

BOARDSPORT

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source.

EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

K2 BIG WIG INTERVIEW

KIDS IN SNOWBOARDING

BRAND PROFILES, BUYER SCIENCE, SERVICE PROFILES



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDES - FW19/20 SNOWBOARDS, OUTERWEAR, GOGGLES, WETSUITS, CRUISERS, SNOW SAFETY



Elias Elhardt

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

Team Baron Mitt + Team Mission 25L Pack

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DAKINE

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A full-page photograph of a surfer riding a massive, curling wave. The wave is a deep greenish-blue, and the crest is a thick, white wall of foam. A small surfer in a black wetsuit is visible at the base of the wave, riding a bright yellow-green surfboard. Overlaid on the center of the image is a large, white, stylized logo that reads "Hurley" in a bold, sans-serif font, followed by two large, stylized parentheses "))((" in the same font style.

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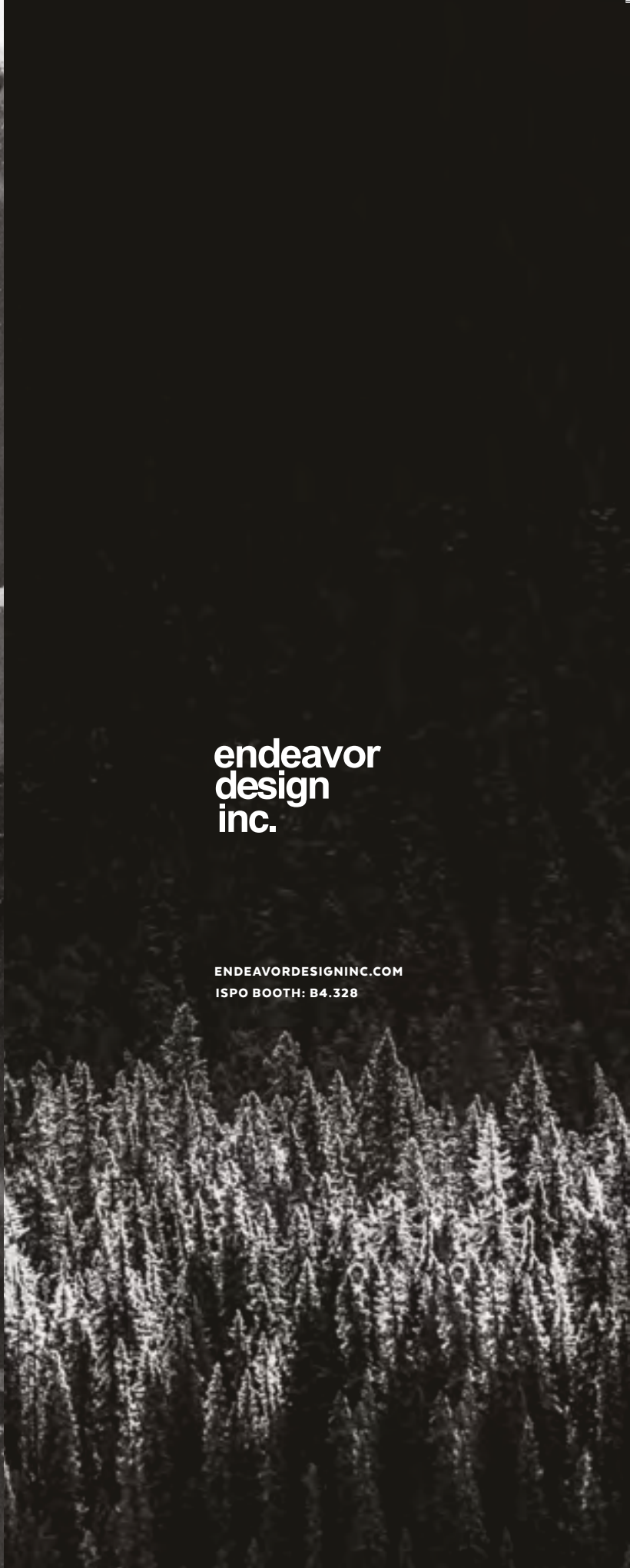
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HELLO #95

"It'll be 2025, snowboarding'll be back in vogue, the bollocks of all this political turmoil, the fear of D2C and falling participation figures will all be a distant memory." Fantastic optimism or the ramblings of a drunken (anonymous) snowboard industry employee after a full day thwacking the Italian pistes of Champoluc for Vans Snowboarding Days? However pressing these concerns may seem today, we're definitely seeing the signs of change.

Returners – the hyped snowboard retail buzzword – has been bringing joy to snowboard retailers in the form of mid-30 and 40-somethings revisiting the snowy sideways love of their formative years after a career/family induced hiatus. We've previously reported that it's these deeper pockets spurring splitboarding's growth, and this demographic are also ideal proponents for the trending of wider, asymmetrical and piste hugging, powder float boards and the advent of quivering.

Also previously reported in SOURCE, snowboard participation figures have been on the decline. An epidemic that we've collectively known needs to be fixed, but with the exception of a small few, no one has taken the bull by the horns – until now.

Kids snowboarding products are finally seeing the attention they deserve. Not just a sized down adults board, specially designed kids sticks, bindings, boots and outerwear are now on the rise with brands seeing the potential and need to get kids hooked from a young age.

But it's not just about the products, it's the mentality we have to address – and we do so with a feature called 'Kids Snowboarding: Lighting the Touchpaper' by our newest recruit and snowboard product guru, Andrew Duthie.

K2's John Colonna takes this issue's Big Wig hot seat and we speak with the industry vet about the fears mentioned above to find out some insightful news on a re-sharpening of the group's focus on snowboarding.

As ever you can expect to find all the info you need to help your buying process in our Retail Buyer's Guides (see contents below) and our market insight authors take stock from across Europe on the state of retail after the Christmas period 2018.

Always Sideways
Harry Mitchell Thompson
Editor

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On the cover: Pablo Pou, Co-Owner of White Days shop, Madrid, Spain

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POLER STUFF FILES FOR CHAPTER 7
BANKRUPTCY

Portland-based outdoor company, Poler Stuff have filed for chapter 7 bankruptcy. They’ve vacated their corporate offices and closed their Laguna Beach and Portland stores. It’s unclear what led to the filing, which is made when a company plans to liquidate its assets. The company’s bankruptcy attorney said there’s potential for a buyer to purchase the company and restart the brand. Poler Stuff’s revenues fell by 50% in two years, from \$7.7 million in 2016 to \$3.6 million in 2018.

ALL SURF IMPORT TO DISTRIBUTE GO FOIL
ACROSS EUROPE

The carbon only hydrofoil company Go Foil have announced that they will now be distributed across Europe by All Surf Import. Having started out in 2009 by distributing Jimmy Lewis boards, All Surf Import now import Aeron, Go Foil, Jimmy Lewis, Nolimitz and Puka Patch.

WAVE POOL MAG, A SURFER’S RESOURCE
TO NAVIGATE THE GROWING WORLD
OF WAVE POOLS

Wave Pool Mag has been launched by surf industry media vet, Bryan Dickerson, formerly of Surfers Village. With an estimated growth of 20+ surf specific wave pools to open in the next two years, Wave Pool Mag aims to cover everything from breaking news, reviews, guides and investigative articles. The mag’s strapline is “For your curiosity and stoke.”

DANIEL SURF LTD TO BE NSP UK
DISTRIBUTOR

NSP produce some of the best SUP race boards which have won prestigious titles in stand-up paddling and they have now teamed up with Daniel Surf LTD who hold over 40 years of experience in the surf industry to become their UK distributors.

DAKINE ACQUIRED BY MARQUEE
BRANDS LLC

Dakine have been acquired by Marquee Brands LLC, Marquee have signed a long term licensing deal with JR286, a global sports equipment and accessories company who also license brands including Nike and Hurley. Marquee Brands is a growing brand management company with a portfolio that currently consists of Ben Sherman®, Body Glove® and more.

SOLE TECH APPOINTS HANS DIJS
AS EMEA SALES MANAGER, BAS JANSSEN
TRANSITIONS TO EMEA MARKETING
MANAGER

Sole Technology has appointed a new EMEA Sales Manager, Hans Dijs, an industry vet with a wealth of knowledge in the skate and streetwear. He will be replacing Bas Janssen who is now taking on the role of EMEA Marketing Manager with the aim to significantly increase the EMEA Marketing efforts for Etnies, Emerica and éS.

EIVY APPOINTS CAROLINA OHLIS AS COO

Having been recruited from H&M HQ in Stockholm, Sweden Carolina Ohlis has worked with Eivy in their domestic and international sales relations at their HQ in Åre, Sweden and will now be taking on her new role as COO for the company.

TASSILO HAGER LAUNCHES NEW
SNOWBOARD MEDIA TITLE: CURATOR

Tassilo Hager, formerly of German snowboard magazine, Pleasure has launched a new snowboard media outlet, Curator. Curator takes coffee table book format and with it, Hager along with several authors and photographers look to dig deeper under the surface of fast-paced media culture and cultivate the real stories in snowboarding.

LEPHYR APPOINTED SUPRA’S UK PR
AGENCY

Ultra Sports EU, one of Europe’s leading action sports distributors has appointed Lephyr to handle SUPRA’s UK PR and influencer strategies starting immediately to grow the brand’s visibility in the region.

POW GLOVES APPOINTS FOUR SEASONS
AS GER/AUT REGION SALES AGENCY

POW Gloves has appointed sales agency Four Seasons to oversee wholesale sales for European territories Germany & Austria. Four Seasons has been formed from boardsports agencies Blauer Himmel and Agency Maiwald, who are both long established within the German market.

GIGI RÜF TAKES BACK CONTROL
OF SLASH BY GIGI

Originally under the Nidecker umbrella, Gigi Rüf has taken back control of his brand Slash By GiGi. Since leaving Nidecker two years ago, Slash used Spacecraft as the licensee, but the pro snowboarder says he has now accrued enough business acumen to run ‘the business side of things’ himself. Slash are manufacturing at Meditec in Tunesia.

SHINER LTD APPOINTED
EUROPEAN DISTRIBUTOR FOR STRAYE
FOOTWEAR

Shiner have been appointed European Distributor for US based shoe brand, STRAYE Footwear. STRAYE was founded by shoe and skate legend Angel Cabada and the first collection that will be available through Shiner will be Summer for an April 2019 delivery.

SURFCLOUD LDA ANNOUNCED AS NEW
STICKY BUMPS DISTRIBUTOR FOR FRANCE

Surfcloud Lda currently distribute Shapers Australia (Fins, hardware and shaping supplies) and the bodyboard brands NMD, Versus and Hubbards across France and have been announced as Sticky Bumps distributor for France by Wax Research, Inc.

RASMUS OSTERGAARD JOINS TELOS
SNOWBOARDS AS GLOBAL BRAND
MANAGER

Industry vet, Rasmus Ostergaard has held many different roles in the snowsports industry from distributor in the early 90s for brands like Apocalypse, Crazy Banana, Rad Air, A-Snowboards to CEO of Method Magazine and running his own snowboard travel/ guiding business Vistas Tours. “Rasmus’ snowboard industry roots runs deep with athletes and shop owners around the world and we know he has the skills and network to make a big difference. He’s a true snowboarder and the fact that he seems to always know where to ride powder is something we see as a great bonus,” said Telos Snowboards’s CEO Ben Schwitz. Check out the Telos brand profile on page 98.

JP RUEDA PROMOTED TO BUSINESS
DIRECTOR HURLEY EMEA

After serving the company for one year, JP Rueda has been appointed Business Director for Hurley EMEA, heading the offense on the EMEA region: Europe, Middle East, Africa. He will report directly to Bob Coombes, VP/GM Global Hurley, based in Costa Mesa, California. Hurley runs Sales, Marketing, Product, Operations and Finance for the region from their Barcelona office, as well as the Global Expansion of the Digital Business – excluding USA and Asia. The EMEA office reports directly to Hurley Global Headquarters in Costa Mesa, but benefits from the full support of Nike EMEA.

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ISPO MUNICH, GERMANY FEBRUARY 3-6, 2019

ISPO continues to be the pre-eminent winter sports show globally with significantly more visitors than any of the other major continental sports shows. In 2018 a record 2,801 exhibitors and over 84,000 industry professionals attended the show. With international exhibitors accounting for 68 percent of all exhibitors and international visitors accounting for 88 percent of all visitors, last year the world's largest trade fair for the sporting goods industry became an even more global affair. This is where an event the scale of ISPO offers real value. ISPO is still the biggest sports show on earth; even North America doesn't have a single show to rival it. With all these different sports communities and nationalities congregated in one place, ISPO uniquely offers opportunities and connections to develop your retail and brand business and for retailers to find the products and brands of the future.

For 2019 the show stays with its traditional Sunday to Wednesday schedule starting on February 3, 2019. The trade fair spreads over 18 halls (two more than in 2018) covering 200,000 square metres. The key focus topics for ISPO this year are Snowsports, Outdoor, Health & Fitness, Urban, Team- & e-sports. However, other topics under the spotlight at ISPO Munich will include "Digitalization" and "Women in the Sports Business."

Snowboard hardware stays in the centre of the tradeshow, in hall B4, like last year, with the brands spread out throughout the hall. The hall format successfully introduced last year has been maintained with the central aisles creating a focus in visitor traffic flows and "The Welcome to Snowsports" platform in the middle serving as a hub for the ski and snowboard community. The hall will be an integral part of the Snowsports segment, which will be spread across Halls B1 to B6, ensuring that plenty of space is dedicated to winter sports. Leading international brand manufacturers will be showcasing snowboarding, skiing, snow shoeing, cross-country skiing and sledding as well as related clothing and accessories, with helmet, goggles and protections brands located in Hall B6. And not far away skate brands can be found in

A5 and surf and SUP in the watersports village in A4.

With regard to the digital transformation within the sports industry, ISPO Digitize, the first platform created which addresses solutions for digitalization is to be found in Hall C6. Topics covered will range from wearable tech trends and digital retail solutions right through to digital procurement management and marketing. The Wearables Technology Conference taking place in the same hall will provide market insights, present the latest research findings regarding IoT (Internet of Things) devices and bring business developers and sales teams right up to speed. Also in Hall C6, the ISPO Academy will be taking audiences on a journey into the sports business of tomorrow with an extensive program of speeches and presentations held across all four days of the trade fair. ISPO Munich is also continuing to follow and support developments in the area of Women in the Sports Business, with key discussions in the "Women's Lounge."

ISPO Munich has always been and continues to be a trade fair for professionals. However, in order to include consumers, for the second time ISPO Munich is organizing the ISPO Munich Sports Week. Munich-based sports retailers can capitalize on the draw of ISPO Munich and issue invitations to events themselves in order to bolster contact with customers. When the ISPO Munich Sports Week was launched last year, for an entire week the city truly caught the sports bug, with a total of 11 partners and around 2,000 enthusiastic sports fans took part in the 35 activities held throughout the retail week.

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

www.ispo.com

SPORT ACHAT, EUREXPO, LYON FRANCE, MARCH 11-13, 2019

Sport Achat celebrates its 18th anniversary this year. France's most well known sports trade-show is the place for the outdoor industry to deal, order and create relationships inside the 20,000 sqm exhibition area at Eurexpo in Lyon. The show is designed to work alongside Sport Air's other business-to-business events ASAP (the clothing specific event held in Annecy) and Rock On Snow Pro(the on snow demo test), so after attending these earlier events, retailers can now finalise their orders.

At time of going to press 80% of the trade-fair is booked and will welcome 571 brands including 31 new ones, which are split into 4 areas; Ski, Snow, Outdoor and Lifestyle. As in past years, the aptly named new brand village "Crème Fraîche," supported by FIFAS and OSV, offers the opportunity for startups up to exhibit at the entrance to the show. And also next door are the "Made in France" brands and following last year's successful introduction is a display of products that have won awards at other international shows. This year Sport Achat will host the Ecosport awards, which are presented for the best sustainable achievements

within the sports industry. The prizes are for Eco-designed sports products, sustainable building, sustainable management recycling and end of life, heightening of awareness of the practitioners and structures and places of practice and the grand jury prize for the best winner amongst all the categories.

As always there will be a full schedule of conferences designed to give attendees valuable information and in which hear the opinions from experts in their fields. The program of topics and speakers will be announced soon. Last year 3300 visitors and 1423 shops attended the show, underlining the importance of the event for the French winter sports industry, as the vast selection of products and brands makes the show an effective, fast and efficient use of time. The show is open from 9am till 7pm on the Monday and Tuesday and 9am to 6pm on the last day. Looking forward to seeing you there

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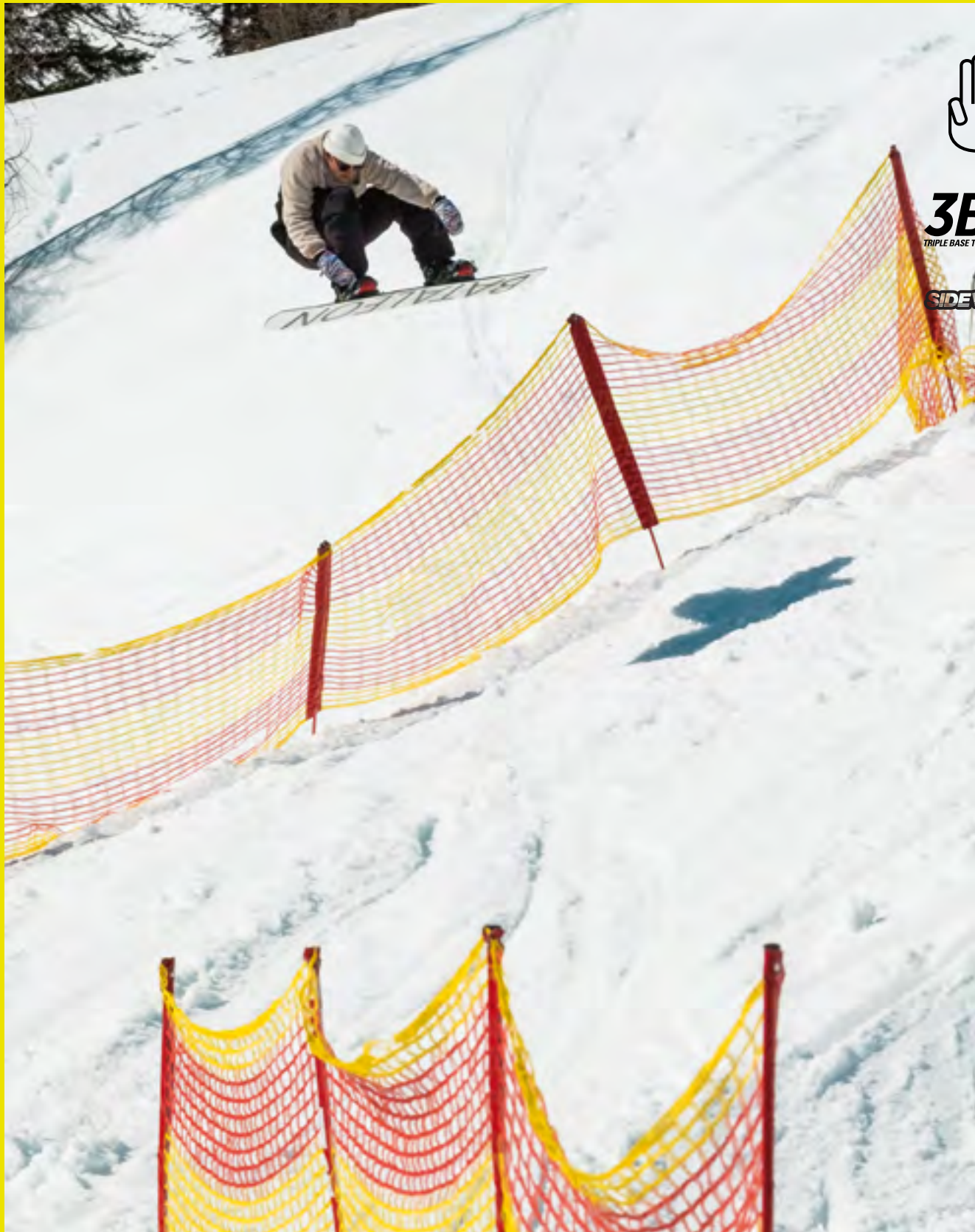
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Alexander Klerud on the GW

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photo Lib-Tech

SNOWBOARDS FW19/20

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Hundreds of brands, thousands of models. Some with - breathe - pointy noses. Buying snowboards is a complex game nowadays, with bullshit abound... but plenty of hidden gems if you know what you're looking for. Let's roll up our sleeves and get shoulder-deep into the main trends of next winter's snowboards. **Tom Wilson-North** investigates.

FREERIDE STILL FOCUS

No surprises here, freeride boards remain the centre of interest, investment and influence in snowboarding today. Burton's long-missed Landlord is a welcome return to the Innsbruck team's line, kicking the Mystery Fish off the topspot of their premium Family Tree range. Jones have a banging new shape on the all-new Flagship to make it ride better than ever with refined Traction Tech, a new tapered shape and 3D Contour 3.0 base. We're stoked on the new Fjell MT1542 big mountain board, and Weston's first foray into carbon with the Backwoods is a masterpiece, well worth checking out under the striplights. Meanwhile, Matt Cummin's new MC Snake Kink from Lib busts out of nowhere with a unique reverse curve nose shape and freeride-friendly C3 bend. At more accessible pricepoints, Burton's Steve Klassen-designed Leader Board, Slash's Portal and Capita's playful Powder Racers represent massive bang for freeride buck.

SIZE EXTREMES

The counter's a blur; the end of the snowboard size ranges are heading higher and lower than ever next year. Burton's Moonbuggy 168 has a monstrous 272mm waist, Nitro add a 203cm Cannon to their Quivver Series and Pogo's Wingergun 173 will be spot on for big days. But it's not just about the numbers; the execution is super important when you're dealing with monster decks. Borealis' Leviathan 164 is a next-level snowsurfer with a refined (albeit gigantic) nose rocker, whilst Stranda's 177cm Nallo has low camber and intelligent sidecut which offers an effective counterpoint to the short & fat trend seen of late. But short & fat is still working too, with more brands getting in on

the game next year. Korua will offer a pocket rocket style deck in their Concept line, Gnu's Free Spirit ladies' model has mega floatation in a downsized platform, Sandy Shapes' Divina 132 has a rocker inspired by San Diego fish surfboards and Borealis' Marauder is a quick-turning pow board for tree runs & carving. Arguably the board that kicked off the S&F trend in the first place, Rossignol's XV Sushi has spawned a sibling - the XV Sashimi retains the playful Sushi feel but is a bit more do-it-all. "Sashimi schmears the line between playful, progressive and full send mode with L.I.T.E. Grip core, AmpTek Elite camber profile and on-demand sidecut radius adjustment. It is softer than the XV for ease of use, narrower and longer than the XV Sushi for manoeuvrability and float, but also very solid and balanced underfoot", according to Rossignol's Arnaud Repa. Find it in 152, 156 and 160 sizes.

SHAPES

Two years of shape experimentation has left a mark. Unusual shapes are now the norm, and you'd better have some in your shop if you're planning to sell some boards next year. The biggest trend is the classic deep European-style swallow with long tails and a blunt, round or tapered nose. "The Snommelier was inspired by the graceful powder guns which used to be the signature of France's big-mountain pioneers. This 166cm beauty blends a plug of future, a pinch of unusual and a whole scoop of retro," gushes Amplid's Rich Ewbank. We loved the bulbous nose of the Bataleon Surfer, the Endeavor Archetype looks like fun with muscle car-inspired black-and-red graphics, Phenix's Camaro is a thing of beauty and Wired's Chase is a big step forward for this small brand, alongside their awesome

The Candide effect is waning as the postmillennial generation look for new heroes... and there’s a faint possibility that they might be discovering snowboarding again.

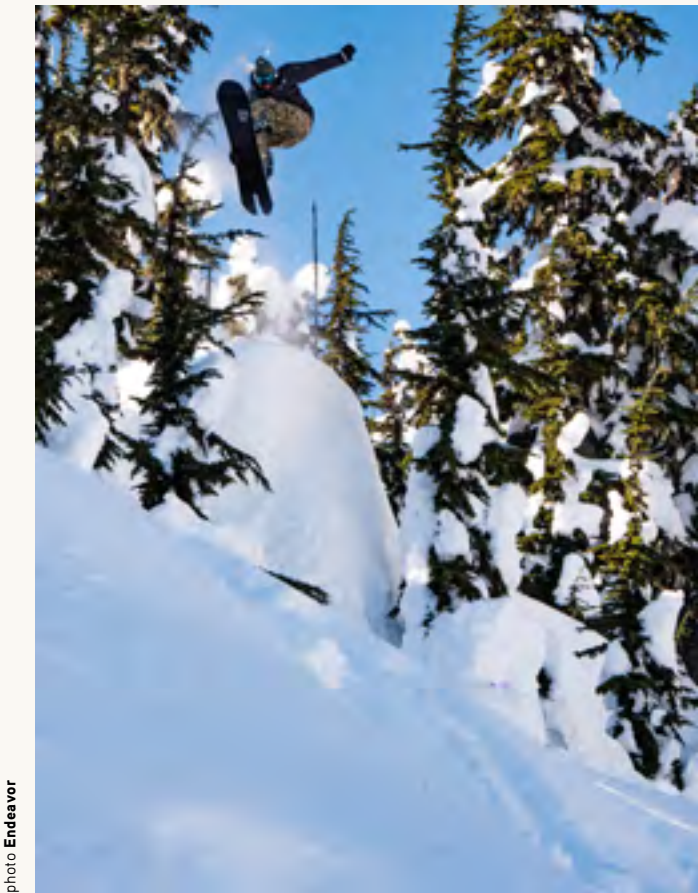


photo Endeavor

custom stuff. Just watch it with those long tails guys, it doesn’t take much to pop ‘em out. Hard geometric nose and tail shapes are trending again next year. Arbor’s Shiloh evokes the Bert Lamar Trick Stick with graphics by seminal designer Aaron Draplin, and West evolve their Hache into a premium full camber Hache Plus with new wood core. Take a look at the sharp angles of the Yes Hybrid too.

Other new shape standards include the ‘pointy nose, flat tail’ look embodied by the Korua Café Racer, Academy Chris Roach Master Series and Rome Warden... and the Hovercraft shape (directional, setback, blunt nose, no-rise tail, tiny swallow) which was inspired by the Gentemstick Manta Ray and has given rise to a thousand imitations since. “Unless a big proportion of snowboarders start riding switch as much as they ride regular, I do not see why snowboard shapes should not keep on being directional, which means more adapted to the real use of the big majority of riders”, says Serge Dupraz – whose HOT capsule collection looks rad next year.

Are we in a new era of snowboard shapes? “We see the shape trend as something really positive as we feel that snowboard shapes have been kind of stagnant for a while”, say Arbor. Nidecker agree: “Snowboarding is moving forward and we need to move on from round nose and tail. But it’s very important we don’t lose sight of WHY these shapes are being more accepted today than 10 years ago. Pro riders and board designers are looking for new ways to express themselves, and consumers take this opportunity as another way to show their individualism and have fun in a new, simpler way”. That said, we heard rumblings of caution from brands who felt that this trend might peter out soon, and that sales slowed once shapes got too crazy anyway. “Maybe for new brands it can be a way to gain some visibility... a board with a mad shape can be a good second board, but does it make sense to invest money on moulds just to have a weird nose or tail while the geometries are almost the same!?!?”, asks Drake’s Product & Marketing Manager Davide Smania.

Well, it didn’t stop Moonchild, whose Vanilla Ice is shaped like an ice cream, complete with stick poking out the tail. “I doubt anything like it has been seen before, it’s a weird shape and the stick acts like an ollie tail bar. Experimenting is good for everything – not only snowboarding. It is progress. The new shape direction is a Pandora’s box and it can’t be stopped once you start,” confesses Moonchild builder Jure Sodja.

CARVING COOLING

Well, carving is cooling off a bit as a trend probably since pure carving boards have been a bit of a handful to handle for the average snowboarder. That said, Korua have a new carving board in their concept line, Endeavor’s Alpha Series is a 157 with a much longer effective edge than normal and Goodboards’ Vulcarvo carver has extra basalt for more torsion and grip. The biggest news in carving boards next year is Head’s Kizamu, which is a mere 2350g. “It’s packed with literally everything our technology department has to offer, and designed for riders with high demands. Although very low in weight, the KIZAMU is a rocket both on- and off-piste. The flex of this board is rather stiff, which is necessary for its extraordinary carving performance. At the same time, the hybrid camber and setback make it good for pow. Speed is guaranteed with its sintered base, and the directional shape assures grip and control in all conditions,” explains Head’s Max Thurner.

KIDS KIDS KIDS

Don’t say it too loudly, but there’s good news. The Candide effect is waning as the postmillennial generation look for new heroes... and there’s a faint possibility that they might be discovering snowboarding again. Well, they’ll have their choice of boards, that’s for sure. Verdad’s V-Knight is their first ever kids’ board and West’s brand new K-West is a pint-sized pow ripper. And they’re not the only ones. “We feel it’s unfair that only adults are getting all these new board shapes, while the future of snowboarding is mostly restricted to some sort of lame twin tip. This is why we have added 137 and 142 sizes to the popular SQUASH Series, giving our young shredders a piece of the action,” says Nitro’s Tommy Delago. Look out for a new Bataleon Minishred and a Borealis Big Surf for junior riders. Spoiled rotten, kids nowadays. A nice note came in from Wi-Me, who have found a nearby high school and vocational college which offers composite programmes. They’re planning on getting involved and helping out the next generation of builders down the line develop their skills for making the snowboards of tomorrow.

Customers expect sustainable manufacturing and corporate social responsibility nowadays. What are brands doing?

NEXT LEVEL SUSTAINABILITY

Customers expect sustainable manufacturing and corporate social responsibility nowadays. What are brands doing? Well, Burton is taking the surprising move of removing the lacquer from their boards. “Lacquer is soooo last season. Starting in 2020, we have removed the lacquering stage from the finishing process of all our snowboards to eliminate the negative environmental and human health effects of the high Volatile Organic Compound content found in traditional snowboard lacquers. We focused on maintaining a high-quality premium finish, while removing that nasty lacquer,” says Burton’s PR Hanna-Marie Mayer. In the same vein, we loved Gnu’s bio beans topsheets on next years’ range, which show off their sustainably-harvested wood cores and water based sublimated topsheets beautifully.

Buddybuddy have a board called the Emcee Eco Earthkeeper which comes with an original Earthkeepers Art image by Maurice Spees – sales help support Earthkeepers activities. Earthkeepers is a foundation that supports the wellbeing of the planet – particularly the importance of the human connection to nature and the earth. With a five year warranty it’ll also be one you hang onto for longer, for bonus points. We were really impressed with Rossignol’s partnership with NoK boards, whereby they upcycle B-grades into longboards, and we admire Phenix’s attention to detail using wood veneer reconstitution or silviculture to avoid touching endangered noble wood species.

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photo Jones



MODERN FREESTYLE EVOLUTION

Inspired by the avant-garde punk grooviness of the Spring Break Twin & Ride Twinpig of years past, modern freestyle is about asym shapes, blunt tip and tails and pronounced sidecuts. The Amplid UNW8 and new Capita Asymulator with Shovelhead tips do it right, and Yes’ Jackpot is a thing of great beauty with sawed tips and tails. And, since 2019 is the Chinese Zodiac Year of the Pig, Ride have some extra additions to their Pig family. Oink. “We are totally

behind our shape and technology in the Pig range and we are sure we have the board for you... one will make you stoked on every single turn,” says Ride’s Head Pig Farmer Joerg Schramm.

The K2 Party Platter, an important part of this evolutionary subtrend, has been retooled and revamped with longer running length and more tail volume for more pop and easier switch riding. Roxy’s XOXO gets a nose and tail shape update too, for a little more steeze whilst hanging out in the park. And Head’s new Anything with Hybrid DCT 2.0 construction has a longer effective backside edge and four extra contact points for more bite.

In the more conventional freestyle/twintip category, there’s a few shuffles; Capita update the DOA with the introduction of the premium SuperDOA with lighter core and faster base. GNU’s Rider’s Choice gets a revamp with input from their young shred crew. Salomon feed power pills to their Huck Knife resulting in the Huck Knife Pro - it’s a true park board with a classic blunt shape, now upgraded with a Ghost Green Core and cork/honeycomb insert at the nose and the tail to reduce spin weight for quicker rotations.

Play’s The Carpet is a classic all mountain freestyle board with low camber to flat and tip/tail rocker, and we’re stoked to see Gnu’s Whip in the flesh. “The Whip is for ladies who want more from their board, can’t ride a skinny smaller version of the men’s models, but want to whip their board around the whole mountain without any restrictions. The Whip is the exciting result of advanced geometries developed over 25 years by women, for women”, says Gnu’s Barrett Christy Cummins. There’s a big change at stablemates Lib Tech too, who (finally) unveil a whole new and totally badass women’s specific line. Luckily it’s not

Well, carving is cooling off a bit as a trend probably since pure carving boards have been a bit of a handful to handle for the average snowboarder.

just a size or a colour thing - there will be topsheet and base art from the most iconic Lib painters, and the decks will all have womens-specific tunes and features. We really liked the C2X No.43 all-mountain, quiver-killing directional twin. And hats off to Coalition, whose women’s specific line features cores made from “tampons and the tears of fragile masculinity”, as well as a bunch of other rad stuff, according to CEO Jen Gurecki.

Finally, look out for Neversummer’s new Warlock, which they’re calling the Dipstick, the DC 156 which was designed with Mons Roisland and Easy’s new freestyle board, the Easy Killer.

GRAPHICS

Next year’s graphics are a mixed bag, as usual. A couple of themes pop out though; there’s a definite nautical vibe to a lot of boards. We particularly liked the yin and yang of sea and sky on Burton’s Day Trader, and the anchors on the Academys we saw. Generally graphics are moving away from the retro 1990s thing of this year - although the art on the Sims Juice & Tom Sims Pro look great. They were done by OG Sims & Morrow designer Scott Clum, who was also on topsheet aesthetic duties on the Yes Hybrid.

There are fades, pastel colourblocks and gradients abound at Jones and Amplid, and on the Spring Break Powder Racers, while Nidecker use fluoro pop hits on darker underlays. DC go full digital distortion and digital/analog contrast, while we noticed a more whimsical and fantasy theme emerging too, particularly on girl’s boards. Neversummer’s Lady West is a great representation of this direction.

Then there’s white, lots of white. Well, it’s cheap, I suppose. Korua, Yes, Sims, Rossi, DC - everyone’s into the paperwhite or hand drawn monochrome look. Roxy’s Smoothie has Baldface guide Jessa Gilbert



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photo HEAD



on graphical duties - her depiction of some of Robin Van Gyn’s favourite spots is just drop-dead gorgeous and needs to be seen to be believed. Outdoorism features heavily - unsurprisingly - with Rome describing their direction as “a healthy dose of surreal nihilism anchored with the ever-expanding textural universe of the great outdoors”. Whew. There’s a new Markku Koski signature line from Vimana next season as well, which is based upon icebreaker ships from the early 1900s.

Finally, hat tip to Verdad for their incredible Mobb Deep collaboration - over to Démir Julià to explain. “Mobb Deep is the best rap duo ever. Since the beginning they stayed loyal to themselves and never sold out their soul, blessing us with real street music, grimy and hardcore like it’s supposed to be. What Mobb Deep did for hip hop, Verdad does for snowboarding.” The Mobb Deep board has a new core, a mixture of wood hybrid fibres and carbon and kevlar stripes which gives the board a lot of extra strength and energy.

CONSTRUCTION

In terms of production, the big news is Burton moving parts of their production - principally the 3D-based Kilroy models - to SWS in Dubai, who already build for Jones, Yes, Arbor and many others. This is a first for them, and shows just how good the SWS technical mastery of 3D has become.

Inside the boards themselves, sidewalls get some innovation at Borealis, with new Liquid Walls on the Leviathan. “This shock-absorbent sidewall is poured directly into the core in its liquid form before solidifying and creating an impenetrable and rock-solid barrier, protecting the board from obstacles,” explains Borealis’ Ben Hall. Over at Nidecker, there’s a unique new sidewall in their Snowsurf quiver with constant thickness from tip to tail - the wood core covers the sidewall for a surfy type result. They’re also using tinted resin, again, like in the surf industry. And Yunika are employing a poured liquid PU sidewall into core channels for increased stability on their Elias models.

It seems there are evolutions in dampening every year, and next year is no exception. Salomon’s C/FX Basalt mixes basalt and glass to make the Super 8 and Bellevue boards more powerful, with a smoother

ride. Amplid have a midrange damping tech called Viscodamp, which puts channels of special viscoelastic TPU down the middle of the core. It flexes with the core but absorbs energy as it moves to reduce vibrations. Meanwhile, Capita start using Technora boosters woven around aramid to eat up shocks. Happy days.

We were interested to see Goodboards use a new base material called Nivysten - it’s faster, stronger and stores more wax, and the structure lasts longer. Over at Jones they’ll be showing a new Ultra base, which is embedded with multiple wax types for a faster factory wax right out of the wrapper - they’re claiming it’s the fastest base they’ve ever tested. See you at the finish line.

CONCLUSION

So, there it is. A solid slice of new tech, new shapes, new graphics and some small production changes. There’s a lot of choice out there nowadays, and it’s our job to help clients to pick out the best of the bunch. On that note, let’s kick it over to Konvoi’s Ben Dietermann for the final word: “Just because someone tells you how good a board is or your best buddy rides the same board just doesn’t mean it’s really the right board for you and your riding style. And let’s all start being honest about what we’re going to do with it. Yes, we all love powder, but conditions here in the Alps vary quite a bit so you better have a board that can handle more than one type of snow. And maybe you used to ride park five years ago... but does that really mean that a freestyle board is still the right choice?” Let’s help clients be honest with themselves, make the right choices and get stoked on snowboarding again. ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- Freeride boards dominate
- Fades & pastel colourblocks
- Evolved modern freestyle
- Kids Are Back

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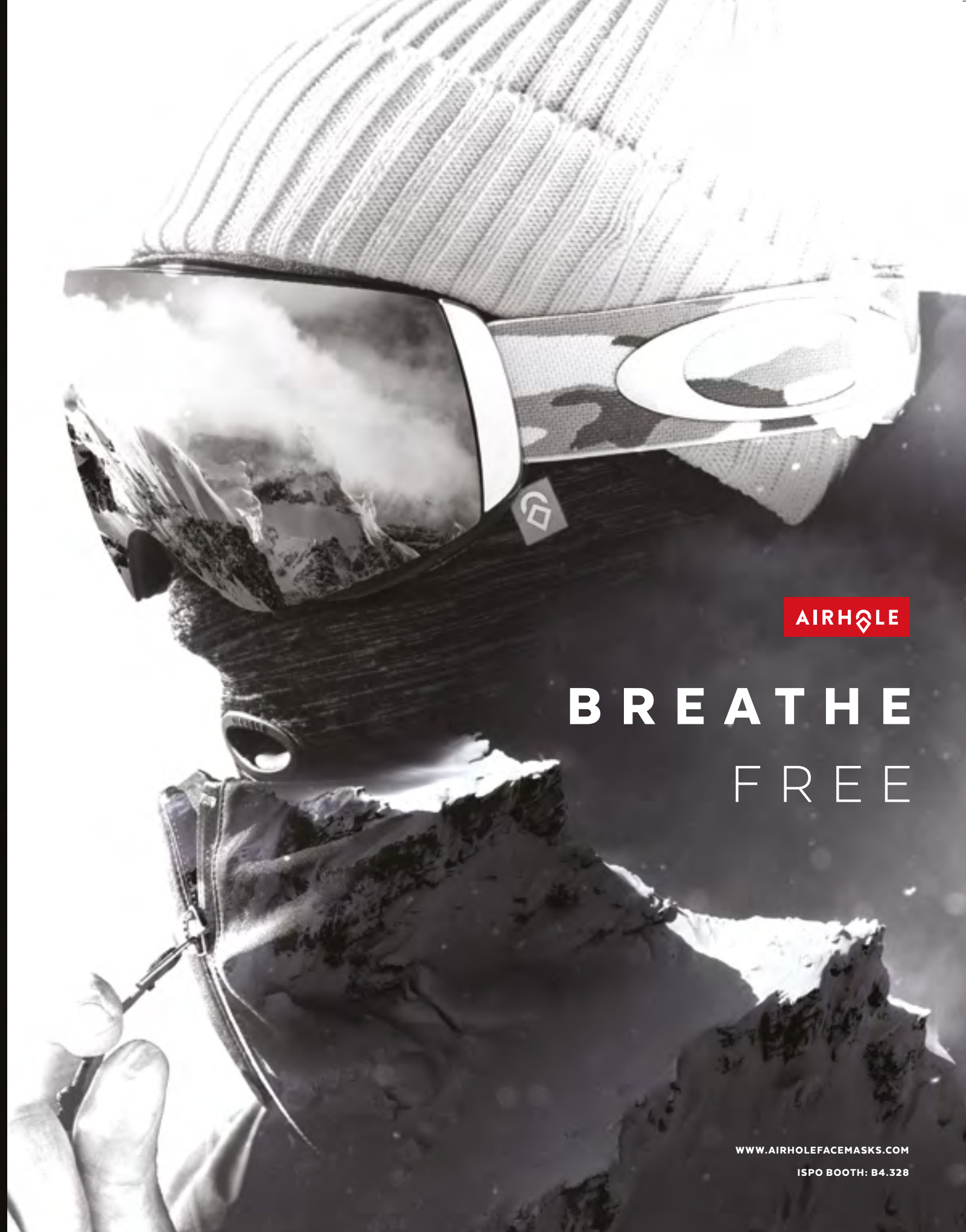
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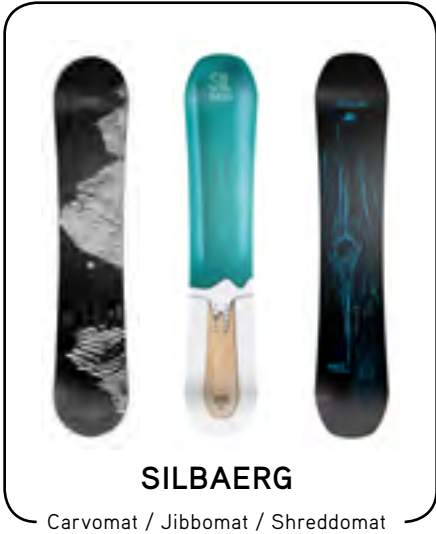
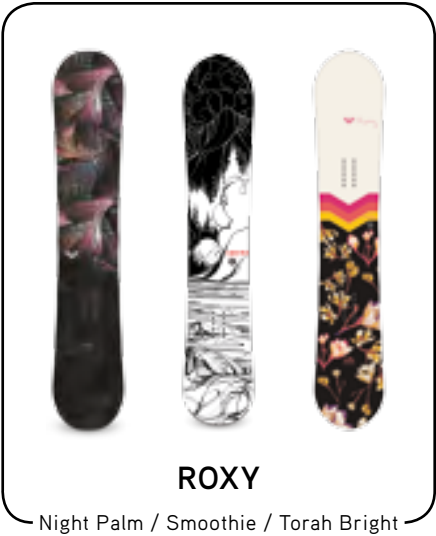


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RETAILER PROFILE
LABOSHOP ARC 1800

LABOSHOP ARC 1800 encapsulates the true spirit of snowboarding. Started in 2012 by Jose and Polo the shop in the French resort of Les Arcs 1800 is working with some of the industry’s finest brands and we speak with Jose to find out more about this shop that puts snowboarding above all else.

Please give a brief history of your store including when it was started, who started it, who the owners and key players are.
LABOSHOP ARC 1800 launched at the end of 2012. With my associate Polo, we concentrated our attention on creating a store that would specialise in snowboarding gear in order to provide the best service to any and all the riders who come to Les Arcs’ domain. I manage this shop with my close collaborators, Mathieu Belmere and Marina Briss.

What percentage of your sales are from online business compared to your brick-and-mortar sales?
We do not offer online shopping because we strive to orientate riders towards the best possible advice and choice in store depending on the riders’ individual personality. We are a relatively small trader and answer to the riders’ immediate needs in resort.
Our motos: #comeridewithus #trybeforeyoubuy #laboshoparc1800

Which brands and products have you seen the best success with in the past two seasons?
We have noticed an interest for brands such as; Amplitud, who provide a very high end quality product, Burton, who are always a safe bet in the public eye offering especially well developed bindings, and their extensive range and affordable prices are attractive to all K2 snowboards and Ride are also quite present and are making their marks with fresh and simple designs and shapes for the former, and very “core” ones for the latter. We believe in and enjoy pushing smaller brands like Rome, Aaven, and Easy.

How are you using digital media to enhance your bricks and mortar presence?
Of course, we are present on social media, FB and Instagram (@laboarc1800), we also have a website on Google with links towards all the info and services we provide, as well as our identity and activities. We try to be as present as possible on the internet, posting relevant and catchy content. Our special offers and rental information are closely followed by many.

What makes your store different and in what ways does your store excel beyond your competition?
At LABOSHOP ARC 1800 we provide an unparalleled variety and diversity of snowboards, bindings, and boots. All three of us are passionate practitioners of the sport, and what better than passion to fuel our day to day motivation to talk about, advise, and help in

the choice of setup of you snowboard. All the repairs and gear care provided in our workshop is at 95% executed by hand; we are craftsmen, accessible and available to all...

What are the biggest challenges facing the snowboard industry at present?
The European snowboarding industry is a prey to egotistical conflicts; its direct link to the ski federation, the lack of resources made available to the discipline, the absence of recognition that snowboarding is a real alpine sport requiring its apprenticeship, however its real challenge lies elsewhere... In my opinion (and because you’re asking), snowboarding needs to go back to basics, dive back into its values of freedom far from the confinements of the ski industry, recover the sideways boardriding culture that sets itself apart from the rest, it needs to give to kids that desire to look beyond the alpine world... We all possess the necessary ingredients, we just need to learn how to and read between the lines again.

How are you working towards this?
Thanks to our business, we are in constant and direct contact with the riders and future riders who come to us for anything as small as a conversation out of sheer curiosity and love for the sport, and out of this exchange, we strive to pass on our knowledge. The LABOSHOP ARC 1800 is the GQ of the association “L’AMICALE du SNOWBOARD”, an organization that my brothers from another mother Fred Mamen, Kabou and I put together 5 years ago now. We regularly set up small events, but the main one remains the “John Doe”: a gathering of snowboarders from everywhere and anywhere, with nothing to win or lose, but with something much better than anything materialistic to take away from it, a crazy session of passionate riders who will, once a year, gather together and share a memorable shred: our basic culture. NEVER GIVE UP RIDING.

Which tradeshow do you attend and how important are they for your selection process?
I essentially attend my suppliers’ showrooms; I prefer a more confined and tranquil atmosphere rather than big exhibition. However, I do go to Sport Achat in Lyon once a year, to bargain-hunt new products live on the stands. It’s always interesting to witness and participate critically in a new idea that could emerge during an encounter with a nice cold beer. Cheers! ☺



CRUISERS 2019 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

With a focus on quality and authenticity, the cruiser skateboards market is making a fresh start. All the news in our Skate Cruisers Retail Buyer's Guide 2019 by SOURCE Skateboard Editor, **Dirk Vogel**.

Now that skateboarding is recognized as a 'real sport', the question remains whether the 2020 Tokyo Games will bring a new wave of beginners on board – and into skate shops. Then again, does watching athletic ski jumpers soar hundreds of metres through the air on the telly make anyone want to pick up a pair of skis? Top-notch athletic performances are impressive, but to inspire mass participation, we may need something more laid back and relatable. Going into 2019, that thing could be 'surf skate' – a budding grassroots movement bent on bringing the joy of surfing to concrete environments. With deep hooks into both surf and skate culture, it holds enormous potential if retailers play their cards right, says Xué Gil, Brand Manager at Spanish brand YOW Surf (Your Own Wave): "Surfskates are really fun, but you don't know it till you try it. So the best way to grow the customers interest is organising little test events or having test boards inside the shops. Surfskates are by far the best surf training one can get!" Nate Schumacher at Landyachtz also noted: "Longboard dancing has attracted a much more diverse demographic than street skating or more core hill bombing. We've seen a big growth in women getting into dancing." At Penny Skateboards, Head of Marketing Jay Baikie said: The simplicity of riding a cruiser is the easiest sell. The ability to grab a board and simply cruise with mates is so simple. No rules, no expectations... just cruise and have fun." While at Ocean Pacific, they see the category shining towards "multi-functional cruisers that are great for tricks, cruising and carving."

THE MARKET

The cruisers segment has been battling overstock and competition from no-name brands for some years now. "The market is still 50% full

*"The consolidation of the market has meant that there has been a consolidation of brands, which is a good thing. In the speciality channel – brick and mortar and online – there are now very few non-branded or no-name brands left. Nate Shute, **Arbor Skateboards***

of boards from been-and-gone brands, which is causing a knock-on effect," said Andy King at UK brand Mindless Longboards. Speaking on the issue, Nate Shute at Arbor Skateboards said: "The consolidation of the market has meant that there has been a consolidation of brands, which is a good thing. In the speciality channel – brick and mortar and online – there are now very few non-branded or no-name brands left. And most of what is left is from excess stock from prior years. It's possible we still need to go through Spring/Summer 2019 before the market has really been cleared of excessive older stock." A clean slate is exactly what's needed to tell exclusive brand stories and build perceived value around cruisers again. In terms of price points, €109 is now the entry point for beginners completes from authentic brands offering quality deck constructions and hardware. From there, it's a wide-open field in 2019: More elaborate boards with inverted kingpins or surf-style trucks gravitate around €179 while premium boards from Arbor retail for €239, retro-style surf skates from YOW for €295, premium boards from Loaded between €300–400, and the high-end Sidewinder Carving boards by Sector 9 featuring Gullwing Double Kingpin Carving Trucks for €339.

“Wider shapes and more female participants may be going hand-in-hand in some cases. In skate decks, 8.25”-8.5” sizes have grown in popularity largely due to girls wanting a wider more stable board. That same mentality, along with a revival in old-school boards is causing us to look at widening our offering.” **Globe Senior Skateboard Designer, Dave Gitlin**

SHAPES: A WIDER RIDE

The trending cruiser for 2019 offers a stubby nose, wide belly and blocky tail next to wheel wells and curved rails to create a stable, pocketable ride. Looking for the main cause of this trend, Globe’s Senior Skateboard Designer, Dave Gitlin offered: “Wider shapes and more female participants may be going hand-in-hand in some cases. In skate decks, 8.25”-8.5” sizes have grown in popularity largely due to girls wanting a wider more stable board. That same mentality, along with a revival in old-school boards is causing us to look at widening our offering.” Penny developed a, “wider and more aggressive 32” board allowing for the rider to perform more technical skating.” Key models serving the wider cruiser trend next season include the Pocket Rocket (Arbor), Villa Belza (Flying Wheels), OP Surf Skate (Ocean Pacific), Ray Collins Five Mini Cruiser (Sector 9), Sunset and Lombard Cruiser (Mindless), Huntington Beach Surfskate (YOW), Dinghy Summit and Dinghy Creature (Landyachtz), Swallow (Carver), Beanbag (Lost), 30.5” Fat Cruiser (Kryptonics), and Koi (Dusters California). But before going all-in on stubby shapes, retailers need to keep in mind: “Variety is key. Some people want wider boards to feel more stable, some people want really small boards they can bring anywhere, others want boards that can be skated like street boards or taken to the skatepark,” said Shane Maloney at Madrid Skateboards pointing to best-selling models such as the Madrid Explosion OG Cruiser and Madrid X Stranger Things Mini Cruiser. At Loaded Boards, Pablo Castro is stoked on the “Kut-thaka board, which is a cut down version of our Kanthaka. It’s a 30.75” (78cm) board using our technical longboard construction. Response has been stellar.”



photo Carve

STYLING: SWAGGER & ATTITUDE

Speaking of Madrid’s Stranger Things cruiser, it’s a masterclass in mixing retro style with on-trend pop cultural storytelling. Penny is pumped on the Star Wars collection in both the 22” and 27” categories featuring characters such as Darth Vader, R2-D2, Boba Fett and the Strom Troopers and will release more artist series boards including the renowned surf artist Andy Davis. Without these layers of reference, cruisers are just wooden planks on wheels. Artist collaborations are a way to keep it special, as Sector 9’s Andreas ‘Maui’ Maurmeir explains: “In 2018 we had the pleasure to work with Ray Collins for a special line that went out very well. For 2019 we will have two absolutely stunning Artist Collaborations - one with Roshambo and the other one with Spencer Keeton Cunningham. Don’t miss those.” At Carver Skateboards, Eben Woodall, VP of Sales said: “From our Pro Surfer Models such as Taylor Knox, Courtney Conlogue, and Yago Dora to our collaborations with Channel Islands and Lost Surfboards, Carver strives to epitomise the essence of surfing and surf culture.” Arbor keeps creating an upscale aesthetic out of wood veneers paired with modernist graphics, including artist collabs with DOC. For Globe, it’s all about, “large reverse wood-burned art, cork textural inlays with bold patterns, and a few of our key styles are getting a full tiger-camo overhaul.” Flying Wheels is bringing in a major pop culture trend: tattoo style. “We are working close to artists and the main stories in our collections are tattoos, photo collage, flowers, retro and typo,” said Benoit Brecq at Flying Wheels/HOFF Distro. Mindless heads into 2019 with cool mandala graphics on pink wood veneers, while YOW features comic-style

lightning bolts in the Power Surfing Series. One more thing: Top graphics paired with griptape stencilling will be a big theme in 2019!

TECHNOLOGY: ROBUST & SUSTAINABLE

Next season’s deck constructions stay true to the proven formula of Canadian maple mixed with birch, and bamboo. Loaded Boards is playing with natural materials like bamboo, basalt, and bio-resin in premium cruisers. Behind the scenes, Loaded is working with eco-friendly bamboo, bio epoxy and water-based finishes. Many brands such as YOW, Arbor, Carver, Globe, Flying Wheels and Mindless are also improving their carbon footprints and replacing glue with non-toxic alternatives – all without compromising on quality. Landyachtz is expanding Hollowtech and planting one new maple tree for every board sold. In major news, Arbor is launching a fully-fledged alternative to griptape, made from 30% recycled rubber for a padded ride: “Our Collaboration with Vibram, using their INVRS material as an alternative grip solution has already been generating a buzz around it, being chosen as Gear Junkie’s Best in Show at Outdoor Retailer this summer.” Over at YOW, the Huntington Beach surfskate is, “the first surfskate to feature a cork top instead of griptape. Perfect for barefeet sessions and beach lifestyle.” The best part: Both inventions won’t scratch your feet during surf-style sessions. On that note, the season’s biggest innovative push comes surf-style trucks, reports Dave at Globe: “We’ve got a new offering featuring Revenge trucks called our Onshore series. They’re for the guy or girl that surfs when the waves are up, and wants to catch a bit of that feeling on land when they’re not.” Spanish brand YOW has based an entire line around surf-style front trucks and brand manager Xué Gil, wants shops to know: “It is important to emphasise on the fact that the more you improve on a surfskate the looser you feel when surfing in the water.”

ACCESSORIES: TRUSTED QUALITY

Wheels are trending in two opposite directions: Extremely big or small and compact. Arbor caters to both sides with the 75mm monster Highlands Wheel as part of the Sucrose Initiative, as well as the 58mm Axel Serrat Pro Model Wheel for hybrid skaters. Maui at Sector 9 proposes the 69mm Top Shelf model as the wheel to rule them all, while pushing partner brand Gullwing as the premium choice in trucks. At Mindless, Andy King said: “Our custom Talisman V2 truck has been in the market for some time now and without any negative feedback, we’ve managed to put these on almost all completes where pricing allows.” Carver offers two proven options: “Our CX truck system is tight and snappy while our C7 trucks is smooth and flowy.” Brands without their own hardware departments saddle up with quality manufacturers, including Paris, Caliber, and even Indy trucks as well as Cadillac Wheels. Speaking on rider demand, Benoit at HOFF said: “For trucks, inverted kingpin and forged trucks are the trends for technical riders, but since last year the surfing trends is exploding with new trucks technologies to create new truck variations.” And while bright-coloured wheels are all nice and retro, look for more black wheels making their way into the streets next season.

HOT TREND: KIDS CRUISERS

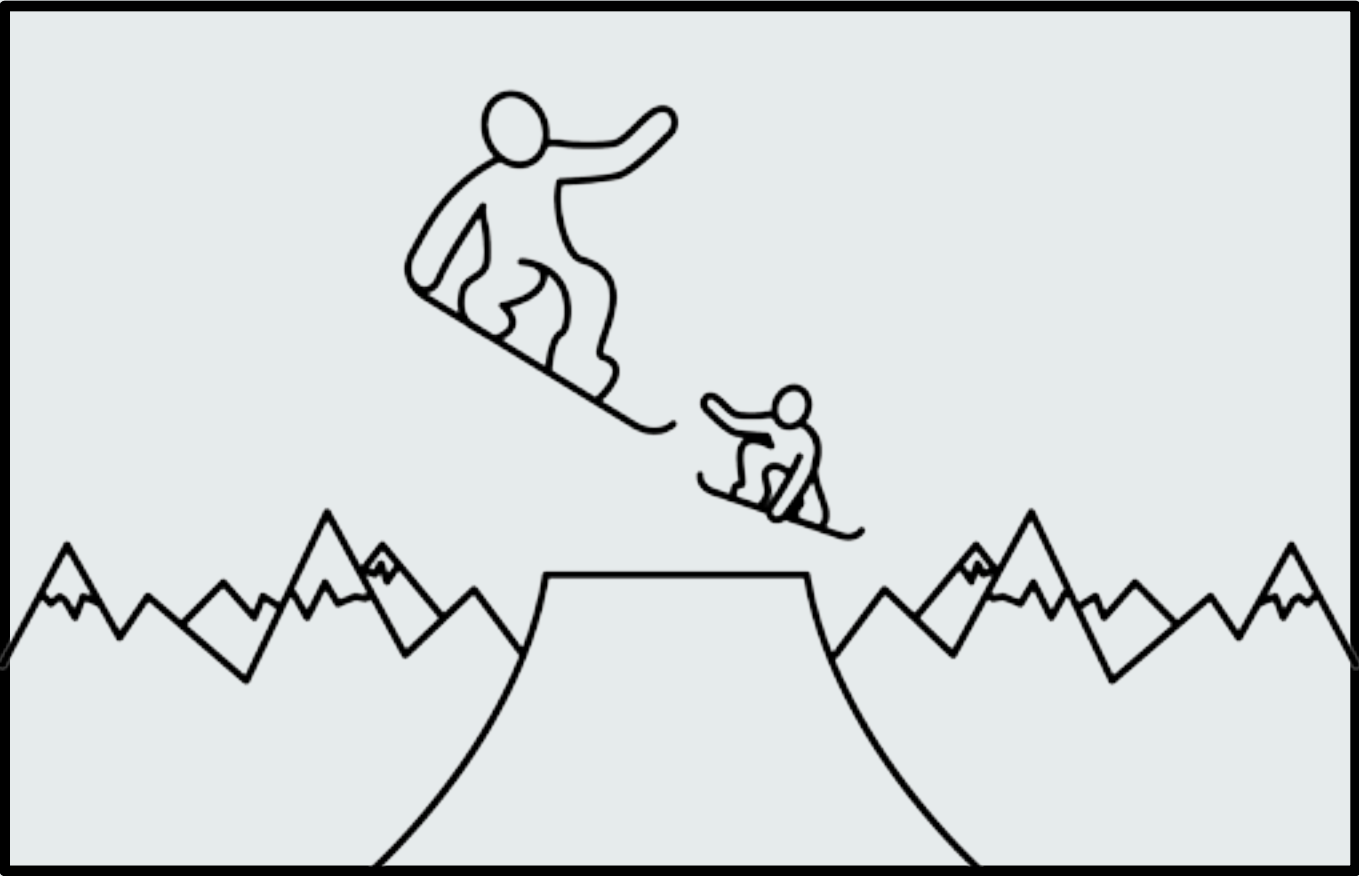
Women aren’t the only growth market for cruisers – kids are next in line. Nate at Arbor is proud to introduce, “the Seed Series; a line of street shapes meant for the younger ripper to learn on and grow with. Our Certified Arbor Completes in the Seed Series feature Arbor Revert 90A Wheels, ABEC 5 Bearings and Ace Trucks, making it a quality component build at a very competitive price.” Look for more mini and kids cruisers in 2019 selection, as a new generation explores the joy of casual cruising. ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- Less brands, market consolidation
- Season Trend: Surf Skates
- Wider decks
- Top graphics
- Tattoo-style graphics
- Griptape alternatives
- Hot Trend: Kids Cruisers

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KIDS SNOWBOARDING

LIGHTING THE TOUCHPAPER

With participation in youth sports falling, how can snowboarding attract a new generation of kids?
By **Andrew Duthie.**

In the late 1990s I was at a barbeque, telling one of my uncles (and literally anyone else who’d listen - he’d drawn the short straw this time) about my new favourite thing in the world; snowboarding. After humouring me for a full five minutes at least, he interrupted in search of a clarification on one key point: “So are you lying down on this thing, or what?”

It says a lot about how rare snowboarding still was back then that this man - who, other than some fairly out-there opinions on digestive health, is pretty switched on - couldn’t even conjure it in his mind’s eye. It’s not, I would wager, something that’s anywhere near as likely to happen today.

While it’s now fully ingrained in the public consciousness, we’re two decades further down the road and snowboarding isn’t booming in the way that the fledgling teenage snowboarder I once was would have liked (not that anything would have been enough for that guy - ISIS recruitment videos display less fanaticism. And better dress sense).

Part of the problem is the fact that while snowboarding has become more accessible, so too have most things. If a family can afford snowboard lessons for their kids, there are myriad other options competing for that same cash. Plus, as attention spans have reportedly shortened - with mobile phones the prime suspect for that one - even the most entertaining pastime has its work cut out in keeping kids coming back for more.

It’s not a problem that’s exclusive to snowboarding by any means; these days the very notion of youth sports appears to be on a downward trajectory. Most of the available data has originated in the USA, where it’s a colossal and ever-growing business, and while the jury’s out over what exactly is to blame (the usual suspects include video games and overprotective parents) they all tell the same story: even as opportunities increase, the youth of today are less likely to be active participants in sport than that of the generation that preceded it.

Then there’s the fact that snowboarding in general remains in a relative lull - it may be ticking along, but we’re definitely no longer living in what was once described to me as ‘the Jamiroquai years’. Without attracting kids to snowboarding in considerable numbers, it paints a potentially bleak future for the sport. How likely are we to see the likes of Halldor and Eiki Helgason - who spent countless undistracted evenings jibbing a corrugated plastic pipe behind the ice rink in their home town of Akureyri, Iceland - again?

It follows that anything that can get more kids on a board, and keep them there, is to be encouraged - but once you factor in the relatively steep learning curve in potentially treacherous conditions, the deck appears stacked against a generation that supposedly thrives on instant gratification.

The trick, according to Barry Parker, Co-Owner of Morzine-based school REAL Snowboarding, is not to rush things. “It’s about letting the

If the shop staff know their onions, they’ll be uniquely placed to recommend the right instructors to parents when they’re buying gear. If the instructor has successfully lit the touchpaper, the newly-converted kid (or more accurately, their grateful parent) will hopefully be a customer for years to come.

child enjoy the mountains,” he explains. “Part of the job is to help them enjoy the snow and learn to be safe. There are a lot of things you can do, that maybe to the untrained eye don’t look like part of a snowboard lesson, but at that age things like learning to walk in the snow, or make a snowball, or watch out for skiers crossing the piste, is really valuable stuff.”

To an extent, it’s a matter of letting the kids lead the lesson. Not only is this less likely to put them off, it’s also a bit more aligned with the roots of snowboarding. If you want to be drilled by a coach, there are plenty of options. If you want to discover things for yourself, that’s what this particular ‘sport’ has always been about.

As for the issue of distractions, it’s something Barry’s noticed coming up with slightly older kids, who are more likely to be heavy mobile phone users. “Are they at the lesson just so they can take a photo for Instagram? You do get that, but that’s just life - it’s just the way things are going. I don’t see it as detrimental to their motivation to snowboard. It’s not stopping them in any way, even if it occasionally interrupts things.”

So what’s the biggest obstacle, if it’s not that? Bas Elhordt runs Black Sheep Snowboard School in St Anton, through which he’s taught several hundred visitors and locals (as well as his own four-year-old son). He noticed that, in what is still a very ski-heavy resort, most of the snowboard lessons were being taken by highly qualified ski instructors with only a fundamental understanding of snowboarding.

As he puts it, “ski instructors are giving snowboard lessons for the money. They are not ‘real’ snowboarders, and you will never motivate people that way. It has to be something that you feel. I think it’s one of the biggest mistakes in the whole snowsports industry.” Bas set up Black Sheep a couple of seasons ago in order to provide the kind of specialist instruction that he felt was in short supply around the Alberg. “They want to have an expert, someone who’s been doing it for a long time.”

Barry agrees - even in the heart of the Portes du Soleil, which has served as a breeding ground for some of Europe’s finest snowboarders, the outdated national model of letting ski instructors take snowboard lessons (but not the other way around) is missing opportunities to get kids properly hooked.

Ironically, neither Barry nor Bas felt the heavy influence of their first instructor. “My first lessons were with a ‘ski guy’,” remembers Bas. “After three days of lessons, I was done - I said ‘OK, I can go snowboarding now’. One or two years later I was out with a snowboarder who was jumping cab 5s, finding natural hits, and that was completely different. Maybe he’s the reason I got where I am - he showed me the way”.

Retailers have a vital role to play here; if the shop staff know their onions, they’ll be uniquely placed to recommend the right instructors to parents when they’re buying gear. Indeed, Barry cites referrals from respected snowboard stores such as Boarderline in Aberdeen and Subvert in Manchester as instrumental in helping REAL get off the ground. It’s a win-win; if the instructor has successfully lit the touchpaper, the newly-converted kid (or more accurately, their grateful parent) will hopefully be a customer for years to come.

Speaking of which, you only need a quick look at what’s available for 2019 to see that getting kids on the right gear has never been easier, with a wealth of kid-specific models in ever-smaller size ranges (right

down to the Burton Riglet setup, which has a retractable leash for pulling ankle-biters along flat ground).

Beginners can choose from the many lightweight, twin-shaped and flat-based (or gently rockered) boards that provide an ideal platform for those first steps. They may want to progress to something more technical before long, but it’ll last them at least until they need to trade for a bigger size anyway.

Then there’s the Bataleon Mini Shred, with the Triple Base design that further reduces the chance of edge catches. What was already a great choice for groms got a whole lot better this year, thanks to a massive drop in price. As Sales Manager Rubby Kiebert explains: “We dropped the price from €299 for a set, to €229. We felt it was the only way we could get a big group of young people riding full wood core camber 3BT boards that make snowboarding more fun and easy to learn without any downsides on carving progression for youngsters. We as family men know the cost of riding with the whole family, and we just saw around us that lots of kids were riding inferior products if you would compare it to what their parents were riding just to save some money. We felt like we had to make a move to get kids on quality stuff and put some positive energy in this next generation of riders.”

“Those who underestimate the importance of “stoke” only have themselves to blame when kids go looking for something else to do.”

2019 is also a banner year for freeride-specific kids’ boards, often with tapered shapes and setback camber profiles - the YES Powlnc, Jones Discovery and Burton Role Model to name just a few. Admittedly these cater more to those that are already well acquainted with snowboarding, and most likely living in the mountains, but you can’t accuse the brands of failing to do right by the youth. Jones even makes splitboards for groms (although if ever there were a niche within a niche within a niche, that’s it).

While any self-respecting snowboard seller would advise you never to make your choice based on the graphic, there’s no denying that younger riders respond to such things a lot more, and getting it wrong can be detrimental to the learning process. That being said, for every Spongebob Squarepants topsheet there are also boards that look just like Mum and Dad’s. Salomon, for example, uses the same designs on the junior versions of the Gypsy and Villain, as you’ll find on the adult models.

All of this means that kids who don’t like being pandered to don’t have to be, and those who approach a snowboard like having a new toy (no bad thing in those early days, if the Riglet’s popularity is anything to go by) are well catered for too. In any case, a big part of selling snowboarding to kids can be done in the shops. If clued-up staff can engage with younger customers, point them in the right direction and instill some of their own passion for snowboarding, that’ll be as attractive as any of the shiny new kit lining the shelves.

What we’re getting at here - whether it’s on the mountain, in the shop, round the BBQ pit or behind the ice rink - is what most of us call the ‘stoke’, and those who underestimate its importance only have themselves to blame when the kids go looking for something else to do. “Stoke”, as Barry puts it, “is a word that should be well known throughout the world. Everybody feels it - and if you sense it in somebody after your lesson, you know you’ve done a good job.” **👊**

BUYER SCIENCE

OLA NYGÅRDS
INLANDET SWEDEN

In this issue's Buyer Science, SOURCE takes a close look at Inlandet, Sweden. Started three years ago by Ola Nygårds, Hampus Mosesson and Jakob Wilhelmsson, the team at Inlandet tell us how their company has transformed from an old-school skate and snow store that has been renamed, remerchandised and relaunched online. Ola gives us their take on the snowboard industry, the importance of brand-supported events, and how to adapt to changing markets.



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

Larger brands need to share the risk of the stock in our stores. They should take back products that are not selling and use their own outlets to clear old products from the market. Younger brands also need to share the risk, but in different ways. If they can't take the products back, they could always give kickbacks etc.

A lot of stores are so afraid of stock that we see the sales period start before the season starts. That will just make the consumer nervous and always need a deal to make a purchase, thinking that otherwise they are being fooled. We try not to do that. If we still have products on the shelf, you might be able to buy it cheaper next season. But in most cases, you will not find a good selection then and we can be honest about that to our customer.

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

We've focused more on brands that are focused on older customers and products that last for a long time. You don't have to be a classic snowboard brand, as long as you make great products.

What's your process for finding new brands?

Mostly by talking to people and looking at things that are inspiring us. And sadly, on Instagram and other places on the internet. Tradeshow are usually too late to find new gear for the coming season.

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

Don't just sell in, be there through the whole season.

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

Since we live in a resort, we usually try the gear pretty early. If that was not the case, Shops 1st Try would be necessary. We still like bigger tradeshow like ISPO for a larger picture, since you get to see different brands from other industries as well.

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

The brands need to know earlier since the deadline is tied to manufacturing, so we try to be as early as possible. Since a lot of brands are willing to take a shared risk, it usually works pretty well, and they have their own ways to sell direct to take care of leftover stock.

What are the biggest issues facing the snowboard industry and how do you propose to fight against them?

If people don't like snowboarding, we should not force it on them. Just adapt to whatever market and market share we have and try to stay in reality. As long as we love to be out on snow, we guess there will be more people like us. If you fight to get people to enjoy your passion, I don't think it will be so inspiring. The medicine, I guess, is to keep focusing on what you like, and not on what "they" as customers should like. ☺

How long have you been a buyer for Inlandet and how did you end up in this position?

Hampus Mosesson, Jakob Wilhelmsson, and myself started INLANDET three years ago, and it was a transformation from an old classic skate/snow store that we bought, renamed, changed the assortment and brought online. Before a four year break, I was co-owner of the Burton agency in Sweden for about ten years, so getting back into snowboarding as a store owner is something familiar, but at the same time new and interesting. Now we live next to the mountain, so it feels great. We use the products a lot every week, so usually have great feedback and support from people that want to know details about them.

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

When we were looking around, we couldn't find a store that was truly focusing on older customers like us. It's basically those neglected market segments that are growing a lot for us. Snowboards, splitboards, quality outerwear and other products you will keep for many years are selling and growing most for us.

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photo Zeal

GOOGLES FW19/20 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

With new lens optics and adaptive technologies disrupting the snow goggles segment, retailers need a clear view of next season's offering. Here's our Snow Goggles Retail Buyer's Guide for FW19/20 by **Dirk Vogel**.

MARKET & PRICE POINTS

Encouraged by two great European winters in a row, leading snow goggle brands are approaching next season with optimism. "Winter 17/18 in Alpine Europe has been what some have called a 'Goggle year' at retail. Good snow conditions got people up the mountains and the light snow shower weekends of January and February have incentivized people to wear or replace their goggles," said Darius Heristchian, EMEA Snow Category Manager at Giro Snow.

Speaking on current challenges, Spektrum Co-Founder and Chief Designer Robert Olsson said: "There's an array of smaller brands offering open mould goggles direct-to-consumer by social media or crowdfunding. I have yet to see one with a solid brand, a solid story and product to match. There is great pressure from ecommerce retailers fighting for space and using price as their weapon." As a way out, endemic brands point to a combination of strong product innovation and working with core retailers. "It all comes down to technologies that create a 'holy shit' factor in-store in order to seal the deal at retail," said Mike Lewis, Director of Brand Activation & Digital Strategy at Zeal Optics.

Price points for FW19/20 offer something for every customer. Solid kids and junior goggles retail as low as €29.00, while value-oriented brands including Dirty Dog also offer fixed lens adult goggles between £24.99 and £44.99. A lot of the action in the grown-up beginner's segment revolves around €79.00, but customers looking for performance lens optics and interchangeable lens systems should prepare to spend between €129.00 and €279.00. Meanwhile, the latest tech goggles featuring electric adjustable lens tints can run up to €349.00.

*"There's an array of smaller brands offering open mould goggles direct-to-consumer by social media or crowdfunding. I have yet to see one with a solid brand, a solid story and product to match. **Spektrum Co-Founder and Chief Designer Robert Olsson***

SEASON TREND: PERIPHERAL VISION

As riding styles continue to trend towards outdoor exploration, consumers demand goggles with a broad field of vision. Smith is launching a major innovation next season: "We're excited to announce Birds Eye Technology that provides an entirely wider field of view than anything else on the market. This state-of-the-art lens technology has a 25% increase of overall field of view compared to the I/O MAG," said Cale Meyer, Marketing Manager Snow at Smith. Shay Williams, Product Development Specialist at Dragon is stoked on 2019's Panotech lens in the PXV model: "The ground-breaking new shape – toric in nature – allowed our designers to wrap the frame more so that you get an unheralded amount of peripheral vision without an overlay large package or fit." Also look for peripheral vision goggles – often in fits for small and medium-sized faces – from brands across the board, with key models including Vorlage S (Sinner), Line Miner XM (Oakley), M4 (Burton), Exo (Cebe), Parker (Melon), EGG (Electric), Maverick Sonar (Rossignol), The Boss (Carve), Templet and Helags (Spektrum), Method EXV (Expansion View Technology from Giro), Hemisphere and Hatchet (Zeal), Bonnie (Red Bull SPECT), Northstar (Bollé), and new MagSwitch models (Dirty Dog).

“It all comes down to technologies that create a ‘holy shit’ factor in-store in order to seal the deal at retail.”
*Mike Lewis, Director of Brand Activation & Digital Strategy at **Zeal Optics**.*

photo **Spect Red Bull**



GOGGLE SHAPES

Next season’s goggle is lightweight, large, and form-fitted with shapes trending towards what the team at Quiksilver sums up as, “thin rim, wide vision, large-sized shape, cylindrical.” Brands cultivate their own shape aesthetics, but one common denominator looms large over FW19/20 collections: “Honestly it’s all about fit! There’s no point having the best features on the market if the product doesn’t fit correctly,” said James Robinson, Art Director & Brand Manager at Carve. On that note, a growing number of brands offer ‘Asian’ fits – serving the growing snow sports community in Asia-Pacific – and fits for delicate faces. And Red Bull SPECT offers the Tranxformer model with three different sized nose pieces to fit every face.

The second major factor behind goggle shapes: “Helmet compatibility is always one of the first considerations with our goggle range and vice versa,” said Tom Lazarus, Operations Manager at Dirty Dog. As visor helmets keep trending, most goggle designers position top bars accordingly. Melon’s snow goggles are shaped to suit motocross and mountain biking when fitted with a dirt lens, and their new MTB/MX goggle frame shape is also available in a snow version, said Neil Slinger, International Sales Manager at Melon Optics.

LENS OPTICS

When it comes to optics, we’re entering a high-tech field – think lens curvatures, refraction, polarization and patented technologies – where endemic snow brands with R&D commitments are in a league of their own. Tech milestones for FW19/20 include Oakley’s Prizm React (see below), and Electric California’s KLEVELAND + edition, “with performance features including super anti-reflective, super anti-fog and a dual injected cylindrical lens,” said Philippe Lalemant, Electric’s Marketing Director Europe. Head is proud to introduce Trans Vision Technology (TVT) to increase perceived colour contrast in alpine environments, available in three different lenses; TVT red, TVT green and TVT Pola.

Smith is banking on ChromaPop technology to deliver crystal clear optics to amplify the snow experience. Zeal Optics incorporates Japanese-

sourced Optimum Polarized lenses that, “cut through the glare like your board through blower pow,” and pair well with the company’s Everclear anti-fog molecular infusion. Spektrum relies on inner lenses, also made in Japan, “with an amazing ability to repel fog and moisture as well as impeccable visual clarity. They provide a 50% improvement from our already high standards, a 140% improvement to industry standards and are market-leading in fog management and quality.” Dragon equips the entire line with Lumalens Color Optimized Technology for “increased clarity, enhanced color recognition and reduced eye fatigue.” Bliss are launching “Nordic light, where we are offering a lens technology that greatly enhance contrasts and blocks harmful light for increased ease on the eyes.”

Instead of trying to reinvent the wheel, a growing number of brands trust German-engineered Carl Zeiss lenses, including Melon, POC, Rossignol, Spektrum, Quiksilver and Roxy. Explaining the reasons, Rossignol’s Aurélie Zucco, Business Unit Manager Technical Equipment, said: “Some lenses feature Zeiss Sonar, distinguished by the fact that it maximizes the light transmitted and eliminates the ‘blue light’ effect behind the retention of certain wavelengths, in order to improve contrast, optimize colours and increase the definition of moguls and dips in the piste, whatever the light conditions, guaranteeing increased safety at all times.” POC developed Clarity base lenses and Spektris mirror coatings with Zeiss: “These will offer exceptional vertical and peripheral vision and have been enhanced for different snow sport disciplines, and a wider variety of head shapes and sizes,” said POC’s Damian Phillips. Giro partners with Zeiss on Vivid, a proprietary contrast enhancing technology. Quiksilver partners with a number of brands on lens tech, including Zeiss, Dalloz and Essilor.

*“Honestly it’s all about fit! There’s no point having the best features on the market if the product doesn’t fit correctly, James Robinson, Art Director & Brand Manager at **Carve***

LENS TINTS

FW19/20 lens tints are trending towards a reflective mirror coating for that ‘tech look’, enhanced by the aesthetic of oversized frames (see below). Aurélie at Rossignol notes that, “blue mirrors tints are well appreciated as well as orange ones.” Also look forward to classic outdoor colours such as red rock, khakis and ink, plus warm shades of green and luxe gold finishes. Taking a comprehensive view of next season’s trends, Robert at Spektrum said: “In terms of tints, the ‘trend’ is functionality and being fit for use in a specific environment or condition. In effect, a dark smoke polarized lens for glacier riding or a Sonar Infrared for white-out navigation.” At Red Bull SPECT, Head of Brand, Marius Cadalbert said: “To create a unique look we are introducing matt lenses into the collection. The result is a ‘frozen’ look of the lens, which is contributing to style and individuality.”

ADAPTABLE LENS TECH

Riders demand all-day riding under varying lighting conditions without changing lenses. Brands make it happen with a new generation of electrically charged lenses, including Electric California’s Electron platform which offers “three lens tints at the push of a button. This goggle features an adaptive LED panel technology controlled by a module with micro USB charging.” Spy has developed the Ace EC Goggle where, at the push of a button, a battery pack charges a filament sandwiched in the lens, switching tints from low light to mixed light all the way to bluebird. Oakley continues to expand Prizm React, an electrochromic lens technology designed to adapt to environments in a matter of seconds with three lens tints at the simple touch of a button. “Prizm React is a must have technology. It’s the best piece of electronic eyewear Oakley has ever produced,” said the team at Oakley.

Other brands pursue alternative strategies in their adaptive lenses. “Batteries and goggles don’t mix well”, said Mike at Zeal while pointing out the “Automatic+ patented combo of Polarized and Photochromic technologies. This lens reacts with UV light to change tint and colour. It’s like having 30 distinct lenses in one, and it is truly the only lens you’ll ever need, except for night riding.” Dirty Dog has added photochromic

p: Tal Roberts



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options to its value-friendly goggles: “Changing from Clear to Grey within a minute, our customers can be prepared for all conditions that they may meet on the piste.” Meanwhile, Spektrum ups the ante with a new “injected photochromic lens, as opposed to a photochromic coating normally used, that provides a quicker shift in tint when the weather changes as well as much better durability of the tint-shifting function.” Dragon just released a superior Photochromic lens currently available in six styles, four different base tints and a variety of price points.



photo Rossignol

QUICK CHANGE FRAMES

Despite the influx of adaptive lenses, interchangeable lens systems are far from finished. “Spare lenses are a sleeping giant in terms of volume and dollars. Fast lens change goggles makes selling lenses easy and this is a major portion of our business,” said the team at ANON while pointing out their mid-price Sync model featuring M-Fusion combines the simplicity of fast lens alignment with a magnetic latch system that makes lens changes a snap. For FW19/20, Smith has updated the Smith MAG system by integrating dual locking mechanisms into the goggle frame. Zeal is bullish on the patent-and award-winning Rail Lock System, which includes a bonus flat light Optimum lens.

James at Carve is stoked to roll out the “magnetic lens system featuring ten magnets, the goggles also come with a dual lens pack for high light and low light.” Sinner charges into the season with the Sin Valley magnetic goggle, boasting a “very thin frame that gives it a slick look. The nine magnets hold the lens inside the frame and make it easy to put a new lens in the frame. Besides the full coloured mirror lens there is an orange polarized spare lens included!” Red Bull SPECT has updated the best-selling Magnetron series with a frameless design in six new colour options. At AZR, marketing director Damien Didier recommends the magnetic collection featuring the Galaxy OTG and Magnet OTG models, with lenses held in place by seven to nine magnets and options for all lighting conditions. Dragon still runs strong with their proprietary Swiftlock tech in styles including the NFX2 goggle.

COLOURS & DESIGNS

Next season’s panoramic, oversized ‘tech goggle’ look finds its perfect pairing in all-black straps, which dominate goggle collections. But James at Carve points out that, “Olives, Camo, Tort, Red, Cyan and classic Matt Black and Matt White are all strong this season.” For Sinner, it’s all about “colours that are bright and vivid. On top of that, we go with colour-blocking to create a more interesting collection with complementary colour combinations,” said Sinner Product Manager Boukje Bontenba, who also sees a strong ‘retro ski’ trend marked by red, white, and blue combinations. Melon keeps all colour options fully customizable, Giro has cool skull patterns on the Cardiel collab, while Electric California loads straps with flavour by ways of Torgier skull patterns, a herring strap with an orange logo and frame, plus a marvellous native-inspired Nuevo Rust pattern.

In terms of design, several brands are reengineering their offering, including Head: “The goggle line 19/20 will be redesigned in regards of strap finish and construction details, like applying softer foam to improve the wearing comfort and the use of new lenses,” said Head’s Katharina Acham. At Spektrum, sustainability factored into the design of the Duo-Tone Line: “We introduced bio-based polymers or plastics to build our goggles last season and by that creating a smaller ecological footprint as well as a more comfortable fit, Duo-Tone also comes with Zeiss multilayer coated lenses and of course an extra low light lens.”


STORIES & COLLABS

Authentic boardsports brands are more than mere purveyors of products. This is where collabs with like-minded artists and labels come into play. Carve is tapping Australian artists Bound By Sea, mentalben (Ben Brown) and Kentaro Yoshida for a signature straps collection. Electric continues the Volcom collab on the key Kleveland and Egg models, as well as a Jimbo Phillips collab goggle on the Egg and a kids version with the EGV.K. Melon has a limited Tomorrowland music event collab and is going round two on the rider collab with Tyler Chorlton, Eiki Helgason and Antti Jussila, while their Chief goggle gets the Horsefeathers makeover for next winter in two colourways for boys and girls. Dragon has tapped Gigi Rűf, Danny Davis, Bryan Iguchi, Forest Bailey, Chris Benchetler, Blake Paul, and Jossi Wells on their Signature series goggles between three separate styles.

Spektrum tells an inspiring environmental story in their POW (Protect Our Winters) limited collaboration series, focused on “bio-based polymers as well as recycled polyester straps and for that package we might even offer two Zeiss Sonar lenses for different light conditions. Proceeds will of course support their great work protecting and preserving where we play.” Giro also works with POW, plus delivers amazing collabs with John Cardiel on the Method goggle and Hannah Eddy on key models. Meanwhile, the team at Quik is stoked on the Browdy Anniversary Pack, “one of our best-selling goggles, sold in a nice pack with a pair of sunglasses, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of our brand Quiksilver.” Congratulations!

Bigger is better, especially when it comes to full panoramic vision on the mountain. Next season’s goggles are trending towards XL-frames.

HOT TREND: OVERSIZED FRAMES

Bigger is better, especially when it comes to full panoramic vision on the mountain. Next season’s goggles are trending towards XL-frames. Prepare for generously-sized models from key brands, including Zeal’s Portal XL goggle featuring the Rail Lock interchange system: “We’ve created a new vista-exploding model for larger faces that is also designed to work over the glass.” Smith serves the oversized trend with the I/O MAG XL, “taking the Smith MAG interchangeable system and integrating it with a more expansive window to the mountains.” Oakley’s new Fall Line XL frame is a rimless goggle with a cylindrical lens shape, fusing “premium technology with a larger field of vision”. AZR joins the party with the cylindric Cyber and Galaxy OTG model, while Rossignol’s Airis Zeiss women’s goggle introduces a modern frameless design for a wider field of vision. Also make sure to catch the Burton Sync, Dragon NFX2, Bollé Maddox, Quiksilver Storm and Electric Stale models for the XL look this season. TSG introduces The Goggle Three, which is the largest goggle in their collection, “delivering super-wide vision from pipe to park and beyond. The oversized spherical two-layer lens gives distortion-free peripheral and horizontal vision, while an inner anti-fog treated CA lens ensures all-day clarity,” says Nadja Herger, Marketing/Communication. Aside from all these trends, brand portfolios are also trending towards more continuity and less season-to-season reshuffling. Which makes sense: Considering the massive investments behind new optical technologies, it’s okay to keep proven winners for more than one season – and it’s more sustainable. “We will once again keep 90% of our colourways of frames, straps and lenses the same as carryovers – no need to change a winning team. We just infuse it with a few seasonal additions,” said Neal at Melon Optics. 

HIGHLIGHTS

- Peripheral vision
- Smaller face and ‘Asian’ fits
- Reflective lenses
- Adaptive lens chromatics
- Rimless frames
- Quick-change lens systems
- Rider and artist collabs
- Larger goggles

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WITH VIVID OPTICS BY
ZEISS. AS YOU STRIVE
FOR BETTER WE'LL KEEP
MAKING THE GEAR THAT
GETS YOU THERE.

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WE'LL STOP

 GIRO

FW19/20 GOGGLES



Anon - M4



Anon - Men's Sync



Anon - Women's Sync



AZR - Cyber



AZR - Galaxy



AZR - Magnet



Bliz - Carver



Bliz - Flow



Bliz - Nova



Bolle - Laika



Bolle - Maddox



Bolle - Northstar



Carve - Infinity



Carve - Platinum



Carve - The boss



Dirty Dog - Bullet



Dirty Dog - Mutant Legacy



Dirty Dog - Velocity



Dragon - NFX2



Dragon - DX3



Dragon - PXV



Electric - EG2



Electric - Kleveland Heat



Electric - Torgier



Giro - Cardiel



Giro - Duck



Giro - Lava



Head - Globe



Head - Horizon



Head - Solar



Melon - HF x Melon



Melon - Jakson



Melon - Parker



POC - Cornea



Quiksilver - QSR



Red Bull Spect - Park



Roxy - Feelin



Sinner - Sin Valley



Smith - IO MAG XL



TSG - Drippin



Von Zipper - Capsule



Oakley - Falline



POC - Fovea



Quiksilver - stormml



Rossignol - Airis



Roxy - Pop Screen



Sinner - Vorlage



Spektrum - Helags



TSG - Mini Safari



Von Zipper - Satellite



Oakley - Flight Deck



POC - ORB



Red Bull Spect - Bonnie



Rossignol - Maverick
Photochromic



Roxy - Rock Ferry



Smith - Chroma Pop



Spektrum - Skutan



TSG - Spray



Zeal - Hemisphere



Oakley - Line Miner XM



Quiksilver - Browdy



Red Bull Spect - Magnetron



Rossignol - Orb Clarity



Sinner - Olympia



Smith - IO MAG S



Spektrum - Templet



Von Zipper - Cleaver



Zeal - Portal XL



Photo K2

BIG WIG INTERVIEW

K2, JOHN COLONNA

John Colonna joined K2 Sports as President in January 2018 and his CV reads like a who’s who of action sports brands. Having started out at Burton in the late 90s before going on to work for Rusty, Nike, Levi’s, Converse and now overseeing K2 & Ride Snowboards, John provides us with some fantastic snowboard biz nuggets for this issue’s Big Wig. A snowboarder through and through Colonna explains a renewed focus on both brands by the group, he talks taking care of their customers – the retailer, and managing the balance between D2C and wholesale. Interview by **Harry Mitchell Thompson**.

Please explain your history in action sports and you’ve involvement with the K2 Group.
Without knowing it, my career started at the Ski Chalet in Youngstown, Ohio just after high school. I eventually became manager and buyer over the years, doing everything from boot fitting, to buying, to running bus trips. Ironically, I was brought out to Vashon island in 1993 as a shop rider to experience the K2 brand with about 30 other retailers. We hiked and built kickers while camping on Mt Rainier. The experience really opened my eyes to the industry.

From the shop, through a lot of hustling, I was fortunate enough to get a job at Burton. After a few years I worked my way up to Director of Softgoods. Working closely with Jake and the team was an amazing experience. I had the opportunity to work with some of the biggest hitters in the industry and do some great things.

My next stop was Southern California with Rusty Surfboards where I held the role of VP of Merchandising and Design. To live in California and surf was a childhood dream. I learned a lot both culturally and from trying to keep up with the business complexity of the brand. This position allowed me to dial in the experience needed to get a call from Nike.

My team at Nike was responsible for launching the original Tech Pack and managing collaborations. I held a couple of different roles ranging from working with Nike SB in the US to being connected directly to the Nike Tokyo design studio to create a new sportswear aesthetic for Nike. Another great experience working directly with some of the most influential people in street culture.

In Europe I feel we have more potential than we are planning for. Don't call it a comeback, but it feels like there is a new energy in snowboarding.

After a few years I received a call to join Levi’s to help them get back on track with the younger consumer. As VP Of Merchandising and Design, I was responsible for creating The Levi’s Commuter Collection and resetting the brand in the US. My role evolved into a global role managing the premium segments, collaborations and their pinnacle brands (LVC and Made & Crafted). This led to me living in Amsterdam to manage the pinnacle brands globally. Once back in the states, I was approached by Nike again to work for Converse, which they own.

I relocated to Boston, Massachusetts and took the role of Cons GM to reignite their skate program and unlock new footwear growth. After building some business momentum and re-launching the One Star with Hiroshi Fujiwara, I was asked to take on their Apparel business. Working out of NYC for a couple years, I led the shift into streetwear and relocated the team to the new headquarters in Boston.

When a close friend gave me insight on the K2 Sports opportunity, I had to explore the position given my roots. This opportunity truly leverages my past product, go to market and consumer experiences together.

Can you explain the current setup with K2 Snowboards and Ride? How are they operating in Europe Vs US and other regions.
Our portfolio includes 8 brands – K2, RIDE, LINE, Fulltil, BCA, Atlas, Tubbs and Madshus. The goal is to successfully manage chaos. We are headquartered in Seattle, Washington and most aspects of the brands are managed from there. The core functions of the brands like strategy, product and marketing work globally with our regional teams to keep things aligned. In Europe we have a team who manages execution for all brands.

Snowboarding as a business is a larger percentage of the portfolio. Both brands have solid market share in each region. In Europe I feel we have more potential than we are planning for. Don't call it a comeback, but it feels like there is a new energy in snowboarding.

How are you streamlining your business (K2 Snowboards and Ride) to maximize efficiency and synergies?
We leverage areas where it makes sense like product line management, some development resources, operations and finance. We definitely approach them as different brands. The core of operations and finance is category based where the front of house is brand specific. We focus on brand health as much as business health in our approach with our portfolio.

Could you explain K2 Snowboarding and Ride's approach to retail in 2019 and moving forward?
We have a very sophisticated approach... make killer product, deliver on time and drive demand to our retailers. There is a strategy in place for each brand and the focus is on the priorities that makes sense for them.

Ride is in a good place and building momentum globally. They keep it real and push the brand each season. There is a lot of focus on the Warpig right now because it’s working but don’t expect things to calm down. There are new things coming to keep the energy going. The product roadmap is loaded, the team is next level and the marketing doesn't suck. Their directive on how to approach retail in the future is to keep doing what they are doing.

K2 has made a lot of progress recently. Over the last few years the brand has lacked the attention it deserves, got stuck discounting too much and had minimal product innovation. Now it’s a new day. This is one of our top priorities within K2 Sports and the internal team is being supported to get the brand back. Marketing with help of a great

team and some solid execution is driving some needed energy for us. K2 will become more aggressive in driving sell-through for its key partners both short-term and long-term.

How are you implementing a D2C strategy while preserving loyalty with your wholesale consumers?
We are focused on the consumer and their experience. By focusing there, I believe we will find ways to evolve and better serve our customers, the retailers. For us, we are using Quivers to help meet the consumer’s needs while still supporting our retailers and the industry. As the consumer comes to experience our brand directly, we offer the ability to purchase the product and have it fulfilled by a retailer. We are required to elevate our game digitally and from a service component to be successful here. We have been focused on the North American market so far and receiving good feedback from our retailers who are taking advantage of this service.

The bottom line is that this is a business and we all should focus on growth. The less the industry evolves, the more it discounts and the farther way it gets from growing.

Which snowboarding trends do you believe will be key over the coming 18 months?
Shapes will continue to create noise and be done by most brands because it’s easy. I feel an innovation moment coming for snowboarding. Freeride, if that’s what we are still calling it, feels like it will lead the charge here. There are some solid brands out there with great talent and experience. As much as the 90s are trending and things feel like they don't change, the future is here. I see the snowboarding culture as one who embraces if not drives change. Considering the sense of energy being felt in snowboarding now, my gut says people are going to take things to the next level. I may also be saying this because that’s what we are planning to do...

What do you see as the biggest challenges to snowboarding specifically and to winter sports as a whole, and how will you be working to mitigate them?
An obvious one is snow. Pretty sure that global warming thing is real and people should wake up. There are a couple of things that may also be obvious with no clear paths to mitigation also. One is accessibility and tied to that is participation. As I see the industry struggles with this, you can feel it get conservative. I think we need to find a way to begin to broaden our communication and experiences to grow the industry. The more we talk to ourselves, the less we address this issue.

In regards to challenges specific to snowboarding, I don’t see any. I am a snowboarder and my statement may come off as bias, but I believe it to be true. This is a major component of our industry that continues to drive influence and attract progressive consumers into our sports.

Do you have any interesting growth strategies or philosophies you believe the snowboard industry as a whole should be working towards?
I don’t think it’s rocket science or we would all be wearing lab coats. I feel collectively we need to support snowboarding and the culture surrounding it. The bottom line is that this is a business and we all should focus on growth. The less the industry evolves, the more it discounts and the farther way it gets from growing. 📌

photo Patagonia



WETSUITS FW19/20

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Without wanting to sound like a climate change doubter, it's still just as cold as ever in the winter line-up but there have never been so many frozen moustaches in the water at one time. Good or bad news for the grumpy surfer, this affluence can for the most part be put down to the work of brands, whose wetsuits are certainly pricier than ever before but are also ultra-high performance. And next winter (spoiler alert) there will be a whole new batch. Wetsuits buying guide autumn/winter 2019/20 by **David Bianic**.

Those who don't know the masochistic pleasure of slipping into a soggy 5/4/3mm on the beach with temperatures touching on zero haven't yet had the full winter surfing experience. While the changing part itself remains a transition of pure agony, cold water sessions are now sessions like any others thanks to these rubbery second skins that combine warmth, comfort and elasticity. "10 years ago you had to choose between a stretchy wetsuit or a warm wetsuit, now we are giving both with all our Flashbomb series," explains Jonathan Cetran, Core Division technical products manager at Rip Curl Europe. These technical garments make it possible to brave the throes of winter and are sending sales figures through the roof. "Just five years ago between December and March, a lot of people would

stop surfing," remembers Benoît Brecq from Madness, "but today with the technological developments in wetsuits, there are more and more people in the water at this time of year," before going on to mention how surf clubs these days are open all year-round. Julien Durant from Picture Organic Clothing reminds us that this is an era where "customers are the most demanding when it comes to conditions and the extreme use of their equipment." For him there is no space for inadequate quality or useless gadgets but it is perhaps the best moment to introduce innovations: "You pass or crash." For surfers based in Northern Europe, a 5mm model can even embody an all-round wetsuit, confirms Irene Duncan, Product Chief at English brand Typhoon: "We have seen an increase in demand for an all-year-round

photo Volte



wetsuit." Another symptom of the sector's good health is that for Soörüz' "hoods and gloves have been out of stock since November," points out Co-Founder Yann Dalibot.

SMALL IS BEAUTIFUL?

The vibrancy of the neoprene market has allowed many 'small' brands to emerge, sometimes specialised in commercial niches, as well as opening doors to new distribution strategies, especially D2C. But is this new arena seen as good news? There's mixed feelings at Adelio, admits Director Brett Vergou: "It's one thing to make a product but if there's nothing else behind it then it feels a bit soulless to me and I feel there's more of that in the market at the moment which has damaged things." While he welcomes the healthy competition these new brands are injecting into the market, Bruce Moore, VP of Innovation at Hurley forecasts that "the D2C strategy is an aggressive price policy, while pricing is just one aspect of a wetsuit," and that the new players will at some point have to bring more in terms of added value. Benoit from Madness joins him by reiterating the importance of the after sales service that only the 'real' brands are able to provide. For Mike Pickering, Commercial and Marketing Director at GUL, the best protection against this phenomenon resides in the traditional distribution structure: "You cannot do better than get proper advice on fitting a suit than from a retailer whose staff actually surf/go into the water." And from the defence: "lots of brands created a second market with discounts all year long or big braderie (sales) with non sensical prices," states Mathieu Desaphie from Sen No Sen, who is happy with his D2C sales while he searches for high-quality physical partners. To fuel the debate, heed the words of Yann from Soörüz: "A healthy market needs niche brands to explore and take risks. The big brands are often stuck on rails." A word to the wise...

INNOVATION: WHAT'S UP DOC?

Technical advances seem rather modest overall and they tend to prove the high degree of accomplishment already attained by brands as opposed to suggesting immobility in the sector. However, it is impossible to bypass the new Flashbomb Heat Seeker from Rip Curl; this one promises to generate heat by stretching and rubbing fibres in the new Flex Energy liner, "which gains you between one and two degrees" asserts Jo Cetran. Rip Curl say they have doubled sales of their Flashbomb with this new model; there's no smoke without fire (inside a wetsuit): it works!

Pull quotes: "Celliant Black is a material that promotes blood flow within the body and produces heat," Lance Varon, XCEL Wetsuits

In the same spirit, XCEL Wetsuits are offering bewildering technology in their Drylock models aimed at the coldest conditions. "Celliant Black is an updated version of our FDA-validated Thermo Dry Celliant material, a material that promotes blood flow within the body and produces heat," reveals Lance Varon, Head of Global Product. How does it work? The smart fibre fabric contains thermo-reactive minerals that convert body heat into infrared rays: more heat as well as better vasodilation to provide better oxygenation of the fabrics and therefore more performance. Impressive eh?

Once more, the devil is in the detail. Torso/back made of shark skin (this smooth coating is strategically placed to stop the effects of windchill) are less prevalent than in recent seasons, like at Adelio who are ensuring that the treatment applied to the smooth skin retains the same heat and provides a more flexible wetsuit that's also more durable. It's a similar story at pioneers O'Neill Wetsuits with their triple-layer TechnoButter 3 whose outer jersey is made of flexible hydrophobic thread.

After 60 years of existence, the wetsuit sector continues to look for better placements of seams. In 2019, to achieve this, Hurley will put the results of their studies carried out at San Marcos University, San Diego to use: "We have studied Biomechanics and Kinesiology extensively for a few years now," Bruce Moore tells us. "The short version is that seams are placed in compression areas of the body so they do not inhibit stretch." The search for the perfect fit may have just found an answer at the brand Solite who are offering thermomouldable booties, at home, in hot water! This is something that can inspire wetsuits... All the same Chris Grant from C-Skins does warn: "some brands are making suits so lightweight and stretchy that there are serious compromises on durability and fit retention." To avoid this, the British brand are announcing a new neoprene for 2019/20, Diamond Flex, whose external weave promises enhanced flex memory, stopping the wetsuit from deforming after wearing it for a few weeks.

Sometimes too hot, which is the final straw frankly, internal liners have increased the weight of wetsuits, especially once



photo Picture Organic Clothing

photo O'Neill



“We have studied Biomechanics and Kinesiology extensively for a few years now, the short version is that seams are placed in compression areas of the body so they do not inhibit stretch.” Bruce Moore, Hurley

they get wet. It’s this line of research that has motivated ION to end up with a 2.0 version of their Plasma Plush liner: “Thanks to its vertical structure, water drains super quickly,” explains Marc Burhans, Head of Wetsuit Product, “and helps to take the suit on and off easily.” Also of note is their interior coating ‘Silk’, featuring across the range, reminiscent of the soft touch of the fabric’s namesake. Other details come from Madness, whose top-of-the-range Couture Edition models dispose of a Donuts Cuff system; a more tailored finish at the wrists to reduce water ingress. These waterways were part of the problem for the first zip-free wetsuits. This era seems to have passed but some brands are continuing to go down the route, for example, Onda Wetsuits and their Freedom Back Entry system with its zipless opening at the back.

LIKE OIL AND WATER

While the surfboard can easily hide its environmental impact under its immaculate white gloss, the black wetsuit is an incarnation of the evils of oil. This ‘bad taste’ violation will surely accelerate development in one way or another towards cleaner manufacturing and sourcing. The jury is still out about the use of Limestone-based neoprene, too wasteful in its extraction/production to represent a 100% clean

alternative in the face of neoprene from the petrochemical industry but it’s a good first step. These brands are using it on the entirety or part of their ranges: Adelio, GUL, ION, Typhoon, Sen No Sen, Solite, Soörüz, C-Skins, Onda, XCEL. There’s another replacement choice at Picture, with their exclusive Eicoprene fabric, a foam made from recycled tyres (30%) and Limestone neoprene (70%). To this day the only sustainable alternative is still Yulex, the natural rubber from



photo Sen No Sen

the hevea (or guayule) tree that Patagonia have been the best promoter of. It now benefits from a fair trade certification at the Sheico factory for whoever is willing to pay the price. Brands like Soörüz (Naturalprene based on guayule) and Sen No Sen (hevea Yulex) have since followed in their footsteps.





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FULL RANGE:
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WHIP-IT
6'10"

SHRED
8'0"

SKUD
9'10"

ALL ROUNDER
10'2"

GLIDER
10'6"

VENTURE
12'6"

EXPLORER
15'0"

SUPERTANKER
17'

PADDLES AND
ACCESSORIES

photo Tiki



But these aren't the only manufacturing points to be reconsidered by brands, for example the dying methods "Traditionally used huge amounts of water," points out John Westlake, "Rubber Man" at Alder. As a result, the brand favours a process christened dope-dyed, "which adds colour at the weaving process;" a choice also prioritised by Patagonia, ION and O'Neill Wetsuits: "This method of dying not only reduces our environmental impact but it also stops the colours fading quickly and doesn't damage the fibres," adds Gabe Davies from Patagonia. Equally, the use of water based, non-solvent glues is now pretty standardised, "a great thing especially for the workers in the factories which we should never forget about," states Marc Burhans from ION.

photo Onda



*"The female market has pushed the vision of wetsuits. Feminine fashion has infiltrated their style with colours, flowers, Navajo motifs, etc." Benoît Brecq, **Madness***

BLACK IS BLACK

At least surfers have one thing in common with skaters: their love of black. Although spring/summer wetsuit ranges have brightened up in recent years through colours and livelier prints, winter models have sunken into stark conservatism. "Not only do our consumers prefer stealth colours, they also have technical benefits. Darker colours absorb more heat from ultraviolet radiation," explains Tom Copsey, Head of Product for Europe at O'Neill Wetsuits. To avoid black without losing its heat retaining properties, the brands have turned to colours such as navy blue, Bordeaux, dark green, mottled grey or they go for panels of bright colours or prints. "Concerning the men's line we are working with soft colours & melange colours. Designers worked on a Lofoten print, inspired by Svalbard landscape; a camo print & a wave one," adds Julien from Picture.

For a bit more creativity, cherchez la femme! The audacity expressed in feminine interseason and summer models also features in winter, confirms Benoît from Madness: "The female market has pushed the vision of wetsuits. Feminine fashion has infiltrated their style with colours, flowers, Navajo motifs, etc." It's the same idea at Picture, through

Winter wetsuits for those winter waves...

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18/19
WINTER
COLLECTION

photo Adelio



a collection using pastels as well as abstract art prints and marble affects, basically motifs that you find on their outerwear and accessories, “as an opportunity for retailers to cross-merchandise.”

To finish on a playful note, we asked brands what they think the major innovations of the wetsuit markets will be in the near future. Here are some of the ideas from this little fortune-telling game:


- A wetsuit custom made through bodymapping (Adelio, Onda)
- Connected accessories and smart fabrics (ION)



photo Solite

*“The vibrancy of the neoprene market has allowed many ‘small’ brands to emerge and has opened doors to new distribution strategies, especially **D2C.**”*

- 3D printed wetsuits using recyclable neoprene beads, after a body scan in the surfshop (Tiki)
- Wetsuits that adjust to your body, like the Nike E.A.R.L. (Jobe Sports)
- Wetsuits that change colours according to their temperature and/or contact with water (Jobe Sports)

Science fiction or simple anticipation, this brainstorming exercise does highlight the vitality that runs right through the surf wetsuit sector. Innovation and participant numbers (in winter) are intrinsically linked to this and that’s why it’s so important for retailers to go for brands that invest seriously in R&D. 

HIGHLIGHTS

- Black still winning
- All aboard the eco train
- Winter is booming
- Tech, tech, tech



PEDRO BOONMAN M. BIGET

GURU PRO

ECO-RESPONSIBLE PERFORMANCE



GURU PRO



Black Diamond

Soörüz' exclusivity that has a water-repellent and windbreak effects, it replaces the finemesh as it is more sustainable, flexible, lighter and is externally sewed.



GURU WIND



Our new Neopren **G5-ECOTECH HYPERFLEX Limestone Neoprene** is already included the GURU Range for 2019. Made of limestone and associated with Recycled Polyester, its use reduces the environment impact. The Soörüz experience provides super soft and comfortable wetsuits resulting in offering **THE HIGHEST PERFORMANCE** to our riders and customers.



We challenge the outdoor industry to fight against

CLIMATE
CHANGE

BE PART OF THE SOLUTION



ALL CARBON BLACK MADE
WITH RECYCLED TYRES

45 X 1 =
1 WETSUIT

100% RECYCLED POLYESTER
INSIDE & OUTSIDE LININGS

AQUA α

ECO-FRIENDLY WATER BASED
AQUAGLUE



REGIONAL SERVICE

INVEST FRENCH BASQUE
PROMOTING ACTIONSPORTS
BIZ IN BASQUE COUNTRY

**We catch up with Invest French Basque's
François Applagnat to see how this regional
service is drumming up action sports
business for the Basque Country.**

**What have been the highlights of the past 12 months for invest
French Basque? Please give us an overview of the current state
of surfing in SW France.**

The local market has never been bigger, thanks to tourism and surf schools. The market is growing as more and more people want to come to the Basque country for a short stay, all year long. We've developed a relationship with Biarritz airport – we currently have 1.2 million visitors each year and the project will soon welcome more than 1.5 million passengers each year. We already know that around 500,000 people are coming to the Basque country – flying to Bordeaux first and then coming by train or rental car. We do not know how much traffic is coming via San Sebastian or Bilbao. We are working on new destinations, especially from Northern Europe, like Helsinki, Copenhagen and Stockholm, with brilliant results, and we may soon open a connection with Munich too. With all of this, we are building an action plan for tourism and surf with cities on the coast like Hendaye and Anglet, showing the economic potential of this area.

**Are you noticing any trends in people moving from bigger
companies to start up small and medium sized businesses?**

In this growing local market, some managers from major companies have had the idea to create a new product or service. Back in the day, it was mainly surfers, but nowadays it is more people coming from the action sports and fashion industries. It could be local people as well as foreigners who would like to keep living in the Basque country with a nice quality of life for their families. For example, there is somebody who came to work for a big company and had an idea to create an outdoor brand – presenting a range of sleeping bags made of recycled material from local sourcing. It's our new challenge to create a strong local value chain for recycled material. Up until now, it's been more startup companies creating products, not only for the surfers, but also for foilers, kite surfers, mountain hikers, wakeboarders and climbers.

**What opportunities does the Internet Of Things present
to the surf industry in SW France?**

We have a lot of innovation mixing electronic innovation and the future trends for textile industry. We have seen a lot of electronic integration in accessories like watches, as well as in shoes and jackets. Estia, the Basque engineering school, has created a lab for researchers and companies to imagine the IoT integration in the future of our clothes. This lab has been created with Lectra systems – a world leading company for laser cut machines. Many famous brands are committed to the movement – mainly in the fashion industry and there's also some potential for crossover evolution throughout the action sports industry.



**The French Basque Country has been the epicentre
of the European surf industry since the birth of the sport here.
How will this remain so in future years?**

Since the establishment of the major companies like Billabong, Quiksilver and Rip Curl in the 80's between Saint Jean de Luz and Hossegor, many other European regions have set up a hub. We saw some companies moving their headquarters to Netherlands or Switzerland for fiscal reasons. Spain and Portugal are working on creating their own hub or business park. They are creating marketing materials to attract foreign companies.

**What initiatives are you running to attract surf business
to SW France?**

To bring more business to the Basque country, we created a business park and hub six years ago. We have some experience in welcoming action sports companies, we have created the lab for textiles, and we help people from action sports and fashion industries to work together on innovation projects.

We strongly support engineering schools to push students to be entrepreneurial, and we believe that they will be the next generation of managers in our industry. We are on the way to creating a new campus dedicated to ocean activities with the university of Bordeaux and the university of San Sebastian.

Our team currently helps entrepreneurs to connect to local markets, sub-contractors and suppliers in order to increase sales. We help Biarritz and Anglet grow as surf destinations for international surfers. Since then, Anglet has created a "surf avenue", which is an international Hall of Fame (Nat Young and Tom Curren have already printed their footprints and hands in the cement). We are now close to having a new type of fair, dedicated to surf accessories, boards and wetsuits for next summer, and many more to come.

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MOUNTAIN WEAR

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photo Picture Organic Clothing

WOMEN'S OUTERWEAR FW19/20 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Women can (and will) always ask themselves what to wear, and when heading to the mountains this questions is often twice as hard to answer as you want to look stylish and feel comfortable in all conditions. Luckily brands are taking good care of that in FW19/20, with lots of inspiration and opinion from those who know best: female riders themselves, whether professional athlete or snow princess. Report **by Anna Langer**

THEMES

In order to satisfy the modern women, outerwear must be as stylish as functional - a combination that isn't always easy to handle, says Nikita Outerwear Designer, Natalie Sullivan whose main theme for FW19/20 is "Comfort / Fashion. Sounds simple... but is extremely important. Themes can get too much about the theme and not enough about the end product. This Comfort and Fashion covers many aspects of our outerwear."

Dakine take inspiration "from the riders who see the full potential of the mountains from windlips, cornices, berms and transition," to create "long lasting, durable constructions and performance materials matched with styles that meets individual style." Horsefeathers Head of Sales and Marketing, Tomas Koudela, says: "All of our inspiration comes from our Girl Squad members, crew and the artists we follow. We use both our own and our Girl Squad members knowledge and feedback to develop the style, cuts, and technology." Billabong's A/DIV collection features highly technical products and gives rise to high-end and functional mountain gear and the FW offering is "inspired by, and made for the core: true products that encapsulate technicality and style".

Active / athletic wear is an important source as well, "we incorporate a look that parallels what women are wearing in their everyday lives, mixed with the needed performance to be out in the elements all day on the mountain. The idea that outerwear can be subtle, flattering and expressive is our passion and our focus when entering every new season," says

"All of our inspiration comes from our Girl Squad members, crew and the artists we follow. We use both our own and our Girl Squad members knowledge and feedback to develop the style, cuts, and technology." **Horsefeathers**
Head of Sales & Marketing, Tomas Koudela

L1 Creative Director Jon Kooley. 686 combine "form flattering jackets and pants built for movement with luxe trims and fabrics that shimmer in the daylight," while Nikita give big colour blocking, logo and brand hits a twist with a tomboyish look and nostalgic outerwear.

A bit of nostalgia is also brought to the shelves by Billabong, Rip Curl and O'Neill, who dig into their archives using "oversized, layering, patches, pouch pockets, panelling and high energy details," as Jan Lindeboom, Global Category Manager Snow Performance O'Neill explains. Nobaday infuse retro elements to their organic grunge style from Scotland and Turkey. Burton on the other hand state that they are implementing less heritage influenced creative direction in terms of colours and fabrics. Over at DC, they "integrate design, utility and tech presenting a progressive approach on modern outerwear. Merging classic outdoor and military influences with a contemporary retro athletic streetwear style, DC's got you outfitted for all your needs on and off the hill."



686



686



Billabong



Billabong



Brunotti



Burton



Burton



Dakine



Dakine



DC

FW's fits are "dedicated the core: our target demographic including snowboarders who grew up influenced by boardsports culture and brands. Not overly baggy or clingy, FW's quality fabrics and innovative cuts allow relaxed fits that hang excellently,"
Anna Smoothy, Marketing Manager.

Volcom are celebrating 20 years of outerwear and plan to "celebrate with a timeline highlighting our technical innovations, stand-out rider performances, unforgettable video parts, snowboarding history in the making and much much more."

KEY PRODUCTS & LOOKS - PANTS

The Bib Pant continues as the most on-trend pant silhouette for FW19/20 and comes in many different variations. Dakine redesigned the Women's Beretta 3L bib with more room in the hips and thighs to accommodate under layers and insulators as well as a broader variety of shapes and sizes for riders. Horsefeathers name their Nenna bib pants as "everyone's favourite piece in the collection." Rip Curl introduce their first ever women's bib, the Belle Bib in their slim fit and Rojo also opt for a slimmer fit bib in an all over printed oxford fabric with their Snow Day Bib. Burton offer a softshell version with the Avalon Bib, an expansion of one of their most successful styles with a new material and Protest and Billabong also offer bibs with new fabric: technical corduroy, playing with the retro-feel of this style.

But also regular, relaxed fits keep growing in importance. "After talking with our retailers it was clear we had a great slim fit pant but we were missing a more rider friendly pant fit," say Nikita. Tomas from Horsefeathers agrees: "In pants, we feel the same movement as in the men's line, the comeback of the regular fits." Dakine also offer a "Standard Fit" that reflects a relaxed cut with room to layer next to a "Tailored Fit" that is closer to the body. FW's fits are "dedicated the core: our target demographic including snowboarders who grew up influenced by boardsports culture and brands. Not overly baggy or clingy, FW's quality fabrics and innovative cuts allow relaxed fits that hang excellently," says Anna Smoothy, Marketing Manager.

Yet slim fits are definitely here to stay and continue to play a big part in many collections from Billabong to Rojo, with more extended sizes and a unisex focus from Burton and a "new moto-inspired pant that has all the bells and whistles while retaining a unique street inspired look," from L1.

KEY PRODUCTS & LOOKS - JACKETS

A favourite partner for these type of pants are oversized parkas and longer jackets, that make for an especially flattering silhouette. And on top of their wearability on the streets and thus promised sell-ability through added perceived value, they are also very practical on the mountain through better coverage, as Dakine note. Protest Design Manager, Ine Wouters says that the "parka has had a tremendous influence on length and tailoring this season. Many of our jackets are longer length, also reflecting a tendency that we see in the clothing of our athletes." A trend that spans through all price segments. Rip Curl reduced the pricing of their Amity Parka "to make that great-looking core product more accessible" while Horsefeathers feature a high-end ultratech laminated membrane and 60g Primaloft insulation in their Luann Parka. L1 highlight their Fairbanks model with its longer parka silhouette and contemporary styling and O'Neill recommend the GTX Parka Jacket for cold destinations.

Anoraks are the other main style story that a lot of brands are following. "The Anorak was invented by the people of the polar regions so it's a perfect starting point for your functional winter outfit." says Ine from Protest. Next to the more boxy, oversized retro-looking Original Anorka, O'Neill adapted the popular look for freeriding with a slightly longer fit that is "ideal when wearing a backpack" in their Gore-Tex Psycho Tech Jacket.

Next to varying lengths and fits, the upper regions get some updates as well. 686 add a new silhouette with a "collar that can be buttoned three different ways," for different looks and FW show a "high neck collar lined with cosy Polartec fabric." Nikita offer new hood styles with "convertible hoods that tuck comfortably in the neck and oversized hoods that crisscross at the centre front, giving the garment a big cozy feeling, yet technical for the mountain."



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Horsefeathers L1



L1 Nikita

“A total of 33% of the entire FW O’Neill collection is made with sustainable fibres. In outerwear we are working closely with Repreve for recycled polyester.” O’Neill

COLOURS

In line with their retro vibes, Billabong and Nobaday go for 90s’ riding style colours, O’Neill implement a “louder (without being annoying) heritage use of colour” with “neon/fluo usage in a smart way,” while Burton opt for “vibrant, bold, adrenalized and saturated” shades.

Rojo combine tone on tone with a contrast “both within a garment or within a print, such as deep forest colours popped with a summer bright” while O’Neill and Protest also have a Monochromatic black and white story prepared.

Pastels give a “smooth, colourful feeling without being too bright,” say Rip Curl, who work with Yucca and Peach. Nikita introduce Lavender and Picture Organic Clothing go for pastel green and pink. Muted shades and earth tones are nice to the eyes, easy to combine and also work on garments taken to the streets, hence we’ll (again) see a lot of them.

PRINTS

“Prints still play a role in outerwear shells and linings through classic favourites like our new ‘Tempest’ that provides a more timeless camo look that pairs well with a variety of solid colours. Snow customers spend a lot in their outerwear and we want it to last stylistically and functionally for years to come,” says Amy from Dakine. Nikita work with an “abstract camo”, Billabong with “camo inspired by high-mountain military equipment” and Protest “mash up traditional camouflage prints, combining them with other elements like animal skins or leaf shapes.” More of this most popular pattern can be found at 686, Nobaday, O’Neill and Picture Organic Clothing. Volcom are celebrating 20 years by shouting about their Leda Ins Gore Jacket for Women in Aurora White print.

Rojo mix it up with floral inspired camos, playing into the next big pattern trend: flowers. Nikita select a “pansy flower print” as their stand out for FW19/20, Dakine use their “Botanics” floral print to merchandise back to their lightweight baselayers, Picture Organic Clothing mix flowers and marble, Ripcurl use red florals and Protest contrast “exotic florals on dark grounds with grey melange fabric.” Horsefeathers also do a nocturnal variation with an “Avatar pattern inspired by coloured night leaves,” next to a Jungle print. Other highlights reach from hand painted graphics, crystal mandalas and mixed cultural prints from Rojo, through “Snowflakes inspired by the night snowfall” from Horsefeathers to stars and animal prints from Protest, which have been an “unbelievable success” and are updated with a black and white leopard print. Burton on the other hand opt for a “global, clean, compelling” look.

ECO FOCUS

Sustainable and ecological approaches have become ever more important in recent years and we’re happy to see them growing further. “Sustainable materials that do not sacrifice on performance and durability is a big focus in outerwear and apparel,” says Amy from Dakine, who update their tried and true women’s Beretta line with bluesign approved materials, a solution dyed, 100% recycled polyester tricot backer and a PFCec Free DWR finish. O’Neill have also heavily invested in sustainability says Jan: “A total of 33% of the entire FW O’Neill collection is made with sustainable fibres. In outerwear we are working closely with Repreve for recycled polyester.” Their 2 Layer Gore-Tex material is made from recycled polyester, as well with PFC free DWR like the rest of all our outerwear. Billabong extend their Recycler Program to their outerwear collection with some PFC free products that use recycled PET. Nikita continue their partnership with Thermore, using their Ecodown synthetic insulation which is 100% recycled from PET plastic bottles and Rip Curl keep pushing their Search Series of recycled, durable and PFC free products. New British outerwear manufacturers FW us a 2L Oxford Recycled Yarn: “This waterproof 2-Layer shell fabric has a natural outdoor look with no compromises on technicality and is PFC free, water resistant and waterproof,” explains Anna. Roxy continue their sustainability efforts with “eco-fabricated pieces and fabrics made from recycled materials will be paired to the brand’s famous colorful patterns in several flattering silhouettes.”



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NIKITA
FOR GIRLS WHO RIDE

We are focusing heavily on creating a community of women snowboarders and will be creating events focused on getting women out and riding with each other and progressing over the next year.”
686 VP Marketing, Brent Sandor

Built on environmental protection, Picture Organic Clothing introduce the first 100% Recyclable membrane, Dryplay, that is laboratory and field tested and takes their approach even further, “reducing the use of synthetic fibres, increasing the use of alternatives such as recycled polyester and bio sourced materials. This process is not only including production, but also in packaging, shipping & travel, activations, etc.”

FABRIC INNOVATIONS

Horsefeathers introduce Clo Teknica Vivo Insulation in their high-end ATP line jackets. “The unique Clo fibre construction with Vivo concept maximizes breathability and thermal comfort of the jackets with a series of tiny apertures within the insulation that allow moisture to move away from the body unimpeded, while simultaneously trapping air and so enhancing warmth and comfort through high breathability. Clo Insulation focuses on performance and ecology by utilizing Eco fibres recycled from plastic bottles.” Burton introduce Therma Pockets in all of their jackets and Rip Curl replace down with Primaloft Thermoplume.

Gore-Tex still reaches strong responses says 686, as do stretch fabrics. “Theorem capsule is our primary tech story with the 3 layer, 4-way stretch, 20k/20 fabric,” says L1 and Nikita advertise a new technical 4-way stretch shell fabric. Our haptic experience receives an update as well, with technical corduroy from Billabong and Protest, as well as “fabric with Osman style civilian jacquard weave and innovative Scottish plaid, tartan with a tatty effect” from Nobaday.

Keeping out snow with durable materials has been the norm until now, but Roxy have a new heated pad that will bring a new element to the warmth game: “A unique technology that combines a heating pad located in the lower back for increased comfort on the slopes and the elegant design and premium fabric that built the Premiere collection’s reputation.”

INSTORE VS ONLINE SALES

“This is the big theme of today and the online sales go slowly over the 50:50 split. Anyway, these two groups are still very connected when we talk about the core part,” says Tomas from Horsefeathers. This seems to be true for most brands, with 686 noting that “shops will buy differently for a floor set than an e-commerce setting.” Where people buy online vs offline differs by market, adds Holger Blomeier, Sales & Marketing Director at Mons Royale, arguing that their baselayers (which we take a closer look at further down) is “strongest at the place of experience which is the mountains, so it’s the physical purchase which first gets the fan.” Amy from Dakine thinks that “as distribution is rapidly evolving towards omnichannel, the pure online vs instore split will soon be outdated.” Yet brands seem to agree that a digital strategy promises most successful to connect with customers, including social media and influencers.

PRICE POINTS

Despite pressures from provider and retailer side alike, price points are looking stable for FW19/20. Burton show a slight increase based on product updates that are driven by sustainability and durability investments and 686 report success with higher price points from technical customers as well as a strong response to growing the lower price point range. L1 also feel more need for strong offerings in lower price point but mention that “it really varies country to country on needed price points and we aim to cover all the needs required.”

BASE LAYERS

“Layering is the key to regulating body temperature and to staying warm and dry in any weather,” says Julien from Picture Organic Clothing, who offer a range of functional undergarments with recycled Polartec Power Stretch, Primaloft, Sorona and a PFC-free durable water repellent finish. Dakine differentiate three tiers of warmth and weight, using moisture wicking, bluesign approved fabrics with a Polygiene odor control technology finish, heathered brushed fleece fabric with storm ready hoods and collars for added protection from wind and snow.



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Volcom



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Eivy



Eivy



Mons Royale



Mons Royale

Rip Curl implement their 37.5 technology in their baselayers and have released a tall hoodie with biodegradable tencel finish “to limit the release of polyester micro-fibre into nature”. O’Neill use Polygiene stay fresh technologies in some SKUs, Burton increase the offer of bluesign certified materials and FW as well as Mons Royale praise the natural properties to manage moisture and heat of Merino wool.

In the modern life of the multi-facetted female, a baselayer is rarely only worn underneath outerwear and restricted to the mountains, but used as a multifunctional piece of clothing that has to fulfil the same demands in style as well as function as the rest of their wardrobe. Baselayer only brands like Eivy and Mons Royale have had years of expertise specialising in exactly this field. “Eivy was created to challenge and expand the perception of how multiFUNctional Base Layers can be,” says Anna Vister, Founder & Creative Director. Such an approach also has great advantages for retailers. “A product that was bought in winter through a snowboard shop, its getting used everywhere from hikes to MTB. This has helped us become our retail partners’ most loved brand in the shoulder season by driving a greater connection to their customer because we have an offering that is going to add value before the snow falls, allowing them to ride their bike into November or run the streets at night” says Holger from Mons Royale. They are now also doing neckwear and balaclavas, which they see as “good gateway to get people off the petrochemical synthetics and into merino wool given that it’s only a beer or a couple of coffees more in price.”

On top of their signature and industry first integrated neckwarmers, Eivy introduce a “new non-transparent fabric, making our base layers the most multiFUNctional there is. Wearing black underwear under a pair of bright coloured base layer pants without no one being able to tell is now a reality and one less thing to care about on your adventures,” says Anna. “Naturally soft and warm merino fabric and have slim-cut cuffs make the FW Raw Jogger the perfect item to wear as an under layer while riding, or on its own on a down day” and their retro inspired Root Pillow Fleece transforms into a pillow through the front pocket.

When it comes to styling, Mons Royale work closely with their fan base: “Many of them will own both a slim baselayer like Bella which is an active baselayer and a Yotei which is a relaxed fit.” Rojo feature a longer length hoodie with cute trims and an elastic back panel that is “super flattering on different body shapes” and Nikita have given their “Radio PO Softshell Hoodie” a killer makeover with some new fleece options. Billabong link their layer collection to the main line, L1 repeat the lining print and pair it with their high end Theorem line and Nikita share prints from their outerwear line on their Life Layer category.

FEMALE MARKETING

The Women’s FW19/20 collections prove how far the industry has come since the “pink it & shrink it” beginnings and the marketing stories are reflecting this with a big and more than deserved focus on female riders. “We are focusing heavily on creating a community of women snowboarders and will be creating events focused on getting women out and riding with eachother and progressing over the next year” promises 686 VP Marketing, Brent Sandor. Horsefeathers are all about the “Girl Squad, a group of action-packed girls connected to the brand that love adventures, fun, and snowboarding. Apart from working tightly with the design team, they also pick their favourite combos. Girls go by their own rules! If you do so as well, then join the Girl Squad.”

Nikita have been all about “Girls Who Ride” from the very beginning and keep this close connection through their team of athletes, while also casting an eye out to the future with their Chikita girls collection, that is a big story for them. “This is the second season for our girls line. We have a strong point of difference that sets our youth outerwear apart from the competition: our Grow With Us system allows for use of the garments for multiple children. Adjustable elastic band pulls allow for adjustment up or down by using the provided buttons to set at desired length. No cutting seams – the system is very unique and different.”

HIGHLIGHTS

- Bib Pants
- Earth Tones & Pastels
- Eco-Friendly Approaches
- Parka Jackets
- Camo

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photo O'Neill

MEN'S OUTERWEAR FW19/20

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Except for the obvious exceptions from the rules, men in general are quite practical when it comes to clothing: stuff has to be functional, practical, fit and suit their personal style. Overall, the Men's Outerwear collections for FW19/20 follow these guidelines, with the typical action sports twists of course.

Report by Anna Langer.

THEMES

More than appropriate for its usage, a lot of inspiration for next winter's outerwear is taken from team riders. "All of our inspiration comes from our riders, crew and the artists we follow. We use both our own and our riders' knowledge and feedback to develop the style, cuts, and technology," says Horsefeathers Head of Sales and Marketing Tomas Koudela. L1 Premium Goods follow the same credo: "Our primary source of creative inspiration is the team itself, and the diverse styles, needs and personalities that need to be represented within this line. Finding the balance is not always the easiest task but in the end offers a very unique line season to season," explains Jon Kooley, Creative Director. Picture Organic Clothing are also "inspired by people who always want to stretch the limit during their expeditions." FW's Marketing Manager Anna Smoothy says their "outdoor gear is made for alpine living, wherever you are. The snow capsule is inspired by, and made for the core: true

*"All of our inspiration comes from our riders, crew and the artists we follow. We use both our own and our riders' knowledge and feedback to develop the style, cuts, and technology," says **Horsefeathers** Head of Sales and Marketing Tomas Koudela.*

products that encapsulate technicality and style." Dakine pair "a high level of performance, features and function with an overall focus on offering designs, colours and prints that allow the expression of individual style."



686



686



686



Billabong



Billabong



Bonfire



Bonfire



Bonfire



Brunotti



Burton

*“The entire collection is about modern and minimal design and embracing the ‘less is more’ philosophy. We spent a lot of time ensuring every detail and feature were important to the overall design. We implemented a ‘Classics With A Twist’ theme, taking classic silhouettes and inspirations and giving them a technical and progressive twist,” says **686**’s Brent Sandor, VP Marketing.*

Minimalist styling is a great match for this focus on purpose. “The entire collection is about modern and minimal design and embracing the ‘less is more’ philosophy. We spent a lot of time ensuring every detail and feature were important to the overall design. We implemented a ‘Classics With A Twist’ theme, taking classic silhouettes and inspirations and giving them a technical and progressive twist,” says 686’s Brent Sandor, VP Marketing. Bonfire also work with “timeless silhouettes and modern technology to inspire design lines and feature details” and FW add “efficiently minimalist detailing” to authentic product design. DC merges “classic outdoor and military influences with a contemporary retro athletic streetwear style,” tapping into their “brand heritage which derives from skate & street culture and/or integrate the riders ideas and style to give the product more authenticity and meaning.”

To ensure the shelves don’t look too plain, brands continue to play with colourful, retro 90s inspiration. “Key trends we have identified and are important to us are ‘oversized, layering, patches, pouch pockets, panelling and high energy details.’ With those trends in mind we have researched our archive (we have been making snow outerwear since the 80s) and applied the O’Neill DNA by using elements from our own designs from the past,” says Jan Lindeboom, Global Category Manager Snow Performance. Session’s Outerwear Developer/Line Coordinator Shasta Metcalfe reports a “request to see more of the old school Sessions in the line. We really looked to the throw back styles of early Sessions outerwear to help inform the design process, we referenced the Jaime Lynn jacket quite a bit during the development season for FW1920.” 686 find the retro trend fits their collection aimed at younger customers: “for the younger park rider, embracing the 90s revival was easy for us because all we had to do was go back in our archives and re-interpret either some of our outerwear or outerwear that had inspired our 90s designs.” Nobaday mix up “organic grunge style from Scotland and Turkey which infuses retro elements” and a “tecno romance style from Belgium and Azerbaijan” for “fascinating information and vivid colours.” Billabong also reach into their archives for their second cross gender theme, named Re-Issue and leaning on early 90s collections by the Australian brand. FAM’s Josh Cottrell explains their take on the 90s: “We are constantly inspired by old-school hip-hop along with the early 90s London rave scene. Some products and print methods out of these eras have become timeless and we are seeing a large influx of that again in functional streetwear.”

KEY PRODUCTS & LOOKS - JACKETS

“Pullover snowboarding jackets are the trend these days,” say Nobody, and also for O’Neill all key jackets next winter are anorak styles: the Utility jacket with oversized pouch chest pocket, the Original Anorak with a more boxy oversized fit and the Gore-Tex Psycho Tech 3L Jacket designed for freeriding. For Horsefeathers the Spencer Atrip Anorak Jacket is a key style since they added atrip apparel as Halldor’s Signature line last year, which is “inspired by early 90s snowboarding and the Snow Beach book horse.” Rip Curl feature the retro-inspired colour-block logo Primitive Jacket and Session sport a “fun throw back aesthetic” with their 10K shell pullover, the Chaos Jacket. FAM have tipped great piles of effort into their 3 in 1 parka, which is a “key piece in our collection as it is a core representation of us as a brand, a true peak to street product. The parka includes a removable bomber jacket, which enables 3 ways of wearing, shell jacket, bomber or combined for a heavyweight parka.”

Those favouring a slightly longer fit should take a look at the Rip Curl Pow Jkt, a “totally eco-friendly and durable product with our new Modern Fit, slightly longer and wider than our other styles”, or the O’Neill GTX Parka Jacket made from “sturdy Gore-tex twill material and filled with Primaloft Gold luxury insulation.”



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L1 Premium Goods suggest we “will see a significant change for this season as the trend is moving away from super tight and leaning more toward a relaxed or straight fit.”

For the classic regular fit type, Burton add a “new Doppler Gore, an entry price point within the Burton Gore offering with a fresh, modern and young silhouette” to their line, next to the New Covert Jacket, a slim option of their most successful men’s jacket. Dakine promote their lightweight Gearhart 3L Gore-Tex Jacket with Gore-Tex C-Knit® backer technology (bluesign® approved) next to the lightweight Stoneham Jacket made from 2-way stretch nylon ripstop. For Bonfire the biggest story is their 3-in-1’s, a “snap-in liner system which lessens bulk and allows for the use of your powderskirt while the liner is still attached in your jacket,” for example in the Terra 2L Stretch 3-in-1 Jacket in TuffTech with stretch Cordura shell fabric.

KEY PRODUCTS & LOOKS - PANTS

For the bottom half, L1 Premium Goods suggest we “will see a significant change for this season as the trend is moving away from super tight and leaning more toward a relaxed or straight fit.” Session highlight a “new baggy fit pant, more relaxed in the hip, thigh, knee, and hem,” that is “team approved.” 686 have also “loosened the fit on some of our lower end pants as the team has been requesting larger and larger pants over the past few years. It got to the point where Forest Bailey would be wearing an XL pant simply to mimic the way his pants fit when he skates. That definitely inspired us to cut back on the slimmer fit pants and widen their legs,” says Brent. FW dedicate all their fits to the core: “our target demographic include snowboarders who grew up influenced by boardsports culture and brands. Not overly baggy or clingy, FW’s quality fabrics and innovative cuts allow relaxed fits that hang excellently.”

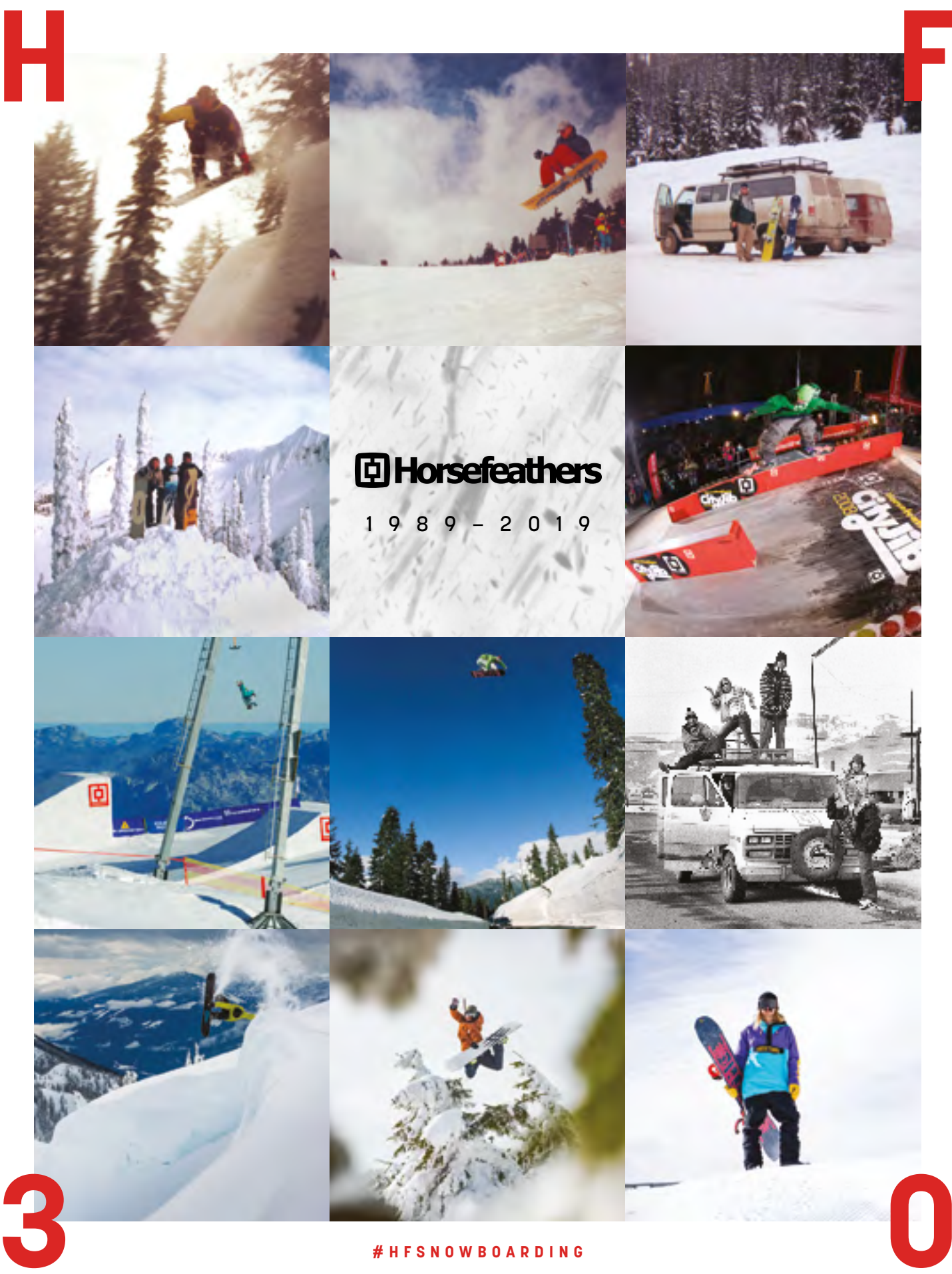
Horsefeathers have also “added more regular fitted pants, that we see as a growing segment, same as one new bib pant and a special 90s sweatpant-inspired cut of the Halldor’s Summit pants.” This is a fairly new interpretation of the more classic look that we’ve seen in menswear and is now entering the outerwear realms as well. “You will see more of the encased elastic at the hem of some of the pants as the team is leaning more into a streetwear-inspired direction at the moment,” explains Jon from L1. Session’s Bracket Jogger is another variation of this style, “a labour of love inspired by team request. This pant has an elastic band hem to give that ‘jogger’ style look. This is casual outerwear to the extreme - you will feel like you are wearing your joggers on-hill and may never take them off.”

“You will see more of the encased elastic at the hem of some of the pants as the team is leaning more into a streetwear-inspired direction at the moment,” explains Jon from L1.

Serving the functional approach, Bib pants stay in style as much as in demand. Preferably in highly functional materials, like the 686 GLCR Gore-Tex Stretch Dispatch Bib, the O’Neill GTX 3L Bib Pants or the FW Manifest 2L Bib.

Outside of these trends, two pieces deserve a special mention: the only men’s one-piece by L1, the County, which mimics “a prison-style jumpsuit” and the Rip Curl Pro Gum Outfit that is a collab with Plum Splitboards and the first dedicated outfit for skinning.

Bonfire state they have not created any new fits this season as they’ve concentrated on adding a youth program to their collection, featuring the “Grow With US system. This system doesn’t require cutting of seams and can be passed from one sibling to the next. We use an elastic pull and buttons to make adjusting the length of the garment easy. It can not only be let out - it can also be shortened to the original



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Horsefeather



L1



L1



L1



O'Neill



O'Neill

Picture Organic Clothing continue to stay fully committed to their long term goal: “Fight against climate change by ending our dependence on fossil fuels, including oil. That is why we this year we are again reducing the use of synthetic fibres in our outerwear collection, increasing the use of alternatives such as recycled polyester and bio sourced materials. This process does not only include production, but also packaging, shipping & travel,” says Co-Founder Julien Durant.

length allowing for use in multiple seasons,” explains Shasta Metcalfe, Outerwear Developer/ Line Coordinator. Volcom also bring Gore-Tex to their youth line for 1920.

FABRICS & INNOVATIONS

Not serving any more or less fast-lived trends, Picture Organic Clothing continue to stay fully committed to their long term goal: “Fight against climate change by ending our dependence on fossil fuels, including oil. That is why we this year we are again reducing the use of synthetic fibres in our outerwear collection, increasing the use of alternatives such as recycled polyester and bio sourced materials. This process does not only include production, but also packaging, shipping & travel,” says Co-Founder Julien Durant. Their main innovations for FW1920 are the first 100% recyclable membrane, Dryplay, and the first partially bio based membrane, Pebax® Renew®, that is featured in the new Harvest outfit and made from Castor Oil. Dakine focus on “sustainable materials that do not sacrifice on performance and durability,” updating their popular Sawtooth 3L Gore-Tex jacket and Stoker 3L Gore-Tex bibs with “bluesign® approved materials, a solution dyed, 100% recycled polyester tricot backer and a PFCec Free DWR finish,” says Amy Eichner, Senior Product Manager (Outerwear, Snow Gloves & Headwear). O'Neill used sustainable fibres for 33% of their FW1920 collection, working closely with Repreve for recycled polyester and FW feature Dermizax, an exceptionally waterproof and breathable 3-Layer fabric that has 30% Plant Based PET derived from bio-waste and is OEKO-TEX approved. Protest highlight their GeoGreen jacket, the Arram: “The GeoGreen series is clothing where authentic design is fused with new technology. The outer shell of Arram is made from polyester derived from recycled PET bottles – 40 to be exact,” says Ingrid Kalma, Head of Menswear Design. Horsefeathers use Clo Tecnica Vivo Insulation in some of the high end ATP line jackets that utilizes eco fibres, also recycled from plastic bottles. Volcom are shouting about their “proprietary technologies Zip Tech, TDS (Thermal Defense System) Face Tech and Grow Tech,” and also have some interesting collabs with major players to talk of (see collabs).

As it guarantees great functionality and durability, Gore-Tex continues to be very popular, especially in stretch versions that ensure a good range of movement for stylish tricks and comfy wearing. “We are seeing a strong response to Gore-Tex and stretch and have continued to add more and more of those into our collection” says 686 and also DC offer “more stretch in our fabrications overall as the functionality is a key attribute.” L1 feature 3 layer, 4-way stretch, 20k/20K fabric in their Theorem Capsule and Bonfire work with Pinnical Stretch as their new transition material, offering 4-way mechanical stretch.

Billabong herald their Adventure Division as the pinnacle of their line and The Prism jacket, from this line is endorsed by Bode Merrill. It features a Sympatex stretch (whopping!) 45k fabric and is insulated with Primaloft Hi-Loft. Rip Curl update their Pro Gum pant that is “inspired by trail-running backpacks with a mesh feature that allows the rider to carry all needed accessories (sunnies, sunscreen, food, water etc...) in a very accessible way, to avoid taking the backpack on and off all the time while touring. It also comes with an Aerogel pocket (Primaloft technology), to save your phone's battery in the freezing cold,” says Edouard Cousty, Product Manager Mountainwear Europe.

COLOURS

DC find that “in the past normally earth tones/neutrals have dominated, however we see a convergence to more brights and unexpected combos of neutral and brights – attributed to the retro athletic trends going on.”

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O'Neill



Patagonia



Picture



Picture



Picture



Protest



Quiksilver



Quiksilver



Quiksilver



Rip Curl

*“Classic favourites like our new ‘Ashcroft Camo’ and ‘Tempest’ provide a more timeless look that pairs well with a variety of solid colours,” says Amy from **Dakine***

686 still report “good response to our earth tone palette for the every day consumer.” FW use “natural tones inspired by the environment that surrounds us” and L1 are also “known for a more muted, earthy colour palette.” Horsefeathers’ Urban Mountain line is “toned-down” too and Session offer a “fairly neutral colour palette with Navy, Charcoal, and Olive but with the orange pop and a nice rich deep red added as a standout in FW1920.”

For the backcountry, 686 use colour pops as well: “It’s always important for us to offer bright hits in the backcountry to keep visibility high in dangerous situations. We try to add the bright panels in unique ways that don’t overpower the silhouette or current trends.” Bonfire report great feedback on red, dark cyan, and slate, Rip Curl feature a “nice deep red (Arabian spice), as well as a bright Orange to brighten up the mood,” while Horsefeathers go a bit more wild with “Oasis lime, Black Haze, Cement and Sycamore green.”

Team rider signature pieces add some more colours, “giving them a creative outlet to get exactly what they want,” says L1. Horsefeathers highlight Tyler Chorlton’s Jaffa orange jacket next to Halldor’s 90s mix including black, grey, yellow, bluebird, violet and white with “sick artwork by Schoph,” and Eiki’s “lining in the signature outerwear that is inspired by the colours of oil stains, and the effect is used not only in the interiors but also on the metallic logos, zippers or even the embroidery. Together with the decent Black Haze material looks fantastic!” says Tomas.

PRINTS & PATTERNS

“Prints seem less important and tend to be more abstract than geometrical,” say DC. 686 use “graphic and design inspiration” for a “well thought out system of experimental graphic applications” and Burton’s offering is “global, clean, compelling.” Picture Organic features “prints in 3 colours: white, neutral grey & a very dark black.”

Rip Curl use similar shades with black and grey camo, adhering to the biggest pattern trend for FW1920: camouflage. “Classic favourites like our new ‘Ashcroft Camo’ and ‘Tempest’ provide a more timeless look that pairs well with a variety of solid colours,” says Amy from Dakine and Horsefeathers name their Tree Camo that is inspired by bark as their most significant pattern. Bonfire offer a Slate and Yellow Camo, Nodaday pair Camo with Japanese printing and Sessions show Black Tiger Camo next to Cheetah prints, while Picture Organic Clothing sport Camo, Lofoten & mountain prints.

SALES

Asked about online vs. brick & mortar sales, DC say that “wholesale still dominates but we see a movement shift into greater online sales year over year. DC does such a great job with our consumer engagement and we continue to drive them online.” Bonfire say that they are still selling more in-store, “since the feel of our technical outerwear and the stretch cordura is the most influencing part” and Horsefeathers add that “customers perceive the products differently when shopping off or online” yet find the two are “still very connected when we talk about the core part.”

Customer connection and activation is generally split evenly between digital strategies, mainly social media like Instagram and Facebook, and real-life events like demos, pop up shops or snowboard organisations and clubs.

Price points are pretty stable. Burton report some increase due to sustainability and durability investments, and also Bonfire say that “some price points have gone up but we have brought in some new fabrics this season and the increases are relevant to the added value you get, for example through a 4-way mechanical stretch technical shell fabric.”

DC find that “the average consumer is willing to spend more for highly functional, technical quality product” and 686 also continue

FW »



APPAREL FOR ALPINE LIVING

The Ski and Snow capsule is inspired by and made for the core: true products that encapsulate technicality and style. FW’s premiere range combines minimalist, modern silhouettes with quality fabrics that look, feel and perform exceptionally.



Rip Curl



Rip Curl



Sessions



Sessions



Volcom



Volcom



Volcom



Super Natural



Mons Royale



Mons Royale

L1 Premium Goods expanded their collection in both the higher and more entry-level price points. “From a global standpoint it really varies country to country on needed price points and we aim to cover all the needs required,” says Jon.

to have “success with higher and higher price points with technical customers,” while also seeing “a strong response to growing the lower pricepoint range” this year. L1 Premium Goods expanded their collection in both the higher and more entry-level price points. “From a global standpoint it really varies country to country on needed price points and we aim to cover all the needs required,” says Jon.

COLLABS

Similar to team rider’s signature series, collaborations are still playing an important part in men’s outerwear while they have more or less vanished from the women’s side. 686 have teamed up with The Hundreds, Primitive Skateboarding, Coal Headwear and Slayer, next to Forest Bailey’s Cosmic Collection. Horsefeathers are working with “three great artists we love. We are super happy about the Schoph artwork for the atrip line, Lucas Beaufort drawings for a couple of streetwear and accessories products and Cyrex Li snowboarding designs for t-shirts,” and Rip Curl are proud of their Madsteez Collab for the more park-orientated segment of their line.

Volcom use their tried and tested ambassador Bryan Iguchi to celebrate their 20 years of snow outerwear (The Bryan Iguchi Stretch Gore Tex collection) and also enlist team rider, Pat Moore for a signature series.

BASE LAYERS

Base layers are the “fastest growing category” that Picture Organic see, saying a “new midweight style & base layers program”, of course made from “sustainable, durable, and technical fabrics” combining “eco-friendly materials and a well thought out design”.

One of the most popular materials for base layers is Merino wool, in which Mons Royale and super.natural have specialized. The latter combine “the advantages of merino wool and synthetic fibre that perfectly complement each other, providing maximum comfort and functionality,” allowing their shirts and tights to withstand “regular wash up to 40°C – no need to put on a separate wool wash - and can also be put in the dryer.” Making their base layers ideal not just for riding but also for everyday life as well as other adventures.

For FW1920 Mons Royale offer three different weights of base layers: “Alta Tech with rolled shoulder seams for a maximum backpack comfort and thumb loops to keep your sleeves under control, Yotei with maximum merino performance coupled with a relaxed fit and Olympus 3.0, with 250gsm our warmest base layer designed for big days in big mountains where temperatures do their best to cut your day short.” Using inspiration from their homes in Wanaka New Zealand, Innsbruck Austria and Whistler Canada they “design clothes for a mountain life and this is where we get our inspiration from. Fans and athletes are therefore a core inspiration as well.” Showing “striking colour stories and print patterns” and “full fabric prints and carefully curated clashes to bring a clear distinction to the range,” says Holger Blomeier, Sales & Marketing Director. 📍

HIGHLIGHTS

- Anorak Jackets
- Jogger Pants
- More relaxed & less slim fits
- Gore-Text & Stretch fabrics
- Camouflage patterns
- 90s styling

A snowboarder in a red and orange suit is performing a trick in the air against a blue sky. The O'Neill logo is in the top right corner.

It's always summer on the inside

ASAP, ANNECY (FR)
14–15 JANUARY

SHOP 1ST TRY, WILDSCHÖNAU (AUT)
20–22 JANUARY

ISPO, MUNICH (GER)
3–6 FEBRUARY

ONEILL.COM



Snow safety is in the core of our foundation. In fall 2019 Black Diamond is launching the next generation of our electronic airbag systems.

JetForce Pro



Gold Winner

Modular System

Switch between 10L, 25L (ski or board version) or 35L modules, all with one pack.

Redesigned handle

Switch sides for right- and left-handers

Dedicated snow safety equipment pocket

Bluetooth connectivity

Easy software updates via your phone

Redesigned Electronic System

Smaller, lighter, repositioned

The new JetForce airbag systems are coming in three versions:



JetForce Pro

10-35L, from 2.76kg
JetForce electronic system



JetForce Tour

26L, 2.6kg
Alpride E1 supercapacitor system



JetForce UL

26L, 1.99kg
Ultralight Alpride 2.0 cartridge system



photo Advenate

SNOW SAFETY FW19/20 RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

Going into the FW19/20 season, freeriding continues to be the dominant Alpine trend. As a direct consequence, avalanche protection emerges as a hot button issue. Find all the latest gear for safely navigating the backcountry in our buyer's guide by **Natalia Maruniak**.

On the heels of the backcountry trend, "the global awareness that getting in the outdoors could get you into exposed situations seems higher than ever," said Matthieu Giraud at Resero Whistle. "Innovations like the IOT emergency Resero Whistle seem to be playing a major role to keep on building awareness and revenue on the snow safety market." Black Diamond helps spread awareness via "digital learning programs such as the Snow Safety App and on-site workshops with pro riders." After all, "the best gear is not enough – it is the training and knowledge about snow safety," said Christian Lehmann, Brand Marketing and Pro Sales Manager Europe.

TRENDS

Most powder-hungry riders have accepted that snow safety gear is indispensable for freeriding. The basic kit consists of a snow safety transceiver, beacon and shovel, plus the additional backpack with airbag system. "Airbags will soon be mandatory if you go in the backcountry," said Michael Vogt at ABS. Customer expectations are rising accordingly. "First and foremost, customers expect their safety gear to assemble quickly and perform when it counts in a real rescue scenario," said Seth Lightcap, Marketing Manager at Jones Snowboards. "Lightweight but safe... It needs to be there when it counts. Otherwise, you shouldn't notice it," said Lucy Willmott at Ortovox. Brands also point out longevity and reliability, as well as "intuitive operation" (Recco).

BACKPACKS

ABS provides a unique airbag system with two chambers. Aside from their double balloon Twinbag system, the "partner activation is the most important feature. Over 20% are not able to pull the trigger by themselves, that's why the partner protects you best," said Michael Vogt, while announcing a completely new, groundbreaking system to be released soon. The highlight at Advenate is the Surface IAS 24 avalanche backpack as "it is the only airbag system on the market with an integrated breathing system. It allows you to activate two different systems with one movement," explained CEO Matthias Werz, for whom "breathing under snow" represents a big topic for snow safety brands in the future. Ortovox is focused on reducing weight while maximizing airbag volume. The minimalistic AVABAG system is fully detachable, lightweight, compact and allows for dry practice. Integrated into the Jones DSCNT 321 RAS avalanche pack, the Mammut RAS 3.0 System can also be detached for everyday use while offering another key advantage: "It allows you to travel with the air canister empty," said Seth Lightcap. Dakine is another brand implementing the detachable Airbag 3.0 System from Mammut. The cutting edge Poacher RAS Pack is available in 18L to 42L capacity with roll-top enclosures. "By eliminating the weakness created by a standard zipper, we have created a Poacher RAS Pack that is simpler, easier to use and longer lasting," said Flavien Foucher, EMEA Marketing and Merchandising Manager. Black Diamond, who created the first airbag system without gas cartridges in collaboration with PIEPS,

releases a new line of Jetforce avalanche backpacks for 2019, including the JetForce PRO with Bluetooth connectivity via the PIEPS app.

TRANSCIVER, PROBE, SHOVEL

Launched for Fall 2019, the new Black Diamond Beacons Guide BT and Recon BT also rely on Bluetooth. "Their cutting-edge features for long-range and multiple burial searching are supported through their Bluetooth capabilities via the PIEPS app," said Christian. Ortovox continues to bank on Smart Antenna technology, which automatically switches to the best broadcast antenna to optimize rescue efforts, while all transceivers are equipped with Recco reflectors, "following the philosophy that all means should be used in case things go wrong, giving organized rescue an additional option to locate a buried person electronically," said Manuel Dürmoser, Global Marketing at Recco. Next season offers a wide range of probes and shovels, a standout product is clearly the Hybrid Pro from Advenate – a combination of shovel, probe and winterproof bivouac, extremely lightweight and with minimal packing size. "The Advenate Hybrid Pro combines all essential equipment items for a night in the mountains, whether planned or unplanned and that without separate tent poles. For all situations where full protection of weather and low weight matters, the Hybrid Pro offers a significant plus in safety", explained Matthias.

ADDITIONAL OUTDOOR-SAFETY-DEVICES

Providing additional safety, the Resero Whistle is a new to market easy-to-activate wearable device that sends precise GPS coordinates and user's details to friends and local rescue at a pull of a trigger, also compatible with avalanche backpacks. In addition, its signals can be tracked from super remote areas with no network such as crevasses by Resero SAR mounted on a rescue helicopter or drone from up to 15 kilometers away. And on-trend for next season, it is also equipped with a Recco reflector – a feature not only found in snow safety gear from several brands but soon also available for purchase solo to pair with helmets and backpacks. In other news, the brand is also expanding into helicopter search with the RECCO SAR Helicopter detector. With that said, consumers should get educated about avalanche protection and stay safe out there in the backcountry. 📡

HIGHLIGHTS

- Awareness building
- Lightweight but safe
- Intuitive use
- Additional safety devices



INTRODUCING IAS: INTEGRATED AVALANCHE SYSTEM

AVALANCHE SAFETY REDefined



IAS WITH AVALANCHE AIRBAG AND BREATHING SYSTEM

The IAS is the first rescue system that allows two modules to be triggered simultaneously with just one pull. The activation handle for the avalanche airbag also includes the mouthpiece for the breathing system. By activating all rescue systems simultaneously in just one action, you can rely on two different survival systems within seconds.

WWW.ADVENATE.COM



AWAYCO

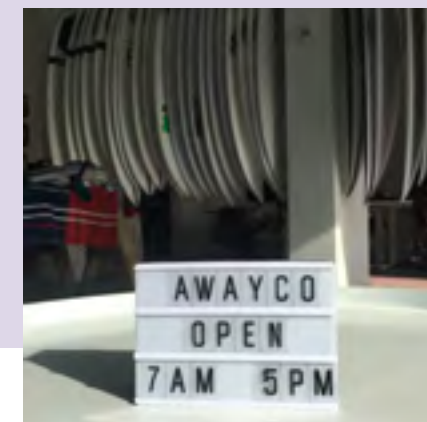
Launched by two former Google employees, Awayco looks to capitalise on the growing shared economy and service global boardsports enthusiasts with their global network. Already operating across four continents and over 70 locations, Awayco gives its members access to premium quality rental gear from bricks and mortar locations, meaning less to travel with and potential sales for local boardsport. An innovative digital platform providing a great opportunity for bricks and mortar retail. We speak with Gideon Silverman, CEO and Founder.

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

Awayco is an experience platform. Our technology connects the world's best outdoor retail stores and brands to enthusiasts who want to travel lighter and experience premium gear to live out their passions. We launched in early 2018 with a selective group of amazing locations around the world and have been growing fast ever since.

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

My Co-Founder, Francesco Nerieri, and I met at Google in San Francisco in 2016. Francesco. He was an Engineering Director and I was a Product Manager. We hit it off over coffee and found we had a common vision. We quickly built a world-class technology team combined with some amazing people from the industry who really understand retail and outdoor sports. Being close to our retailer community is critical to us, so we opened up three offices: San Francisco for North America, Sydney for Asia-Pacific, and Lisbon for Europe.



What is the company ethos?

Awayco believes in sharing and discovery. The Awayco technology makes it easy for stores and brands to share their products, stories and insights, and for members to discover and curate amazing experiences. Every day, with every booking, Awayco wants to enrich communities, support retailers and empower more people to get offline and enjoy nature.

What sets you apart from your competitors?

We had to be a global company from day one to serve our customers, but really the heartbeat of Awayco is the local communities we serve. Awayco partners with small businesses like ski and snowboard shops, and gives them a new stream of revenue while driving people through their space to learn their stories. It's this connection between traveling enthusiasts and store owners that represents a wonderful bridge – from online discovery to offline experience.

Tell us more about your local offering.

We are very committed to the idea that Awayco experiences should feel truly local. Almost all of our stores are “local legends” in their communities. Technology should be a constant in the Awayco experience. Whether travelling boardless and picking up a new snowboard in Banff, a pair of pow skis in Val D'Isere, or a splitboard in Saas Fee, as an Awayco member you can bet you're going to learn and experience something new based on the particular local context. We want to enable our members who want to learn, connect and feel at home wherever they are.

What do you find important about the European market?

Europe is absolutely critical for us. For a start, there is a personal dimension: Francesco, one of our Founders, is Italian. He grew up skiing and snowboarding all around Europe, especially in Innsbruck, before heading over to Dublin and San Francisco working for Google. There is also business logic: Europe has the largest rental



market in the world. Awayco is committed to innovating here and we established an office in Europe for that specific purpose.

What marketing are you running?

Awayco is a technology company at heart. Our team really understands how to use marketing technology to grow our partner brands.

Why should retailers sell your brand?

As a platform, our brand is as strong as the retailers in our community. If we partner with your store, we want to tell its story to our members all around the world and get them excited to visit!

How are you working globally and how do you see this changing?

We are in about 70 locations on four continents, and we're growing every week. We have a team dedicated to discovering the world's best stores to invite to become Awayco locations. If you are interested, or think you might qualify, please email hello@awayco.com. We're also constantly on the lookout for leaders in the fields of technology, marketing, business development and sales to join our team. If you're interested in joining us, please get in touch: jobs@awayco.com



TELOS SNOWBOARDS

Telos Snowboards are launching with 30 years of snowboard production knowledge and a management team of industry vets. Coming out of Dan Agundes' GP87 factory and with a mission to support retail with premium products, Telos Brand Manager, Rasmus Ostergaard profiles the brand for us.

Where is your HQ and where are you manufacturing your boards?
Our HQ is located in the City of Telos, the sister city of Atlantis, that now exists in the 5th dimension far beneath Mt. Shasta, California and where much of our advanced technology is inspired. We also have our own distribution warehouse in Denver, Colorado USA. Telos Snowboards are proudly built for quality at GP87 Manufacturing, Inc. in Shenzhen, China.

Why was now the right time to launch your own brand, Telos?
It is true that our Telos brand was founded by members of the GP87 team, however, we are not just a "factory brand" that's stamping out generic boards with our own logo.

The idea for Telos Snowboards has been in development over the last several years, as well as the new technology that we are incorporating into the boards. With our now more than 30 year history of designing and building snowboards we've managed to develop some pretty advanced tech along the way. We decided that we wanted this to be part of our story and after several years of testing some of the new technology and constructions, we decided they were ready for market. With some input from our Japanese Distributor, Maneuverline Snow Division, we developed the initial line with them to fill some gaps in their current offerings for 2018/19, which

we also launched in the USA. Now we have plans to expand our line for 2019/20 to encompass the types of boards and riding that we all enjoy and to expand more into the world market.

Who is on the management team, and what are their backgrounds?
Dan Agundes is Head of Product Development, Founder and CTO of GP87 Manufacturing. He designed and built his first snowboard with his Grandpa(GP) in 1987 and opened his first factory, Yaqui Snowboards, in Northern California in 1990. He began consulting with new Chinese snowboard factories in 2002 and moved to China in 2005 to continue OEM Snowboard Manufacturing. He founded GP87 in 2014 with an all new American Management Team.

Eric Luthardt is an award winning board shaper, Designer at GP87 and industry veteran who has worked with brands like Ride and Flow among many others.

Ben Schwitz, CEO of GP87, Inc. and Telos Snowboards, is an avid snowboarder and marketing professional, specializing in branding and international trade.

And lastly myself as Brand Manager. With more than 30 years standing sideways building brands across the world and holding many different roles in the snowsports industry from distributor in the early 90s for brands like Apocalypse, Crazy Banana, Rad Air, A- Snowboards to CEO of Method Magazine and running my own snowboard travel/guiding business Vistas Tours.

Please explain your distribution strategy.
We are all old school snowboarders that grew up going to snowboard shops and dreaming of the days we'd save up newspaper delivery money to buy a new snowboard or in Dan's case buying materials to build one. Brick and mortar shops are part of our history and many shop owners are now close friends, so we want to

support them as much as possible. We were one of, maybe, the first brands in history to have a distributor before we even had a product to sell because we wanted to build something that would support the distributors and core shops that took the risks and helped build the snowboard industry to what it is today. We've already set up some core demo shops in the USA and France aside from the shops already carrying our boards in Japan. We intend to build on this model as we grow to new markets. Of course, it is now 2019 and a company can't survive and thrive without online marketing, sales and social media, so we still project a high percentage of direct sales through these channels as well to reach the broader worldwide market.

What do you find important about the European market?
The European market is important to most, if not all snowsports brands because it is the birthplace of snowsports. So many historic brands started in Europe and for a brand like Telos Snowboards - the new kid on the block - to be able to show the world that, "yes, we build our boards in China, but our quality will compete with any brands produced in Europe, or the rest of the world for that matter." 

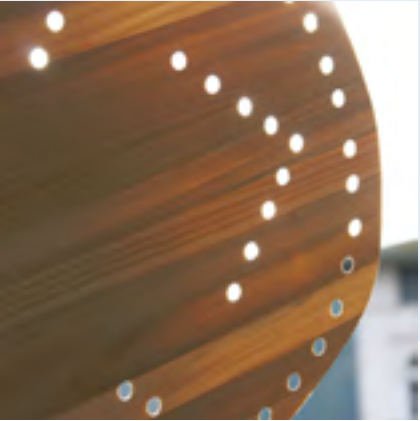
Read an extended version of this profile online.

BUDDY BUDDY

German-based BuddyBuddy are producing boards that are extremely strong, maintain their pop and don't delaminate thanks to their patented AnchorCoreTechnology. All while maintaining rigorous sustainability practices. SOURCE speaks with Sales & Distribution Manager, Rainer Soelch to find out more.

How did BuddyBuddy come about?
Mike (Gelbricht) had this method of connecting the top sheet and fibres directly - similar to how a suspension bridge works. The first tests proved that anchoring the upper and lower chords through the core increased breaking strength by up to 50%, so we decided to make a series of test snowboards and longboards with our ACT construction. The only producer who was able to meet the required quality was GST - so we made the deal with them. The boards performed better than expected - even the experienced GST technicians were amazed by the results of their tests. However, with GST's decision to discontinue snowboard production in Europe in July 2015, Mike was left with an ingenious product, but no means of production. It sounds like a fairy tale that a customer of his shop (Brettladen, Dresden), was so convinced by the boards that they invested in a workshop for producing ACT. Preparations began in 2016, and in the spring of 2017 we started producing longboards in our workshop in the Erzgebirge. The investor is now our Managing Director, Mike the technical visionary, Christian Kaden is the in-house Manager, and I take care of distribution and sales.

Where do your boards differ from those of other manufacturers?
Our laminate is constructed three-dimensionally - we call this patented technology



AnchorCoreTechnology (ACT). We pierce the core in predefined areas, then tie and connect the reinforcing strands in specific directions, positioning "anchor points" depending on the desired outcome. This "anchoring" of the top sheet and fibres has been proven to achieve:

1. 50% better break values - therefore we can build much thinner and lighter, without the risk of delamination.


2. 25% higher dynamics, e.g., significantly more snap. We can't see any reduction in the flex of boards that have been in use for four seasons.

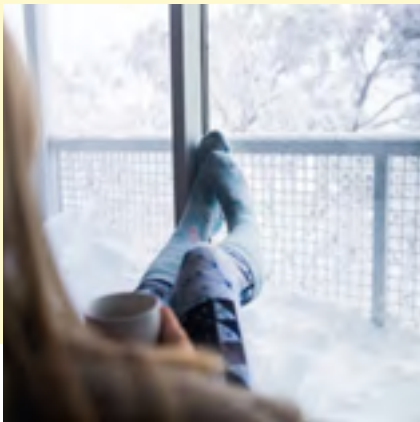
3. 70% more effective shock absorption and thus a smoother ride. In addition, we have set ourselves the goal of taking all steps to make us as environmentally friendly and resource-saving as possible. This is essential if we want to give the generations after us some quality of life. But communicating about sustainability (without actually doing anything) because it has become an indispensable marketing tool, and acting sustainably are two different worlds

What is your contribution to sustainability?
The lifespan: Regarding flex, our boards do not seem to change at all with regular use. As long as they're not tuned too often, or are destroyed by misuse, their performance remains like new. To back this up, we give a 5-year guarantee on delamination. We have customers coming into stores saying that our boards should be more expensive, considering the quality and durability they offer. Raw materials and semi-finished products: We do not use components from overseas, let alone transport our boards to other markets around the world - each material at originates in Europe, and if possible, it is sourced regionally. We use bio-based adhesives, the only plastic parts we currently use are the sidewalls, which



are recycled. The laminate fabrics are mineral and thanks to ACT, we can completely do away with synthetic reinforcements, without sacrificing our superior physical values. We are continuously working on how to improve our footprint and are in the test phase with laminates made from 100% renewable fibres and 65% organic adhesives. But the pure product is only one aspect when it comes to sustainability criteria: How much energy is applied to manufacture the product? We have hydropower on our doorstep, can entirely avoid emission-intensive products such as carbon fibres that have not yet been disposed of, and we are aiming for the shortest possible freight routes with our suppliers.

What is your vision?
The benefits of ACT are undeniable, the industry is hungry for innovation and we deliver the technology to produce greater performance and durability for boardsports products. If the advantages of ACT are applied in all areas, we have made a very significant contribution to better the energy balance in our industry - and if we achieve this with fabrics made from renewable fibres in combination with pure bioadhesives, the vision will become a reality. 



ROJO

“Born in the Mountains, Lives by the Ocean” is the mantra for snow brand Rojo, who design outerwear for woman, by woman. With over 30 years in the industry and based in Australia, they’re now increasing their focus on Europe this winter. We speak with Marketing Manager, Michael Belfrage to see how they plan to do so.

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

The Rojo brand started back in 1987 in an Australian snow resort when two friends shared their passion for hand painted custom headwear. Following their original mantra "Born in the Mountains, Lives by the Ocean" all styles continue to be lovingly created down to the smallest detail for female riders. Today, Rojo is available all over the world - from women's and girl's outerwear to base layers, mid layers, gloves, socks and goggles.

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

Dave Salveson: CEO - Partner in business and life with founder Jo Buckle and general director of daily traffic.
Jo Buckle: Founder and Head Designer - Working with the design team daily Jo continues to ensure that her brand is true to its roots in every garment, every season.
Robyn Carter: Designer - With a vast background in active sports design Robyn works with the team to create seasonal direction and design innovation.
Michael Belfrage: Marketing Manager - A passionate snowboarder with a strong background in the action sports & lifestyle industry.
Michi Mohr: National Sales Manager Europe - Big wave surfer, keen snowboarder and all round brand representative heading up Europe from Spain.

What is the company ethos?
"Born in the Mountains, Lives by the Ocean." Rojo designs outerwear for women by women.

What marketing are you running?

Rojo's Winter 2019 visual brand story, "Our Tribe" is an intimate view into the life of our team riders and designers and how they live the Rojo lifestyle. We continue to support numerous female athletes across winter sports from Olympians to soul riders and cross-country skiers as well as B4BC and Chicks with Stix events.

Our brand marketing focus for Winter 2018/19 in the European market has been increasing brand awareness and working with our retail partners with in store product knowledge events and strategic campaigns throughout their online platforms.

Could you give us some info on how and where you produce?

We work with a number of strategic partners across Asia which have been with us since the brand's inception. Rojo is committed to ensuring that all production factories we use are socially compliant. We endeavour to protect the health, safety, and rights of employees, the community and environment in which they operate, and the lives and communities of workers in their supply and distribution chains. Each season we are striving to improve our environmental impact, which is a committed and continued effort.

What makes Rojo stand out from the crowd?

Rojo is designed for women by women. Our design team is focused on making each garment unique and special so that when our customer wears the garment she feels the same way. We achieve this by using specialized engineered fabrics, luxe linings, elevated details, trims and beautiful artwork. All of this is rounded out with technical features that are developed in to our classic and timeless silhouettes to create a coordinated story throughout the line.

Please explain your product lines and the cuts and shapes you're working with?

The Winter 2019 range see Rojo continuing to blend the perfect mix of timeless femme and fashion. We have expanded our base layer offering to include some beautiful new silhouettes including a slouchy funnel neck, a printed hoodie and some great new fabrics. We have also introduced a slim

line bib to the outerwear offering which really compliments the base layer.

Which tradeshowson-snow do you plan to attend for 18/19?

SIA Trade Show - Australia, USA
ISPO - Germany

What do you see for the future of your company?

Rojo has had a solid retail following across Australia and NZ for over 30 years now, for Winter 2018/19 we have expanded our distribution into Europe through core snow specific retailers via bricks & mortar and online channels. We are currently exploring opportunities within the North American market for Winter 2019/20 with announcements to be made soon.

What do you see for the future of the industry?

The future is alive and well, brand alignment to our core specific sports and engagement with our customers through different retail mediums is key to growth for the industry. It is also important that our industry strives to be socially aware from a compliance and environmental point of view, including being mindful of cost accessibility to ensure participation growth with snowboarding and skiing. 🌱

WE CELEBRATE WINTER GEARS

SNOWBOARD COVERS



8321



8321

SKIBAG



7020



7048



SKI WHEELIE

SNOWBOARD BAG



8110



8140



HEATABLE BOOT BACKPACK



DO MORE, BE MORE, SEE MORE

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NEW PRODUCTS

01 - BENT METAL'S COR-PRO BINDING

The COR-PRO is BMBW's new all mountain binding that is ready to get aggro when you feel the urge. Kitted with a 7/10 flex boosted Magnesium Fiber Carbon Stringer matrix Drive Plate and a new highback for direct energy transfer and added precision when things get dicey. A new Grip Form toe strap with a secondary flexible panel forms to any boot.
bentmetal.com



02 - SAXX'S VOLT MEN'S UNDERWEAR

The Volt featuring the BallPark Pouch is Saxx's newest performance underwear style in the brand's boldest prints yet. The patented pouch design offers chafe- and contact-free support by using a 3D hammock-shaped pouch and mesh panels to keep everything in its place. With moisture-wicking and anti-odour material, the Volt is cut from a new breathable, lightweight mesh. It features a Three-D Fit™, Flat Out Seams™ and an anti-roll waistband.
saxxunderwear.com

02



03 - 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

03



04 - PRO-TEC CLASSIC HELMET

Proven protection, proven style. A team favourite across every sport, the original Pro-Tec Classic helmet is now officially certified for snow, skate, and bike use. This helmet features removable ear pads with neck curtain and three-sport certification to make sure you can use this helmet year-round. It also boasts our new Pro-Tec heat-sealed liner, comfort chinstrap cover, and rear goggle clip.
protecbrand.com

04



05 - NOW BRIGADA BINDING

The Brigada is the latest addition to the NOW women's line up. This pure freestyle bindings is versatile, nimble and playful and like all NOW bindings, the Brigada is equipped with their award winning Skatetech for more power to the edges, less foot fatigue and true dampening, so perfect for all you ladies.
now-snowboarding.com

05



NEW PRODUCTS

06 - RESTUBE PFD (PERSONAL FLotation DEVICE)

It's the smallest certified PFD on the market. The Restube PFD falls into the category of swimming aids and offers maximum freedom of movement in combination with buoyancy for all water sports activities. Thanks to its DIN standard, it can be used wherever there are legal regulations.
restube.com

07 - SPARK R&D ARC PRO SPLITBOARD BINDING

The Arc Pro features all the same great assets as Spark's standard Arc bindings, but they are tuned up with premium materials and custom versions. They feature carbon reinforced nylon in the highbacks, full Pebax® plastics for the straps, ladders and adjusters, 7075 aluminium heel loops, 7 custom made screws and hardware pieces, and lastly, hollowed out steel pivot pins to shave a few more grams.
sparkrandd.com

08 - AIRHOLE 5 PANEL TECH HAT

The 5 Panel is part of our new hat collection that combines technical fabrics with functional headwear and our patented Airhole technology. We combine a classic 5 Panel hat with a built in neck protector and facemask to keep the elements at bay. This style has been designed to wear the facemask either in front for full face protection, or tucked behind to wear as a technical hat.
airholefacemasks.com

09 - PICTURE CALGARY BAG

Made from 50% Recycled polyester and 50% Polyester this 26L pack features Adjustable vertical snowboard carry, Shovel & probe pocket, Ergonomic shoulders straps and hipbelt with equipment carrier. Adjustable strenum strap, Picture heatmolded back panel and Goggle pocket. It offers quick access to safety equipment and is Hydration system compatible. Picture is a Fair Wear Foundation membership
picture-organic-clothing.com

10 - DEELUXE GROUND CONTROL BOOT

Take back the slopes: The Deeluxe Ground Control revolutionizes carving. This fresh design provides the power and precision of a hard boot, while still delivering the enduring comfort that makes a softboot so appealing. Developed with input from both our alpine and free-style team riders, this boot delivers the best of both worlds. Own the slopes with the Ground Control.
deeluxe.com

11 - BBCO'S DOCKER BEANIE

The Docker range of headwear sets the mark for BBCo's new sustainable range of headwear. The Dockers beanies are made with 100% Merino lambs wool spun in Ireland and dyed using European REACH standards, the yarn is sourced from non mulesed supplier's and the hat itself is made in England. Look out for the introduction of eco fibre Polylna for new 2019 ranges.
bbcoheadwear.com

06



07



08



09



10



11



EASY
SET-IT AND
FORGET-IT

INTRODUCING THE NEW FENIX SPEED-ENTRY SYSTEM

Set-it and forget-it means always benefiting from the perfect and consistent tightness of your straps, and no hassling with ratchets in the snow. Flow PowerStraps are 3D-shaped and cover a larger surface of your foot. This results in more control over your snowboard and better energy transfer into your turns.

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NEW PRODUCTS

12 - BBCO'S HOLSTER CAP

The Holster 5 Panel caps are constructed from heavy duty British made wax cotton, water resistant with real leather trim and accessories. Removable side holster converts the cap from work wear to street wear efficiently with a magnetic side attachment. Also available in Yorkshire tweed wool. bbcoheadwear.com

13 - NORTHWAVE DECADE BOOT

Comes with new 3D rubber reinforcements to make it bulletproof. Thanks to the new spats, its waterproofness is assured by a neoprene material that prevents snow, ice and water getting stuck on the tongue and eventually penetrating the boot. It's equipped with the new Biomap asymmetrical thermoformed tongue for a more progressive flex and the CAB5 heel retention system for a secure foot lock.

northwavesnow.com

14 - AIRHOLE AIRHOOD INSULATED

The Airhood Packable is a new addition to the Airhole collection and has been designed to provide the best protection possible. The new shape combines our ergonomic Airtube with a hood that packs away into the neck. An elasticated top ensures a comfortable fit that contours to the face to seal out the elements. The Airhood Packable is the perfect compact, portable and protective facemask for active adventurers.

airholefacemasks.com

15 - DRAKE SUPERSPORT BINDING

This all mountain binding has been supercharged with new features: including a superlight weight Carbon Composite highback for more direct response, asymmetrically designed to be anatomically compatible with every calf. A new overinjected Grandmaster Strap embraces the boot comfortably with no painful pressure points and the new Easy-Entry System makes getting in and out of your bindings a breeze.

northwavesnow.com

16 - BRETHREN APPAREL THUG RUGS

The original cut. Ultimate face protection from the harshest of elements, whether that be from the most hellish weather or the cruellest hangover. Specifically designed to be worn with a helmet; whether you rock it over or under the bucket, the Thug Rug has your back. Available in 8 new colourways.

brethren-apparel.com

17 - PACSAFE DRY LITE 30L BACKPACK

Keep your gear dry while you get dirty. This 30L anti-theft backpack is built using water-resistant ripstop and a lockable, roll-top closure to protect your things from weather and worry. Perfect for damp sports fields, packed pools or work commutes. Stay active with peace of mind. Available in 2 colours Black and Lakeside Blue.

pacsafe.com

12



13



14



15



16



17



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CARBON

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Demir Tullia V.

NEW PRODUCTS

18 - SOLITE 6MM CUSTOM PRO SURFBOOT

Their flagship boot for cold water conditions (-10°C), the 6MM Custom Pro is the lightest, highest-performing, warmest boot on the market. The 6MM Custom Pro gives you barefoot-like board control in the most frigid, mid-winter conditions. Forget about stumbling over your toes on takeoffs, the 6MM Custom Pro lets you focus on turns and tubes. soliteboots.com



18

19 - DRYROBE ADVANCE LONG SLEEVE

Designed to let you get out there whatever the weather, Dryrobe enables you to get changed anywhere, whilst keeping you warm and protecting you from the elements. The synthetic lambs wool lining allows for re-use multiple times without the Dryrobe ever feeling wet or cold. The world's most advanced change robe is available in multiple sizes and colours. dryrobe.com



19

20 - SWITCHBACK HALLDOR PRO BINDING

Updated last season to the revolutionary Aeron Base, this binding is built for serious riding. The forward lean adjustable, calf cupping Wrapback highbacks ensure full support whether you're sending it in the park or dropping into backcountry lines while the ultra plush Eames straps comfortably hold you in place. Like always, Halldor's bindings perfectly match his pro model Lobster board graphics. switchbackbindings.com



20

21 - BRETHREN APPAREL DRUID HOODS

Designed for days lost in the steep and deep, the Druid Hood cut offers an all new 'Chin Wrap' and shaped shoulders giving you a total seal against the snow. Tuck the back end down your jacket, leave no gap between your face and goggles and you are ready for every faceshot coming my friend. Available in 8 new colourways. brethren-apparel.com



21

22 - PACSAFE VIBE 25L BACKPACK

Spacious and sporty, the Vibe 25L anti-theft backpack is made for city exploration. There's space to fit your essentials including a 13in laptop sleeve, adjustable straps, and sternum and removable hip belt for on-the-go comfort. Secure it all with smart zipper security, slashguard panels and more, for security while you have fun. Available in 5 colours: Granite Melange, Jet Black, Goji Berry, Hydro and Grey Camo. pacsafe.com



22

23 - HEAD THE OPERATOR BOOT

This is the solution for the winter, where consumers do not focus solely on one sport anymore, but split their interests into a variety of activities. This is driven by changes in the global climate, where the start of the season is not as predictable as it was. The Operator is one boot for all of those activities, offering variety and flexibility to consumers. In addition, the Operator is equipped with Boa® Fit System so no more fumbling with laces in the cold, easy to handle and simply looks great. head.com



23



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NEW PRODUCTS

24 - DAKINE TEAM MISSION 25L PACK

Team rider Elias Elhardt's appreciation for the natural world comes alive in the Team Mission 25L pack. Featuring muted tones with a hand-dyed look, this pack has the space you need for in-bounds and through-the-gate missions. The clamshell design has a dedicated pocket for your shovel and probe plus a main compartment for skins and essential backcountry gear. A fleece-lined pocket protects goggles or sunglasses, and there's a padded laptop sleeve for the days when you're stuck in town. dakine.com/en-eu

25 - STANCE NORA VASCONCELLOS SOCKS

For most professional athletes, their sport is their only outlet, but not for Punk & Poet and world champion skateboarder, Nora Vasconcellos. Nora's days are spent not only conquering concrete terrain, but also surfing, singing karaoke, and expressing her creative energy through pen and paper. This Spring, Stance showcases Nora's multifaceted personality by featuring her whimsical creature art sprinkled with pastel hues. stance.com

26 - GIRO JACKSON HELMET

The Jackson is all about design and style. Its modern profile utilizes the "Passive Aggressive" Venting System, inspired by the aerodynamic airflow of high-end autos. The look is finished with a slight brim and subtle lines for seamless compatibility with Giro goggles. The helmet features Mips Technology, ultra lightweight construction, dialled In-Form 2 Fit system and for the first time on helmets, the liner is now equipped with Polartec Power grid for wicking efficiency and Breathability. giro.com

27 - UNION ULTRA BINDING

A flagship model and team favourite, the Ultra showcases the full arsenal of Union Technology. Revolutionary Forged Carbon response, working in harmony with their innovative shock-absorbing Vaporlite Foam provide the comfort and performance that have to be ridden to understand. unionbindingcompany.com

28 - MIZU 360 ADVENTURE PURIFIER

The 360 Adventure Purifier removes virus, bacteria, and cysts along with many other particulates, so you can confidently fill up from nearly any fresh water source you can find. At just 1.4 ounces, the 360 Adventure Purifier is heavy on purification and small on weight, letting you pack lighter and go further. mizulife.com



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MARKET INSIGHT

Brexit. There you go .. I've got it out of my system right at the start. In the last article I noted "by the time you read this it will hopefully all be over". Ever the optimist. Here we are in early January, just 12 weeks from Brexit, and it's a long, long way from over. According to UK Media, not to say UK Politicians, you would not know that there was anything else in the world apart from Brexit – perhaps with a little Donald Trump thrown in for good measure. I am not sure which I dislike most. Both cause stress beyond measure and both are no good for the world. Luckily one will hopefully fade away in a few years time (or sooner) whilst the other could be with us for decades to come. Will we? Won't we? Hard? Soft? Or could it even be 'remain' – at this juncture it's anyone's guess... and it is causing more than its fair share of anguish businesses – of whatever colour or nationality.

So I am turning to a couple of UK Europeans for comment. Tobias is the snowboard and skate buyer for SurfDome, now part of the Internet Fusion group – IF for short. He's a Swede who has lived in the UK for over 20 years. He's survived the transition at SurfDome to IF. So how is it and how was the transition? "It's good – it's all settled down and it's really good." Tobias now also buys other categories so increasing his workload. "That does not worry me - I love rising to the challenge - I enjoy it more. My main focus is snow and skate - perfect for me. A slightly slow start but it's picked up a lot recently and I'm really happy with how things are going. Winter hardware is bang on track. Goggles and helmets are still really important and will continue to grow. Skate is good and we're seeing a new generation entering the sport and, in particular, more girls which is really good. Skate is good"

Will the Olympics help or hinder skate? "It's fine with me. It will help with the public eye. Those factions who do not like it will still go and do what they do. It will bring in some big companies who will push it, promote it and pump money into it... and then go away again. All fine by me"

What about bricks & mortar – do you think IF will go that way? "That's above my pay grade – I simply don't know. From a personal view I would love it – I am sure there is still room for B&M stores." So all in all happy? "Yeah - no sweat... well...my only sweat is Brexit and what happens at the end of March – that's really the only thing giving me cause for concern. Everything else is under control."

Gus from Board Basement has been in the UK for 11 years and also hails from Sweden. So how are things? "Uh OK" – said with a bit of caution. "I cannot believe what is going on. This Brexit thing is ridiculous. As a Swede I didn't get a say in what is happening but I am really sad about it all. It also appears to me that everyone in the industry is nervous – distributors and retailers alike."

So, apart from Brexit how is it? "Well it's OK but slower than I would like. I think that, perhaps due to the nerves, there is much more of a race to the bottom spurred on by Black Friday. We've got retail competitors offering discounts on products that have not even been received in store. Incredible. We had to make a decision whether to participate and we decided to keep out of it. A good decision I think."

So how are you differentiating yourself? "We value our service to customers. Sure we based the original concept of the business on old stock at the right price but it's all evolved considerably - people may be surprised by just how much kit we sell at full price. It's our great service that enables us to guide customers through what can be a difficult buying process. We have to add value

and it is our knowledge and customer service that sets us apart."

Looking ahead to the 'buy in' season how does Gus feel? "I would be silly not to be a little cautious and pull back a little and we will definitely not be trigger happy... certainly not at the moment." I certainly understood the sentiment although, as a distributor it was not music to my ears.

Someone who has been running a Bricks and Mortar store for more than 20 years is Ben from Big Dreams (Wareham, English South Coast). Ben appeared more interested in the fact that I was calling him from the mountains of Austria than in my dismal attempt to write this article. "How is the snow? Is it as good as I've heard?" The simple answer was yes. I was now in Montafon for the Smith Optics Conference and the snow was... well... amazing.

Dragging Ben back from his dream (excuse the pun) I managed to get him to comment on business. "So far it's been a soft goods year. Hardware has only just started moving in the past few days. Not really sure why but that's just the way it is. I guess the mild weather has not helped but recent snow has got people thinking... Boots are the quietest for three years, boards are slow. Helmets are good and goggles are so so. This all makes it really hard to think about going into buying mode. Hopefully in a few weeks time it will be a very different picture."

Whilst talking to Ben he mentioned the shop snowboard trip. "We usually go away with a small group but this year is a bit more organised and we've got 45 going away later this month. Could have got a lot more but I want to make sure we do it right. Looks like we may even run another trip later in the season."

So that is surely a good sign. "It is, people are still going to go away – that's their priority but I think that Brexit is having a major impact on confidence. In fact I know it is." There we have it... another B word reference. It seems to becoming ever more invasive!

All that said Ben was, as always, really upbeat and cheerful. "I'm optimistic – I have to be. We're a good old fashioned shop offering solid advice and I do get the feeling that people who have perhaps had a bad experience online are turning back to places like Big Dreams."

Is that Ben, like me, is ever the optimist. I really don't know. I'll finish this little missive with a personal comment on Brexit. I am very aware that there are many people that do not share my opinion – sorry.

I would like to apologise to my EU fellow citizens. Brexit is a cockup of huge magnitude and completely unnecessary and divisive. I find it all so sad that the global village in which we live is building walls. That said I am confident that the UK and EU will get through this and that we can all flourish and prosper – it may just take a little longer than we thought. And in the meantime there's a lot of work to do... and it's snowing.

GORDON WAY

UK

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FRANCE

SWISS

ITALY

GERMANY

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As per usual, the inner cities were buzzing in the run-up to Christmas, but this can't hide the fact that one trend remains and grows year on year: More and more people order their goods online. However, a lot of these subsequently go back: It's not unusual that about 25 to 50% of purchases are returned to the online retailer.

As a consequence, German parcel services are going to increase their prices by about 5 – 10% again.

But as the trend for digitalisation progresses, even high street shops are finding ways of benefitting from the new technologies. There's a lot of things currently being trialled at point of sale: push messages, interactive screens, RFID/Bluetooth tagging, touchscreen mirrors, changing rooms with online connections, interactive window displays, mobile payment solutions for NFC-enabled smartphones or even paying without an actual till! But not everything that bursts onto the digital scene is here for the long-term, and even the digital age requires a calm approach. Claudia Helming, founder of Dawanda (online marketplace), found this out the hard way. Her business folded in 2018, despite a positive forecast and despite Dawanda being seen by many as Germany's model start-up. While this is nothing to do with the action sports scene as such, it clearly shows that even online retailers with a great turnover have massive problems when trying to turn a lucrative profit.

Even 25 years of experience in retail and a new shop concept with a Cocaines/Lebowski café on site could not prevent the closure of the well-established Landshut skate and snowboard shop. The founders are calling it a day, and they're even leaving the business altogether. One of the reasons behind that is the fact that there's less and less footfall in smaller towns. Soaring leases for retail spaces in top locations and rising wages as well as crippling additional costs put a strain on businesses, while at the same time customers are staying away from the shops. Moreover, it's increasingly difficult to find and retain staff who have sound knowledge of snowboarding, can give advice and are also good salespeople. Other industries tend to offer better pay, plus retail doesn't have the most appealing working hours for employees. But when Sport Scheck issued their staff with tablets, they contributed an additional 10 Million Euros to the turnover, according to the retailer. This clearly shows that there's an advantage to using online technology even on the shop floor.

Joerg Schramm of Ride Snowboards undertook a shop tour in November and heard a lot of positive things about hardware sales from the retailers in Bavaria. He thinks that the downward trend has finally been broken and that snowboarding is showing a positive upwards trend again.

This positive outlook is shared by Marco Reck of Korua, as they have had a fairly mad time recently. "We can see Korua penetrating the market, the brand is slowly becoming a household name. Our videos are making a real impact and we did good trade even before it started snowing properly. There's a positive trend of small shops that would normally order between 7 and 10 boards altogether. They are now reordering the same number already, and some of them are even doing that before Christmas. Retail is livelier than last year, and even then we were fairly happy. We definitely expect an increase of orders in the coming pre-ordering season and we'll offer more depth with some models and will also consider different lengths. Plus there'll be the odd additional highlight, of course."

MARKET INSIGHT

Tobias Bär of Love-snowboarding.com has even opened a pop-up store in Tett nang, at the spur of the moment. "I felt that there wasn't a proper snowboard store anywhere round Lake Constance anymore, so I decided to take matters into my own hands. It's not something I really have time for, as I work in distribution and also own a bakery, but I've always enjoyed being on the shop floor. That's why I decided to find the time for opening a snowboard pop-up on my own premises at the beginning of December. I sensed that people round here would appreciate competent advice on snowboards and I was proven right. I have now extended the run of the pop-up as it has been so successful. The basic idea is that people can book an advice session with me. This news has already spread like wildfire and been passed on by word of mouth. It even attracts people who have to travel a long way to get here." He believes that the region needs a specialised snowboard shop as most of the multisport stores can't or don't want to properly present the sport.

The private showroom concept of Boarders Project in Hersbruck has been around since 2014. "It's more a secret shop than a pop-up really and the owner runs it as a kind of hobby. There's no proper opening times, you make appointments instead and there's a flexible approach to what this comprises. That may even include a little session on the in-house mini ramp. The season's been good so far. There's a lot of people looking for second or even third boards, whether they are focussed on powder or looking for a cambered board. There's also a lot of people who are buying their first set-up, don't know anything about the selection process and have no idea about the range available and what to go for. And you may have already figured from what I told you that I sell mainly hardware. I do offer a few different brands, but when it comes to boards and bindings, I focus on one brand that I'm fully convinced is the best. My showroom is only 35 square metres, which is not very big. More often than not, I will directly order a product that is suitable for a customer. I believe that a lot of customers come to me because they want independent advice and have the products explained to them in clear, easy-to-understand terms that make sense to them. On top of that, I have a lot of regulars and people come to me after I am recommended to them. I did run a normal shop for quite a while, after all. I'm not dependent on turnover, so Christmas doesn't have that much of an impact on me. I'd rather say that the impact of the start of the season and the first glacier openings and snowfalls is being felt more. For the 2019/20 season I'm already planning to expand my range again and I expect it to go well."

For Martin Dockenfuss of Pivot Distribution, the decks and complete boards business went well, better even than in 2017. Shops were reluctant when it came to ordering longboards and cruisers. Surfskates are picking up, though, but it's too early to talk about a boom. Shops that that dedicate their efforts to that product are reporting good sales, but it requires a lot of guidance and advice. There wasn't great trade at Christmas, but this has been the case for a few years now. Compared to the spring and summer months, hardware sales have recorded small seasonal declines. The outlook for deck and complete sales is encouraging. Unfortunately at the same time, a number of well-established shops still closed their doors forever in 2018 and others have already announced that they will follow in 2019.

Things are looking slightly different for the SUP segment. For Axel Wallem of Boards & More 2018 was the best year in the now eight-year history of Fanatic SUP. "Of course, a lot of it had to do with the great summer that we had last year. We also have a strong network of retailers, focussing on a few brands and we're doing well. It's looking good for this year, too."

JOCHEN BAUER





SINCE 1967

Beth Leighfield

Romain Farthouat



info@gul.com

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The end of 2018 was strongly marked by the “Gilets Jaunes” movement, which had an impact on the economy and on consumption in France. The Economy Minister, Bruno Le Maire, estimates that the consequences of the movement were 0.1 point of GDP in the fourth quarter of 2018 while Banque de France valued it at 0.2 points.

This movement hit at a critical period in terms of consumption at the end of year festivities and a chunk of this is probably not recoverable, especially when it comes to tourist spending. The majority should be recovered in 2019 over the course of the next two months through two channels: a part of consumption will be delayed and another will be substituted from traditional commerce to electronic commerce. Meanwhile, household confidence is in free-fall. Last November this had returned to the same level as the start of 2015, with the French regarding their buying power at its lowest in four years. Bit by bit, the French economy is slowing down and finding its cruising speed, i.e. pretty slow. To combat the drop in household investment, France, much like most of her European neighbours, has opted for budget support. We’re not sure that this economic policy works during periods of slowdown if it’s mostly structural. If the forecasts from Insee are confirmed for the first half of the year, and if in the second GDP grows by 0.4% per quarter, growth in 2019 will be just 1.3%.

So how did the end of this year 2018 go for our Retailers? Did the social and economic climate have an impact on traditionally good end-of-year sales in shops? For most of the shops interviewed, the months of October and November were pretty decent. Everyone agrees that the month of December was pretty much down compared to last year. At Reves D’Isles on the Ile de Ré, Marina declared a pretty quiet Christmas period. She explains: “We weren’t directly affected by the social movements here on the island, which saw good tourist numbers during the festive period but spending was more focussed on accommodation and restaurant commerce than on leisure commerce.” It was a similar scenario at her neighbour Cocoa Gliss on Ile d’Oléron where Frédéric adds. “we can see an increase in sales in November compared to the previous one, undoubtedly linked to the Black Friday effect which is growing bigger each year but unfortunately we were down in December.” He goes on to say: “This year it was the ‘Gilets Jaunes’ as well as the holidays coming really late for our coastal shops with just 3 days of tourists before the 24th of December.”

The same was felt in Hossegor at Picture Store. Stéphane told us: “Despite the great wave conditions, the month of December was pretty average in terms of visits and sales in the shop.” For the urban shops and most notably in Paris like at Au Spot, it seems like the social movements and the protests had a real impact on sales and customer numbers in shops. Christian says: “the month of December wasn’t very good compared to previous years while October and November were pretty good”, he adds: “The Gilets Jaunes protests every Saturday in Paris had a big impact on numbers and sales in our shop, which were pretty poor for this time of year. However, it seems as though customers opted for online purchases because we noticed a significant increase in online sales compared to those made in the shop.” On the Mediterranean coast, at Aloha in Six Fours, the same thing happened, with figures for December down, Julien tells us: “Despite a little surge for the Christmas holiday, December was pretty quiet. The lack of waves and wind combined with the social climate didn’t exactly help

MARKET INSIGHT

sales in shop.” In the resorts it was a little bit different and in 2 Alps especially at Picture Store, previously One Love where Stéphane says: “It was really good weather and even though the snow was quite old, the snow park was firing and the shop saw high affluence at Christmas and New Year.” The same goes for Chamonix and Zero G where Martin confirms: “The sun was out at the end of year period and even though the snow wasn’t as fresh and deep as last year, visitation numbers and sales were pretty good and in line with last year.” While the results were pretty positive in the Alps, in the Pyrenees the lack of snow at the end of 2018 wasn’t good for the shops. Stéphane from Picture Store confirms this from his Hossegor shop where his clientele hesitated to kit themselves out because of the lack of snow accumulation across the whole Pyrenean range.

As for equipment, for coastal shops it was logically neoprene products that had high success rates at the end of the year. According to the shops we asked, there wasn’t any particular difference between the brands. To this you can add all the other neoprene accessories like gloves, booties and cagoules, which surfers tend to renew more often and with participant numbers growing each year, this segment of products tends to be expanding. The surfboard segment has also enjoyed considerable sales at the end of this year and in all the different price categories. The good wave conditions and increase in winter participants year after year are undoubtedly the main explanations for this. The brands most mentioned are Channel Island, Lost, Venon and Torq. At Au Spot in Paris, however, there was a slowdown in sales of Stand Up Paddles for Christophe: “People are already mostly set up and don’t need to renew their equipment. For the clothing section, while the weather wasn’t very cold, the seasonal pieces sold quite well: jumpers, sweats, jackets and beanies took the lion’s share. All warm cotton garments, not necessarily for the deep cold, given the mild temperatures for the season. The brands that seemed to stand out in shops were most notably: Carrhart, Vissla, Picture, Volcom as well as Rhythm.

In resort at Zero G and Picture Store, no major change from last year. Versatile mid-range all mountain snowboards made up the biggest chunk of sales in shop. The most sought-after brands seemed to be Burton and Capita. Otherwise, bindings and boots ranges also saw good rates of sale. In clothing, technical jackets and pants and mid layers unsurprisingly had a good success rate at the end of this year, especially brands such as Picture, which seems to still be in favour with customers. Finally, all accessories such as gloves and goggles were logically amongst the best rates of sale for this winter. Customers tend to renew this type of product season after season and that was something directly reflected in shop sales.

So the start of Winter 2018/2019 was marked by a tense social climate in France. This played a part in visitations and direct, in-shop sales. A proportion of consumers lent more towards online purchases so shops with a window on the net were able to/knew how to benefit from that. Nevertheless, the boardsports world is populated by passionate enthusiasts and technical products and so it’s above all advice, the search for suitable equipment, in specific situations, experience or even product tests that customers come into shops for. Some of the shops we interviewed even talked about a spark in consumer conscience for the interest in favouring in-shop purchases and of a real return to shops in some cases. Could this be the start of a change of habit or is it still pretty marginal?

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frame making the performances long
lasting.

NORTHWAVE SPATS

Thanks to its neoprene material the
waterproofness is granted and this
elastic material allows to open the
tongue in the right way.

THERMOWELDED COMPONENTS

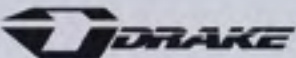
Built into the exterior of your boot, our
3D Shield guards against abrasion,
wear and tear, and will give your boot
extra reinforcement over its lifetime.

3D PAD

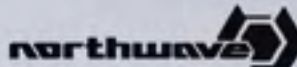
Its design is making the contact part
overinjected directly on the structural
frame making the performances long
lasting.

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MARKET INSIGHT

ITALY

FRANCE
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UK
SWISS

2018 is done and economically it was a year with a small growth in GDP, but not fantastic. Politically we had a lot of discussions regarding budgets, with the EU as the new government with the combination of 5stelle and Lega, who want to spend more money and need to raise more debts as planned to fulfil their election campaign promises.

One of them is to give a salary to the unemployed and to lower the tax pressure for small companies. Something the Italians are waiting for with baited breath, but the EU is scared that things could get out of control if it's not controlled well. Let's hope this brings a positive mood, as it would definitely help our economy to grow. At the time of writing, it would appear that now that the EU has finally given the green light to proceed.

Boardsport-wise the year was good for skateboard hardgood sales, and bad or even really bad for skate shoe sales as the traditional skate shoe silhouette has gone out of trend. The only 'skate' shoe brand doing well is Vans according to retailers across Italy. The rest is ruled by sneaker brands. Snowboarding had a season with slow sales as winter kicked in late and the time for selling full price is just too short as sales start early and older products are already heavily discounted when the season starts. Alex Ricci from Asa agency, who are agents for many different snow brands say that being active and doing events with the end consumers is crucial when you want to compete with online stores as service and customer support is the most important thing to do now when you want to survive.

SWISS

ITALY
FRANCE
GERMANY
UK

After a 17/18 winter with loads of snow, it's interesting to look at trends and their effects on the start of the 18/19 winter. It looks as though we can consider ourselves pretty happy with winter product sales this season, but as always, this might not apply to all of our retailers.

Good memories of the huge amounts of snow that fell last winter seem to have had a motivational effect on purchases from Swiss snowboard enthusiasts. Those who had lost faith in winter because of climate change seemed to rediscover their taste for altitude in 2018. Lots of people went up the mountain more often and seemed to rediscover their stoke for snowboarding. Shops recorded good sales from mid October until the end of the year, despite scarce snowfalls and pretty mild temperatures. The excitement is palpable and you can feel people's desire to update their equipment. Matthew Lee from the Doodah shops is happy with the increase in hardgoods sales – their shop in Bern is well up on last year, selling close to 200 boards in the final three months of the year.

If you scratch the surface of the market and look closer, you realise that the Swiss customer base has evolved somewhat over the years, and now it seems like the average customer age is higher than in the past. The bulk of the snowboard market is made up of riders from the first generation – those who started in the 90s, and who today are between thirty and fifty years old. At the same time, we can see that snowboard sales (notably in rental equipment) for children are growing, which is logical when you consider them as snowboarding's second generation

Lukas Höller from Sub shop in Bolzano says: "Skateboarding is still a big trend in Italy and also in fashion, while surfing is lacking a bit of that coolness it used to have a couple years ago. Skateboarding is present everywhere but unfortunately core stores can't really take advantage of it as distribution of many brands has gone very wide and stores also need to compete with many very well assorted online stores."

Many stores asked say that US based skate and streetwear labels will have a strong comeback in 2019 as kids are really asking for them. This also applies to new or small labels, because the kids of today are very active on social media and are very strict on what they want to buy and stores need to react and adapt to these requests if they wish to stay relevant.

Brands that stayed true to their roots, for example DLXSF, are again growing from season to season which is a great indicator for a healthy skate scene and a sign that kids do care about the brands who over the years have supported skateboarding. That's the case in both streetwear and hardgoods as kids are very interested in new upcoming brands as they want to stand out from the rest.

A wish from many retailers and even distributors is that they would like to see less B2C business from new brands as it takes a lot of business away from them, from which they would profit. Stores are still the true creators of the skateboarding scene. But many of them run their business close to the edge and are highly at risk of closing down as margins are very low especially in hardgoods (decks), whilst in streetwear they need to stock the hottest brands to make the difference when competing with online and big box stores.

Enough for now as finally winter has kicked in in January, it's only that sale starts too early. Happy 2019 everyone!

FRANZ JOSEF HOLLER

– the offspring of the first generation are emulating their parents. After talking to a good number of forty-somethings, we sensed a real return to snowboarding, with lots of people who swapped their boards for skis about ten years ago seeking to rediscover those magical feelings from snowboarding earlier in life, so they're strapping in again. This is something we heard a lot, not just in one or two isolated cases, but an actual trend. Going hand in hand with the "ageing" customer base, you can see a change in the types of boards sold. Freestyle, which a few years ago made up at least half of snowboard sales, is shrinking quickly in favour of all-mountain, carving and especially freeride boards which suit our alpine environment. Equally, the brands that are prioritising this kind of board now have the wind in their sails. Cases in point are Arbor, Jones, Never Summer and dedicated freeride sections within big brands' ranges such as Burton, Nitro and K2, who have all managed to play this out well by making boards that target this kind of rider. Others head more towards the carving side of things, which also suits our resorts and clientele perfectly, as is the case for Capita, Nitro, K2 and Swiss brands Nidecker and Korua.

Along the same line of thinking, you can imagine that the increase in splitboard sales is also credited to the evolution of today's less freestyle-orientated customer who is closer to nature and simply more mountain-focussed. This market itself is up on last year by 30% in Switzerland.

As for the bad news, we regret to announce the closure of the shop My Way Dreamstore in Payerne. After twelve years of true and faithful service, the shop founded by Jacky Pilloud and Mathieu Rebeaud is closing its doors. A big thanks to them for all they did for the area.

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FEBRUARY

**02
06** **ISPO**
MUNICH - GERMANY
[ISPO.COM](http://ispo.com) 

**02
08** **FREERIDE WORLDTOUR**
KICKING HORSE - CANADA
[FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM](http://freerideworldtour.com) 

**05
07** **AGENDA**
LAS VEGAS - USA
[AGENDASHOW.COM](http://agendashow.com) 

**22
28** **FREERIDE WORLDTOUR**
FIEBERBRUNN - USA
[FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM](http://freerideworldtour.com) 

**25
01** **SIGB SKI & SNOWBOARD TEST**
PILA - ITALY
[SIGB.ORG.UK](http://sigb.org.uk) 

MARCH

**02
08** **FREERIDE WORLDTOUR**
VALLNORD-ARCALIS - ANDORRA
[FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM](http://freerideworldtour.com) 

**03
04** **AIR + STYLE**
LOS ANGELES
[AIRANDSTYLE.COM](http://airandstyle.com) 

**11
13** **SPORT ACHAT**
LYON - FRANCE
[SPORTAIR.FR](http://sportair.fr) 

**13
17** **PILA VALLE D'AOSTA**
ROOKIE FEST - ITALY
[WORLDROOKIE.COM](http://worldrookie.com) 

**21
26** **BASEL WORLD**
BASEL - SWITZERLAND
[BASELWORLD.COM](http://baselworld.com) 

**23
31** **SWATCH FREERIDE
WORLDTOUR**
VERBIER - SWISS
[FREERIDEWORLDTOUR.COM](http://freerideworldtour.com) 


**25
30** **WORLD ROOKIE FINALS**
KITZSTEINHORN - ZELL AM SEE-
KAPRUN - AUSTRIA
[WWW.WORLDROOKIE.COM](http://www.worldrookie.com) 

APRIL

**17
27** **RIP CURL PRO**
BELLS BEACH - AUSTRALIA
[WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM](http://worldsurfleague.com) 

MAY


**08
09** **PERFORMANCE DAYS**
MUNICH - GERMANY
[PERFORMANCEDAYS.EU](http://performancedays.eu) 

**13
24** **BALI PRO**
BALI
[WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM](http://worldsurfleague.com) 

JUNE

**27
07** **MARGARET RIVER PRO**
AUSTRALIA
[WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM](http://worldsurfleague.com) 

**11
14** **PITTI UOMO**
FIRENZE - ITALY
[PITTIMAGINE.COM](http://pittimagine.com) 

**20
28** **OI RIO PRO**
BRAZIL
[WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM](http://worldsurfleague.com) 

JULY

**30
03** **OUTDOOR BY ISPO**
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**19
21** **ITALIAN SURF EXPO**
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[ITALIASURFEXPO.IT](http://italiasurfexpo.it) 



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