flags / technical polar fleece with camouflage print and Sherpa lining / straight-cut pant with special tool pocket. 🛠️

HIGHLIGHTS

- Retro outdoor in glorious colours and styles
- Re-issues, collabs in vogue, especially between seasons
- Neutral technical outfits for travelling and blending in easily
- Strong 90s revival in prints, logos and story telling



CRUISER & SURF SKATE



FUNNY BOARDS



OLD SCHOOL BOARDS



photo : Miller Division

CRUISER SKATEBOARDS 2018 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Eighties nostalgia, surf skating, and refined quality at entry level price points: Our 2018 Cruiser Skateboards Retail Buyer's Guide by **Dirk Vogel** has next year's popping trends.

Skateboarding enjoyed a major pop culture moment this autumn when the hit TV series Stranger Things introduced a new lead character: Over 15.8 million viewers watched California girl "Mad Max" cruise into the season premiere riding the iconic "Explosion" skateboard by heritage brand Madrid. Responding to surging demand, Madrid – their boards also appeared in the classic 1980s film Back to the Future – brought back the "Explosion" as a premium setup with accurate retro components, next to an entire line of Stranger Things decks. Mainstream exposure on this scale brings new participants into board shops. But as several brands questioned for this Buyer's Guide pointed out, core shops can be intimidating places, staffed by condescending cool kids that are tone-deaf to beginners' needs. "Cruisers are a gateway into skateboarding for many people, so having a welcoming atmosphere and plenty of product knowledge about the category can help growth with inexperienced, first time skaters," said Jeff Goforth, Global Brand Manager at Penny Skateboards.

Then there's female participation, another potential growth area, if addressed correctly. "Most skate brands are still too scared to offer girls designs but here on the Gold Coast, Australia, there are more girls that surf than nearly any other region globally. Riding a cruiser is a way of life these days for surfing girls, so it's part of our brand's DNA," said Kris O'Brien, Brand Director at OB Five. Arbor serves female riders with the girl-designed Solstice Collection, Miller Division has two girls models, and Sector 9 gave surf icon Tia Blanco her own pro cruiser. "Not only younger girls hop on the boards, also the over-35 ladies seem to enjoy sidewalk surfing more and more," said Andreas "Maui" Maurmeir, Retail & Marketing at Sector 9, whose shapes are not "gender specific", but "pretty unisex and accessible to everyone".

THE MARKET: MORE BANG FOR THE BUCK

Keeping skateboarding accessible to everyone is key as cruisers are purchased for a wide range of uses these days: Customers want portable pocket rockets for commuting to work and school. They want

dancing boards, trick-ready all-terrain assault machines, or "surf skate" rides to catch some concrete waves (see Hot Trend). And they want a medium to enjoy some fun time with their friends and even hit a downhill out in the great outdoors, pairing hiking with cruising for what could be next year's sleeper trend. All these customers find the best value for their money, not at their local Toys'R US, but at core board shops. The reason: Core brands have raised their manufacturing expertise to a point where formerly cutting-edge technologies and materials – think top-mounted trucks, premium urethane and lavish wood treatments – have trickled down into the entry-level price range.

"Not only younger girls hop on the boards, also the over-35 ladies seem to enjoy sidewalk surfing more and more."
Andreas "Maui" Maurmeir, Retail & Marketing at Sector 9

"We want to be faithful to our origin by offering 'poured wheels' in all our cruisers even at the entry price points," said Roberta Pinali, Kryptonics Sales Manager. Behind the scenes, Arbor is lowering prices through a global distribution partnership with Absolute Board Co. "This new structure has allowed us to reduce our average retail price in Europe by 20-25%, bringing European retail pricing in line with MSRP in the USA before taxes," said Nate Shute, Marketing Manager at Arbor. Surf skate stalwarts Carver Skateboards have launched Triton Skateboards as their new entry-level brand for the international market (retailing around €230). With that said, price points for next season start with entry-level cruisers around €60.00, followed by performance-ready completes in a window between €125.00 and €150.00 that captures most of the action. Customers also invest in the premium segment, composed of luxury models offering elaborate wood materializations, state-of-the-art hardware, and engaging storytelling at €229.00 and above (Madrid's Stranger Things throwback retails for \$249.00, Carver's premium from €246.00 to €421.00).

“Going into 2018, the retro inspired shapes seem to be getting the most attention.”
Shane Maloney, Madrid Skateboards

SEASON TREND: 1980S COMPLETES

Last season’s building trend for 1980s-shaped cruisers – over 9 inches in width with square tails and stubby noses – will kick into overdrive next season. “Going into 2018, the retro inspired shapes seem to be getting the most attention,” said Shane Maloney at Madrid Skateboards, whose retro boards feature era-appropriate details such as Flypaper griptape and copers (see Accessories). Andy King at Mindless Longboards confirmed: “Old-school shapes are making a comeback, we’ve had a few of our customers ask us for them.” Look for 1980s cruisers from major brands, including Miller Division’s “Tail Block” model with sick retro graphics.

SHAPES: WIDER RIDES

Driven by the 1980s revival, cruisers are trending towards wider shapes. “For 2018, we continue to expand the width in the cruisers. We are inspired by the shapes of the late ‘80s, beginning of the ‘90s, where the width where the feet are placed was extremely greater than the centre, as well as large tails,” said Ivan Garcia Arozamena, Product Manager at Miller Division and OB Five even sets the bar at 10 inches in the surf skate (see Hot Trend) line of RKP-1 Surf Truck-equipped cruisers. Prepare for wider rides at all lengths, which fall into three categories in 2018: First, stubby and packable rides from 23 to 27.5 inches long available from all brands, including stunners from Flying Wheels, Globe and OB Five. Second, trick-ready all-terrain cruisers from 27.5 to 32 inches with standouts from Sector 9, Landyachtz, and Carver. And third, cruisers that are more like “short longboards” – including drop-cruisers offered by Arbor and Mindless – between 30 and 34 inches. “We have a couple of 34-inch boards that we are super stoked on, the longer cruiser,” said Mike van Mosel, Brand Manager at Goldcoast Skateboards. Kryptonics are also vying for this shorter longboards trend and predict “classic cruiser shapes with wider decks, a single kicktail and good concave being on the rise in 2018.” At Dusters, Marketing Director, Desiree Moore is stoked on their new Steve Olsen shape: “We worked with the legendary Steve Olson to develop and design a unique cruiser that was based on his every day board. Geared for bowls, the 9” wide shape features mild concave and some special Olson features like the pointy nose and tapered wings.The cruiser comes with classic Kryptonics Star-Trac Blues 60mm, custom grip and metallic accents on his original artwork. Longboard version also out this spring!”

CONSTRUCTIONS: LONGBOARD FINISHES

While “regular” skateboards may never abandon their bedrock formula of seven-ply Canadian maple laminates, alternative constructions implementing bamboo, cork, reinforced fibres, and cherry wood have flourished in the cruiser segment, often “borrowing” product innovations and finishes from longboards. Globe continues to achieve amazing results with environment-friendly coconut and brings back a 1980s favourite in slick bottom construction rendered in a proprietary “Pearl” finish. “We’re incredibly stoked with the way our Pearl Slicks turned out. We knew right from the get-go that they were going to look really new and interesting, but we were pleasantly surprised by just how fast they slide!” said Dave Gitlin, Senior Skateboard Designer at Globe. Landyachtz rely on lightweight Hollowtech in their premium models, and Penny backs their plastic formula with a lifetime warranty.

STYLE: ARTISTICALLY INCLINED

Next season continues the trend towards natural wood grain finishes on top and bottom sheets, pioneered by the likes of Arbor who roll out Red Gum, Pallisander, and Black Walnut in 2018. Added flair

comes from contrasting wood patterns with classic line art on white or light blue background. In terms of aesthetic themes, Benoit Brecq at HOFF Distribution/Flying Wheels sums up next season’s graphics: “Tattoos, photo collage, flowers, retro and typography are the main stories.” For that special street flavour, several brands are teaming up with renowned artists next season: Mindless is working with Alex Szukalski from Kook Culture on four boards, including the gorgeous “Raven” model. OB Five tapped Manga and punk rock influences from Kentaro Yoshida, Penny enlists artists Mitchell King and Tyler Spangler, while Goldcoast collaborates with shirt makers Pendleton on patterned wool topsides. Further graphic standouts include Globe’s Psychotropic designs on Pearl slicks, and Carver’s Taylor Knox “Quill” model and Yago Dora “Goat” graphics.

HOT TREND: SURF SKATE

Everyone knows that skateboarding began as a way for surfers to hone their skills on concrete whenever waves were flat. In 2018, the trend comes full circle with “surf skate” cruisers that realistically recreate the feeling of surfing with specific truck wheel designs on driveways, banks, and downhills. “Carver is focused on surf skate, and surfing will forever be at our core. Skateboarding is evolving, and surf skate has tons of room to continue developing as it is so new,” said Peter Shu, Director of Marketing and Media at Carver Skateboards, who develop boards in partnerships with surf companies such as Al Merrick featuring C7 trucks, transitional CX trucks, and new C5 streetsurf trucks. OB Five also spearheads the surf skate segment with their line of 10-inch wide cruisers loaded with RKP Surf trucks: “Our Reverse King Pin truck features special geometry that enables a tighter turning radius and increased rotation in turns.” Benoit at Flying Wheels points out the Cutback series, “made for people who search ultimate surfing sensation. They turn great, pump easily and offer that wave riding feeling everybody seeks.” Sector 9 serves the segment with surf-friendly boards equipped with Sidewinder trucks, while HLC Distribution in Spain increases their YOW (Your Own Wave) Long Island Boards range for 2018.

ACCESSORIES: SMALL DETAILS, BIG DIFFERENCE

The rise of surf skate will also lead to customers looking to upgrade existing set-ups with “surfy” trucks, which is where accessories from aforementioned brands come in, where Flying Wheels has a surprise in the works for 2018. Mindless equips boards with 88A Serenity bushings for those tight turns. What’s more, keep an eye out for super grippy wheels like Carver’s hourglass-shaped Roundhouse Concave wheels, 83A SHR Mindless wheels, and Arbor’s sucrose formula wheels that replace urethane with a sugar-based alternative. Madrid protects trucks with plastic copers as a blast from the blast and may have hit a jackpot with the 57mm Pipe Finder wheel, a slightly smaller, super soft wheel. Make sure to ask brands about their latest POS displays and get ready for new waves of customers – boys, girls, surfers, shredders, casuals, and pros – ready to cruise into 2018.🌀

HIGHLIGHTS

- More female participants
- Quality at low prices
- SEASON TREND: 1980s-shape boards
- Wider decks (up to 10 inches)
- Length up to 34 inches
- HOT TREND: “Surf skate” cruisers



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BRAVO

Italian brand BRAVO are known industry wide for their inflation valve expertise which has been in parent company, Scoprega's DNA for 50 years and are now synonymous with helping SUPers inflate their ride with ease. Sales Manager Francesco Caramaschi explains the company setup and their growth intentions.

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

Scoprega started about 50 years ago as a plastic injection company, mainly for TV tubes production. The demand for inflation valves represented the opportunity to enter the marine/watersport market. Valves were followed by oars/paddles, and later by foot pumps, hand pumps and, in the 90s, electric pumps – which are now the core business of the group. In 2007 the company opened an affiliate branch in China – Ningbo BRAVO - where parts of our items are manufactured and from where we supply the expanding Chinese market.

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

Mr. Artemio Affaticati is the President and CEO of the group. Artemio has been CTO and CEO of multinational companies in Germany, United States and Italy before joining Scoprega in 2014. Mr. Gianluca Tormen is the Managing Director of the Chinese branch Ningbo Bravo. He's got a large experience in plastic injection as he's been production manager for Luxottica (worldwide leader in eyeglasses design and production) and he's been living and working in China for 10 years. I came to Scoprega in 2010, after an experience in the product marketing division of the largest automotive part-distributor in Italy.

What is the company ethos?

Scoprega group wants to focus on the customer needs, lifestyle and behaviours and, thanks to the strong technology capabilities and a big

range of products, is able to cover almost all the activities in the outdoor fields providing a complete immersive experience.

We believe that in few years the outdoors will become part of our daily life, we will experience different activities not only in the wild, such as mountains and rivers, but also inside big metropolises and towns.

Following this vision, we are focusing on different collaborations with schools and companies from other fields, in order to define a stronger brand and to find new market opportunities.

Please explain to our how your products work and any other product details which will be of relevance to our audience.

We develop innovative products that are guided by the latest trends and needs in the outdoor and marine scenario. We aim at combining design and efficiency in user-friendly products that make your life easier. Think about an inflatable SUP: inflation time and effort are the key topics and that's where we see the largest space for improvement and development in the next years.

Why is the European market important to you?

We serve different market segments as our products are used in several applications, not only related to water. An inflation valve is necessary in a RIB, but may also be in a tent, in a gymnastic air-track, in an inflatable advertising structure. We serve not only the distributors, but also the manufacturers.

Leisure, boating and the outdoor mentality is so popular in Europe. Also, being based in Italy, the geographical allocation allows us to distribute easily in all Europe.

Which is your biggest and best performing national market?

Germany, Russia and China are our biggest markets.

How have you seen your market evolve in the past 12 months?

The marine equipment market is substantially stable, while the watersport and especially SUP segment keeps on growing significantly.

Why should retailers sell your brand?

BRAVO is a well-known brand in the market, a recognition built over the years thanks to the focus on quality and service. We are constantly putting our efforts in the development of better products, where better means innovative, more reliable, better performance, but also more attractive in terms of design.

What do you see for the future of the SUP industry?

There's a lot of discussion about this where many players have different opinions. Even if there will a natural stabilization in the future, we expect this industry to keep growing for the next few years, as there are countries where SUP is still not very well known or practiced, and national markets that definitely have more potential than the current setup (Italy for example). ☺



FAM

FAM are a new outerwear brand hailing from the UK, who are looking to bridge the gap between skiers and snowboarders while offering a product that can be worn on the mountain yet not look out of place on the streets of London, Berlin or Paris.

Where did it all start?

It all really started in 2016, we had been talking for a good year about wanting to do something that combined our passion for skiing and snowboarding with our desire to build our own business. One evening, we sat outside a bar in Les Arcs people watching. As we watched skiers and snowboarders walk by, one of the things that really stood out was that, to us, everyone looked the same! Everyone was covered in bold block colours, and you genuinely couldn't tell the difference between brands. At the same time, one of our friends had been complaining that he spent hundreds of pounds on ski gear to use once a year and that he couldn't wear his jacket in a bar in London as it was fluorescent yellow! At that point we decided to start designing ski and snowboard apparel, which is heavily fashion focused.

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

Management consists of Andrew and Josh. Josh's background is in fashion, having spent a number of years with Arcadia Group, who have also been supporting our venture. Andrew's background is in banking and finance.

What is the company ethos?

Peak to Street! Fashionable product, functional product and at a good price point. Everything we design and manufacture is focused on being multi-functional. Great for the mountain, but equally great for a cold day in London, Berlin, New York, Paris etc. For example, some of

the products that we have created incorporate elements that allow them to transition from heavy weight winter jackets to more style spring jackets.

What sets you apart from your competitors?

Firstly, our fashion focused, multi-functional product. Secondly our desire to be relevant to both skiers and snowboarders alike. With the blurring of lines between our demographic of skiers and snowboarders, there is now a lot of crossover between the two, not just from a fashion sense, but also in terms of aspirations in life, music and social circles. We realise that this is a challenge, however, done properly, we feel can be very successful.

What is your plan for the next few years?

We are looking to expand our customer base and really establish a foothold in the European market. In order to do this, we are looking to develop relationships with key retailers and industry stakeholders in order to and grow our distribution network. We have also developed relationships with PR networks in both the US and Canada and will be exploring distribution platforms in those markets over the coming years. Brand awareness, penetration and equity are key for us over the coming years and developing a loyal consumer base are fundamental to our growth.

Why should retailers sell your brand?

Simply put, because we are doing something different! The industry needs start-ups like us to help change the dynamic, and to continue

the evolution of the industry through the development and innovation of new product. Innovation doesn't necessarily start and stop with hardgoods. Also, what we focus on is manufacturing high quality product at a good pricepoint, which is also very fashionable. This is what the new generation of skiers and snowboarders want from their apparel. They want to look good both in the mountain but also back at home.

How are you marketing your brand?

The power of social media is an important tool for us, not just because of the fact that it is a relatively cheap way of building brand awareness, but also because our target consumer (Generation X&Y) is heavily influenced by social media. We also use events such as ISPO, magazines such as Method Mag, influencers, and also blogs in order to build brand awareness. In all that we do, we really try to create a differentiating factor versus what everyone else does.

Where are you currently distributed and what are the plans for future growth?

We currently distribute our product via an ecommerce platform and ship globally. Our intention for AW18/19 is to really start building a European distribution / retailer network, this is the next step and one that is incredibly important to having a viable business. We are currently speaking to retailers in the market and we are really excited to be launching our AW18/19 collection with some of these guys. ☺



VOLTE WETSUITS

Raising from the ashes of Australian wetsuit brand West, Volte wetsuits are committed to making wetsuits of the highest order. And just how does Volte strive to make the highest quality wetsuits? In Design & Production Manager, Patrick Leahy’s words: “Pushing the design envelope with the latest materials technology. Quality components. Water comfort. Flexibility. Easier to get on and off. Durability.”

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

Volte has its roots in the much-loved West wetsuits brand, which we started in Western Australia in 1982. West’s reputation for innovation, durability, and comfort saw it carve out a global market. But about five years ago, West hit rough financial waters and that chapter closed. I believed there was a vacuum in the market for a company that was wholly focused on just making better wetsuits. Some other surfers in business backed me in to bring that total commitment to quality back to the wetsuits market, with Volte.

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

General Manager John Harbin is based in Oceanside, southern California, and handles all global distribution, outside Australia. John was West’s man on the ground in the States for eight years. So, when the opportunity presented itself to pick up where we left off, we went for it.

In my role as Design and Production Manager, I live beachside in Western Australia, where I still get wet in some waves. I lay awake at night thinking about new generation neoprene and quantum leaps in design and materials, which is kind of obsessive but I feel like an excited grom about the advances we’ve achieved in the Gen3 range. Stuff which was not possible just a few years ago.

What is the company ethos?

No compromise on quality or materials – the best neoprene, the best zips, the best threads for stitching, the best glues to ensure fit and comfort. Delivering value through superior performance with wetties that your customers will love.

What sets you apart from your competitors?

Pushing the design envelope with the latest materials technology. Quality components. Water comfort. Flexibility. Easier to get on and off. Durability.

How are you working on Eco factors in wetsuit production?

We are always working on using more eco-based materials – real stuff, not gimmicks. Like Aqua Alpha-laminating adhesives – a water-based glue which has the same laminating properties as solvent glues but is free of organic solvents, therefore eliminating harmful volatile organic compounds. Using Aqua Alpha reduces solvents by 600 grams a wetsuit – which is also great for the human laminators! We use limestone-based foam – recycled fabric, where possible – carbon black which is derived from recycled car tyres.

What do you find important about the European market?

Back in the West era we had guys wearing our wetsuits in Norway! We had to work bloody hard to meet their needs, so our heritage makes us feel right at home in European waters. Our Volte team surfers’ go to extreme ocean testing grounds like The Right in the Southern Ocean and even Nazaré. We want to bring something new and better to European retailers, surfers and watersports fans.

How do you support athletes and boardsports?

We have a small but exclusive team. It’s growing, spreading to more places and more surfers – and we’ll add to it when we find the right fit. Right now we have giant wave riders like Francisco Porcella and Mick Corbett, ex tour pro Damien Hobgood, local performance

surfers, longboarders, alternative surf craft riders and shaper/surfers.

What other marketing are you running?

Advertising in “Surfer” – hard copy and digital, and some smaller Australian magazines. And we’re taking up some more grass roots sponsorship opportunities. We’ll be pushing a lot more into the social media space, and are stoked now to be putting our toe in the water, so to speak, with BoardSport SOURCE.

Why should retailers sell your brand?

Happy customers! We’ll be supplying products for your clients, which are technically superior, deliver on comfort and value – which is all good for retailers’ credibility with their market.

Garrett Jones of “Surfer” reviewed one of our Gen2 steamers and wrote: “Most wetsuits I’ve worn in the past few seasons have fallen apart following a year of surfing...it hasn’t been since the days of West wetsuits...that I’ve had a good, warm flexible wettie that’s managed to handle multiple winters...”. On the Volte steamer he wrote: “...you’ll be stoked with what you get... The neoprene boasts flexibility, longevity and warmth...insulating your torso for those long gruelling sessions. The seams are simple, flexible, comfortable...Good bang for your buck.” ...And Gen3 suits just got better!

Which factory do you manufacture in?

PL-Sheico, Taiwan

Where can we check out your products?

Our Instagram: @voltewetsuits or Facebook page @voltewetsuits ...our presence will get better in this space, with some innovative video planned which will bring some new perspectives to wetsuits. 📹



POETIC COLLECTIVE

Swedish skate brand Poetic Collective have been gathering momentum recently with two full edits and designs that have become synonymous with European skateboarding in 2017. Founder Tom Botwid and his brother and partner, Paul both come from arts and design backgrounds and Poetic Collective base their graphics around art history, architecture and design.

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

Poetic Collective started from the will to do something with friends and to bring a different kind of aesthetic and way of looking at things into skateboarding. I have a background in fine arts and felt like most companies were looking to skateboarding for inspiration.

During my art studies, I wanted to do something where we could look beyond the skateboard industry and in that way also bring something fresh, visually into skateboarding. So instead we try to draw our inspiration from art history, architecture and design.

As for as how it started, we began with just one board and a shirt graphic, and with the help of a few good friends that pitched in by buying a few decks to reach minimum quantity, we made a video. At this point, my brother came in and added his digital expertise and sense of aesthetics to help shape the brand and slowly it started growing. It is still a really small scale brand in the way that it’s only the two of us and we both have other jobs, but we hope for to grow so we can have more time to focus on the company.

Tell us more about you and your brother’s

backgrounds and duties for Poetic Collective? Me and Paul being the only two people handling the larger part of it, we both have a lot of roles. We work on designs and edits together, I do

social media, go skating with the team, film, talk to shops and handle orders etc. Paul does a bit more on the digital side. I studied fine arts at the Weißensee art academy in Berlin and Paul studied digital design at Hyper Island in Stockholm. He has skated all his life too but isn’t as involved with the scene as I am, so the combination of me being a total skate nerd and him knowing about skating and understanding it, but not being influenced by it is a really good combo.

How are you distributed throughout Europe?

We mostly work directly with shops, I like the connection of actually speaking to the person in the shop but in some countries, we work with distributors that we trust. We just look for shops and distributors with a similar outlook on skateboarding that present their brands in a good way.

Why’s it so important to be selective with your distribution?

I feel like it is important that we can identify with the shop and /or distributor. There are some places where I don’t think that our brand would fit.

Which skaters are you working with?

The team consists of, Sarah Meurle, Amandus Mortensen, Simon Källkvist, Samuel Norgren, Nils Lilja, Peter Johansson, Klas Andersson and then I fit in on a corner there too. I think that’s

important too, for me to be out there with the team, skating with them, not just being some dude telling them to go skate. I’m in it too, we are a group and it’s up to all of us to make it happen.

We also have a flow team that we support and a goal is also to provide more support for the female skate scene. We have Sarah on the team and two more girls on flow so I hope in the future we can make videos and collections with an equal amount of men and women.

Any artist collaborations to talk of?

Sarah Meurle is not only a team rider but also a talented photographer and has designed two signature boards. We want to do more to work with other artists, there are some classic Swedish painters that we would be really excited to work with. Time will tell!

What are Poetic Collective’s goals for the future?

For the coming 12 months, we are dropping two new collections, a few new video projects and articles in print media. Our goal is to get more established in Europe. In the future, we want to reach the US and Asia too and develop our apparel into a full head to toe clothing line. We want to take it slow though and keep doing things we believe in, work with people with similar values and do a whole lot of skating! 📹

NEW PRODUCTS

01 - PROTEST VIRGO JACKET

Introducing a legend in the making, successor to their best-selling Mount jacket, introducing the Virgo by Protest. Part of the PVRE line, this super technical jacket is hydrophilic and water resistant at 10K. Featuring a chevron design quilted body, the Virgo has some tremendous colour blocking with bright contrast detailing.

www.protest.eu

01



02 - DAKINE MISSION PRO PACK

The Mission Pro is a versatile full-feature technical pack in a lower-profile design. Available in two sizes, 25L and 18L, features include a vertical snowboard carry, fleece lined goggle pocket, snow tool/shovel pocket, padded hipbelt, insulated hydro sleeve and rescue whistle on the sternum strap. The 25L version offers an added horizontal board carry system that will work as a padded, dry seat for a quick break just by flipping the board carry panel down. The Mission Pro 18L is Elias Elhardt's pack of choice.

www.dakine.com/en-eu/

02



03 - ELLIOT BROWN KIMMERIDGE WATCH

Elegant lines and bombproof construction help make this Elliot Brown a real classic. The Kimmeridge ladies collection boasts a shock protected Swiss movement, tested in water at 200m with triple sealed crown, durable stainless case, interchangeable straps and toughened anti-reflective glass. Already a best-selling hit, built for adventure and works just as well at the office.

www.elliottbrownwatches.com

03



04 - JETPILOT SCOPE – REVERSIBLE WAKEBOARD VEST

Imagine one vest to cover all of your water activity needs. The Scope Reversible features two comp vests combined into one. This versatile vest utilises their flex-Lite neo and fully segmented panels to conform to your body, to give a perfect anatomical fit. On top of this the vest offers hidden webbing and PVC Foam core for supreme buoyancy. Scope is especially designed for women who have really high expectations in wakeboard vests. A two in one vest for every usage.

www.jetpilot.eu

04



05



05 - ROLLERBONE STARTER CORK SET

RollerBone comes to the market for the most beautiful of all celebrations - Christmas with its brand new RollerBone Starter Cork Set that extends its current product line. The RollerBone Starter Cork Set is the right balance training tool especially for children, starters, returners and people of all ages, when it comes to improving their fitness level. RollerBone Cork Role and the RollerBone Starter Board are both made of 100% sustainable materials. RollerBone Cork Role has the advantage of reacting slower and offers the necessary adhesion on any floor covering and makes the training even safer.

www.rollerbone.com

SURF

E X P O

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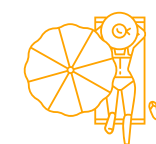
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MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY

UK

FRENCH

ITALY

SPAIN

AUSTRIA

SWISS

What is going on? At the time of writing this (late November) some of the most respected (!) retailers in winter sports appear to be going on sale. It's November and they're going on sale ... and not just a little sale it's 20% off ... the season's not started, some of the stock has not even arrived in store, and they're going on sale. Is this panic?

As a distributor it dismays me completely when this happens. We all know only too well, that Retail Price Maintenance is illegal so once again, for the record, I am not (absolutely not) supporting any efforts towards RPM. There's nothing we can do to protect the Retailer Margin or the reputation of the product in the market place – it's a free for all. Unlike the USA where MAP policies (Minimum Advertised Price) can help protect both. It does seem to me to be an eminently sensible idea. Sadly in the UK we are at the whims of the 'on sale' merchants and the Amazon algorithms. It's a race to the bottom.

Hopefully by the time you read this it will all be over, the snow will have fallen, the season will have kicked in and other retailers will have 'held firm'. The business is tough enough without having to drop your trousers this early in the season. Easier said than done !

It is with all this in mind that, with some trepidation, I start to make my calls to retailers. If the rumour mill is right then all of this should not matter to Brian Stark of Boardwise in Edinburgh. After the fire last year that ripped through his store is he coming back? The latest is that Boardwise will not reopen and that the mail order business is to pass to Boardwise Cannock. So I caught up with Brian to find out the state of play: "It's a bit of a nightmare. Architects, solicitors, insurance companies and the council – fed up with the lot of them. Seven months ago I thought it would be a week and I would know where we are heading. Today I am waiting for a phone call so I can then start to move forward – but I was waiting on that same phone call weeks ago. At the moment all mail order business is going to be run by Boardwise Cannock and all our purchase orders have been taken on by them. But Boardwise is my passion and my life and I just want to get back on the shop floor selling. Unfortunately I have no idea if or when that will be." For the time being Edinburgh and the industry has lost one of the longest boardsports retailers in the UK. As I mentioned in a previous issue Ultra Sport can trace our own trading history back more than 40 years with Boardwise. Time will tell what the future holds. It's obviously not easy!

Next I thought I would talk to the closest competitor to Boardwise Edinburgh – Ross from Freeze. Whilst it is always sad when a retailer leaves the playing field, temporarily or not, at the same time there is a potential upside in that another retailer has an opportunity to grow. Ross did not want to talk about the Boardwise situation and was certainly not gloating: "What can I say? At this point in time we have heard nothing official. What I can tell you is that Freeze have moved to a new premises which are about twice the size, we've got a new shop which is looking sharp with no expense spared, and a proper fully functioning workshop. Footfall is up and whilst it is early days, so difficult to give you a feel, we are very confident that we're going to have another bumper year. Early indications are good." Ross has been at Freeze for almost a third of his life so you can imagine that the business is really close to his heart and, like Brian, he has a real

passion for this business "We're about the only decent store left in Scotland right now and whilst we are going to continue to serve the local community, as we always have done, we're also looking further afield to grow the business."

You may recall that Ross did attend ISPO in 2017 despite saying that he thought it was not going to be productive time. So I had to ask. "Yes, yes – I'm going again... the jury is still out but if you are buying me dinner I'll be back". This will now be his second visit to Munich – will he become a regular?

So far the issue of the price war has not actually raised its ugly head – was I mistaken that this is a big factor in retailers minds? I guess it's never far away. "It's something we simply have to live with," Nick Warne from Snowtrax had a refreshing approach to the constant discounting: "It's now part of every day life. As a retailer we don't like it but there's nothing we can do about it and moaning to suppliers is going to have little impact."

Snowtrax, a long established operation in Christchurch, has their own shop, a dryslope and an adventure park. "We do have the advantage that we have different strings to our bow but retail is an important part of the business and, like many other UK specialist winter sports retailers, we pride ourselves on customer service and knowledge of the market. The bottom line is that product pricing will find its own level and there's nothing you can do about it. High demand and low production will keep prices higher – Low demand and over production, we know what happens. And so many brands are over producing – they over forecast, over produce and we end up with huge discounts." So how do Snowtrax compete? "We get on with it, try to upsell wherever possible and look for the blended margin." As a dryslope, Snowtrax is a good barometer for the season – so how are bookings? "Good – the slope is up, lessons are up and actually retail is up – we're in good shape."

So far so good – now Jeremy from TSA. What will this call bring? "July, August and September were all massively up on last year," so far so good, "and then in October it turned to \$hit," Oh dear. So what's the reason that October is so bad? "I think we just have to accept that the consumer is postponing their buying decisions until they get closer to actually going on holiday. The season for snow has shifted and the season for buying has shifted. I'm not panicking it will come – in fact high end kit is still selling through well and the entry level stuff will follow. As soon as the consumer wakes up to the fact that they ARE going to the mountains they will be in store. Brexit is probably not helping but, as I say, it will come."

So I had to push it a bit and see how Jeremy felt about Black Friday (we were in the midst of it as we spoke) and discounting in general: "It's just effing stupid and there is absolutely no reason for it. As for Black Friday it has zero impact on us and no – we don't participate. I would just say to my colleagues 'hold your own' and don't let your business be run by accountants who make decisions based on spreadsheets."

Gordon Way



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY	UK	FRENCH	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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The French economy has been doing decidedly well lately. For the fourth quarter in a row, the gross domestic product has increased significantly. After 0.6% between April and June, it grew another 0.5% between July and September according to INSEE estimates. It's a figure that is in line with estimates of independent observers who are predicting growth of 1.8% for 2017.

After 8 years of financial crisis, industry and services have benefitted from the tax credit for employment competitiveness and the responsibility pact to increase margins; and tourism is finally on the rise again, after two year affected by the fear of terrorist attacks. But if the economic recovery is taking place, it's also because the global economic environment is getting better, with the recovery of emerging markets added to the better economic health of the Old Continent.

Another positive point: the household expenditures are on the increase as we approach the end of the year. Boosted by purchases of clothes and other household items, they are increasing by 0.5% in spite of a slight 1% rise in inflation. The falling level of confidence of families for the last four months – especially concerning their on-going financial situation – could be unsettling, but that is offset by positive results on the employment front. The unemployment rate went down in September farther than it has in any month since 2001. We don't yet know what the short-term impact of measures taken by the executive branch in France on labour regulations and budgetary adjustments will have. Any eventual positive effects won't be felt before 2019. All economic indicators in France seem to be positive at the end of 2017. What effect has all of that had on the frequentation and in-store sales as far as shops are concerned?

As seems logical, for shops located on the coast or that deal mainly in aquatic sports, the number of client visits at the beginning of winter is rather low, and frankly on a downswing compared to last year. Jean-Michel Zecchi from the Tamtam shop in Bonifacio, Corsica tells us that: "There are still quite a few late-season tourists on the island, but the level of traffic in the store is down considerably at the end of autumn and the beginning of winter." The same feeling has been felt back on the continent at the Hot Spot shop in Merignac, although Cédric Amiel tries to put things in perspective: "The sales figure for this time of year is actually rather encouraging because we've compensated the lack of foot traffic with sales of technical products like neoprene which have been selling well at the start of winter". Even if the surfboard aisle has been relatively calm, Cédric notes that, "certain brands like Torq have blown up in the last few months by filling a demand for quality products at a reasonable price," adding that "sales of accessories, especially booties, gloves, ponchos and changing bags have been good sellers at the start of winter." As far as trends are concerned Jean-Michel adds: "We've noticed a small but increasing demand for foil products. More and more people are intrigued and starting to ask for information. Likely something to keep an eye on in 2018."

It's the same story in urban locations as well. Laetitia Cressent at Chattanooga, a store with more than 40 years of history in the French capital of Paris says: "September and October were rather alright, although we did slightly less business than the same period last year", while adding that "November is traditionally calm before a significant uptick in December for the end of year holidays." Aurèle Daubargues at Skate 'n' Roll in Besançon notes that, "traffic has generally been better in 2017, with quite a few clients in September, with a slight slowdown

in October followed by an increase in customer numbers in November. That's encouraging for the Christmas holidays." She also said that, "in general, tourism seems to be improving and even if people's buying power is still limited, the nice weather helped skateboard sales." She remarked that, "brands like Magenta, Antiz and Dark Seas were selling rather well." At least one thing is sure, street skating is definitely back in favour. At Skate 'n' Roll the outlook is: "More and more kids are starting to skate street or are getting back into it, which has meant solid sell through figures on complete setups from brands like Cartel and Tricks." It's the same feeling in Paris: "There's been a real comeback of street skating since spring. After selling lots of cruisers and longboards, our clients are rediscovering and are coming back to this much richer style of skating." But at the same time she adds, "nevertheless, we've seen a true demand for all kinds of street surf and electric mobility products, which seem to be growing market segments." Another trend that seems to be confirming itself is the slowdown in the fashion phenomenon around the Thrasher brand. Still, Laetitia adds a bit of nuance: "After all the craziness for the brand these last few months, things seem to be running out of steam a bit, which is making all those who knew and wore the brand before it became trendy very happy because they'll finally be able to dig their old tees and sweatshirts out of the closet."

As for the shops in mountain resorts or specialized in winter sports, the early season has shown promise. Norbert Bernigaud at Atmosphere in Gap is rather optimistic: "We've actually had a true start to winter, which is really good for our activity. Last year was rather mild at the same period, but now the weather has been sunny and cold, with early season snowfalls that have been good for foot traffic and for sales." The early start to the season seems to have encouraged customers to replace old gear with new, which hadn't been the case for the last few years. Martin Green at Zero G in Chamonix adds a bit of contrast: "Traffic is rather stable compared to last year at the start of the season, but we've noticed a nice upswing in e-commerce sales, which is rather welcome so early in the season." As far as hardgoods are concerned the most-talked-about brands have been the usual suspects: Burton, Nitro, Jones and Lib-Tech. Martin explained: "They're the ones that have managed to understand and work with shops' sales schedules. Brands that impose 30-day payment terms in winter with deliveries in October are really helping shops to grow." Talking about softgoods, Norbert from Atmosphere says: "Picture seems to have a good connection with the riding community, but brands with excellent price-to-quality ratios like Protest are gaining market share little by little." Concerning accessories, Zero G's Martin says: "Once again this year, this is where the largest part of sales are to be found. Clients are more inclined to buy brands that sell the dream, and not get the impression they're breaking the bank."

One thing is certain: clients come into a store first and foremost to feel welcome and to get advice. And all storeowners agree, that is their strongest asset and the one that generates the most sales. The clients, the storeowners and the staff are all passionate about these sports, and above all that feeling of sharing something special is what customers are looking for when they come into a shop. Shops remain a place where people like to stop by, cruise around, daydream and have a chat. It's sharing this common passion that as always will make the difference when it comes time to make a sell in shops this winter.

Benoit Brecq





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The Federal Statistical Office announced with a first estimate, that in 2017 the German economy is heading for its biggest growth in six years. On the other hand the private consumption in the third quarter is pretty much the same as in the second quarter of the year. Consumers are still in buying mood thanks to the historic situation in the job market and interest dropped. This is also noticed by the skate, surf, and snowboard dealers.

Adrenalin Regensburg’s pre-orders in the winter line were placed more carefully with the last few seasons in mind. But their involvement in snowboard workshops and tours still stays the same. Giso Merkl, who expects an ongoing decline in the snowboard section, thinks that time will tell if “it’s getting worse or levels out on a certain level.” He wants a more intense cooperation with brands for things like better warranty exchanges. A lot of the labels he sells already offer this and only “with cooperation it works!” says Giso, who celebrated his 25th shop anniversary this October. Congratulations!

A lot of retailers try to battle against the recession in the business. They reinvent themselves and move into new shops in better locations. Stefan Zeibig from Switch Boardershop in the east of Bavarian just renovated his shop completely. Fancy with a simple style is the trend, which is the opposite to the 90’s look. Some shop owners are still in this time capsule and just don’t seem to understand why the number of customers is decreasing or entirely vanishing.

“The skateboard market is under pressure – especially the deck section. Trucks and wheels always sell well”, says Jörg Ludewig from Urban Supplies distribution. “Although the attention is on a few brands: Indy, Venture, Thunder Trucks, Spitfire and Bones. Also in the shoe section where it’s all about Vans, adidas and Nike.” On the other hand Nina Kreiner from Attitude in Bremen is trying to change up her brand selection by vying for small brands – just like SHRN in Munich or Lobby in Hamburg. Because the next Titus shop is right across the street and Blue Tomato also has a shop in her city.

“Decks and completes did extremely well – hardware in general,” says Johannes Beck from skatedeluxe.com. The longboard sector is still in crisis. Therefore a retro trend in skateboarding is visible – from Thrasher Hoodies to Indy shirts, from Nike Dunks to Levi’s 501’s. The wheel is not reinvented, but materials partially get better.

Marc Hausen (Boardjunkies) isn’t best pleased, when trending brands sell their products directly to customers. But taking them out of his offering isn’t an option. “Some people still like to try on shoes in a shop,” says Marc. That’s the people he wants to attract with his new shop in the town centre.

However he thinks it’s a bummer that the sales for shoes concentrates on a few brands and the “real” skate shoe labels fall behind and lose importance in the scene. The big brands definitely did their homework. Some of the traditional ones missed the transition when the big players went through the roof.

TX-Sports increased their skate sales by around 30% this summer. After the longboard and cruiser hype has passed, it’s finally the turn of the skateboard. Hardware sales are on a good level again. Of course premium boards don’t sell as good as cheap decks, but at the moment there are fans for every price range and this whole spectrum should be represented in your store. You can’t just concentrate on the three

big distributors any more, but have to buy from a lot of the small ones with their small brands. The buyer’s effort increase and become more difficult in general to adapt in the fragmented landscape.

Tobias Hammer is also bitter that many windsurf shops give big discounts on SUPs. For this reason the Riders Heaven owner tries to work only with brands “that like his shop, want to work together with him “and don’t put extra pressure on retailers with new rules and high pre-order minimums. This is the only way our business will work well again! It is a give-and-take basis and as a retailer I have to buy goods to sell them in order to make a living. There are also goods that don’t sell very well, but it’s great if brands or distributors offer an exchange in this case. We have to talk to each other – this is what a lot of companies forget from time to time.”

“The brands who communicate and cooperate are usually the ones that sell well in the shop. Demo days and board tests – this is what matters today and this is what guarantees new customers and sales. In early winter we have 250 snowboards and 40 boots here to test – this is what we are known for. We want to reach the people with our service and offer boot fitting, which is a common practice in the skiing section. This is very important to us, because you can’t fit a boot in an online shop! Every one of our employees is a SUP instructor which ensures professional advice.”

In neighbouring austria Peter Wagner came up with a brand new shop concept for his Betaboards that also attracts people beyond just boardsports enthusiasts. The goal for Betaboards in Linz is to find the right snowboard, binding and boots for everyone – “making you ride better.” He specializes in Burton, Anon and Analog. Another unique feature is that you need an appointment for Betaboards. Why? “We want to take enough time for every customer and give them the right advice. The only way this works is in a calm environment with a lot of time. Social media channels like Facebook, WhatsApp and Skype are very important for our advice. 24/7/365. This way we can serve people from all over Europe in a short period of time.”

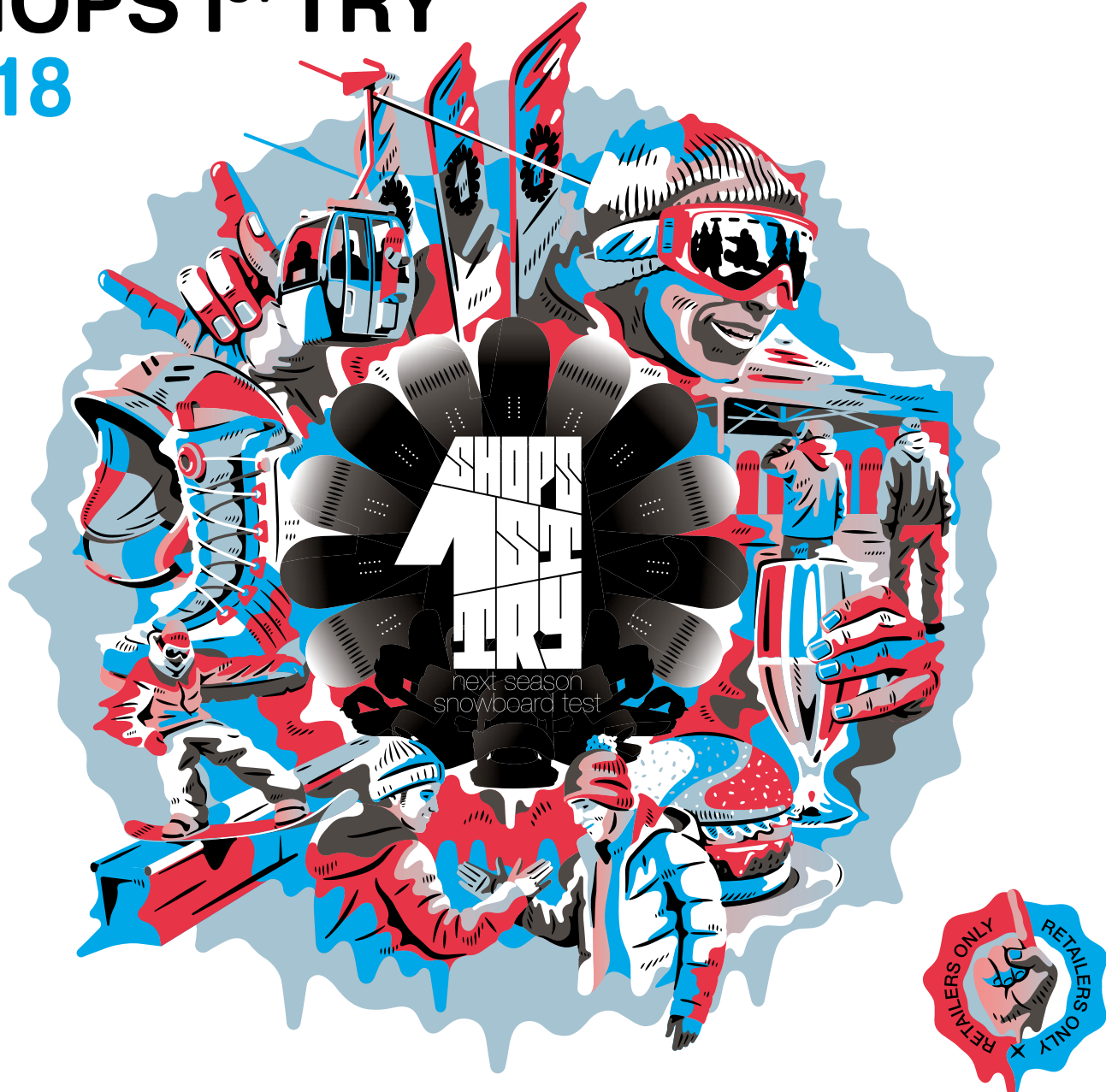
The range covers everything a snowboarder’s heart desires – from the 70cm kids board to exotic boards, second hand and test material, rental stuff, splitboards, vintage editions to the 170cm freeride board. “If Betaboards doesn’t have it, it doesn’t exist!,” says Peter who worked in Burton’s field crew for years. He is mainly focused on beginners, girls and kids with their parents, because this is the next generation. Used boards, beginner setups or kids boards ensure a good and easy start for them. All boards, bindings and boots get individually adjusted for every customer. Some of our competitors still make a lot of mistakes, which can take away the fun in shredding and make people stop snowboarding.

For next year the federal government estimates an economic growth of 1.9% for Germany, whereas the EU-committee calculates even better with their +2.1% prediction. These are the numbers for the gross domestic product in theory. In practice business will not be easy due to digitalisation in retail and its transparency of prices on the Internet. Fortunately winter came early this year and has provided white alps since November. The ski resorts were able to open their gates on time, which is always very positive!

Jochen Bauer

ONE FOR ALL SHOPS 1ST TRY 2018

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PARTNERS:





MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY	UK	FRENCH	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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We nearly have a new election law in place, which means we can now go to vote for a new parliament in Spring 2018. FINALLY! So election campaigns from the different parties are in full swing, for what will be an important vote for our nation after years of governments and prime ministers who have not been elected by the people. Our biggest issue is the big state department, combined with our low rate of GDP growth, our yearly growth which is estimated around 1%, which means pressure once again from the EU.

A lot of boardsports retailers are having a hard time getting any kind of bank loans as the different credit institutions are more cautious than ever before. This means that stores need to work with their own cashflow and often need help from suppliers with long payment terms or else they get into serious trouble as when goods don't always sell as fast as they'd like. Often it means that be bigger suppliers get their money in time but smaller brands often are last in line and struggle to do business in Italy. This results in a new way of thinking for shop owners and brands. More and more store owners are moving away from a two season pre-book model and are focusing more on ordering more quick-strikes, special drops and stock orders. This means more work on the one hand but on the other hand, more product news for the consumer and a better way of splitting payments through the whole year.

Margin has also become a big topic in our industry today. The old 2.0 or 2.2 is often not enough for retailers so buyers, especially from the bigger stores, are searching for opportunities for bigger margins, as Marco Minoia, owner and CEO of the Minoia stores from Brescia tells us.

Alex Berger from Fakieshops says: "The brands and products we stocked in the early 2000s have been exclusive to our industry and we have been an institution for our customers to buy these

products from in our area, but now the offering has tripled or more and stocking new products every few months has become crucial to compete against other retailers and online.

Skate and snow hardgoods sales are sold a lot online as the variation of product in the physical stores has decreased a lot over the last few years. Margins on hardgoods are lower and a lot of store owners simply can't afford to give hardgoods a lot of space when they need space for products with higher margins. This is done resentfully by most retailers as hardgoods are their real passion and the reason why they started the business.

Good news for our 17/18 snowboard season is that we had the first snow and cold temperatures by mid-November, so the resorts have time to prepare and stores are happy as consumers in prepping for the season. According to different retailers I spoke to at Skipass in Modena (biggest winter sport fair in Italy): Lib-tech, Capita and Union are ruling the core market and have good traction with the core consumer. Burton is making some good noise with their Step On project and brands like Nitro and Salomon are solid as always.

Skate apparel is trending heavily with Thrasher still leading the pack, a best seller for nearly every skate/streetwear store. The fake product on the market, which is sold in the so-called 'fast fashion' stores is really frustrating for many retailers. When a product sells like crazy, everyone wants to get their slice, unfortunately.

On the skate hardgoods distribution side we have a switch from NHS (Independent, Santa Cruz, Mob..etc.) which is now distributed by BLAST! out of Sergen (MI) from November 1 2017 onwards. **Franz**

Josef Holler

GERMANY	UK	FRENCH	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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While winter knocks at the door, the weather in summer 2017 was so nice it was like being away on vacation in the tropics without leaving Switzerland. This pushed sales of nautical gear, beachwear and lighter streetwear up a bit. The slight rise of the Euro against our currency is equally positive for the Swiss retail business because it diminishes the attraction of shopping tourism, which as we know has become a real problem the last few years.

Simon Frei from the Cloud-9 store and distribution company in Winterthur, which specializes in hiking and telemarking, but especially surfing gave us his opinion on the surf market in our little country without waves. According to Simon certain board shops sell as many surfboards in a year as they do snowboards in winter. A significant part of the sales figure in this sector is thanks to accessories like fins, leashes and boardbags. The sales volume of this type of product has risen strongly the last few years, while wetsuit sales have only risen slightly. Astonishingly, according to Simon, these articles sell all year long, which makes them particularly interesting for stores. The most sought-after brands that he distributes are Hayden Shapes (especially the Hypto Crypto model, which has been a best-seller for three years), along with Aloha and Chillli. Softech surfboards are also doing well for a few reasons including paddle training on the lake, surfing on artificial waves and of course in the ocean, with certain models selling out quickly. As far as accessories are concerned, FCS is number one in sales, followed by Gorilla. Wetsuit sales are primarily Rip Curl and not only at Simon's shop. As a general rule in Switzerland this brand represents the majority of neoprene sold for surfing. For surfboards as well as wetsuits the online market, including foreign sites doesn't yet represent a fierce source of competition. It seems as if

clients are still attached to getting advice and being able to hold the product in their hands before buying it. However, this is not true for accessories where the competition from online sales is intense.

In skateboarding, the online market is well established and is making things difficult for the stores. Real skate shops are becoming increasingly rare, because margins are small and as a general rule volumes are decreasing. Nonetheless, stores who still have faith in skateboarding are being rewarded lately as it is still holding its own and representing a non-negligible level of sales. Claude Ticon from the Manly Shop in Morges told me that in September skateboarding represented 30% of his sales, something that hadn't been the case for any month in at least a decade.

As for the Transport store in Geneva, it decided at the beginning of the year to rethink its business model, opting for a partnership with Volcom with the intention of putting a flagship store into place, or something similar at least since half of the surface area is now dedicated to Volcom. According to the owner Romain Loosli it was a question of change mandated by these times of crisis for skate shops and other specialty stores, which he sees as a new beginning. Although it is still too soon to tell for sure, after a little more than six months his initial results and feelings about the change are positive since levels of traffic and sales have increased, which has allowed him access to a new client base that didn't come into the store before. It seems as if for the moment the refined boutique look he's put into place is paying off, and we hope for him things continue that way.

Fabien Grisel



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY	UK	FRENCH	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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The first winter sports resorts and the Absolut Park opened in November to impeccable conditions. Perhaps it is indeed the winter of the century that everyone is talking about?

Björn Bettermann from Kanoa Trading in Innsbruck was attending all glacier openings and reports enthusiastically that the conditions were great, that the parks at the openings were better than they had been for ten years, and that there was a lot going on everywhere. His expectations for the winter: "The first signs aren't bad, there is already a demand for reorders, and the first snowfall does the rest. The people are waiting for a good winter after the last few rather modest ones. But it is certainly too early for a realistic assessment."

When asked which brands and products were particularly in demand at the openings, Björn answerd: "Unfortunately, at the openings, I only see my microcosm around our booths, and I don't find the time to check out other products. As far as my brands are concerned, I can say that Bataleon's and Lobster's Triple Base technology continues to have a growing fan base. The curiosity of new customers is unbroken, and this also shows that the Triple Base continues to have potential." According to Björn, the two brands will also get bigger when it comes to hybrid shapes in the future. "The first reorders of the still young season seem to confirm this." The Bataleon Surfer is very present with its unique shape, but Gigi's slash is also very well received as an "independent, rider-driven" brand, says Björn. And that's not all; Switchback Bindings' new Aeron Base gets a lot of attention and customers return with a high level of satisfaction after testing. Also, 686 caused a sensation at the openings with the All-Weather Lab, where customers can test 686 jackets and tops. "People like the idea, and it increases brand presence. We're getting excellent feedback, and what is better than testing the 686 top

Glacier line at the glacier openings?" That sounds pretty good already. But what's happening in the Austrian skateboarding world? Emanuel Kutschi took over the Villach board sports shop Rollin in October. We had to knock on his door and ask how things are going... "As a skateboarder, Rollin has always been a point of contact for me. When I heard that Markus Höller was leaving the south of Austria, it was clear to me that someone rooted in the boardsports scene would have to take it over," says Emanuel. "After we've known each other for some time now, it didn't take long, and we were both very happy that everything went down so cool." And how does he like his new job so far? "The start was the best thing so far about the whole thing. I didn't know what was coming, but it's exactly how I imagined it."

We are not satisfied yet - we are also interested to know which skate brands are currently selling well at Rollin. "DGK and Primitive are well received, but also Zero, Zoo York and Alien Workshop. It's Etnies, Emerica and Supra for shoes, which makes me very happy because I'm very much in favour of these brands myself."

And what does Emanuel expect from his first winter with Rollin? "I hope that we will continue to be a go-to shop for snowboarders. Since I am not only a skateboarder but also an enthusiastic snowboarder, it is essential to me that I offer my customers a good and fair service." Two weeks ago, Emanuel had already sold Burton splitboards, Ride bindings as well as snowboard jackets and pants. We have our fingers crossed that the winter of the century will come and that many more snowboard products will be sold over his counter!

Barbara Mayer

GERMANY	UK	FRENCH	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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The European Commission has made an upward revision of the organisation's growth forecast for Spain for 2017 and 2018 from 2.8% to 3.1% and from 2.4% to 2.5%, respectively. Meanwhile, the Spanish Government has posted a 3/10 downside forecast for 2018 as a result of the impact of the political and institutional crisis the country is going thorough as a result of the independence process in Catalonia, and in the absence of an approved budget as yet for 2018.

As a general rule, the sliding sports sector professionals share positive impressions, although there are some differences of opinion. "Things have improved to a certain extent, particularly towards the end of June, yet poor weather curbed expectations. It has been a reasonably productive year, boasting a rising trend." These are the thoughts of David "Capi" Garcia, Manager of the Cantabra de Surf school and store, in Somo, Cantabria, a benchmark in Spain since 1991. "The textile sector continues to decline, although the trend has not been as catastrophic as it has been leading up until now. Technical material sales have stalled, especially in terms of top tier products, as well as wetsuits, although it has still been a good year - the previous year was worse and last year was indeed a great year. Our particular top seller is our own brand, together with beginner equipment."

"As a general rule, the market has sustained itself with the crisis having cleaned things up. What is really making a serious dent in the market is online sales and internet bargains and large stock purchase sites. Our customers visit our store to see what they like and try things on or out, only to later surf online using the latest app to order the exact same products at a cheaper price. This is something that brands need to be very conscious of. At the end of the day, it's the stores who are committing themselves to these brands and taking risks placing orders."

Jose, Manager of Cerra, in Oviedo, a streetwear and footwear store which specialises in snowboarding, skating, freestyle skiing and surfing, asserts that sales are on the rise, but this rise is just a small percentage. "There is more seasonality; sales are much more concentrated at Christmas, in the summer and at sale times. Sales shoot up during sale periods whilst sales then slow down significantly over the rest of the year. Textile sales have increased slightly, particularly upper garments, whilst footwear has remained constant. Skating has seen a slight increase whilst snowboarding and longboarding have suffered a substantial drop. This leaves us with very limited leeway at the end of the year and with auxiliary staff less prepared for these campaigns."

In terms of his target customers and the latest trends, Capi explained that most of his customers are youths who love sport, fashion and who are most interested in specialist core stores that can provide both teaching and assessment. "One of our main target customers is the more advanced and experienced surfer. People are always on the look out for the latest trends and, to this regard, we endeavour to keep up to date with the latest products in demand. Thankfully, we work with the strongest brands on the market who we love to work with and with whom we share an extremely important professional and human relationship. We look for what we would look for ourselves so as to offer that same level of quality to our customers."

Accordingly, it certainly looks like sales are increasing from year to year although there have been no major breakthroughs. Specialisation, human factors and offering the latest products at the right time is proving itself to be the effective formula.

Jokin Arroyo

DECEMBER

8 20	BILLABONG PIPE MASTERS OAHU - HAWAII WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM		14 17	DEW TOUR BRECKENRIDGE - USA DEWTOUR.COM		14 17	CORVATSCH ROOKIE FEST CORVATSCH - SWISS WORLDROOKIE TOUR.COM	
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JANUARY

4 5	AGENDA LONG BEACH USA WWW.AGENDASHOW.COM		8 10	BAW TOUR TYNCastle STADIUM - EDINBURGH MIDGEWHYTE@AOL.COM		7 8	FUTURE TRY LAAX - SWISS SNOWBOARDBOX.CH	
9 12	PITTI OUMO ITALY PITTIMMAGINE.COM		14 16	SNOW AVANT PREMIERE LA CLUSAZ - FRANCE SPORTAIR.FR		15 16	ANNECY SHOWROOM AVANT PREMIERE ANNECY - FRANCE SPORTAIR.FR	
15 20	LAAX OPEN SWISS LAAX.COM		16 18	BRIGHT BERLIN - GERMANY BRIGHTTRADESHOW.COM		20 21	WORLD ROOKIE FEST LIVIGNO, ITALY WORLDROOKIE TOUR.COM	
20 27	FREERIDE WORLD TOUR HAKUBA JAPAN FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM		21	WORLD SNOWBOARD DAY WORLDWIDE WORLD-SNOWBOARD-DAY.COM		21 23	SHOPS 1ST TRY ALPBACHTAL - AUSTRIA SHOPS-1ST-TRY.COM	
23 25	SLIDE TELFORD - UK SLIDEUK.CO.UK		24	SIA INDUSTRY INTELLIGENCE OUTDOORINDUSTRY.ORG		24 25	JACKET REQUIRED LONDON - UK JACKET-REQUIRED.COM	
25 27	SURF EXPO ORLANDO, FLORIDA SURFEXPO.COM		25 28	OUTDOOR RETAILER + SNOW SHOW DENVER, COLORADO OUTDOORINDUSTRY.ORG		26 28	BULGARIAN ROOKIE FEST PAMPOROVO - BULGARIA WORLDROOKIE TOUR.COM	
28 31	ISPO MUNICH GERMANY ISPO.COM		29 30	SIA ON SNOW DEMO COPPER MOUNTAIN - COLORADO SIASNOWSHOW.SNOWSPORTS.ORG		31 2	REVOLVER COPENHAGEN - DENMARK REVOLVER.DK	

FEBRUARY

3 9	FREERIDE WORLD TOUR KICKING HORSE - GOLDEN BC - CANADA FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM		4 5	PRO SHOP TEST BARDONECCHIA - ITALY SNOWSHOPTEST.COM		9 25	WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES PYEONGCHANG - SOUTH KOREA OLYMPIC.ORG/PYEONGCHANG-2018	
21 25	PILA VALLE D'AOSTA ROOKIE FEST ITALY WORLDROOKIE TOUR.COM		12 14	AGENDA LAS VEGAS USA AGENDASHOW.COM		MARCH		
						1 7	FREERIDE WORLD TOUR VALLNORD-ARCALIS - ANDORA FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM	

3 4	AIR + STYLE LOS ANGELES AIR-STYLE.COM		12 14	SPORT ACHAT LYON - FRANCE SPORTAIR.FR		9 15	FREERIDE WORLDTOUR FIBERBRUN FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM	
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EUROPE

ITALY-AUSTRIA-GERMANY-UK

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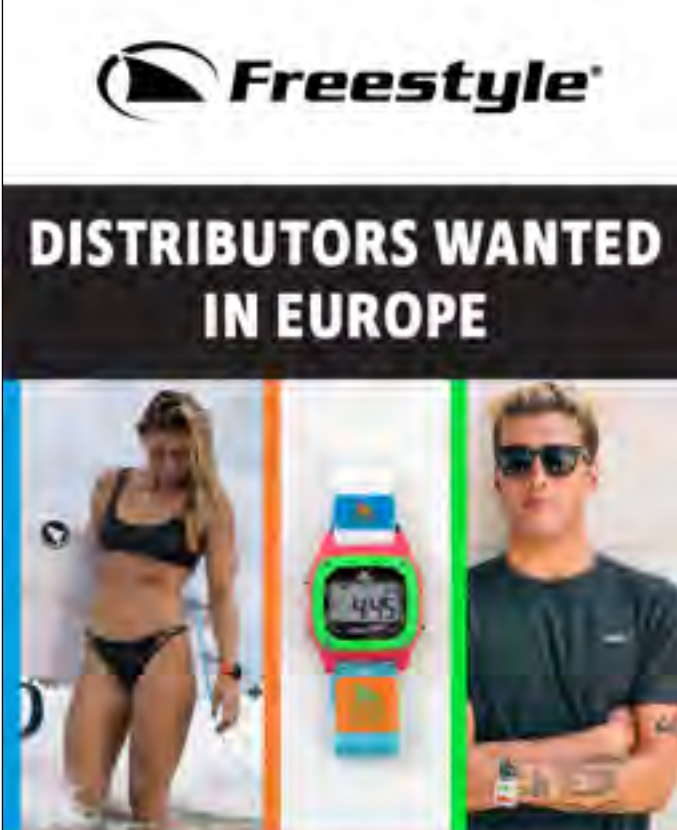
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CHOPPY WATER is responsible for distributing the snow brands Never Summer, SIMS and Flux Bindings in Europe. Both Never Summer and SIMS are amongst the world's premier independent board companies with a focus on high quality factory made snowboards in Denver/USA. Flux Bindings are creating high quality bindings to fit each individual's feet and riding style.

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From our humble beginnings in the back of a skateboard shop in the late 90's, we started with a single purpose; to make clothes **FOR GIRLS WHO RIDE** and this is what drives us 'til this day and into the future.

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OPPORTUNITIES



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BURTON

Burton is more than just a snowboard company. Based on our vision of being the premium alternative mountain lifestyle brand, we trend on new trails and reach new summits while still standing sideways, hitting park jumps and doing powder turns. Therefore, we are looking for people who share our passion, are willing to grow, dream, think big and see the world through our consumers' eyes.

For the European headquarters in Innsbruck we are currently looking for a

Team Lead Rider & E-Commerce Service (m/f)

The primary responsibilities for this position are:

- Oversee day-to-day operations of our Consumer Service Department for end consumers (Rider Service, E-Commerce Service)
- Responsible for leadership, training and coaching of the team to ensure consistent, premium brand experiences
- Responsible for coordination and communication with other departments and stakeholders
- Assign work, establish goals and review performances
- Create and maintain a high performing customer service function including service desk, endpoint technology support, call center and specific business processes
- Identify key trends in customer experience technologies and work with counterparts in our global HQ in Burlington/Vermont on implementing new technologies and services
- Ensure high levels of performance in all processes, accurate reporting and establish service improvement activities when required

Essentials for this role are:

- Bachelor's degree with minimum three years of customer service experience, preferred in a supervisory role
- Exceptional service orientation and familiarity with the latest contact center technologies and customer service methodologies
- Strong interpersonal and problem-solving skills
- Experience with developing benchmarks, analyzing trends and statistics
- Proficiency in the use of Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook, SAP experience is desirable
- Fluent in English and French or Italian, German or additional EU languages are a plus
- Affinity for snowboarding and the outdoor lifestyle

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OPPORTUNITIES



Shop Manager (m/w)

Für unseren neuen Blue Tomato Shop in Berlin

Blue Tomato ist der führende Omni-Channel Händler im Bereich Snowboard, Skate, Freeski & Surf mit Hauptsitz in Schladming/Österreich. Neben dem internationalen Onlineshop ist Blue Tomato mit einer stetig wachsenden Anzahl an Retail Standorten in Deutschland, Österreich und der Schweiz vertreten. Aktuell beschäftigt das Unternehmen mehr als 450 Mitarbeiter/-innen.

DEINE AUFGABEN

- Organisation und verkaufsfördernde Präsentation des Sortiments
- Selbstständiges Umsetzen von Merchandising Konzepten
- Organisation aller Shop Abläufe und Shop Mitarbeitereinstellung
- Verantwortung der Shop Umsatzentwicklung
- Team- und Mitarbeiterführung
- Verantwortung über die Sortimentsgestaltung in Zusammenarbeit mit anderen Abteilungen
- Aktiver Verkauf
- Verantwortung für regionale Marketingaktionen
- Organisation von Events und Partys regional

UNSERE ANFORDERUNGEN

- Abgeschlossene Ausbildung und Berufserfahrung im Einzelhandel bzw. vergleichbare Ausbildung mit wirtschaftlichem Hintergrund
- Erfahrung als Shop Manager oder Teamleiter
- Berufsausbildungsprüfung von Vorteil
- Fundiertes Know-How im Boardsportbereich und in der Szene
- Gespür für Style und Dekoration
- Grundverständnis Warenwirtschaft
- Sehr gute Deutsch- und Englischkenntnisse, weitere Sprachen von Vorteil
- Führungs- und Motivationsfähigkeit
- Planung, Organisation und Problemlösungsfähigkeit
- Selbstständiges Arbeiten, Belastbarkeit und Eigeninitiative
- Gute MS-Office Kenntnisse (Outlook, Excel)

WAS WIR DIR BIETEN

Blue Tomato steht für Teamgeist und Professionalität. Die Leidenschaft für Snowboard, Skate, Freeski und Surf sind die Grundlagen unseres Erfolges. Blue Tomato bietet dir eine aufregende Stelle in einem sportlichen und aufstrebenden Team in einem dynamischen Unternehmen mit angenehmer Arbeitsatmosphäre und Platz für Eigeninitiative und Weiterentwicklung.

BEGINN & ORT

Ab November 2017, Vollzeit in unserem neuen Blue Tomato Shop Berlin

BEWERBUNG

Nähere Infos und Bewerbung unter:
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Ansprechperson: Gordon Pujo

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RECRUITING NOW!

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JOB SUMMARY

In this creative and challenging position, you are responsible for Project Management of the snowboard production cycle for our OEM brand partners. Working from concept to completion with a strong team in various sectors of research, development, supply chain, and production, it is your goal to find the best solutions for performance, production efficiency, and cost management while working to meet customer expectations on a strict cycle timeline.

KEY QUALIFICATIONS

- Passion for snowboarding.
- Highly Motivated, communicative personality, social skills to work with a diverse team.
- At least three years of working experience in a comparable product/project mgmt role.
- Knowledge of CAD / CAM NX programming or in 3D drawing programs.
- Understanding of the snowboarding market and snowboard construction techniques.
- Ability to demonstrate analytic and strategic thinking to solve problems.
- Fluency in English mandatory. German and/or Slovene would be an advantage.
- Ideally completed university or technical education.

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Be a factory ambassador for our partner brands, and facilitate their needs.
- Functional and operative command of current and future product development cycles.
- Independent planning, execution, control and evaluation of projects in context of product.
- Management of technical designs, prototyping, on snow evaluation, new construction validation.
- Procurement of cost calculations and factory floor construction database.
- Reporting and analysis of relevant information to connected departments.
- Constant progression to deliver the best quality and snowboarding experience for our customers.

CREATE THE FUTURE WITH US.

We are seeking passionate and progressive individuals to join us on our journey. We care deeply about the products we make and how we make them. We are dedicated to efficiency and sustainability, and our production process is fueled by a company-wide understanding that EVERYTHING IS POSSIBLE.

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HAND BUILT AT THE WORLD'S ONLY 100% HYDRO POWERED SNOWBOARD MANUFACTURING FACILITY – THE CAPITA MOTHERSHIP.

POSTED: NOV 9, 2017



SHINER Account Manager Skateboard Bristol

Shiner is a leading European distributor of action sports goods and lifestyle apparel. We are looking for an Account Manager to join our UK Sales Team in Bristol.

You will be responsible for securing and increasing sales and distribution gains of all our brands (but with primary focus on skate) within the UK, by building positive sales relationships with new and existing customers.

You will:

- Have a connection with our brands.
- Be willing to travel across the UK to visit customers and attend trade shows.
- Have exceptional interpersonal and influencing skills and a can-do attitude.

As far as qualifications and experience go, your personal qualities count more than your experience, but you will need to have worked in a similar role to understand the needs of the accounts. You will be driven, with an entrepreneurial spirit and be passionate about relationship building and customer service.

In return you will join an ambitious and expanding European company, with a down-to-earth culture where everyone has fun and pulls together. We will offer you a competitive salary in addition to lifestyle benefits.

If this sounds like the job for you, please contact marie.hodgson@shiner.co.uk for a copy of the job description and more information.

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OTIS

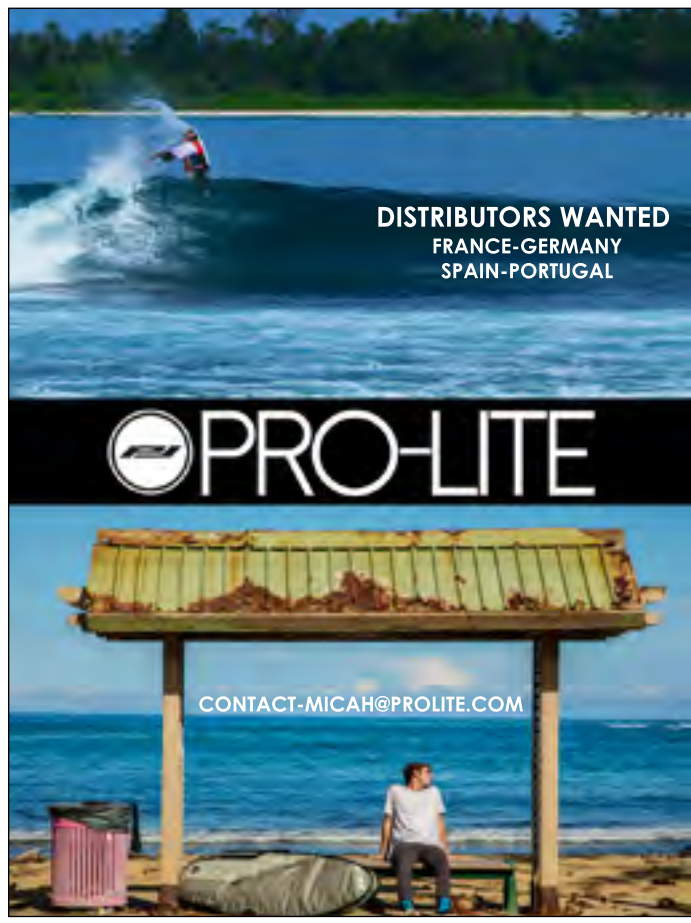
EUROPEAN DISTRIBUTORS WANTED

OTIS EYEWEAR, the iconic Australian sunglass brand and 2017 SIMA 'Breakout Brand of the Year' nominee, seeking distribution partners in European action-sport markets.

Founded in Australia in 2000 and synonymous with the core surfing community, OTIS specialises in the design and production of premium sunglasses, using exclusively mineral glass lenses. OTIS is the top-selling eyewear brand in surf stores throughout Australia and New Zealand and has experienced rapid growth in the US since launching there in 2013. With sales and marketing offices in Yallingup and Sydney in Australia and Oceanside in California, OTIS has now seeking distribution partners to help launch the brand and meet demand from the United Kingdom and Europe.

If you are an experienced distributor or sales agency in your market, and would like further information or to discuss the opportunity to represent OTIS Eyewear in your market, please contact OTIS Global Brand Director Scott Lewis on the details below.

s.lewis@leisurecollective.com.au
+61 9756 7311
www.otiseyewear.com



DISTRIBUTORS WANTED
FRANCE-GERMANY
SPAIN-PORTUGAL

PRO-LITE

CONTACT-MICAH@PROLITE.COM

BURTON HUB LAUNCH, ZURICH, SWISS



Burton Europe's marketing, brand and PR squad - Patrick Allegritti, Hanna-Marie Mayer Chris Patsch



Burton's Anne-Marie Dacyshyn (Chief Marketing Officer) and former European GM, Hermann Kapferer



Burton's Franck Waterlot, Vice President of Sales and Marketing



Burton's President, John Lacy

GOPRO THE MOMENT LAUNCH, MUNICH, GERMANY



Director Communications and Public Policy EMEA at GoPro Isabel Pakowski, Onboard Snowboard Magazine's one + only Tom Copsey and former snowboard photographer legend turned GoPro Photo Manager EMEA Markus Fische Fischer



GoPro Athlete Danny MacAskill and Martin Steinbach, Director Sports + Entertainment Marketing and Media Production EMEA at GoPro



GoPro Regional Marketing Program Manager EMEA Philipp Schlusser

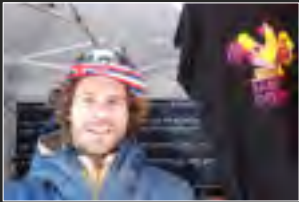


Senior Director of International Marketing at GoPro Filip Good

HOTZONE PARK OPENING HINTERTUX



Dupraz, handed over by the master Serge himself



Hotzone's Stefan Fankhauser



Mervin Austria Rep for Gnu, Lib Tech Roxy Boards Didi Feichtner



Salomon Festival Crew Michael Schirrhofer Karl Feldbauer

HUMAN NATURE ART SHOW, LONDON, ENGLAND



Dragon's Sam Nelson with team rider Gigi Ruf. Photo James Sweet



GoPro's Ben Rumney, Sputnik's Jayne Drinkwater, Snow + Rock's Sam Clark and Dragon's Craig Smith



HMNNTR Co-Founder, Kyle MayNerd and Nike SB's Rich Wilder



TSA's Shannon + Orchard sandwiching former staffer George

PADDLE EXPO, NUREMBURG, GERMANY



Aquadesign's Terry Barbier, Inge Waes and Francis Bardot



Around the show



Choppy water crew handling Bic, Sic and Oxbow



All the winners together

SPORT ACHAT NANTES, FRANCE



Rip Cul's Vincent Liets and Adrien Schubmehl



Santocha's Alain Rious

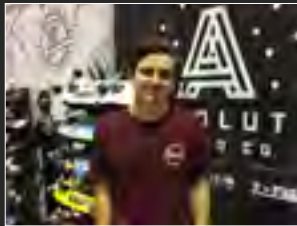


SportAir's Florence Pezet Bertrand and Mathieu Kurtz



UWL's Benoit Jean and Nicolas Guillois

SURF EXPO, FLORIDA, US



Absolute's Jeff Goforth



Boardworks Andrew Mencinsky



SIC's Anthony Scaturro with Nemo Designs Dave Wray



Tony, Jeremy, Beni and Karsten Liquid Force powwow

SURF PARK SUMMIT, SURF SNOWDONIA, WALES



Surf Park Central Founder and Co-Founder of Surf Park Summit John Luff joined by the team from Ice Mountain Adventure Park in Belgium



Surf Snowdonia's Justin Everley, coach Jo Dennison and owner Andy Ainscough



The Wave (Bristol)'s Craig Stoddart, Nick Asheshov and Charlie Anderson (Clintons)



Winveste's Dimitrios Levendakos, Shane Beschen, Oriol Vicente (Kelly Slater Wave Co) and Ed Atkin from eCoast



EXTREME DESTINATION TO LAUNCH IN SHEFFIELD, UK

Founded in 1995, EXTREME is a uniquely positioned brand on a mission to inspire, entertain and connect through action, sport, adventure and fun. EXTREME Destinations to develop, launch and operate a 48-acre, \$30.5million long-term sustainable EXTREME branded world class sports, leisure and accommodation solution.

Incorporating a combination of action and adventure sports facilities, including the possibility of an indoor sky diving facility, live music, E-Gaming and virtual-reality hub as well as a restaurants, bars, social spaces, retail and themed accommodation.

EXTREME's brand reach will be harnessed to broaden Sheffield's appeal and drive visitor numbers via EXTREME's Digital Media Network, its 128 global sports and lifestyle ambassadors and its presence at more than 80 events annually. These create a monthly reach in excess of 100 million people globally.

- **DESTINATIONS:** Designing, developing & operating sports & leisure destinations
- **ATHLETES + EVENTS:** Sponsorship opportunities & programme management
- **STUDIOS:** Storytelling, content generation, creative strategy and design
- **MEDIA NETWORK:** Branded content distribution, reach and exposure
- **LICENSING:** Branded product and experience partnerships



// [FACEBOOK.COM/EXTREME](https://facebook.com/extreme)



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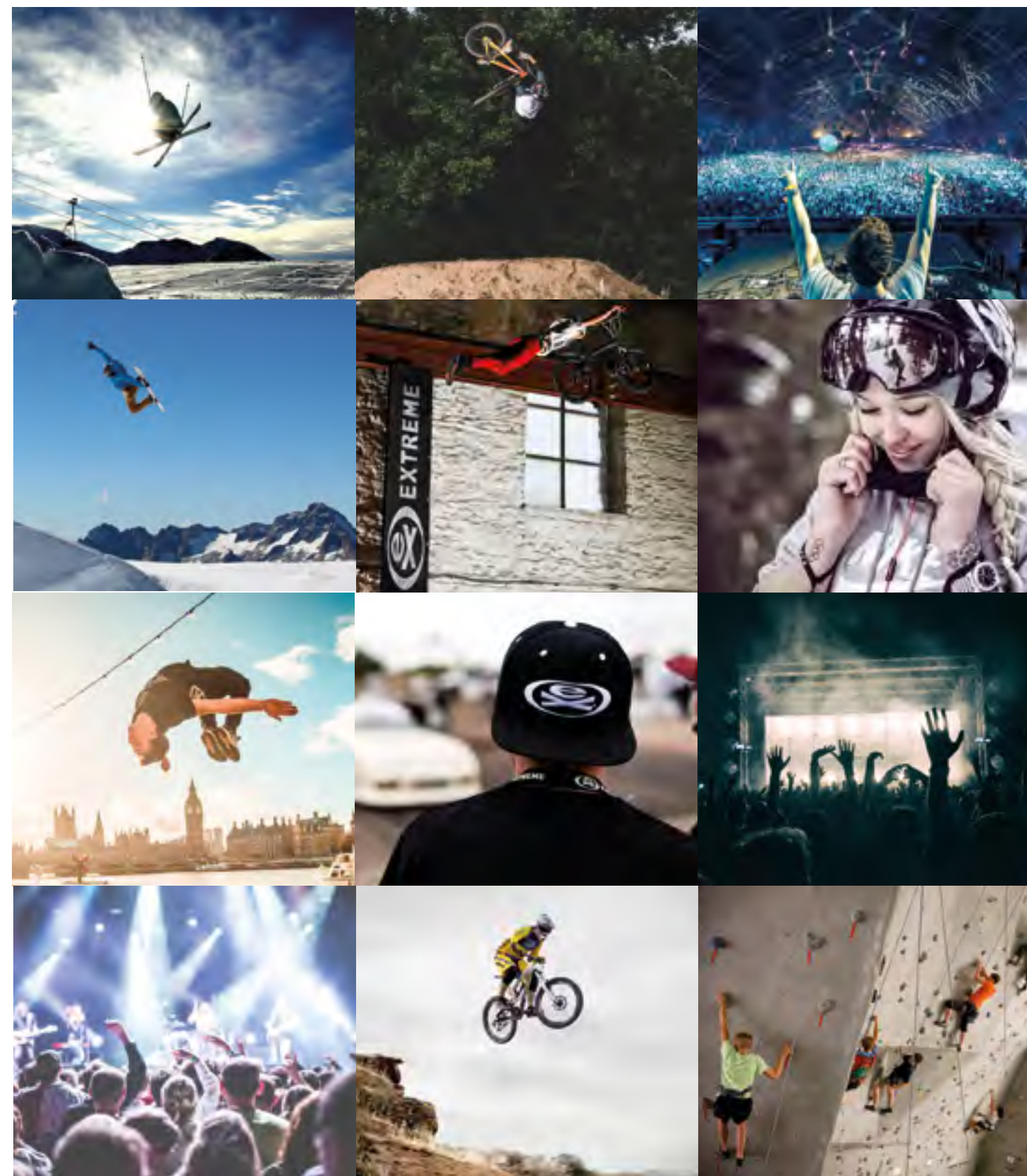
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// [ENQUIRIES@EXTREMEINTERNATIONAL.COM](mailto:enquiries@extremeinternational.com)



RIP CURL

MOUNTAINWEAR

ULTIMATE STRETCH STAYS DRY



RIP CURL

A PRODUCT OF THE SEARCH

RIPCURL.COM

Carlos Gerber