

BOARDSPORT

#94 DECEMBER/JANUARY 2019 €5

source.

EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

BIG WIG HENRY NIDECKER

RETAILER HELP BOOT FITTING

BRAND PROFILES, BUYER SCIENCE & MUCH MORE



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDES FW19/20 SNOWBOARD BOOTS & BINDINGS, SPLITBOARD HARDGOODS, HELMETS & PROTECTION,
SURF APPAREL, STREETWEAR, SOCKS, BACKPACKS & SKATE SHOES

Elias Elhardt



Elias in the Smith Rye 2L Jacket + Pant
ENGINEERED WITH GORE-TEX

Team Baron Mitt + Team Mission 25L Pack



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DAKINE

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HELLO #94

As we draw the curtain on 2018, we are at peak Instagram. It rules advertising and communication and since Apple introduced their treacherous weekly ‘screen time’ update, we can now see it also monopolises the amount of time we spend looking at these horrid little screens too. As we continue our downward spiral into digitalisation and away from tangible goods, consumer-spending habits paint the same picture. Whereas Generation X kept up with the Joneses by buying cars and houses, today Millenials and Gen Z are spending their money on experiences to populate their Instagram feed, “living their best life.”

It’s been a case of survival of the fittest since the Global Financial Crash and only those boardsports outfits innovative enough to keep evolving have stayed ahead of the curve. Evolution comes in many forms, from acquisitions and mergers to hybrid distribution strategies and those retailers who can offer bespoke experiences in store are today’s innovators.

One such forward thinking retailer is S’No Control in St Anton, who we hear from in our Retailer Help article on Boot Fitting (p.20). S’No Control look to capitalise on St Anton’s high end consumers with a bespoke snowboard boot liner fitting system, which they’ve engineered in house harnessing ski boot tech, a premium leather liner and foam injection process to offer a truly bespoke experience and product.

A procedure which comes with a high price tag, but allows them to connect with the consumer on a totally unique level. We look forward to hearing more unique ways in which retailers are offering their customers experiences when in store as we hit the road for shred/trade show season in January. Please also feel free to get in touch via the email address opposite.

You’d be hard pressed to find a more innovative snowboard company than the Nidecker Group. In 2018 Nidecker welcomed Rome Snowboards and the Low Pressure Studios brands (Bataleon, Lobster & Switchback) into the fold, creating a snowboarding super group. For this issue’s Big Wig we speak with Henry Nidecker to talk innovation, using competition as inspiration and staying relevant in a rapidly changing consumer environment.

And here at SOURCE we continue to put our printed pages in your hands every other month because we know there’s no replacement for it. You (un)fortunately can’t double tap to show your appreciation for our hard work, but we can promise you our pages won’t have push notifications flash up mid-read and we can still think of no higher accolade than scoring a magazine cover. What do you think, Matt Patti?

See you on the snow or at the shows

Always Sideways
Harry Mitchell Thompson
Editor

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On the cover: Matt Patti, Vans Snow Global Category Manager. Photo: Dustin Lalik at Baldface Lodge.

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LOW PRESSURE STUDIO & ROME SDS JOIN FORCES SUPPORTED BY NIDECKER
Rome SDS, Bataleon, Lobster and Switchback are joining forces under the Nidecker umbrella. The move sees Vermont-based Rome’s European operation shift to Amsterdam to join forces with Low Pressure Studio (Bataleon, Lobster, Switchback), who were also acquired by Nidecker.

SURF SNOWDONIA'S £16MILLION DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR EXPANSION & REBRAND
Surf Snowdonia is due to rebrand to Adventure Parc Snowdonia as of May 2019, following a £16 million investment into development plans which will include an expansion into indoor and outdoor activities for individuals and families followed by the addition of a Hilton hotel in 2020.

AGENDA LONG BEACH JANUARY SHIFTS TO CONSUMER EVENT IN JUNE
Reed Exhibitions are postponing its Agenda Winter Long Beach trade event. After careful consideration and feedback from the show’s exhibiting brands, retailers and media the Southern California edition of Agenda will evolve its platform to have a greater focus on the B2C festival in June 2019, merging streetwear, action sports, lifestyle and fashion alongside music, art, food, education and more.

WSL APPOINT SURF INDUSTRY VET SCOTT HARGREAVES AS WSL COMMERCIAL DIRECTOR
WSL has appointed on Scott Hargraves as Commercial Director. Having worked as Global Vice President of Marketing for Billabong and prior to that at Rip Curl in numerous leadership positions Hargraves has plenty of experience accompanied by passion for the sport and industry to drive growth across Australia, Asia and Oceania.

NITRO SNOWBOARDS AND SWISS AIR ANNOUNCE MARKETING PARTNERSHIP
Nitro Snowboards have announced their latest partnership with SWISS International Air Lines for the coming winter season 18/19. SWISS not only supported the Nitro team while they travel across Europe to produce their latest upcoming full length movie but will also be hosting a sweepstake, along side Nitro, for two people to win the trip of a lifetime to Laax.

SKATE INDUSTRY VETS STEVE DOUGLAS & ALEX COCK LAUNCH NINETEEN76 DISTRIBUTION CO & ANNOUNCE PRIMITIVE AS 1ST CLIENT
Skate industry vets, Steve Douglas and Alex Cock have recently announced the launch of their new distribution company, Nineteen76. The company will be based out of London and is set to be the distributor of Primitive Skateboard and Apparel. With both of their extensive experience and knowledge we can only expect good things to come.

INTERNET FUSION ACQUIRES FACTORY MEDIA
After acquiring Surfdome last year, Internet Fusion have recently acquired London-based action sports media house, Factory Media, home to titles including Whitelines, Onboard, Sidewalk, Surf Europe, Ride BMX UK, Mpora and more. Internet Fusion is a UK-based ecommerce company. Under the Internet Fusion Umbrella, Factory Media have rebranded as Any Day Media.

MIZU STRENGTHENS MANAGEMENT TEAM WITH APPOINTMENT OF TWO INDUSTRY VETS
Mizu have made two new additions to their management team, both with great experience in the action sport segment. Craig Smith, formerly of Dragon will run European Sales and Marketing for the company, while Scott Keating, formerly of Nike SB joins Mizu as the new Vice President of Sales and Marketing.

VF CORP COMPLETES SALE OF REEF TO THE ROCKPORT GROUP
VF Corporation have announce the sale of lifestyle brand Reef to The Rockport Group, the home of Rockport, Aravon and Dunham brands, with a wide range of mens and women’s footwear Reef seems like a good fit.

WSL APPOINTS ERIK LOGAN AS PRESIDENT OF CONTENT, MEDIA AND WSL STUDIOS
WSL has appointed Erik Logan as President of Content, Media and WSL

Studios. Logan has a solid history of work having been President of Oprah Winfrey Network (OWN), Executive Vice President, programming and broadcast operations for XM Satellite Radio and prior to that President of Programming for Citadel Broadcasting. Logan is due to start in January, 2019.

VIMANA SNOWBOARDS LAUNCHES NEW ON-THE-GO B2B SOLUTION
With B2B systems becoming a necessity in retail Vimana Snowboards decided it was time to launched their own B2B system, for the first time retailers will be able to use their smartphones to access the B2B system giving retailers the fastest possible response, elevating the customer experience and making ordering quick and easy for retailers.

DUTCH INDOOR WAVE POOL SECURES CROWDFUNDING TARGET & STARTS CONSTRUCTION
Europe's first indoor wave pool, SurfPoel, based in The Hague, Netherlands, is now under construction, having reached their crowd funding goal the day before their investors party. the aim is to have the first waves going before the new year, they plan on creating up to 149 waves per hour and customisable waves that can be adjusted in height and shape to fit the needs of every level of surfer.

BURTON APPOINTS NEW CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER SARAH CROCKETT
Burton has appointed Sarah Crockett, former VP of Integrated Marketing and Community Engagement at REI, as their new Chief Marketing Officer, bringing with her plenty of experience in creating marketing strategies with a story and a passion for snowboarding.

SNOW AVANT PREMIERE & ROCK ON SNOWBOARD TOUR JOIN FORCES AS SPORTAIR & LIKETHAT SEAL MERGER
SportAir (home to Snow Avant Premiere, Sports Achat, Bike Expo and Ski Test Tour) have joined forces with French agency LikeThat (organisers of events including High Five and the coveted French consumer snowboard test, Rock On Snowboard Tour), in a move that sees the French on snow demo rebranded to Rock On Snow Pro.


THE WAVE ANNOUNCE PLANS TO OPEN MAN MADE WAVE IN LONDON, UK
The Wave have announced they are planning to open a man made surfing lake in North London powered by Wavegarden Cove technology, which creates up to 1,000 quality waves per hour. The site in Edmonton (North London) will run adjacent to the Lee Valley Athletics Centre and The Wave expect the site to be open in Autumn 2019.

SOLE TECH APPOINTS HANS DIJS AS EMEA SALES MANAGER, BAS JANSSEN TRANSITIONS TO EMEA MARKETING MANAGER
Sole Technology has appointed industry vet, Hans Dijs as EMEA Sales Manager for Etnies, Emerica and éS. Current EMEA Sales manager, Bas Janssen is moving into the position of EMEA Marketing manager.


SIGB ON SNOW SKI TEST ADDS SNOWBOARDING FOR 2019
This year’s annual SIGB on-snow ski test is due to return to Pila, Italy and will take place from February 25-1 March, 2019. This year’s test will see the introduction of a snowboard test in response to requests from retailers and suppliers.

TAHE OUTDOORS ANNOUNCE PURCHASE OF BIC SPORTS
Tahe Outdoors are set to purchase BIC Sport with the deal being finalised in late December. As BIC Sports is already a leader within the watersports market, Tahe Outdoors Group will have the ability to expand into new activities giving them the wider market they were looking for.


ENDEAVOR DESIGN ACQUIRES SANDBOX HELMETS
Endeavor Design (home to Endeavor Snowboards & Airhole) has purchased the Sandbox helmet brand to expand their offering of Canadian snowboarding products globally. Endeavor has acquired the Sandbox intellectual property from founders Kevin and Melle Sansalone and will launch the Winter 2019/20 collection to retail customers in January.




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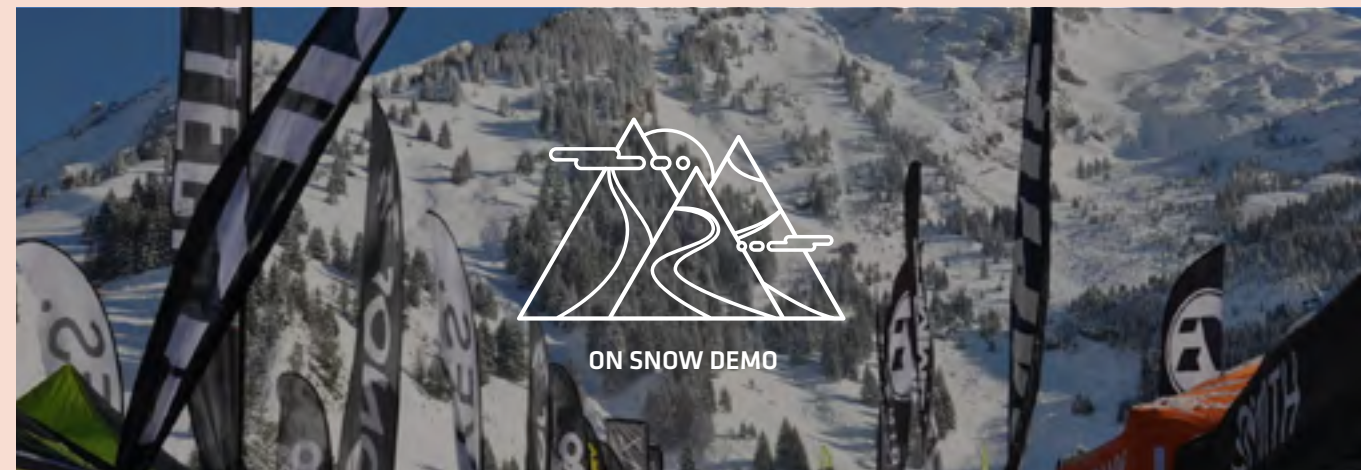


WELCOME TO



GIGI RÜF PHOTOS BY MIKE YOSHIDA

THE FAMILY GIGI RÜF!



ROCK ON SNOW PRO, LA CLUSAZ, FRANCE, JANUARY, 13-15, 2019

Snow Avant Premiere, Europe's first on snow demo for snowboards, has been renamed following the merger of owners Sportair with the Like That Agency, which owns the Rock On Snow consumer test events. The newly named Rock On Snow Pro will see a number of changes to enhance the experience and value of the event for retailers and brands. The biggest move is that retailers, press and exhibitors will all stay in the same Hotel, the 4 star Beauregard, located on the slopes of the resort. The hotel will be the venue for the new the Rock On Dinner and Party to be held on Sunday night and offers great facilities, including a swimming pool, hamman and jacuzzi to relax in after a hard working day.

The test area will continue to be divided into two parts, an outdoor village where the brands will have a wide range of snowboard hardgoods to test, no matter if you are powder or park rider and the 450sqm showroom tent where visitors will find soft goods brands, boots and accessories in a professional atmosphere. In the showroom there is an exhibition wall where retailers will see at a glance each brand's highlight. During the day this is a place to relax between rides, grab a cup of coffee and enjoy the free lunch and happy hour from 5pm. This is the best time to debrief from your riding day, speak with reps, exchange views with retailers and press and have a look at the exhibition wall to choose which products you will test the next day.

The Sportair Mobile App for both Android and IOS allows retailers to mark their product tests, in real time, and to exchange files with exhibitors and after the event. They will be able to see which

products they tested and what people's opinions where. This information will help them to choose which products they want to sell in their shop.

As usual, Sportair invites retailers from all over Europe to La Clusaz to get to know the brands and to discover their new snowboard products. For people coming from abroad, the organizers provide a return shuttle service from Geneva Airport to La Clusaz and preferential prices on accommodation. Two people per shop are invited with each visitor receiving an access badge, skipass at La Clusaz resort, breakfast and lunches with beer included. If your party is more than two or if you wish to extend your journey, there is a special offer of 50 euros extra per person per day. Retailers should also take the opportunity to visit ASAP, Sportair's softgoods show which is held in Annecy over the same Monday and Tuesday in brand stores and at the ASAP specific showroom in the Espace Rencontre in Annecy-Le-Vieux. This year the fashion show is at the Espace at 12.30 on Monday and the 10th anniversary celebration of ASAP and the presentation of the Outdoor retailer awards will be held at the Tribeca restaurant on the same day in the evening.

Last year's was event was visited by 308 shops who undertook 3,748 tests during the 3 days. So sign up and enjoy all the new opportunities this year's event has to offer.

sportair.fr

SHOPS 1ST TRY, ALPBACHTAL/ WILDSCHÖNAU, AUSTRIA, JANUARY 20-22, 2018

Shops 1st Try celebrates its 10th anniversary this year as the event grows from strength to strength, from a small discussion in 2008 to becoming an unmissable event for the snowboard industry in Europe. In its first year 25 brands attended whilst this year 87 brands have already registered and over the same period the number of shop people attending has over doubled. And to celebrate this year's prices have been discounted 10% to get everyone in the party spirit. The event is over a Sunday, Monday and Tuesday opening at 8.15 in the morning to 3.30pm whilst the indoor exhibition area is open from 4.30 to 10.30pm on the Sunday and Monday. The program is the same as last year's except the Industry Welcome Dinner on Saturday will be on the mountain, which should be an interesting descent, and at the exhibition dinner on Sunday and Monday nights in the Congress there will be a "surprise dessert" to celebrate the 10th anniversary. The dinners are a combination of eating, drinking and chatting against a backdrop of wall stands from every single brand at the event. The outerwear brands will be there in force, as this is the time of day when retailers have the time to talk about this product category after a full day of testing hardgoods. And don't forget the after show parties from 10pm-1am. Whilst Germans and Austrians make up the majority of visitors, there are also good contingents from Switzerland the UK, Poland, Czech Republic and Benleux. And this year more Italians are expected.

80% of visitors said they are there to get a feel for the market as well as to look at the latest trends. The test area is at the Pöglbahn Parking area in Inneralpbach, at the bottom of the main SkiJuwel lifts and for the last few years mother nature has served up some good conditions. As always at the event, hardgoods brands dominate but now also a significant number of goggles, accessories and outerwear are exhibiting. New Brands include Advenate, Alprausch, Brethren Apparel, Funky Snowboards, Korua, Level, OneBall, Penguin Clothing, Rehall, Remind Insoles, Sidas and Red Bull SPECT Eyewear, and in the Micro Brand tent this year you will find Ambition Snow Skates, earebel, Gara Splitboards, Konvoi, Loaded, Phunkshun Wear, Slopedeck and Stranda Snowboards. And on hand to accompany you on your trip up and down the hill will be a full roster of Shred Buddies (brand Ambassadors and Pros). So all in all not one to be missed by either brands or retailers so make sure you sign up. Remember, shops attending get free 2-day lift passes for 2 persons, free dinner for 2 persons for one evening and free entry to test area and Highlight Exhibition Dinner. Additional staff will receive discounted lift tickets and dinners.

shops-1st-try.com



SLIDE, TELFORD, ENGLAND, JANUARY 22-24, 2019

At time of going to press, 98.7% of the area of last January’s show has been sold, so the organisers are hopeful that they will surpass last year’s total area, having already exceeded last year’s exhibitor number. There are currently 86 exhibitors, a number of whom are returning after an absence or are new to the show and the show continues to attract key decision makers as it’s the only opportunity for UK retailers to see so many brands under one roof. New to show brands include Haago handwarmers, OneSkee onesies, Boot Doc boot-fitting, G3 skis, G-10 Gloves, Silverpoint Outdoor clothing and accessories, Grangers waterproofing materials, Gogglesoc goggle bags, Eider clothing, Zanier gloves, FAM clothing, Dinoski child-specific clothing and Red Bull SPECT eyewear. Returning exhibitor MaxTrax, distributors of Never Summer snowboards are at the show as they want to combine it with the successful SIGB Ski Test, which is now opening up to snowboard suppliers this coming winter. One of the brands to have significantly increased their space at Slide is Bradshaw Taylor. Sales Director, Sonia Prior commented: “We made the decision to substantially increase our presence at Slide in recognition of our development in the market. For FW19 we will have more space to be able to exhibit more from our brands including some excellent innovation.”

As always the Slide Awards will take centre stage with awards up for grabs for Hardware, Software, Accessories and the Fresh Brand Award, for the best newcomer. All entries will be displayed throughout the show in a dedicated display area and specialist retailers, media and opinion-

JACKET REQUIRED LONDON, UK, JANUARY 23-24, 2019

This is the event for brands from the casualwear, tailoring, sportswear, streetwear, denim, footwear, accessories and lifestyle markets. All come together in the vibrant East End of London at the Old Truman Brewery. This January’s edition of the show sees no major changes to the floorplan just “further improvements on adjacencies and flow and a more effective use of space,” providing exhibitors with maximum exposure to buyers and giving buyers a more direct route through the show. The shoulder high white walls introduced this summer continue as does the single entrance and exit, so visitors will get to see all exhibitors as they tour around the show.

The show is launching two new platforms, ‘Introduces’ and ‘Living’. The new ‘Introduces’ platform will give visitors the opportunity to discover the breakthrough talents of the new season and future contemporary classics with Jacket Required’s pick of emerging designers. Whilst ‘Living’, will be a curated selection of contemporary products and accessories from the most progressive and visionary interior design brands. This provides a complementary offer alongside the current progressive fashion line-up. And don’t forget the womenswear that supports the growth of casual clothing and sophisticated streetwear for women.

The FW19 theme for the event ‘Reinvention Reimagined’ draws together the importance of sustainability and the responsibility of the individual to demand transparency within the supply chain, while championing new trends and giving a nod to the evolution and continual reinvention

leaders will be voting for their favourites on the first day of the show. On the first evening at the end of the show, the SIGB are inviting all attendees to join them in the show’s central café for a drink. It’s a chance to network, meet friends, competitors and to welcome industry-newcomers in an informal environment. On Wednesday evening, the AGM of the SIGB (that owns and runs Slide) will take place including an open forum where all are welcome to have their say, followed by the presentation of the Slide Awards. On-site hotels mean visitors and exhibitors can easily walk from hotel to show and back. Telford is well served by the road and rail network meaning travel to and from the show is as easy as it gets. A free shuttle from the train station to the exhibition centre will help make the trip a seamless one. Drivers are offered free parking. Doors open at 9am and close at 6pm on the first two days and at 4pm on the final day. Visitors can take advantage of preferential hotel rates by booking on the Slide website. This year Slide is again the first trade show in Europe to exhibit the snowsports industry’s products for the 19/20 winter, and it gives buyers plenty of time to make their selections whilst meeting order deadlines for production. It’s still very much an order writing show, with brands holding back-to-back meetings. So for all key players in the UK snowsports market, Slide is the place to be.

Don’t forget the newly combined SIGB Ski & Snowboard test at Pila, Italy February 25 to March 1, 2019.

slideuk.co.uk

of the quintessential British man and woman. As part of this aim to work towards a more sustainable future in fashion, Jacket Required will be collaborating with Blackhorse Lane Ateliers, London’s only jean manufacturer, with some workshops on jean repairs. The ‘In Talks With’ series of key speaker and panel discussions will continue from the last show to provide insight into sustainability and corporate responsibility and give industry leaders a platform from which to share knowledge with retailers, press and consumers about best practice.

Action sports brands will continue to be found all around the show rather than be congregated in one place. Brands at the show include Santa Cruz, Body Glove, Independent, Powell Peralta, Element, Dickies, Chrome and Howies.

Opening hours are 10am- 7pm on the first two days and 10am - 5pm on the last day. Shoreditch High Street, Liverpool Street Station, Aldgate East Station and Old Street Station are all within walking distance and if you’re driving to the show there are two car parks available within The Old Truman Brewery on Brick Lane and Grey Eagle Street. So if you’re a retailer on the lookout for what’s hot in men’s and women’s wear you know where you need to be. See you in London.

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SNOWBOARD BOOTS 2019 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Ah, the double edged sword of the snowboard boot. A pain to sell online or off, lots of variance in length and width... and difficult binding compatibility because of inconsistent vamp heights and heel widths. Nightmare, huh? Well, every snowboarder needs a pair, and it's a great touchpoint for customer interaction and trust building if you can get it right - and if you can't, then see our boot fitting article on page (insert when contents page done) to sort it out. Meanwhile, **Tom Wilson-North** delves into the main trends of 2019/20 snowboard boot lines.

BIG CHANGES

First up, Flow boots are no more - since the merger they've become Nidecker boots. "But the history of Flow still lives on in Nidecker boots. 'FlowFit' is a core concept whereby our boots fit your feet perfectly and feel great," explains Footwear Manager & Designer Margaux de Mercurio. We saw widespread integration of Nidecker's cornerstone asym tech, as well as a full clean-up of the range, alongside a lot of familiar Flow names and know-how.

Next up, you have to have been living under a rock if you missed Nicolas Müller singing with Thirtytwo, and FW19/20 sees them release his first boot pro model since the old Nike Kaiju. It's a high-tech, high tie-dye masterpiece. "We especially focused on the idea of protection around the heel and ankle zones, and developed new technology to give Nico the cushioning that he needs. But even with the emphasis on support and our Elite Fit System, this boot is mid-flexing - which suits the way he rides perfectly," says Thirtytwo's James Kim.

COMPONENTRY AND CONSTRUCTION

We looked at new branded and unbranded technologies which are making boots ride better and last longer. DC are using Carbitex, which is a flexible carbon fibre composite. It's tune-able, with a dynamic flex and offers amazing resistance properties which make it perfect for use in boots. You'll see it used in the lower shell of Burton's topline SL as well. Thirtytwo have a new Michelin branded Fiber Lite outsole on the underside of the aforementioned Mullair (it's on the Ride Fuse too), as well as a 3D moulded football style heel cup called Cushion Cup out back. Vamana have changed the flex pattern a bit on the Continental - they're using urethane reinforcements to keep the boot flex consistent.

Meanwhile, Nidecker have used a new outsole with the grippy and flexy BFT Vibram Ascent material on their Helios. Over on the other side of the Alps, Northwave's Prophecy and Decade models have new Seamless Shield rubber protection at toe and heel, which promises to make the boots more waterproof and last longer. The minimal application of the technology leaves a really clean, minimal look - which is common to many boots next year.

In liners, we noticed expanded use of Ultraloon liners across the industry as a response to increased performance requirements. Some are using a new Ultraloon F.I.T. liner with dual density foam which is great at shock absorption, then Salomon are using Ultraloon on the all-new Dialogue and Launch models, promising a great weight-to-comfort ratio. The liners are the big story at Rossignol too - the new Document, Cutback and Primacy inners all look more like ski boot liners than traditional snowboard boot liners, with a really nice fit, increased rebound and a healthy glop of forward lean. We saw a first from Vans too, whose V2 UltraCush Smartwool liners are made from merino wool, whose non-stinky, moisture-managing thermoregulating properties are beloved by wearers - and sheep - worldwide.

PREMIUM CATEGORY PERFORMANCE

No surprises here - the premium segment is still the one shown the most interest by consumers, so brands follow with investment and development. But the premium segment is mellowing out. It's becoming apparent that not everyone needing a high end boot wants to splitboard, ice climb or scale the north face of the Aiguille du Midi, so there has been a refocus on making high end boots more 'do it all'.

“Brands are making buyer's jobs easier with some well-designed earth tones, textures and patterns to complement the staples”

“Our number one focus remains our Team boot”, confirms Nitro’s Tommy Delago. “Riders are willing to spend the extra buck for a boot that really fits and works.” Nitro’s new high-end women’s model - called the Bianca TLS - is particularly foxy, with a heated ThermlC liner and genuine leather exterior. We liked the look of Burton’s new Kendo premium lace-up, the DC Shuksan feels pimp and K2’s Maysis gets upgraded to the new proprietary Conda system as well as getting new rubber toe and heel protection. Below the Maysis sits their new Holgate, which has a banging featureset from the likes of Intuition and Vibram as well as outsole rubber reinforced panels for durability. Meanwhile, at Ride the premium packages on their Insano and Trident models will add durability and improved fit via new Rebound Heel Counter and TPU Toe Caps.

Looking at boot-world innovation, Nidecker’s Talon is stronger and stiffer with an eye-catching asym design, and Head’s Eight BOA has a brand new socket construction and smooth traction to distribute lacing load over a greater area for a more comfortable fit. Then you get to Deeluxe’s unique Ground Control; we’ve been excited about this awesome hybrid hard-meets-soft boot carver since we saw the first prototypes eighteen months ago. “It absolutely revolutionizes carving,” says Deeluxe’s Marketing Manager, Florian Heim. “The totally fresh design provides the power and precision of a hardboot while still delivering the enduring comfort that makes a softboot so appealing.” Great job, guys.

“Finally snowboarding is trending away from the running shoe look and finding a wider aesthetic definition.”

OLD SCHOOL/RETRO/SOFT

The fact that snowboard boot preference is such a personal thing means snowboarders aren’t prepared to sacrifice riding performance just for a bit of throwback steeze. Boots were shit back in the day anyway. That said, there is definitely an uptick on surf-inspired boards and riding, so there’s a boot trend to match. “The Zephyr is designed for exactly that surfy and skate feel. It’s cut slightly lower with a flex collar and has a very forgiving forward and medial flex - so you can get those knees turned in and get low”, says Thirtytwo’s Kim. The Zephyr will come in a Boa version next year too. Vans expand their Linerless technology for 19/20: “Lightweight construction and slimmed-down upper reduces the boot’s overall size and weight and the increased internal foam package provides a softer, more cushioned feel. A calculated combination of support and free-flex articulation makes Linerless technology ideal for performance, street, or park riders,” says Vans’ Matt Patti, Global Category Manager. And don’t forget the well-received DC Tucknee, which is back again with a super plush, squishy feel for maximum tweak. These surfy type of boots aren’t to be confused with high-end, softer-flexing freestyle boots, which have more support and shock absorption properties. That’s the biggest market in Japan, according to Flux, whose new TX-Lace model looks sick next year.

LACING

If you’re short of time, we’ll sum it up in just one word - Boa. Boa reigns supreme in the snowboard boot world - next year there’s a Double Boa TM-2 from Thirtytwo, a sick OM-BOA from Flux, Boa on the entire range from Nidecker and a cool Ritual Limited Dual Boa from Burton. It’s interesting looking at how brands have their own spin (groan) on the technology - Burton’s soft lace in place of the metal cable, Thirtytwo’s extra lower lace points and K2 with their patented Conda system. And Salomon are introducing Boa on the STR8JKT liner closure part of the Launch Lace, an application which is a perfect use of the reel.

That all said, next year you’ll note a small increase in popularity of traditional laces - although this market remains niche in Europe at present. Burton’s Kendo has a mid-flex, autocant outsole - same as the Ion - and Rome remain true to their roots with traditional lacing and powerstraps. “We’re seeing riders gravitate towards this style because it creates multiple levels of adjustability and is the most foolproof, trustworthy system out there,” explains Rome’s Matt Stillman.

AESTHETIC

Well, clearly black is going to be the dominant colour on a boot wall today, but brands are making buyer’s jobs easier with some well-designed earth

tones, textures and patterns to complement the staples. Snowboarders want their boots to match their pants, not their board and binding, so where possible boots tie in to the season’s softgoods colour trends. The most modern-looking boots we saw next year were Thirtytwo’s Lashed in Spectrum with a bright prism effect, and Burton’s Ion with a cool translucent shell. And we noticed a rising trend towards volume reduction and minimalism with Salomon, Flux, Rossignol, Head and many others citing the demand for thinner, slimmer, more compact and lightweight silhouettes and footprints.

The main inspirations next year will come from skate (duh), workboots, football cleats, hiking boots and vintage mountaineering footwear - finally snowboarding is trending away from the running shoe look and finding a wider aesthetic definition. “The outdoor influence is important for technical solutions - after all, we’re not producing fashion good... but as an Italian brand we always keep an eye on style,” concurs Northwave’s Davide Smania,



photo Rossignol

CONCLUSION

So, there you have it. Next year’s boots lines are cleaner and slicker than last year, with a focus on functionality and ingredient brands. Stitching is less and less prevalent on the outer shells, and the mid-to-premium sector is where a big part of your buy-in ought to be. But let’s not forget the importance of making the boot purchase as easy and obstacle-free for consumers. The industry still has a way to go in that area, through the adoption of quantitative standards in insole length and width, as well as communicating clear and genuine flex ratings and forward lean angles. If the skiers can do it, why can’t we? “Unfortunately, many riders choose boots in the wrong size. They often do this by simply defaulting to their shoe size when selecting boots. Yet the fit and size of boots varies tremendously across brands. Next year we’ll be explaining how crucial it is to measure in order to get boots in the right size,” says Deeluxe’s Heim. ☹

FOR SPLITBOARD BOOTS SEE P49
FOR BOOT FITTING ARTICLE SEE P18

HIGHLIGHTS

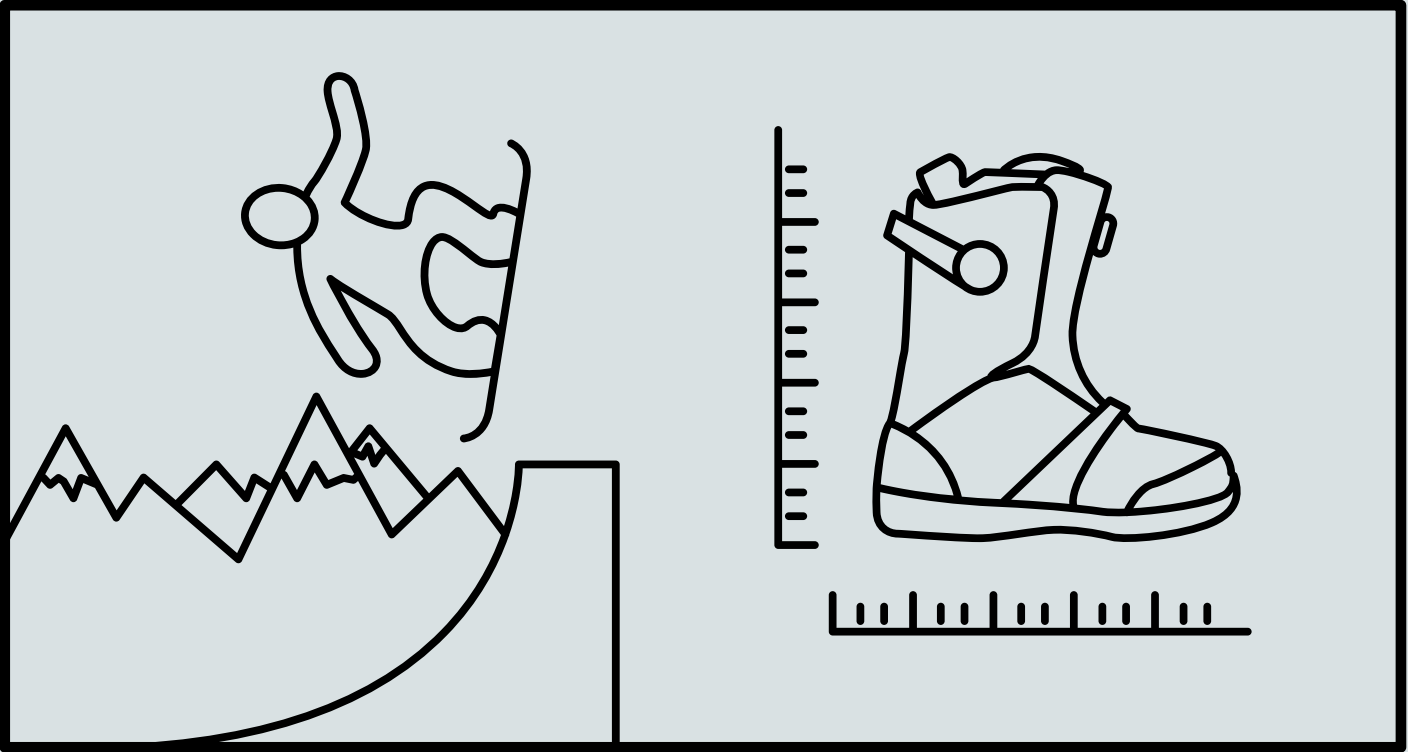
- Thinner than ever
- Sleek, minimal lines
- More ingredient brands
- Surfiness remains popular
- Focus on durability



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RETAILER HELP

BOOT FITTING

FIT FOR PURPOSE

Was snowboarding really better in the 90s? Probably - but if it's a strong case for the defence you're after, just dig out a shop catalogue from any point in the 20th Century and turn to the boots page. While there might be some degree of variation, everything you see there will share a few questionable traits; limited colour palette, curious shaping, and less support than a Sunday league football team, to name just a few. Glory days indeed.

Another thing they'll all have in common is that, were you in the mind to buy any of them, you'd have gone - nay, had to go - to a snowboard shop, whereas nowadays shred gear is readily available online. Meanwhile the materials and technology found in the modern hoof have advanced beyond even the most chemically-assisted fantasies of your average 90s rider.

While they'll never have the 'wow' factor of a freshly-pressed snowboard adorned with killer graphics, boots have nevertheless got to the point where they'll practically sell themselves. However, more and more retailers are realising the huge advantage that the humble boot can give a snowboard store.

After ten years at S'No Control, a core snowboard store in St Anton, Max Alber has seen first-hand just how the boot market has developed. "Because we take the whole boot-fitting thing pretty seriously, we've noticed that in the past three or four years things have changed a lot," he says. "With the new high-end liners you can get an almost perfect fit without doing a crazy amount of

How a proactive approach to boot-fitting can give core snowboard stores an edge in the internet era.
By Andrew Duthie.

work, and also people are more concerned with how the boot fits. They realise that's much more important than how it looks. People are asking if they're heat-mouldable, and what customisation options there are."

Indeed, the heat-moulding option - something that's thankfully now available with the vast majority of boot liners - is a huge draw. As well as the obvious benefits in comfort and performance, staff can use that one-on-one time to find out more about the customer, and recommend additional products.

Given his shop's proximity to the slopes, Max can also offer an effective follow-up service. Whether it's day 1 or 100, any problems that present themselves whilst riding on the slopes of St Anton can be diagnosed and hopefully fixed. As he puts it: "We can't match the online prices, obviously, but [dealing with] any complications like heel lift, lace issues, it's all included in our price."

If a customer is struggling with their purchase after a week on snow, then Snowfit-Revolutionz will allow an exchange for another pair (minus the equivalent of a week's rental fee). That way, Chris Sturgess explains, they're not stuck with something that's likely to turn them off to snowboarding altogether.

"The boot's regular liner gets replaced by a custom-shaped liner made from leather. It's completely empty, no foam or anything inside. You step into this vacuum fit machine wearing the liner and the shell, then my colleague and I inject foam into the liner. Your foot is the model for the liner shape - it can't get more customised than that. If we get a customer with a problematic foot, from injuries or whatever, this is the option we'd offer." Max Alber, **S'No Control**, St Anton

The importance of an ongoing relationship post-sale is echoed by Chris Sturgess, Manager of Ipswich's Snowfit-Revolutionz. While much of his shop's footfall comes from those who travel to the mountains only once or twice a year, that doesn't change the approach in the slightest. For him, it boils down to this: "It's important to get people in the right kit, so that they'll continue to snowboard and hopefully come back and buy more gear." Case in point; if a customer is struggling with their purchase after a week on snow, then Snowfit-Revolutionz will allow an exchange for another pair (minus the equivalent of a week's rental fee). That way, Chris explains, they're not stuck with something that's likely to turn them off to snowboarding altogether.

In Chris' view, no sale should ever be fully customer-driven. Even when someone comes in saying they want a specific boot, his staff will always bring them another pair for comparison. It's great for the customer, who is more likely to find exactly what works best for them, and the extra-mile element of the service is also one of the best ways to avoid 'showrooming' - the practice of checking out a product in-store, then buying it online from whoever offers the lowest price.

In much the same way that you'll be more likely to leave a tip for great service at a restaurant (and conversely may never return to one that doesn't deliver on that front) a snowboard shop can build a loyal customer base and positive word-of-mouth with expert service. And there's no greater opportunity to win someone over than during a boot fit.

Of course, you'll still get those who will gladly eat up a good hour of a shop assistant's time, only to take what they've learned and fire up Google. One way to potentially combat this is by charging for the fitting service up front, with the understanding that the cost will be refunded if it results in a purchase.

While this approach may seem like a sound anti-showrooming strategy on paper, neither Max nor Chris have adopted it: "I've heard of a shop that charges £30 for 30 minutes, and more if it's over that," recalls Max. "I don't judge the ones that consider doing it, but I don't think it's an option for myself. It's about a personal experience. I go riding with a lot of our customers, and it'd be a different type of relationship if you have to ask them to pay 20 euros at the end of a boot fitting. It also pressures the customer to find something, and pressures me to sell them something that maybe they don't even want, and then they're unhappy on the mountain."

Chris agrees, citing a recent example: "A guy came in for a jacket and pants to take on his second ever snowboard trip. I asked him how he got on the first time, and he mentioned that his feet had hurt, but that he was hoping to get lucky with the rental boots this time.

I explained that they could be a bit of a lottery, so if he wanted to get an idea of size, then it may be worth trying a few pairs on here. He looked at his watch and said 'I've got half an hour, maybe I'll do that'. As it happened, he left with a new jacket, new

trousers, and a pair of boots. Whereas if I'd said 'OK, if I could just get 35 quid off you first...'. I think that limits sales." Despite the difference in location and target market, these two shops seem to share a formula. If you commit the time and trust the customer, you're more likely to see long-term benefits. And what of future opportunities? As boot tech continues to develop, perhaps there is lots of unrealised potential for a truly tailored boot-fitting service? A quick glance in the direction of the ski industry shows just how deep a dive it's possible to take. In London, for example, there's a shop that will analyse everything from your balance to your gait in the quest for a 'perfect' fit. It's an exhaustive service, and will set you back more than the cost of the boots themselves.

"Snowboarders of every budget now have access to heat-mouldable boots, and shops should seize the opportunity that presents with both hands. Not only does it get customers through the door, it gives them plenty of reasons to keep coming back."

Too far? Perhaps. Although having said that, no one could argue that there aren't things to be learned from our two-planked friends. After all, they had figured out the importance of the heat-moulding process long before snowboarders caught up. Max gets it; by working alongside an experienced ski boot technician and using technology borrowed from Fischer, he has developed what is surely the next level in snowboard boot fitting.

"The boot's regular liner gets replaced by a custom-shaped liner made from leather," he explains. "It's completely empty, no foam or anything inside. You step into this vacuum fit machine wearing the liner and the shell, then my colleague and I inject foam into the liner. Your foot is the model for the liner shape - it can't get more customised than that. If we get a customer with a problematic foot, from injuries or whatever, this is the option we'd offer."

Naturally something this bespoke comes at a cost; around £400, to be exact, although there's a small saving on the cost of the boots as you're only buying the shells. Even in relatively affluent St Anton there have so far been just a handful of takers each season, but Max acknowledges that it's still early days for this technology. There is, therefore, every chance that it could be refined for a wider market in future.

In the meantime, snowboarders of every budget now have access to heat-mouldable boots, and shops should seize the opportunity that presents with both hands. Not only does it get customers through the door, it gives them plenty of reasons to keep coming back. 🛷

HALLDOR PRO

The Halldor Pro bindings are fully decked out for all-mountain freestyle riding. They are built on the ultra strong and lightweight AERON base and feature calf cupping Reach Around highbacks for extra proper presses and added support while the Eames straps comfortably hold your feet in place for a more responsive feel. These bindings will support your dreams like a middle school guidance counselor.



photo Head

SNOWBOARD BINDINGS FW19/20

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Snowboarders are beginning to understand that the steering and control which a quality binding offers is definitely worth paying for, and the days of seeing sick decks mounted with vile plastic foot-traps are - for the most part - over. So, what's new in the binding world? Well, quite a lot, as it happens. It's your job as buyer to make a solid selection and build up a binding collection which is going to work appropriately with the boards you offer, look pimp and - hopefully - score you great sell-through. **Tom Wilson-North** separates the bangers from the junkers in next year's binding lines.

ANKLE STRAPS

The modern defined aesthetic for snowboard binding straps for 2019/20 has trickled down from Burton's defining Hammock Strap and, subsequently, Now's Sieva Strap. These injection-moulded masterpieces were the inspiration for most of what's on the market today, and the durability, eco-cred, low cost, comfort and high performance of the style are evident, accepted and understood. Nidecker is using branded next-gen Now Hyperfuse straps in their Carbon binding, and Fix will be showing new Injected Gel straps on their Magnum and Opus models. Head have modernised their straps and come up with the new Comformance strap, which adapts well to many different boot shapes and is very low-profile once on the foot. We were also stoked on Drake's new injected strap with over-injected TPU built around a nylon frame, which provides long-lasting and stitch-free performance.

TOESTRAPS

Despite some mainly nostalgia-driven yearnings for old-school over-the-top toestraps, overwhelming consumer demand is firmly in favour of round-the-front capstraps. Next year there are some interesting takes on the tech coming out. "We are expanding the use of Vibram's rubber compound in our Übergrip toe straps to build a strap that perfectly wraps around any shape of toe box. The rubber makes sure the strap stays in place, even if conditions are wet or cold", explains Nitro's PM Florian Lang. Expect to see a new 3D Contour toestrap from Now, and Rome's AuxGrip toe strap will use a previously-unseen pattern to give mega hold and dexterity. Burton, who alongside Technine were responsible for the shift to

capstraps in the first place nearly twenty years ago, will be using injected Supergrip and Supergrip 2.0 capstraps all the way across the line.

BASEPLATES

Union's Contact is responsible for a lot. That binding floated on a soft EVA panel to stabilise and support the chassis and minimise vibration and chatter. This floating format is a popular one for bases next year, expect to see it emerging from other brands too. Materials are evolving as well; Vimana are using Kevlar in their Scando Gold binding for faster edge to edge response, and Arbor will be eeking more power out of their burly Cypress binding, doubling up on the fibreglass in the System-X baseplate. That translates into high-speed, big-mountain performance. Union, meanwhile, are upgrading their Fused Vaporlite material used on last season's well-received Strata. The new Fused Vaporlite+ has all the same properties but is 20% lighter - find it on the Falcor and Ultra.

Flow have an interesting new asym baseplate design on their Fenix, Mayon, Nexus and Juno SKUs. "The entry point for the new baseplate is a little wider for easy access and exit, with a minimal footprint thanks to the slim waist and the design of the rockered corners - this allows the board to maintain a natural flex. And since bindings are mounted on a snowboard at an angle, we designed off-axis PowerBeams so that energy is channelled directly to the toe and heel edges of the snowboard. For an evenly balanced power distribution, we also offset the connection points of the

“With a multitude of shapes, innovation, great design and obvious functionality improvements, things aren’t looking too tricky for next year’s snowboard binding buy-in.”

PowerTriangle cables on the lateral and medial side of the baseplate to line up closer to the centre-axis of the snowboard,” explains Flow’s Senior Product Manager & Designer, Lucien Vink.

BUCKLES

Buckles have a tough life; if they work properly, they’re forgotten, but the second they don’t, they’re subject to a foul-mouthed tirade. The takehome? Get the buckles 100% right and customers are happy. Ride introduced their new Linkage ratchet last year at their high end, and this year it’s rolling out linewide. So no more chewed up ladders and flaccid buckles. It’s the same story over at K2 with their RADchet, and Now will be introducing a fibreglass-reinforced nylon buckle lever called, catchily, the PA66-FG. And while they’re not strictly ratchets, over at Rossignol they are bringing out new 3D-moulded, tool free length adjusters, which are perfect complements to their trusty binding ladders.

“There’s a movement back towards the printing of technical detail text on the product in a Designer’s Republic-esque fashion, but generally art packages remain bare-bones and industrial.”

HIGHBACKS

A lot of a binding’s identity derives from the highback. Next year sees cut-outs galore with creative highback shapes that show functionality through considered design. K2’s Meridian, Formula and Lien AT are all gorgeous and ought to be high on your list at the on-snow demos. Meanwhile, Nitro’s Phantom Carver highbacks are gnarled and wrapped things of great beauty with sensibly placed carbon inserts and airy cut-outs for maximum edge pressure and control, whilst Salomon’s Highlander highbacks are geometric, scary and uber-minimal. Shape is important for comfort and performance in a highback, and the shape of Nidecker’s Carbon highback promises to hit the sweet spot. The Jones Apollo - based on the Now chassis still - highback gets a tweak too, with the addition of a subtle wing at the top for better toeside response. And since asym is one of the big themes of the year, Flux’s XF gets a new spoiler with symmetrical looks and asymmetrical function. “It has a different thickness layer inside, which becomes thinner towards the outside for more flex,” explains Flux’s Kyosuke Ogata. “More support backside, more forgiveness sideways.”

We saw increased use of mixed materials in highbacks next year too. SP have an aluminium reinforced heel area for greater board control - it’ll help the outsole to stay clear when the highback reclines too. Rome’s brand new Black Label model will use an industry-first thermoplastic glass fibre composite material in the highback, and Drake have a carbon composite highback which is way more affordable than a full carbon piece - and much easier to 3D shape too.

We saw an interesting approach to adjustability from Head on their NX Six highback, which has been redesigned to accommodate their Flexmaster 3000 flex adjuster. This allows one binding to multitask as the carver, jibber or powder shredder with ease. This versatility is a great idea, we love it.

Finally, minimal forward lean adjusters (such as those seen on Union’s Strata & Legacy, Nitro’s all-new Team Pro or Rome’s Slice) are trending - this is logical because it fits into the understated and smooth modern aesthetic of today, but it’s important to remember that not providing enough forward lean options is extremely annoying, so remember the FLAD needs to work well enough when required.

GRAPHICS

Beyond the ubiquitous black-on-black, which is literally everywhere, we’re seeing some space-age design in snowboard binding graphics. There’s a movement back towards the printing of technical detail text on the product in a Designer’s Republic-esque fashion, but generally art packages remain bare-bones and industrial. There’s not too much consumer demand for self-expression via the medium of the snowboard binding, so chromes, ritzy glosses and unusual colours are out, presenting the possibility for doing more harm to the sale than good. Saying that, Nitro’s Phantom Carvers look the shit in their red, shiny candy apple colourway. But the rest of their line is plainer, with only basic contrast colourblocking and some low-key monochrome hand-art on the Zero Worries model.

Earth tones remain strong (Union, Flow) as do muted neutrals and cool blues (Burton, Now, Salomon and Arbor). Pop colours are still fluoros and Lego primaries. But yeah - black kills it. “Our bindings are as black as our hearts”, agrees Ride’s Global Brand Director, Jim Linnberg. “We live in a horrible corner of the USA where the sun doesn’t shine for six months a year, so we like black stuff. I think we have some other colours too, but why mess around when you can get black?” Why indeed.

Cross merchandising between boards and bindings where possible is clearly still a thing, with Switchback incorporating more graphic elements from sister brands Bataleon and Lobster. Burton’s Woodgrain Jane colourway on the Scribe looks great with their Yeasayer, and the Mission Off White/Black colourway has big, bold branding for fans of the big B.



photo Salomon

RANGE CHOPPING

As bindings become sleeker and cleaner, product lines are tightening up with unnecessary SKUs being zapped out in favour of cohesive and coherent lines as well. Amplid is a great example. “Our binding program is really very simple. Two bindings at two price points, one low one high, offering different levels of response and support. Any colour you like, so long as it’s black. The Mutant will meet the specific needs of powerful and technical riders, and the versatile and wallet-friendly Santos is optimised for all-mountain snowboarding. The bindings are carry-over products which will remain in Amplid’s collection until we’re able to create something significantly better and offer real innovation,” explains Amplid’s marketing guy, Rich Ewbank. There’s been a good clean-up at Flow too, with the product lines being simplified with more equal jumps between pricepoints and clear feature upsells as you go up the range.

CONCLUSION

So, what to make of all that? Well, with a multitude of shapes, innovation, great design and obvious functionality improvements, things aren’t looking too tricky for next year’s binding buy-in. Offer up a good mix of the key brands, make sure you get a couple of bags of spare parts to support everything, don’t go too insane on the high-end stuff and you’ll be sorted. Oh, and don’t forget to buy a bit of black in there somewhere too. 🖤

FOR SPLITBOARD BINDINGS SEE SPLITBOARDING HARGOODS BUYER'S GUIDE, PAGE 51

HIGHLIGHTS

- Asym movement grows
- Clean & sleek designs
- Injected straps prevail
- Earth tones & neutrals
- Tidy product lines

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RETAILER PROFILE

RADIX, SWITZERLAND

Radix is a boardsports store in Switzerland started in the mid-90s by two brothers and a friend while still in high school to meet the snowboarding boom. Now they operate three stores in the region, each with a bespoke setup for their respective area and all with a focus on customer experience and engagement. Realising the potential for dwell time with the introduction of cafes a number of years ago, Radix are continually striving to stay ahead of the curve.

Please give us a background to your store.

Radix was founded by my brother, a friend from school, and myself back in 1995 in the times when snowboarding began to get really popular in Switzerland. We were actually still going to high school ourselves and our customer base rooted mainly in our fellow students back then. Nowadays we're a business with a strong family groove. We see each other in our crew as friends and part of the Radix family, and actually the head office in Burgdorf is run by us, three "Berger bros", and we even got our father out of retirement to lead the ski and snowboard service department. Today we've got three stores across Switzerland which are partially owned by their respective store managers. Our roots are snowboarding, but over the years we added freeskiiing, skate, longboarding, kitesurfing, and SUP. We also have a great gravity-bike floor and workshop in Liestal.

What are your secrets for selling high-end products?

You have to love the things you sell, then you know from your own experience what you're talking about. This is what makes a difference to the big chain stores, customers in the shop have to feel that they're standing in front of a real expert and not some random salesperson with catalog knowledge. Our own workshop and services help the customer to trust that we know what we're doing.

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

As a small business that started out with nothing but enthusiasm, we always had to find a way to sneak us into a niche. We couldn't (and still can't) afford the best-frequented locations, so we had to organise a lot of events to get our customers into the stores. Maybe that's an advantage today, as customers demand a lot more than just a product on a shelf nowadays, they want an experience, the feeling to be a part of something, and most importantly, they want to feel welcomed when they enter your shop. That's why we offered (from the first day of our business) coffee, tea, drinks to our customers for free. To be honest,

as we're coffee addicts ourselves, we're brewing coffee all the time anyway. From this culture, we integrated a cafe into our store in Zurich, and built a cafe/bar in Burgdorf in our old workshop four years ago.

What also makes us special is that all of our stores maintain a strong local focus. Our stores have a common product base but differ in their key focuses, depending on what the local customer is demanding. To our surprise, we realised that even in a small country like Switzerland, the local customer acts and buys completely different.

What kind of advice can you give other independent retailers who are trying to compete against the big box megastores?

Well, the ones that survived the past few years here in Switzerland are doing a good job already. To be honest, I don't think it'll be getting easier in the near future, especially since the online chains and marketplaces like Amazon will continue to grow stronger and take away a big piece of the cake from us smaller stores. So I think it's important to really take care of your existing customers, learn what your customer base wants, try out niches to be different, and keep a strong eye on your margin and inventory so you don't overstock. Amongst handling a million other tasks, of course. If you realise that the things you did the past ten years don't work anymore, dare to think outside the box and try to create an experience that makes you unique.

How does having a cafe in the shop help drive business to the store? Do cafe customers convert to retail customers?

Overall, the cafe and the store both take profits thanks to each other. The shop has greater footfall, the cafe has a unique style and atmosphere. But the task stays the same and I can only repeat it: You have to love what you do! Just putting the hippest Italian coffee machine on your counter alone won't work. Andi, our store manager in Zurich, is a coffee freak, always on the search for the holy grail of espresso. Customers realise that and share his love for good coffee. A good coffee makes people happy, and happy people is what we want in our stores. ☺



TIGER CAMO COLLECTION

Military looks and camo accents continue to inspire commercial fashion. A traditional approach to this perennial print remains prominent in classic color combinations. A more graphic take on this traditional organic pattern.

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GLOBE



photo Circa

SKATEBOARD FOOTWEAR FW19/20

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

7 SKATE FOOTWEAR TRENDS RETAILERS NEED TO WATCH IN FW19/20

What are the brands, models, colours, and constructions skateboarders demand in skate shoes this coming season? Find the answers in our Skateboard Footwear Retail Buyer's Guide for Fall/Winter 19/20, by SOURCE Skateboard Editor **Dirk Vogel**.

MARKET & PRICING

Asked about the current state of the skate footwear market, SUPRA's EMEA Brand Director Sascha Weil holds no punches: "The bigger brands become bigger and squeeze the market. The top three in skateboard footwear know their position and force retailers into a certain position they don't want to be in: dependence on these brands, forced collections, lower margins and loss of independence. It is the task of the smaller brands like SUPRA to help these retailers with a strong collection that can withstand the force of the top three."

Speaking on the European market, Scott Sentianin at Lakai said: "The start of 2018 was tough at retail throughout Europe and did set a lot of people back for the start of the year. But we are positive for the end of the year and start of next year." Sharing the positive mood, a new wave of small and value-driven brands launched by industry veterans is shaking up the market. Started by OSIRIS Co-Founder and shoe designer Brian Reid, Forwin offers stylish designs made from vegan and animal-friendly materials at affordable prices. Hailing from Sweden, the 3-3-20 Footwear brand by designer Sami Tolppi is focused on elevated classics hand-made in Portugal at premium price points.

What about price points? Entry-level models deliver skateable constructions for as low as €49.99, mostly in the form of low-cut cup soles crafted from suede or basic vulc styles. DC are introducing the Infinite, "a shoe which is so innovative and at such an accessible price point and will cater for a market that is ripe for disruption." Among riders looking for a 'serious' skate shoe that can enhance performance and endure some abuse (see Technologies), most of the action now gravitates around €74.99. There's also an enduring trend towards

upscale entries at €85.00 including Tony Hawk's new cup sole model on Lakai, plus top-of-the-line models from the likes of Nike SB and SUPRA selling at €119.99. On the subject of trends, here are the 7 Skate Footwear Trends retailers need to watch in FW19/20:

"The bigger brands become bigger and squeeze the market. The top three in skateboard footwear know their position and force retailers into a certain position they don't want to be in: dependence on these brands, forced collections, lower margins and loss of independence. It is the task of the smaller brands like SUPRA to help these retailers with a strong collection that can withstand the force of the top three."
SUPRA's Sascha Weil

1. SEASON TREND: SKATE-READY PERFORMANCE

The streetwear market is hot for 1990s 'ugly shoes' and bulky 'tech skate' sneakers. Brands who created the blueprint for this trend are seeing high demand, including éS Footwear who recently sold out a re-release of the bulk-tech Scheme model within 24 hours. OSIRIS reports an amazing response to the D3 2001 model, while DVS is selling heritage styles like the Comanche. But when it comes to shoes to actually skate in, the enduring formula lies with high-tech and low weight styles featuring stitch-less toe sections and layers

*“Just to be clear, this is not a collaboration. It's a true partnership with one of the finest rubber companies where we develop special outsoles to make the most durable skate shoes out there,” Bas Janssen, **Etnies**.*

of performance technology. Styles to watch for FW19/20 shoe orders include the Option EVO and CT-IV (Globe); Atlantic and Proto Tony Hawk (Lakai); Cromer 2 (HUF); Lizard and Elevate (SUPRA); Lutzka and Stasis (DVS); Campus and 3ST models (adidas); Nyjah, Zoom Bruin and Gato (Nike SB); Techniq VLC and Kort VLC (OSIRIS); Romero (Emerica); T-Funk (DC); Veer and Score (etnies); Elston and AL50 Pro (C1RCA); Mercer Low' (State); and Symbol (eS).

2. WEATHERIZED TECH

As cold weather season holds Europe in its grip, some brands are updating key models in 'winterized' versions to brave the elements. At Globe, shoe designer Morgan King is stoked on the new raised rubber mudguard technique on the Motley Mid model: "This rubber wrapping engulfs the lower half of the shoe making it impenetrable from the damp and cold surfaces you encounter in the cold European winters." etnies supports winter warriors with the Cyprus HTW Jeremy Jones model packed with a Michelin outsole, while all of their "winterized styles have 3M Thinsulate and Scotchguard as well. Next to that, a lot of our ThirtyTwo riders are endorsing these products with signature colours," said EMEA marketing manager Bas Janssen. Meanwhile, OSIRIS uses, "different leather and treated materials that can withstand those elements and provide a longer lasting product during the season." But as Scott at Lakai reminds retailers about weatherized styles: "This product is mainly used for non-skate activity. Most skaters find an indoor park to skate or hold out for those dry days to go and skate." For this reason, several brands decide to carry no winterized styles or have stopped.

3. SEASONAL COLOURWAYS

Darker days and cold weather also call for a more muted colour palette. While black remains the year-round favourite colourway on any skate shop shoe wall, FW19/20 will see an influx of earth tones, magenta, forest greens as well as a few wildcards. And by wildcards we mean an untypical rise in white, tan, and baby blue-coloured shoes, only to be explained by the fact that the majority of endemic skate shoe brands are based in the eternal sunshine of Southern California. Light grey may turn out a top trend next season, as seen on the HUF Cromer 2 model. At SUPRA, Sascha Weil maintains that, "we choose not to go too crazy in terms of colour, but in looks and aesthetics," while allowing that the new Lizard King pro model does come in a "freaky black/purple acid-wash colourway." In terms of branding, past season's trends towards 1990s-style big logos is moving aside for subtle brand accents on the tongue and heels, including a growing number of cross-branded models (see 6. Collabs).

4. NEXT-LEVEL TECHNOLOGY

When it comes to performance features, skateboarders demand lightweight, longevity, impact absorption, ventilation, and comfort from today's skate shoes. Delivering on these factors, brands are beefing up their footwear tech across the board: HUF is implementing Infinity Rubber outsole, Rubber Shield barrier, Strut-Soft insole, and four-way-stretch in next season's models. SUPRA incorporates PUSH, which stands for Performance Utility Shock Heel, "a new lightweight performance insole, made with odour-resistant high-density foam." etnies is continuing the successful partnership with auto tire pioneers Michelin to add equally high-performing and durable outsoles on FW19/20's Veer and Score models. "Just to be clear, this is not a collaboration. It's a true partnership with one of the finest rubber companies where we develop special outsoles to make the most durable skate shoes out there," said Bas Janssen at etnies. Further tech to watch next season includes Paramount outsoles (Lakai), CTRL Impact System (OSIRIS), double-wrapped foxing and PU insoles (State), Vaporcell (DVS), Impact Air (DCShoes), Ultracush Lite 3D (Vans), FusionGrip (C1RCA) and Formula G (Emerica).

5. COLLABS WITH BOARD BRANDS

Board companies are the guardians of authenticity in the skate world, so teaming up with core footwear brands on collabs is adding strength to strength. For Lakai, collabs run deep in the brand DNA: "Instead of using collection themes, we prefer to collaborate with artists and other brands who share a similar ideal. We have a special collaboration with Chocolate Skateboards, with whom we share three pro riders – Vincent Alvarez, Stevie Perez, and Yonnie Cruz." Independent footwear company State is teaming up with WKND Skateboards next season, said owner Kevin Furtado: "Christian Maalouf is pro for both the brands, so we wanted to connect Christian's board brand to two new styles to the line, namely the Harlem Up Town and Harlem Strapped. For next season, SUPRA is

teaming up with Lizard King's board sponsor Deathwish on the Lizard pro model and also legendary NYC skate brand SHUT on the black-gum Cuba slip-on. Collabs, so hot right now!

6. AFTER SKATE CHILLING

Weatherized styles for braving the cold are cool, keeping skaters' feet comfy after the session is even better. No longer just the domain of saunas and pools, slide slippers are trending in FW19/20. HUF is making a statement with Plantlife slides in their signature leaf design, while adidas and Nike SB feature equally cool and comfortable slides. For added flair, consider a slip-on shoe, for instance Forwin's S3EN high-end slip-on or the 1970s-inspired SUPRA Greco slip-on in premium Italian loafer style. As Sascha at SUPRA said, "Looks like a dress shoe, but skates so well."



photo Osiris

7. SLEEPER TREND: ALTERNATIVE LACING

Despite recent breakthroughs in performance tech (see 4.), almost all skateboard shoes these days stay true to the time-honoured principle of lace enclosures. But that may soon change. Last season's emergence of Velcro-enclosed models has unleashed a wave of innovations in the lace segment that could come to a full boil next season. Vans is already fitting classic Old Skool models with zippers, although in limited runs. Just in time for cold season, the brand also included the technical BOA lacing system in its Sk8-Hi MTE silhouette. We have yet to find out how the BOA system, initially designed to provide a more secure fit in snow boots, holds up in contact with grip tape – but it's a start. While DVS is introducing Max Lace technology as another evolution in this segment, the other big season trend is 'no laces' – for instance in slip-ons like the SUPRA Greco, Nike SB Janoski slip-on, and a number of lace-less Vans models. 

HIGHLIGHTS

- Performance at entry-level prices
- High-tech skate sneakers
- Weatherized winter models
- Subtle colours and low-key branding
- Board brand collabs
- After skate chill shoes
- Alternative lacing



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TECHNICAL SNOW BACKPACKS FW19/20 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

It's all about touring this coming winter season, so technical snow backpacks need to provide the right features to support demanding customers, and also pack a healthy dose of style !

Retail Buyer's Guide by **Natalia Maruniak**.

"Ambitious touring and splitboarding is a big topic for next season," said Jan Sallawitz, Head of Marketing at Evoc. Last season's touring trend retains its momentum, with no end in sight. More and more winter sports athletes are leaving the slopes to explore nature, which leads to rising demand for suitable equipment. And since climbing to elevated locations is physically challenging, and riders want to avoid excess weight on their ride down the mountain, the focus lies with light and functional product. Asked about major trends for FW19/20, the crew at Ortovox said: "Definitely ski touring. And there's the fact that gear is getting lighter without losing its performance." Safety is also a trending issue and "airbag-compatible backpacks continue to trend in the more technical space," said Dave Trenholm, Product Line Manager for Snow Packs at Dakine. For more info on ABS bags, please stay tuned for our Mountain Safety feature next month.

PRICING & MARKET SITUATION

When it comes to pricing, the snow backpacks market displays significant differences based on technical features for various applications. Most collections are divided into resort-based, backcountry, and touring-oriented packs. Entry-level models start at €70 (including the Dakine Heli Pack), crystalize around a mid-range price window between €130 and €180 and retail for up to €240 in the premium segment (including the Evoc's newest avalanche collection LINE R.A.S.). Most brands cover all three price segments.

100% RELIABLE PACKS

In the backcountry, riders need to be able to depend on their backpacks 100 per cent, so stakes are high for technical performance. "As more and more customers are earning their turns through touring they need to have better, more stable carry-ability and more breathability in the backpack," explains Austin Robbs from Patagonia, who offers The Snowdrifter Series in response to those demands.

Aside from breathability, low weight and safety being key, protective elements are also in high demand. Most current models feature light back protectors (for instance Amplifi's BC Pack, Nitro's ROVER with Koroyd EOP Protector and Evoc's FR PRO). Similar to airbag systems, the protectors are fully removable to facilitate the year-round use of these packs, even off the mountain. "Ideally people can use the avalanche safety backpack all year around, as we feel the times where people are willing to buy multiple backpacks for a different use are over," said Jan at Evoc. The market is hungry for all-round packs that can be worn in the snow just as much as in daily life. After all, backpacks have made an impressive return as acceptable style accessories over the past few years. But it's not all fashion. As Seth Lightcap, Marketing Director at Jones points out, backpacks also need to "endure serious wear and tear in the mountains," which is why longevity is a leading factor for consumers. At brands such as Patagonia, Dakine and Picture Organic, development of durable products includes a search for more sustainable solutions and environmentally-friendly manufacturing processes.

TREND: CLEAN LOOK

Ultimately, style is a major factor when it comes to deciding between products with largely similar characteristics. In terms of aesthetics, the category is trending towards, "a clean, modern look" (Jones), "urban styles" (Picture), minimalism, and aerodynamic shell exteriors. True to the motto "minimize to the max", Amplifi is banking on aerodynamic and sleek backpacks that are loaded with all necessary features, "without having tons of straps flying around and snagging on lifts and trees when you don't need them to be in use." For this reason, straps for attaching skis and boards, as well as hip straps and other attachments need to stow away safely. Ergonomic designs, slim silhouettes, contoured fits and optimal weight distribution also loom large over this season's offering. Standard features now include hydration channels inside the shoulder belts, dry pockets for clothing, ventilation systems, fleece-lined pockets for goggles, as well as helmet compartments. And fans of roller top enclosures will be delighted to find new choices like Dakine's Poacher RAS Series.

COLOURS & MATERIALS

Next season's colours and prints offer attractive picks for all tastes. "We are really proud to offer such a colourful backpack portfolio," said the team at Ortovox. Evoc are also staying true to their roots with bright and strong colours, which avoid being overly garish thanks to earthy and natural tones. At Dakine, the colour palette extends from dark slate, to shiny golden yellow, to tandoori red. In the women's segment, these are complemented by camo and floral prints. The design team at Picture likes to draw inspiration for prints from, "natural resources such as marble or mythical and arctic atmospheres from Svalbard." And to match their outdoor collection, the team also offers classic colourways such as yellow and khaki. Amplifi presents "retro looks with a classic mountaineering feel," in a tonal mixture as well as denim models. Patagonia uses black, classic navy and a higher visibility Hammonds Gold for safety. And Jones plays it safe by featuring the most timeless of colour choices, black.

In terms of materials, prepare for an influx of rip-stop, high-grade nylon, and PVC-free materials. We'll also see an upsurge in sustainable materials such as recycled nylon and polyester from PET bottles, as well as Bluesign-certified fabrics – an area to which Dakine, Picture and Patagonia show strong commitment. ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- Touring trend continues
- All-round backpacks
- Ultra-light models
- Detachable avalanche and back protectors
- Clean aesthetics



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photo HUF

MEN'S STREETWEAR FW19/20 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

The streetwear universe is broader than ever – so what are the shining stars for next season? For your orientation, here's our Fall/Winter 2019/20 Men's Streetwear Retail Buyer's Guide by **Dirk Vogel**.

Formerly the sole domain of skateboarders and other urban types, streetwear is more popular than ever. It has officially become part of the high fashion canon and dominates the mainstream. Some major brands blatantly copy from streetwear labels, others give praise where praise is due. The latter happened in the Fall 18 collaboration between Ralph Lauren Polo and London-based skateboard brand Palace that sold out within a matter of minutes.

But this kind of hype comes at a price: Consumers want new pieces and trends as fast as possible, to a point where new hot drops arrive every week. Authentic brands with boardsports backgrounds choose not to play this game: "Fast fashion? Really not interested! It's a completely different market. We construct jeans to be as strong as possible and therefore last longer. We don't chase fads to grab an extra euro," said Filip Elerud, Co-Founder at 1991 Denim. This sentiment is shared by a rising number of brands, who feel it's okay to retain key collection pieces for several seasons and prioritize quality at accessible price points. Speaking of price points, boardsports labels may not stoop down to fast fashion's low prices, but still offer tons of bang for the buck: Graphic tees gravitate around €29.99, hoodies at €59.99, knits and flannel shirts €69.99, quality denim around €74.99, and jackets between €129.99–179.99. Aside from scoring significant value, hunting down your cold season wardrobe at the local board shop instead of H&M limits the chances of ending up wearing the same threads as hundreds of other blokes in your town.

KEY PIECES FOR FW19/20

Nobody has a crystal ball, but here's how industry insiders see next season's direction. "We are bracing for chilly winter streets, making

a statement with multiple layering. Workwear-inspired jackets cover layers of textural contrasts, checks, and quilted nylon, resulting in varying hemline proportions and clash pairings. The overall look gets a streetwear vibe when mixed with hooded sweats and casual footwear," said Dan Preston, Global Design Manager at Globe. Workwear looms large over FW19/20 collections, next to grunge and hip-hop influences peppered with mid-90s flavours. Here are some key pieces to watch: Anorak-style jackets. Functional and timeless in style, these jackets are loaded with boardsports-approved tech, like 20,000-water resistance in the Protest 'Hopton' anorak and comfy warmth in Brixton's 'Monte' jacket.

*"Fast fashion? Really not interested!
 It's a completely different market. We construct jeans
 to be as strong as possible and therefore last longer.
 We don't chase fads to grab an extra euro."
 Filip Elerud, Co-Founder at 19.91 Denim*

Polar Fleece tops. If there's one must-have staple for FW19/20, it's got to be zippered fleece tops available from almost all brands in this guide. Easy to layer, comfortable to wear, and now in a surprising array of colourways – check Primitive's camo-patterned 'Montreal' fleece. Flannel shirts. Perhaps it's the Grunge revival, but flannels are all over streetwear collections next year. Look for tone-on-tone patterns or neon thrown in for contrast. Also heavier versions such as Globe's 'Clifton' heavyweight flannel shirt that doubles as a lightweight jacket.

Hunting down your cold season wardrobe at the local board shop instead of H&M limits the chances of ending up wearing the same threads as hundreds of other blokes in your town.

Polo shirts. Not just for prep schools anymore, polos get the streetwear treatment with cool knit patterns and details. The Brixton 'Our Hunt' quarter-zip long-sleeve polo leads the way with black and yellow colour blocking and a vintage inspired feel.

Light denim jeans. For years and years, denim trended on the dark side. That's officially over. Prepare for light denim jeans – even stone wash is back – disrupting denim walls in shops, while corduroy picks up steam for 2019.

Fishermen's beanies. The official headpiece for next season? "Fisherman Beanie on the mop of hair and done," said Julian Wolf at Homeboy. Worn high on the head, these knit beanies are everywhere next year.

Sleeper trend: Suit pants. For a gentlemanly touch, look for cropped and tapered suit pants with regular fit, made from soft, blended viscose fabrics in different patterns like pinstripe, micro hound's-tooth and micro herringbone, for instance the Wemoto 'Charles' line.

MATERIALS

Cold season puts a premium on warmer threads, like the aforementioned fleece pieces and insulated anoraks. Instead of trying to reinvent the wheel, more and more streetwear brands are implementing proprietary performance fabrics in their collections, including tons of GORE-TEX. Globe has teamed up with POLARTEC for a line of jackets that, "employ the unique versatility of POLARTEC fleece and the utility of engineered nylon camo, with functionality, form and comfort as focal points." Last season's trend towards sustainable materials continues, as brands such as IrieDaily participate in the Fair Wear Foundation and other certification schemes and HippyTree are developing more sustainable fabrics for all categories. Aside from knit materials in tops – but not in a granddad-sweater way, but with lit graphics – rip-stop pants are next season's major surprise.

DENIM

Here's a special look at what's hot in jeans – or not. "Distressed skinnies in black or strange washings are dead! You even make yourself a little ridiculous wearing them. Loose-fit washed blue jeans in a vintage look are a must-have in every wardrobe but also rich colours like yellow or red are finding their way to the more conventional customers," said Julian at Homeboy while pointing out the 'X-TRA Baggy' pant. Nevertheless, most brands bank on diversity, including 1991 Denim with four skate-approved fits featuring Warp Stretch. Reel Jeans cover it all from loose to baggy in straight, tapered, loose, and regular cuts. Brixton's European marketing specialist Quentin Loritte is stoked on the newest fit, called 'Method', in faded indigo with skateboard-specific range of motion in the 'Blank Generation' collection. Marcus Hyltbring at WeSC introduces, "a collection with paint and distressed washes. The USP is about details, washes and fits."

FITS & SILHOUETTES

The baggier trend in pants is coming to a full boil next season. "Slim fits will make room for more regular and loose fit pants. Also cropped pants will defend their position," said Stefan Golz, Creative Director at WeMoto. At LA-based brand Primitive, European distributor Alex Cock at Nineteen76 Distribution sees, "looser cuts and cut-off hems. Regular stonewash. We are seeing more success with sweat pants and track pants." Meanwhile, several brands pointed out that pant fits are still "all over the map" these days, so retailers need to stock what their customer base demands. On tops, the boxier, roomier trend also continues to gain momentum, with an interesting blend of longer base layer pieces and shorter jackets.

COLOURS & GRAPHICS

Next season's colourways explore familiar winter territory. "Black, navy, olive, brown and sand. Camo is also an option," said Tomasz Mielcarek, Global Team Manager and Marketing at Reel. Protest is teaming up with team rider Andri Ragettli on an entirely black-and-white collection to make a statement. Dan at Globe expects, "flashes of mustard joining classic red, white, blue, and green via creative colour blocking." Graphics are difficult to pin down in FW19/20, but there are standouts: First of all, floral prints and generous graphics applications on pants are trending. Second, huge logos on the front of tops are making way to

larger back graphics and – hot trend alert – sleeve prints on long-sleeves and hoodies. And third, graphics are trending towards 'zine-style, hand-made designs with a punk edge, while animation styles from the likes of Hook-Ups and Primitive's collab with Dragon Ball Z are trending. "The Primitive x Dragon Ball Z collection is unique and features the characters and original artwork that still gets people hyped. It will be huge here as it has been in US," said Alex Cock. HippyTree are launching an athlete inspired capsule collection in collaboration with Jimmy Webb, "one of the top climbers in the world. Listening to the wants and needs of those using our gear the most, then translating that through the collection has been valuable in making great products," says Josh Sweeney, Director of Global Sales.



photo IrieDaily

Similar to the socks segment, a major season trend consists of pairing washed fabrics such as tie-dye or cotton-candy wash (for instance by LA-label HUF) with loud graphic prints. The result is a layered, complex look that signifies added value. Globe is banking on horizontal stripes next season, paired with clashing patterns such as plaid for contrast. And don't write order sheets for FW19/20 without picking up some camouflage, as several brands are reinterpreting this streetwear staple, including Protest: "This new camo print is a work of art. Seen from a distance, it's a camo print but up close you see the watercolour layering of tone on tone," said Ingrid Kalma at Protest.

Closing out this season's Retail Buyer's Guide, major congratulations are in order: Swedish streetwear mavericks WeSC (We Are The Superlative Conspiracy) are celebrating their 20th anniversary in 2019 with a special capsule collection. Marcus Hyltbring promised more details on key pieces to be unveiled during next sales season, but already confirmed a satin anniversary coach jacket. Over in Berlin, skate-inspired clothing brand IrieDaily is turning 25 this year and will be celebrating with the Authentic School 2.0" Collection. "The collection takes you on a short time journey and presents designs from the beginning of IrieDaily and takes you back to the present with updated artworks!" Congratulations to both of these brands – and congrats to everyone in streetwear, because it's never been hotter than today! Started from the bottom, we're still here. 📍

HIGHLIGHTS

- Layering materials & patterns
- Strong workwear influence
- Light denim jeans
- Sleeve prints on tees & hoodies
- Polar fleece
- Baggier pants, straight cuts
- Anorak jackets



THE 5th POCKET

IN THE 1870'S THE 5TH POCKET WAS DESIGNED TO HOLD MATCHES
THE 1991 MATCH POCKET WILL HOLD A 4 FINGER KITKAT

Photo The Nidecker brothers, Cédric, Henry and Xavier Nidecker.



BIG WIG INTERVIEW

HENRY NIDECKER

For our first winter issue of the 18/19 winter season we speak with Henry Nidecker, the man at the helm of snowboarding supergroup, Nidecker. Home to rider operated snowboard brands Bataleon, Flow, Jones, Lobster, Nidecker, NOW, Rome, Switchback and YES., the Nidecker group have grown an incredibly diverse portfolio of some of the world’s finest snowboarding companies. None of this has happened by chance and we speak with Henry, an extremely astute businessman, about the strategy behind their success and he explains his views on the current snowboarding retail landscape and delivers fascinating insight on how his biggest competitors have offered the greatest inspiration. By **Harry Mitchell Thompson**.

Henry, what are the biggest lessons you’ve learnt personally in the past 5 years.

I’ve learned over time that in more dynamic times, you don’t actually need to do everything and anything possible to change the circumstances. You just need to do the right things at the right times. And doing the right things is about knowing your values, and knowing what matters most. This, for us, has resulted in focusing our time on snowboarding and concentrating on the right brands. It’s also meant stepping away from some brands and other markets such as SUP, whilst always staying focussed on hard goods.

I’m also still learning that we don’t need to chase all opportunities. It’s pretty hard for me as I know that the only constant in our industry is change, and I love change, and we want to drive change in our business to take advantage of all the big shifts in the snowboarding

landscape. The company has also grown a lot, from 15 people when I started to close to 100 today, so it’s a bigger boat to move, and even if we are +130 years old, we always want to have a start-up spirit.

What are the biggest lessons the snowboard industry as a whole has learnt in the past 5 years?

I think that over the last seasons the snowboard industry has learnt that great winters in Europe and North America are still possible. The industry also learned that the speciality brands that believe in snowboarding are the ones who grow the most. I think it’s a great time to be in the snowboard industry, and more then ever, snowboarding is shaping our culture and continues to evolve quickly.

The main lesson is: Invest in snowboarding and snowboarding will grow. We try to do our part of the job to help snowboarding brands,

The main lesson is: Invest in snowboarding and snowboarding will grow. We try to do our part of the job to help snowboarding brands, but it’s a collective effort, and I’m amazed to see people starting to build new factories, new brands, etc. There is a lot of energy.

but it’s a collective effort, and I’m amazed to see people starting to build new factories, new brands, etc. There is a lot of energy.

What do you see for the future of snowboard retail?

They key to success is, brands and retailers working together. If a retailer doesn’t offer quality service or a powerful storytelling for our brand, we will be undifferentiated inside. Those shops that lack that great experience, either physically or digitally will fall by the wayside as the consumer migrates to retailers that offer a more complete shopping experience. Traditional brick and mortar retail once served the purpose of providing pretty much all access to the marketplace. But today with digital, that access is a lot simpler. So, the retail experience both online and in store has to evolve to ensure retailers stay competitive.

We believe that the partnership between the shop and the brand doesn’t only help the shop, but also the brand. We know that once we have strong visual presence in store, we more than double the revenue of conventional wholesale retail. We know, when we are differentiated, we have a powerful home court advantage.

Could you talk us through any innovative brick and mortar retail partnerships you have and where you see these going in the future?

There are plenty of examples but TSA in the UK, led by Jeremy Sladen, is definitely a good one. The UK is a long way from the Alps but through a combination of modern technology, training and passion for snowboarding, they deliver a retail experience that really does bring product and snowboarding alive. Combine that with their commitment to on snow demos and customer experiences, such as their Morzine based Shred Week and it’s a great example that if you work to bring all the elements of your business together, combining online and traditional retail is still a potent force in the marketplace.

In a digital world, where information is king, how does a snowboard brand/company differentiate itself?

The digital world is one of the greatest opportunities for brands to differentiate themselves and serve our consumers more personally. Brands that listen, connect and serve, will succeed, and that touches what I love most about our brands. Consumers choose to be a part of it. We don’t purchase community. We grow our communities organically with those who love our brands, the products we make, the services we create and the experiences we dream up. This helps us to form an emotional connection with customers and that’s why they gravitate to us.

However, the digital world is just another way to drive people back to the snow. Because we are not in a video game, the reality is that the true snow experience is still being driven by those shops who advocate snowboarding.

What have been the most notable changes in consumer habits you’ve noticed in the past 5 years?

I think the most notable change is the knowledge of consumer, they know exactly which brand they would like and know everything about it. They also have infinite choices. Within seconds, they can quickly shop thousands of different snowboards, online or offline. We strongly believe that today’s consumer wants to buy the brand that they most identify with. For a mono brand to achieve this across such a broad spectrum of different riding styles and disciplines is really tough to achieve without being schizophrenic.

This is why we have a portfolio of brands, which is broad and deep, allowing us to serve our consumers however they engage in snowboarding in their lives. Today, all our brands are strong and growing. Growth starts with great product and that growth comes from the scale of our powerful portfolio. We deliver in all the key categories and price points through our powerful brands all around

the world. That diversity means we have the possibility to reach the biggest opportunities, to reach the right market at the right time. This is Nidecker Group’s biggest competitive advantage.

What do you see as the biggest opportunities for the snowboard industry and the biggest threats?

The biggest opportunities have to come from the fact that we’ve had two great winters and that snowboarding has found a way to promote itself that once again makes it aspirational. We need to remember it’s the recreational rider that really drives this market, so it’s really important that we present snowboarding in a balanced way. However, we still need to be aware that even off the back of two good winters, global warming is still an issue – this is also why we contribute with Jones and with the Nidecker brand to 1% for the Planet. I’m very confident that as an industry we will be able to grow snowboarding.

The company has also grown a lot, from 15 people when I started to close to 100 today, so it’s a bigger boat to move, and even if we are +130 years old, we always want to have a start-up spirit.

Which industries away from action sports do you see parallels with the snowboard industry, and how do you plan to emulate and work off such inspiration?

It’s difficult to actually pinpoint a specific industry to draw parallels with. What I see is more of a movement that is gaining pace across all sectors. From food, drink, watches in fact in almost every sector, there’s definitely a trend toward the more artisan brands and focus on services. People are beginning to understand that if you want the best flavours, the best sound, the best performance etc, the brands and companies that specialise are the ones that are going to deliver that. That’s similar to the way we’ve structured our brand portfolio. By working with the best designers and riders within each of the separate elements of the sport, we believe that we can deliver the best equipment for whatever and wherever you ride and provide the best services to support our customers.

Who in the industry has most inspired you and why?

My father and my brothers Cédric and Xavier Nidecker are the ones who have inspired me the most and are the main reason why I’m in this industry. David Fernandez (COO) and Thierry Kunz (CMO), who run the company with us are also extremely inspirational. The energy of my competitors inspires me a lot, for example the investment into snowboarding with the Capita/Union factories and Lib-Tech’s to be commitment to US production and Burton for the work they do to promote snowboarding. And in our group, I would say Jeremy Jones for his commitments to sustainability, Romain De Marchi, DCP and JP Solberg (YES.) for their love of snowboarding and dedication, JF Pelchat (NOW) for all his ideas and positive attitude, Dennis (Dusseldorp) & Danny (Kiebert) for building a great snowboarding platform (Low Pressure Studios: Bataleon, Lobster, Switchback) and all the Rome team for their passion towards snowboarding and their support during the transition.

Where do you see snowboarding’s place in the sports landscape in 2025?

I think and hope it’ll still be these rider driven brands that are still leading the way. We don’t have a business plan or projection for the future, we work each day to do our best to have the best impact in snowboarding and we will continue to do so and see where it will guide us. You can count on us to work hard and we’ll still be there delivering great product, great stories and great experiences in 2025. 🏆



WHEN WE'LL STOP

THE EMERGE MIPS HELMET WITH MIPS SPHERICAL. AS YOU STRIVE FOR BETTER, WE'LL KEEP MAKING THE GEAR THAT GETS YOU THERE.



photo Giro

SNOW HELMETS FW19/20 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Without a doubt, mountain enthusiasts, regardless of level, are becoming more aware of the use of helmets both from a fashion perspective and for safety too (from the Ekeland study, we know that around 80% of people on the slopes are now wearing helmets). Riders are charging harder; parks and pipes are getting bigger and riding untracked snow in the backcountry is on the up. "Speed increase, more frequent accidents and an overall cultural evolution" are therefore the main reasons for this continual growth in the helmet market according to Picture's Co-Founder, Julien Durant. By **Ruth Cutts**.

With an estimated 5.3 million people living with traumatic brain injury-related disabilities (CDC) in the United States alone, the long-term impact of concussions is so much more evident to the snow community, (once you have had a concussion, you are 3-6 times more susceptible to suffer another) which in turn affects the market for protective headwear. "When it comes to wearing safety gear, the attitude has nowadays completely changed compared to the early 00s," says' to Dainese's Davide Burnoli.

Kevin Sandstone, Owner and Founder of Sandbox, explains this shift in attitude by using the pro hockey analogy; "back in the day the goalie didn't even wear a mask in hockey, now every player wouldn't even think of going on the ice without a helmet on and it's a strict rule of play. Action sports are continually progressing, and with them, so are riders' needs for safety, comfort and style." Wearing a helmet has become an essential part of any mountain dweller's equipment with ventilation, a lightweight construction and advancements in safety being at the forefront of most brands' technological developments.

DESIGN

Many helmet brands are investing their time into creating discipline-specific technologies to cater to particular sectors of the snow community. Damian Phillips, Head of PR and Communication at POC explains that the brand "has a very specific race community, freeride/all-mountain, park and pipe family," which all require high-end innovations. For Smith, they're incorporating their innovative Koroyd protection

material strategically in different models to create different options for "your most progressive backcountry expert to the casual holiday enthusiast." Whilst Rossignol is making a tremendous analysis on the ground, in different countries, with skiers, athletes and retailers to understand how the key features need to improve in their new products "from the rental segment to juniors, beginner skiers to experts and top athletes".

"Ventilation, lightweight product, rich neutral colours and timeless graphics are key for 2019/20" - Rebecca Larsen, Product Line Manager at K2

The main trend in helmets is the research for the perfect combination of design and safety and this continual growth in the snow helmet market can certainly be looked at from a fashion perspective as well as from a safety one too, with many riders using style and community/crew affiliation as strong factors for wearing a helmet. Sinner's Product Designer, Sam van der Heijden thinks it's great to see that people are wearing a "helmet as a fashion item that adds something to [their] style instead of being hesitant to wear one". It has become essential for snow helmets to provide a more streamlined, functional fit whilst keeping some personality in the aesthetics. "The

*“If we can get head protection on outdoor enthusiasts at a young age, they will be able to continue doing the active things they love for longer!” [on the growing youth market] - Tim de Redon, **Bern** Global Marketing Manager.*

colour thing we’re seeing across the board and wanted to keep up. So, we added some pop colours and colour blocking to the line. We also see oversized logos coming back into play and did a Big Logo concept in two of our popular styles,” says Pro-Tec’s Global Brand Director, R.P. Bess. Whereas for K2, the 19/20 season is focused on “ventilation, lightweight product, rich neutral colours and timeless graphics,” (Rebecca Larsen, Product Line Manager).

TECHNOLOGY/MATERIALS

Undeniably, the use of MIPS (Multi-Directional Impact Protection) continues to take centre stage for many helmet brands in 19/20 with Bern, Smith, Giro, Head and Pro-Tec all including this technology in their offering. Developed by neurosurgeons and scientists, the MIPS technology, which was created to reduce rotational forces on the brain caused by angled impacts to the head (in which cases it’s more likely the brain will be damaged by moving around in the skull). When a helmet with MIPS technology is subjected to an angled impact, the low friction layer allows the helmet to absorb and redirect damaging rotational forces before they reach the brain.

A major trend seen from consumers and retailers is the demand for MIPS-only product. As rotational impact protection becomes a standard across all helmet categories, Smith designs its helmets around the MIPS fit system to fully integrate the technology to provide the best fit and function for their helmets. “Combining rotational impact technology, with our industry leading protection material Koroyd, we feel that we’ve created our own category of protection,” says Smith’s Marketing Manager (Snow), Cale Meyer.

All of Giro’s in-line models now feature this technology with the brand using their R&D resources to develop the technology even further. By partnering with MIPS, Giro was able to develop the MIPS Spherical technology, which is integrated between the layers of EPS foam – instead of against the rider’s head – giving riders the benefits of MIPS without obstruction to comfort or cooling power.

Bern has added two new products with MIPS to their FW19/20 range; the Heist Brim and non-brim versions as well as the Weston Peak, which will now be offered with a MIPS E2 solution.

For Rossignol, their key innovation for FW19/20 is their use of IMPACTS technology. After taking into account the actual day-to-day usage of a ski helmet including storage, transport, and usage, Rossignol has developed a new technology that provides long-term protection. Rossignol has worked with ARPRO to develop a safe and sustainable solution for ski helmets through IMPACTS technology. “Even low-intensity shocks that leave no visible trace can alter the protection helmets provide and negatively affect resistance to future impacts,” explains Business Unit Manager (Technical Equipment), Aurélie Zucco, hence the brand’s inclusion of IMPACTS technology to make their helmets resistant to multiple impacts. The helmet does not deform permanently after impact but returns to its original shape with no loss of performance.

Picture continue to keep the focus on creating eco-designed products to help reduce any adverse environmental impact without compromising on technicality. As Julien Durant explains, “wearing a Picture helmet is much more than wearing a simple piece of protection. It means being part of a community and making an environmental statement.” Their Omega, Unity HIFI and Tempo models all feature recycled EPS (expandable polystyrene) collected from Japanese automobile manufacturing industry leaders and the lining and ear pads are made from recycled PET bottles.

MARKET GROWTH

The snow market has seen rapid growth in the Asia Pacific region over the last few years with China being the largest growing market (especially with the imminent 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing and the boon of the recent 2018 PyeongChang games) followed by India and Japan. Picture, Sinner, Rossignol and Dainese all identified Asia as their expanding market for the 2019/20 season. “The core markets in Europe, US and Canada are mature in helmet and protection equipment, but some new markets are expanding, especially in Asia where a huge educational support needs to be prepared to help them find the right product to protect them properly,” says Rossingol’s Aurélie Zucco.

Riccardo Ramacciotti, Managing Director of Mivida identified Eastern Europe as the region of biggest growth for the brand whereas Bern, Smith and Rossignol all highlighted that youth helmets are seeing big growth in the helmet market. As Bern’s Global Marketing Manager, Tim de Redon explains, “if we can get head protection on outdoor enthusiasts

at a young age, they will be able to continue doing the active things they love for longer!” In their 19/20 offering, Smith are excited to launch their new Prospect Jr; a helmet that takes all the bells and whistles from their high-end products but is designed to fit as a child grows throughout the years as a groom. “The active ventilation, MIPS technology and Koroyd provide the protection story for your child as they grow from pizzas to French fries” explains Smith’s Cale Meyer. For Rossignol, their Whoopee model is their latest junior helmet with an improved fit and the inclusion of IMPACTS Technology.



photo Picture

POINT OF SALE

Simply having the right products in a store is not enough for retailers to really push helmet sales and most need additional support from brands to highlight new innovations and explain product features. This is often achieved effectively through innovative ‘point of sale’ material. Sandbox offer key retailers a custom Sandbox wall built out with their helmet racks and custom-made imagery to fit with each store’s aesthetics, whilst POC takes a similar approach offering helmet stands with a variety of copy options to support retailers. They also provide a host of imagery that is tailored to each particular helmet.

Rossignol continues to develop different tools to support their retailers from specific displays to leaflets, videos, training, goodies and contests to give them the best support possible. Dainese’s POS materials are created to explain all the technologies that come with their products using window stickers, cardboard panels with touchable and interactive spreads and clinic videos for each of their product lines. Head Snowboards are offering their retailers LCD screens which show two different short videos in a loop – lifestyle cuts as well as a technology explaining parts – to entertain and educate the customer in the shop. They also provide what they’ve called a ‘Cleanie-Beanie’ counter display in their rental market which includes hygienic beanies in two different sizes for customers to wear under their rental helmets.👓

HIGHLIGHTS

- Rotational impact technology is key
- Asia is an expanding market
- Streamlined, lightweight & ventilated designs
- Oversized logos are coming back





p. Tel Roberts



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BUYER SCIENCE SNOWLEADER'S THOMAS ROUAULT

For this issue's Buyer Science feature, we speak with Thomas Rouault who started Snowleader.com a decade ago. Rouault, who prior to Snowleader worked at Nike ACG and 6.0, gives some fantastic insight snowboard industry insight on everything from brand support to the future of retail.

You worked at Nike ACG and Nike 6.0 before starting Snowleader.com – please explain the lessons learned from your days at Nike and how you implemented them into Snowleader.

I learned a lot of things at Nike, but today two notions really resonate. The first, is their channel management. Nike was one of the first brands who managed to place the right product in the right network. A 'Dunk' for example can be sold in a premium store with a limited series, in a skate network with Nike SB and into a more general network with a basic colour. Outdoor and winter sports can't do this. They sell the same product to the entire network, whether premium, ski resort shop or stock seller. This makes no sense and this is what depletes distribution networks today. We try to have open communication and educate/be educated by our suppliers. And this ethos is finally starting to take effect with certain players. The second notion is their premium retail execution. The value perceived by the customer of our operations must be high. We invest a lot in the training of our sellers, their involvement in global decisions, showcases, events and in the shop.

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

Brands must design products that have a lifespan that's longer than a single season. Apple is able to roll out a new iPhone every year, but that's Apple. A snowboard or ski jacket can be part of a catalogue for two years, and the customer is ready to accept that. This would reduce risk-taking, give the product more opportunity to sell, and avoid the customer seeing a new alternative just a few months after purchasing.

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

Big brands will increase their direct contact with consumers as part of their business. That's a fact. They will continue to need fewer retailers like us. We need to strengthen our offerings with intermediate brands that cannot afford to have their own direct sales network. These brands also need to think about which retailer network they want to work with for the future. By agreeing to sell their product to non-qualitative retailers, they are sealing their own fate.



How has the online industry changed since starting Snowleader. What do you see for the future of digital retail?

In 10 years, the obvious change has been the overall weight ecommerce accounts for. We went from a market of less than 1% to almost 15% or more today. This growth was often made with a lack of understanding by our suppliers of how this new sales channel worked. They did not understand that within ecommerce, there was the same segmentation as in physical networks. Brands have therefore sold the same products to all suppliers, whereas they would never adopted this strategy in brick and mortar. This has been a trigger for significant price competitiveness. I think in the future, retailers and consumers will see ecommerce and bricks and mortar as one fluid transition. Differentiating between the two is already a notion from the past for the consumer. In the end, the consumer considers retail as a device. They want to consume on their mobile, on their computer and also in stores. Large-scale suppliers will seek to approach consumer alone, through their own means/channels and smaller players will have to strengthen the links they have with retailers. In the same way, the big retailers will want to launch their own private label. The above concept is, in my opinion, only the beginning of a profound transformation of the distribution model.

What advice do you have on upcoming brands on how to stand out?

The main question a brand must ask is: what will it bring me to have my products in a network of retailers? The temptation can be great to go it alone and have your own points of sale and ecommerce site. Retailers need to stay attractive for new brands, looking forward with the view to these brands becoming margin contributors of the future. We must also look at which models work and which create value. Many brands have made real distribution choices, which have paid off. The most recent seems to me to be Picture Organic Clothing. This is a good model for new entrants. A limited number of retailers, growth generated by the increase of business by retailers and not by extension of the network. An ecommerce website that is part of a global strategy that involves ecommerce. **📌**



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SNOW PROTECTION FW19/20 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Protection has always catered to entry level and elite level riders, but with an ever-savvy consumer, this gap is now bridging to those in between thanks to lower profile pieces and with anti odour and better-than-ever air circulation, the market is opening new doors. Buyer's Guide by **Ruth Cutts**.

Body protection is starting to find its way from the pros to the mainstream as snowboarders are pushing themselves to achieve higher speeds and more impressive manoeuvres in the park. "They want to get properly equipped to express their passion and be secured," explains Rossignol's Business Unit Manager (Technical Equipment), Aurélie Zucco. As snow enthusiasts want to push their riding there is an understanding that they will take some falls no matter what, so being smart and taking the necessary precautions becomes paramount. "AMPLIFI is here to protect your 'ass-ets' while you continue having fun on the hill, rather than nursing your injuries at home," states Head of Product Design, Tom Howells.

Thanks to innovative R&D from the leading snow protection brands, the use of safety gear is no longer considered a burden. Lightweight and comfortable designs, which still adhere to the highest safety standards, are replacing the chunky and heavy products of years gone by which were previously only worn by hardcore park players and back-country pros. Many safety layers are now so streamlined that they not only act as protection for your body but also act as a mid-layer of clothing.

TRENDS

The trend for lightweight soft foam protection has been established within the past few years and therefore, for most brands, the focus is on finding multi-impact light compounds, capable to be imperceptible to the body and extremely protective at the same time. Designed ergonomically to adjust to the natural contours of the body, "the main trends are fit and comfort under every condition with great ease of use," highlights Tom Howells.

The need for flexible back protection is particularly of interest to those that are starting out or progressing in the park. Although back injuries are less common than those that occur to the hands, wrists or knees, the result of a back injury can be more devastating and body armour can certainly go some way to preventing such incidents. When hitting rails and kickers in the snow park for the first time, the most common injury occurs when landing sideways with your coccyx and lower back taking all of the impact. Flexible back protection that you 'set and forget' for the whole day, therefore, becomes integral in this instance.

Amplifi have created a new MKX range of limb and back protection, which offers the ultimate flexibility and comfort, while actually increasing the protection offered. They've managed to achieve a 25-30% weight saving on their previous protectors while increasing ventilation and fit. They've also been able to reduce the bulk of the protector significantly to reduce the appearance of the items under your outerwear.

MATERIALS

Many brands are producing flexible protective gear that can be used for multiple sports such as BMX and mountain biking in the summer too, with the need for breathability and odour-resistant properties proving essential. To ensure that lightweight protection is achieved, Rossignol has included SAS-TECH multi-impact foam in their impact vest which is combined with stretch mesh fabric for improved breathability and fit.

EVOC's Protector Vest Air+ is optimised to provide welcome ventilation having been equipped with their innovative Liteshield Air Back Protection (originally from the motorcycle industry) with orifices for a better air circulation. It offers additional protection for shoulders and the collarbone and is made of a very breathable and quick-drying outer fabric. The use of a Polygene treatment, where silver ions are applied to the fibres, prevents a build-up of odour and requires less washing as a result.

"One example is a fabric we are using in the higher end products which use a natural charcoal yarn which dries super-fast, absorbs odours and reflects UV rays all the time. A true performance second skin," says Tom Howells from Amplifi.

DESIGN/TECHNOLOGY

For Dainese, their main technology for their FW19/20 offering is represented by FLEXAGON; one of the lightest protectors on the market (weighing in at only 479g in the Polartec version) which is able to transmit just 4.8 kN of impact force to the body.

Demon is shouting about their innovative D3O chest plate that features in their new Flexforce X2 Top guarding your chest and back with its 2-stage foam – available in both men's and women's sizing.

TSG meanwhile have upgraded their Backbone Tank A; a low-profile back protector crafted from lightweight and highly shock-absorbent Arti-Lage foam, to be compatible with a hydration bag plus tube routing and Velcro fastening straps for secure storage. **S**

HIGHLIGHTS

- Innovation to airflow
- Anti odour
- Lightweight, discrete

photo Finisterre



SURF APPAREL FW19/20

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Rain, wind, cold and mud. 21st century surfers no longer just dream of an endless summer, they want to enjoy the waves in winter so they need the right clothes to overcome the obstacles and if they can keep them on for wearing in town, down the pub, then even better.

Fall Winter 2019/20 Surf Apparel Buyer's Guide by **David Bianic**.

Some signs are clear to see. In the past, surf shop windows would go into mountain mode at the first hint of autumn. Boardshorts and t-shirts would be put away to make way for outerwear collections with their spectacularly snowy backdrops. These shops are no longer turning their backs on the sea when the summer season ends: silhouettes of beanies? and parkas show off the water resistance, warmth and versatility of these surfwear garments that are rallied under the banner of "cold water surfing". Winter surfing is a reality, always has been, except now it's sexy, so it sells. For brands such as Finisterre, their whole identity resides in cold-water surfing and autumn-winter is the height of the commercial year for them. The winter season is also an opportunity in the sense that customers wear more garments on their backs on a daily basis, as pointed out by Senior Designer at Rusty, Ben Noble: "Layering is key as you can show some individuality and personality in the colder months."

PERMEABLE MARKETS

But the rise of winter surf textiles is not without its dilemmas, with most of the sector's prominent brands also offering outerwear/snow collections. This means there's a risk of cannibalising their own ranges as the boundaries between surf and mountain clothing become blurred, all being designed to stand up to the same elements... Similarly, brands are progressively entering into competition with outdoor companies as winter comes, highlighting a trend for crossovers of versatile mountain/outdoor garments as suitable on the seafront as they are on the mountains and even the streets. Patagonia is a perfect illustration of this: "Our technical product line is built around gear that needs to function

in the harshest Alpine conditions, and so we bring those years of experience, fabric technology and durability for use at sea level," explains Gabe Davies, Director of their surf category for Europe. It's not always that simple for brands to position themselves between the worlds of snow/outdoor and the big fashion labels whose collections are also entering into competition with this winter's surf apparel category. "While the Snow brands offer tech product for the colder days the fast fashion stores can produce on trend variety," explains Ben Noble from Rusty before adding: "Our goal is to combine the two and offer a quality product and design that is true to the Rusty DNA and sits in between the two."

A COLLECTION OF STORIES

So what have the brands got in store for us in their autumn-winter 2019/20 collections?

Well, the answers are varied but all draw on their history to make for some wholesome diversity. Finisterre for example are not changing tack and remain loyal to their True North range, explains Todd, Chief Menswear Designer: "The collection needs to stand up to the demands of those who are out there seeking uncrowded waves in the most remote locations, and in the harshest of conditions. The collection is sharply styled, but it's built to withstand the elements." Other collections aren't seeking such monolithic status as is the case at Rip Curl who offers three concepts: Ultimate Sport, inspired by their team riders ("Made by surfers for surfers. Products made for the search and travel, with a sports look," explains Pierre-Alexandre 'P-A-M' Merlet, Senior Menswear Designer), Free and Easy, enriched by their surfing DNA

"The quality and durability of our clothing, as well as using a responsible supply chain, means that the production cost is more expensive than that of fast fashion options." Todd, **Finisterre**

(logo, colours and Rip Curl silhouettes) and finally Surf Craft, that draws on 1950's Californian surfing. We continue the journey back in time with Rusty who are showcasing the 70s through a theme that has always held water: "Instead of the 'free love' style of the 60s, where surfing was considered a 'beach-bum' occupation at best, in the 70s there was a group of surfers who radically changed the world's perspective on what it meant to be a surfer. Fashion was all about individuality and expression. As such, many traditional fashion rules were broken", conveys Ben Noble. Staying in a similar time period, Lightning Bolt's brand image is closely associated with the 70s. Their autumn 2019 collection is centred on a very cool "surf adventure" spirit inspired by "soul surfing" influences from the 70s as well as the big logo pieces of the 80s. Sometimes the eras crash into each other too, giving birth to hybrid collections, like at Brunotti who are offering "a variety of cross-overs" where "Retro sports and casual vintage meets modern sports technology," reveals Marketing Assistant, Saskia Groeneveld. Rhythm are also putting forward vintage pieces reworked into contemporary clothes. Unsurprisingly, Patagonia are staying true to their leitmotif with Gabe Davies highlighting the capsule collection that's designed to help their Global Surf Activists on drives around the theme, "Protect your Peaks". Another form of commitment from the French brand Sen No Sen, who are celebrating 20 years of existence in 2019, sees them commending the merits of slow fashion "bringing intemporal pieces you can wear every winter," assures Founder, Mathieu Desaphie. "We make quality products that last longer and encourage people to keep them as long as possible." Ethics and no faking.

"Cross-overs where retro sports and casual vintage meets modern sports technology."
Saskia Groeneveld, Brunotti

KEY PRODUCTS AND FABRICS

Collections have to withstand the brutality of winter's elements with garments that inspire confidence, starting with the timeless thick flannel shirt in brushed cotton, in either checks or stripes at Brakeburn for example. At the same time, teddy fur features at the top of the list at Brunotti. This work on textures is at the heart of a designer's work, as confirmed by Ben Noble at Rusty, who states "Big wale cord, Polar Fleece, Melton plaids, Chunky fisherman knits, Sherpa linen," are amongst the staple fabrics used for t-shirts and hoodies. At Finisterre they also admit to being obsessed with wool because its qualities are proven after centuries of use by seamen. You can find it throughout the range, "from our knits to our Merino wool base layers, and even in our insulation," affirms the designer, adding that they use wool of ethical origin without mulesing (removing strips of sheep's skin).

These timeless traditional materials are still compatible with the more modern synthetic solutions as well. This refers to treatments such as VaporCool from Rip Curl, since breathability is also a necessity in winter, as well as good old nylon on their Anti-Series jackets, which is combined with bio cottons and recycled polyesters. It's the same idea at Brunotti with the inclusion of waterproof and breathable fabrics, Clo-I insulation and taped seams in their Hybrid collection, "which can be used in the streets and on the slopes," assures Saskia Groeneveld.

Salty Crew have seen unprecedented success since launching a few years ago, and for FW19/20, they pay close attention to protection as "we continue to use DWR coatings, SPF fabric, multi-stretch performance fabrics and quick dry fabrications. Our sun protection category is gaining steam and we will keep building this category," says Mike Niemann – Head of Product.

More often than not, synthetic rhymes with sustainable, like at Finisterre and their puffer made from recycled materials, or their waterproof jackets with fluorocarbon-free coating. Another example comes from Passenger Clothing who are combining recycled cottons and PFC-free Ripstop nylon fabrics. Gabe from Patagonia for his part is proud to announce that all their liners are now made from 100% recycled material.

COLOURS & PRINTS

While every brand is telling their own story, autumn-winter collections realign as soon as we look at the key colourways. It

comes as no surprise that earthy, autumnal tones are everywhere: "Deep rich forest greens, burgundy and reds and the blues of the winter sea" (Brakeburn); "'retro outdoor' colours with classic oranges, blues and yellows teamed up with autumn shade" (Finisterre); "whisky browns and olive greens, sky and marble greys" (Lightning Bolt); "Navy, Kaki, Grey, Aubergine, Mustard" (Sen No Sen); moss green, worn asphalt shades with dark navy blue, rusty brown and blue salt (Passenger). This rich, rather subdued palette is accompanied by equally subtle motifs/prints such as Finisterre's nautical diagram inspiration, Isobar and Infinity Waves motifs (Sen No Sen), Fair Isle Scottish jacquard (Brakeburn), vintage flower motifs, stripes and Paisley motifs (Rhythm), marbled effects and tone-on-tone full flower prints (Rip Curl).



photo Salty Crew

THE PAINFUL PART

All these collections are undoubtedly very seductive and you have to hand it to the designers, but how will these efforts be reflected on the price tag? More protection, more ethical and sustainable materials, a higher price? "They are more expensive but compare to the level of quality and technicality," reminds P-A-M from Rip Curl. This is also Todd's attitude at Finisterre for whom, "the quality and durability of our clothing, as well as using a responsible supply chain, means that the production cost is more expensive than that of fast fashion options," and that these garments are to be considered as "investment pieces that won't need replacing for years to come." For Patagonia, it's an investment in the future as Gabe Davies would like to think that "the surf industry could lead the fashion and high street industries by example, as we have the most to lose when the environment suffers." You are also voting with your wallets.👉

HIGHLIGHTS

• Best-seller: the flannel shirt

• Retro pieces with tech fabrics

• Wool, velour, fleece, Sherpa fleece: soft stuff !

• More recycled synthetics

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photo Spark R&D

SPLITBOARD HARDGOODS FW19/20 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

If you're not selling splitboards properly, you're missing a trick. This scene is of increasing importance as snowboarding regrows - so it's time to swat up on uphill snowboarding. **Tom Wilson-North** demystifies the splitboard corner and looks at what's available next year.

SEAMS, CLIPS & HOOKS

Splitboard hardware comes attached to the board, but any good shop has spares for repairs or upgrades. Karakoram is the undisputed leader in hooks; their premium active-joining Ultraclips are the business, and will feature on Burton's splitboards amongst many others next year. "These are the best on the market", agrees Moonchild's Jure Sodja. "They're part of what makes the board ride like a solid, and since they're mounted via inserts, there are no screws through the base." Solid hooks are also available from Phantom, whose Board Cleats are nearly weightless, and whose ergonomic Hercules Hooks will come on Neversummer splits next year. Then, Plum have a new TT Hook system which allows you to go into ride mode with the skins still on, should the urge grab you. At tip and tail, Karakoram's Tip Locks are coming standard on the Jones Ultracraft & Carbon Solution; they stop the tips popping open, and are compatible with nearly everything as an aftermarket upgrade. Spark R&D's Tip Clips do a similar job. And we were impressed with Furberg's innovative new seam sealer. "We've got a completely new way to eliminate the vertical movement of the board halves in ride mode. Not just under the hooks and bindings but along the entire length of the board. We believe this is the future of splitboarding," claims Furberg's Hampus Cederholm. See it for yourself at the on-snows and trade shows.

POLES

Black Diamond's Compactor has been the reference in splitboard poles for some time now. "We were the first brand to bring Z-Pole technology to market," says Brand Marketing Manager, Christian Lehmann. "While the compactable poles were originally designed

for trail running, the team immediately realized the potential for splitboarding." But there are alternatives out there too. Leki's Tour Stick Vario Carbon has a 100% carbon shaft and Aergon foam grip, and it folds to 42cm in the pack. If you're looking for even smaller, K2's Swift Sticks are the shortest out there and will require a magnifying glass to find at 33cm folded, but the market is looking for solidity, functionality and durability too. We liked the look of Jones' new Talon Carbon with integrated ice scraper and chunky basket, whilst Rossignol's new Xavier de le Rue signature poles are in a three-section design, using Dyneema cord deployment.

"Neversummer have split the Atom (groan) with a megalight new carbon mesh and retro 50s graphics"

SKINS

Nothing really new in skins; G3's Splitboard+ are still super popular, and come in Grip, Glide & Universal formulae. We are seeing a trend of pre-cut skins being marketed by board companies - Korua are doing that with mohair mix next year, and Rossignol's precut XV signature skins will be made by Pomoca.

BOARDS

Of course, everyone wants a light splitboard. Amplid comes out lightest year after year with their Milligram, but there is some intense competition next year. Neversummer have split the Atom (groan) with a mega light new carbon mesh and retro 50s graphics. Korua's new Escalator 56 is insanely light with a skinnier waist

BINDINGS

Splitboard bindings are the key part of the assortment to get right; Karakoram and Spark dominate the volume, but have little brand-new stuff next year. Union, however upgrade to Expedition 2.0 for year three. "Expedition has been completely redesigned for improved touring, changeover and riding connection. If you're looking for the

Splitboard bindings are the key part of the assortment to get right; Karakoram and Spark dominate the volume, but have little brand-new stuff next year. Union, however upgrade to Expedition 2.0 for year three. "Expedition has been completely redesigned for improved touring, changeover and riding connection. If you're looking for the

- Where's the hardboots?



STANCE 

FILIPPE TOLEDO



photo American

SOCKS FW19/20 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Comfort, style, and upscale materials: Boardsports socks offer the full package, plus attractive margins for retailers. Watch the key trends in our 2019 Buyers Guide by Boardsport SOURCE skateboarding editor **Dirk Vogel**.

PRICING & MARKET

Going into 2019, price points remain stable with entry-level and fun socks starting as low as €9.95 in retail, while Many Mornings offers kids and low-cut socks at €5.99. Advanced snowboard socks with longer cuts and elaborate materials crystallize around a €19.95 price point, while upscale materializations like Merino wool can run up to €29.95 per pair. Several Europe-based brands are shaking up the category, including Polish brand Many Mornings, American Socks – based and produced in Barcelona, Spain – as well as Stinky Socks out of Bulgaria. “We are only producing socks, so we do focus on getting the best product out there,” said Stinky Socks owner Risto Petkov.

Here are seven boardsports socks trends to watch in 2019:

1. FULL-PRINT GRAPHICS

Next season's boardsports socks crank up the volume with loud all-over prints applied via advanced digital printing. Standouts include ‘sticker wars’ logos and Hawaiian flowers (HUF), Japanese-style kittens and kabuki masks (American Socks), monograms and cartoon icons (Stinky Socks), plus fluffy Alpacas and Mexican ‘Day of the Dead’-style skulls (Many Mornings). “Our brand campaign Uncover the Uncommon continues to celebrate human originality across all boardsports,” said Laura Fairweather, EMEA Marketing at Stance. Smartwool introduces art by Brian Iguchi as part of the ‘Art of the Outdoors’ collaboration. As the icing on the cake, most brands now add their logo on the upper calf.

2. PERFORMANCE-READY MATERIALS

At performance socks outfit Smartwool, head of EMEA Marketing, Simon Mur points out the advantages of premium Merino wool in their socks, including moisture wicking, odour-resistance, as well as warmth and cushioning. HEAD relies on a soft knitted wool blend. Stinky Socks is fighting odours via antibacterial fabric treatments, while implementing cotton capable of absorbing three times its weight in moisture. Ortovox uses Cimayarn, a brand of yarn from Schoeller used by the Swiss Army. Stance is stoked on, “our FEEL 360 technology – keeping our feet fresh and reducing odours, dry with the moisture wicking as the durability of our premium twisted yarns.”

3. MASH-UP FINISHES

Loud prints are only half of the story in 2019, as leading brands mash up fabric treatments such as tie-dye or gradient-dye with layered graphics on top. The crew at HUF is taking their signature weed-pattern to a new level by layering the ‘Plantlife’ motif over psychedelic dyes and aloha flower graphics. American Socks is playing the mash-up trend with comic book line-art graphics by Australian artist Mulga on patterned fabric, while Smartwool layers mountain scapes over melange fabrics. For the ultimate mash-up, Many Mornings makes mismatched socks – two different socks in a pair – their calling card.

4. LETTER PRINTS

The sneaker industry's hot trend for ubiquitous ‘LETTERING’ in bold

type – started by artist/designer Virgil Abloh – is spilling into the socks segment. Look out for unicoloured knit socks contrasted by slogans in white or black typeface by brands such as HUF, Homeboy, Head, and Stinky. Smartwool became the first brand to master prints on a Merino wool-blend base in 2018 and announced plenty of lifestyle socks for 2019.


5. ATHLETIC DESIGNS

Performance-minded brands have reengineered constructions from the ground up. Simon at Smartwool is stoked on, “specific fits for men and for women, body-mapped mesh ventilation zones, Indestructawool reinforced high-abrasion points, a Virtually Seamless toe, and 4-Degree Elite Fit System that has elastic in four strategic areas to keep socks in place.” Smartwool also offers different fits in their PhD Snow Socks for ski and snowboard boots. All HEAD ski socks feature arch support to keep socks from slipping, plus a cushioned sole for shock absorption; technical models offer protection of key pressure points and air channels. Ortovox Merino Ski compression socks have an elasticated double stretch cuff for a non-slip fit plus some ventilation.

6. COLLABS

Socks offer the perfect canvas for creative brand collaborations and Stinky socks is upping the ante by teaming up with Method Magazine, Boreal Mountain, and snowboard icon Chris Bradshaw this coming season. Stance is teaming up with Disney and Star Wars. Smartwool continues the successful collab with Vans and also tapped snowboard legend Brian Iguchi and snowboard nomad Chris Benchetler for their PhD Snow socks collection. Stance works with mountain man Jimmy Chin on the Ski Ultralight Merino and is spreading some love to core shops with the Insider sock for store staff only.

7. CLASSIC STYLES

One more thing: Despite all these new trends, good old tube socks with bold horizontal stripes – a staple in skateboarding attire since the mid-1970s – remain relevant, especially in the women's segment. Make sure to catch the classic athletic styles by Homeboy, HUF, Stinky, as well as the Stance Ishod Wair crew sock and a cool rainbow-striped version by American Socks. Performance-oriented companies such as HEAD and Ortovox create an aesthetic with brand signage next to geometric designs. With that said, boardsports socks offer something for everybody these days. 

HIGHLIGHTS

- All-over graphic prints
- Blended materials
- Athletic constructions
- Layered graphics
- Letter prints
- Merino wool
- Brand & artist collabs

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brand profile



HOT

The legendary Serge Dupraz is resurrecting Hot Snowboards. The brand synonymous with carving rises from its ashes at a time when the art of carving is in full blossom.

Please tell us about the reincarnation of Hot snowboards.

Hot Snowboards was launched back in the 1983/84 winter. For me, making snowboards was a totally natural progression from my profession as a custom windsurf shaper. The young brand had a special sort of creativity and audacity and it quickly revolutionised snowboarding as a discipline, sending ripples through the winter sports market. The impact was unprecedented.

It's often omitted from articles about the history of snowboarding but anyone who was into snowboarding at that time knows all about it and recognise its importance.

The end of the '80s was a crazy time for us. Sales exploded year after year, each model we released was the crème de la crème in terms of performance, pushing the new sport forward. I created the first team of professional racers who were on a salary with an assigned coach. The Hot Pro Team provided us with international exposure through some remarkable successes.

Circumstances, mostly due to the weather, forced me to grant a production license in 1990 (there was a succession of bad seasons for years and clients really felt the pinch). Unfortunately it was not honoured. I left the industry in 1991 with a profound sense that my story with Hot wasn't finished. Predictably enough, the brand saw success for a few years of prosperity before weakening and eventually disappearing completely. Fifteen years ago Dupraz brought freshness and, if I do say so myself, my shapes were visionary and we are now all coming out of a period of decline in snowboarding. Momentum is building, the time has come...

Why was now the right time to re-launch Hot?

We are reaching a point where snowboarding is finally coming out of the "freestyle only" niche it was pigeon-holed into by the big brands in the last 25 years. I firmly believe that snowboarding, as a discipline and in its popularity, deserves a lot better than what it has today. This was one of my clear objectives for launching Dupraz snowboards 15 years ago. The D1 brings you back to the essence itself of snowboarding, the idea of surfing the snow, putting the two fundamentals of snowboarding at the forefront - the joys of riding in powder and the pleasure of the carve. The D1 and our philosophy itself have influenced so many brands over the years and it's now re-launching the sport, from Japan to the USA, Canada, Russia and, of course, Europe. The 'Dupraz shape' is often copied but never matched. We continually update our D1, which remains an absolute benchmark for 'modern' shapes. 'Playing' with other shapes and codes with 'Hot Snowboards' and tackling different rider profiles represents a promising new step forward for us.

Which models will you be selling?

We will start off this year with a range close to our flagship D1, which we have called the "Be Hot". On the topsheet we used the logo from the second version of the "One Sixty", which came out in 1988, only slightly modified. This is an ultra-modern revamp of the famous "One Sixty" which was the first board to be effective for use on the piste and in powder. The "Be Hot" is a super-manoeuverable, fast and stable board designed to bring you joy no matter what you have your eye on that day.

How will you differentiate Hot and Dupraz?

Hot has always been an audacious, unconventional brand. There will of course be projects quite close to Dupraz under Hot Snowboards as our values and mindset have the same source but there will also be real differences in the products and in our communication, which will gradually become clear.

How are you going to market Hot?

Dupraz enjoys a great reputation earned not through big marketing or advertising campaigns but through strong word of mouth and authentic exchanges between riders. We are not a brand that is known to the masses, we're more under the radar but appreciated by the connoisseurs of the scene, by people who ride. At the moment our boards are ridden by 'those in the know'. Things might be very different when it comes to Hot Snowboards.

Which retailers and regions are you working with?

We are so lucky to live where we do. We have an incredible choice of terrain and various different resorts to keep us entertained. This ranges from huge wide-open spaces to perfectly groomed pistes for carving on. Switzerland and Italy are only just an hour away as well. Designing boards suitable for such an immense variety of terrain near where we live means that we can respond to the needs of all riders on the planet. In the Hot era we sold 4 times more boards than Burton in France and our boards were distributed into several different countries. I'm stoked to be working with all these people around the world again, with respect, efficiency, integrity and above all...fun ! 🏂



POW GLOVES

POW Gloves were dreamt up on a road trip to a ski resort in Washington State, America in 1997 and were first sold out the back of a car to combat the often wet Pacific North West. Fast forward to present time, POW is now being sold in 43 countries worldwide and are fully focused on making the highest quality performing, durable, and well-styled handwear for those who demand it. We catch up with Marketing Manager, Michael Belfrage to profile the brand.

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

POW Gloves was first dreamt about in 1997 on a road trip to a ski resort in Washington State (America). Cold, wet hands can ruin a great day of riding on the hill, this is common where we live in the Pacific North West and why we decided to get into the handwear business in the first place. We originally designed and created a small range of gloves selling them out of the back of a car to the locals that rode the PNW resorts, fast forward to the present where the POW brand is now sold in over 43 countries worldwide.

Who is on the management team?

Dave Salvesson – CEO
Dan Egan – Head Designer and one of the original brand founders
Doug Foss – Operations Manager
Michael Belfrage – Marketing Manager
Ryan Davis – National Sales Manager - USA
Michi Mohr – National Sales Manager - Europe
Alex Jones – Communications Manager

What is the company ethos?

Born out of the Pacific North West, POW is focused entirely on creating the highest performing handwear that is “Built To Last”. Each POW product is designed and tested at the POW Test Lab located in Glacier WA, at the base of Mt Baker.

What sets you apart from your competitors?

POW is a handwear brand, focused entirely on making the highest performing, durable, and well styled handwear for those who demand it.

While other companies produce a multitude of other categories, with gloves being merely an afterthought, POW remains committed solely to handwear, which uniquely enables us to do it better than the rest.

POW is created from performance proven technical fabrics, “Grade A” leather and GORE-TEX brand technology, all POW product is rigorously tested in all conditions to ensure a superior product that keeps your hands warm and dry. POW is about authenticity, heritage and being true to our origins.

Could you tell us about the way in which you use local resources in your products?

Even though POW is a global brand we are always thinking locally from a creative point of view, whether that be collaborating with local artists as a part of our Artist Series Collection; for example, we’re currently collaborating with Artist Christian Hundertmark – C100 Studio based out of Germany.

We have a partnership with QPARKS where we create a collaboration glove that the crew use daily whilst building and maintain their terrain parks.

We source premium leathers from Pittards, UK which makes up part of the construction of specific glove and mitt models. We collaborate with local grassroots snowboard/ski stores, for example at Stevens Pass and Mt Baker. We also support B4BC (Boarding For Breast Cancer) a non-profit foundation that advocates early detection and a healthy active lifestyle as the best means for breast cancer prevention with a collaboration Mitt and artwork designed by Steph Elise.

And we ensure that all our production factories are socially compliant.

What do you find important about the European market?

The European market is incredibly important to POW, arguably some of the world’s best freestyle snowboarders and skiers are consistently coming from Europe. We see this region as having solid growth potential for POW and we have recently invested

in customer support, logistics, retail partnerships, and athlete engagements.

Why should retailers sell your brand?

Everyone that works at POW has a passion for snowboarding, skiing and outdoor adventure and each product we design and create is with the utmost detail and function for its intended use.

POW’s commitment to the vision of advancing glove technology for the winter sports glove market is driven by performance feedback from our staff, team riders, and most importantly our customers ensuring that we deliver a superior product to help keep you on the hill longer and stronger.

We’re also noticing a lot of imitators popping up of late, so we must be doing something right...!

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

We are distributed in all major territories throughout Europe, we’ve been strategically re-aligning the distributor network to include a mix of direct agency engagements in key territories such as France and Germany to expand the reach of the brand to consumers and ensure better customer service. We have also recently appointed new distributors in Scandinavia and Russia. 🇸🇪

POWGLOVES.COM

www.shops-1st-try.com



OTTER

Otter are a SW England based wooden surf craft maker outfit, specialising in gorgeous surfboards, hand planes, belly boards and paddleboards. Founded by maker, James Otter, the company offers workshops where they welcome customers to come and make, from scratch their chosen vessel and leave with smile on face and product in hand.

Please give an overview of Otter. How did the idea come about? Where the operation is based and how long the company has been running for.

The idea for Otter came from James' passion for making things out of wood (he was studying a degree in designing and making at the time) and his passion for surfing. He was fed up with how his typical surfboards would only last a couple of years and felt like he could make something stronger and longer lasting from wood. The journey for James began in 2008 and in 2010 he started the company, which is now based in a workshop in Porthtowan, Cornwall, UK.

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

We don't really have a management team, we just have our team. Everyone is free to contribute and help pull the company in the way they see fit, but we all have the same fundamental beliefs - to share the joy of making and playing in the ocean and to preserve these delights for future generations. We've got James at the helm, Chris who keeps things on track in the workshop, Ally who helps out in the workshop, Trudy (covering Liz's maternity) guiding the office upstairs and we have Mat who captures it all and tells our story via images and social media.

Which channels are you currently selling in and how do you see this changing in the coming years?

We sell mostly direct to our customers. We are

toying with branching out into some specialised retail stores, but we'll see how that goes. We love connecting to our customers and sharing the joy of what we do so much, that we'd rather retain that as much as we can. The biggest part of our business is running our workshop courses and whilst we can take these on the road, the connection is still made to our customer in a very personal way. That's just how we like it!

How is a bespoke, custom-made brand such as Otter working in a market full of replica products?

Always staying authentic and always striving to better ourselves. Both of those we are in control of, the market and replica products we can't control. We trust that our customers can see that and hope that they will continue to want to support us.

Tell our audience more about your workshops you provide.

We provide a few different workshop experiences. You can spend a day with us to make a bellyboard or handplane, you can spend five days with us to make your own surfboard and you can spend seven days with us to make your own paddleboard. We've been running our surfboard workshops the longest (about seven years) and see these as the cornerstone of what we do. It's the reason we all get up and go to work. We get to spend five days with our customers, teaching them how to make a surfboard and building their confidence and excitement and welcoming them into our world. They leave as good friends and they have a new surfboard to enjoy the ocean with, that they made themselves.

Can you talk to us about materials, where they're sourced etc.

The majority of the wood we use is all grown in the South West of the UK. Our cedar is from

Wiltshire and our poplar is from Somerset. We repurpose some other timbers as and when we get our hands on them and we use a poplar plywood that is grown and produced in Spain. When you design and make anything, you become incredibly aware of where the materials you're using come from and for us, we want to preserve and support healthy, diverse and sustainable woodlands. That is why we work closely with foresters and saw mills to ensure we know exactly where our timber comes from and how the woodlands are being managed. Seeing this gives you a real sense of responsibility. We know we have to make something worth making and that lasts as long as possible.

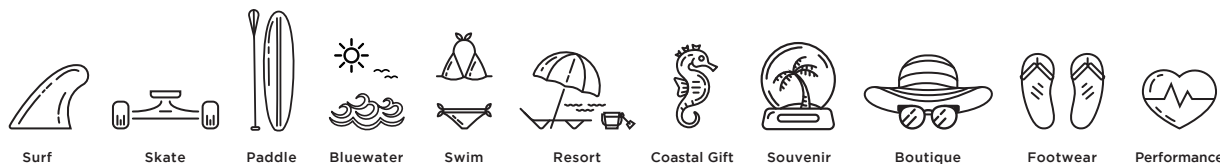
We then use marine grade glues throughout the construction of the boards to ensure their longevity and strength and we finish them with a bio epoxy and fibreglass. These are the 'dirtier' bits of our process, but at the moment we feel it is the best way to ensure the quality and longevity of our boards and allows us to stay at the forefront of developing technologies within this industry so we can use the products that create the least amount of environmental damage as possible. ♻️

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REBOUNCE

Rebounce, hailing from Luxembourg are bridging street culture including tattoos, music and dance with skateboarding and BMX. Already a sought after brand in their home territory, Rebounce are now looking to expand into Europe.

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

I've always loved what streetwear represents, the story, the people, the dreams, the sacrifices. But I couldn't relate to any brand, so I decided to create one that represents what I love and live. Before opening Rebounce, I already had a different brand named "PROFU" with my best friend. We never took it further because we were students and couldn't afford it. Rebounce Clothes is the 2.0 and at the same time a message that you should never give up.

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

I couldn't dream of a better team:
Tony Francisco (designer)
Sven Soares (photographer / model)
Dany Francisco (designer / videographer/ photographer)
Dany Gee (accountant / housekeeper / model)
Rui Miroto (CEO / designer / photographer / videographer/ marketing)

What is the company ethos?

Chase your dreams and never give up. Live your own lifestyle without worrying about others. Enjoy and live your life to the fullest without letting other people's opinions affect you. Help each other when you can, because at the end of the day we're all one big family.

What sets you apart from your competitors?

I believe our supporters can tell we don't just

do this for financial reasons. Rebounce is a movement you have to see it with your own eyes. It's not just the fact that we sell clothing. We organize events for our customers, we have giveaways, free tattoo sessions, and way more. A lot of people didn't just find a clothing store when they found Rebounce, they also found a family, and that's what sets us apart.

How have you created a community through the movement of your brand?

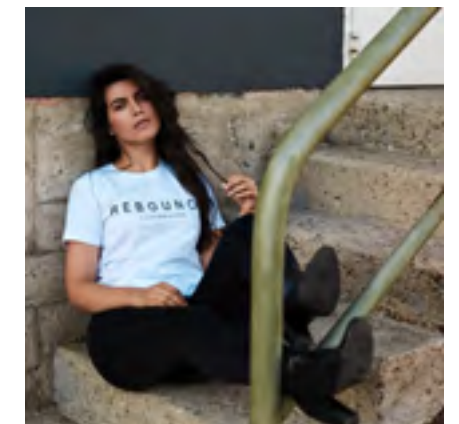
We don't know ourselves! We believe it's because our designs and collabs aren't based on one category (sports, tattoos etc). We've always tried going beyond to reach the entire world while keeping our own style. We organize a lot of events to spend quality time with our customers outside of the shop. It can go from dance competitions to fundraising events and more. We also think that since we foster such strong relationships with our customers, they end up supporting us by wearing the brand at photo shoots, in music videos or even on television. We've had the opportunity to work with renowned people including: Les Twins (Dancers), Red Café (Music Artist), Josh Mario John (Tattoo Model), Machine Gun Kelly (Music Artist), Lil John (Music Artist) et al.

What do you see for the future of your company?

We plan on travelling around the world and organizing different pop-up stores. When our customers travel, they tell us that most of their friends and family ask them about the brand. So instead of us waiting for people from other countries to come to us, we decided to bring a Rebounce shop to them.

Tell us more about your collaborations.

We try to collaborate with renowned brands in



the art world. From graffiti and BMX to music or skateboarding. We try our best to reach as many communities as possible at once. Also, we've created a lifestyle and unique movement in Luxembourg. We stand out when it comes to headwear and we're always proud to be present. Of course, we constantly have to follow trends but try to keep the authenticity of older brands.

That's why we proudly release each year a Rebounce hat dedicated to its country and the honour of our Duke's national day. This limited but very sought after product makes us proud of our creation. Today, Rebounce is launching its first collaboration with the brand "Cayler & Sons". Not only because we share the same headwear passion, but also because we saw Cayler & Sons growing over the years and we're excited to share this project in association with Anthony Diamonds. The release will be available at the shop and online by end of January.

Since a lot of customers can't visit our shop, we created our www.rebounce.lu website where we only sell our own brand, collaborations, and latest releases.

NEW PRODUCTS

01 - ISLAND TRIBE SUN STICK

Suitable for everyone, but most of all for sports enthusiasts, on the snow, or off it, Island Tribe's Sunstick is for the adventurous. It offers superior UV-A and UV-B protection, whilst remaining sweat-resistant and water-resistant for 4-6 hours, meaning no sore eyes or white streaks. All in all it's ideal for all outdoor sports, for children and those with delicate skin. The product is friendly for all with no parabens, oxybenzone or perfume and is recommended by the Cancer Council, Cancer Research UK and CANSA.

islandtribe.eu

02 - DAKINE CONTINENTAL GT GLOVE

A warm, durable glove for daily wear on the hill, the Continental GT is a dedicated glove for dedicated riders, built for the demands of day-to-day resort and backcountry use. The system features a GORE-TEX insert, a premium leather palm, Primaloft® insulation and a removable, quick-drying fleece liner. The mitt has the durability, warmth and versatility you need for all-conditions riding. A one-hand cinch makes for easy cuff adjustability.

dakine.com

03 - NSP COCOFLAX CRUISE

Uses the award winning CocoFlax Technology that won "Product of the Year" at 2019 PaddleExpo. This is a highly durable reinforced 100% natural fibre technology made from coconut fibres from Harmless Harvests organic farms. The end result is a unique look, with less weight and considerably stronger rails whilst at the same time the CocoFlax construction also adds to the responsive flex of the board.

nspsurboards.com

04 - FLYN X LANGE MORA WETSUIT

Zipless long Mora 3/2mm wetsuit uses ecological Yamamoto neoprene, made from Japanese limestone, which guarantees high water impermeability and durability of the product. The low absorbency of the foam guarantees lightness and maintains the perfect temperature of the body. The inspiration for the Mora pattern comes from the Polish Army's uniforms back in 80s. If you specialize in kitesurfing, windsurfing or wakesurfing it's the perfect choice.

getflyn.com

05 - EAREBEL STEEZE BEANIE WITH BLUETOOTH HEADPHONES

Stop wearing In-Ears and start enjoying "Radical Sound Comfort" with Earebel's new "Steeze Beanie" and headphone combo. Highest wearing comfort meets pure sound! The stylish "Steeze Beanie" with cuff comes with integrated and removable Earebel Bluetooth Headphones that can also be used as a headset with telephone function. "Push the Button & Push your Limits"

earebel.com

06 - STANCE ISHOD WAIR'S CHECK MATE SIGNATURE SOCK

New Jersey-born professional skateboarder and Stance Punk & Poet Ishod Wair is one of the most respected names in skateboarding. From mind-blowing film parts to international contest wins, Ishod is out there living the pro skater dream while always maintaining a giant smile on his face. Stance is proud to present Ishod's Check Mate signature sock, inspired by his love of cats and the great game of chess.

stance.eu.com

01



02



03



04



05



06



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I was, once again, going to try and get through this without a Brexit mention – but as you will see this was a forlorn hope.

2018 has been pretty good year. The winter season ended well and the summer really kicked in with some amazing sunshine - if not the best for the wind driven boardsports, or those that need waves – but that sunshine brought people out from behind their screens and onto their boards.

Distributors appear generally happy with their winter pre-order books, although perhaps more nervous than normal about the general demise of the High Street which is certainly impacting on some of the larger/chain stores. But even in this area some stores are thriving which shows that if you get it right customers will still come to your bricks and mortar stores. If you get it wrong... your destiny is written on the bricks!

Paul Harrison started the Black Sheep skate store in Manchester ten years ago and is still as enthusiastic today as he was then. So how has the tenth year been? “Alright.” I pushed for a bit more. “We’re seeing a polarisation to the bigger players who are all trying to grab a bit more of the market. They need to feed the machine and I feel that the smaller skate shops are suffering as a result.” Does that include Black Sheep? “No. We’re in the middle ground and Black Sheep is a really progressive business never standing still. You have to evolve and develop your business and face the issues head on.”

Paul’s been working in skate for the past 17 years although in a previous incarnation he also worked for the BBC as a Ccmeraman and documentary producer. “It was not for me and even though my Mum still thinks I am messing about, I knew then as I do now, that running my own business is what I want to do.” And running it in skate is a bonus I presume. “It is but we’re lucky because we are small enough to be nimble, smart enough to evolve and we know what we’re about. We know skate.”

Paul is a free thinking, smart thinking individual who understands the pitfalls of running his own business. He’s clever enough to come up with good ideas to maintain the difference but also, in his own words, happy to pinch a good idea if he sees one. Whilst the polarisation will undoubtedly continue, and it may put some smaller stores out of business, I think it’s clear that Black Sheep is certainly going to be ‘alright’ for some considerable time.

It has been a long time since I spoke to Jeremy from TSA, one of the most vocal contributors. “F&*£ing Brexit”. I had apparently just caught him in the car on the way back from a meeting with a freight consultant where all the talk was about Brexit. “But what else is there to talk about – it’s a mess – I cannot believe we are in this position.” I had to agree with Jeremy and I cannot believe we are in this position either. But enough of the B word. Apart from that how are things? “Really positive – we’re back in growth in all areas – boards, boots, bindings, kids, adults... you name it and it appears to be growing. Of course summer business is low but it’s still showing growth so we’re ready for a good winter.” It seems that Jeremy also has a good memory and he recalls the summer of 1976: “After that amazing summer we had an amazing winter and if we get that again then we really could be seeing the start of something big... the last hurrah until it all turns to \$hit!” Here we are back at Brexit again. So how is Brexit going to change things for TSA? “The main thing is,

of course the uncertainty. It’s going to affect my buy for sure. I’m going to be cautious – more so than ever probably. I don’t see what else I can do.”

Bringing Jeremy back to this season: “Our Big Bang was busy – one of the busiest yet with 600 testers over the two days. The interest is there and snowboarding is cool again so we just have to make sure we convert. Early season business is always affected by temperature – early October was warm and I was crapping it, end of October is cold and it’s all turned out fine.”

We ended the conversation with a few more shared expletives about Brexit – not suitable for print.

Over to Darren and Lorraine from Subvert – I managed to get them both on the line at the same time. Subvert is a pure skate and snow store to their customer base like almost no other independent in the UK. So how are things? “Last season was great but it always seems to end so abruptly. We have our snowboard trip to Morzine – the Subvert Slushy Social in April so we always end on a high. Then we work our way through the summer months just gagging for the next winter. This summer we put a lot of effort into promoting skate - we sectioned off some of the car park, put in some features and it worked well. We also ran some girl-only sessions with a female coach, which was really well received. We’ll certainly repeat all of this for 2019.”

And now, winter is here, how are things? “If October is anything to go by it’s going to be a good winter. People are buying earlier and it’s obvious that our customers are really optimistic and we’re hopeful that we’re going to have another great season. The Subvert Slushy Social is already sold out - and that’s not until April next year! A great sign.” All in all it seemed that Subvert were pretty happy with the year and optimistic about the season to come.

Finally over to Absolute Snow and Matt to see how things are. This year they moved the warehouse to a new location. “Pure chaos. That’s the only way to describe it during our move. Now it’s OK. Teething problems are over and things have settled down. Now it’s heads down for the coming season.”

So what’s new? “The shop is doing way better than we ever thought. It’s interesting that we were online only and we now have a good bricks and mortar store that has evolved from that online business. And a store that’s going really well.”

But the Absolute store is not A-typical. “It’s more of a showroom – destination store if you like - but the one thing we guarantee is personal and experienced attention. We really know our sports and we give our customers 100% attention. They can just walk in but we encourage customers to make an appointment and it’s surprising how many do. With the appointment comes dedicated expert time. That and free coffee or even a beer makes for a great experience all round.” There was only one negative that Matt alluded to: “Returns. We’re seeing a much higher rate of returns which is, I believe, a shift in online buying culture – buy three, send two back, keep the one you want. This is a real issue for the future.” Apart from that it was all good and Matt was really optimistic for the coming winter. “Great summer, good indicators, improved margin – all good”

And... no mention of Brexit. By the time you read this it will hopefully all be settled. And if it’s not then it really is going to be a bloody mess.

GORDON WAY

MARKET INSIGHT

Economically speaking, 2018 was a pretty good year overall with general unemployment down and growth close to 2%. The French economy seemed to be in good shape in the spring of 2018, despite seeing a slowdown compared to the previous year. 2017 saw even more dynamic growth than expected, reaching a level not seen for 10 years with an evaluation of +2.3%. You would have to go back to 2007, before the crisis, to find a higher rate of growth at +2.4%. However, France suffered a slowdown in growth in the second quarter as consumption was weakened by the increase in oil prices and taxation. Indeed, apart from the few hours of jubilation straight afterwards, Les Bleus’ victory in the 2018 Football World Cup could not deliver on the hopes for sustainable euphoria throughout the country. It was the underlying factors of unemployment and inflation that most affected morale in France, and not the outcome of sporting events as some might have thought.

When it comes to our industry, and in particular sales and shop visits, 2018 was pretty good, surfing on the positivity of the politico-economic climate in France and Europe.

Ski resorts saw quite an exceptional amount of snowfall in 2017-2018 winter and the season was a success in terms of customer numbers in shops as well as in sales. Equipment sales seem to have worked well and in a widespread manner. In board sales, it was mostly the all mountain segment that came out smelling of roses. The splitboard segment also stood out and, even though it remains niche, more and more people are seeking freedom away from the pistes. Surf-style freeride snowboards cut quite short or with swallowtails also worked pretty well. As for other snowboard hardware, boots and bindings also enjoyed good rates of sale, however more and more people are coming to try boots on in shops before leaving with the information they need to go and find the best price online. Another product category that did well this winter was goggles: all retailers had really good rates of sale in this department. In clothing, logically it was the technical garments, namely pants and jackets that customers were mostly looking for in shops.

The winter was pretty calm and rainy on the coast but the Atlantic did see fickle, windy weather as well. Neoprene came out pretty late in the season because of this. As for equipment, it would seem like the general public segment is taking more and more space, even in winter. This just shows that there are more and more surfers, with notable sales in everything around inflatable SUPs and beginner and improver surfboards.

Overall, weather conditions were quite favourable for shops that are aimed at winter, despite competition from the internet becoming more and more fierce. But we are still far from the figures of a few years ago, even with the good snow conditions. Shops are putting emphasis on service to set themselves apart from websites: repairs, rentals and demos, as well as good advice are the keys to differentiating yourself.

In the spring, May’s exceptional calendar largely contributed to family holidays in France. Naturally the urban shops suffered from a visitation deficit because of weekend trips away and locals’ holidays, while shops on the coast really felt the increase in turnout due to the long weekends in May. Like every year, the season really kicked off around Easter when we saw a lot of people in the coastal shops, with a large percentage of foreigners to boot. Despite the dicey weather, the long weekends in May were quite beneficial to these shops in terms of attendance and turnover. In the more urban shops it wasn’t so much the vacation calendar or bank holidays favouring sales as the nice weather, which could not always be counted on this year.

As for sales, the weather wasn’t perfect for launching spring clothing collections. It was mostly neoprene enjoying the sales in spring, with the fashion aspect really taking its place this year. Today’s customers

are looking for a stylish, coordinated look. This is a trend that really seems to be taking off. In surfboards, progressive boards seem to be popular: Hybrids, Fish and Twins have been the most sought-after boards in shops. Another trend that has been confirmed in surfboards is for foamies. The trend has been pretty well established in the USA and Australia for a few years now, and the foamie is starting to takes its place here in France too. This is a reality of the 2018 season.

On the streets, the surfskate phenomenon continues to swell. This trend that began last year strengthened in 2018. Surfers without waves are constantly looking for the feeling of gliding, and despite the difficult conditions, the surfskate is the answer they’ve been searching for. It’s a craze product that has seen real rates of sale in shops. On the other hand, street skating has taken the lion’s share in 2018. Infrastructures (parks etc) are being renovated and expanded and this contributes to a renewed interest in the activity.

After an exceptionally wild and rainy winter and a non-existent spring (meteorologically speaking), the 2018 summer was actually really sunny. It was an amazing summer with great weather all over France. Even still, July was quite a weird month, with hardly anyone in the shops yet decent, if not good turnover for the season. People had great snowboarding conditions this year, so perhaps they’d used-up their holidays over the winter. People tended to wait until the very last minute before going away and, with the good weather everywhere, some people decided just to stay at home. The weather wasn’t all great news for street. It was almost too hot to skate, so it was a pretty quiet summer in the shops, with sales down for the period, especially considering the heat wave.

With the superb victory of the French football team at the 2018 World Cup, we expected a positive impact in shops. But it seems that the Russian Championships did nothing to benefit retailers. This sporting event didn’t exactly encourage people to go on holiday or have weekends away. They preferred to watch the games with their friends, and some of them definitely delayed the start of their trips. With kick-offs in the middle of the day, the matches weren’t timed well for people to go to the shops either. Even though France won, with the World Cup being held abroad, it was nothing like in 2016 when we were hosts and attracted extra tourists to France.

When it comes to the most sought-after products in shops, it appears that the good weather did have some positive effect on clothing sales – notably summery products like baseball caps, shorts, boardshorts and bikinis. In the technical section, foam boards and progressive boards were popular finds for customers. But it does seem that participants have improved, so were looking more for big fish boards. SUP, and especially inflatable ones that make up around 90% of shop sales, have continued to work well this summer.

Overall, 2018 was a pretty good vintage for the boardsports world, with the confirmation of some trends and the appearance of others. As I write these lines, it’s still too early to foresee any promise from the 2018-2019 winter season, so all that remains is to hope the weather is as beneficial as last year so that the winter to come is as good as the previous one. Watch this space...

BENOIT BRECO

FRANCE

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MARKET INSIGHT

GERMANY

FRANCE
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ITALY

After a noticeably cold winter, during which we even recorded record low temperatures way into March, everything suddenly switched to summer a month later. It lingered for weeks, then months, gifting us tropical weather way into October. This resulted in good, even great sales for watersport retailers during the summer months.

Matteo Cau of Intenics, who represents the German sale and distribution arm of Red Paddle Co. and O’Neills Wetsuits and SUPs, couldn’t agree more: “This season was great as we had fabulous weather all over Germany. This will have caused the increase of about 20-25% on last year. Red Paddle as a premium brand has sold very well again. But even O’Neill, our new SUP brand, whose wetsuits we’ve been marketing for quite some time now, have done really well. Their boards and sets are medium price – they were re-launched in 2018 and have gone down well with retailers and customers alike. The overall trend is more for touring and we have had an increasing number of enquiries about 12’6” boards. We’re expecting another increase in the stand-up paddling sector in 2019. How much will very much depend on the weather though.

The domestic surfing market was another beneficiary of the hot weather, and Markus Hensinger of Link Distribution has recorded a doubling in surfboard pre-orders from some retailers.

At Sascha Jeakel’s Rebel’s Garage skate shop, the mood is slightly more subdued, despite the grand opening of the skate park in Düsseldorf. Surely Germany’s biggest skate park right on your doorstep has a positive impact? “Shortly before the opening and after it was publicised that something new would be launched, something happened. A lot of people dug out their old boards, bought new grip tape or installed new wheels on their boards. We really noticed a spike in terms of sales. A well-heeled customer bought a complete board for her niece, only to come back later and get one for herself. She was 60, has now started to skate and goes round the block with her niece. But the few initial complete board sales aside, we haven’t really felt the impact of the Düsseldorf skate park. It’s mainly down to the general trend in terms of boarding, which remains bad, just like last year. I even think it has pretty much died down! The summer was far too hot, you can’t skate in 39°C, people have other things on their minds than rolling or shopping. While the business remained consistent, every skate shop owner has basically become more wary. I can also see this with orders for our shop deck production, which has continued to decline. In 2018, we pressed 1500 to 2000 shop decks less than previously. Even the team skaters don’t take full advantage of their free allocation. Some of them even take as long as three months before they return to swap their decks. It’s a really strange situation at the moment. The longboard market has been flooded with special offers. While my cheapest longboard retails at €160, Karstadt Sport are currently selling one for €39. Of course there are customers who say they prefer to buy quality rather than replace a cheap board three or four times, but the market has become really difficult overall. Consumers, who would visit the shop two or three years ago in order to have a high-end longboard assembled to their specification or to buy specific components, have all but disappeared. Anyone else who’s after something specific will do a targeted search on eBay and buy at rock bottom prices. We’ll see what the whole Olympic application thing will bring. While we have Germany’s biggest skate park with 4000 square metres in the city, I don’t think it has been done the right way. Even in the flow area, which

measures 600 square metres, they’ve put signs up saying, “only three skaters at a time.” That’s just not great. The modern tech skater will celebrate the curb and the rail, but the general response to the park has been subdued and that’s a pity. It’s made worse by the fact that they screwed up the bowl area during construction, which was designed by Rune Glifberg. That’s why my sales prognosis for 2019 is a difficult one. I get the impression that all people do these days is work, they have less spare time and that’s why skating goes to the back of the queue. I’d really wish business was more like 2015. That was a really healthy year with good board sales, but for that to happen, a lot needs to come together.”

Let’s have a look at Berlin and the Barrio Skate Shop belonging to Martin “Kongo” Boehmfeldt. He’s had a good year so far with a steadily increasing turnover. “If the business continues like this, we won’t experience any problems and can have a positive outlook. Skateboarding is booming like it hasn’t done in ages. Skateboard hardware did very well, which is the lion’s share of our turnover. Fashion has plateaued in comparison, and the whole retro hype has died down for shoes.”

His Core Skate Shop is close to famous Berlin spots like “Die Bänke” (the benches), “Dog Shit Spot” and Skatehalle Berlin. Berlin has become the skate capital of Germany and Barrio Skate Shop can score with its prime location in Friedrichshain. “As we’re close to the spots, we’re everyone’s go-to place. Online retail doesn’t really come into it for us. People often ask us if we have an online shop, but we don’t. We promote stationary retail as we believe that good advice is essential in a skate shop, whether it’s for beginners or advanced skaters. That requires a good range and choice, and we’re opting for quality rather than alleged bargains.” How did the refurbishment of the Skatehalle Berlin and the CPH Events in the city impact his turnover? “CPH was noticeable with good turnover. We won’t feel the impact of the refurbishment before winter sets in. Thanks to the warm weather in October and November people were still skating outside. Overall, I think we’ll continue as we have done. The only thing we’ll change is that we’ll scale down our range of shoes. Having too much choice has proved to be overwhelming for customers.”

The other news from Berlin is less positive, though. The Bright Trade Show, which has taken place twice already this year, is taking a break after being taken over by the Premium Group. This could be a sign of how things are with action sports in Germany as a whole: cautious! Of course, there’s always discount campaigns like “20 % off everything” by retailers and online shops, a sign that the sum of the retail sector is still under pressure in terms of stock.

“I’m confident we can match last year’s figures but big leaps forward will be difficult,” says Richie Löffler of MDCN in Hamburg. Jörg Ludewig of Urban Supplies in Wiesbaden sees a slightly more positive trend, but that could always be put at risk by rising costs. DHL will drastically increase their prices in 2019, while Hermes is already charging retailers more for Christmas. The reason is the ever-increasing amount of parcels being sent.

Plus, after GDPR, there’s going to be another new bureaucratic hurdle to jump when the new packaging law comes in on 01/01/2019. The good news is that Germans intend to spend more on Christmas again, according to Ifes-Institut. On average, they plan to spend €472 this year, which is €6 more than 2017. The industry association HDE is expecting a turnover of more than 100 billion over this year’s Christmas period, that’s 2% up on last year. Let’s keep our fingers crossed that action sports retail gets a piece of the action.

JOCHEN BAUER

MARKET INSIGHT

Economically, the year was pretty much the same as last, with a very small percentage of growth in Italy. The political year was dominated by the formation of the new government and discussions of who will be our next Prime Minister. Now the focus shifts to the state budget for next year’s spend. This is also a big topic in the European Union at the moment – overall spend and debt seems too high for our already insanely high state debt.

Boardsport-wise, the year was again driven by strange or unusual weather conditions – it was extremely hot during summer and autumn and now everybody is hoping that winter kicks in as we have seen an October with temperatures still at 25 degrees which means slow sales on jackets and outerwear for Q3 – not great for our stores.

Overall the year was solid on skate hardware sales, with snowboarding still driven by big online competition where low pricing on last year’s gear is making it hard to sell new products at full price. In skateboarding hardware, skate decks from hyped brands like Magenta, Polar, Palace or Fucking Awesome have reached good sales and show that boards can be sold full price (if the brand is hot enough). From US brands, the house Deluxe with Real and Antihero are doing well as far as decks go, Spitfire wheels are doing good, and brands that offer good margin and low pricing are still high in demand for skate shops. The skate hardware industry is also very online sales driven – kids find a bigger and better selection online, so stores need to offer good service to gain sales. The Vans Shop Riot finals took place in Milan in Italy and John Cardiel was DJing the pre-contest party night which was awesome for the young kids to get to know a legend, and of course, it was great for all the store owners to see him still in full swing. The snowboard season is now kicking in, with the Skipass event near Modena at the beginning of November. There will be a huge Big Air World Cup contest for snowboarders and freeskiers, and a trade show alongside where stores and consumers can learn about brands or buy at the B2C area, where different snowboard and ski stores can sell

The time has come for a rundown of 2018. Boardsports retail is in a constant state of flux, with business models, product ranges and, in the most extreme cases, the very existence of the shops being called into question.

Although this year’s seasons and weather seemed to be working in the shops’ favour, it’s clear to see that you still need a solid set of shoulders in order to make it through. Arcade-style core shops, skate shops and pro shops are becoming more and more scarce. In Switzerland, the biggest and most lucrative boardsport is snowboarding. Skateboarding holds its share of importance but consists of products with low unit price and small margin, so it’s difficult to make into a cash cow. Meanwhile, the surfing market is just too small here. So, our Swiss market, focussed on the winter, needs money-spinning products to keep things ticking over in the summer or, better still, throughout the year. We can see that a lot of the most important players in the snowboarding sector are often actually multisport shops with a bigger snowboarding department. Another type of retailer that we mostly find in the mountains is the bike shop (especially mountain bikes), positioned as specialists of summer and winter mountain hardware. With the rise of the electric bike, these guys have found a highly sought-after product with big returns, as much in terms of sales as subsequent servicing.

Another phenomenon we can see more and more of is outlet stores. The interesting thing here is that these aren’t shop chains with lots of points of sale and then one place dedicated to sales and stock liquidation, the outlets are actually their only shops. This clearly proves that there’s something wrong in our industry and that there’s an overproduction effect occurring. But perhaps they are just meeting the demand for cheap products now that consumers have had their appetites whetted by the explosion of a price-slashing online market, which could also explain it. What’s for sure is that even for the Swiss, amongst the top in the world when it comes to spending power, searching for the best deal is definitely on trend.

their goods.

The sad thing about 2018 passing is that the smaller skate and snowboard stores, or even surf stores in the smaller villages located outside the bigger cities seem to suffer more and more from online presence and need to close as they simply don’t have enough people visiting and buying from them anymore. As well as this, skate shoe sales are still decreasing and they have been a significant portion of every store’s turnover for years. This is a bad thing for our industry as those stores build the community and help grow boardsports with their presence, their events and their efforts in having a skate, snowboard, or surf team, which motivates and pushes the scene. Many stores would ask for more support from brands as they need better conditions if brands want to keep them alive and would wish less competition from themselves as Fabio D from 100-one Stores out of Rovereto and Trento states.

A phenomenon which is also having a big impact on boardsports stores in Italy are the so-called Hypekids, who are mainly wearing hype brands from head to toe. A group of young kids that years ago were shopping at skate and streetwear stores, and in best cases were skating, surfing or snowboarding, are moving away to be a fashion-led kid – concentrating on buying online or at high street stores to look cool which means a lot of missing turnover for our industry. Now let’s pray for snow to have some fun on the slopes. Cheers.

FRANZ JOSEF HOLLER

If we look at what’s happened in the summer, we can clearly see that SUP is continuing to grow. All the rental bases were a big hit this year; Nicolas Droz from Wind SUP in St-Blaise in the Neuchâtel canton wasn’t able to take much holiday this summer at all. In just three years, SUP has become the water sport in Switzerland, on our rivers and lakes alike, everywhere and in all its forms. Some like it as an exercise pursuit, others use it for relaxation and excursions, and for some, it’s even replaced the old blow-up boat for use at the beach. In any case, we definitely haven’t seen the end of people stirring our lakes with a paddle in summers to come.

While we’re on the subject of water, it seems appropriate to mention wave pool projects, because yes, Switzerland has been seriously considering them for some time now. Several projects are already well underway and scheduled for a 2020 opening. This goes for Alaïa in Valais and Wave Up in the Zurich area. Alaïa has already acquired the necessary funding and permissions. Furthermore, the first part of their concept, The Alaïa Chalet will open its doors this winter in Lens, right underneath Crans Montana. As for Wave Up, they are in the final stages of getting their building permits in place, after which should come the funding without too many problems. We know the Swiss are fond of waves, so it’ll be interesting to see if basin surfing in the mountains motivates them as much as the travels they set off on every year in search of good waves. To tell you the truth, I don’t really doubt it, and I wish the greatest success to the people behind these centres.

FABIEN GRISEL

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DECEMBER

08 21	BILLABONG PIPE MASTERS OAHU - HAWAII WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM		12 16	CORVATSCH ROOKIE FEST CORVATSCH - SWISS WORLDROOKIETOUR.COM		13 16	DEW TOUR BRECKENRIDGE - USA DEWTOUR.COM	
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JANUARY

08 10	BAW TOUR HEARTS FOOTBALL STADIUM - GORGIE ROAD - EDINBURGH MIDGEWHYTE@AOL.COM		06 07	FUTURE TRY LAAX - SWISS SNOWBOARDBOX.CH		08 11	PITTI OUMO ITALY PITTIMMAGINE.COM	
10 12	SURF EXPO ORLANDO - FLORIDA SURFEXPO.COM		12 16	WORLD ROOKIE FEST LIVIGNO - ITALY WORLDROOKIETOUR.COM		13 15	SNOW AVANT PREMIERE LA CLUSAZ SPORTAIR.FR	
14 15	ANNECY SHOWROOM AVANT PREMIERE ANNECY SPORTAIR.FR		14 19	LAAX OPEN SWISS LAAX.COM		15 17	SEEK BERLIN BRIGHTTRADESHOW.COM	
19 26	FREERIDE WORLD TOUR HAKUBA - JAPAN FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM		20 22	SHOPS 1ST TRY ALPBACHTAL - AUSTRIA SHOPS-1ST-TRY.COM		21	WORLD SNOWBOARD DAY WORLDWIDE WORLD-SNOWBOARD-DAY.COM	
22 24	SLIDE TELFORD - UK SLIDEUK.CO.UK		23 24	JACKET REQUIRED LONDON - UK JACKET-REQUIRED.COM		29	SIA INDUSTRY INTELLIGENCE DENVER - USA OUTDOORINDUSTRY.ORG	

30 01	OUTDOOR RETAILER + SNOW SHOW DENVER - USA OUTDOORINDUSTRY.ORG		30 01	REVOLVER COPENHAGEN - DANEMARK REVOLVER.DK		02 08	FREERIDE WORLDTOUR KICKING HORSE - CANADA FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM	
03 06	ISPO MUNICH - GERMANY ISPO.COM		04 05	SIA ON SNOW DEMO COLORADO - USA SIASNOWSHOW.SNOWSPORTS.ORG		05 09	AGENDA LAS VEGAS - USA AGENDASHOW.COM	

25 01	SLIDE ON SNOW DEMO PLIO - ITALY SIGB.ORG.UK		02 08	FREE RIDE WORLD TOUR VALLNORD-ARCALIS - ANDORA FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM		11 13	SPORT ACHAT LYON - FRANCE SPORTAIR.FR	
13 17	PILA VALLE D'AOSTA ROOKIE FEST - ITALY WORLDROOKIETOUR.COM		21 26	BASEL WORLD BASEL - SWITZERLAND BASELWORLD.COM		22 28	FREERIDE WORLDTOUR FIBERBRUN FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM	



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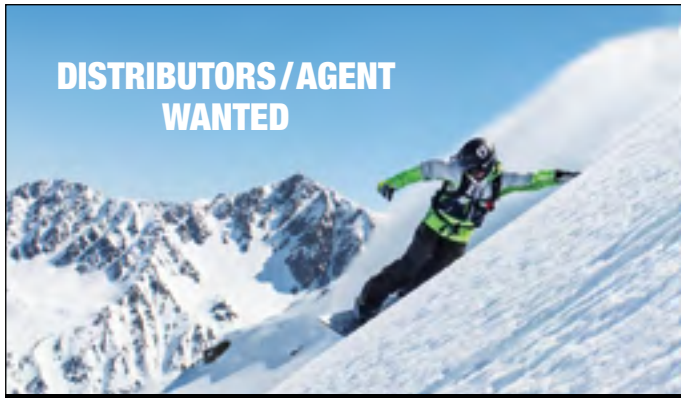
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Team Finisterre - Lawrence Stafford and Oli Culcheth with surfer Noah Lane

BURTON MUNICH HUB OPENING, GERMANY



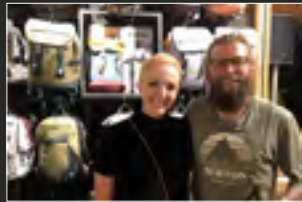
John Lacy (President, Burton Snowboards), Nina Kay, Donna Carpenter (CEO, Burton Snowboards)



Muck Muller stoked on meeting Donna Carpenter and Jake Burton Carpenter



Peter Bauer in his personal Tribute Corner



Sarah Crockett (Burton Chief Marketing Officer) and Tobias Haseloff (Store Manager)

EUROSIMA SURF SUMMIT, SEIGNOSSE, FRANCE



Dakine's Remi Chaussemiche celebrating his Source cover with colleague Flavien Foucher



Hurley's PJ with Kai Lenny and Ail In One's JB



Rob Carroll and Mathieu Crepel



Serge Dupraz and Stokehouse's Derek O'Neil

PADBLEEXPO, NUREMBURG, GERMANY



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EXTREME's uniquely positioned media network entertains fans and offers reach and engagement for brands, reaching over 100 million views each month.

If you have a message, we have the audience... We are on a mission to inspire & entertain through action sports, adventure and fun.

Whether you have a story, an event or just some fun action you would like to share with the world, we would love to hear from you.



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