

BOARDSPORT

#90 FEBRUARY / MARS 2018 €5

source.

EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

JEREMY JONES BIG WIG

SURF PARKS FUTURE OF PRO SURFING ?

GB PARK & PIPE'S RADICAL GAINS

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HELLO #90

We've been blessed with stellar snow conditions across the Alps this winter right from the word go, finally giving retailers a fair crack at the whip. Despite a small number of early season discount horror stories, we're pleased to report that the lion's share of retailers have held firm, standing strong behind their products and having confidence in the orders they placed last winter.

Nowadays a retail buyer has better access to information than ever before, which undoubtedly aids their decision making process. However, where other markets are working with more and more seasons each year (collections, injections, capsules), the snowboard industry still works on a yearly cycle, putting more credence than ever before on a retailer's buy, as they stick their finger in the air to gauge trends some 9-12 months in the future.

Fear not! Our in-house snowboard expert, Tom Wilson-North picks apart the snowboards and outerwear offer for 18/19 while Anna Langer looks into goggles, giving retail buyers their perfect reference guide to roam the halls of ISPO with. The 2018 Winter Olympics are just around the corner and SOURCE headed out to Livigno to report on an innovative airbag that the GB team are using as their secret weapon in the run up to the 2018 Games in conjunction with a fascinating coaching philosophy, coined Radical Gains.

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Away from snowboarding, Dave Mailman rounds up his Surf Parks trilogy with a look at how these manmade waves fare when hosting professional surf competitions while Denis Houille dissects the FW18/19 wetsuit market.

We're very pleased to present a preview of 'A History of Skate Fashion', written by SOURCE's very own Skateboard Editor, Dirk Vogel, which takes a look back at how skateboarding has influenced fashion over the years.

In a new feature for SOURCE, we debut our artist profile series, kicking off with prolific snowboard artist Schoph who works with Dragon, Vans, Lib Tech, elm company, Volcom, Asymbol gallery and more. Read on for brand profiles with The James Brand, Dupraz and Mayori while we also speak to C-Skins to find out more about their re-branding.

SOURCE would like to wish everyone a warm welcome to ISPO Munich 2018, the mother of all action sports trade shows and may whatever business brings you to the Bavarian capital be fruitful.

Always Sideways
Harry Mitchell Thompson
Editor

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On the cover: Pacome Allouis. Vans, 686 & The James Brand. Photo - Julien Perly

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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.

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.

UNION BINDINGS PARTNERS WITH WORLD ROOKIE TOUR

Union Binding Company has signed a two-year sponsorship deal with the World Rookie Tour. The WSF World Rookie Tour is organised by the Black Yeti in collaboration with World Snowboard Federation and its National Snowboard Associations, and it is made possible by Red Bull.

MOUNTAINS & WAVES NEW FRENCH SALES AGENCY FOR ARBOR SNOWBOARDS

As of January 1, 2018 there has been 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.

WAVEGARDEN GETS FINANCIAL BOOST FROM SHARED WORKSPACE BIZ WEWORK

The WeWork office company have bought a large stake in Wavegarden in a move that sees the company expand far beyond their normal operations. WeWork is an American company which provides shared workspaces, technology startup subculture communities, and services for entrepreneurs, freelancers, startups, small businesses and large enterprises.

BILLABONG CONFIRM \$150 MILLION ACQUISITION APPROACH FROM QUIKSILVER

After months of speculation, Billabong have confirmed that Boardriders (the new name for the Quiksilver group) have made an "indicative and non-binding proposal to acquire all of the shares in Billabong, other than those already owned by Boardriders' related entities, at a price of \$1.00 cash per share, via a scheme of arrangement." Funds managed by Oaktree Capital Management, L.P already have a majority interest in Boardriders and Oaktree already holds 19% of the shares in Billabong. Billabong's share prices rocketed 23% on news of the offer. Billabong have said they'll grant due diligence access to Boardriders to allow them to put forward a formal proposal.

TYLER WRIGHT WINS 2ND WORLD TITLE IN A ROW

Australian Tyler Wright has just claimed her second consecutive World Title after winning the Maui Women's Pro in Hawaii.

HUF WORLDWIDE OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCES SALE TO TSI HOLDINGS CO.

Japanese investors, TSI Holdings, are prepping for skateboarding's entrance into the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo with plans to purchase a 90% stake in skate brand Huf for approximately \$63 million USD.

SNOWFACTORY TRIAL BEGINS AT CAIRNGORM MOUNTAIN, SCOTLAND

The two month trial of the Snowfactory technology from TechnoAlpin at CairnGorm Mountain Ltd has now begun. Operational staff are currently being trained on the snow machines that will aim to provide guaranteed snow cover. The mountain fully opened to the public on November 30.

THE WORLD ROOKIE TOUR ANNOUNCE TSG AS OFFICIAL SUPPLIER FOR 2 MORE YEARS

A continuing partnership deal has been announced between the World Rookie Tour and helmet and protective gear brand Technical Safety Gear (TSG) for the next two years. TSG is made for riders designed by riders so it fits to provide the young snowboarders on the WRT with impressive protective gear.

BURTON ANNOUNCES INDUSTRY-LEADING SUSTAINABILITY GOALS TO ACHIEVE BY YEAR 2020

Continuing their existing ethos towards running a business based on sustainability, Burton have released their new goals that aim to further reduce their carbon footprint by the year 2020.

JOHN JOHN FLORENCE WINS BACK-TO-BACK WORLD TITLES

Hawaiian John John Florence has won back-to-back world championships, as he took 2nd place at the season finale at the Billabong Pipe Masters. Florence needed to reach the finals to ensure his win over Brazilian Gabriel Medina and JJF eventually lost out to Frenchman Jeremy Flores in the final, but it was enough to make him the first surfer since Andy Irons to claim consecutive world titles.

WSF: WORLD SNOWBOARDING SCHEDULE AND RANKINGS SEE A MAJOR INCREASE IN NEW EVENTS FOR 2018 SEASON

The recent changes in the WSF Membership Program, due to the merger between the World Snowboard Federation (WSF) and TTR Pro Snowboarding, has resulted in a substantial increase in WSF members and consequently an increase in additional International, National and Regional level events.

THE INTERNATIONAL SURFING ASSOCIATION AND WORLD SURF LEAGUE REACH OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION DECISION

The International Surfing Association (ISA) and the World Surf League (WSL) have reached a landmark agreed process to ensure participation of top WSL professional surfers in the upcoming 2020 Olympics in Japan. The final qualification process is still subject to approval by the International Olympic committee. The agreement will see up to 18 of the 40 places at the Games reserved for WSL Championship Tour (CT) surfers (10 men and eight women), with the remaining 22 places determined at the 2019 and 2020 ISA World Surfing Games, the 2019 Pan American Games in Lima, and a single slot (each for men and women) for the host nation (Japan).



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ISPO, MUNICH, GERMANY JANUARY 28-31

ISPO continues to be the pre-eminent winter sports show globally with significantly more visitors than any of the other major continental sports shows. Last year a record 2,645 exhibitors (3% increase) and over 86,000 industry professionals (6% increase) attended the show. This is where an event the scale of ISPO offers real value. ISPO is still the biggest sports show on earth; even North America doesn't have a single show to rival it. With all these different sports communities and nationalities congregated in one place ISPO uniquely offers opportunities and connections to develop your retail and brand business and for retailers to find the products of the future.

For 2018 the show stays with its the traditional Sunday to Wednesday schedule but moves forward a week from last year's show to start on January 28. The key focus topics for ISPO this year are Digitalization, Women, CSR and Cross Industry. Women in Sportsbusiness will be cantered around the Munich lounge with B2B and B2C events for female trade visitors, exhibitors, journalists and influencers. Digitisation with over 1000 sq metres in A4 under the banner 'Digitize by ISPO Academy' will have an ISPO Academy with interactive forums, a Retail Lab and a Digital Readiness Check station where retailers can see how prepared they are for this new type of business. The CSR Hub and Sustainability Kiosk in Hall A3 will be run by Greenroom Voice and Brands for Good and with sustainability now more than just a trend the subject is also considered in the ISPO Awards.

For boardsports companies the key changes this year are as follows: The merging of snowboarding into the snowsports halls, with the positioning of the snowboard brands moving more central to the show as they have switched from B6 to B4; the move of skate hardgoods into the Urban Hardgoods hall and the moving of surf to next to SUP in hall A4. The Longboard Embassy and Skate/Scooter Hub in A5 will be run as

always by Alex Lenz from 40inch Longboard magazine. In A3 the Snow and Safety platform will examine safety on and off the piste, in A4 the Watersports village is where the surfing and paddle sports industry will be demonstrating its latest products and trends in a large water tank, in B2 the newly launched Wool street platform is cantered around natural wool and related products made from processed wool fibres. In C3 it's Textrends - the platform for performance textiles, always a busy destination for manufacturers, designers, and product managers and in B4 it's the 30th anniversary of ISPO's Brandnew, the world's largest competition for sports start-ups. This year it has been given an entire village of its own including a Walk of Fame, giving visitors an idea of the winning products from over the years.

The enthusiasm for winter sports shows no sign of slowing down. In the Snowsports area halls B2 to B6, brands will show off their entire product range for winter sports: from snowboarding to skiing, freeskiing and snowshoe hiking, cross-country skiing and sled riding. The 'Welcome to Snowsports' platform in B4 will display on trend new products grouped by category for ski and snowboard, best practices of events and retailers and resorts, the state of trade of these sports and will also include a bar and lounge area that can be used as a focal meeting point for brands and retailers.

ISPO is Europe's one opportunity to see all that's new in winter sports. All other trade events are either niche focused offering opportunity only for the already converted or are purely national in scope. So action sports retailers - no matter what their specialization - should make the trip to Munich to keep themselves at the forefront of market developments.

www.ispo.com

SPORT-ACHAT WINTER, LYON, FRANCE, MARCH 12-14

Sport-Achat is held in Lyon at Hall 1 and 2 of Euroexpo and is designed to work alongside Sport Air's other business-to-business events ASAP (the clothing specific event held in Annecy) and Snow Avant Premiere (the on snow demo test). In 2017, 305 exhibitors, 575 brands covering 20,000 square metres of exhibition space and 3,600 visitors took part in the show. A similar number are expected this winter. To date 75% of the show is already booked and there are 33 new exhibiting brands.

Now in its 17th year, the show is divided into four category areas: Ski, Snow, Outdoor and Sportswear with the 'Crème Fraîche' - space for new brands supported by FIFAS and OSV - situated right at the entrance to the show. New this year will be a space dedicated to innovative products that received awards at international sports fairs. Talks of interest to boardsports brands and retailers include on Tuesday 2pm: Performing in Innovation: The Start-up Mode in Sport - discover the new tools and

methods of structured innovation to better exploit potential markets and at 4pm innovative Products, presented by Frédéric Tain. On Wednesday at 11am OSV will present their new Bachelor degree in Sports Design & Communications as well as the new business incubator and at 12:30 - Olympics 2024, Paris in the final straight against Los Angeles! Organized by UNION Sport & Cycle.

The show is open from 9am till 7pm on the Monday and Tuesday and 9am to 6pm on the last day. On the Monday evening from 7pm all participants are invited by the Sportair team to the Sport-Achat opening party for fun and networking. Sport-Achat is a must visit for the French winter sports industry as the vast selection of products and brands makes the show an effective, fast and efficient use of time. See you there.

www.sport-achat.com



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photo : Nitro

SNOWBOARD FW18/19 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

A consolidated industry means there's less junk out there than normal, and shops are in a privileged position to be able to pick and choose the best of a brand's offering instead of simply 'doing the range'. With that in mind, let's get your snowboard buy right next year - not just OK, but let's really smash it out of the park. **Tom Wilson-North** takes a look at the must-haves for your snowboard wall in 2018/19.

KEY NEW MODELS - POWDER

Korua have been the ones to beat since their boards and videos dropped around ISPO back in 2015, marking a focal return to 'real snowboarding' - a bit piste, and particularly pow. Next year their highlight is the Dart, an overwide classic deep swallowtail. "It floats like nothing else and the shape makes it lie perfectly in deep powder to keep speed in and out of short snaps and through speedy soulturns", explains expert soulturner, Nicholas Wolken. Also brand new in swallows is the Winterstick Vistas, a concept shape aimed at dragging the swallow out of the beardy-freerider territory into more daily use. You can expect an exciting new ultralight, all-purpose and minimalist Corey Smith swallow called the Powder Glider from Spring Break as well.

Over at Arbor we were stoked on the high volume, stub-tailed Cask - a pretty unique outline with a big old nose rocker. The Cask uses their new Uprise Fenders for a nice soft feeling edge-to-edge, and the geometric nose with long front contact point speaks for itself. At the big B, Burton are making a classic pow shape the top of their line next year with the Vermont-produced Mystery Fish. It's part of their Lightweight AF collection. "Producing in-house allowed us to add different stuff to the Mystery Fish core, like vertically laminated pre-cured carbon strips and really light end-grain wood. Then we used a Mystery TopGlass topsheet - from the original Method - which is easier to work with and super strong," explains Burton's Patrick Allegritti. DC's all-new HR has been made in collaboration with Japan's 'The House of Powder' and is purpose build for shredding the deep

"Brands should continue to be creative with shapes and help make on-slope carving and cruising stay cool. This will keep all the new snowboard dads stoked on riding when their knees aren't. I really think this is a very positive trend." **Bataleon's Dennis Dusseldorp.**

stuff. Made with their S-Camber, an exaggerated taper and wide nose, its directional shape provides optimal float and control in powder.

KEY NEW MODELS - FREESTYLE CARVING

This newish segment retains its significance. "Brands should continue to be creative with shapes and help make on-slope carving and cruising stay cool. This will keep all the new snowboard dads stoked on riding when their knees aren't. I really think this is a very positive trend", says Bataleon's Dennis Dusseldorp. Rome have an entire capsule based on the love for the turn called the Tram Line. The new Ravine is the highlight, a versatile freeride deck with a directional shape and 3D blunt nose which planes well in untracked snow. It looks badass.

Nidecker are locked right into the carving trend too, and we loved the look of their asym Tracer. "Our knowledge of developing asymmetrical snowboards is not new, we were doing that since the end of the 80's. But next year we did it in a modern way, aiming for the softboot riders who love to carve", says Nidecker's Thierry Kunz.



STORM LOVEPOWDER FEELBETTER



SPIRIT PUSHUP SHEW

*“Our knowledge of developing asymmetrical snowboards is not new, we were doing that since the end of the 80’s. But next year we did it in a modern way, aiming for the softboot riders who love to carve.” **Nidecker’s** Thierry Kunz.*

We’re seeing a few old favourites rekindled for carving next year; Arbor bring back the A-Frame, and Dupraz widen out their classic D1 shape with a premium, turbocharged D1-S model and a kid’s version for up-and-comers, which is also available as a splitboard. There’s more trickle-down children’s tech out there too, as affluent mums and dads spoil their brats rotten. Yes will offer a scaled down 420 called the PowInc 125; “We’re seeing an exploding ‘grom-nation’, weaned on an incessant feed of shred edits with style for miles and we’re seeing more and more 8-12 years olds killing it beyond their years”, says Yes’ Alex Warburton.

KEY NEW MODELS - SHORT & FAT

The 420 was one of the first models to kick off the short & fat trend of powsurf-inspired boards which excel in playfulness and floatation; now this sub-trend has grown to the point where customers are understanding that they can trade up in fun by scaling down in size.

Growing D2C (direct-to-consumer, more on that later) brand Stone have a 147 shorty called the Barrel, and Canadians Hightide have a little board called the Hippy Slasher which invites you to size down 6-10cm. We’re also looking forward to trying an Amplid deck called the Aloha Vibes at the demos. This one is part of Amplid’s new “Future Shapes” collection, and is stumpy, very fat and super surfy, with a big ol’ swallow tail to make it easier to stand up outside restaurants, of course. Lib Tech’s Stump Ape is going to be a winner here too. It’s good to see some of these decks coming down in price - Bataleon’s 3BT Party Wave kicks in at 399€, which makes it an appropriate sell for use as a second board.



photo : Head

KEY NEW MODELS - ALL MOUNTAIN

Despite the rise in popularity of unusual shapes, the ‘old fashioned’ daily driver snowboard is going nowhere. “We added two models with retro-inspired shapes that have been modernised for today’s riders. The Fusion brings back memories from the first Nitro years. It’s a classic all-mountain shape with square tail, while the Hazzard brings back the concept of a park-specific board with short tip and tail and a relatively long running length. This board can and should be ridden at least 5-6 cm shorter than usual”, advises Nitro founder Tommy Delago.

There’s a new Sims Kidwell RT2 which sees the old Roundtail graphic on top of an updated modern chassis, and Vimana are extending out their VUFO & Motherbrain sizes to appeal to taller riders. Meanwhile, at Lib Tech you’ll find a brand new Travis Rice Orca which is floaty enough to rip pow but narrow enough to do the daily - it has a beautifully fishy turquoise topsheet. There’s also a tweaked BSOD from Capita, with a 40mm carbon kevlar Battering Ram strip down the middle and some extra carbon fleece around the insert packs for maximum durability. And new French brand Easy will be showing a cool hybrid camber deck called the Wallride which is the most-wanted

test at their demos. At Technine, their twin shaped T9ID has and soft tips combined with a stiffer flex in the middle, allowing riders to turbo charge their ollies, making it a go-to for park and piste while also holding its own in deep snow too.

KEY NEW MODELS – WOMEN’S

Some good stuff going on in women’s boards next year. Gnu’s Chromatic gets a new shape with half moon tail, which adds to the value of this loaded directional twin. The textured topsheet is a nice addition too. Burton replace their Socialite & Talent Scout with the new Purepop camber Rewind, and are showing a new beginner shape called the Hideaway.

Pause a second; to be honest, we hate segmenting women’s boards into their own section for the purposes of this article. “Tell me about it”, says Jenn Sheridan of Coalition, a brand making boards for female riders. “Companies are offering more progressive shapes than ever before but many aren’t offering the same shapes in women’s specific boards”. The best solution, to us, seems to be providing gender-neutral boards in appropriate lengths for male or female riders, or clearly identifying a narrower version of a particular deck as a women’s variant, thereby doing away with accusations of shrinking and pinking. Head are doing it right with their unisex Architect platform, which has a size range from 136 to 161 with a variety of widths. And Niche have a new Ember & Pyre directional do-it-all duo with swallowtail shapes loaded with proprietary tech. “We will offer this board in a medium flex with smaller dimensions for women in 145cm & 150cm, and a slightly stiffer/up-sized model for the men in 150cm & 155cm”, says Niche’s Ana Van Pelt.

A new generation of snowcrafters are out there, from the guys building in their spare rooms with a sketchy old Ebay press to the microbrands with excellent quality and innovation.

INSPIRED BY THE LITTLE GUYS

As in surfing, we continue to see the growth of independent shapers. This is mainly due to the end customer wanting to differentiate or have a closer link to the guy who built his board. It’s the old capitalist story of small cool brands dependent on their core narrative for value creation expanding fast, becoming subservient to targets of market expansion and shareholder dividends, and eventually ending up with a perception to having Sold Out To The Man. In any case, a new generation of snowcrafters are out there, from the guys building in their spare rooms with a sketchy old Ebay press to the genuine microbrands with excellent quality and innovation. There are interesting ideas about, so a visit to the quivers of Moonchild, Hightide, PLP and the other creative geniuses is time well spent.

“We see that brands that have a real passion for snowboarding are gaining momentum and the end consumer recognises and supports these brands more and more. It is becoming increasingly easy to get info online from sources that you trust (peer reviews), so innovation & passion is being rewarded”, confirm Bataleon. Who knows what disruptive innovation is around the corner? A new hole pattern standard? A new way of looking at how a snowboard turns or floats? The rulebook is out the window. Watch this space.

KEY NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES

Zooming in and looking under the hood of next year’s boards, there’s some crazy stuff going on. First up, nose inserts have become quite en vogue in order to reduce chatter and vibration. Salomon have a honeycomb and cork insert on their all-new Speedway, and Rome are putting a new tech called Buzzkill into their Mountain Division plank. “This board needs to be able to handle chopped up snow off-piste. We replace core material with elastomeric dampener inlays in a series



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*Who knows what disruptive innovation is around the corner? A new hole pattern standard?
A new way of looking at how a snowboard turns or floats? The rulebook is out the window*

of concentric circular channels in the shove. BuzzKill decreases vibration to keep the arc of the board smooth”, says Rome’s Philipp Kämmerer – Sales & Marketing Manager Europe. There’s also a double thick core profile going on inside Amplid’s Future Shapes, which is reminiscent of Burton’s well-received Working Stiff last year. And Jones will be using an exclusive web-fused carbon layer designed by engineer Xavier Nidecker and SWS in their surfy splitboards for dampening control.

Carbon is still a must-have material; Pogo are using a brand new signature construction with carbon and kevlar, a triple rubber dampening frame and titanal reinforcement, which allows them to offer a free lifelong repair service. Bataleon and Lobster are adding carbon tubes to the majority of their line to improve response without getting stiff, and there’s a microtrend toward flax and carbon fibre mixes which we saw getting approval at Salomon and Amplid.



photo : Ymana

In topsheets, Lib Tech have a new hydrophobic coating called Lib Texture (groan), and in cores expect some innovation from K2, who have a new BAP Core using three species of renewable timber that enhance dampening without the need for extra gubbins.

FACTORY STORIES

You can’t sell a board if you don’t know where it was born, right? It’s worth taking the extra step to find out where the boards you’re ordering were made, and why that factory was chosen. Amongst the brands we spoke to, factors included experience, quality, prototyping ability, reliability, materials sourcing and, of course, eco credentials. In Europe the majority of production is split between Meditec in Tunisia, NBL in Poland who received big props for their prototyping skills and - of course - the Mothership in Austria. “The Capita factory is still fairly new, but the collective experience of everyone involved

at every step along the production line is second to none,” explains Dinosaurs Will Die’s Sean Genovese. Since the demise of GST, Silbaerg decided to play it safe and split production between LTB in the Czech Republic and BuddyBuddy in Chemnitz, Germany, which is a half-hour drive away from their office. Who’s this then? “We started our own production because GST were the only factory that were able to make our Anchor Core Technology. We were able to buy some production parts from them, and we jump-started making boards in May”, says BuddyBuddy’s Rainer Soelch.

In the US, Mervin & Smokin’ continue, and Neversummer are collecting brands with Academy transitioning to full production with them in Colorado. And in Asia, Endeavor hyped the community support network in place around Maosen Sports in Ningbo, China and Stepchild are stoked on the materials and reliability offered by Titan Sports, formerly SBF. Borealis splits production between Meditec and GP87, where they’re making their premium Shaman model. “GP87 is American-owned, and specialise in ultra-high-end boards with great attention to detail”, explains Borealis founder Ben Hall. Finally, Arbor & Jones continue making boards at SWS in Dubai. This factory is already powered by 90% solar energy, and they are progressing towards 100% solar for 2020.

PRICEPOINTS

We noticed two significant trends here - more options at the super-premium pricepoint, and the emergence of ‘premium medium’. Super-premium first; with increasing global wealth inequality, the rich are getting richer, and some of them love to snowboard. And they expect a snowboard in their ‘usual’ price range. A thousand-buck board isn’t going to shock a guy for whom a six-bill dinner is small change. Burton’s Mystery Fish and Bataleon’s new 1200€ Surfer Limited both check this box. The demand for the high end is international; over to Smokin’s Jay Quintin: “We have been re-engineering our entire factory since last spring, putting many new systems in place to be efficient in manufacturing high end snowboards in smaller numbers”, he says.

The middle pricepoints are also experiencing growth, with the rise of ‘premium medium’ - brands that are packing value into the midrange to boost sales. Salomon are using a less expensive recycled sintered base on their 400€ boards, and Rossignol load almost all their tech into their 499€ pricepoint. “With that being said, the >499€ euros price category only represents 20% of the market”, cautions Rossi’s Arnaud Repa.

The trend of D2C sales can’t be ignored here; whilst generally agreed by many to be short-sighted and short-termist, this method of excluding third-party retailers from the sales chain is starting to be effective and isn’t going away. Hopefully the extra margin generated by these channels will be pumped back into brand’s hardgoods lines and see MSRPs heading back down to realistic levels, as well as supporting key independent retail storytellers.

CRAZY SHAPES

We covered short & fat earlier, but the trend of commercialising one-off, proto and concept shapes is here to stay...for now, at least. Ride are rolling out their unique Warpig into an extended Pig Family, and Salomon’s Hillside Proto Series features a board developed with Hokkaido’s Takahau Nakai & Aesmo’s Wolle Nyvelt. Bamboo, mid-wide, huge rocker, can’t wait to try it. Over at Pogo there’s a Bonzer-inspired double concave base promising mad acceleration, and Lib Tech are showing a 195cm Doughboy Shredder which has been brought back from the dead, but still has the skeleton topsheet. Meantime, Furberg continue their mega-long sidecut radius thing, with their POW deck hitting a huge 17m.

We heard notes of caution from brands concerned about the real-world riding characteristics of too zany a shape. “Nowadays, the more surprising a shape is, the cooler it is. But unusual shapes do not



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TO EDGE. LESS EDGE CHATTER,
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necessarily mean efficient shapes, and often the geometry is not at the same level of the design. The rider’s sensations mostly come from the shape, certainly before the construction and graphics. When you mess with a single parameter you can feel a huge difference in the real world”, warns lifelong shaper Serge Dupraz. That said, when it’s right it’s really something special, and Nitro noted that they’re seeing many veteran riders with nutty-looking boards and they give a great incentive to buy a ‘modern’ platform and use it for everyday riding.

Of course, as with any trend there is a counterpoint and the kindling of backlash. “We’re not really into it”, says West’s David Lambert. “We are actually going back to more classic shapes. We’re already bored of this trend.” Public’s Joe Sexton agrees: “Nope, we are not really that brand either. We are sticking with timeless true snowboards, the same shapes we have been riding for the last 15 years or so.” And Drake made a good point that unusual shapes are not especially hot sellers for every retailer out there, so buy with caution.

SPLITBOARDING

Uphill snowboarding continues to experience the same meteoric growth as ski touring, and now the gear has mellowed out a bit and there are some good-value binding solutions hitting the market, we’re optimistic that this is going to keep rocking. Jones bring the Mountain Twin split back, and their new Mind Expander split is a logical addition to their line. Meanwhile, Rossignol have just signed Xavier de le Rue for another five years, and they’ll also be pushing Marion Haerty’s split version of the Diva. Rome have a new moontail Powder Division split with extra width, and Regis Rolland’s new Rhyme project has a split which allows the rider to leave the skins on the board in ride mode for timesaving in mixed terrain.

Salomon are taking splitting extremely seriously, bestowing their S-Lab honour on their revamped four-part Premiere, which uses the same Aero Core as Killian Jornet’s touring skis for a whopping 750g saving. They’re also using custom Plum hardware and their own clips.



photo : Buddy Budddy

Burton’s new Flight Attendant X split is a mere feather too, using the Flight Attendant shape, Custom X core and magic juice borrowed from the Mystery Fish for light weight. And Phenix are showing an all-new four-part Blackbird with new woods in their core and cold resins holding everything together. Plum remain a key player in the game with shapes that are ruthlessly efficient on the way up and compliant on the way down, and Endeavor are showing a new Channel-equipped split called the Patrol based off their successful freeride Maverick shape.

GRAPHICS

Black plays a key role in next year’s boards, black bases for repairability and speed, offset by earth-tone or tone-on tone diecuts, with muted topsheets that imply stiffness, tech and low weight via matt black, functional graphics. Interest is created via contrasted matt/gloss texture hits which look great in the showroom, visible technology windows and small panels containing written spec details. A design direction has definitely been set and a flick through next year’s catalogues will see many similar-looking boards. The technology is at the centre of the 18/19 aesthetic.

Of course, you know the brands that won’t be playing the game and DWD, Lobster and Stepchild will be keeping snowboarding young, fun, trashy and irreverent. Over to Stepchild’s Steve Day. “I mean, can we really outdo what’s been done before? Chi Guy floating down a blood river on a tampon? Check. Chi guy surfing a blood wave on a tampon? Check. How can we top these things? Lazer tits? Oh man, I love lazer tits, I mean who wouldn’t? Shit, who reads this? Oh man, wait, Lazer Tits.. Boom. Trademarked. Don’t steal our shit!”

Woodgrain topsheets are going nowhere, with interest added via translucent vector overlays like the one on Goodboard’s gorgeous Rotor Camber. Jones will look like...well, Jones, and Mahee are using North American Native art on their wooden topsheets. And we liked Wired’s approach. “We have heard a lot of shop owners and customers complaining about artwork and graphics. So we are taking a unique approach to this issue. We offer one graphic each season that is available on all our boards, men’s and women’s. If a customer doesn’t like it they can order a board with either a black or white top sheet. Problem solved”, says Brand Manager Rob Dow.

MARKETING STORIES

It was enlightening to discover some unusual brand activations that will be taking place next year. Jones will be engaging end consumers via a public grant program to support the dreams of amateur riders, and will be launching a public photo sharing platform to share the global stoke. Head are launching a youth sponsorship programme called Futureheads, and Amplid have a scheme called Test Pilot to involve riders directly into their R&D process. This stuff is important, and a great way for brands to reach out directly to consumers. Finally, Niche have been looking at a closed-circle solution for recovering their end-of-life boards for recycling and reprocessing, and Wi-Me will be trying out a subscription service for some of their models to make things more affordable to their 18-25 demographic.

CONCLUSION

So, that’s the lowdown on the latest and greatest in snowboarding next season, and hopefully we’ve highlighted some must-rides as the reps start lending out their demo fleets a little. And as to your snowboard buy? Well, don’t be afraid to cherry-pick a variety of shapes and styles to suit what your customers want, and don’t be afraid to break out the tests to get your team behind what they’re selling. Let’s hope next year’s a snowy one. ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- Techy dark graphics
- Shape renaissance continues
- Splitboards getting lighter
- Short, fat, fun!
- Innovative customer involvements

RIDER: **Kehel Kudo**
PHOTO: **Lucas Grivelli**

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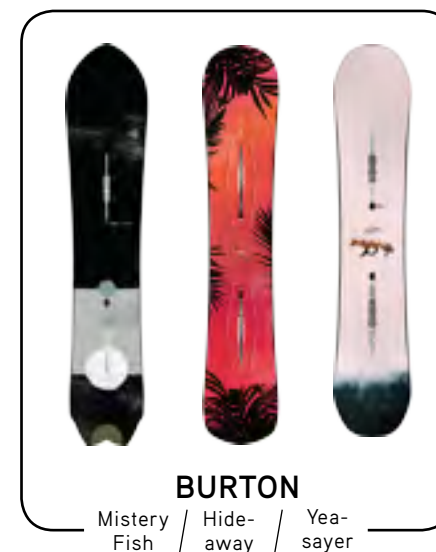
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FW18/19 SNOWBOARDS





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GOODBOARDS

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NEVER SUMMER

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HEAD

Daymaker / Pilot / The Day



HIGHTIDE

Draft Dodger / Grease Gun / Happy Slasher



JONES

Dream Catcher / Mind Expander / Mountain Surfer



K2

Limelite / Manifest / Overboard



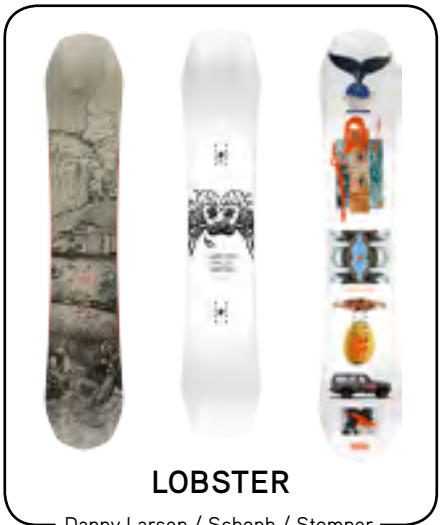
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Apollo 52 / Cafe Racer Plus / Drat 56



LIB TECH

Doughboy / Jamie Lynn / Splitbrd



LOBSTER

Danny Larsen / Schoph / Stomper



NEVER SUMMER

Big Gun / Peace Maker / Shaper Twin



NICHE

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Escape / Princess / Tracer



NITRO

Beast / Quiver Fushion / Squash



PHENIX

Blackbird / Corvette / KLNK



PLUM

Eterle / Prems / Talps



POGO

Big Wave / Venado / Wingerun




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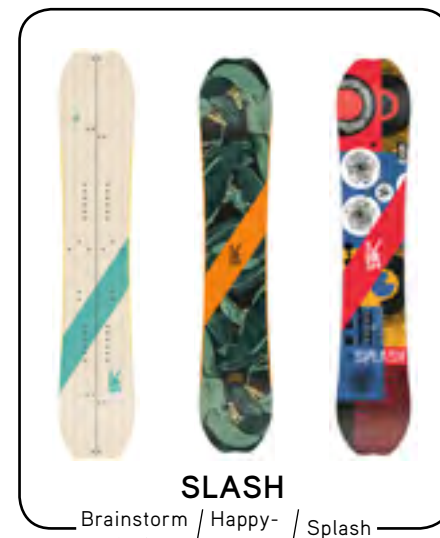
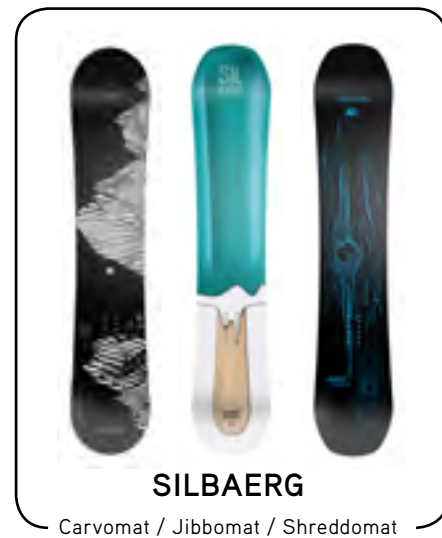
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RIDER BRADY LONGHURST PHOTO MARC VITELLI

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HOLY SHIT. THAT WAS TEN YEARS?!

For 10 years, YES.'s influences have run deep into surf and skate.

We learn from surfing's rich cultural history as much as its legacy of shaping. We have way too many surfboards in our garage for people that live in the mountains and we check the surf forecasts even when we know there is no way we're getting to the beach. **Surfing influences our approach to natural terrain and inspires us to carve our own line on an ever-changing canvas.**

And of course, we are all products of skateboarding's golden age. **Skateboarding taught us where to grab, how to spin and that there's no such thing as a frontside Indy.** It's spawned our style, attitude and ethos. Our sport has tracked similar booms, busts, exploitations, and finally indifference. And just as skateboarding has done, we've weathered it all.

It is this mish mash of influences and experiences that have written our definition of snowboarding. Freestyle, Freeride, Powder, Park - a single label doesn't do it justice. So follow our lead, and take it from there. Be influenced or be inspired. When you ride a YES., we expect you do it on your own terms.

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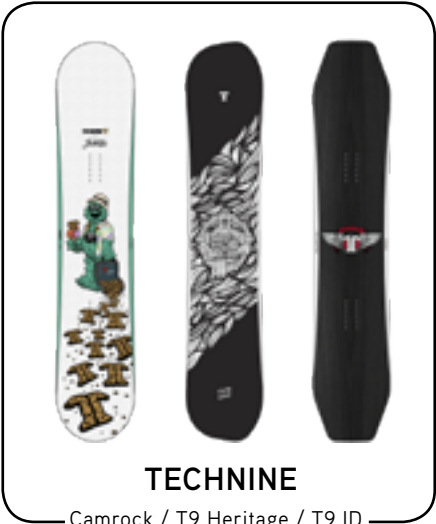
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STONE

Barrel / Barrel Split Board / Message



TECHNINE

Camrock / T9 Heritage / T9 ID



VERDAD

Bucaneer / DJ / RR



VIMANA

The Clone / The Continental / The Vufo



WEST

Achab / Salaz / Six Carro



WINTERSTICK

Partywave / Ark / Vistas



WIRED

Chase / Directive / Vantage



YES

Basic Decade / Pow Inc / Hell Yes



YUNIKA

Klondike / Totem / Univers



11 | SIMON HOULIND

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SNOWBOARDS



SPUTNIK, UK

Sputnik has built their reputation as an industry leader in the UK snowboard industry thanks to their renowned customer service and interesting product lines spanning back 18 years. 2017 saw Sputnik join forces with their sister store, Ski Bartlett in what was a tough decision based on many internal and external factors, including the age-old divide between skiers and snowboarders. We speak with Sputnik's Anna Smyth for more on their latest chapter.

Please give a brief history of Sputnik and Ski Bartlett.

The business began three generations ago with my grandmother Joyce Bartlett as a camping shop and after a few years as her three children got into ski racing Joyce spotted a gap in the market that the business was able to fill. In 1997 a second branch of Ski Bartlett was opened at Wycombe Summit Dry Ski Slope, by my sister Sally and two years later I opened Sputnik Snowboard Shop at the same location. Unfortunately it came to an abrupt end one November morning in 2005 after a devastating fire which destroyed both the ski shop and snowboard shop. At this point we made the decision to consolidate the ski shop back to the one original location and find a new home for Sputnik, this is when Sputnik moved to its new home in Marlow. While Sputnik was in Marlow we kept growing the snowboard side of the business and worked really hard on building a strong reputation for a great product range, we also focused on delivering impeccable customer service.

Looking at the future growth of the shop and the industry as a whole we have taken the very hard decision to move Sputnik in its entirety, into Ski Bartlett's bringing both shops together into the existing premises in Hillingdon.

Could you talk us through the decision to put the two under one roof, explaining any pros and cons analysed along the way.

Sputnik had reached a point where it couldn't carry on in its home in Marlow any more. Parking had become impossible, which for a destination store this became a huge issue. It was a very hard decision for all involved to merge the two shops, as it was going to involve huge amounts of change and adapting for all of us.

We spoke to our suppliers and explained that there was going to have to be a reduction in product lines so we could see what works within the two combined shops. The 2018 product ranges are now in stock and although it's a squeeze all the stock is in and organised, and customers love it.

One of the biggest risks that we identified when deciding to bring the businesses together was whether the age-old skier snowboarder rivalry

could impact customer perception of our brand. However we decided that over the last few years the divide has seriously faded and people are happy to shop along side each other. We also realise the importance of maintaining our reputation, both in the snowboard and ski world.

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

A huge challenge is the ever changing shopping habits of customers both in store and online. We all know that customers shop around online for the best price but this has also become regular practice in store. You can spend a very long time with a customer ensuring they have the right equipment, and the first thing they do is go online to see if it's available cheaper elsewhere.

Brands selling direct is also a huge issues. Brands can offer customers so much more than we are able to due to the margins they have to work with. It certainly feels like the brands are working against the independent retailers rather than assisting them like they used to.

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

We have worked on offering the best customer service we can, this really shows through when you look at the feedback and referrals we get from our customers. We have always found that word of mouth is our best advertising and offering great customer service is the best way to ensure this continues.

One area that really sets us apart is our women's range; having a woman buyer has obviously helped, making sure that the latest trends on the high street can be fed through to the range in store.

Across both stores we have very keen customers who live and breath skiing and snowboarding, often going multiple times a year. Sharing their passion for the mountains and truly understanding what their needs are keeps them come back again and again. Ultimately it's what keeps us fired up and looking for ways to add more value to their experiences - in store, online and in the mountains! 🏔️



Dusters is proud to introduce another collaboration with one of skateboardings biggest icons of all time! Mr. Steve Olson!

Olson has a raw, uncut, in your face attitude that can be felt through his skating as well as his art. He was the original tester of the Independent Stage 1 truck and his iconic Santa Cruz checkerboard model which became the first use of full-board graphics on seven-ply laminated maple. Fast forward almost 40 years of skateboarding history and Olson's legacy is still alive and strong, recently being inducted in the Skateboarding Hall of Fame and becoming well known for his controversial art and other collaborations in the fashion world. For our 2018 Spring line, Olson has partnered up with Dusters California to create not only a skateboard, but a true piece of art, featuring some of his favorite paintings on his favorite shapes.

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photo : Santa Cruz ScreamingHead Hoodie SkateKnibs BsSmith

SKATE HARDGOODS RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE 2018

Ironically, winter tradeshow season marks the time to write orders for the warm time of year. Find all hot trends in our 2018 Skate Hardgoods Retail Buyer's Guide. By SOURCE Skateboard Editor **Dirk Vogel**.

Sometimes it's nice to look back 30 years to see how far we have come. In 1988, skateboarding was at a major peak in popularity, but compared to today, skate hardware left a lot to be desired in terms of diversity. Sure, you could buy wide-bellied street and vert decks from a wide range of manufacturers – plus all the rails, Rip Grip, and tail bones you wanted – but you were lucky to find a “mini” model especially for kids or some soft wheels as those were considered “so yesterday”.

Fast forward to today and skate hardware offers the best of past, present, and future. You're into the latest, indestructible fibre laminate technology decks? A classic 1980s stub nose board with rails? The latest drop from that indie label all the cool kids follow? Or an early 1990s-style, 9-inch street shape with blocky tail and wide nose? No problem, the core shop has you covered. And while the entire skateboarding market suffered a major crash in 1989, it's never hit rock bottom again since.

“After the success in longboard skates over the last years, more and more people are coming back to street skateboarding. The market is increasing!” said Benoit Brecq at HOFF Distribution (Cartel, About, Venture, HOPPS, Coda) in France. From a distributor's perspective, the market became somewhat crowded recently, said Calum MacArthur, Purchasing Manager at Shiner Distribution in the UK: “Things are good now. There were quite a few years when a lot of new brands appeared and the market was very saturated. A lot of these new brands were competing for the same space, but things have settled down now, the heritage brands are growing well and some of the new brands have really found their niche.”

THE MARKET SITUATION

In the bigger picture, skateboarding is a “real” sport now, headed for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, so municipalities and national sports

*“After the success in longboard skates over the last years, more and more people are coming back to street skateboarding. The market is increasing!” said Benoit Brecq at **HOFF Distribution**.*

associations are recruiting a new generation of talent (see 7.). Aside from outdoor parks at higher densities, “there are also more indoor skate parks, not in every town but within driving distance, allowing parents to take kids at weekends. This keeps participation levels higher during the winter period,” said Ali Crichton at Mindless Skateboards, adding: “Because of this higher and more consistent participation people are using and going through their products quicker which in turn is driving sales as people look to replace broken boards, upgrade bearings or replace grip tape more regularly.”

More wear is good, as “there is still too much product and the amount of closeouts, discounts, deals and such is really scary,” said Jörg Ludewig at Urban Supplies Distribution in Germany. Asked about price points, Ludewig sums up the current spread as follows: “Our key price category in decks will stay at €59.99 retail, while the majority of the market is probably below. Trucks and wheels are too diverse to have a main price point.” Similar to the development in cruisers and longboards, customers now get more quality for less money, especially in completes. Benoit at HOFF is stoked on the “Cartel Skateboards complete, a high-quality complete with Canadian maple and riser pads at only €69 retail.”

WITH THAT SAID, THESE ARE THE SEVEN SKATE HARDGOODS TRENDS FOR 2018:

1. Limited Edition Decks

Rarity has been the name of the game in the sneaker business for

Because of this higher and more consistent participation people are using and going through their products quicker which in turn is driving sales as people look to replace broken boards, upgrade bearings or replace grip tape more regularly.

years. Now “blink-and-you-missed-it” product releases are becoming the hype in skateboard decks. Select models now have to be pre-ordered, including recent blockbusters such as the Powell-Peralta “Cab Flat Track” Dead End Skateboards Henry Sanchez, Primitive x Chocolate “Holy Water” for Richard Mulder, plus every single drop by buzzing indie board outfits. “The so-called hype brands like Palace, Magenta, Fucking Awesome, Hockey, Pizza, and Numbers are very hot right now,” said Franz Josef Höller, CEO of FRESCO agency. Retailers can turn these rare drops into events (also signalling they are cool enough to carry coveted brands). Calum at Shiner also reported, “the re-issue market has picked up again with strong sales from Powell-Peralta and Santa Cruz.”

2. Early 1990s Shapes

Classic reissues are drivers in a wider trend towards decks built on classic templates. Spearheaded for several years by Pontus Alv’s Polar Skateboards brand, the of-the-moment shape for 2018 harks back to a fleeting moment in board evolution before symmetrical popsicle shapes arrived. A moment around 1991/92 when skateboard decks were shedding their 1980s heft and width and developed longer, upturned noses but had yet to lose their block-shaped tail. “Retro is getting better and better in sales. Riders are looking for stability and style, so retro boards combine the two,” said Benoit Brecq at HOFF, while pointing out: “Decks are larger than in the past! Boards under 8 inches are for kids only now!” With that said, Jörg Ludewig at Urban Supplies still sees the centre of the action around, “classic popsicle shapes in sizes 8 to 8.25 inches.”



photo : Birdhouse shawn hale ollie munich

3. The Return of Slick Bottoms

Board walls are getting slicker in 2018. Introduced in 1989 by Santa Cruz Skateboards as “Everslick” technology, slick bottom boards promised endless boardslides without any rails (mind-boggling stuff at the time). Almost 30 years later, Santa Cruz brings back a full line of Everslick decks, ridden by top team riders like Tom Asta. Globe Skateboards cooked up proprietary “Pearl” slick bottom construction. “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. Also watch out for slicks from brands such as Plan B, Fucking Awesome, Weekend, AllTimers, and more. Need more deck technology? Powell-Peralta is putting marketing muscle behind Flight deck construction, plus Dwindle’s Impact, Impact Plus, and Impact Double constructions are finding more devotees.

4. Female Pro Models and Participation

At the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, an equal number of male and female participants will represent their countries. Today, participation numbers are far from equal, but: “There are more females, which is also being honoured by more female pro models. Yet we are coming from a super small overall female number and it will take some time to get to a good level,” said Jörg Ludewig. Calum at Shiner said: “Lizzie Armanto’s first pro Birdhouse board flew off the shelves and

Nora Vasconcellos MOB griptape did the same. There are definitely more girls skating and we continue working in this segment as we always have done by supporting girls’ events and jams and flowing some really good girl skaters.” Benoit at HOFF also supports the French federation, dedicated tours for girls, videos clips and specific products. Peter Shu, Director of Media & Marketing at surf skate mavens Carver Skateboards said: “Female participation is very strong, and growing the fastest in Europe and South America. We believe that showcasing female talent in our marketing encourages more females to join in.”

5. Proven Quality in Trucks & Wheels

Despite new brands barging onto the market, trucks and wheels remain segments where skateboarders trust brands with proven track records. “Shops will need the top U.S. wheel and truck brands to have a legit offering,” said Jörg at Urban Supplies, allowing that: “It is rather hard for a retailer to keep track. The number of SKUs in trucks is huge!” Looking through the clutter, insiders note increased demand for colour and graphic trucks, plus: “Higher-end trucks from Thunder, Indy, and Venture are selling in more volume. We are selling more titanium trucks than last year,” said Calum at Shiner. The investment makes sense from a rider’s perspective, because “high quality trucks will turn, lock on and grind with ease giving them confidence when pushing themselves at the park or on the street,” said Ali at Mindless while pointing out Decade trucks. Benoit at HOFF is pushing Prohibition trucks with a good price-quality ratio, together with Agency wheels. Calum at Shiner also sees momentum behind wheels featuring, “wider riding surfaces. Skateable soft wheels are still a key category with Ricta Clouds selling very well.”

6. Individualized Accessories

If SKUs in trucks are overwhelming, the new diversity of brands in the skate accessories segment may add to the confusion. Standouts for 2018 include Bronson Speed Co. and Andale bearings, and a major comeback of Shorty’s hardware and Doh-Doh bushings. “Anything that allows you to change and personalise your set up goes along way with the kids looking to stand out,” said Ali at Mindless. Similar to trucks and wheels, proven quality also goes a long way. “Skateboarders want classic logos and hardware from brands they know and trust,” said Calum at Shiner. Gold standard accessories include Bones Swiss bearings, MOB and Jessup Grip, and Bones bushings. For tune-ups on the fly, Peter at Carver suggests: “The Carver Pipewrench is increasingly important in this age of versatility. Being able to adjust your setup for whatever terrain you are riding, with a small, lightweight tool that fits easily into your pocket.” As a special “accessory” for 2018, About Skateboards offers a bench made from decks, to chill in style in the shop or at home.

7. The Next Generation

As the final trend, many industry insiders reported a building wave of next-generation talent. Young riders, as young as five years old, are discovering the joys of skateboarding, oftentimes with their skate-experienced parents on board as well. Brands are catering to this new wave with kid-specific completes that pack acceptable quality – always key not to sour the first experience – at more than reasonable price points. “In street skateboards, we start at €30 for beginner complete skateboards through the Hillmore brand,” said Benoit at HOFF, adding: “We also see really good sales in protection kits and helmets. More and more kids are starting to skate. The first generations of skaters are now fathers, so they push their kids to start safely!”

HIGHLIGHTS

- Female participation
- Kids’ completes
- Early 1990s shapes
- Slick bottom boards
- Higher-end trucks



CRUISER & SURF SKATE



FUNNY BOARDS



OLD SCHOOL BOARDS





NEW BOOK ON SKATEBOARD FASHION HISTORY

5 LESSONS FROM OVER 60 YEARS OF SKATEBOARD FASHION

What can brands, distributors and retailers learn from 60 years of skateboard apparel?

Key insights from the new book SKATEBOARDING IS NOT A FASHION by Boardsport SOURCE Skateboard Editor, **Dirk Vogel**.

Super models in Thrasher T-shirts, skate brand apparel at fashion boutiques, launch ramps on Paris Fashion Week catwalks: The love affair between high-end fashion and skateboard style is hotter than ever, and it's been a long time coming. From day one, fashion has played a major part in skateboarding's overall aesthetic – even before official “skateboard clothing” existed as a product category. That's because skateboarding is more than just a sport, more than just athletic performance or an adrenaline-fuelled spectacle, but a physical medium of stylistic expression with deep hooks into art, music, and youth culture.

This becomes painstakingly clear in SKATEBOARDING IS NOT A FASHION (SINAF), a new coffee table book published in February 2018 by Gingko Press, chronicling the evolution of skateboard apparel from the 1950s onwards. Compiled by Jürgen Blümlein at the Museum of Skateboard History with photography by Cap 10 and words by Boardsport SOURCE Skateboard Editor Dirk Vogel, the book packs several decades of skate style, original apparel, and iconic pro skaters into 636 fully illustrated pages.

“Telling the story of skateboard fashion proved far more challenging than our first book, Made For Skate, which was about the history of skate footwear. Because how do you even define ‘fashion’? And how do you show apparel the best way in an illustrated book? It took seven years to finish and we are really stoked that people can now go on a historic tour of skate style,” said co-author Jürgen Blümlein, adding: “We could never have done it without the support of key supporters like Todd Huber at SkateLab and Lance Mountain, who gave us access to his clothing archive, and generous skate photographers like James Cassimus, Glen E. Friedman, Jim Goodrich, Grant Britain and so many more.”

SINAF chronicles era-defining skateboard brands and their owners, including Jeff Ho and Craig R. Stecyk III (Zephyr), Stacy Peralta and George Powell (Powell-Peralta), Rich Novak (NHS/Santa Cruz), Skip Engblom (Zephyr/SMA), Steve Rocco (World Industries), Jimmy Ganzer

(Jimmy'Z), and countless others. It features testimonials from pro riders who influenced entire generations of skateboarders with their self-styled looks, for instance Tony Alva, Christian Hosoi, Steve Olson, Brad Bowman, Steve Caballero, Lance Mountain, Mike Vallely, and more. And for the first time, the book lets skateboard photographers explain the role of skate magazines as gatekeepers of skateboard style.

Supplemented by images of original clothing from the vaults of skateboard history, these previously untold stories provide powerful lessons on what makes skateboard fashion special, and how to keep it unique in the future. And because 636 pages can be a big chunk to work through in search of answers, we offer a condensed version. Here are five lessons from over 60 years of skateboard fashion history:

1. Skateboard fashion needs specialty retail. Skateboarding's first major fashion trend hit in the early 1960s and revolved around T-shirts with broad, horizontal “surf stripes”. Back then, buying such a coveted shirt inevitably meant one thing: going to the specialty skate or surf

*“Telling the story of skateboard fashion proved far more challenging than our first book, Made For Skate, which was about the history of skate shoes. Because how do you even define ‘fashion’? And how do you show apparel the best way in an illustrated book? It took seven years to finish and we are really stoked that people can now go on a historic tour of skate style.” – Jürgen Blümlein, co-author and curator of **Museum of Skateboard History**.*

Advice to designers: forget the current Nineties rage and go digging for rich treasures in the vaults of Seventies skate apparel.

shop (no online stores, sorry). Actually, skate shops single-handedly created the “skateboard apparel” segment by showing skateboard companies – still generating 90% of sales from hardware in those days – the dizzying profit margins behind branded softgoods. In the early 1970s, the world's first skate shop, Val Surf in North Hollywood, began printing and selling T-shirts with skate brand logos to market its mail order business. Sales went through the roof, brands took notice, and suddenly the entire industry's spread between softgoods and hardware shifted to 50/50. Over the years, core skate shops have also birthed their day's most sought-after skate labels, including Zephyr, Sessions, SUPREME (now worth \$1 billion), and HUF. So what is legitimate skate apparel? Answer: It's what's sold at real skate shops!

2. There's a formula for what makes a good skate company logo. Every skateboard company needs a logo, but only a select few brand insignia advance to become cultural symbols, worn on tees, jackets, and hoodies; even inked under the skin as permanent emblems of skate culture. Some of the most iconic brands are owned by NHS in Santa Cruz, California, home of the red-and-yellow Santa Cruz Skateboards “Capsule” logo, the Road Rider Wheels “Wings” logo and the Independent Trucks Cross (perhaps the most iconic skate logo of all time). In SINAF, NHS co-founder Rich Novak reveals the process behind creating these classics: The design team would spray logos in black paint on white cardboard and stage photo shoots at the local skate park to see which designs would “jump” the best in the background of a skate photo. And despite Photoshop magic and special FX, the winning formula of clean lines, geometric forms, and minimalist colourways still holds true today (here's looking at you, Palace Skateboards).

3. Modern-day skate style was born in the 1970s, not the 1980s. Consensus marks the late 1980s as the period when skateboard style “came into its own”. But as SINAF makes clear, that already happened in the mid-to-late 1970s. Bedrock technologies such as urethane wheels, 7-ply maple decks, aluminium trucks, shielded bearings, plastic-cap knee pads, and helmets emerged in this period (and have remained fundamentally unchanged since). Skateboard pros broke the

mould of being portrayed as mere athletes and brand ambassadors when the likes of Alva, Olson, and Bowman emerged as super stars and rock gods. Most importantly, skateboarding emancipated from surfing, also on a product level: “The very first fashion element that came into skateboarding in the 1970s – the very first fashion element that skateboarding can claim as its own, free from the surfing world, was the custom-coloured Vans [Era model] deck shoe made popular by Tony Alva in SkateBoarder Magazine,” says skateboard icon Stacy Peralta in SINAF. Athletic style, work wear, street wear, prep boy, punk rock, and California hippie? All been done in the Seventies! Advice to designers: forget the current Nineties rage and go digging for rich treasures in the vaults of Seventies skate apparel.

4. Stop making sense. Who cares if mainstream audiences understand it?! Skateboard style is best when it's an inside secret, even better if it's rejected by the public at large. Over the years, skateboarders have built buzzing fashion trends out of left-field, neglected wardrobe items such as tube socks, fedora hats (considered old men's hats), argyle socks, sweatpants, trucker caps, hip bags, and ultra-baggy pants. Ultimately, mainstream culture adjusted and began liking these styles, but long after hardcore riders brought them to the streets (see 5.) with initial responses ranging from scrutiny to ridicule. Imagine the surprise when the Powell-Peralta company began selling skateboards and clothing adorned with skulls, swords, and snakes to children in the early 1980s. It made no sense, but ultimately sold millions of units and forever changed the skate fashion game. Other skate fashion secrets will always remain shrouded from the public eye, like Inouye's Pool Service (IPS) true identity as a cover operation for pool hunting antics or the correct pronunciation of Jimmy'Z (is it Jimmy's or Jimmy-Z?!). Current brands still love a good mystery, like GOLF WANG or that 917 phone number...

5. The hardcore will always lead. Skateboarding is at an interesting crossroads these days. Skate style is hotter than ever and everyone from hypebeasts to high-fashion designers are chasing after the exclusive halo of skateboard fashion. In a way, it's a bit of history repeating because skateboarding has been mainstream-hot before in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, only to hit rock bottom again once the hype subsided. Then again, today marks a new situation because skate style will always be available for purchase, not just at core shops like in the old days but via a plethora of omnichannel vendors, both core and non-endemic. The biggest lesson, however, is that skateboard style always loses once it caters to mainstream demand; made clear by the downfall of mega brands such as Alva Clothing, Airwalk, and Vision Street Wear, who soared high into the stratosphere only to lose touch with their base. Because whenever a trend crosses that crucial tipping point – will Thrasher tees be next? – the hardcore of our culture initiates an automatic immune response, rebelling against widely held definitions of “skate fashion” by whacking the public across the head with something they can't understand. Like the mid-1990s regression to plain white T-shirts worn by the day's hottest pros in protest of their brand-name sponsors, or today's resurgence of clowny, cut-off baggy pants rocked by the SUPREME kids. Again, who cares if anyone else gets it? So fashion designers at Hermès, Celine, Balenciaga, and Louis Vuitton can try to “keep an ear to the streets” all they want, the real skaters will always lead where others follow. Skateboarders decide the direction in which skateboard fashion will evolve – and the types of clothing skateboarders will want to buy – while everyone else is just trying to hop on the bandwagon. As legendary graphic artist Jim Phillips, creator of the Santa Cruz “Screaming Hand” logo and countless timeless graphics, says in SINAF: “Fashion is really all about fads. Fads come and go. But skateboarding is here to stay!”[👊]

SKATEBOARDING IS NOT A FASHION by Jürgen Blümlein, Cap 10, and Dirk Vogel is out now on Gingko Press, ISBN: 978-1-58423-630-6. The book will be accompanied by a touring exhibition on skate fashion history at global House of Vans locations. + info at gingkopress.com & vans.com



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BUYER SCIENCE S'NOCONTROL MAX ALBER

Max Alber looks after the buying for one of Austria's best-respected snowboard stores, S'NoControl. Max is a straight up dude and he lives and breaths snowboarding. It's our privilege to be able to share Max's views on the science of his snowboard buys with you.

How long have you been a surf buyer for S'NoControl and how did you end up in this position?

I took over the buying for s'NoControl gradually as I moved into the managers position about eight years ago. I've managed the shop and been responsible for buying since 2000.

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

The biggest and most obvious change has been that the pure "rocker" isn't where it was a few years ago – it's still there but the hybrid-shape is very strong at the moment. Camber has returned to its former glory once more. Splitboarding is also making a huge step up, which is plain to see by the new brands and boards on the market.

It's tough to say which product has been the most reliable, as every brand offers a bit of everything in their range nowadays. It's also tough to decided which products are the worst performing. As a premium shop, I definitely think it's worth spending a few extra bucks on your set-up, but on the other hand we have a lot of "lower priced" products too and the price/performance ratio is surprisingly good there.

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

The ordering process here in Austria is amazing; the reps and brands I work with are reliable and the service is great. Reordering product mid-season always depends on the brand – the bigger ones are obviously easier to get your hands on than others. When it comes to support – just supply stickers, people love stickers!

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

We've stuck to around five hardware brands for the last few years and we do the same in the apparel section. You never know what'll pop up and catch your eye, so from time to time we take new brands in and see how they do! When my team and me stand behind a product or a brand we try to make it work with all we've got!

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

Be innovative, affordable and personal. I don't think you have to drop a massive catalogue; if you can offer retail partners a unique and promising



product, things will start rolling easily. The best example right now is Korua; smart marketing, products that work, great people to deal with and at an affordable pricepoint.

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

ISPO will hopefully pick up again – it was always the flagship, which portrayed what sports in general had to offer. What's cool at ISPO at the moment is that you get so many small/new brands and they don't drown next to the huge ones anymore – it's the perfect place to find upcoming brands. For hardgoods the on-snow demos are great. I love them because that's how you get the real feeling for everything, even though they don't usually provide size 13 boots!

Please tell us about your background – how did you end up working for S'No Control. How big is the shop and which areas do you operate in?

My personal background in snowboarding started many years ago. I come from a family that was personally and business-wise focused on skiing 100%. In 1992 my dad started s'NoControl with his former employee Bernd (Bernie for me is a Legend – he made snowboarding in the Arlberg what it is today, unfortunately this legend passed away way to young). Bernd was also my mentor and put me on a snowboard when I was about six years old and about three years later I stopped skiing for good, ever since then a board has always been my weapon of choice.

After our shop was rebuilt in Summer 2015 we now sell snowboarding goods over about 120 square-meters. We cover pretty much everything from socks to safety, to splitboards and powder guns.

Tell us about s'NoControl's staff.

The hardcore s'NoControl Crew has been the same for years. Sindy Larcher and Marielle Jauring are our Ladies for clothing and girls hardware, Consti Gasser has been our hardware specialist and since last season we made a great addition to our team, Basti Leeb who is our hardware and softgoods all rounder. 🇸



ELECTRIC



the kleveland



@marcuskleveland

photos: @processfilms



photo: Giro

GOGGLES FW18/19 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

The better your vision, the more fun you'll have on the mountain, and while no one can influence the weather, we can all do something about the gear we shred in. What sounds quite simple takes some intricate technology though, which **Anna Langer** outlines in our Snow Goggles Retail Buyer's Guide for FW18/19.

CHANGING LENS TINT TECH

"Innovation" is among the buzz words for FW18/19, with a futuristic new lens technology from both Oakley and Electric that changes tints with the push of a button - you don't even have to take your goggles off anymore. "Prizm™ React is a revolutionary electrochromic lens technology designed to adapt to environments in a matter of seconds with the simple touch of a button. Prizm React creates one lens for all possible on mountain conditions with three Prizm lens tint options offered in a single lens", including Rose, Torch & Black as Kurt Sabin, Category Manager at Oakley explains. Electric feature a similar technology in their new model The Electron, allowing a change in tint percentage with the push of a button." Sitting in the higher price bracket, this piece isn't for everyone, but it gives the power to essentially change lenses without ever taking your goggles off!" says Electric's Snow Snow Marketing Manager, Cody Rosenthal. Zeal's Automatic lens also changes when it reacts with UV light: "The patented combination of polarized and photochromic technologies let the lens change gradually with light conditions, giving you a unique tint for every condition," in less than 10 seconds and gives the impression you have "30 lenses in one", especially paired with polarization.

*"Prizm™ React is a revolutionary electrochromic lens technology designed to adapt to environments in a matter of seconds with the simple touch of a button. Prizm React creates one lens for all possible on mountain conditions with three Prizm lens tint options offered in a single lens", including Rose, Torch & Black as Kurt Sabin, Category Manager at **Oakley**.*

The innovators at Dragon once again forge ahead and have developed their own photochromic lenses for FW18/19 "that functions the same and changes tint in the same time frame as our Transitions lenses, but with wider VLT ranges," something we are particularly looking forward to checking out at ISPO. Sandbox Owner/Founder Kevin Sansalone calls their new Polarized Photochromic Technology a "kick in the butt to all of the quick change lens technology" as "you never need to change your lens again," with their new Shift technology. Spektrum

“Instant recognition of features on uneven terrain (moguls, crevasses, icy patches, etc.) is key to avoiding injury,” says **Rossignol’s** Aurélie Zucco, Business Unit Manager Technical Equipment.

Co-Founder & CD Robert Olsson states that he’s “impressed with how well the new Photochromic lenses are working now and how fast they adapt to the light conditions.” Out Of expand their photochromic and polarized One lenses to six colours, Sinner feature a Polarized SINTEC®/ Photochromic TRANS+ -Double lens in their Mohawk goggle and Bollé and Cébé extend their offering of NXT photochromic lenses as well.



photo : Bern

ENHANCED CLARITY

But it doesn’t have to be that fancy. “A good number of brands now offer high contrast lenses due to increased demand from the consumers,” notices Andy Steel from Bern Unlimited, who have five high contrast models in store, from adults to kids. Giro name VIVID as their most popular lens, that has an “exclusive spectral curve to enhance contrast and boost confidence on snow,” and is available in 9 lens options and comes standard in 10 models. Smith also see “demand for the performance and clarity of ChromaPop increasing” and expanded their offering to 11 tints, as does VonZipper with their proprietary WILDLIFE lens.

For 2017 Dragon started offering their Lumalens® technology for enhanced clarity and optimized colour tuning without an up-charge in all goggles and tints - making it their “new normal.” Head’s TVT (Trans Vision Technology) lens technology was also introduced in FW17/18 and is enhanced with a “mirror coating on the inside, so it looks flash but the coating is protected by the lens from external hazards, like swiping it off or scratches.”

High quality lenses from Carl Zeiss are gaining ground as well, especially Sonar which is featured by Melon, POC, Rossignol, Spektrum, Quiksilver and Roxy, where it can be found in 60% of collections. “Instant recognition of features on uneven terrain (moguls, crevasses, icy patches, etc.) is key to avoiding injury,” says Rossignol’s Aurélie Zucco, Business Unit Manager Technical Equipment. “Sonar is distinguished by the fact that it maximizes the light transmitted and eliminates the blue light effect behind the retention of certain wavelengths, in order to improve contrast, optimize colours and increase the definition of moguls and dips in the piste, whatever the light conditions, guaranteeing increased safety at all times.” On top of that, Spektrum also praise Zeiss’ “impressive CSR program taking care of both staff and the planet.”

LENS TINTS

The range of lens tints will not change too much for FW18/19, Carve report four primary colours from Clear to Grey, Rose and Orange, Melon show a “fairly even split across silver, green, blue and red

chrome.” Most Spektrum models have a brown base that “works great for a wide range of light conditions,” with “a lot of different finishes” and Summit also “upgraded all lenses to brown/bronze tints”, while the “new Talisman line has a polarised filter eliminating glare.” TSG stick to Red Chrome, Green Chrome and Blue Chrome and Cyclops’ new video recording goggle Boreas comes with an iridium lens, with the option of an additional rose coloured lens. Spy add a new Happy Bronze with Gold Spectra™ lens on their Space Legacy colourway.

Sinner and Bern also make sure that lens tints work well with the frame shades, “so for example a blue frame comes with a blue revo lens,” says Annemiek van den Boogaard, Product Manager from Sinner, while Bern also match “strap, lid colour and logo on the corresponding helmets.”

QUICK CHANGE FRAMES

The ability to change your lens with only a couple of simple movements has been very well received by customers, hence the offerings are growing every year. Bern features LensPOP in all adult goggles, Cébé use strategically placed magnets in their Magnetic Family, Giro pair their quick change magnetic lens system with the ADAPT STRAP, a customizable strap option, Head offer their Speed Snap Lens Exchange System in a regular and frame-lens construction on top price points, Spektrum add the SnapSwitch lens change system to their frameless G007 Helags model and TSG alternate between their Magnetic Interchange Lens System with self-locating rare earth magnets and the Fast Lock Lens System, “allowing to easily click the lens on the frame.”

*“The other amazing new benefit of this lens, is it allows you to lift the lens up in the channel about two centimetres while hiking so you get amazing ventilation when things heat up, but don’t need to take your goggles off.” **Zeal***

Anon evolve their Magna-Tech with their new M4 that offers fully interchangeable options for cylindrical and toric lenses and comes with an integrated MFI facemask. Zeal also add their first cylindrical goggle, the Hatchet, to their growing RLs family that uses an evolution of their patent-pending Rail Lock System that aligns the lens with the frame’s dual rails by seamlessly sliding into the channel and locking into place with a magnet system for a safe and secure closure that also keeps out snow and ice. “The other amazing new benefit of this lens, is it allows you to lift the lens up in the channel about two centimetres while hiking so you get amazing ventilation when things heat up, but don’t need to take your goggles off.”

SPY updated their Lock Steady system with The Legacy, “allowing for a thinner goggle profile, effectively bringing the goggle lens closer to the eyes and allowing for greater peripheral vision.” Out Of also advocate an enhanced field of view through a thinner construction in their “Dual Frame” construction with “Real No Frame” technology, consisting of two different frames with two diverse rigidities that “only allows to mount the lens in only 6 seconds, but protects the frame from eventual shocks providing an excellent protection”. POC’s new grilamid Orb frame provides “a maximized field of view and a simple and quick lens changing system” as well, as does the new completely rimless design of the Smith I/O MAG. Dragon’s new frame and lens combo that is still waiting for a name at the date of print also brings the goggle further back, which allows for more peripheral vision. “It’s not a new technology, rather giving the wearer more



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CYCLOPS
BÖREAS

*“It’s not a new technology, rather giving the wearer more of what they need, which is visible area,” explains Shay Williams, Product Development Specialist. **Dragon.***

of what they need, which is visible area,” explains Shay Williams, Product Development Specialist.

NEW SHAPES & MATERIALS FOR BETTER PERFORMANCE & FIT
Oakley’s new Fall Line XL frame is a rimless goggle with a cylindrical lens shape, fusing “premium technology with a larger field of vision” and the only model that will feature their Prizm React technology. Based on the success of their Frameless ALT Model, VonZipper will continue to push ALT-SM “which is perfect for smaller to medium faces and will be a great option also for women.” Rossignol agrees that “frames tends to be smaller, more integrated with modern designs” and also Carve show a new INFINITY frameless style that has (amongst other things) a slightly larger sleek design and a vented flow through system,” next to the RUSH with an extremely thin frame “that also gives it a very clean frameless appearance” says Colin Foy, Product Development Manager.



photo : Zeal

Besides all innovations regarding lenses and frames, for Spektrum “the real story is the renewably sourced content in our Duo-Tone frames where we manage to keep all the functionality while taking better care of our planet. Using new plant based polymers derived from castor and ricin oils as well as recycled polyester these products don’t compromise on functionality and truly earn our motto ‘Clean Vision’”. For Bern their exclusive 100% recyclable PLUSfoam® frameless goggle technology is becoming more and more relevant, “as environmental awareness and corporate responsibility become fashionable.” PLUSfoam® is an industry exclusive material that is 100% recyclable, yet the “real difference comes in the weight (108-113.6 grams depending on frame size), fit, feel and unparalleled field of vision in this frameless series,” argues Andy.

He continues: “The PLUSfoam® material outperforms traditional foams, rubbers and plastics by flexing and hugging your face without creating pressure points or air gaps like many other stiffer goggles on the market.” TSG Articulating Outriggers in their Goggle One and Two also ensure great fit through a full range of face shapes and sizes by evenly transferring pressure across brow and nose to ensure a complete seal against the face. Bollé cater to this with the B-Flex technology on their TSAR range that “allows you to easily and quickly adjust the frame’s nose and cheek areas to give an exact customised memory fit” and at the same time eliminates pressure points and air gaps.

DESIGNS & COLLABS

Regarding colourways and patterns, the tie with helmets is the man influence for brands that offer both goggles and helmets including Bern, Giro, Head, POC, Rossignol, Sandbox and TSG. Spektrum tie

their goggles closely to their sunnies range for “a seamless package with a stronger visual impact the more of the range you sell or use,” and Electric feature a “Darkside Tort” goggle that is based off their best selling sunglass SKU. They also continue their collab with Volcom with a “black and white half tone pattern” for next year, next to a goggle and mitten combo with Howl Gloves, “creating a new age military look for both items.” Quiksilver and Roxy strengthen their collections by matching the prints with their outerwear and Smith created a unique colourway together with The North Face and team rider Austin Smith. More athlete inspired Signature Series are offered by Bern, Smith, Dragon (Danny Davis, Blake Paul, Jossi Wells, Chris Benchetler, Forest Bailey, Gigi Rüf, & Bryan Iguchi), Giro (Lucas Beaufort), Quiksilver (Travis Rice), Roxy (Torah Bright), Spektrum (Ingemar Backman), SPY (Eric Jackson & Helen Schettini) and VonZipper (Halldor Helgason & Yagowoons). Electric add their first ever pro model frame with The Kleveland that allows for “some add-on features that will change the game” through a Keyhole System in the nose piece that we’re rather curious about.

Other design highlights in FW18/19 include artist collabs from Melon and Spy, who add their “perennially popular Danny Larsen collaboration” to two new frames, next to Giro’s collaboration with Protect Our Winters. B4BC is even supported by two brands next season, VonZipper and Smith. The latter also work with the High Fives Foundation and give a “percentage of each sale of the B4BC Skyline Goggle, and co-branded Hi-Fives I/O and Quantum helmets to each foundation to support their efforts in growing awareness about each mission.”

Colours are very much oriented on general trends, ranging from classic black and white, through natural colours and matte finishes all the way to “poppy” (Zeal) and “louder” (Electric) options. Bern introduce the “Patriot Concept” with a Red / White / Blue combo that “reflects the flag colours of no less than 38 countries around the world” which “seemed like a great move ahead of the forthcoming winter Olympics.”

Giro use their customers “interests, cultures and aspirations” as basis for their designs and Melon feature “street inspired patterns such as Bandana prints, paint splatters and earthy outdoor inspirations in the form of topographic designs.” Dragon work with “sublimated prints that allow for complex straps and different colour schemes”, SPY offer a “a tactile experience” with their NASA-inspired Space Legacy 3D strap, next to a Herringbone collection, an updated camo colour pattern “with finer detail” and “geometric patterns seen in traditional Native American art”. TSG also show Native Indian elements next to a “sticker bomb pattern, a custom dark blue/light blue/yellow camouflage, fine lines and stripes with logo integration and colour-blocking.” Roxy and Quiksilver implement a “mix of plain and print patterns, jacquards, silicone print and logos” including camo. Summit keep it more minimalistic, “yet very bold with monochrome designs: Minimalist strap designs allowing our bold logos and lens coatings to provide the flare.”

HIGHLIGHTS

- Chaning Lens Tints
- Clarity Enhancing Technologies
- Frameless Designs
- Greater Peripheral Vision
- Matching Goggles & Helmet Designs





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FW18/19 GOGGLES



Anon - M4



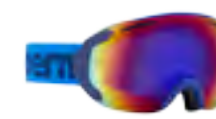
Anon - M4



Anon - MFI



Bern - Eastwood Patriot



Bern - Jackson



Bern - Monroe



Bolle - Nevada



Bolle - Nova 2



Bolle - Supreme OTG



Brunotti - Odyssey



Brunotti - Speed



Brunotti - View



Carve - Excess



Carve - Infinity



Carve - Rush



Cebe - Artic



Cebe - Icone



Cebe - Versus



Dirty Dog - Bullet



Dirty Dog - Mutant



Dirty Dog - Velocity



Dragon - NFX2 Blake Paul



Dragon - X1 Echo



Dragon - X2s Gigi Ruf



Electric - Egg



Electric - Electron



Electric - Kleveland



Giro - G Agent



Giro - Eave



Giro - Lusi



Gloryfy - Red



Gloryfy - Transformer



Gloryfy - Mexifin



Head - Globe



Head - Horizon



Head - Solar



Melon - Chief



Melon - Jackson



Melon - Parker



Oakley - Falline
Prizm Torch



Oakley - Line Miner XM



Oakley - Line Miner Youth



Out Of- Flat Blue



Out Of- Open Chamelon



Out Of- Shift Blackboard



Poc - Fovea Clarity



Poc - Orb Clarity Comp



Poc - Orb Clarity



Quiksilver - Hubble TR



Quiksilver - QS RC



Quiksilver - QSR



Rossignol - Ace Hero



Rossignol - Airis Sonar



Rossignol - Maverick
Photochromic



Roxy - Feelin



Roxy - Feenity



Roxy - Rock Ferry



Sandbox - Boss



Sandbox - Kingping



Sandbox - Kingping



Sinner - Bellevue



Sinner - Olympia



Sinner - Vorlage



Smith - I/O Mag Rise



Smith - Skyline



Smith - Squad XL



Spektrum - G007



Spektrum - G008



Spektrum - G009



Spy - Ace



Spy - Legacy



Spy - Marshall



Summit - Talisman



Summit - Talisman



Summit - Xpose II



TSG - Amp Contra



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BIG WIG INTERVIEW JEREMY JONES

Jeremy Jones is a man who needs little introduction in the snowboard world; heralded as the greatest freeride snowboarder on the planet and the face of snowboarding’s hottest brand. Created through necessity, Jeremy started Jones Snowboarding to make better splitboards with more of a freeride focus. The company spearheaded the backcountry movement, which has seen huge growth in recent years as snowboarders, once put off by the dangers and unknown factors of venturing off piste, now look to escape the crowds and “earn their turns.” We speak to Jeremy on a wide range of topics spanning his career, his brand, moving into the binding category for 18/19 and Jeremy also gives his thoughts on how snowboarding’s changed since he came up.

Interview by Harry Mitchell Thompson.

Jeremy, give us a brief history of JJ the snowboarder and what led you to start Jones Snowboarding.

I had worked with Rossignol for 19 years. Over that time period I had become more involved with product development and marketing. For about the last 10 years I had a growing line of signature products and was spending time every year with the key shops around the world getting them on my product. By the end my name was on over 20 products and I had become friends with many of the key shop owners around the world. The product I was making was really good but I felt it could be even better. This coincided with Rossignol going through a rough patch. I had interest from a few companies out there but none were interested in putting money into new freeride shapes.

Specifically I needed a better splitboard. And I wanted to play around with freeride focused rocker/camber profiles. I figured if I was feeling this way there were probably others too. My focus went from, where can I get paid the most, to what path leads to the best snowboards under my feet. I had some decent offers on the table but I heard over and over, “we are not investing in new freeride shapes or splitboarding.”

How did the relationship with Nidecker come about?

Then DCP [David Carrier Porcheron co-owner of Yes Snowboards, fellow Nidecker stable brand] introduced me to the Nidecker family. I have always had major respect for the family and the snowboards they

This year I am coming out with Jones bindings that utilizes NOW technology and the fact that we both work with the Nideckers has helped make this happen.

make. They had the factory and the engineering background to make my ideas reality. Starting from scratch I was able to form the company of my dreams. A company totally committed to developing the best product, embracing the most sustainable materials, and give 1% to the Planet. I had very low expectations. I set up the company so it could run in the black selling small quantities of product. It was going to run by standards and I would let the industry determine our size. Nidecker from the start has totally supported my vision and has been a great partner to help me execute my goals.

Working under the Nidecker umbrella presents a lot of room for synergies and collaborations. Can we expect Jones to venture into any new product categories in the future? Please also tell us how Jones has benefited from being under the Nidecker umbrella.

Jones is a small company so being able to share back-end resources like, warranty, logistics, and customer service has been helpful. As for snowboards we are off on our own and there is no cross over. I see the YES and Nidecker product for the first time at the trade show like everyone else. However NOW is a different story. I have known JF for 20 years and was one for the first people to get on his prototype. I felt the difference right away. By the end of the first day going back and forth between NOW and traditional bindings I was hooked. At first the relationship had little to do with the Nideckers. But this year I am coming out with Jones bindings that utilizes NOW technology and the fact that we both work with the Nideckers has helped make this happen.

How involved in the daily running of Jones Snowboarding are you? At what point did you step back and allow other people to be involved in operations?

As the company grows I have handed off certain duties to the staff, but when it comes to the product on the snow, I am deeply involved. I am not a micromanager. I let my employees do their job. I make sure when hiring that they understand my needs to be outside. That this is where my inspiration and ideas come from. Being in the mountains daily is the key to our success. It is our compass. I have never had a break through idea while writing emails.

What are your goals and aspirations with Jones Snowboarding?

I started Jones so I could have total freedom to develop snowboards and to raise money for the environment. Product development makes up 80% of our budget. We are constantly exploring different shapes, materials and manufacturing processes. Having support from the customers has allowed us to keep developing more products for sliding on snow. It is a dream come true to do this. I have never pushed a shop, rep or distributor to take more product. There has never been a five-year plan or sales incentive goals. Keep the products from going on sale and have an empty warehouse come spring is the goal. I get excited when the orders come in. I always think of them in terms of money raised for the environment. As someone close to the struggles of NGOs, money is the single biggest issue holding us back from achieving our goals. More and more I view Jones as a vehicle to raise money for the environment.

This year sees you release your passion project movie...

I wanted to make a film that everyday riders can relate to. A simple film that celebrates that feeling of riding, and the reason people dedicate their lives to moving to the mountains or the beach to pursue that feeling. “It’s shot mostly under the chair or off the side of the

road, so it’s relatable to anyone who rides. I’m most proud of the shots we got right off the lift in a mediocre snow.

Deeper, Further and Higher were all great bodies of work. Is there scope for a continuation of the trilogy at any point?

I will not be making Higher 2, but my commitment to go Deeper Further Higher is as strong as it has ever been. This side of my snowboarding has really evolved the last four years since the trilogy. I am covering way more ground and spending longer amounts of time in deep wilderness than I was with the trilogy. This has lead to first descents in California. Going where no one has been before; in a place as populated as California this takes a lot of commitment and something I am very proud of.

What are your views on the current landscape of competitive snowboarding, both freeride and pipe/park/big air?

I am really removed from contests and the happenings of the industry. I really live in my own little bubble of snowboarding with a few friends in the backcountry, hanging out with my family, developing product and working on climate change. I do not have time to check the latest tricks or contests other then watching Sammy [Luebke, current Freeride World Tour champion]’s runs on the FWT. And those runs have really been mind blowing.

I make sure when hiring that they understand my needs to be outside. That this is where my inspiration and ideas come from. Being in the mountains daily is the key to our success. It is our compass. I have never had a break through idea while writing emails.

What are the main differences between young professionals nowadays compared with how things were when you started out?

There is less money in snowboarding but the barrier to become a pro costs less too. Back in the day if you were not in the mags or the major movies you couldn’t make a name for yourself unless of course you dominated the contest circuit. These days social media is making it so everyone has a platform to highlight their snowboarding. This is really cool but it requires a little bit of time every day. It also may have stalled progression. When I came up you had to put it all on the line to stand out in a snowboard movie. Everyone was competing for those few spots and the intensity of a film day was really high. I am not sure if that commitment to breaking barriers and pushing yourself to the edge is there as much as it was before.

Tell us more about your work with Protect Our Winters (POW) and what the next steps are with this.

POW turns ten this year. What I am most proud of is the people that are a part of POW. That I am a cog in the wheel. Between the board of directors, staff, Science Alliance, and Riders Alliance there are more than 100 people closely connected to POW. Our work has never been more important and we continue to get better at it. POW markets climate change to a younger demographic. We use social media, op eds, PSA’s, to inspire our industry to act on climate, to educate them on the hurdles in our way that are keeping us from fully embracing a the solutions. The last election was devastating. It undid years of work in a matter of hours. Since then my work in climate change is my main priority. The stakes are too high and I am sick of losing. 🇺🇸



photo : Oreill

WETSUITS FW18/19 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

When it comes time to take on the coldest of winter weather, no one is ready to make compromises on the product they buy. In the water, only the highest end neoprene is acceptable to surfers who dare take on the frigid temperatures of the coldest season of the year with blind faith in their choice of gear. Thermal linings, extra stretch, comfort, quick drying... When it's cold, entry-level wetsuits are of no interest to anyone. Besides, who wouldn't exchange a few extra euros for a few extra degrees of warmth? This is an update on all things neoprene in the European market place for 2019 by **Denis Houillé**.

A MARKETPLACE WITHOUT REPROACH

Cold, even glacial water temperatures don't scare anyone in Europe anymore. The number of surfers in the water, even in the hardest to reach areas is constantly increasing. On weekdays, outside of school holidays, morning, noon and night, surfing is adapting to all schedules just as neoprene is to all climates... as long as the waves are good. The desire to explore new surf frontiers is getting to the point that even products that are meant for winter use only are being used in the middle of summer to access cold water destinations. Julien Durant at Picture agrees: "Cold water surfing is pure outdoor / exploring surf, and we really feel that this trend is the future of surfing, even in summer."

The precious knowledge shared by the specialised brands, their agents and shop owners has rapidly spread to consumers who are now extremely well informed as to which models and accessories they need depending on water temperatures. Not only does word of mouth work, it's a determining factor in different areas and spots where surfers swear by one brand or another.

In the shops, the general feeling is that surfers buy a new winter wetsuit once every two years on average, and market growth doesn't seem to be slowing down, quite the contrary. "There are more surfers in the water than ever before and at the same time, there is more competition in the market than ever before", admits C-Skins founder

*"Cold water surfing is pure outdoor / exploring surf, and we really feel that this trend is the future of surfing, even in summer." - Julien Durant, **PICTURE** co-founder*

Mark Brown. All the manufacturers try very hard to deliver customers the highest quality and performance possible in terms of warmth, comfort and durability. Nonetheless, for the last few years, prices have remained stable, which is a sign of wellbeing in a market that has made the promise never to sacrifice quality for profit margin. At Typhoon wetsuits, Samantha Leonard has observed a polarisation of the market divided along quality standards, with premium products whose prices remain the same, entry-level products with ever more aggressive pricepoints, and small price fluctuations on mid-level products. The most strategic pricepoint is on average between 250 and 300 euros, where consumers are willing to spend somewhat more depending on the features offered, especially environmentally friendly construction. Rip Curl has been pursuing its own segmentation for several seasons, and has found that its high-end models are among the most sought-after in shops. In order to remain competitive, Madness Wetsuits offers very durable and comfortable wetsuits with very aggressive prices. With the desire to "not trick

“There are more surfers in the water than ever before and at the same time, there is more competition in the market than ever before.” - Mark Brown **C-SKINS** founder



photo : Gul

consumers”, Tiki Wetsuits also maintains very affordable pricepoints for unequalled solidity as proven recently by Andrew “Cotty” Cotton in hellish conditions at Nazaré.

Next winter, as far as product aesthetics are concerned it’s all about understated efficiency. It looks like the brands removed all needless features in order to concentrate on the essentials and perfecting the finished products with timeless designs featuring only a simple, and in some cases, revisited logo as a final touch. Jan Michaelis, O’Neill Wetsuits European Marketing Manager couldn’t be clearer about the fact that every winter studies show that: “Customers are only looking for technical features and reliable engineering for their wetsuit, the colours and prints can wait until summer.” Nonetheless, the designers have still used the modern digital and sublimation printing techniques at their disposal to produce distinctive looking products that are easily recognizable in the water.

WETSUIT MATERIALS 2.0

In 2018, we will see more advances in rubber technology with lamination techniques that produce more stretch and absorb less water. There will also be revolutionary foams in terms of shape-memory, which now offers incredible levels of stretch and comfort in the water. At O’Neill, to obtain a feather-light inner foam core, each layer of neoprene is deconstructed then put back together again, which is producing unprecedented levels of technology. You’d be right to ask if this race for the lightest wetsuit isn’t at the expense of the durability of the products. But, based on past experience, manufacturers have worked to reinforce their neoprene by developing outer coatings that endure the effects of stretching, high winds and UV rays much better than in the past. As a result, they have also succeeded in lengthening the overall lifespan of their products. Jorge Imbert, the Global Wetsuit Manager at Quiksilver explains that in order to guarantee a quick-drying, optimum-performance wetsuit they have been working on the hydrophobic properties of their foams.

*“Customers are looking only for technical features and reliable engineering for their wetsuit, the colours and prints can wait until summer.” - Jan Michaelis, **O’Neill** Wetsuits Limited European Marketing Manager*

On the assembly front, each manufacturer has been fine-tuning their patterns by adjusting the size and placement of the neoprene panels to be assembled to make each wetsuit. This precision pattern making allows for the least amount of off-cuts and waste of a material that is difficult to recycle. Using innovative computer programmes, the brands design models directly in 3D and then flatten the forms into 2D patterns.

After intense work on prototypes, O’Neill perfected a minimalist design with large neoprene panels and a minimal amount of stitching to guarantee an optimal amount of flexibility, comfort and durability. In a similar fashion, Patagonia has reworked its cut patterns and softened the density of the rubber to improve the ergonomics of its products.

Continually striving to find the perfect fit, Volte Wetsuits has concentrated on shoulder and chest panels to make it as easy as possible to put on and take off their wetsuits. Also in the name of comfort and freedom of movement, at Mystic Wetsuits they “think that zip closures systems will disappear in the future”. Paulo Green reminds us from the shores of Portugal that Onda Wetsuits are offering the dynamic fit concept as the solution to a problem that all surfers have experienced in the past: “Wetsuits that are too stiff, and slow down certain movements that are essential to surfing”. Last but not least, Yann Dalibot the president and CEO of French brand Soörz



*“The wetsuit is the most pivotal piece of European surf gear, so it must stand up for exactly what we need, but also stand up for what we believe in.” - Gabe Davies, **Patagonia** Europe Surf Manager.*

confides that in the R&D department they are using panels of curved neoprene as much as possible for added elasticity and comfort.

At the junction points, strips of neoprene tape are used to reinforce the traditional glued and blindstitched (GBS) seams. Manera has paid particular attention to the taping process, now using a welding process with a hot air machine to make the seams even more durable and waterproof while maintaining very good flexibility. As for Mystic, they’re studying water flushing, which is a recurring problem seen especially in low quality wetsuits. It would seem to be relatively easy to solve, but according to them they “still see way too many people who surf with a wetsuit filled with water”. Blended nylons are another interesting trend that is opening new horizons in terms of colours and textures, especially in linings, as John Westlake from Alder wetsuits explained to us.



photo: Picture

THOSE BELOVED INTERNAL LININGS

Their role is so crucial to cold-water surfing they are the true feature you can’t live without for the current generation of wetsuit users. Their fleece-like or honeycomb texture helps retain a maximum amount of air against your skin, which creates a true thermal barrier. Each of the microcells evacuates water, captures air and generates even more heat than your body movement.

Rip Curl, a pioneer of internal thermal linings, has developed a revolutionary lining that generates heat when stretched. “The more you move in the water, the more the Thermoflex lining reacts and heats your wetsuit”, explains Jonathan Cetran Rip Curl Technical Division Manager. All of you tea bags floating out the back... get moving!

The design department at Billabong has been hard at work on a must-have internal lining in terms of warmth; the Furnace Carbon lining performs remarkably, with superior heat conduction and retention as well drying in the blink of an eye. It also has anti-freezing, anti-bacterial and hydrophobic properties that protect your vital organs, but in no way alter the stretchiness of the wetsuit.

It’s undeniable. When displayed inside out with the lining showing, these products catch the attention of the clientele in store

immediately. The interesting colours and soft, fuzzy look make clients want to try them on, even if they might not necessarily need one. The brand manager at Manera has a laugh at the sake of his team riders who say putting on one of these wetsuits feels like “sliding into a warm bed in the dead of winter”. While the French crew at Sen No Sen think “it’s like your favourite pair of jeans. Once you’ve found it, you never want to wear another!”

It’s now common practice for every brand to divide their wetsuit lines into segments, then into different ranges of linings (between 3 and 4 on average). The features vary from entry-level to high end. Basic wetsuits start simply with thermal fibres that conduct and reflect body heat. Mid-range products trap more air, offer added stretchiness, and use more quick dry materials. High-end products offer full body coverage and an incredible level of warmth and comfort. But in the end, as the good people at Manera remind us, “no matter how good the marketing program, the reason you wear a wetsuit is to stay warm”. As far as the production of these internal, comfy jerseys is concerned most of them are made from recycled polyester, to the great credit of the numerous manufacturers who have committed to using this type of material. However, in order to be reused the recycling process means the material must be broken down, treated, and reconditioned, which consumes lots of energy and resources. Concerning this step in wetsuit construction, Patagonia has succeeded in simplifying the process and economising 100 litres of water and 96% of CO2 per wetsuit.


ECO-FRIENDLY IS HERE TO STAY

Neither a constraint, nor a trend, not even a marketing strategy, environmentally friendly manufacturing is in the midst of becoming a true challenge for our industry. Things have evolved to the point that “green” is no longer just something offered up by brands in a line from time to time. Of course, eco-friendly products come at a price, but that doesn’t seem to be scaring anyone away, neither in production as John Westlake from Alder wetsuits admits, “eco-neoprene is expensive but you would expect this for emerging technology”; nor at points of sale, even for Patagonia whose entire wetsuit line is eco-manufactured and whose sell-through numbers are continually on the rise in spite of the high pricepoints that are never discounted.


Elsewhere, under the radar and for quite a few years now, all of the major wetsuit manufacturers have been studying non-neoprene construction solutions. It has taken time for everyone to develop adequate alternatives, but most anticipate releasing products into the marketplace before 2020. At the same time, progress has been made in the reduction of the quantity of solvents and increasing the use of water based adhesives, as well as that of recycled hangers and packaging. Manufacturing techniques have also been optimised to minimize waste. Logistics have improved also, with many brands managing to group shipments together and simplify the whole process. Quite a few manufacturers such as Billabong mention the use of recycled tyres in the lamination of neoprene, which is very intriguing given the tonnes of them that are lying around waiting to be used... All of these many efforts laid out from end to end contribute to lowering the carbon imprint of the surf industry in Europe, at the heart of which the wetsuit plays a major part. As Gabe Davies from Patagonia confirms: “The wetsuit is the most pivotal piece of European surf gear, so it must stand up for exactly what we need, but also stand up for what we believe in.” Surfing is nearing its objective of 100% environmentally friendly manufacturing, which we all hope will serve as inspiration for other sports.🌱

HIGHLIGHTS

- Minimalist, timeless styles, focusing on the essentials
- Honeycomb, fleece-like & coloured linings
- New cut patterns
- “Green neoprene” alternative
- High price/performance ratio across all ranges





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SURF PARKS

THE FUTURE OF PROFESSIONAL SURFING?

Many people felt it after the Red Bull Unleashed at Surf Snowdonia, before the Willy Wonka of surfing, 11-time world champion Kelly Slater proved it at the WSL Future Classic: legitimate professional surf contests can be held in a wave

“We’re in a wave pool, it’s insane. I swear this was a dream for every surfer 10 years ago and now it’s finally here. It’s the future of surfing; well, for the sport of surfing, anyway.” – Jack Freestone, WSL Men’s Championship Tour competitor during Red Bull Unleashed contest at Surf Snowdonia.

“This is so sick.” – Tyler Wright, reigning 2-time WSL Women’s World Champion during the Future Classic at the WSL Surf Ranch.

It’s clear today’s top surfers are excited by the potential that wave pool technology has to offer competitive surfing. Some other very important professionals have been thinking the same thing for a long time.

In June 1985 before the World Professional Inland Surfing Championships at Dorney Park in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Ian Cairns the Co-Founder and then Executive Director of the Association of Surfing Professionals said in a local paper about the first ever elite contest held in a wave pool: “I thought it sounded fantastic for the future of the sport. We’re taking the sport to the people.” He told Source shortly after attending the WSL Future Classic: “I have always loved the idea of bringing surfing to the people. I personally believe that the customers of the brands deserve to see the surfing of John John, Gabriel, etc., up close and personal. It’s sort of a gift of your time in recompense for the amazing life the athletes lead. I saw the idea of

pool. Now, the question is what does that mean for competitive surfing? This is an examination of the most important aspects of the debate in the last of a 3-part series on the surf park business. **By Dave Mailman.**

the wave pool as a way to achieve this, but all the early incarnations were nowhere near the wave quality to make it respectable. But, the Cove, maybe Surf Lakes, and for sure the Kelly Slater Surf Ranch has waves that are good enough for all the top surfers to rip in a contest. We learned from Allentown, the wave has to be good. 30 years later, that has come to fruition.”

In spite of the enthusiasm of past and present pros, there’s no easy way to know whether or not artificial wave technology represents the future of professional surfing. Although not specifically speaking about the sport of surfing, Kelly Slater had this to say right after the Future Classic: “There’s so much to debate about what it is and where it goes. I’ll always stand by this. It’s just a complement or a supplement to what surfing, the experience is.”

Before going any further, we have to ask ourselves the question: What is it that makes a good surf contest? The easy answer is there has to be a high enough quality of surf and level of surfing to hold the attention of spectators from beginning to end. There’s also the intangible element of suspense, which is important to any sporting event.

The same local paper in Allentown also spoke to Jim Karabasz the Dorney Park Director of Surfing at the time who explained: “It took surfing down to its basic form. The guy who won was the best wave

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rider; all the other things that affect you in the ocean were out of the scenario". This is still a key point put forward by pundits in favour of holding surf contests in artificial waves: it levels the playing field.

However, people against holding events in wave pools think that's exactly the problem. An equally valid argument is that being a good surfer is about more than just riding waves. It's also about ocean knowledge and being able to read a line-up. If you can't read a line-up, you won't be as likely to catch the waves with the highest scoring potential. Also, waves are just as important as good surfing when determining the quality of a surf contest, especially when the swell is big and clean. The ocean is very unpredictable and even when the conditions aren't perfect there is always the added suspense of waiting to see whether or not a wave will come to a surfer needing a score at the end of a heat.

As anyone who took time to read the comments on the surf websites posting leaked footage during the Future Classic can attest, core surfers were bored with the proceedings after about five minutes, while those who were on the edge of the pool considered it an amazing spectacle. Surfing is always more exciting on site, because you can reach out and touch it. When you're watching from home and there is a level playing field you only want to see the very best guys and your favourites, just like during contests when the waves are below average or decent quality at best. When you know from the start that every wave is essentially the same, and that every surfer gets the same amount, there is a lot less reason to tune in... at least until surfers start sticking multiple rotation flips. Whereas a surfer or someone genuinely interested in the sport will watch heats all day long when the waves are pumping no matter who is surfing.

Surf historian and author of the Encyclopedia of Surfing, Matt Warshaw describes it this way: "Wave aside, it (the pool) is taking away everything that makes it interesting for us. By that I mean flukiness, luck, ocean judgment and all the other stuff that makes it fun for us as spectators to second guess, to coach in our heads, to put ourselves in the surfer's place, like we all do when those big contests are on at Pipe or Teahupo'o or those other places that we wouldn't actually surf ourselves. You're always kind of imagining it in your own head, what it would be like out there, how you'd play it... Now, if every guy gets two identical waves where's the fun as a spectator?"

At the World Surf League, it seems keeping current purist spectators happy is not as important as bringing in ones entirely new to the sport. As the former CEO of the WSL, Paul Speaker said in his letter of resignation, "I am incredibly excited for our future. The Kelly Slater Wave Company offers a tremendous and unprecedented opportunity for the League to dramatically shift the landscape of high-performance surfing around the world with guaranteed conditions, total fairness for the competitors, greatly enhanced live viewing, and major television coverage at a scheduled time." Although guaranteed conditions and total fairness are anathema to purists, they make it easier for non-surfers to understand and are therefore considered an essential part of selling the sport to a larger spectator base. However, one thing everyone can agree upon is that knowing when an event will start and end is a fantastic opportunity for all involved: live spectators, broadcast audience, event organizers and the surfers themselves.

Someone who knows a thing or two about organising professional surf contests, and the potential that artificial wave technology holds is Andy Higgins, the former Global Event Manager at Rip Curl International responsible for the Rip Curl Pro Search concept and current Content Creation Manager at Wavegarden. "The Wavegarden Cove is perfect for live TV and web broadcasting", Higgins said. "Events can run to a tight schedule across the course of a day or weekend. With the addition of lights, they can even continue into the night. Fans can get a clear view of all the action - a lot closer than is possible at the beach. The complication with ocean-based contests is they require a waiting period of 12 days and sometimes need a backup site. They stop and start with changes in swell size, tides and winds. Events at Wavegarden are practical for organisers, sponsors, not to mention the athletes. There are lots of different types of waves, so it doesn't get repetitive. They get to perform in front of their screaming fans, which has to make it really exciting for them. And events are always guaranteed to finish,

regardless of the conditions. For example, the other day it snowed at our demo centre in Spain and we still held a training session with some local pros".

While the debate continues about the extent to which artificial wave technology should be used at World Championship Tour events and the Olympic Games, outside of that realm it offers an outstanding platform for organising specialty events in the same way that artificial snow and



photo: Red Bull Unleashed: Surf Snowdonia, Photo Credit: Red Bull

ramp technology helped to create the Air & Style concept and develop in-city snowboard events. After a 5-hour session at the Cove on a lay day during the Quiksilver Pro France, top American WSL surfer Kolohe Andino evoked the idea of having a Coachella-like music festival around a wave-pool contest in an arena-like atmosphere with a huge audience with a pre-programmed broadcast. He said, "It's definitely the future of the sport."

Spectators at the first professional event at Surf Snowdonia got a small taste of what that future may look like. Former Editor of Australia's Surfing Life, Chris Binns wrote that with "an audience 10 feet away and a DJ pumping out the surfer's chosen tracks... Red Bull Unleashed had a stadium-worthy spectacle". Jordy Smith, a top WSL competitor on hand described it as, "an arena for those who can feed off the energy of the crowd". Event winner, Albee Layer from Hawaii doesn't often compete, but had only praise to give: "It's been incredible. Surfing so close to so many people, music playing, heaps of energy in the air... If more events were like this, I'd do them!"

No matter where you hold a surf contest die-hard fans and other curious spectators will find a way to watch. In places like Huntington, Hossegor, Peniche, Haleiwa and Coolangatta thousands turn out to catch the action in the water and in the process create good business for the local community. That will also be the case with wave pool contests.

We've already discussed at length in the first two articles in this series the extent to which different aspects of the surf park business, in this case professional surf contests in wave pools may help increase sales of certain surf products. To sum it up one last time, a growing number of surfers will help sales of technical goods, but not necessarily surfwear sales. No matter the effect it has on the surfing world, the surf park industry is young, and most likely has a long and prosperous future in front of it. ☺

This is the third in a series
of surf park articles by Dave
Mailman, former Quiksilver
Europe Marketing Director,
Epic TV Surf Report presenter
& ASP Europe President.



Into the blue

Agents & Distributors wanted Established in 2010, the fast growing Swiss Stand Up Paddle Brand INDIANA SUP is looking for Agents and Distributors in european countries and all over the world. Interested? Then stand up and send an email to our Head of Sales Niki Dietrich: info@whitewave.ch or visit us at Boot Düsseldorf: Hall 08A, Booth 8AF28 or ISPO Munich: Hall A4, Booth 350

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SURF INDUSTRY SPECIALISTS

Basque-based Invest French Basque Country agency (IFBC) have unparalleled expertise in helping surf industry start-ups get to their feet in the South West of France. From connecting businesses with financial/legal services, to tax information, IFBC has a specialist surf industry network perfect for those moving to this beautiful part of the world looking to dive into the action sports industry.

How is the Basque country performing economically both in general and specific to the surf industry?

The Basque country is a very attractive region in Europe and very dynamic economically speaking. We create more companies here than any other region in France and our average rate is better than national ones for jobs and company setup. Bordeaux catches a lot of business from people coming from Paris, wanting to create a better life down south. We have more and more people from all over the world wanting to benefit from a better way of living with no insecurities and with a beautiful landscape. Tourism is very strong in the Basque country as the destination has become very popular in the French media. As surfing grows with more and more surf schools, we have more foreigners who experience a new sensation with surfing. This phenomenon is helping advance regional surf industries. Surf has now become more popular than ever.

Please explain the new Invest French Basque Country agency. The Basque country expects to welcome 35,000 new people over the next 10 years, and we expect to see the economy of surfing boosted with increased footfall for surf schools and we look to collaborate with other similar agencies in the Spanish Basque Country.

Please explain how IFBC will help the action sports industry?

We are funded by the chamber of commerce, the French Basque country local institution, and the regional council from Nouvelle Aquitaine, to find and help companies set up their business in the French Basque country. We help companies understand how it works with the French administration, which taxes are to be paid, what to declare and what public funds can be benefitted from. We help them to find services such as contract experts, lawyers, accountants etc. We help these smaller outfits connect with majors players like Quiksilver, GSM Europe (Billabong) or smaller companies with the same range of products. And all of our services are free.

Please talk us through some examples of brands that have successfully used your incubator system.

We helped Weesurf to move from Paris to Olatu in Anglet and helped them to raise 200K Euros from local institutions such as Conseil régional and Herrikoa (local business funds). We connected them with Wilco Prins at Rip Curl and other important players who are looking to invest in their business.

Ti'board are a young French company born in Hendaye and now based in Anglet. They make foam boards for kids, and help them to develop technical skills such as proprioception. The company won an award for best discovery at the Paris Grand Prix of Innovation.

Clae shoes were born in California and were looking for European headquarters and they chose to come to Olatu as it is the best place to find all the services they could need in the fashion and action sports industry. In less than three years, they have developed a real solid business in eight different countries in Europe and have created six jobs. They interact with the design department in California, offering a better understanding of their European clients.


Olatu stage 2 is to be built – please explain why this concept has been so successful.

Olatu has been a success so far because we housed bigger companies like Oakley alongside start-up companies such as Xline studio and Clae shoes. We connect companies with Estia labs for innovation and with EuroSIMA and their network. We need more space and a second building is on its way to provide more offices and a new restaurant.

Please tell us about BALI, your new textiles centre.

We will open a new research lab for technical textile innovations called BALI, created with Estia, our engineering school and Lectra, a French leader for laser cutting machines. We have plans to create a library of materials, which will serve as a bank for all kinds of textiles and will allow designers to create new products and integrate the internet of things (IOT) into textiles.

What developments do you forecast in the Basque country surf industry in the coming years?

Each year sees our network base grow, and we have now been providing consultation and helping start-up companies in the action sports and fashion industry for 17 years. We are very confident we'll see more and more companies creating jobs in the Basque country as we offer better services and infrastructures to help them start business in the region they've decided to call home. Here in the Basque country we protect our start-up companies very well, allowing them to be safe and secure and to offer better services. We create collaborations with engineering schools to source talented young engineers and connect them with innovative companies, which in turn develops a stronger surf industry. 

ARTIST PROFILE

SCHOPH

British artist Schoph has seen a meteoric rise to success in recent years with his vibrant, graphic style of art that now adorns snowboards, goggles, sunglasses, boots, skate shoes and more. We caught up with Schoph at his snowboard art show HMNNTR in London, where he was also launching his Dragon X Asymbol collection, to talk snowboarding, art and collaborations.



photo : Sam Mellish

Tell us about your roots in snowboarding.

I began snowboarding aged 12 at Sheffield dryslope, which was when I got hooked by it. One thing led to another and I ended up out in the Alps. I began doing seasons in Alp d’Huez and I also learnt how to drink there! When I left Alp d’Huez, the first stop was Saas Fee and I learnt how to ride pipe a little bit, which I got into during the summer. From that I ended up in Tignes for a good period of time doing seasons and managed to get hooked up with a few brands including Holden, Capita and Electric. I ended up changing sponsors and hook-ups and finally, to cut a long story short, I ended up sponsored by Dragon, Lib-Tech, Volcom and the brands I’m working with now as an artist. So it’s gone round in a massive circle to me now working with brands I want to work with and be supported by.

So that’s my snowboarding background, with around 10 seasons in Tignes at the end there. I was fortunate in that there was a good crew in Tignes through those years; Nelson Pratt, Josh Wolf, Ryan Davis, Will Hughes and just a good few of us all pushing each other in a good way. A very productive time.

And at what point did art come into your life?

Art was always there before snowboarding. I didn’t speak until I was four years old, so my parents thought I was a mute, but apparently

“The teacher wanted me to shade in an apple and a banana, but I just ended up doing my own thing, which she screwed up and threw in the bin and told me to leave. On the way out, I picked it up out of the bin and I still have it now in one of my sketchbooks.”

during that period of time I was just drawing the whole time with and on anything I could find. And then I got thrown out of art class during high school for not doing what I was told, and got told I’d never be an artist. Whether that pushed me to want to be an artist, I don’t know, but I carried on going from there.

What part of art were you interested in during high school and how did this progress over the years into while you were snowboarding?

I was interested in doing my own thing, but the teacher wanted me to shade in an apple and a banana, but I just ended up doing my own thing, which she screwed up and threw in the bin and told me to leave. On the way out, I picked it up out of the bin and I still have it now in one of my sketchbooks.

“My first show I exhibited alongside Banksy, Shepard Fairey and Blek le Rat - basically all the heavy hitters from that time. So I was properly in at the deep end, but 10 minutes before the show had even started I got a phone call saying that I’d sold all my art before the doors even opened.”

What was it of?

You know Friesian cows? Well, it’s not Friesian cows, but Friesian rabbits and then there were fisherman in the clouds with hooks coming down fishing for these rabbits.

Anyway, years later while I was snowboarding I was filling sketchbooks full of art and I just got to a point where I needed to do something else. I loved snowboarding and I always will, but I wasn’t progressing as much and I was actually swaying towards putting my all into being an artist.

The mad thing was when I stopped doing seasons and left Tignes, I moved back to Yorkshire and got a studio and bumped into Si Forster who I knew from doing Electric. He introduced me to a gallery he knew and said he’d managed to get me into a show. I asked him what I needed to do and he just said paint some pictures and put them on a wall. So I did that and my first show I exhibited alongside Banksy, Shepard Fairey and Blek le Rat - basically all the heavy hitters from that time. So I was properly in at the deep end, but 10 minutes before the show had even started I got a phone call saying that I’d sold all my art before the doors even opened. This first show was a real kickstarter for me and I got good attention from a lot of people. Within a month I was showing at Red Bull for a collective show and then after that for Travis Rice’s Art of Flight. It just spread like wildfire and within a year I’d had six gallery shows.

What do you put your early popularity down to – was it your connections, snowboarding, a certain style of art, or just a perfect storm?

I think a lot of it has to do with being in the right place at the right time. And if I want something I give it 100% of my attention and I really wanted to do this art thing, and I was fortunate that it got under the noses of some really influential people. A big one for me was when Lib-Tech picked me up. I met Pete [Saari, Lib-Tech founder] for the first time and he told me he’d had my art as his screensaver for a year and he had no idea who I was.

Because I’d already met Jimbo [Jamie Lynn] five years before doing the Shithouse Tour [music tour organised by Schoph across European Alps], we had that connection and then bumped into each other at ISPO, where Jimbo introduced me to Pete, and what better person to introduce me to the owner of the company, than Jamie Lynn? Pete asked me if I was interested in putting art on one of their snowboards. So I said, “yeah alright, go on then.” I’d been wanting to do artwork for Lib-Tech for years and after this happened things just escalated. Dragon were also keen to do some work and Volcom and Vans were keen too. It really did just spread like wildfire.

Talk us through your Asymbol collection with Dragon.

My last signature line with Dragon went really well, so I put forward the idea of an Asymbol X Dragon collection and they were all over it. Dragon wanted to do something with all the other artists (Jamie Lynn, Bryan Iguchi and Luna Tinta), so it all aligned pretty well. All of our art works really well together, so it’s a no brainer. And so was launching it here at HMNNTR in London – it was the only time all four of us were

going to be in the same place at the same time and it meant we could have the prints on the wall, the artwork on the goggles and it all tied in really well.

And how far back does your relationship with Dragon go?

About 15 years now. I left Electric and bumped into Craig [Smith, EMEA Sales & Marketing Manager Dragon] who was working for Oakley at the time, but doing Dragon on the side and he got involved with the Shithouse Tours we were doing and helped fund those. As I got older I realized I wanted to do the art thing and Dragon wanted to get on board with that as well and they’ve basically supported me the whole way through.

Tell us about your new Vans collaboration.

Matt Patti, the Global Category Manager for Vans Snow contacted me when he was over on the Vans Snowboarding Days in Les Arcs last January asking if I could make it over for the day because he wanted to talk to me about some stuff. He’d been into my artwork for years and he said he wanted to work with me for Vans. He said the five pillars of Vans were skate, snow, surf, music and art and that they weren’t doing loads in art at the moment, so did I want to do a signature line. So they gave me a full signature line, which was a trip because I’ve always worn Vans and to think that someone from Doncaster would make some art to go on a Vans shoe is mad.

“Pete [Saari, Lib-Tech founder] asked me if I was interested in putting art on one of their snowboards. So I said, “yeah alright, go on then.”

Away from snowboarding, do you do commission pieces?

Yeah I’ve been working with some different projects recently. I work with a gallery in Harrogate and I work with a guy called Michael O’Hare [English celebrity chef] who has all these mad restaurants and he’s given me two of his restaurants to paint with more projects in the pipeline. He’s gone into business with Ryan Giggs and Gary Neville and so I’ve been knocking around a bit with them, which even though I don’t like football is a bit of a trip. So that side of things is totally different to the snowboard industry, which has opened up some really interesting new doors.

Where do you see your art progressing in the future?

I can’t switch off, so say for example when we’re doing HMNNTR, I’m already thinking about the next thing. I’m always thinking about what I can do better, and I’m constantly pushing myself on a personal level. I just want to establish what we’re doing with the HMNNTR thing a bit more, because we’re the only people doing that. And the group of guys I’m doing it with, we’ve all become really close. I’ve got some interesting projects I want to do with Danny Larsen and shallowtree, which is away from the snowboard industry.

I don’t want to plan too far ahead, but I just want to keep on top of the momentum. ☺

photo : Rojo



WOMEN’S OUTERWEAR FW18/19 RETAIL BUYER’S GUIDE

Your trusty snowboard jacket is so much more than just a piece of equipment to keep the snow out; it's your identity on the hill, a visual statement allowing for self expression and instant recognition. Believe it or not, every time you sell a jacket, it’s the result of a considered process of research, comparison, technicality and trust assessment by today’s snowboard girl, who is more informed than ever before via marketing channels, third party influencers and her peer group. So, with all that in mind, what the hell is going on next year? To which booths should you make your bee-line at the tradeshow? Join us as we make the coffee, leaf through the samples and scribble on our workbooks in our FW18/19 Women’s Outerwear Retail Buyer’s Guide. **By Tom Wilson-North.**

MACRO TREND SUM-UP

The research into next year’s collections was done via questionnaires and follow-up calls to the major players in women’s snowboard outerwear. Once received, we collated submissions into this trend analysis. It’s worth remembering that these collections will have been designed over the summer, and designers have historically been primarily influenced by the high fashion and catwalk scenes. Today, however, that’s less relevant, as inspiration is more readily available via Instagram and Twitter - now it’s possible to instantly see what riders, influencers and generally interesting or high profile people are wearing during the early summer months. There’s a lot going on out there. So much so that Nikita have given their outerwear the theme of Perfect Storm. “God, there are so many trends going on these days, it’s hard to just stick to one - especially with women! We pulled from 80’s punk rock, military, the great outdoors, and others to make the Perfect Storm of Nikita”, Marketing Manager Jenna Kuklinski told us.

Let’s get to it then. The first macro trend we’re calling Space Age, and it’s all about futuristic materials and high-science looks. Catwalk inspirations here come via Welsh couture designer Julien Macdonald, whose collections exuded androgynous pearlescence. “For our FW18/19 collection we pictured the universal citizen and were inspired by the universe and eclectic space travellers. We incorporated new technical innovations and our designers took inspiration from space, mutants and gravity suits. Big puffer jackets with high collars, utility details and graphics such as removable emblems are inspired by the evolution of astronaut space suits”, says Brunotti’s Hanna Verweij. There’s lots of mono colourways, sometimes contrasted with brights. Mons Royal’s black-and-white striped cuffs and hems on their colourful tech baselayers are one such manifestation; Rojo’s dark winter theme sees contrasting light and dark against colour in more of a low-key way.



686



686



Billabong



Billabong



Brunotti



Brunotti



Burton



Burton



Dakine



Dakine

“God, there are so many trends going on these days, it’s hard to just stick to one - especially with women! We pulled from 80’s punk rock, military, the great outdoors, and others to make the Perfect Storm of Nikita”, Marketing Manager Jenna Kuklinski told us.

Looking deeper, Space Age also talks to 1950s and 1960s era endurance and human limit-pushing. L1’s utterly awesome Helldiver military flight suit locks right in here, dripping with test pilot vibes. They’re not expecting to do big numbers with this dark green overall, but as a brand builder it shows that L1 is right on point. The Space Age macro trend is also about exploration, both up in space and towards remote places down here on the planet’s surface. Protest’s Antarctic vibe keys in well - a fusion between polar utility and colourful self-expression, snowboard jackets that wouldn’t look out of place in an ice station. Leather patches and drawcords, silver zips, swishy bright parachute material linings, process yellows and primary reds make up this trend, which is also represented very well at Horsefeathers.

Space Age has a counter trend, which we’re calling Ethereal Something. This one is a little less serious and techy, and has been influenced at catwalk by the kitsch palettes - heavy on Millennial Pink, of course - and girly detailing of Temperley London and others. Ethereal Something has a dreamy, surreal feel of sparkly and romantic femininity. Nitro are good here, with jewel tones for miles, as are Dainese and particularly Roxy, whose younger demographic understand this digitally-born trend better; Youtube phenomenon Poppy, anyone?

Lightweight material is popular everywhere next year, so a key part of your jacket buy will be thin, packable windbreaker style jackets that are loaded with tech for no compromises on the hill

Next up is a macro trend called Beyond Sustainable. For the last decade it’s become apparent, due to the thankfully-loud-voiced environmental lobby, that our species is going in the wrong direction if we want to continue thriving in our beautiful world. Things need to change on regional, national and individual levels. And generally speaking, our industry is getting better and better, probably due to the end consumer’s expectation that the company making their gear aligns with their value structure. Beyond Sustainable is about brands taking inspiration from the changing world - not just trying to improve the planet through better business, but using the planet as inspiration for outerwear, both the challenges of today and - hopefully - the restored world of tomorrow. Over to Picture Organic Clothing’s Julien Durant for more on this: “During our last inspiration trip to Nepal we met locals with whom we discussed the impact of climate change: we observed torrential rain and other effects up on their glaciers. After seeing this amazing country, we chose a clear concept for our FW18/19 campaign - Climate Change - to challenge the industry to fight against this big problem. We chose our way by producing products with a minimum of 50% recycled polyester or 50% organic cotton”. The concept of corporate social betterment also links in to Beyond Sustainable.

In addition to those three macro trends we saw some additional constants running through next year’s women’s outerwear lines. The first is Tailored, notably classic pinstripes, thinner fabrics, cinch-waist jackets and layered looks, or 3CS’s great Climtech HD twill fabric and old-world stretch Oxford weave. Next up, is Modern Bling which is about impeccable styling, high pricepoints and premium detailing, and lastly Good ‘Ole Days is classic US nostalgia that you’d expect to find in a Levi’s or Malboro ad. A dusty Western Americana look, with baseball jackets, darkened primaries, leather and an overall heritagey feel.

We also asked brands which trends they felt had run their course; whilst the mainstream are still enjoying the hiking look, glamping and outdoorsyness seem to have trended out of snowboarding; anoraks and parkas are still very present, but now they are edgier and more modern than the clumpy and unsubtle silhouettes of last year. Goodbye, second-hand dad...hello modern mountainism.

KEY LOOKS IN JACKETS

No surprises here, the more wearable a jacket is, the more it’ll be used, and the higher the perceived value. Brands are all-too-aware that we already trust them for waterproofing and insulation up the hill - and since we’re all feeling a pinch



DC



DC



Horsefeathers



Horsefeathers



L1



L1



Mons Royal



Mons Royal



Nikita



Nikita

Yellow is important, either as full Beacon Yellow or Holden's gorgeous Mojave, which has hints of brown and matches well with everything

in the pocket right now, why not grab a do-it-all piece for riding and round town too? Enter the transition style of jacket. Drawstrings, dark colours, hidden technical features and a smooth, sleek and urbane silhouette for inherent wearability. This trend is so present that Volcom's entire line was designed with this in mind. "Our line was built to perform with style and functionality both on and off the slopes with sobriety, innovation, comfort, and technicality across the entire range. An obvious style is our best seller, the Shadow Ins jacket, which offers particular mountain-to-city versatile style," says Melanie Foulon, Volcom SW France/Pyrenees Sales Rep. We also really liked Bench's Smart Softshell Jacket with its dynamic cut lines and modern details, and O'Neill's Hybrid Snow jackets continue to rise in popularity, partly due to their integrated Firewall insulation for warmth wherever as well as city styling.

Most of next year's marketing stories - naturally - focus around the top end jackets on offer in the range, because they're the aspirational no-compromise pieces that are most effective for brand storytelling. The stuff north of 2500 is getting the most attention and interest from core consumers too. Volcom's NYA TDS Gore-Tex Jacket has a revamped Thermal Defense System and pulls no punches. Equally, their 3D Stretch Gore-Tex Jacket matches a stretch lining with a stretch membrane with a stretch shell for unrestricted flexibility and great freedom of movement. Over at Rip Curl, the Women's Pro Gum Jacket has had an update and is finished with a nice heather face fabric, and prints inspired by their Mirage bikinis.

At the top of 3CS's FW18/19 line, the Atwood 3L Parka is the one to beat, and uses their Climatec ripstop to keep riders toasty warm and incredibly dry. Warmth is - as usual in womenswear - a big story next year, and Holden's 20k Marren Down waterproof parka is for you if you get chilly fast... it's "ultra warm, ultra sophisticated and made to go anywhere", according to Marketing Director Mike LeBlanc. Durability is also a big story in top end jackets, and Nikita's Hollyhock uses 2L Stretch Cordura to stop branches, rocks and lift infrastructure damaging your threads. "But in addition to being super tough, it's also really waterproof; 20K to be exact with fully taped seams and a jacket-to-pant connect system. We're setting the bar here for what should be offered to girls, and we know that having a jacket that keeps up with them is a must. The fit on this jacket is one of our favourite, never limiting the movement of the rider, but always keeping the lines flattering and fun. We're really excited about the Hollyhock!" enthuses Jenna Kuklinski.

Whilst high science and rider-friendly features clearly stay in demand - this is snowboarding after all - the elegant, haute couture, high bling look is being offered by a couple of boardsports brands. Our advice to buyers; steer clear. This is snowboarding, not polo.

We were happy to see anoraks remaining very in. They don't seem to be trending very hard in menswear, but apparently female riders can't get enough of pulling their jackets over their heads. There's a really nice one from WearColour called the KJ with a clean Swedish look, and Nikita's Hemlock has an innovative easy-in, easy-out closure and eye-catching pattern up at the neck. Anoraks are rocking, and Aussie brand Rojo agree wholeheartedly: "The anorak is back in a big way this season. We've done this style in the past, but the new Takine Softshell Anorak is simple while still looking effortlessly cool both on and off the slopes. The lightweight material also means that it's a great travel item - a real multipurpose part of the range", says Rojo designer Robyn Carter.

On that note, lightweight material is popular everywhere next year, so a key part of your jacket buy will be thin, packable windbreaker style jackets that are loaded with tech for no compromises on the hill. Nitro's Couloir Packable will be an easy sell with a nice mélange dobby fabric, and Roxy's Breeze Jacket is a collection highlight. "This jacket is extremely lightweight and mega stretchy thanks to its strategic stretch lining panels. The jacket also has the Hydrosmart skincare technology integrated in the collar that protects your skin from the cold conditions. It's very feminine with slim fit and cozy and warm faux-fur hood", says Roxy's PLM Marion Bertrand.

KEY LOOKS IN PANTS

The industry seems to have settled on six key pant fits - baggy, straight, slim, skinny, slouch and tapered - so there's not really much new stuff in pant shapes next year. But bibs...well, if it's not got shoulder-straps, it's not worth wearing, according to every single brand in existence. Volcom's Elm Bib, Nitro's sick 3L Yamanouchi Bib, Dakine's Brentwood Bib with brushed twill, Nikita's Evergreen Bib, Holden's Lotus Bib with back zipper... an aesthetic standard has definitely



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Picture



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Protest



Protest

been set in women's pants. The benefits of bibs are myriad and easy to understand, and the prices are often pretty competitive; who knows, this might be the start of the bib becoming mainstream... until the cool kids notice and pivot back to regular pants, that is. If you're looking for the brightest bib of the bunch, buy into Billabong's Riva Bib in pink corduroy.

SUSTAINABLE ACTIONS

Earlier we talked about the Beyond Sustainable macro trend where changes to the planet influences and inspires outerwear design. We found four key industry partnerships which will see snowboarding outerwear's footprint reduced and negative corporate social impact minimised, as well as leveraging our culture's visibility and voice for the betterment of society.

First up, Roxy have partnered with Swedish ingredient brand We aRe SpinDye to make a silhouette built using a waterless dying technique. The garments are called Down The Line and are available in two different colourways. We aRe SpinDye delivers a clean, traceable and sustainable method of fabric dying, resulting in less environmental impact and improved long term wearability. Fewer inky rivers = world better place.

Secondly, merino company Mons Royale announced a partnership with ZQ Merino, who represent the world's most rigorous on-farm standards for quality, animal welfare and animal health, as well as environmental, economic and social values. This makes for happier sheep, and happier sheep make better base layers.

Next, it was great to see Volcom continue their long-standing partnership with the Boarding for Breast Cancer Foundation (B4BC), which is now a decade old. Volcom is supporting B4BC's important breast cancer awareness and education effort with three styles next year - the Costus fleece, Leda Jacket and the Westland Ins Jacket.

Lastly, Picture Organic Clothing continue working hard at protecting our playground and next year they've come up with the world's first biodegradable base layer. "Amni Soul Eco breaks down slowly in landfills, where there is a lack of oxygen. Whereas other fibres need decades to break down, it takes less than three years for this stuff to disappear from the planet. Its biodegradable property makes it a sustainable option to reduce pollution caused by waste, contributing to a better world for future generations. It's also 100% recyclable, reusable and Oeko-Tex® certified", says Picture's Durant proudly.

KEY NEW COLOURS

Right, that's the serious stuff out the way - now what about the colours? Single-coloured jackets and matching one-colour outfits are trending, but let's look at some colour groups. The Lights group features a light icy blue ethereal grey colour reminiscent of glacier interiors, and uses a sporty backup colour group which is clean and fresh - think light coral and sky blue. Aquamarine teal is brighter still, and pastel pink is very popular either leaning towards millennial pink as in Ethereal Something above or shifting towards a soft, misty rose. Finally, sprucestone is an unexpected but effective addition to the Lights group.

Next up, Earth tones continue to be important. Cumin, Space Black, the winter berry family, light denim, and L1's walnut, which is "a very dark khaki or light greyed out brown, however you want to look at it", according to their guy Jon Kooley. Bone, a fairly traditional off white, is present too. Metallics like silver and copper add interest to the subtleties of Earth. The final significant group is Primaries, which is influenced by the re-issue and throwback sub-trend present today. Ketchup red, electric blue, industrial grey and true black are key here. Also important is yellow, either as full Beacon Yellow (via 3CS) or Holden's gorgeous Mojave, which has hints of brown and matches well with everything.

Combinations-wise, expect to see red and pink thrown together (thanks, Emilia Wickstead), siren red with merlot or even emerald and smoked pink - we saw these last two at Nitro. Brights and heathers are a popular combination, those primaries above will be offset by industrial greys and dark greens. Pop colours continue to be popular - we particularly liked Dakine's Melon and Coastal colours popping out of their earthy palette.

THE PRINTS OF THE FUTURE

As usual, there are enough prints in next year's snowboard outerwear to give an LSD-overdosed kaleidoscope a headache. Although since we're all a bit more grown up nowadays (I'm looking at you, ageing snowboarders), it's a little less playful than before. There are lots of trees, foliage, leaf and forest prints and camos, and the florals are less chintzy and darker and more structured. These two prints link in to the Beyond Sustainable macro trend. Photo prints remain on trend, and there are some nice ethnic stamps from usual suspects

NIKITA

FOR GIRLS WHO RIDE



Rip Curl



Rip Curl



Rojo



Rojo



Rojo



Rojo



Roxy



Roxy



Volcom



Volcom

Next year, our industry is certainly giving us enough tools to keep the boardsports look fun, fresh and desirable.

BASELAYER

Decent outerwear is pointless if your first layer is a stinky cotton long-sleeve and sketchily greying sports bra, so it's time to make sure the store is stocked with appropriate next-to-skin gear. Patagonia's Capilene Air is the most advanced baselayer they've ever made, and Sweet Protection's Alpine base layers are 100% merino and 200g weight, which makes them perfect for cold days in the mountains. They're also offering one of their baselayer pants in a full-leg length to make them appropriate for four-season mountaineering as well as shredding.

This diversity of use is an important story in baselayers; brands realise that they can be worn in many more contexts than just riding. "We developed a new type of baselayer, which is crafted to suit multiple outdoor activities. The seamless construction, bound with the natural merino wool provides a great feeling fabric against the skin while still providing excellent breathability and insulation. This is conceived for active minded people," says Dainese's Davide Brugnoli.


Mons Royale have been aware of this for years, and their encyclopaediatric range is extending further still as they seek to capitalise on the equity and trust they've built through their effective merino programme. Next year's Yotei BF Powder Hood is a key piece from them. "You can ride hard in this relaxed fit hoody. With a powder-perfect SCUBA style hood, a high neck for storm protection and plenty of room for layering it's a performance garment you can hang loose in too", claims Team Manager Anna Smoothy. We're looking forward to checking it out at the tradeshow.

TECHNICAL INNOVATION

Whilst we won't delve into the category of connected wearables - we'll leave that one for FW19/20 and beyond - there are a few clever features in next year's outerwear lines that will make the mountain a nicer place. We hope Nikita patented their new Mitt Gaiter, because "once our designer introduced it to the jacket, we don't know how we were ever lived without it. It's a convertible mitten gaiter that allows you to wear it as people are used to - the traditional way with a thumb hole and fingers exposed, or you can convert it by folding the cuff up and over your fingers and creating a mitt that keeps hands toasty, but thumbs free for using your phone", says Nikita's Kuklinski.

Furthermore, the fibres in the clothes themselves are becoming smarter. Brunotti are using a lightweight waterproof insulation fibre called Clo Vivo, which improves moisture transport and retains heat. The insulation is penetrated by a series of small apertures that enhance breathability without decreasing the thermal insulated performance of the insulation. In a similar vein, Polartec's dope new Powerfill insulation uses hollow fibre construction to contain body heat while maintaining a resilient, equalized thermal layer between the colder air on the outside and the warmer temperature on the inside. It's basically double glazing for jackets, and we love the concept.

CONCLUSION

That's it; a breakdown of next year's macro trends, a focus on different jacket and pant looks, a rundown of colours and a look at some of the best innovations out there next year. Of course, every shop is different and no two clienteles are the same, so there's no magic margin-generating formula for your womenswear buy... but next year, our industry is certainly giving us enough tools to keep the boardsports look fun, fresh and desirable. 

HIGHLIGHTS

- Space age monochrome
- High science jackets
- Bib pants prevail
- Sustainable...so what ?


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O'NEILL RE-ISSUE



photo : Horsefeathers

MEN'S OUTERWEAR FW18/19 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Outerwear - a great way to get people into shops where they can see, feel, smell and try the latest gear they've had forced into their eyes via high-budget Facebook display ads and relentlessly sponsored 'Gram posts. A great thing for classic retail channels. And now the fast fashion guys aren't so obsessed with ripping off our boardsport looks, our industry has some breathing space to be able to create, show and sell some very nice stuff. **Tom Wilson-North** looks at the big picture and zooms in on the key details in our FW18/19 Men's Outerwear Preview.

TREND SUMMARIES

After analysis of next year's outerwear collections from the key players in the snowboard market, we've been able to pull out the following macro-trends.

The first one we're calling Work Smarter. This one is all about re-thought, modern-context workwear influences and is evidenced by modern colours, finishes and trims on traditional workwear pieces. Think whites and off-whites in parkas, gloss trims (whether hemming, buttons or the still-ubiquitous waterproof zips), reflective hits and panels, and asymmetric cuts - particularly off-centre closures - on classic waterproof workwear. 3CS are great here. "Yep, classic utilitarian styling underpins the 3CS 'Essentials' group.

The timeless silhouettes and fits combined with a muted colour palette makes for versatile mix-and-match wearability throughout the range. Furthermore, our Rockwell Club trend feeds from inspirations found during the Klondike gold fever, the harsh nature of the environment dictating what people had to wear to exist and survive", says 3CS Creative Director Brad Scott. Work Smarter develops the Western gold rush fever idea further including an almost indigenous feel creeping in to some pieces, particularly from Picture Organic whose inspiration trip to Nepal yielded brights, primaries and digital geometric prints. We're on a limb here, but we're thinking the news this summer of the struggles faced by indigenous people in the US and Asia has given brain space to these influences.



686



686



686



Billabong



Billabong



Bonfire



Bonfire



Bonfire



Brunotti



Brunotti

The next big macro-trend next year we found is called Lighter than Light. This is all about so-thin-it's-barely-there technical materials. Windproofs and really techy touring pieces are the essence of this, we're guessing it's influenced heavily by the continuing rise of splitboarding and the masses of disgruntled, sweaty uphill snowboarders baking on hot spring ascents and coming down asking for lighter stuff. Burton have a late-season capsule developed with Danny Davis which is scheduled for mid-January delivery - thereby missing the New Year Sales markdown carnage - with a tech-boosted and lightened AK mini-collection. We're also liking the DC Packable range, which are going to be great for shred trips and will offer full Sympatex tech inside compact, portable and, well...packable pieces. The Command Jacket is the stand-out, with Weather Defense fabric offering an impressive 30k waterproofing. Brunotti's Hanna Verweij agrees: "Lightweight materials are a must for all kind of boardsports. They provide freedom of movement and comfort", she enthused. Whilst light is good, Swedish brand Tobe cautioned the compromise in durability. "We're still trying to do some lightweight products, but they're only going to market if they pass our demanding durability tests", explained Tobe's product designer Alex Bågling.

The next ridiculously-named-but-ultimately-understandable trend is Fly-By. Here, shiny finishes elicit modern aviation. Here it's all about short bomber jackets, swishy parachute-style material and military looks with avant-garde matte tones & detailing. The highs are skydiver-style asym colourblocking, particularly following the limbs (as seen at Sweet Protection, DC and Quiksilver). "Our pop-hit-heavy colour palette is clean, progressive, easy to wear and matches well with a lot of staples from other brands. The bright colours really work in our GLCR pieces for backcountry visibility as well as on trim hits throughout the collection", says Brent Sandor, Marketing VP over at 686. DC are showing a fully-reflective jacket and pant combo which is also compatible with Fly-By, and there are oversize puffa jackets with high collars, utility details and removable emblems in a lot of places. Silver is the dominant metallic in this trend, and the primaries are mostly those taken from NASA jumpsuits.

The final macro-trend we identified for FW18/19 is Old School. No surprises here; this one kicks it back to the mid nineties and early 00s with heavy influences from the era's outerwear, and even reissues of archive pieces from back yonder. Balenciaga are doing it, so why can't we? Of course, this yearning for nostalgia is symptomatic of a maturing demographic, but it also meshes nicely to the powder surfing vibe which is getting interest now. "One of the key themes for our new line is our Re-Issue collection, which is a throwback to the early days of Billabong Outerwear back in the 90s. It features our new Wave Washed fabrics, with a washed and vintage look...and plenty of corduroy", says their Outerwear PLM Alexandre Berthonneau. O'Neill will be delving into their back-catalogue too with their own Re-Issue line featuring bold colours and neon blocking. Equally, we're seeing younger brands pivoting towards this look too. Fam's lookbook is all about 90s streetwear and colours - they're even bringing back the borg fleece quarter zip - and Templeton's collection inspiration is pretty unique. Over to them to explain: "It's Ski Patrol from the 90s. Those guys were the heroes in our hometown mountains. Always the fittest, fastest and most charismatic dudes, mostly relaxing with big futuristic sunglasses, hanging out in front of their little patrol chalets, playing Schafkopf cards and sipping coffee from their Thermos". Well, it's a look alright.

NUMBERS CLIMBING UP & UP

The counterpoint to Old School is the end consumer's insatiable appetite for higher and higher numbers in waterproofing and breathability. While no-one's claimed above the 50,000mm mark yet, it's inevitably going to happen soon, and our research calls yielded more than a few snarky

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While no-one's claimed above the 50,000mm mark yet, it's inevitably going to happen soon, and our research calls yielded more than a few snarky comments about the legitimacy of these numbers, particularly on the notoriously-hard-to-measure breathability side.

comments about the legitimacy of these numbers, particularly on the notoriously-hard-to-measure breathability side.

Still, high technicity is clearly in demand. We loved WearColour's new uber-tech Hawk jacket and pant combo with a refreshing clean Swedish look and recycled face fabric, and Holden's Summit gear with Schoeller's Corkshell 4-way stretch works brilliantly. The top-end Highline range at Quiksilver is growing wider as a response to increasing consumer demand in this segment, but we also saw a broadening of Gore-Tex availability down at the 300€ pricepoint from the likes of Volcom and Burton. We particularly loved Burton's Dunmore Gore-Tex hooded jacket in the gorgeous reddy Sparrow colourway. Finally, expect to see better trickle-down technology in kid's stuff, as groms inherit the same desire for tech that we have; Horsefeathers have some impressive gear at good pricepoints in their kid's line next year, and Tobe's 2.0 Junior Mono Suits have all the same features as their adult versions.

Transition pieces play a key role in jackets next winter with rideable tech hoodies and cross-purpose softshells increasing in popularity

KEY LOOKS IN JACKETS

The backcountry-style jacket is still going to dominate shelf space next year, with the combination of lightweight and function-over-form ethos resonating well with end consumers. Sweet Protection have evolved their Supernaut Gore-Tex Pro jacket to make it even more useful in a snowboard mountaineering context. "As our brand matures we are putting the onus on freeride, all-mountain and touring. This means that park and freestyle clothing is something we don't focus on anymore", says Sweet's Managing Director Bjørn Fjellstad. This move away from the jib scene towards more accessible, aspirational and real-life snowboarding has been on trend in hardgoods for a while (see Korua Shapes), so it's natural to see it in outerwear too.

We also really liked Quiksilver's TR Stretch Jacket, a Travis Rice powered piece with tons of freedom of movement, seamless construction and a pile of handy storage pockets. There's a nice 3L backcountry jacket from Nitro called the Glades, which clocks in at 20k/20k and is made of micro rip stop, and Dakine's Eliot jacket - which marks four years of design with pro skier Eric Pollard - has a split hem for touring.

Despite a few skier collabs from action sports brands, the snowboard jacket is definitely far from being over. There is, however, a trend of brands looking to zone in on skiers and snowboarders with the same product lines. Could this be the end of one of the last remaining bastions of tribal prejudice in modern sports? We hope so, and the quicker the skiers vs snowboarders thing can be put to bed, the better. So long as we don't have to wear Spyder too soon, anyway.

Transition pieces play a key role in jackets next winter with rideable tech hoodies and cross-purpose softshells increasing in popularity, particularly at the mid- and low-pricepoint. Billabong's oversize All Day

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L1



L1



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Mons Royal



Nitro



Nitro



Nitro

jacket is a key example, and their unique Watson Hybrid hoodie is a heavyweight shell/fleece thing with a DWR coating. “Athleisure continues to blur the lines between sport and fashion. The emphasis, however, is on sophisticated styling with performance and comfort being a prerequisite”, confirms Bench’s Chief Product Officer Sebastian Streck. “Our Thermal-Tech Hoodie is an excellent example of the transitional sportswear trend, where streetwear style meets functional design. This hoodie equips the urban athlete with superior functionality in terms of breathability, flexibility and moisture control”.

Templeton have a Pilot Softshell, which is minimal & functional with a brushed fleece interior, and will look spot on whether you’re kicking it down the boozier or bagging freshies up the hill. Fam are all about this crossover look too. “One of the founding principles of our technical product is our ability to offer consumers multi-functional pieces, something you would wear in the mountains but also be happy to be wearing on a cold day in London. You simply can’t do that with a neon yellow jacket,” says Director Josh Cottrell. Sessions also have a 10k workshirt called the Steadfast which is a perfect hill-to-skatepark piece and a big part of their new All Weather Apparel line.

Finally, we can’t talk about jackets without mentioning Airblaster’s Alpine Surf Duster. This is a Corey Smith collaboration, a trench length jacket providing extra coverage for powder. They claim it’ll amplify style exponentially...if you dare to rock it.

KEY LOOKS IN PANTS

Well, babies and road cyclists will be happy, because it’s bibs, bibs, bibs all the way next year. Bibs, bibs, bibs. DC’s new Sympatex plastic clip bib is one of our favourites, with a cavernous front pocket and new bottom hem clinch system. Meanwhile, fits are evolving fast in pants, with L1’s (Sam) Taxwood Pant nodding back to a jogger style with included nylon belt and encased elastic hem at the leg opening. And their new throwback puffy pant - called the Aftershock - is totally unique out there. “It’s really something I’ve always wanted to do. I thought this was the perfect time to introduce something like this. This one is fun and quickly becoming a team favourite”, says L1’s Jon Kooley. Meanwhile there’s a new Freeride fit in Rip Curl’s pants, which is kind of like an updated slouch, and 32 are introducing six brand new pant fits to cover lots of different riding styles.

Whilst straight cut pants dominate, very slim pants remain relevant - we liked Protest’s Zed skinnies - and 241’s lovely 3L Gore-Tex true denim jeans defy categorisation. “The idea here was to make something you can use no matter your lifestyle. Skate, snowboard, go to dinner...these are fit for it all”, says 241 founder Mike Basich.

While last year Petrol Blue turned ISPO into an explosion in an ink factory, this year it’s a Dijon detonation as variants of golden Mustard splosh the walls of the outerwear booths.

COLOURS & PRINTS

While last year Petrol Blue turned ISPO into an explosion in an ink factory, this year it’s a Dijon detonation as variants of golden Mustard splosh the walls of the outerwear booths. It’s an autumnal, leafy yellow, and it offsets a palette of natural tones - which are also popular - as well as it blends into workwear colours like rust, steel blue and chestnut brown (which are going nowhere either and evidenced at usual suspects Holden and L1).

Conversely, there are some flashier colours starting to come back in with the Old School macro-trend; particularly reds, corals and true blues. And

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Quiksilver



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Rip Curl

the washed-out look has started to spread further into snowboarding too. “We’re continuing to explore washed out hues: pale pink, blue, white and off white. Generally these run monochromatically or in tonal combination, but occasionally with an unexpected contrast,” says Airblaster’s Creative Director Jesse Grandkoski. L1 have a nice greyed-out mint green called Slit, and Billabong’s Wave Washed collection referenced above brings a subtle fade. Expect to encounter light indigo and baby pink - although in a menswear context that last one’s better described as ‘very light red’, we feel.

In prints, things remain pretty simple and clean. Bench’s prints have a typographic focus, with classic fonts creating sophistication. Wear Colour are showing a faded-out forest camo, and Horsefeathers have a cool print called Drone View which is a top-down look onto a snowy pine forest. Gradients remain popular, and there are a lot of marble-style prints, particularly from Burton, 3CS and Nitro. Finally, Picture Organic have a nice Aztec print in their Adventure range.

If you’re not wearing one, you’re probably stinky and cold. Luckily, clients know this as well as we do, so scoring a baselayer sale is actually pretty easy along with an outerwear purchase nowadays.

BASELAYER

If you’re not wearing one, you’re probably stinky and cold. Luckily, clients know this as well as we do, so scoring a baselayer sale is actually pretty easy along with an outerwear purchase nowadays. The trend in baselayers is overwhelmingly towards merino wool over synthetics. And next year, consumers are going to expect a choice of multiple baselayer weights depending on the local mountain or dome conditions - and just how much they feel the cold. Patagonia’s Capilene baselayer programme goes from Air to Thermal to Mid to Light, using different fibre blends as the grammage decreases. Sweet Protection have a new regular length pant to extend use out to four-season mountaineering, and Tobe will be collaborating with Swedish merino outfit Woolpower on their multi-weight line.

If you’ve not spotted Mons Royale’s quiet yet constant acceleration to the forefront of the boardsports baselayer market, it’s time to give these guys a good look. Next year’s line is wider than ever, and their collection is full of unique asym trims, cuts and details (we particularly liked the two-tone contrast zips). Mons’ focus is on telling the ‘wear anywhere’ merino story, and their new MTN X capsule encompasses this. “We’ve seen an increase in riders using specialized garments prior to the snow season to get ready for winter”, says Mons Royale Team Liaison Anna Smoothy. “Merino wool is the perfect fibre to wear through the temperature fluctuations between seasons. The MTN X capsule harnesses inherent merino capabilities in designs intentioned for riding, trail running and the mountain gym. This versatile capsule carries Mons fans from summer through to winter and enables our retailers to make sales even before the snow has arrived”.

There are also new baselayer lines from Dainese, 3CS and 32 as more brands seek to round out their technical clothing offers.

MIDLAYERS

In midlayers, things are moving on from the now-tired-looking lightweight down jacket. We’re excited to see O’Neill’s Kinetiq Knit which uses ergonomic knitted panels for extra warmth and breathability in key areas, and reflective details for visibility. There’s a cool looking Dainese piece called the HP1 which uses three different fabric technologies, and it’s worth checking out Rip Curl’s new Polartec Thermal Pro tall hoody



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midlayer. In a planet-friendly gesture, they chose to replace their puffer's down padding with the next generation of 37.5 synthetic down.

The new Polartec Power Fill insulation looks the business, a soft and bendy polyester lattice which uses hollow fibres to form thousands of air pockets that retain body heat and insulate against the cold. Find it on Millet's Elevation Airloft hoodie. In a similar vein, Patagonia are showing a new Micro Puff hoodie using PlumaFill synthetic insulation.

FEATURES

Living in the twenty-first century has its perks - one such is intelligently designed outerwear. 686's GLCR Hydrastash Reservoir Jacket is claiming a world first - the only jacket to have a built in hydration system. "This is a patent-pending system that is exclusive to us. It truly is one of the largest innovations in outerwear over the past few years. After using it, you will never want to go back to not having water on you while riding again. It completely changes the experience", claims Brent Sandor. We're also fans of the new Storm Hood on Rip Curl's Search jacket which deftly becomes a high and strong collar when folded down, protecting the rider whilst retaining freedom of movement.

Elsewhere, on an ecological tip, Dakine make the laudable move of ditching PFCs from their Vapor 2L and Smyth Pure 2L jackets, Volcom are using Repreve recycled fabrics and WearColour have a 100% recycled polyester face fabric in all of their 3L pieces. Patagonia, meanwhile, extend their 'made to be maintained' concept to their redesigned Powder Bowl pants. "We have focused on designing these pants for durability and reparability. This includes a new single piece of scuff guard that is easily replaceable and a reinforced stitched crotch gusset. The refined fit and simplified styling combined with the durable design and construction make our pieces a lifetime investment", says Patagonia's Louise Brierley-Ingham.

Bonfire have got some good stuff going on next year too; their entire collection will now feature a minimum 15k waterproofing, fully taped seams and a lifetime warranty on everything they make to increase consumer confidence. They're also using a new fabric called TuffTech Flex-Mobility in their outerwear. It's pliable and bendy, but uses Cordura fibres for mega durability. Finally, we're happy to see 241 stick with their innovative Boa cuffs on their jacket sleeves for maximum lock down...and to keep the pow outside, flying around, where it should be.

CONCLUSION

That's about it, then. A particular focus on lightweight fabrics, lots of action up at the high pricepoints and increasing interest in the backcountry and touring sector mean that there's something for everyone next year, whether they want to look like Maverick, Kid 'n Play or Hercule Poirot. Or, God forbid, a mix of all three. Stick with the tried and tested brands, put the focus on quality and value, reference some of these key trends and your outerwear buy ought to write itself next year. 6

HIGHLIGHTS

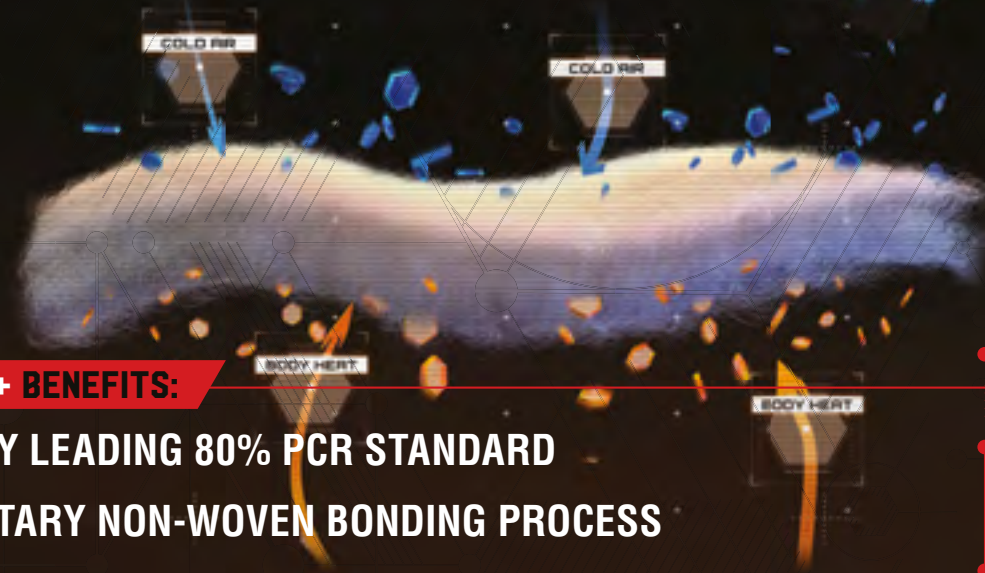
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GB PARK AND PIPE'S RADICAL GAINS

With the 2018 Winter Olympics just around the corner SOURCE headed out to GB Park & Pipe's training facility in Livigno, Italy to take a look at their secret weapon and to find out more about their innovative coaching philosophy, 'Radical Gains'. Standing at 60m long, 23m wide and weighing in at 7.5 tonnes, the secret weapon is an enormous airbag ripe for maximising performance. By **Harry Mitchell Thompson**.

It's been an incredible four years for British snowboarding since Jenny Jones won her bronze medal in slopestyle's debut at the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. It's a pretty remarkable story considering the UK, despite some rather fickle mountains in Scotland, isn't blessed with the sort of terrain one might expect for breeding Olympic snowboard medallists. Nevertheless, an extremely healthy indoor and dry slope scene coupled with said mountains has bred many fantastic skiers and snowboarders over the years but it's with thanks to the birth of GB Park & Pipe in 2010 that really created the structure needed to nourish the current crop of top freestyle skiers and snowboarders representing Great Britain on an international level.

Heading the charge is Olympian Lesley McKenna, GB Park & Pipe's Performance Manager who after her days as a professional snowboarder and her team management role at Roxy, completed a Masters degree in Performance Coaching at Sterling University and now, tooled with some serious performance coaching theory has developed a fascinating learned approach, which serves as the modus operandi for GB Park & Pipe.

They've named the approach Radical Gains, which is GB Park & Pipe's take on marginal gains – the 1% improvement in all aspects of cycling said to result in remarkable overall improvement – and they've coined the phrase to describe the moment when "all the stars align," says Lesley. "The risk factor is always high in a new trick in our world, so when all the stars align and everything feels right and the athlete's feeling good, and they nail that new trick they've been prepping for a long time, that's a special moment and something that doesn't happen that often. Radical Gains aren't something that happen in increments. Because when you're going from a 1080 to a 1260, you can't do it in 10 degree increments, it has to be a Radical Gain from 1080 to 1260."

The underlying coaching philosophy behind Radical Gains comes from a motivational psychology theory called self-determination theory and Lesley also described some fascinating biochemistry at play. "There are some really interesting chemicals that allow you to perform slightly above your current performance level; endorphins and the likes of DMT are chemicals that people are only just starting to study now – the chemicals that put you in the zone." And it's these

chemicals that kick in when very skilful and experienced athletes are under very high risk, and allow them to work right at the edge of their capabilities. "We obviously want to reduce that risk, so this airbag is part of minimizing the risk under those circumstances."

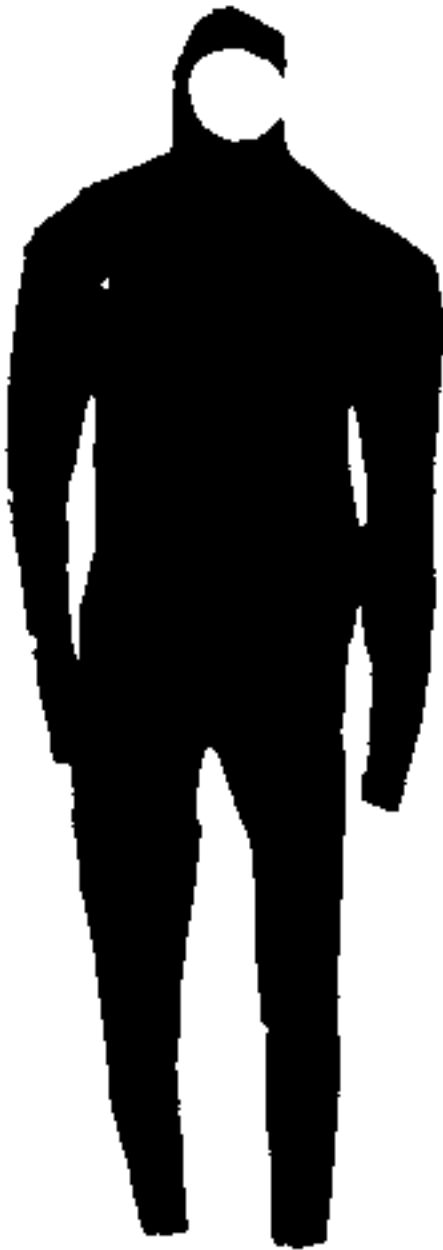
An airbag of this scale is something that GB Park & Pipe's head snowboard coach, Hamish McKnight has been plotting for the best part of a decade: "I've been working on drawings, ideas, and designs for airbags like this and others as far back as 2008/09." The airbag itself is a grand feat of engineering; designed by Dutch company, Big Airbag the bag arrived in 10 parts and took six days to assemble, with Mottolino Snowpark creating 16,000 cubic metres of snow for the setup, which allows for jumps to be performed at full size (18-25m) providing airtime of 2.1 - 2.9 seconds, allowing for even the most technical of tricks. A replica jump alongside the airbag jump will allow for athletes to then transfer their newly learned tricks onto a snow landing.

Looking at the airbag as a tool for progression, Hamish surmises just how the athletes will benefit from this type of training. "Repetition under reduced risk allows each rider to focus on specific mechanics and elements of trick execution without fear of injury in the landing. They get the chance to perform full tricks over and over until they are confident enough to take them to snow," Hamish says, concluding, "the chance to experiment with different mechanics in reduced risk allows athletes the opportunity to acquire skills much faster."

GB Park & Pipe snowboarder Katie Ormerod was bowled over by the progress she'd experienced on the airbag, even just after the first full morning of practice: "I worked on my cab 9s, which before I wasn't grabbing for long enough and after just that first session I could really feel I was grabbing it and tweaking it for way longer. I'm stoked!"

GB Park & Pipe's Radical Gains philosophy is equal parts intriguing and inspiring and their huge airbag is a sight to behold. Airbags will surely now become more and more commonplace in freestyle coaching and it's exciting to see just where they will take the progression of the sport. 📍

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SLAVE TO THE SEA



C-SKINS RE-BRANDING

A brand synonymous with surfing in Europe, C-Skins have a rich history that spans back to the 1970s with founder Carey Brown. Now under the reigns of Carey’s son Mark, the brand has reinvented itself with a progressive re-branding.

Give us a brief refresher on C-Skins, the company and its major players.
We are a wetsuit company specifically focused on making world class wetsuits and neoprene accessories primarily for surfing but also for the wider watersports customer.

Everything we do is about getting you out there to experience the sea and we want our customers to be inspired by this. We are constantly pushing the limits of wetsuit design and materials so that you can push your own limits in the water.

C-Skins was founded in 1999 by Carey Brown, my father, who started making wetsuits with his uncle in 1971. Carey still plays a big role in C-Skins but more and more these days the responsibility rests on my shoulders to lead the brand in new directions, making not only the product, but the brand more relevant in today’s world. Everyone on the team is vitally important to the day to day operations; we’re a real tight knit group all focused on making the brand succeed.

Please tell us about the reasons behind the C-Skins re-branding?
I was fed up of hearing from dealers that every brand feels and looks the same these days (including C-Skins!). We kept joking that many a brand’s logo treatment/aesthetic looks the same these days and in many cases it was hard at a glance to tell wetsuit brands apart (including C-Skins). We felt, for better or for worse that we needed to step away from our competitors and tread our own creative path and remember why we’re in this. It was a catalyst to think differently and work with new inspiring people as well. As a wetsuit brand we also know how hard it is to stand out from the larger apparel companies so we knew we wanted to do something different.

What information/research/data did you use to inform your decision?
We took a long hard look at our sales figures across our ranges and made decisions based around this information. Answering the question – who buys your stuff isn’t always as straight forward as you think. We 100% wanted to make sure we were re-branding for the right reasons and we also understood that it may alienate some of our existing customers. We also had long discussions with some of our best dealers to ensure we were making an informed decision. Much of our rebrand isn’t just

a new corporate logo. It’s bigger than that, it’s a whole company ethos and a fit for C-Skins. The marketing that also goes behind the brand cannot be forgotten – it’s a huge undertaking!

Did you use external suppliers/services to facilitate the re-branding?
About a year and a half ago I got in contact with David Carson who is a real inspiration to me. His design work tests boundaries and has a certain feeling - he has a very emotive way of designing. It was just a tentative, quick email with a bit of background about C-Skins that he replied to saying that he would love to do some work for us. The rest is history. A name that many are familiar with, Carson has been closely involved with surfing for many years now. He has worked for publications such as Transworld Skateboarding and re-designed Surfer magazine before starting Ray Gun magazine. His awards are numerous ranging from Cover of the Year, Designer of the Year and one of the 30 most influential Macintosh users over the 30-year history of the computer. To top it all off David loves surfing and rips – so he understands the business and being a surfer himself, he gets it. We have also been working with a great local agency who have had major input and helped us put everything together. Everyone here at C-Skins HQ has been involved with the process and has had input with regards to products, imagery and brand guidelines/identity.

What are the goals set for the re-branding?
We want to lead, not follow, we want to go against the grain, developing a brand which everyone in and out of the water will recognise, using bold logos, mixed with both minimalist and classic design and innovation/performance.

The aim is to ask our existing and potentially new customers to take another look at the brand and make a fresh decision.

How are you marketing the rebranding?
The use of strong and emotive abstract/unique imagery is central to the brand ethos and our new marketing campaigns. A mix of classic and nostalgic imagery and films shot in both Super 8 and 35mm captures the fun and raw grass roots side of surfing, whilst high performance HD action clips display innovation and progression, both in terms of performance products and surfing. It’s going to be a fun roll-out! 🌀

PRO-TEC



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DUPRAZ

Snowboarding is rife with Carvemanía and so we've profiled the man who started it all. It was with the introduction of Serge Dupraz's Hot Snowboards 'One Sixty' model that allowed our snowboarding forefathers to not only shred the pow, but also hold an edge on piste. Serge is still innovating today and his brand Dupraz leads by example.

Serge, tell us about your history. You've been in the industry for 35 years...

Yes, even a bit longer. Hawaii was the place I wanted to be and the North Shore was the place where I wanted to discover how to make boards. I went there to learn how to shape - that was my goal. I just wanted to become a professional shaper, which I became. For six years I shaped, sanded, glassed, etc. It's during that first six months in 1980 that I learnt the fundamentals I'm still applying to my shapes today.

I started making and selling snowboards in the 1983/84 winter, which were custom handmade shapes - Hot Snowboards. At this time we were just riding in powder, surfing the snow, but after a while riding the deep stuff wasn't enough. We then developed boards to be able to ride every day, even on piste. This led to the invention of carving; the Vitelli turn of course coming from our team rider, Serge Vitelli who blew peoples minds on the 'Revolution' model I shaped. Our team of riders stoked out snowboarders across the globe on these amazing shapes that eventually inspired the entire ski industry.

After a break I started Dupraz in 2003 and launched my first D1 combining all my experience of aquatic shapes but also the great alpine experience I learned from from Hot (in 1990 Hot was the top selling brand in France, selling four times more boards than the world leader). The D1 was a game changer, it provided exceptional performance in deep snow (great acceleration and float) but is also a carving machine on piste, even in icy conditions. We allow snowboarders to surf the mountain.

What is your approach to design and what technical evolutions have you made over the years?

From day one in 2003 with the first D1, I've worked with what is inside the board, to optimize the Dupraz shape and its unique geometry. I've always wanted to let my shapes resemble what I've been doing for years, shaping custom surfboards.

Over the years I have been evolving the construction process, refining materials to make the board lighter underfoot, without losing reliability. Our boards are ultra solid and I love that our customers keep them for years and years.

We are working hard for what is going to be the new golden age of snowboarding. We are re-opening the market from the elitist-freestyle-only-niche. Our growth potential is very wide; we know our original concept so well, which comes from the essence of snowboarding and now shops are now becoming more receptive to our shapes. With riders spreading the word about us worldwide, it's time to structure a network with the best agents and distributors.

Tell us about the production side of things at Dupraz.


At Dupraz we love the fact that we manufacture in a democratic country, with salaries and social rights protecting the workers. The people who make our boards by hand know what they are making because live in the European mountains and enjoy riding our products.

Just as your boards were trend setters, you've also been organising bank slaloms since way before the hype too?

One of the problems that the snowboard market has had during the past few decades was that events were too elitist and not open to average snowboarders. I decided some twelve years ago to organize Banked Slaloms and push that format. We created events that are accessible, welcoming, fun, open to everyone, not dangerous and with a great surf-like feeling. I've organized more than 40 Banked Slaloms and it's been a great investment for us. I am so stoked to see the phenomenon spreading worldwide now. We are going to be celebrating the 10th anniversary of the 'Dupraz Happy Banked Slalom' in Morillon/Grand Massif in 2018. Our D1 boards are often on the podiums of great Banked Slaloms all over Europe.

What's new and fresh with Dupraz this year?

I think there might be a misconception of what people understand as "fresh". For me fresh means timeless. This may sound paradoxical, but in essence it is really just fine-tuning. When riders come into our 'world' and start to speak 'our language', they discover different models and understand the coherence of our range. The boards look the same, but in fact they are made for different uses. Riders are always impressed to discover this.

We are presenting some models with more carbon fibre than we've ever used before. 



THE JAMES BRAND

The James Brand is a new action sports company, whose focus is to “own the pocket”. Specialising in high quality knives with a refined aesthetic and started by Ryan Coulter, he has now enlisted industry vet and former Nixon COO, Mike Hoefer to fulfil CEO duties and we get the skinny from Mike on the brand who have storytelling at the centre of their MO.

Please give an overview of how and why the company began.
Founder and chief creative officer of The James Brand, Ryan Coulter, had been carrying a knife for years, and it had become something that he used and depended on every day. But he wasn’t satisfied with the product, and he didn’t have any kind of connection to the brand. There was nothing that really spoke to him or that was endemic to the outdoor and action-sports world. There was plenty of highly functional product out there, but almost all of it lacked the attention to detail and aesthetics that he appreciated. Basically, it came down to: “If you can’t find what you are looking for, you’ll have to make it yourself.”

Who is on the management team, and what are their backgrounds?
The team consists of Ryan Coulter, founder and chief creative officer; Sam Amis, director of product; and Mike Hoefer, CEO and partner. We have a lot of background in action sports: Mike spent 17 years at Nixon, primarily as the COO. Ryan has spent most of his career between Burton, Nike and innovation consulting. Sam has worked with some of world’s best design firms, including Cinco Design, MNML and Ziba. He’s also worked on the innovation team at Nike for years.

In Europe, we have Timo Breyer and Pacome Allouis, both of whom have been deeply involved with action sports for decades,

working with companies such as Nixon, Mizu, Electric and many others. They are the backbone of our European operation, but we are adding folks to that team right now.

What are your plans for the European market?
Our plan is to build an operation within Europe that will allow us to directly connect to the market. We really want to be a global brand, but with a regional emphasis. The everyday-carry category is a personal experience for each customer and we want to make sure we connect directly. You will see products, people, stories and operations developed for the European market. We don’t want to be known as this American West Coast brand being sold in Europe. We think The James Brand, if properly structured, can connect regionally. We have great people on the ground in many regions that are part of the day-to-day.

Please explain the design and manufacturing process of each knife.
We are very focused on the idea of everyday carry. What are the things that you keep in your pocket on a daily basis to make your life easier? The things that you carry with you every day matter a lot. They are a reflection of who you are. The pocket has very specific requirements. It’s not a big space, which means you have to be very focused on what’s important. You can’t throw everything at it. Your most important knife or tool is the one you have on hand when you need it. That’s what we are focused on.

What’s your unique proposition and how are you equipping retailers with tools to sell your products?
Knives have an interesting place in human history. It’s the world’s very first tool. But when you look at the knife category, you generally see two markets: hunt/fish (especially in the USA) and then tactical product. We have a different point of view. We are completely focused on everyday carry. We want to create things that fit in your pocket and in your daily life. We see knives as tools that make our lives better.

Our values are different. We really focus on customer experience, from the minute you come to our website until you unbox the product at your house. We really try to sweat the details, and we have a design-centric orientation. We want to take the customer on a journey with us. The knife and tool category hasn’t modernized. There is some really insane product on the market, but much of it doesn’t fit the practicality that we design for. Our goal is to bring a new category to many retailers. We can do this by making the product more approachable. As for retailers already carrying knives and tools, we want to bring them a new customer — one who has been thinking about this category, but nothing really suited them.

Read an extended version of this interview on our website. [🔗](#)

MAYORI

German soft shoe brand Mayori is the brainchild of Ben Steckermeier and shoes have been in Ben’s family for four generations. Mayori make sandals and lightweight shoes marketed at those who live a boardsports lifestyle. We check in with Ben to hear about a brand with a solid base in Germany and Austria, looking to grow across Europe.

Who’s on the management team and what are their backgrounds?
At the moment it’s a one-man-company, with me in charge of management, collection development, design and marketing. I stem from a shoe family of four generations, meaning fashion development, trends and creativity have had a big influence on me and my career choice. My family has always supported me in this.

What’s the company ethos?
To create summer and surf lifestyle products with recognition, value and a certain uniqueness. We place high value on natural and special materials with our own designs and on top of that great interaction and solid partnerships with our suppliers. Obviously our customers are very important as well.

Where is your best performing European market?
Our main market at the moment is Germany, due to our company being based here. Yet we already have retailers in other European countries including Belgium, Spain and Austria.

How do you support athletes in boardsports?
Since we are still a very young brand and our products only launched in 2016 we haven’t started an athlete ambassador program yet. But we will definitely be supplying athletes with our products and expanding on this in the medium term.

How do you help retailers sell your products?
With our small minimum order of six pairs per style and colour we offer retailers minimal capital commitment in the first order round and with that a lot of flexibility. We also offer a re-order program for our bestsellers, so that shops can stock up on articles during the season. In the coming months we will add other projects including sales and promotional materials for retailers as well as marketing campaigns through social media.

What has been the highlight of the past 12 months?
One of our highlights is our Slip On made from printed leather. We picked the images that were printed on leather and then manufactured into a shoe. We’re also very proud on our cork and neoprene sandals.

What is your three-year strategy in Europe?
Our medium-term target is to expand and solidify our market position in Europe. This includes an increase in the awareness of our brand. To summarize, you can say that we’re looking to grow in a healthy way with our partners and customers over the next few years.

Which European market do you hope to see most expansion in over the coming 12 months?
We see the biggest chances for growth in Germany and Austria. Our home base is in Germany and the geographical proximity with Austria is ideal for intensive support of our

customers in these areas. Yet through our customers and contacts in Spain and Belgium we also see great potential in other countries.

Please tell us the idea behind the brand - when you started and why?
I took the first steps to founding my own brand in 2015. I’ve been into snowboarding, wakeboarding, surfing and skateboarding since my teens and still love doing these sports. Being involved in these sports I was always connected with the lifestyle. And growing up in a shoe family, I had a lot of contact with fashion, trends and materials. I’d been looking to do my own thing for a while and in July 2015 at a BBQ with good friends we had long talks, which was the final push to start. Since then I’ve been working on creating lifestyle products with a high recognition value and a certain uniqueness.

Do you have any interesting stories to tell around your production/manufacturing processes?
The Slip Ons are made with the Strobel process, a special way of manufacturing that makes the shoes especially flexible and light, which is ideal for wearing closed shoes in summer.

What marketing campaigns will you run over the coming six months?
In the next six months we will start our online campaigns on social media. We’re already deep in detailed planning for that and will start the project in Spring 2018. Of course we have a lot of ideas for additional measures as well, which we will try to realise in the coming months. [🔗](#)

NEW PRODUCTS

01 - STANCE X SKIN PHILLIPS SOCK

Growing up in Swansea, South Wales, Skin Phillips began taking photos in the early 80s, contributing to local zines and building a skate scene that became known all over Europe. After years of couch surfing, he got a job as an Editor/Staff Photographer at TWS and moved to San Diego, where for the next three decades he documented the careers of the worlds greatest skateboarders.
www.stance.com

02 - DRYROBE

Dryrobe have introduced two new colours to their range of products. Purple/Grey and Sky Blue/Grey long-sleeve Dryrobes in small, medium and large, which strengthen the extensive range already available to provide a colour for everyone. An essential piece of kit for all outdoor sports and activities whether you are enjoying leisure time or competing at the highest level. It's been designed to be used multiple times throughout the day, over wet or dry kit, without the need for drying between uses. Get changed and stay warm with dryrobe.
www.dryrobe.com

03 - GIRO EMERGE MIPS HELMET

The new Emerge MIPS helmet delivers freestyle riders the same proven technology used by top World Cup alpine skiers. This technology is packaged in a low-profile shell with a trusted freestyle shape and combined with the highly-refined and sophisticated MIPS Spherical technology, which aids in the reduction of rotational energy during certain impacts.
www.giro.com

04 - DAKINE DIABLO MITT

Part of Dakine's Highline Series (gloves with premium materials for ultimate performance), this modular style is the warmest, most waterproof mitt they make and is composed of three pieces: a shell, a removable down mitt and a Storm Liner Glove. It is built for the committed rider who will ride the resort but, when the conditions are good, will head into the backcountry by any means.
www.dakine.com

05 - JETPILOT FREERIDE VEST

This vest is the pinnacle of performance and value. This ultra light vest utilises their flex-lite neoprene panels and beveled segmentations to generate maximum flexibility. This is the perfect crossover vest for jetskiers, wakeboarders, surfers and for most kinds of watersport activities. The Freeride vest is also 50N coast guard approved. Thanks to the long stylish cut of the freeride vest, it helps you to keep your hips protected and warm. Features include fully segmented panels, which conform to your body for the ultimate fit, PVC foam core for supreme buoyancy and hidden webbing. Available in S, M, L, XL, XXL and in military colours and black/blue.
www.jetpilot.eu

06 - NORTHWAVE DOMAIN CR BOOT

This special version of Domain boot, the well known and respected backcountry model comes with the new freeride dedicated CR soles that are made in collaboration with Vibram. Front and rear crampon compatibility make these outsoles unique for extremely technical and difficult hikes. They are compatible with step in camprons, strap on and hybrid.
www.northwave.it



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Lockdown point for zippers and cables with Interlocking zip pullers.



RFIDsafe® blocking pockets & material
RFID blocking material (10MHz – 3 GHz)



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NEW PRODUCTS

07 - ELLIOT BROWN BLOXWORTH 929-012 WATCH

This ultra durable "tool watch" has jumped from 35,000 feet, survived 11 months at sea on a global circumnavigation, summited Everest and crossed continents. Its custodians breaking 5 world records on their travels, this watch really is built to go the distance.

www.elliottbrownwatches.com

08 - BIG BALLS COLLECTIVE ORIGINS BEANIE

BBCo's mission for this season was to develop a more sustainable range of headwear and to start migrating production back to the UK. The new range of headwear was inspired by those worn by early Antarctic explorers and Cornish fishermen, the 'Origins' beanie range is rustic, raw, stylish and functional, made from 100% British wool and is produced in the UK. The name comes from the fact that all the different elements can be traced back to their origins, from the flock of sheep, where the yarn came from all the way through to the production process. Expect more British headwear products from BBCo in Spring 2018.

www.bigballscollective.com

09 - BENT METAL BINDING WORKS JOINT BINDING

The all new Bent Metal Joint for 18/19 is a medium flex (5/10) all mountain performance binding. A boron fibre Drive Plate tuned to the perfect all-mountain flex is paired with a responsive, yet forgiving nylon high-back formula. The combination of these materials and components create a fluid joint between you, your board and the mountain!

www.bentmetal.com

10 - PACSAFE VENTURESAFE X18

Be adventure ready with this backpack 18 litre that's light, yet loaded with features.

With, a 13 inch laptop/hydration-pack sleeve and organization for all your stuff, you'll be secure and stocked from the tarmac to trail. Security Features include PopNLock Security Clip, eXomesh® slashguard, RFIDsafe® blocking pockets and material, Roobar™ Sport locking system, Interlocking zip pullers and Carrysafe® slashguard strap with Dyneema®.

www.pacsafe.com

11 - HEAD THE OPERATOR BOOT

The Operator is the SUV of winter boots, fulfilling the new demands of a changing industry. Usable for sports and working outdoors. Boa® lacing, extraordinary performance in cold conditions (-40°C) and a vulcanized, waterproof design makes it the perfect boot for all activities in winter.

www.head.com

12 - FLUX DS HIGHBACK HOSOI COLLAB BINDING

The DS is a top choice in bindings for hardcore freestyle snowboarding. The renewed highback improves on stability at high speeds while maintaining its playfulness at slower speeds. The DS Highback combines lightweight construction, a wide range of motion and flexibility, response and a progressive design. Christian Hosoi came to fame growing up in the SoCal skate scene in the late 70s and early 80s and he invented several tricks including the Christ Air and Rocket Air, and was renowned for pulling huge aerials.

www.flux-bindings.com

07



08



09



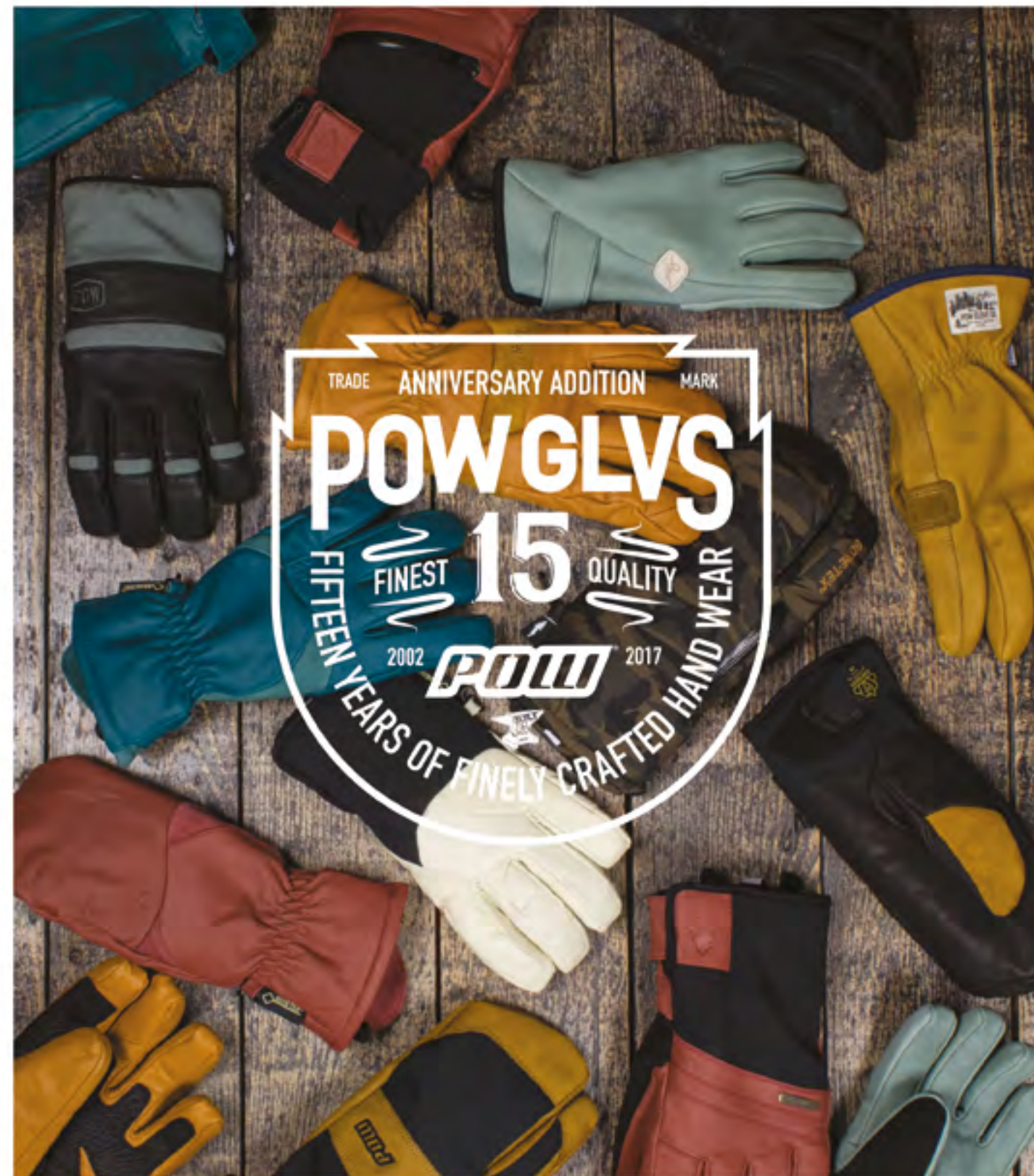
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11



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NEW PRODUCTS

13 - DRAKE SUPERSPORT BINDING

It has all the best features: Light Saber baseplate with heelcup position that is tool-less, it's adjustable thanks to the lever located on the baseplate in heavy duty material. It also gives the opportunity to adjust highback rotation and ankle strap position and regulation without the usage of any tool.
www.northwavesnow.com



14 - INDIANA SUP 14' LIMITED EDITION TOURING

The reshaped Indiana SUP Limited Edition 14' Touring is lightning-fast and very track-adherent thanks to its pointed outline, flat scoop-rocker-line and tear off edge. The woven prelaminated double layer and the 15cm wide fibreglass stringers on top and bottom make it lightweight and very rigid at the same time. This board is the choice of heavier paddlers who are doing long exploring trips or who just love going fast and straight. The loud colours and totem patterns give it a fresh look.
www.indiana-sup.com



15 - PACSAFE VIBE 40 BACKPACK

The versatile Vibe 40L anti-theft carry-on backpack is designed for 24/7 city living. Multipurpose and comfortable, this backpack meets most airline carry-on standards and features back support and padded adjustable straps. Security Features include PopNLock Security Clip, eXomesh® slashguard, Carrysafe® slashguard strap, RFIDsafe® blocking pockets and material, Roobar™ Sport locking system and Secure Zip Tab.
www.pacsafe.com



16 - PICTURE UNITY HELMET

Made from recycled polystyrene and Recycled polyester, the Unity helmet features a Continental divider, a Nexus SFX buckle, removable earpads, a goggle strap holder, venting system and a Boa system and meets safety compliance CE EN1077.
www.picture-organic-clothing.com



17 - SPARK R&D SOLID BOARD PUCKS

Their solid board pucks are perfect for trips where you are traveling with multiple boards, or days when you might see a mix of resort riding on your solid board, and side-country touring on your split. Solid board pucks attach to 2x4 snowboard insert patterns and channel boards. Proudly to manufacture them 100% in Bozeman, MT USA!
www.sparkrandd.com



18 - POW ALPHA GLOVE

This heritage glove has an all-new look and feel for winter 18/19. Made from Grade A leather and Pittards Oiltac Dragon etched leather palm, this allows the glove to move more freely with your hand. You'll stay warm with a GORE-TEX® insert, PrimaLoft® Gold and merino wool lining. And when the hand is feeling a little clammy the waterproof fly vent zipper will allow for much needed airflow. Available in four colorways and in sizes S – XL, the Alpha is all style.
www.powgloves.com



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MARKET INTELLIGENCE

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UK

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SPAIN

AUSTRIA

SWISS

A year ago the talk was all about Brexit and the uncertainty that came with it. Twelve months later and the talk is all about Brexit and the increasing uncertainty that comes with it. So not a lot has changed in a year – but there are some refreshing views on it all and today (Dec 8th). It seems that there is a breakthrough as it has been announced the Brexit talks are to “move on to the next phase”. Good news indeed. Despite Brexit, 2017 was not so bad – there is still instability and uncertainty but, without wanting to give any succour to the Brexiteers, it hasn’t been a bad year... not a bad year at all. Sure there have been some casualties (Surfdome being the most notable), but a casualty always offers others opportunities. Martin Brailsford, CEO of Internet Fusion, certainly spotted the opportunity when Surfdome’s parent got into trouble - he moved in quickly to add the specialist retailer to his portfolio. Has the dust now settled? “Yes it has – there are still things to do but we’re really please with how well it went – better than expectations and sales are, likewise, better than expectations - up 10% over forecasts – very positive.”

Surfdome have not been everyone’s favourite retailer and there’s plenty of competitors who complain about them – rightly or wrongly. The business will now be run by an accountant - will we see a better, some say more sensible, business as a result? “2017 has been exciting, to say the least, but we are really focussed on the business and are confident we’ll continue to grow in a consolidating market. We know the pie is not getting bigger and we’ll work closely with brands to develop the business.”

It’s so very true that the market is consolidating and whilst competitors may fear the onward progression of onliners ... Has Brexit affected the business? “I don’t know. Consumer confidence has been knocked but does that really stop our customers buying? I’m not sure it does. And Brexit is what it is – there’s no point in worrying about something we cannot control. At the end of the day I believe very little will change. If and when it does then we’ll work our way through it. For our group the goal is to keep our head down, keep growing and ignore the media storm.”

Now part of Internet Fusion where business is split UK/Export 50:50 how will the business develop? “Surfdome is currently 70:30 so we have some clear direction where we can grow. UK online businesses lead the world. We used to be called a nation of shopkeepers - now we’re a nation of online shopkeepers. We [the UK] are good at what we do and we’ll continue to thrive.”

Acknowledging that other countries do have some strong online retailers Martin is still very confident for the UK: “Amazon is a freak of nature and they’re damn good at what they do. But so are we. 2017 has been a great year and we cannot wait to see what 2018 brings for our group.”

I think it is pretty obvious that I can be classified as pro Europe so I was interested to talk to Ian Madden from Boardshop who is on the other side of the fence. “I still feel that there is a chance that we’ll either remain or that the Brexit Britain will virtually be the same Britain we have now.”

Time will tell on that one but how’s business? “Good. Very positive. We’re now almost more niche than we ever have been – surfboards, accessories, wetsuits. It’s good and whilst the weak pound has knocked our margin we have seen increased export business, which has helped compensate. So in summary sales are up, margin is down but we’re happy enough.”

What’s good and what’s not? “Boards and hardware are strong but the wetsuit business is really tough. We’re looking more and more for brands that are not everywhere so we’re a bit more selective. We want to work with brands that perhaps see themselves as a bit more ‘core’ – that’s where we’re coming from.”

Turning back to the Brexit situation. “It’s obviously not a good situation – I’d really like the pound to strengthen a bit but I’m confident about our future on the outside. I am sure it will help us both in terms of sourcing and sales. I was shocked by the Brexit result and shocked by the immediate aftermath but also totally fed up of the Euro-Gravy-Train – something had to change.”

We continued to chat about Brexit and we hit on immigration and the problems of finding good employees: “We simply cannot recruit – this is such an expensive place to live that nobody wants to move here,” so if anyone is looking for a job...

So whilst Ian seemed pretty content with things on the surf side, Lorraine from Subvert (skate and snow) was a little despondent. “Early season discounts, Black Friday becoming Black November, more major brands moving to sell direct through their own websites offering incentives that we cannot match and Brexit nerves amongst customers has seen a slow start to the season which followed a slow summer.” Subvert are approaching their 20th anniversary and are rightly proud of their bricks and mortar, independent heritage. “Being really ‘involved’ in our local board community undoubtedly helps us but we really need the big brands to want to do something to help independent stores. Working with suppliers on things like our collab 32/Subvert boot will help give us the edge. We’re excited and looking forward to receiving these soon. We need more stuff like this to help differentiate us from the online discount and direct-sell businesses.”

So it’s not all doom and gloom? “No - protection is selling well and we’re doing really well with our own branded clothing - which at least nobody can buy from the online-only stores.”

Subvert is the kind of store that is key to our board community – they do so much more than just run a shop. “Our fundraiser, SubJam, has raised £55,000 for Cancer Research. We’re proud of that.” And so they should be. “We’re the kind of store that you can just turn up with a pack of biscuits and have a cup of tea on our sofa – you will always feel welcome and you will always be part of our community. That’s the difference – but is it enough? Only time will tell but we’re looking forward to celebrating our 20th year – it’s not far away!”

Apart from the boardsports market, where there are always ups and downs, there are mixed reports from elsewhere in the economy. The UK manufacturing sector picked up with November hitting its highest level since August 2013. At the same time net migration fell by the largest amount since records began – wage pressure is just around the corner which will certainly not help Ian from Boardshop. Consumer confidence ebbed further and new car sales, a favourite indicator of UK wellbeing, dropped in November by 11% over 2016. YTD sales dropping 5%.

Who can blame consumers for being unsure about their future – we all are. That said it will all come out in the wash and we will get through it. I will be very surprised if, at the end of it all (Brexit), business is very different to how it has been. It will just have cost us a few bob in the meantime.

Gordon Way



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R: Rafael Pease in Kyrgyzstan filming for the Connections Movement project. P: Jesse Levine



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY	UK	FRANCE	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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2017 has been another intense year for France as much from a political as an economic standpoint. The beginning of 2017 was especially marked by politics due especially to the presidential election. At the start of the year, France was in the middle of the most topsy-turvy presidential campaign in the history of the fifth republic. This crazy presidential campaign far surpassed the most famous political fiction novels. In years to come, political scientists will study the 2017 presidential election and will note: that there was no real a campaign; that Duflot, Juppé, Valls, the favourites were all eliminated during the primaries; that the two candidates who led the polls throughout, Le Pen and Macron were the only ones who weren’t the products of a primary; that François Fillon, the candidate of the right, elected by nearly three million voters during his party’s primary was unable to campaign and was charged in the now renowned “Penelopegate”; and that a former advisor and minister of François Hollande, the outgoing president, was the embodiment of change, after nonetheless having spent five years in power and was elected President of the Republic in his first run for the office.

From an economic standpoint in 2017, we can’t really say that the weather has been bright and sunny, but the skies are starting to clear. More than eight years after the start of the subprime crisis, and after five years of virtual standstill, the activity in France in 2017 experienced a true acceleration. As a matter of fact, the economic recovery well and truly confirmed itself: growth accelerated and reached 1.8%, a level unseen since 2011, which helped unemployment continue its downturn.

For the government, which is benefitting from measures taken during the term of the last president, the conjuncture is ideal. The result: 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 years affected by the fear of terrorist attacks. Another positive point: household expenditures increased by 0.5% towards the end of the year, boosted by purchases of clothes and other household items.

As far as our industry and more specifically in-store sales and shop frequentation is concerned, 2017 has gone rather well, surfing on the positive dynamics of the political and economic climates in France and Europe.

The 16-17 winter went along the same lines as in preceding years. In shops located in the mountains, although the true enthusiasts were very present at the start of the season in search of very specific products, the rest of the winter was a bit more complicated. This was most likely due to the lack of snow at Christmas in 2016 that caused a later start to the true winter season and to the rather mild temperatures. On the “street” side of things, skateboards and cruisers and surf skates in particular were the most sought after products last winter. The surf skate trend started slowly before becoming the truly trendy product of the springtime. On the coast, surf conditions were rather favourable, which pushed clients towards purchases of wetsuits and surfboards with a modern retro trend confirmed by the twin fin revival and the arrival of all-together new shapes.

Political developments in France in April and May, with the election of a new president had an impact on shop frequentation numbers. However, the feeling in stores was universally positive. On the coast, in spite of tourist numbers and nice weather it would seem that a lack of waves had a slight impact on the way clients spent their money. The nice weather geared purchases towards boardshorts, flipflops and

sunglasses to wear to the beach. As for the urban sector, textiles sold rather well in the spring. Core brands like Thrasher who were very successful in 2017 were generally the most sought after, while clients seemed less attracted by major brands opting instead for smaller labels. The trend that started at the beginning of the year solidified, with surf skates becoming the street trend of the summer.

Summer 2017 was very good. The superb weather during June made for an especially good pre-season, which was much better than in 2016. The first wave of summer tourists, which arrived on July 14, was well and truly present in the stores. On the technical side of things, neoprene, especially high-end products seemed to attract the most clients, those looking for technical, high quality goods. It should be noted that sales of women’s products exploded, particularly in neoprene lines. The bikini lines from all the different boardsport brands, especially Rip Curl had solid early sell-through rates. The great waves combined with great sandbars had a direct influence on surfboard sales over the summer. In 2017, clients were once again looking for comfortable, easy-to-surf high-volume boards for summer: eggs and mini-mals with round, voluminous shapes.

Where SUPs were concerned, inflatable boards represented the vast majority of sales. The practical side of these products combined with technological advances were the main selling points. Still on the SUP side of things, foil boarding started to make a very small dent in the market. Even if it’s still relatively low key, there was a growing interest in the new sport throughout summer 2017.

Autumn 2017 saw a classic decrease in foot traffic on the coast, but was generally better than last year. Overall sales were rather positive with purchases of technical products like neoprene on the rise and working well throughout the season. Wetsuit accessories, especially booties, gloves, ponchos and changing bags sold well at the start of winter 2017. As for surfboards, high-end, high-tech epoxy products saw solid sell-through rates in stores. In more urban shops it was the same story: tourism was up and eventhough purchasing power was still limited, the nice weather led to solid sales of skateboard products. Street skating was well and truly back at the end of 2017. More and more younger skaters are starting or coming back to street, which led to solid sell-through rates on full street set-ups. After selling lots of cruisers and longboards shops are rediscovering this aspect of the sport. Last but not least, for resort-based shops and others selling winter gear, the start of the 2017-18 season has been very promising. The weather has been nice and cold, with early-season snowfalls that have increased foot traffic in stores, and boosted sales figures as a result. This quick start to the season has notably encouraged clients to buy new product, which hasn’t necessarily been the case over the last few years.

In general, 2017 in France was affected by politics, presidential elections and the swearing in of a new government in place for the next five years. From an economic standpoint, the GDP outperformed predictions and the end of the financial crisis seems to be a reality. All of these positive elements can be felt directly in the mood of the French and in there buying habits as well.

Even if purchasing power is still limited and price is still a determining factor at the time of sale clients are returning to the shops, which has been felt directly by shop owners who it seems as a general rule feel that 2017 was actually a pretty good year.

Benoit Brecq



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MARKET INTELLIGENCE

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The early snowfall brought winter sports and snowboarding back into consumers' minds in Germany, who took advantage of the conditions and toolled up. Shops and industry gratefully adjusted to the prevailing conditions and relieved themselves of old stock, thus providing a stable basis for the snowboard market that will benefit from the new carving and powder board trends.

Michael Press from MC agency (Salomon) says "not everything is super great yet, but there is a new tendency that makes more sense and works better. Railslide in Frankfurt am Main is a good example, who are back in business and gave snowboarding another chance last season. Yet those sports retailers that only sold snowboards when it was attractive are dropping out more and more. Those who only bought the standard range with entry-level models are on the decrease. Specialization is where it's leading to."

Andy Threimer from K2 explains: "The classic Intersport and Sport 2000 retailers are opting out of the snowboard business. But those who focus on snowboarding are seeing growth. This winter makes us very optimistic for good growth. I don't think many shops have too much old stock and imagine that most will be pretty well sold out by the end of the season, so they can make a healthy pre-order again. There's a new market space opening up for snowboard specialists who are keeping their eyes open and are well prepared online too. The kids segment in particular has a lot of potential and we still get a lot of requests from consumers looking for high-end equipment for their offspring and can't find anything on the market."

Simon Sander from S Brett in Mannheim, who is celebrating his shop's five year anniversary, reports good turnover of outerwear and boots at the beginning of the season. "We're really happy with that! The Burton Step On bindings gave great momentum as well. Compared to last season you really feel that we have more snow. Since we aren't in the mountains ourselves, conditions in the Black Forest are important for us, so people can go riding there - which is really noticeable this year. We don't have a lot of stock left. And if the season continues as it started, it's gonna be a great one!"

Simon's prognosis for 2018 stays on those positive lines: "We'll go forward and won't just bury our heads in the sand like many others but give snowboarding a real chance. Well positioned and with good employees, viewing yourself as a specialist in this segment, there's definitely room to grow." Still he's wishing for better support for smaller shops from brands to be able to stand his ground against big chains and online shops in future. The longboard business has become very quiet, but skateboarding grew between 20-30% in Mannheim in 2017, raising hopes for the following year.

Nils Gebbers from 24/7 distribution got the impression that retailers have successfully made the switch by now and coped with the decline in longboarding, after a couple of shops were caught with their pants down in previous years. "2017 has been a lot calmer and skateboard hardware is continuously developing positively. The European and German market had been flooded with longboards, as a lot of US manufacturers had used our continent to get rid of stock levels. This profoundly damaged our market, yet the overstock-situation seems to be dying down now, creating more demand again for certain longboard products. Skateboarding will continue to grow, there was a clear increase again in the second half of the year. Well-known completes show a positive tendency as well and it looks like more people are

taking up skateboarding again, looking for quality when it comes to hardware."

At the stylish Stay On in Koblenz, which has been in business for eight years and is in a new location since November, Felix Alterauge doesn't see room for improvement in the longboard segment anymore - the hype is over. "Our focus is on a couple of smaller brands as the bigger names are everywhere and I don't find it sensible to compete with shops like Snipes & Co. You have to find your niche! In the long run it's going to be difficult for stationary retailers to stay afloat in this industry. Shop rents and incidental expenses are rising and turnover in the skate segment is shrinking! The main part of the customer base, the young ones, shop online. Paying expensive rents with little revenue is difficult. To be honest, I'm pretty pessimistic for our industry. I just heard that the number of packages that our local mailman delivers has risen 100% compared to last year. This is increasing steadily while sales in our segment are decreasing. And I don't really think it's up to the industry to regulate this, but politics. Amazon isn't paying any taxes in Germany but is allocated employees from the job centre to ensure they improve their numbers by the end of the year. Looking at the bigger picture though, people work there for two months and are then are unemployed again. The whole system is broken and needs a complete overhaul. Of course you have to keep up with the times but it can't be that Amazon is making billions without paying a single Euro in this country!"

The development of skate parks in Germany on the other hand is looking pretty good though, as Andreas Schützenberger from IOU Ramps reports. "Projects are growing and are more accepted - developing really positively. The Olympics may give a bit of additional momentum but shouldn't be overestimated either. Bigger cities will surely be getting some indoor parks, Düsseldorf is already offering a little 'preview' and also park builders will benefit, as with raising acceptance in skateboarding more parks will be built." As advice for retailers he says: "Do and don't complain. Go out there, show initiative, appeal to the kids and get the next generation of skateboarders into your shops. Many of the so-called core shops are too cool and only grumble about scooters, which shows that something's going wrong in this business. But the shops are only one part, distributions and the industry play theirs as well. Shops don't necessarily have to invest money but should instead look after the local scene by staying in contact with their community and show the benefits that skateboarding has. Unfortunately we lost a generation to scooters, I'm not sure what the reason is for that but if you look at them, you see that they're definitely interested in skating. You simply have to take them by the hand!"

For the SUP market, Carsten Kurmis from CK-Surf Distribution (Starboard) sees continuing growth in 2018, as a lot of consumers who started with affordable entry models are upgrading their gear and are specialising in race or white water. With their new double chamber system, Starboard also promote safety for those who want to venture even further away from the shore - a topic that premium brands in general will benefit from. SUP has shown regional differences - the South had an advantage as rental stations were struggling with bad weather, but in general business was good everywhere. More smaller brands will provoke more fragmentation in sales, yet Carsten is still estimating growth in turnover for 2018.

Jochen Bauer



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MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY	UK	FRANCE	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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2017 is done so it's time for the yearly recap. Economically we are almost standing still, GDP growth is still pretty weak and the state debt is still very high and tax pressures are still as high as usual. Small businesses still suffer from this and have trouble in keeping their cash flow solid with banks not being able to help much with taking out a loan being more difficult then ever before. The biggest fear right now is a potential hike in VAT for 2018 as that would lower the purchasing power of many of our beloved boardsport and skate/streetwear customers. Let's see what the parliament elections in 2018 will bring, which will be no doubt be the hottest topic to start the new year.

Overall 2017 saw some improvements in our industry when comparing to 2016 as spring sales had some growth in hardware, clothing and shoes. Skateboarding brands in particular gained some solid growth as the logo hype continued its strong resurgence with many brands and stores gaining solid turnover with it. Thrasher leading the pack followed by brands like Huf, Stussy, Ripndip, Independent, Spitfire, Antihero and so on. It's good to see some positivity and store owners appreciate it as they are the brands they started their business with 15 to 20 years ago, excluding the newer ones of course.

But it was just spring that improved, the autumn/winter season had a better start as temperatures dropped in October and the first snow arrived in November with a good amount of snow in early December. This was perfect for the stores and riders alike, meaning the season started on time. Overall this resulted in better sell-through from the beginning with better margins as retailers didn't have to offer discounts to pull customers through the door.

When talking to different retailers one clear message is clear; our business is moving away from its niche and is now sold everywhere, which results in a different business model for the smaller retailers. Lukas Höller from Sub shops out of Bolzano summarises: "Offering specialisation in store, being authentic, having a good brand selection and research are key aspects and coupled together with a good solid and personal customer service are key."

Online is still on the up year after year but as feared the big players are the ones who profit the most and the smaller ones are slowly dying out. In 2017 we could see many small online stores after doing their calculations had to shut down or minimize their online presence because cost and profit weren't attainable and when doing online business there's only one way to do it – all or nothing, which is a familiar message from many retailers around the country.

Surf also had a solid year with hardgoods as the driving factor for turnover in that field. Surf clothing and accessories still struggle as many different streetwear labels also sell to the casual surf consumer. But good news is that surf and skate are trending high and are in good health. Snowboarding in terms of trend or hype is suffering the most but with less product on the market the industry seems to be getting back on track. All that's missing now is some good promotion to get new people on snowboards, which according to Alex Berger CEO of F-tech Snowpark construction and Fakieshop stores has been missing for many years, investing now would mean a healthy business in the years to come.

This is it for 2017, enjoy the shred shred and Happy New Year!

Franz Josef Holler

GERMANY	UK	FRANCE	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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Looking back at 2017, it seems important to mention that for once we can't say that the weather was bad, or at least we can't blame it for any kind of downturn in business. As a matter of fact, although the end of winter and early spring may not have been ideal for finishing off a difficult 16/17 winter season, the weather conditions during the spring, summer and autumn of 2017 corresponded well with the seasonal products on offer. In light of that fact, for those stores that saw an appreciable decrease in sales in 2017, it might be time to consider a business model revamp.

Distribution channels are evolving. We've seen it happening since the arrival of the Internet era, but it's been happening in shopping streets as well, where the stores that are present today aren't necessarily the same ones we saw five years ago. As such, we unfortunately deplore the closure of a certain number of specialty shops like Boarder's Park in Nyon, Snowboard Garage in Zurich and Thalwil. At the same time, we see the arrival of other types of players in the sector like Blue Tomato for example in cities like Zurich, Winterthur, Lucerne and Bern, but also that of the French giant Decathlon, which opened its first Swiss point of sale in Marin, near Neuchatel in August.

There are some that are neither opening nor closing, but quite simply deciding to change tactics, like no longer selling snowboard gear because they find it barely turns a profit, while others decide to jump into the snowboard market to help supply the increasing demand for rental gear. Those entering the rental market are mostly purchasing goods for young children and teenagers. The uptick in the number of snowboards on the market destined for the rental trade seems to be solidifying along with the renewed interest in snowboarding for little kids, which is also resulting in their parents jumping back on boards or trying snowboarding for the first time.

As for the skateboard market, it seems to have made a small comeback over the past two years and seems to have remained stable or risen slightly this year. It is once again offering products that are having an influence on sales figures in certain stores, in some cases on a year-round basis and in others more during the summer. True skate shops are becoming more and more rare, and as an effect, where there is no physical offering, online sales have become the norm.

Aquatic sports are continuing to sell well: SUP is leading the way with an extremely large presence on our lakes; the kiteboarding market is stable; and contrary to what one would think in a country without an ocean such as Switzerland, surfing is not to be overlooked. More and more Swiss are finding a passion for surfing. Their thirst for adventure and purchasing power both play significant roles in deciding to go on vacation to destinations where the search for surf is a main priority. Surf business in Switzerland is less affected by competition from online retailers and the prices are more stable than elsewhere.

Boardsports in general seem to be gaining in popularity again. They are coming back into fashion with the younger generation, are appearing in the media again, as well as in advertising and now truly participated in by people of all ages. Riding along with this movement, last November a small group of passionate enthusiasts created a new event called 'Into the Ride', which united all boardsports over the course of a weekend in Martigny. The event was open to everyone with demos, previews, a skate contest, an exposition, artisans, live shaping, conferences, and of course concerts to get things rocking once the sun went down. The first edition of the event was a real success and the organizers don't plan on calling it quits anytime soon.

Fabien Grisel



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MARKET INTELLIGENCE

GERMANY	UK	FRANCE	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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In 2017, Austrian politics went haywire with new elections and a political thriller, including mutual accusations of espionage. But the most unusual thing about 2017 was that the Austrians did not complain (at least those who spoke to SOURCE). What was the reason for this? Let's find out in our annual retrospect.

2017 was generally a good year for the domestic economy, with the WIFO (Austrian Institute of Economic Research) correcting its GDP several times during the year and forecasting growth of 2.75% at the end of October for 2017 as well as 2018 - the highest economic growth in six years. After years of stagnation, Austrian boardsport retailers were finally able to breathe a sigh of relief. No matter who we spoke to this year, whether skate, surf or snowboard shop, everyone was basically satisfied with sales.

The year 2017 began with the supposedly coldest winter of the last 30 years: the lowest temperature was -26.4 degrees Celsius. As much as people disliked the arctic temperatures, boardsport retailers were very pleased with them. Outerwear and snowboard hardware sold best — Hannes from Conny's Boardshop in Brixlegg was almost sold out with boards and bindings in January. The new carvers and powder sticks were also well received by the customers and it seemed as if snowboarding was finally cool again, especially with the older generation, who earn the big bucks and are now starting to take their own kids to the slopes with them.

This generation was also responsible for another hype: "The outdoor topic is getting more interesting next to the board business. People are getting older, hike up the mountains, also in winter," Thomas from the Alton Premium Board Store in Feldkirch noted in SOURCE #87 - a trend that many dealers in Austria saw and profited from in 2017. Even in the city, the outdoor theme can't be ignored. Instead of partying on weekends, many 20- and 30-somethings from Vienna now regularly travel to Schneeberg, Hohe Wand and Rax to go hiking.

Despite changeable weather conditions in early summer, there were also few complaints from the skate shops. Longboards were completely over this year, but skateboarding finally came back. Decks and skate shoes in particular did well in 2017, but Thrasher hoodies and Vans Old Skool shoes also sold well. Young skateboarders showed a certain trend towards individuality in 2017. "Customers know exactly what they want," Carmelo from Pipeline was convinced, and relied on smaller core brands that, in his opinion, understood this better than the big players. Sustainable products were also in demand and some shops supplemented their surf and skate range with yoga wear, reusable drinking bottles and vegan and/or fair trade clothing. Women's wear, swimwear and accessories were also well received. But the big thing of this summer in Austria was without question Stand Up Paddling. According to Gernot Brandstätter of Surf Service Graz, adult windsurfers and their kids were once again creating a lot of revenue. SUP is becoming more and more popular, and windsurfing also benefited from this hype in 2017 and sold better than the years before.

One might also be optimistic about the upcoming winter. Whether the theories about the winter of the century are true is still in the stars, but the season did indeed start very well; the glaciers got more snow in autumn they have done for many years, the openings were great and the ski resorts were also blessed with plenty of white gold - a large part of them started the season early again. The Christmas business is sure to benefit from the cold temperatures and early snowfall and boardsport retailers can continue their gasp of relief.

Let's hope that the hype and the economic boom will continue in 2018.
Happy New Year!

Barbara Mayer

GERMANY	UK	FRANCE	ITALY	SPAIN	AUSTRIA	SWISS
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2017 has seen the Spanish economy continue to grow in excess of 3% since the annual 3.6% drop in 2009. GDP has experienced increases almost four years in a row, with a mean growth rate from early 2014 to mid-2017 of 0.8%; much higher than the rest of the Eurozone. It would appear that we are now reaching the end of a growth cycle, as forecasts for 2018 continue to be optimistic but with growth predicted to be short of 3%, although it is still expected to remain higher than the Eurozone, underpinned by continued job creation.

In the light of these moderate growth conditions, slide sport stores are enjoying increased sales, although still far from obtaining pre-crisis turnover figures. Demand and the market have also changed with ever more discerning customers more inclined to using digital platforms. Not only this, but new trends, such as Black Friday or Cyber Monday, must be added to the equation. Trends which reap more benefits for department stores than small stores, whilst the latter must keep up with these trends as customers demand these kinds of discounts.

This opinion is shared by Txaber Trojaola of Uretan Basque Surf Center, a benchmark in the Bakio and Mundaka region of the Basque Country. "Turnover is on the up and customers spend much more time browsing before buying and they are extremely discerning. Everyone wants the best but at internet prices. People are responsive to the latest and most innovative products but, if they can, they'd rather wait for discount campaigns. One trend we have noticed is that surfing is now reaching all walks of life. Customers are getting younger and older at the same time. The spectrum is much broader now. Technical gear is the top seller whilst textile and accessory sales have remained steady."

Snowsports have experienced a similar trend. With the season having recently begun, we spoke with Javier Anula Castells, manager of the AN Sport store, c/ Claudio Coello, 141, in Madrid: "Last season's sales were particularly high, with sales of textiles, footwear and accessories much higher than the previous season. Generally speaking, our most important customers are families who all practice snowsports together. And what these customers are demanding the most are new products and new or unknown textile brands."

We hope that this season, which has only just begun, turns out to be the definitive season in terms of sales, substantially surpassing previous seasons.

Sergio Martin, of the skate, clothing, footwear and accessories store VSD in Vitoria-Gasteiz, the capital city of the Basque Country, commented, "the market is in a rut, burdened by the internet and brands, habituating customers to fictitious prices which fall well below margins. Our strongest competitors are the brands themselves."

In his particular case, Sergio suggests that footwear sales are dropping whilst the opposite is true for clothing. "It was the other way round until recently. There's been a slight shift." Accordingly, it can be said that 2017 is reaching a positive end, with sales still on the up although making sales is an uphill struggle. We need to remain on a par when it comes to the internet, discount campaigns and making the right choices in terms of best-selling products. The good news - customers continue to show faith and keep on buying.

Jokin Arroyo

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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 individuals feet and riding style.

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<div>3-9</div> <div>FEBRUARY</div> <div></div> <div>FREERIDE WORLD TOUR KICKING HORSE, GOLDEN BC CANADA WWW.FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM</div>	<div>9-25</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>WINTER OLYMPIC GAMES PYEONGCHANG, SOUTH KOREA WWW.OLYMPIC.ORG/PYEONGCHANG-2018</div>	<div>21-25</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>PILA VALLE D'AOSTA ROOKIE FEST ITALY WWW.WORLDROOKIETOUR.COM</div>	<div>12-14</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>AGENDA LAS VEGAS USA WWW.AGENDASHOW.COM</div>
<div>1-7</div> <div>MARCH</div> <div></div> <div>FREERIDE WORLD TOUR VALLNORD-ARCALIS, ANDORA WWW.FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM</div>	<div>3-4</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>AIR + STYLE LOS ANGELES WWW.AIR-STYLE.COM</div>	<div>12-14</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>SPORT ACHAT LYON, FRANCE WWW.SPORTAIR.FR</div>	<div>9-15</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>FREERIDE WORLDTOUR FIBERBRUN WWW.FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM</div>
<div>22-27</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>BASELWORLD BASEL, SWITZERLAND WWW.BASELWORLD.COM</div>	<div>31-8</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>SWATCH FREERIDE WORLDTOUR VERBIER, SWITZERLAND WWW.FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM</div>	<div>10-15</div> <div>APRIL</div> <div></div> <div>WORLD ROOKIE FINALS KITZSTEINHORN, ZELL AM SEE-KAPRUN, AUSTRIA WWW.WORLDROOKIETOUR.COM</div>	<div>18-19</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>PERFORMANCE DAYS MUNICH, GERMANY WWW.PERFORMANCEDAYS.EU</div>
<div>TBC</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>RIP CURL PRO BELLS BEACH, AUSTRALIA WWW.WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM</div>	<div>TBC</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>MARGARET RIVER PRO AUSTRALIA WWW.WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM</div>	<div>TBC</div> <div>MAY</div> <div></div> <div>RIO PRO BRAZIL WWW.WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM</div>	<div>TBC</div> <div>JUNE</div> <div></div> <div>SUMMER X GAMES AUSTIN, TEXAS, USA WWW.XGAMES.ESPN.COM</div>
<div>TBC</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>FIJI PRO FIJI WWW.WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM</div>	<div>TBC</div> <div>JULY</div> <div></div> <div>ITALIAN SURF EXPO SPIAGGIA DI SANTA SEVERA WWW.ITALIASURFEXPO.IT</div>	<div>TBC</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>BRIGHT, BERLIN BERLIN, GERMANY WWW.BRIGHTTRADESHOW.COM</div>	<div>TBC</div> <div></div> <div></div> <div>SEEK, BERLIN BERLIN, GERMANY WWW.SEEKEXHIBITIONS.COM</div>
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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



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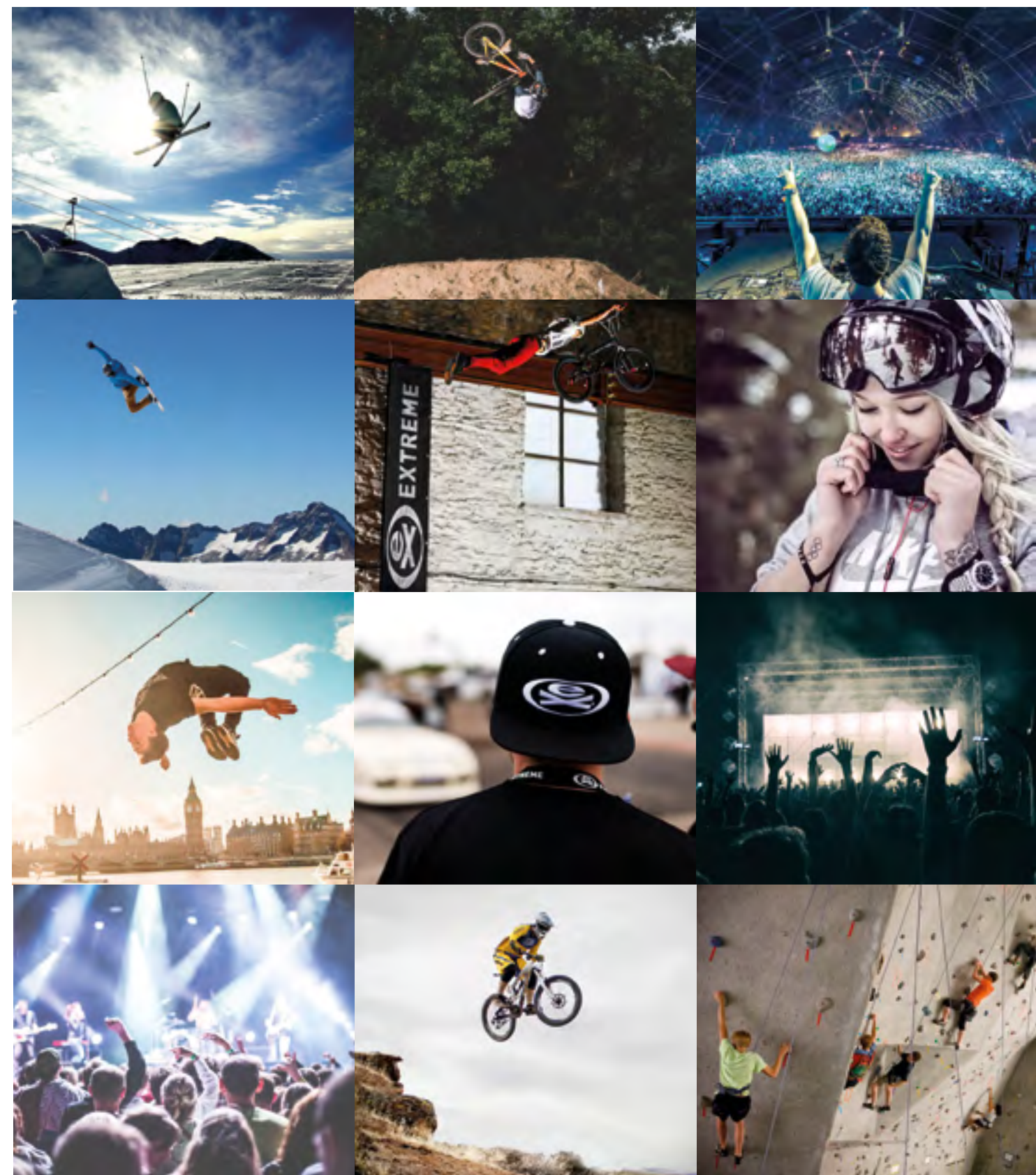
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