

BOARDSPORT

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EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

BIG WIG SHAPER JOHNNY CABIANCA

PUKAS RISE FROM THE ASHES

REGIONAL MARKET NEWS

THE RISE OF THE ACTION SPORTS PODCAST

#96 APRIL/MAY 2019 €5



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDES SURFBOARDS, FOAMIES, SUNGLASSES, SUP, UNDERWEAR, LONGBOARDS, WAKEBOARDING VESTS



JOHN JOHN
FLORENCE

EXCLUSIVE
COLLECTION



"This was a really fun project. We designed every feature with the traveling surfer in mind. I am pretty excited to roll my boardbag and luggage around the world with a simple attachment and one handle!" - JJF

DAKINE.COM

A black and white photograph capturing a moment in a surfboard workshop. On the left, John John Florence, with his characteristic curly hair, is focused on shaping a surfboard. On the right, Bob Hurley, wearing a baseball cap with 'Hurley PRO' and 'FLEXFIT' logos, is also working on a board. The workshop is filled with wood shavings and the shapes of several other surfboards in the background. The overall atmosphere is one of craftsmanship and dedication to the craft of surfboard building.

Hurley

JOHN JOHN FLORENCE

BOB HURLEY



THEY
FL  AT

THE COUNT



INTRODUCING OCEAN PACIFIC SPRING 19 COLLECTION

From the mountains to the beach, the city to the suburbs, Ocean Pacific is embodied in an authentic Californian laid-back lifestyle since 1972

HELLO SOURCE#96

Welcome to the new-look BoardSport SOURCE Magazine. We've been working hard on our sexy new magazine design to make sure we're beach-bod ready for summer 2019 and we have some 5 star content to celebrate with. Christening our new look Big Wig interviewee spot is Johnny Cabianca, the man who's made surfboards for the current world champ, Gabriel Medina for a decade. Dig in to page 36 to hear Johnny's thoughts on robots in surfboard shaping, find out why the Brazilian decided to set up shop in the Basque Country nearly 20 years ago and we hear his story of growing up with Medina's step-dad, Charles.

Staying in the Basque Country we speak to a company synonymous with surfboard manufacturing and retail. PUKAS are one of the

true greats of our industry and we catch up with the team nearly two years after the horrific fire that ripped through their factory, leaving them with no choice but to roll up their sleeves and start from scratch (p.20).

Just as PUKAS started a new chapter in their history, our media landscape has also ushered in a new dawn with the rise of the action sports podcast. The medium has filled a time of day where we are alone and hungry for content – commuting, driving, dog walking, gym etc - but without the ability to fully engage in our smart phone. We speak with three of our industry's finest podcasters to explore the hype (p.26).

Like our target audience, the retailer, here at SOURCE we're constantly looking to diversify our product offering as we strive to make hay while the sun shines. A new category for this issue is the inclusion of softboards (p.23), a former sub category of our surfboards trend report,

this product group has exploded in the past 18 months with OG brands such as Catch Surf and Softech now joined by a raft of new players in the game. Our Surf Editor, SW France-based David Bianic took charge of this new article for us and also penned our surfboard (p.15) and SUP (p.45) Retail Buyer's Guides for our first surf issue of 2019.

Also new for this issue, we debut our first ever Portuguese Market Insight, where we look at a surf market that's booming; having a direct impact on tourism and therefore the economy of this wave rich nation.

Here's to a prosperous summer with good waves, good weather and plenty of surf and skate.

Always Sideways
Harry Mitchell Thompson
Editor

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TEAM

Editor Harry Mitchell Thompson harry@boardsportsource.com	German Editor Natalia Maruniak tala@boardsportsource.com	Contributors Jokin Arroyo, Benoît Brecq, Gordon Way, Fabien Grisel, Franz Holler, David Bianic, Ruth Cutts, Oliver Connelly, Andres Delgado, Emily Adderson, Sissy Herant, Dana Miskulnig	To Subscribe boardsportsource.com subs@boardsportsource.com
Skate Editor Dirk Vogel dirk@boardsportsource.com	French Editor Marie-Laure Ducos ducos@boardsportsource.com		Publisher publisher@boardsportsource.com
Senior Snowboard Contributor Tom Wilson-North tom@boardsportsource.com	Graphic Design Adrien Ballanger ballanger@boardsportsource.com	Advertising & Marketing Clive Ripley clive@boardsportsource.com	Published by ESB 22 Friars Street, Sudbury Suffolk, CO10 2AA. UK
Senior Surf Contributor David Bianic david@boardsportsource.com	Proofreaders Natalia Maruniak, Marie-Laure Ducos, Sam Grant	Accounts Manager accounts@boardsportsource.com	Boardsport SOURCE is published bi-monthly © ESB. All Rights Reserved boardsportsource.com

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On the cover Pukas' Adur Letamendia surfing the Pukas Pegaso by Chris Christenson. Photo by Carles Medina



SPR Regular.
Alex Aulbach.

📷 Bryan Soderlind

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NEWS

#96

THE 2019 INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON MOUNTAIN & SNOW TOURISM: 17/18 SEASON POSTS 4TH BEST PARTICIPATION FIGURES SINCE YEAR 2000

The 17/18 season saw the 4th best year for attendance figures since the turn of the millenium and despite the Western World's figures being somewhat stagnant, Scandinavia has been performing well. The Southern Hemisphere just posted its best ever year, while China moves to number 3 worldwide in terms of number of national skiers behind the US and Germany. Interestingly, the Winter Olympics had no effect on S.Korea's snowsports riders, with the country's participation levels still on the decline.

KINC APPOINTED AS UK COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY FOR SOLE TECHNOLOGY

Sole Technology have appointed KINC as their new PR agency for etnies, és throughout the UK with the aim to drive etnies and és's presence in the streetwear fashion industry.

STEVE DOUGLAS ON REFORMING NEW DEAL SKATEBOARDS TO CELEBRA TE 30TH ANNIVERSARY

Skate industry heavyweight Steve Douglas is relaunching New Deal, the brand he launched with Paul Schmitt and Andy Howell back in the early 90s. Produced and distributed through Dwindle, New Deal will feature only artwork and models from their early 90s heyday alongside some exciting sounding marketing initiatives including re-release videos and an upcoming documentary. Steve says they'll throw a huge party slated in LA this September and Co-Founder Andy Howell has featured in this Spring's Supreme t-shirt drop.

WSL WELCOMES BACK NEW AND EXISTING SPONSORS FOR NEW SEASON

With the World Surf League Championship Tour kicking off this week, the WSL welcomes back new and existing sponsors. Returning sponsors are Quiksilver, Roxy, Rip Curl, Billabong, Vans, Boost Mobile, Hydro Flask, MEO, Woolmark, Swatch, Barefoot, Jose Cuervo, Polo Blue, TropicSport and many others while new partners include: Red Bull, Breitling, Outerknown, Harley-Davidson, BFGoodrich, Boost Mobile and New York State Division of Tourism.

VOLCOM ACQUIRED BY AUTHENTIC BRANDS GROUP

Authentic Brands Group have purchased the intellectual property of Volcom from Kering S.A. The acquisition sees Volcom founder Todd Hymel and Volcom's current management team set up and take majority shares in a newly formed operating company, Liberated Brands which ABG has taken a minority stake in. Hymel and the newly created Liberated Brands will continue to run operations at their US, French, Australien and Japanese HQs on the product, athlete marketing, retail and wholesale side of things while ABG will lend their expertise in "amplifying brand awareness and business development for Volcom while leveraging Liberated Brands' specialized retail and wholesale operations as a platform for international expansion of complementary ABG-owned brands."

OY SANTACO SPORT + NA PALI JOIN FORCES TO DISTRIBUTE QUIKSILVER, ROXY & DC SHOES IN FINLAND

After 25 years with DC Shoes and 3 years with Quiksilver and Roxy, OY SANTACO SPORT and NA PALI have decided to join forces to operate on the Finnish market. This move will allow the Boardriders Group to further support this important Scandinavian market. Spring/Summer 2019 when the Quiksilver Group ships and invoices directly.

TONY HAWK LAUNCHES BRAND CONSULTING AGENCY IN DETROIT

Tony Hawk recently announced the launch of his latest venture into brand consulting. His company, D/CAL, will be based in Detroit with the support of co-founders Ryan Maconochie, Jared Prindle and Adam Wilson with Katherine Huber as director of client services.

ARBOR ANNOUNCE THE ADDITION OF THREE NEW MEMBERS IN THE SNOWBOARD MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

Arbor announced that they will be taking on three new members in their management team. Ben Hayes will be joining the team as Product Director, John Crouch as Global Sales Manager and Dave Marx as Global Marketing Manager.

TRANSWORLD SNOWBOARDING CLOSES & SKATEBOARDING CEASES PRINT

It's with a heavy heart that we report the closure of legendary snowboarding magazine Transworld Snowboarding, while the print output of Transworld Skateboarding will also cease as of April 2019. Acquired by heavyweight American publishing house, American Media last month, TW Skate & Snow were two of 14 titles purchased from TEN: Publishing's Adventure Sports Network. Snowboarder will be the sole snowboarding brand of the new Adventure Sports Network Group, part of American Media's Active Lifestyle Group.

FEMALE SKATEBOARDERS FEATURED ON BILLBOARDS IN TIME SQUARE

On March 3, 2019, professional skateboarder and founder of Girl is NOT a 4 Letter Word, Cindy Whitehead, launched two billboards in Times Square featuring female skateboarders in promotion of Women's History Month.

GLASSING PORTUGAL ANNOUNCE DISTRIBUTION & MANUFACTURING OF SAXON LOOKER'S SURFBOARDS

Glassing Portugal will be producing and distributing Native Surfboards shaped by Saxon Looker throughout Europe. Adding to their already eco-friendly portfolio of brands Saxon Looker's surfboards will be a great addition with his already strong EPS designs.

LYNDSAY MCLAREN APPOINTED MARKETING DIRECTOR FOR UK AGENCY OUT OF STEP (BRIXTON, HUF, THE HUNDREDS, HEX)

Out Of Step Ltd, UK street and skate wear agency and distributor for HUF, The Hundreds, Brixton and HEX have appointed Lyndsay McLaren as Marketing Director. McLaren has formerly worked for Canoe and Ultra Sport in the UK across brands including The Arbor Collective, Nitro Snowboards, Puma, Patagonia, Rab and Canada Goose.

K2 SPORTS EUROPE PERSONNEL CHANGE: MAX ANSELSTETTER & SEBASTIAN SCHMITZ WITH NEW POSITIONS

Max Anselstetter appointed as the new Marketing Manager K2 Sports Europe and Sebastian Schmitz as the new K2 marketing coordinator.

FALLEN FOOTWEAR TO RE-LAUNCH

After two years off the market, Fallen Footwear, founded by Jamie Thomas, is making a come back having been acquired for a global re-launch by its original distributor, Town Connection.

KIEREN PERROW STEPS DOWN AS WSL COMMISSIONER, PAT O'CONNEL STEPS IN

WSL announces that Kieren Perrow will be stepping down to a supporting role after six years as WSL Commissioner. Pat O'Connell, former WSL Championship Tour competitor, and current VP of Sports Marketing at Hurley, will be stepping up to take the role.

HORSEFEATHERS APPOINT NIKITA FOUNDER HEIDA BIRGISDOTTIR AS NEW WOMEN'S COLLECTION SUPERVISOR

Horsefeathers have entered into a partnership with Heida Birgisdottir, the former founder and lead designer of Nikita, as the Horsefeathers Women's collection supervisor.

SHRED OPTICS BRAND RELAUNCH

Shred. optics have re-launched the brand with the aim to enhance the brand's focus on their customers and ensure that their products meet their customer make expectations. As part of SHRED.'s evolution, the Slytech brand, technology, and product line of protective equipment are being incorporated into the SHRED. brand.

SHINER LTD APPOINTED EUROPEAN DISTRIBUTOR FOR STRAYE FOOTWEAR

Shiner Ltd have been appointed European Distributor for US based shoe brand, STRAYE Footwear. The first collection that will be available through Shiner will be Summer for an April 2019 delivery.

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TRADE SHOWS REVIEWS

ISPO MUNICH, GERMANY FEBRUARY 3-6, 2019

For 2019, ISPO expanded with two additional halls, C5 and C6, bringing the total number of halls to 18. Around 80,000 industry visitors attended from 120 countries, a similar amount to the prior year. The countries with the largest number of visitors were Italy, Austria, France, Switzerland, Great Britain and the Russian Federation. Exhibitor numbers grew 5 per cent to 2,943 as the additional space in the two new halls was filled. The share of international exhibitors also set a record at 89 per cent, with the largest participant groups by country being Germany, China, France, Great Britain, Italy, Taiwan and the United States. The show opened with snowfall bringing a smile to everyone's face but this also meant the first day was quieter than last year's as many roads became blocked.

The hall layout ideas introduced last year across the show have been further developed, with wider central aisles focusing visitor traffic flows and an increase use of public spaces. In general, stands seemed to have grown a bit in floor size as the new 3D pricing strategy has lowered the average stand height. The snowsports halls introduced last year to replace the separate ski and snowboard halls remained at the centre of the show, with the snowboard hardgood brands congregated in Hall B4. Snowboard brands were pleased with their business at the show and said they would be returning next year. Brands commented that they were able to access crossover retailers who are not present at other events and the international aspects of their business was definitely enhanced by all the different sports communities and nationalities congregated in one place. Likewise, retailers we spoke to still find the show offers a unique opportunity to find the products and brands of the future with 'Brand New', the world's largest competition for sports start-ups, a popular retailer destination. Additionally, the 'Welcome to Snowsports' platform provided valuable key snowsports product highlights to illustrate current trends.

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

The UK's snowsport trade show, Slide increased exhibitor numbers year on year and saw a good buzz around the show. Although winter was noticeably absent in the UK at that time, the good Alpine snowfalls in Europe had helped the UK Snowsport Industry to keep their faith, and retailers turned up at Slide ready to do business. Opening day saw a drinks and networking event close the day, kicking the show off in the right way and allowing retailers and brands to talk shop. Most brands asked felt – despite the looming B word – that snowboarding is in a good place at the moment. Retailers have been making smart decisions with regards to their buys and stock over the past couple of years and – despite a small number – the early heavy discounts have been avoided, allowing for a healthier market.

Exhibitor numbers were up on last year (from 84 last year, to 94 this year) and visitor numbers remained stable. Of the circa 400 unique visitors to the show, 45% were keen to view snowboard products and 75% of the visitors

The Longboard Embassy in hall A5 with its myriad of small brands and the nearby skate halfpipe were the central focus of skate at the show whilst the Watersports village in A4 had a full schedule of activities from brands based around its pool.

The issues of digitalization and eSports played a major role for the first time at the winter show as ISPO provided ideas as to how brands could remain attractive to the consumers of the future. Sustainability was also a major focus for brands at the show as being Eco friendly is now seen as a necessary value to survive in the marketplace with consumers demanding more resource-efficient and recyclable products. The busy CSR Hub and Sustainability Kiosk run by Greenroom Voice and Brands for Good was a central focus for brand and retailers looking for more information on this hot topic.

For a second year, the ISPO Munich Sports Week and Night Run took place. This is designed to increase consumer involvement around the show, which consisted of 170 events spread over a week. The Night Run presented a highlight, which drew a record number of participants.

ISPO continues to be the pre-eminent winter sports show globally with significantly more visitors than any of the other major continental sports shows. This is where an event in the scale of ISPO offers real value with its multitude of sports communities and nationalities congregated in one place to create unrivalled networking opportunities.

PS. Source will see you at the 1st edition of OutDoor by ISPO from June 30 - July 3, 2019. The next ISPO Munich will be held from January 26 - 29, 2020

ispo.com

were key decision-makers, being MD's, Business Owners or Buyers. Post show on day 2 was the AGM of the trade association, followed by an Open Forum. Matt Woodruffe, President of SIGB, outlined the SIGB activities of the past year and plans for the rest of the season towards next season. The SIGB trade website is to be updated and a social media strategy which will integrate with the association's website has been created. Dates for Slide next year were confirmed as 21-23 January 2020 at the Telford International Centre again.

Exhibiting brands are eligible to enter their top products into the Slide Awards that celebrate the very best new products for the following season. There are 4 categories: hardware, software, accessories and the Fresh Brand category for new brands or first time exhibitors. The finalists are on display throughout the show. At Wednesday night's SIGB AGM, the winners of the Slide Awards 2019 were announced and winners from the snowboard world were Fresh Brand category winners Gogglesoc, a stretchy cover to protect goggle lenses and GoPro won the Accessories Category.

TRADE SHOWS

REVIEWS

JACKET REQUIRED,

LONDON, UK,
JANUARY 23 – 24, 2019

Held in East London's Old Truman Brewery this is the key UK event for brands from the casualwear, tailoring, sportswear, streetwear, denim, footwear, accessories and lifestyle markets.

The layout of the show was changed from the summer edition with only the two biggest rooms used for exhibiting and the smaller rooms in between were converted to walkway spaces. This concentrated both brands and traffic into the two most usable spaces and on the first floor an extra aisle was added so that more brands could be carried. The shoulder high white walls introduced last summer continued, as did the single entrance and exit, so visitors got to see all exhibitors as they moved around the show. Overall there was a much more intimate feel to the show as visitors congregated in the two rooms.

The first day was busy, while the second was a little quieter, but overall visitor numbers were up. There were some European customers, but most were from the UK. Overall the quality of visitors was good. There were less brands exhibiting and action sports brands were to be found all around the show rather than in one place. Brands at the show included Santa Cruz, Body Glove, Quiksilver, Sweet Sktbs, Independent, Makia, Powell-Peralta, Element, Dickies, DC, Sneaker Lab, Chrome and Howies. Newer brands of interest were Conscious Step Socks, Wawaw's, Bad Mondays, Heimat and Straye Footwear. Brands at the show mentioned they found it a more cost-effective option than going to the European shows.

Two new platforms were launched within the show, 'Introduces' and 'Living'. The new 'Introduces' platform gave visitors the opportunity to discover the breakthrough talents of the season and future contemporary classics with

SPORT-ACHAT WINTER,

LYON, FRANCE
MARCH, 11-13 2019

Sport Achat, the last big fair of the winter season in Europe, saw French retailers flocking to place their final orders for the following

winter season. The show remains a key date in the French sports equipment calendar and is still very much an order show. This year 571 brands from the ski, snowboard, outdoor and textile markets exhibited on 20,000 m2 of space, giving buyers the opportunity to look for all their winter needs under one roof at the Eurexpo site in Lyon. Amongst the 75 brands new to the winter show were FW, CMP, Vist, Vuarnet and Rojo from Australia.

Over the 3 days of exhibition 3324 visitors attended from 1394 stores, a slight increase on 2018, The Crème Fraîche' space at the entrance is dedicated to start-up brands who can exhibit at a discounted rate. This year there were 9 exhibitors including Easy Snowboards, Borealis Snowboards, H.Holderness, Alpine Tech Wear, Lag Goggle, Lagoped, Ontracks and Jao Collection. Also near the entrance of the show, 50 award-winning products were displayed which had been gathered in from other international trade fairs to give visitors a global view of the market. Close by was the Made in France area where French brands exhibited and reinforced their message

Jacket Required's pick of emerging designers. 'Living', was a curated selection of contemporary products and accessories from the most progressive and visionary interior design brands. This provides a complementary offer alongside the current progressive fashion line-up. And don't forget the womenswear edit that supports the growth of casual clothing and sophisticated streetwear for women.

The theme for the event, 'Reinvention Reimagined' drew together the importance of sustainability and the responsibility of the individual to demand transparency within the supply chain. The collaboration on jean repair workshops with Blackhorse Lane Ateliers underlined this message as did the 'In Talks With', series of key speaker and panel discussions, which continued from the last show with a panel discussion on Wednesday on sustainability and environmental responsibility. Professor of Diversity, Caryn Franklin, moderated the session titled 'Crafted to Last – the movement towards slow fashion' and the panel of industry experts included British fashion designer Christopher Raeburn, Stacey Wood, Founder of King & Tuckfield and Han Ates from Blackhorse Lane Ateliers. This was followed by G-Star's Sofie Schop, who manages the Global Sustainability Team at G-Star RAW, sharing insights into how the brand has worked towards a positive impact on the environment and on the people involved in G-Star's production process.

So if you're a retailer on the lookout for what's hot in men's and women's wear, Jacket Required remains a key date in your calendar. The summer edition of Jacket Required takes place at the Old Truman Brewery, 24 & 25 July 2019.

jacket-required.com

of minimizing the ecological footprint by increasing business with local suppliers. Brands present there included Mohair aux 4 vents, Villacampa Pyrénées, Labonal, Blanc Bonnet, Marcel Livet, Berthe aux grands pieds, Téorum and Vitabri.

This year 6 presentations took place during the show, these included an analysis of French textile consumption habits looking at the crossover of sport and fashion, a boot fitting study, the 2018 review of the sports and leisure goods market which highlighted a mixed winter season for trading, presentations by brands from the Crème Fraîche' and Made in France to showcase their innovations, values and know-how. And for the first time the winners of the Ecosport Awards, which are presented for the best sustainable achievements within the sports industry, was announced with prizes for Polartec for eco-designed sports goods, Life is Belt for the Recycling and End of Life Award, Millet Mountain Group for the Sustainable Management Award and Salomon for the Special Jury Prize. The dates for Sport-Achat summer are September 9-10.

sportair.fr

ON SNOW DEMOS

REVIEWS

ROCK ON SNOW PRO,

LA CLUSAZ, FRANCE,
JANUARY 13-15 2019

Rock On Snow Pro gave the organisers the opportunity to freshen things up at the event, which was appreciated by brands and retailers alike. The formula of the On Snow event itself remained pretty much the same with the exception of the dinner that organisers hosted for all participants on the evening of the first day.

As always, this event is the first time the European snowboard industry has the chance to see the 18/19 snowboard product offering all in one place, with 458 retailers and 48 brands attending the event. A good number of English, Italian and Swiss shops were there and 3451 tests took place. Brands new to the event included Tobe Outerwear, Apex goggles and Prism modular backpacks

Conditions for testing were good as the long awaited snow fell. The layout at the test village stayed the same with rows of brand booths followed by the 450sqm showroom. The theme for this year, the retro 80's, could be seen quite clearly with the exhibition wall inside the main tent painted in a fluorescent blue and a pink carpet surrounding it. Sunday afternoon, the industry's players took out their guitars, microphones and drumsticks for a concert before an audience of colleagues and retailers to great applause

SHOPS 1ST TRY,

ALPBACHTAL/
WILDSCHÖNAU,
AUSTRIA JANUARY
20-22 2019

After continuous snowfalls throughout January in the surrounding region, Shops 1st Try got underway to the background of blue skies on Sunday January 20. To celebrate its 10th anniversary, brands took a gondola up to a mountain top restaurant the night before to eat, drink and watch organiser Muck Muller cut a cake presented to him by the Alpbach resort.

The spacious test village at the base of the slopes was pretty much the same as last year, with a continuous stream of testers entering and exiting. This year, over 240 shops attended, which is a 20% increase on last year. Sessions, for example, flew over every single one of their store managers this year. In total 92 brands exhibited split between the indoor and outdoor areas. Brands new to the exhibition dinner included Xion Protective Gear, Brethren Apparel, Rehall Outerwear, Alprausch, Advenate, Earebel, FW and Penguin and in the micro tent this year was Stranda Snowboards, Gara Splitboards, West Snowboarding, Konvoi Snowboards, Phunkschun Wear and Furberg Snowboards. Over the 3 days the Candy system registered 7862 tests, which was nearly 40% up on last year. This year's edition really demonstrated how increasingly important this event is becoming in the international snowboard calendar with many industry people and distributors coming for meetings and to catch up with colleagues and retailers from 17 different countries.

and well-natured hollering. Each day a free lunch was available with a choice of hamburgers or a more typical local cuisine, which was followed later in the afternoon by delicious hot ham fresh off a rotisserie. This year, for the first time, all brands and retailers staying for the event were booked into the same hotel, the 4 star Hotel Beauregard with a swimming pool, Hammam and Jacuzzi. This was quickly baptised as the Rock On Base Camp. This provided a great evening atmosphere rather than having everyone split all over the resort. On the Sunday evening, the Rock On Dinner and Party was held for all the retailers and industry professionals, with typical Savoyard cuisine spread across 3 courses and cheese. After dinner it was quiz time, the audience was invited to test their knowledge of snowboarding history with everyone voting via an app on their phones. The evening was rounded off with Peter Bauer paying a tribute to his friend and snowboard pioneer Jean Nerva and presenting one lucky retailer with one of the limited edition Jean Nerva boards.

Meanwhile, the accompanying ASAP event in Annecy had 294 shops attending and 48 textile brands exhibiting. The evening show was held this year at the Espace Rencontre and 26 showrooms in the "Parc des Glaisins" and the "Parc d'Altais" opened their doors.

The new formula was a winner for the organisers and attendees as everyone left feeling a much stronger sense of community. Next year's dates are to be confirmed.

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On the Sunday and Monday, after the test area had closed at 3.30pm, everyone headed off to the Highlight Exhibition Dinners in the centre of Alpbach. These are a combination of eating, drinking and chatting against a backdrop of wall stands from every single brand at the event. The first evening's dinner was packed with just under 1000 people sitting down to eat. The second evening was a more mellow affair with not quite so many people. As always, all brands made great efforts with their stands. Burton had artist Lukas Goller paint a different backdrop for their stand each night.

To celebrate the event's 10th anniversary there was an exhibition of pictures from every single year of the event and brands and media partners who had been associated with the event from the beginning received a wooden placard. Other entertainment inside the hall included the Throwback Quiz with prizes including O'Neill Anoraks, the world vice premiere of Elias Elhardt's video "Contraddiction" with Elias and friends and of course the crowning of BoardSport Source's very own "Retailers Choice Best Board design Award". This year Never Summer took 1st Prize with Nidecker and Goodboards being the runners up. After dinner the party carried on in the resort with the PAX Vape/METHOD Mag Party on Monday evening being the pick of the bunch. All in all, this was the best Shops 1st Try yet. The Germanic region's on snow demo just got better again as it goes from strength to strength. Next year's dates are January 19-21, 2020.

shops-1st-try.com



MANN
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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE SURFBOARDS 2019

Now that the spring has arrived, surfers are coming out of hibernation and suffering from an irrepressible longing for new board(s). Historical brands, labels from champions, underground shapers, traditional and avant-garde technologies: there's a hell of a choice, and even more so for retailers. By **David Bianic**

retail buyer's guide



With our heads firmly stuck inside the resin, it's sometimes hard for us to describe the European market as it really is. Seen from the southern tip of Africa: "Europe on the whole seems to be split across many different segments", reckons Craig from Hurricane Surf. A throng of board families, as well as segment players is what Nuno Viegas from Glassing Monkey in Portugal points to: "Too many brands are appearing in the market so we need to focus on the ones that really made history."

In addition to low-cost boards from Asia, Johnny Cabianca and Mikel Agote from Basque Country Surf Company highlight a new trend in Europe and that's "garage surfboards": "There are more and more small workshops popping up all over, even in landlocked countries like Austria, Germany etc." So it's not so much a case of the market showing signs of weakness but more of an increasing expansion in players, which is a logical progression given the growing number of participants and demand for alternative shapes, subscribing to the philosophy of being able to ride anything.

SHAPE TRENDS

An undisputed best seller in recent years, the hybrid shortboard now has competition with the new wave of performance twin fins: "We have seen a twin fin madness in 2018, ridiculous", states Jaime Azpiroz, Product Manager at Olatu (Pukas, Channel Islands, ...Lost, Bob McTavish, Christenson Surfboards, Indio Surfboards). Even labels already associated with high-performance such as Basque Country Surf Co. have kneeled to the demand with the Uber Twin (Cabinaca) and the Txitxarro Twin (Agote). Firewire have also been taken by surprise by the growth in demand from within their range and Mark Price admits to having "completely underestimated the demand for the Tomo Hydronaut Step Up because historically it's been a relatively small niche in the overall market." The brand has also noted great success with alternative models such as Cymatic, Go Fish, Seaside and Helium Evo. This simplified surfing also finds a free means of expression within softboards (read our Softboard Buyer's Guide on page??), where one of the keys to success resides in the unrestrained approach to graphics. This artwork isn't

just reserved for them though, with Jonathan Bunel from Surf Designs & SilkOnBoard offering customised graphics on their "hardboards" through prints (up to 600dpi) on woven silk fabrics inserted between the foam and the glass or even on stickers.

But let's not count out the good old high-performance shortboard right away. For some shapers, it's even formed a philosophy: "It's our world. We will maintain in 2019 our bet on the high performance boards", assures Nuno Matta whose three best sellers are testament to this (pro-models J5 from Jadson Andre, TLX from Travis Logie and SMP2 from young Sam Piter). Pyzel are also associated with high-performance shapes through the results of a certain JF and the brand are taking care to adjust them to suit different countries: "We are a high performance company but our Ghost family (Ghost, Phantom Gremlin and now Shadow) are unique in that they are high performance boards tuned to different waves." At UWL in France they can confirm this "return to the performance shortboard adjusted for European waves: a little wider and more accessible but using high-performance materials (carbon, resin, fins)", says Thomas Cardinal.

"There are more and more small workshops popping up all over, even in landlocked countries like Austria, Germany etc." Johnny Cabianca & Mikel Agote, **Basque Country Surf Company**

In contrast to these fireballs, we can see a return of 9 footers and over onto shaper racks, supported most notably by the WSL circuit's new investment in longboarding: "I am sure with the audience the WSL has online it will be good for longboarding", surmises Andy Wirtz, Director of Norden Surfboards in Germany. This return to force is confirmed by Surftech, as revealed by Kerry

Powell, Brand Manger at Jorcani Sports, distributor of the US brands since the end of 2018: “Longboards are taking us by storm currently but we know with the new Gerry Lopez offering about to hit that’s going to take off.” No surprise then that the Heritage longboard of Phil Grace features in the top 3 sellers at Euroglass, alongside a shortboard, namely the One from Bradley, surfed by Leonardo Fioravanti on the WCT. Also amongst the best sellers at Venon, the Longsoul longboard owes its success to its versatility, affirms Benoît Brecq in marketing. After the success of performance twin-fins, we are seeing a certain number of shapers getting their ‘80s shortboard templates back out, having been revised for today’s tastes. This is the case for the Heritage Series signed by Simon Anderson, “retro style ‘80s inspired with flyer or double flyer featuring flatter rocker, vee bottom, thicker nose and tail with a flatter deck”, describes the master shaper.

CONSTRUCTIONS & ECO-CONSTRUCTIONS

To our great surprise, this year there are many who are breaking a taboo, that of boards Made in China: “To make a tech EPS board that is commercially competitive in Europe is virtually impossible”, affirms Euroglass Manager Darren Broadbridge. This is a reality that Mark Price from Firewire joins him on: “As more and more surfboard brands offer increasingly technical surfboards, and also find themselves locked in to the fairly static retail price points, most of them are going offshore to fit within that narrow business construct.” Andy at Norden has had enough of people hating on Asian manufacturers and stresses that if you ensure production “at the right factories you can make some incredible surfboards in all kinds of constructions.” There are also many who share manufacturing between local production for experienced surfers and then distribute Asian boards for retailers who “need price point products with 1.8 mark up”, reveals Xavier Barjou from Surf Odyssey. The alternative solution is to open your own production unit, a choice that isn’t within everyone’s means... “We decided to sign with the new French factory One-Kin which developed an original construction based on recycled and eco-friendly products (EPS core is 40% recycled and the Epoxy resin is 60% organic based)”. Explains Sylvain Aurenche from O’Neill Boards who are selling an eco-friendly performance board in epoxy for €599. Olatu are also investing in a spanking new factory in Zarautz (after the fire in their factory in June 2017). Finally Firewire are hitting the top level by announcing a Fair Trade award for their factory in 2020, the first one in the world, surpassing the ISO9000 and ISO9001 standards already in place. The brand are also stating their zero waste objective for 2020 after having reduced their waste by 95% per board in the last two years. Impressive.



To make a tech EPS board that is commercially competitive in Europe is virtually impossible” Darren Broadbridge, Euroglass

While EPS continues to gain ground, it’s still pretty marginal in relation to overall sales volumes dominated by PU boards. Nevertheless, it’s actually still EPS that is boosting innovation while “one of the keys remains flex and torsion” says Thomas from UWL. And so this is the goal for the new Injection-Tech construction from Surf Tech whose parabolic basalt reinforcements go through the foam from the hull to the deck, reducing resistance into torsion for “more flow through the turns with a more drawn out turning arch”, explains Kerry Powell.

“We can clearly see a return to the performance shortboard adjusted for European waves: a little wider and more accessible but using high-performance materials (carbon, resin, fins)” Thomas Cardinal, UWL



Among the other innovations, we should mention the carbon strips on the front of the One model from Christiaan Bradley (Euroglass), designed mostly to suit modern surfers where they often find themselves with the tail above the lip, pushing on the front foot. At Chemistry, the Flextronic technology isn’t going unnoticed with its big X across the board: the idea is to insert a vinyl slat with shape retaining memory within a PU foam (two flex ratings to choose from) and glassed in epoxy in order to preserve the “pop” of the board over time.

Also highly anticipated is the Woolight technology from Firewire that allows fibreglass to be replaced by a wool fabric from a sustainable source in New Zealand. At Simon Boards, flax fibre stratification makes its appearance alongside CR-Flex II technology (double carbon stringer to manage the flex/torsion combo). At Olatu, INN-CA (Pukas) and Spine-Tek (Channel Islands) technologies have found a choice promoter in Mick Fanning. The newly retired surfer from the CT selected these constructions as n°1 and n°2 in the latest “blind test” contest, Stab in The Dark. Venon are rejigging their epoxy construction into carbon-bamboo, which is on offer in their performance best sellers, much like NSP who are releasing their CocoFlax technology onto one of their most successful models, the Hooligan longboard. As a reminder, this construction combines layers of bio coconut fibres (CocoMat) and flax fibre reinforcements on the rails (CocoFlax). Finally, Torq are making a significant leap forward in the EPS/Epoxy manufacturing process with their ACT construction. The innovation resides in materials called “Pre-Pregs”, fabrics that are mechanically pre-impregnated with resin applied by heat under pressure: “They have the weight of a light glassed PU but exceptional strength to weight,” assures Sebastian Wenzel, General Director, before adding that this is “a super clean low waste process” given the absence of any surplus resin and a “Re-flex” effect, a return of energy that ensures a bounce back when pushed, reinforced by unidirectional carbon strips.

With all this great diversity of design and construction, one fact for retailers to remember is an obvious one: the best “head of purchasing” is still the customer. Surfshops have to stay in tune with the local environment, i.e. wave conditions and standard of surfer, and sometimes they need to turn their back on boards that are really appealing on paper. A choice selection of major international labels and local newcomers is a good way of offering shapes and prices that cover the mainstay of demand. For the good weather, we can always pray. ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 fish performances
- 2 softboards craze (read on page 23)
- 3 high-performance, stockier shortboard
- 4 return of the longboard
- 5 80’s style shortboards
- 6 high-tech EPS boards





PUKAS TALK BIZ & RISING FROM THE ASHES



A store synonymous with surfing in Europe and roots going back to the 1970s, Pukas in the Basque Country also manufactures highly acclaimed surfboards with some of the world's finest shapers. A horrific fire ripped through their surfboard factory in 2017 and we've spoken to Adur Letamendia to hear how Pukas have risen from the ashes, coming back stronger than ever, finishing runners up in the 2019 Stab in the Dark surfboard comp, where World Champ Mick Fanning blind tested boards. We also hear from Adur just how amazing the Vans Duct Tape Invitational was for the region in 2018, as we partner with Vans to profile the finest boardsports retailers in Europe.

Please tell us about the history of the store.

Pukas Surf is a family driven company based in the Basque Country (Spain) and has built a reputation for making quality high-performance surfboards and custom bikinis. We first hand shaped a surfboard in 1973 but Pukas was founded in 1979. Along the way came the surf shops, the surf contests, the friends and the parties, the surfboard factory, the professional Pukas surfers, the good and the bad, the surf schools and the stoke. Today we employ around 150 people during summer, and we are deeply rooted to the city of San Sebastian and Zarautz.

Could you talk to us about the fire that hit your surfboard factory.

It was 5pm and everyone was working at the factory. A short-circuit sparked a fire and we couldn't stop it; it grew violently, fast and wild. The fire took everything but the people (who had to run for their lives). That very same night we started planning how to start over again from scratch. The love we felt from all over the world hit us bigger than the fire. It was June 2017 and it made us all stronger. It has been a year and a half since the fire and we are manufacturing more boards than the pre-fire period.

That's amazing to hear. What's popping today?

High-end surfboards are working very well. Channel Island Surfboards is on an upward trend which we correlate to Britt Merrick's appearances and visits to Europe. He will be coming again this July. Pukas Surfboards are doing great and being runners-up in this year's Stab in the Dark (a blind test starring 3x World Champ Mick Fanning) has helped us elevate our brand awareness. Twin fins are definitely the thing; Christenson Surfboards' Chris Fish is killing it along with the high performance twin fin collab by Pukas x Christenson, called Pegaso (featured on the cover of this issue). CI's Fish is booming and Pukas' shaper Son of Cobra is constantly shaping breath-taking twin fin quivers. ...Lost with Matt Biolos' Rad Ripper and Retro Ripper are hyping things nicely, and Max from Eye Symmetry is also working with Pukas and he just flew in from Sidney to shape for Pukas for a third year in a row, which is seeing good growth.

Please explain your views on last year's Vans Duct Tape Invitational. How did the event affect your store?

It was the best thing that happened to the Basque Country in 2018. We don't rate the success of an event like this by the increase in sales; we rated this event by how much new flavour it brought to the local scene and by how much wow factor was thrown into the mix. There is a rad vibe flying around a Duct Tape Invitational that is worth being part of. And the international crew who stayed in Zarautz had a blast. The magic of an event this cool is the most valuable asset a brand can bring to a community like ours because it lasts for years.

How do you alter your brand line-up?

Our brand line-up is constantly changing. In order to be a successful business you better be chameleonic by nature; we are thrilled by new trends, new brands, new products and new people, but besides how much fashion we throw in the mix, we have never lose track of one very important thing: we are core as fuck to surfing! We also visit trade shows, we are open-minded, we travel and we have an international network of friendships that keep us in the loop. Oh, and we love taking risks.

How can physical retail overcome giant online retailer such as Amazon?

There is room for Amazon, there is room for Pukas Surf Shop, there is room for new entrepreneurs... There are plenty of formulas to come up with a successful business and they are all up for grabs. We need to play it smart and have fun along the way; customers can tell.

Our surfboard project feeds from an ever-evolving crew of international shapers. In 2019 Pukas Surf will bring custom surfboards to Europe based on who we believe are some of the most forward-thinking shapers today: Axel Lorentz (FRA), Matt Biolos (USA), Chris Christenson (USA), Son Of Cobra (FRA), EyeSymmetry (AUS), Lee Stacey (AUS), Bob McTavish (AUS) and Grant "Twig" Baker (ZAF). This is connected to our stores, to the Basque Country, to the surf schools and to surfing. That's us. ☺

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

SOFTBOARDS 2019

Who would have thought that a “softening up” of the surfboard sector would actually be good news? In record time, the new generation of softboards have captivated all audiences, from beginners to top pros, united under the same simplistic ‘fun factor’ concept. With this very first Softboards Buying Guide, Boardsports SOURCE will help you serve up the perfect foams at your counters. By **David Bianic**



photo Catch Surf

Long -since associated with beginners and surf schools, foam boards called soft-tops or softboards, were always looked down upon by core surfers. Going from the ultimate kook board to a must-have for everyone’s quiver, this flexible board has opened up the scope of the discipline for customers, and for businesses. For the boss of Euroglass, Darren Broadbridge, who produces the Foamrider Collection for Quiksilver Europe and Roxy, “the sport is still enticing people into the water at an alarming rate!”

Split into two distinct sub markets – beginners/schools and good surfers – the softboard categories feed off of each other, as is the case for example for Softech who show to be both “absolute leader with surf schools (beginner boards) and retail (performance boards),” says Hannah Craig, Marketing Assistant at Surf Hardware International (FCS, Gorilla, Softech). Not a month goes by now without a new brand popping up and, after the astronomic rise of the sector, a skimming phase is sure to follow, predicts Sharen Alcock and Thomas Konen from Spooked Kooks Australia: “In any market segment where rapid growth is noted, a logical response is a massive attack and input of competitors. Between all that debris comes forth the best and most innovative. It’s a logical and natural leap forward in an emerging business.” Care must also be taken to avoid paying the price for any mistakes made, warns Caren Forbes from NSP to “not repeat the damage that the cheap inflatables did,” making a comparison to the SUP market.

BOARD DESIGN
As mentioned above, the softboard market is divided into two main categories: mid-sized boards between 7 and 8ft with really mini mal type shapes aimed mostly at beginners and surfers who are learning, the other being radical micro shortboards that require a decent standard of surfing. “There is a market for every size from under 3ft to over 12ft and beyond,” assures Andrew Mencinsky, Brand Manager at the Americans Boardworks.

“In any market segment where rapid growth is noted, a logical response is a massive attack and input of competitors. Between all that debris comes forth the best and most innovative. It’s a logical and natural leap forward in an emerging business.” Sharen Alcock and Thomas Konen, **Spooked Kooks Australia**

But for the core retailers, beginner softboards are not actually the most interesting category, except perhaps to offer rentals and/or to have a surf school. Purchases of these mini-mals are driven by a floor price that is on offer either at the big box sport shops (Decathlon with Olaian) or from the “pseudo-brands” with somewhat foggy ancestry. No, the real lever for surfshops centres on high-performance shortboards. “Short, fat fishes are the real movers,” affirms Darren from Euroglass because “they suit the conditions that the foamy excels in,” while sometimes it’s a case of “image over functionality” adds Caren from NSP.

One of the keys to the success of softboards “for good surfers” resides in the choice of fin systems. Underpinning your brand with a reputable system, such as FCS or Future Fins, is both buying into authenticity and validating

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the technical dimension of these foamies as well as offering customisation to clients like you would on a classic “hardboard”. At Softech, offering an FCS system as standard is a massive plus with all boards being mounted with FCS Softboard fin boxes that can hold any FCS II or FCS I fins (with adaptor). Another example comes from Boardworks whose boards have Future Fins fin boxes, “which automatically gives our boards a performance edge,” assures Andrew Mencinsky. Targeting a niche at the foamie top-of-the-range, Mick Fanning Softboards are offering both FCS and Future Fins, relates distributor Xavier Barjou (Surf Odyssey-Rip Curl Surfboards). The same goes for the French guys at Notox who are taking it even further, able to equip their Korko cork Softboards with any existing system since “this is the advantage of manufacturing custom boards with our own patented processes.” But many others prefer to talk about ‘compatibility’ without signing an exclusive partnership with one of the two big guns of the fin market, which would add to the price. “We have created our own fin box system from recycled plastics that hold both FCS I and FCS II fins,” say Spooked Kooks Australia.

CONSTRUCTIONS

Under their tangy candy coating, what are softboards hiding? This is often a mystery but behind the EVA skin common to all brands there can be pretty advanced technologies. So what makes a good quality construction? “That the board is stiff and easy to ride”, responds Alain Riou, ambassador for Catch Surf. Yes but what else? “A board that doesn’t take water, that floats well and doesn’t over flex,” explains Darren from Euroglass. More technically, the best constructions are made up of “EPS Core, wood composite layer and epoxy fibreglass covered by a soft deck and slick, the perfect mix between durability and performance in terms of softboards,” expands Benoît Brecq at Madness Softboards about the HD Core construction. This technology is common in the bodyboarding world, a sector that Napco Global (softboards Mullet and Softlite) master to perfection as Lionel Franssen, World Commercial Director demonstrates: “It’s like bodyboards, you have different kinds of core, some are softer, some are harder, some are for cold water, some are for warm water. Stringers have a big role. You don’t want your board to flex. Then the slick is super important too, you have High Density Polyethylene slick, you can add “mesh” under it (carbon), which makes it stronger. Decks are mainly in IXLPE.”



photo Gautho Surf

“Short, fat fishes are the real movers. They suit the conditions that the foamy excels in,” Darren Broadbridge, Euroglass

PRO-MODELS & DECOS

By applying the recipes inherited from skateboarding and snowboarding, some softboard brands have hit the jackpot – partnering with renowned surfers for their pro models and/or offering innovative graphics has proved to be an enormous lift to the explosion of the softboard market. Catch Surf set the tone and are still full steam ahead: “JOB, Kalani Robb, Taj Burrow, Blair Conklin, Johnny Redmond, Tyler Stanaland, Julian Wilson, Noa Deane, Sierra Lerback, Harry Bryant, Beau Cram... do you want us to go on?” rejoices pro-catcher Alain Riou. “Colour is our weapon,” continues Darren Broadbridge about the Foamrider Collection at Quiksilver and Roxy, leaning towards zebra prints and flashy pinks combined with black. These aesthetic biases sometimes also have a practical use, as Hannah from Softech points out: “Every size has a different colour to be able to identify sizes in both retails and surf schools.”

Conversely, Catch Surf are also offering a series of models called Blank, all white or all black, to customise yourself, or not!

Collaborations don’t just stop at pro surfers though, an international-level shaper has signed a partnership with Mick Fanning Softboards in the form of triple world championship winning shaper, Darren Handley with the DHD Twin and DHD Black Diamond models. It’s the same idea at Catch Surf and their collab with ...Lost, who are releasing a soft version of the RNF (Round Nose Fish) model.

“There is a market for every size from under 3ft to over 12ft and beyond.” Andrew Mencinsky, Boardworks



photo Spooked Kooks

DISPOSABLE BOARDS?

Already not brilliant when it comes to classic “hardboards” (despite all the best efforts), the environmental impact of softboards is at first glance pretty mediocre, they are seen as disposable, ending up in the bin after being smashed up by the shore break. Wrong? “Yes it is, which is funny as the soft is way less disposable than a standard shortboard. The foamie can be used for 10 years each summer for all the family,” asserts Darren from Euroglass, putting forward the equation “Price x Manufacturing Quality.” Brands such as NSP are proudly displaying their Ecoboard label granted by the Sustainable Surf organisation thanks to their EPS moulding technology, a waste reduction policy and their use of bio resin: “NSP Softboards are built to last 3-5 times the lifespan of the average foamie, this comes at a premium price, but it’s still cheaper than replacing 3-5 foamies,” explains Caren Forbes. There’s even an Ecoboard Gold label bestowed on Notox’s Korko range, “making the Korko the only softboard to reach such a high level in the world,” proclaims Pierre Pomier, CEO and Co-founder. At Spooked Kooks Australia, all the plastic materials in the board come from recycled sources and so in turn are recyclable themselves: “we offer a 10% discount on your next spooked kooks board purchase if you return your old and used board to us. The best way forward is to maximise the lifespan of these boards, in the same vein as the programme set up by Softech in the United Kingdom with the Surfers Not Street Children association, bequeathing boards that are used but still surfable to the cause.

For retailers, the disposable nature of softboards is a commercial windfall on one side and a moral dilemma on the other. To create sustainable commerce, the surfing community has to make actions tally to its words. It’s up to brands to make the punk-fun image of these boards combine well with eco-conscious manufacturing: Live Fast, Die Young Old! ©

HIGHLIGHTS

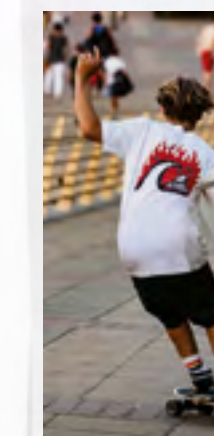
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THE RISE
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In a crowded media landscape the humble action sports podcast is seeing rapid growth. Where printed media outlets are in decline, online article lengths shortening and attention spans dwindling, the mighty podcast can be consumed like no other media today. When connected to the internet we’re responding to emails, scrolling our Instagram feed, chatting on Whatsapp - information is constantly flowing two ways. But what about the times when we’re driving, commuting, are underground, at the gym, doing DIY or walking the dog? Podcasts have filled a time of day when we are alone and hungry for content, but without the ability to fully engage in our smart phone. A study on the rise of the action sports podcast by **Harry Mitchell Thompson**.

Five years ago, the beauty of social media feeds meant that the user could curate their news intake by simply following accounts and sources they trusted. Now, cunning social media algorithms spew out ads and posts in an order to suit the platform’s business model, spelling disaster for media outlets who hedged their bets on one particular platform. However, at present, the podcast has slipped into the media landscape relatively unnoticed and yet fills a niche perfectly. Want a weekly news show that discusses all relevant subjects from that topic? Easy. Want long form interviews and in depth exposes? No problem. Barriers to entry? Low.

As with any new media platform, there comes a gold rush and the action sports podcast world has seen many new players in the past 12 months, but SOURCE has spoken to some of the industry’s early adopters to find out more about the medium and to explore the different business models available. We spoke with three podcasters all with different offerings. Chris Cote runs the Monday M.A.S.S. (The Monday Action Sports Show), a fast pace, co-presented weekly news show. Matt Barr’s Looking Sideways podcast features long form interviews with luminaries of the action sports world and David Lee Scales runs Surf Splendor, a podcast platform encompassing six different shows including a bi-weekly surf news show, a surf gossip show, an in depth interview podcast and David also produces shows for two other podcasters.

While the podcast is a new hyped form of disseminating content, with relatively low barriers to entry, it must be noted that each of these podcasters are already professionals in the action sports industry: Matt Barr from Looking Sideways is the director of ACM, a well established pan European action sports marketing agency. M.A.S.S’s Chris Cote is one of the action sports industry’s best-respected commentators and Surf Splendor’s David Lee-Scales is Creative Director for surfboard foam company, US Blanks. Looking Sideways’ guest highlights include three-time world surfing champion, Mick Fanning, snowboarding legend Bryan Iguchi, surf pioneer Tom Carroll and a slew of other “interesting stories in action sports and other related endeavours.” Chris Cote hosts his M.A.S.S with NBC Olympic snowboard commentator, Todd Richards while Scales co-hosts a show with published author, and Beach Grit provocateur, Chas Smith and also hosts another show with long-time surf reporter, Scott Bass.

FILLING A NICHE

So just why has the podcast exploded in recent years? Looking Sideways’ Matt has run his agency for a decade and before that edited UK snowboard magazine, Whitelines for even longer, and feels the new format simply “offers a way into the stories and the individuals that other media didn’t previously offer. When podcasts work well, and people relax, they’re more themselves, they’re more honest and more truthful. It’s people not filtered through a

traditional media lens.” David from Surf Splendor says that the podcast is a departure from social media’s instant gratification: “In the digital age, everything has become so curated and fake and your Instagram feed is just the best version of your life. I think that regardless of what technology does and how it changes our lives, the one common denominator that will always translate is humans wanting to connect with other humans and also feel validated by other humans. The podcast medium is great at that, especially unedited, because you can hear inflections in people’s voices that you don’t get when something goes to print.”

An avid podcast fan himself, David’s concocted a pretty interesting theory, which goes a step further in unpacking the podcast’s rise to success. David suggests that if the podcast is consumed through in-ear headphones, then “they’re literally in your orifice. My voice is inside of you. There’s an element of physical intrusion there that forces an intimacy that I don’t think can really be overlooked or overanalysed. That’s real and I’m a part of you. But if you go beyond that, and you’re in the car listening, that’s still very intimate. We’re doing a long car ride together and I know it from being a podcast listener, that I feel like I know the host. For people who I have listened to for years, I feel like I know those guys and if I saw them at a bar I could walk up very casually and jump right into a conversation as if they’re my friends.”

A journalist at heart, Matt Barr’s Looking Sideways endeavour has given him a resourceful output, in a media landscape where he was told by one editor that long stories nowadays are “like eating greens and there’s only so much eating greens we can make people do!” Ironical considering his podcast was established in January 2017 and has already featured over 75 interviewees, all of which run for at least an hour, emphasising the punch that the podcast packs.

A labour of love, a canny ancillary product for their day job, or is there a fruitful business model on the horizon?

THE BUSINESS MODEL

Until now podcasts in action sports have remained largely unpaid and have worked either as supplements to a business model (Surfer Mag, Surf Europe) or have allowed the likes of Scales, Barr and Cote to forge their very own media platforms. But just how are these podcasters justifying the time spent in producing and distributing a podcast? A labour of love, a canny ancillary product for their day job, or is there a fruitful business model on the horizon?

For Chris Cote it’s straight forward: “my day job is play-by-play for surf, skate, and snow broadcasts so I originally started doing the M.A.S.S just to keep the tools sharp between events as well as to force myself to keep on top of the latest news in all three sports.” Chris operates his podcast on a sponsorship model, where he works with a number of brands and shops who pay to be associated with different sections of the show. Although Cote says he’s not in it for the profit, “this is just a cool way of making the show pay for itself.”

Barr’s upfront about the connection between his marketing agency and his foray into the podcast world. “I think ultimately as a marketing agency we sell brands creatively. And I made up a brand that has been really successful. I think most people would see this as a demonstration of ACM. On quite a shallow level it’s a demonstration of reach and net worth. I see the podcast and ACM as really complementary. If you want to work with a PR and marketing agency you want to see that they’re well connected.”

Tackling the revenue model head-on, Barr has openly engaged with his audience on social media throughout every step of his journey, polling for support and critique on his involvement with brands in the space. After a hefty case of due diligence, Matt’s finally come down on his preferred business model and it comes in the form of a partnership with Patagonia that allows him to keep doing his Looking Sideways podcast as normal, but introducing a new show called Type 2, paid for by Patagonia, focusing on issues of activism in action sports and the outdoor world. The Type 2 show will appear in the Looking Sideways podcast feed, but will be branded accordingly and include an ident at the start, but Matt assures it “won’t be

Against a backdrop of large action sports social media channels falling victim to algorithms promoting paid content – large audience numbers but low engagement figures - it’s taken real journalism, hard work, quality and long established networks and relationships for these podcasts to grow legs.

a procession of interviews with Patagonia ambassadors and will be more of a spotlight on the people and issues in that world. Giving my listeners more free content and keeping the original Looking Sideways format ad-free.” A format borrowed from famed skate podcast, The Nine Club.

Scales is continually re-evaluating his thoughts on podcast revenues, but his current thoughts are that it “should always be available for free, but I want to at least empower people to throw some change in the tip jar if they want to. I also want to take the power out of the traditional surf media model, where if I was solely funded by brands, you then become just somewhat indebted to them and you start crafting content for the brand.” Having been in the space for almost six years, David’s explored a number of various payment models, from contribution to subscription and advertising models.

David worked with Hurley successfully at the Surf Ranch Pro 2018. “Hurley understands the podcast medium well enough to tell me, “we don’t want it to feel like it’s branded content. So by all means, be critical, ask Felipe (Toledo) if he’s comfortable at Teahupoo (the pro surfer had been given stick for not having his big wave chops about him). We want you to ask the hard questions.” Scales has also established a partnership series with Vissla, resulting in his Creators & Innovators podcast, where they told him “you know your space better than anybody. Do what you want to do and we’ll give you cart blanche to do it. You don’t have to interview our athletes if you don’t want to.”

It’s important to note that despite the low barriers of entry to the podcast world, what we mustn’t underestimate is the part these three podcasters’ notoriety has played in their successes. From printed mags to online news stories and podcasts; you can have the best content in the world, but if the distribution vehicle isn’t right, that story’s never going to reach its potential audience. David Lee Scales has worked hard at it for years and also used the experience and notoriety gained by Scott Bass (co-presenter of Spit!) to leverage the platform and more recently has used Chas Smith’s Beach Grit connection to really grow his numbers. And Matt Barr, a very well connected UK journalist who has worked in action sports media for 25 years has a well established network and Cote’s reputation combined with Olympic commentator Todd Richards speaks for itself.

Against a backdrop of large action sports social media channels falling victim to algorithms promoting paid content – large audience numbers but low engagement figures - it’s taken real journalism, hard work, quality and long established networks and relationships for these podcasts to grow legs.

Surfer Mag and Surf Europe used their podcasts for a number of years simply as additional content for their audience, but speaking on the rise of the podcast at a seminar during the recent edition of Surf Expo, David gave reference to the New York Times’ introduction of its 20 minute news recap pod, The Daily in 2017, which added to their 540K print readership with a colossal 3.8 million daily downloads within a few months. Interestingly, the NY Times managed to actually convert those listeners into paid subscribers and have even seen a surge in subscriptions, which they attribute to the popularity of their podcast.

It’ll be interesting to see not just how the podcasters interviewed here progress and potentially monetize their endeavours, but we also look forward to seeing how action sports media will embrace the platform. It would seem that while the gold rush has been strong in the last couple of years, making money from the platform is far from straight forward. ☹



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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE SUNGLASSES 2019

What are the key frame designs and style trends for 2019 boardsports sunglasses? Find all the essentials in our Retail Buyers Guide by SOURCE Skateboard Editor **Dirk Vogel**



Sunglasses are more than stylish accessories nowadays, but part of one of the world's hottest growth markets: The global eyewear market is currently worth around \$109 billion and projected to reach \$167 billion by 2023 (Business Wire). Major growth drivers include increasing exposure to electronic gadgets, as well as consumer demand to stand out by wearing premium, fashionable products. "Sunwear touches everyone. Everyone wears sunglasses and everyone's sunglasses are an extension of who they are," said Shay Williams, Product Development Specialist at Dragon Alliance, pointing out this season's Designed For All Collection.

The design of boardsports sunglasses tends to march to its own drummer with a main focus on offering reliable UV-protection and crystal-clear vision in a rugged package. But larger fashion trends can no longer be ignored. "The main trend is a need to diversify traditional boardsport frame shapes with more contemporary fashion designs," said Tom Lazarus, Operations Manager at Dirty Dog, a brand specialized in fashion-forward frames at price points between £39.99-£59.99. Josh Hartley, Global Design Director at VonZipper encourages retailers: "Take a little risk, purchase products that are a little more fashion forward and offer your consumers some more diversity. Roll the dice on a little smaller more fashion forward frame or that angular wire frame."

With that said, this season's boardsports sunnies represent the best of both worlds: Rugged performance and on-trend styles, offered at surprisingly reasonable price points. CHPO sunglasses retail from €29-35, while Sinner, Melon, and Carve sell polarized lenses and fashionable designs under €59.90. At VonZipper, the main price window is \$80 to \$120 for non-polarized models and \$120 to \$150 for polarized. Meanwhile, premium eyewear still comes at a price: Brands including Oakley, Dragon and Electric are rolling out the latest frame materials and high-end lenses at price points above the €200 benchmark.

"Sunwear touches everyone. Everyone wears sunglasses and everyone's sunglasses are an extension of who they are." Shay Williams, **Dragon Alliance**

THE 3 MAJOR SUNGLASSES TRENDS TO WATCH IN 2019 COLLECTIONS

1. Ready for action. Consumers demand action sports eyewear that enhances their experience and are ready to buy specific models and lens set-ups for different activities. "We definitely see a trend towards sports performance styles," said Philippe Lalemant, Marketing Director at Electric Eyewear. At Oakley, EMEA Business Manager Carles Malagarriga sees a trend towards, "specific frames and lenses for different activities," including the Split Shot model specifically designed for use in and around the water, equipped with Prizm Deep Water lenses. The season's action-ready frames incorporate rugged materials, for instance Oakley's Unobtainium, Red Bull SPECT's Ultra Flex and 100% memory from Dirty Dog.
2. Futuristic tech. As part of the 1990s retro fashion trend, high-tech frame designs – think wrap-arounds, masks and thin wire frames – are worn unironically. Oakley's techy shield frames lead the way, joined by futuristic designs and the season's hottest phenomenon: "Acetate and wire combos are trending," said Lucy Martino, Head of Product at OTIS. Red Bull SPECT Eyewear takes it to the next level by using wire inserts for added performance in the

Dual Temple System: “A hidden second temple can be pushed out when needed, hides fully behind the ear and thus provides best hold during sporty activities,” said Marius Cadalbert, Head of Brand at Red Bull SPECT.

3. Reflective mirror lenses. Bringing the season’s tech and performance aesthetic full circle, lenses feature mirror coatings in classic silver and a broad variety of shades. “Coloured mirror lenses are the trend. Especially pink lenses,” said Boukje Bontenbal, Product Manager at Sinner. Look out for flashy gold mirrored lenses from Red Bull SPECT while Dirty Dog will be, “introducing different shades of Blues and Greens to suit the customer’s tastes.”

2019 FRAME STYLES

Frame styles are a mixed bag this season, says Josh Hartley at VonZipper: “We all know the 90s are back and the 2000s are already here as well... Small frames, pop colours, monochromatic frames and lenses, wrap around, wire frames, and cat eyes are still trending.” Last season’s trend for John Lennon-style, classic frames continues in frames by Zeal, Bolle, CHPO (Liam model), Dirty Dog (Pandaface) Dragon (Hype Profile), D’Blanc, Electric (Knoxville), Horsefeathers, Melon (Layback 2.0), Oakley, OTIS (A Day Late), Sinner (Dagmar), VonZipper (Morse), Smith, Quiksilver, Roxy and ZEAL (Boone). But a new range of micro trends is joining the party. “Round frames are still hot, but we will also see a lot of straight frame shapes this season and a lot of sunglasses with a double nose bridge,” said Boukje at Sinner. In women’s collections, classic Cat Eye frames are reimagined by OTIS (Lyla), CHPO (Bodhi) and ZEAL (Crowley).

The other major 2019 trending style, as mentioned above, revolves around shields. Red Bull SPECT is, “launching a shield frame line especially designed for the need of bikers, runners and cyclers.” Melon has the Halfway, “a semi wrap-around model which does not look too extreme, but works great,” said Neil Slinger at Melon Optics. Moving things forward, Oakley is introducing the Ahyris collection, “a sun and optical lifestyle collection that features a unified design aesthetic that is symbolic of and takes cues from the eye. The name ‘Ahy-Ris’ finds its source in the collection’s inspiration, the iris of the eye, the window to the soul.”

In terms of frame colours, crystal-clear acetate frames are all the rage – especially in bolder frames such as cat eyes. Phil at Electric points out, “matte black, tortoise and bi-coloured frames,” while Neil at Melon sees a trend towards metal and gold frames. Flexing its design muscle, Oakley introduces the Oakley CHRYSTL, where “the lens becomes the frame” by using, “a single design element to connect the frame and temples together, topped off with a rollbar that adds both style and function.” Also look out for, “a lot of glossy, tinted, slightly transparent frames and tortoise frames,” said Helena Scholl, Marketing Manager Europe at Carve.

“The main trend is a need to diversify traditional boardsport frame shapes with more contemporary fashion designs.” Tom Lazarus, **Dirty Dog**

LENS TECHNOLOGIES

Customers demand full UV protection and polarization, now found in the mid-price segment and most entry-level collections. Maintaining a high standard, Neil at Melon Optics said that all lenses, “are Japanese polarised UV400 lenses as standard. We also incorporate our own Amplify Lens technology on the coloured chrome lenses which adds a richer depth of colour and improved contrast.” Dirty Dog relies on Photo+ lenses to offer photo-chromic properties, while OTIS introduces Light Improvement Technology (LIT) lenses with hydrophobic qualities. At Oakley, Carles Malagarriga names the sports-specific Prizm lens as the season’s focal technology: “With an even larger lens assortment, two sport specific and four new lifestyle lenses, we are confident that Prizm is what sets Oakley apart from our competitors.”

When it comes to lens technologies, not all collections are created equal, said Shay Williams at Dragon Alliance: “Our polarized film is sandwiched in so it doesn’t flake off like some lower-end brands, and it’s not heavy and expensive like a lot of glass brands.” Josh at VonZipper is pushing, “The Wildlife Lens Technology, a polarized lens that blocks 99% of the damaging high energy visible light waves, aka Blue Light.” Phil at Electric is stoked on, “a proprietary technology called OHM lenses. These lenses combine a category exclusive synthetic melanin injection with unique colour tints to maximise clarity and protection.” Instead of developing their own lens tech, a large number of brands trust in German quality Carl Zeiss lenses – adding their own customization – including Spektrum.

“With an even larger lens assortment, two sport specific and four new lifestyle lenses, we are confident that Prizm is what sets Oakley apart from our competitors.” Carles Malagarriga, **Oakley**



photo Dragon

LENS TINTS

Lens colours are a powerful medium that can single-handedly transform the overall look of an eyewear frame. The season’s buzzing style, as mentioned above, revolves around mirrored lens coatings in a variety of tints from gold and silver all the way to electric blues. For a more subtle aesthetic – and a less ‘techy’ look – also watch out for rose and subtle blue tints from a variety of brands.

Let’s not forget that lens tints also represent a performance attribute. At Zeal Optics, Director of Brand Activation & Digital Strategy Mike Lewis, says that, “the Ellume Polarized options are available in four colorways that have different functionalities.” The Copper option “enhances contrast and depth perception by blocking harmful light rays that cause haze so you see greens, reds and blues more vividly.” Oakley is combining tech and style by introducing four Prizm universal lens colours with Prizm Indigo, Prizm Rose Gold, Prizm Peach and Prizm Grey. Meanwhile, the team at CHPO said: “Leaving a colourful SS19 behind, we’re heading for mostly black and darker lenses this season.”

FRAME MATERIALS

The two major frame materials trends for 2019 are functionality and sustainability. In the functionality department, Red Bull SPECT incorporates TPE (Thermo Plastic Elastomers) for best flexibility, the Dragon H2O Floatable Collection offers frames that can swim, and Oakley holds together 24 frame elements in a single piece via Coldfuse technology. The most frequently used materials in boardsports collections are still Grillamide and acetate, including Electrics’ premium acetate sourced from Italian experts Mazzuchelli. Wire elements are trending, while titanium is slowly finding its way into the segment.

On the sustainability front, boardsports brands are committed to reducing their environmental impact: OTIS implements bio-acetate that is 100% bio-degradable, Sinner launches the BPE-free Eco Friendly collection, CHPO uses 100% recycled plastic and Zeal Optics uses Z-Resin that is derived from the castor bean plants. Sustainability can also mean buying sunglasses – and other products such as clothing – less frequently. Eyewear brand Aphex was created in 2011 with the belief that, “re-usable materials or ‘modulable’ glasses are the new trend. If we can buy only the lens, frame or hedges when damaged, no need to buy new ones,” said Aphex founder Maarten van der Laan. ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Performance-ready shades
- 2 Unapologetic tech designs
- 3 Coloured reflective lenses
- 4 Technical shield frames
- 5 Cat eye frames for women
- 6 Clear acetate frames
- 7 Eco-friendly materials





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Dragon - Hype



Electric - Moon



Epokhe - Valentine



AZR - Chic



Bolle - Ice



CEBE - Strickland



Dirty Dog - Blade



Dragon - Rune



Electric - Nashville



Gloryfy - Hitchiker



Aphex - SUB



AZR - Jazz



Bolle - Frank



CHPO - Bodhi



Dirty Dog - Cryptronic



Dragon - The Verse H20



Epokhe - Candy



Gloryfy - Kingston



Aphex - SULO



AZR - Joker



CEBE - Baxter



CHPO - Liam



Dirty Dog - Pandaface



Electric - Knoxville



Epokhe - Dylan



Gloryfy - XTR



Horsefeather - Foster



Melon - LB2



Oakley - Coldfuse



RAEN - Byres



Roxy - Moonrock



Shred - Stomp



Spect - Fly



Spektrum - Blank



VonZipper - Roller



Horsefeather - Merlin



Melon - MTB



OTIS - A Day Late



RAEN - Hewes



Roxy - Nagara



Smiths - Agency



Spect - Lace



Spektrum - Kall



Zeal - Campo



Horsefeather - Nomad



Oakley - Apparition



OTIS - Lyla Havana



RAEN - Sage



Shred - Belushki



Smiths - Barra



Spect - Spin



VonZipper - Ditty



Zeal - Cowrley



Melon - Halfway



Oakley - Chrstyl



OTIS - Omar



Roxy - Jane



Shred - Provocator



Smiths - Eastbank



Spektrum - Anjan



VonZipper - Morse



Zeal - Morrison



photo Cabianca

BIG WIG INTERVIEW JOHNNY CABIANCA

Brazilian born surfboard shaper Johnny Cabianca, best known for shaping World Champ Gabriel Medina's boards moved to the Basque Country in the year 2000 and opened Basque Country Surf Company (BCSC) with local shaper Mikel Agote in 2016. The family man and former Pukas employee takes the hot seat for this issue's Big Wig to talk us through everything from the formation of BCSC, his views on the current surfboard retail landscape, eco boards and Asian imports, to his beginnings in Brazil where he grew up as friends with Medina's stepfather. Read on for the story behind one of the surf industry's best-unsung heroes.

Interview by SOURCE Editor, **Harry Mitchell Thompson**.

Johnny, please tell us your history.

I was born in São Paul, Brazil one hour from the beach. My family used to go to the beach for holidays when I was a kid and seeing surfers always fascinated me. When I was 13 years old, my older brother got a surfboard. We shared this board between the three brothers and repaired it ourselves whenever it got dinged. By the time I turned 17-18, fixing surfboards had become a little business for me and a friend of mine. It was also the time I built my first surfboard. Coming from a traditional family, where the most important thing was getting a good education, making surfboards was only possible part-time while going to university. In the beginning, I didn't shape but did all the other parts of building a board: glassing, sanding, painting. And then I started to create my own shapes. When I was 31 I moved to a beach town called Maresias (the place Gabriel Medina is from) where my production output grew bigger. In 2000 I received a proposal to come to Europe to build a CNC machine in Santander. From there the story goes; I went to work at Pukas for a little while, then in Portugal for one year, then to Hawaii for over a year and at the end of 2003, I came back to Europe and have been here (almost) ever since.

Please could you explain your relationship with Gabriel Medina.

Growing up and going to the beach I became friends with two guys, Charles (Gabriel's step dad) and his brother Richard. They were part of my crew and before moving to Maresias (BRA), I knew Gabriel's mother Simone really well. It's a small place where people know each other. Gabriel was a little kid back then. When I moved to Europe I lost contact with them. In 2009, Gabriel was 15 years old and came to Europe with Charles to do some surf events. This brought us back together and it's when I started doing boards for him.

Growing up and going to the beach I became friends with two guys, Charles (Gabriel's step dad) and his brother Richard. In 2009, Gabriel was 15 years old and came to Europe with Charles to do some surf events. This brought us back together and it's when I started doing boards for him.

It's great to have a local person by my side running this company here in the Basque Country. We currently have five people working at the factory. We have a nice building in the industrial area in Zarautz, sitting at around 300m2. We have the capacity to produce up to 10 boards per day. We have an AKU CNC machine, in my opinion the most developed cutting machine, which makes the most precise pre-shapes.

You started BCSC with Mikel Agote in 2016.

How did this come about?

I decided to leave Pukas at the end of 2014 to start my own label Cabianca Surfboards. For one year my little family and I moved back to Maresias to start things off. In 2016 we came back with the plan to build a factory in Europe (Zarautz) and my good friend Mikel Agote had the idea of starting his own brand as well. So we decided to join forces; it's great to have a local person by my side running this company here in the Basque Country. We currently have five people working at the factory. We have a nice building in the industrial area in Zarautz, sitting at around 300m2. We have the capacity to produce up to 10 boards per day. We have an AKU CNC machine, in my opinion the most developed cutting machine, which makes the most precise pre-shapes. We build PU/Polyester boards using the best materials on the market: Artic Blanks, Silmar resin, Hexcel fibreglass and we have our own construction in EPS/Epoxy.

How do you distribute your boards globally?

Doing surfboards for me is natural. I know what it takes to build a good board. When it comes to sales, I am happy not having to think about it too much. We're continually building a network across the world by choosing partners in different countries; Gabriel's name helps this a lot. We work with great partners in some countries, while in others we are still struggling to find the right person...

How do you see AI/robots affecting the surfboard shaping industry?

The CNC machines cutting surfboards are basic compared with CNC machines used in other industries. A lot of money had to be invested to invent something automated to replace the manual work of building a surfboard. After the pre-shape (done by computer), even in big productions in Taiwan or China all production steps are done by hand. But surfing is definitely growing... so maybe it becomes interesting enough for someone to invest in this technology. For now, small productions like ours are needed to build custom boards especially for professional athletes.

Please explain your process you have from designing a surfboard right the way through to shaping, sanding, glassing.

First of all I develop a shape, which I test with team riders to make it a "master" board model. After this I re-dimension the master to make a list of stock dimensions - but most of our boards are custom made, meaning I change the master according to the needs / weight / size of each surfer. I use Shape3DX and AKU programs to design. After cutting the board on our AKU machine, I spend 30-40 minutes in the shaping room, finishing the pre-shape, opening the holes for the fin plugs before either painting it (if it has a spray) or handing it over to the glasser. If a board is slightly different to standard models, I'll be part of the glassing process myself. Then it goes to hot coat and to the sander. Of course the process can vary depending on the construction; EPS/Epoxy boards need more steps.

What are your thoughts on the current surfboard retail model and how it will change? How is the internet and social media affecting how people buy surfboards?

In Europe surfers like to consume what's in the media. It doesn't matter which segment of surfboards (high performance, retro etc), but surfers like to consume labels from Australia and the USA. The surfboard industry in Europe is younger than on other continents and doesn't have a big history or as much credibility. Most of the people building surfboards in Europe come from outside (me included). So the bigger players for sure get the top labels. Regarding selling online, I can only talk of my own experiences, which might not be representative of the whole market. We had a web shop where people could build their custom board and pay right away. Not many people seemed to trust this service. They want to talk to the shaper, get personal feedback before deciding to buy. So the kind of surfboards we make; high quality custom surfboards, are maybe bought online but not with one click in a web shop. Since we removed the web shop and made it an enquiry platform only, many more people sent requests.

Any thoughts on boards imported from Asia?

The quality of the boards produced in Asia is getting better and better. But it's still boards that have to be pre-ordered a long time ahead and have no options to be customized (one by one). With fun boards and retro boards, dimensions don't play such a big role, so stock dimensions might work for them. For performance surfboards it's different. As a shop you need to have a big stock to have the right board for every surfer. Often times big stocks get old, then have to be sold cheap. As Asian operations are on the rise, the market is oversaturated with surfboards and this automatically lowers the price. I have been building surfboards for 40 years. Good quality doesn't seem to matter too much to many surfers these days. I hear many shop owners talk negatively about the quality of many big labels, but it's still the ones they buy the most of as they get the best payment terms to buy them. The big labels come up with something new; a new model, a new construction, no matter whether it works or not, it's created to make people feel they need to have the latest model. So there are definitely more boards on the market than needed and in the end surfboards aren't ecologically friendly. As a note to clients, even if there is a sustainable sticker on a board or a claim of zero waste production behind it, I would check just what that information really means.

The CNC machines cutting surfboards are basic compared with CNC machines used in other industries. A lot of money had to be invested to invent something automated to replace the manual work of building a surfboard

Which materials do you believe will be the future of surfboard manufacturing?

The standard is still PU/Polyester (90% of the athletes on the CT use this construction). It has the best feeling, allowing pro surfers to achieve good scores. This year we really feel that people are ordering many more EPS/Epoxy boards. But there are always some contradictions. While many people are becoming more and more concerned with owning a greener board, at the same time the trend still adds carbon to every board... For now it's basically those two types of construction mentioned above. Of course there are also boards made in XTR, wood, etc... but a real alternative, a really sustainable solution is still missing.

What are the highlight features of Medina's boards?

I've been talking a lot about the two models he mainly uses, the DFK and the Medina. Our website goes into great detail about the specifics, but what he really likes are round tails. And he really isn't a great fan of EPS/Epoxy.

How will you shape a board for Medina differently for the ocean Vs the wave pool?

Basically there are two different types of wave pools: static ones (like river surfing) and more 'real' ones such as Wavegarden, Kelly's wave, etc. Gabriel doesn't really surf on static waves and for comp pools, we make him the same board models as for the ocean. For static waves I've developed special models, although they aren't tested by Gabriel.

How far do you see the Brazilian storm continuing? Is it possible we'll see a Brazilian winner of every CT stop this year?

The storm passed by, but it's still raining! Surfing is gaining more and more recognition in Brazil. Schools like Gabriel's "Instituto Medina" help promoting more and more talent. Brazil has been playing an increasingly big role on the CT for a long time now. A Brazilian winner at every stop of the CT this year... I doubt it. ☹

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE **LONGBOARDS 2019**

It's high time to write longboard orders for the summer season. Before committing to anything, make sure to read our 2019 Longboards Retail Buyer's Guide by SOURCE Skateboard Editor **Dirk Vogel**



Going into the season, we asked endemic brands about the current state of the European longboard market, also compared to the United States. "Much like in the USA, you better have a damn good story to tell and deliver good ideas and quality to stay in the game," said Andreas 'Maui' Maurmeir, Retail and Marketing Manager at Sector 9, who are celebrating 25 years(!) in the longboard business this year.

Everyone agreed that it's a much tougher market than five years ago, but authentic brands are now seeing a silver lining. "The longboard market isn't as big as it was a few years ago. However, the market is now clean with only the real brands which have a legitimacy in this segment, where of course Globe is one of the true players," said Josh Barrow, EU Marketing Manager at Globe, adding: "To succeed now in this market, you have to bring something else to the table. Like boards with new fabrics or nice design at a correct price, as we are doing with our bamboo, pearl, cork and coconut boards." As a direct result of less brands and more focus on exclusive products, price ranges have seen a slight lift. The main price point for entry level boards has climbed from €149 for completes to around €169, with standouts at this price range including Sector 9's SKC Lobo super-responsive entry board. Price point ceilings for premium complete boards have climbed from slightly below €300 to €349, depending on truck and wheel configurations, while built-to-order completes from premium brands such as Loaded Boards can cost up to €500 as part of the customisation trend. Speaking of trends, before you write orders for the summer, have a look at our 6 Most Important 2019 Longboard Trends:

1. SHAPES: STUBBIER RIDES

Today's customers don't want their longboards to be too long. "We continue to see a trend towards more compact decks that feature shapes and design characteristics traditionally seen in longer boards, especially when it comes to added ride stability. Drop-through mounting, drop decks, and deep rocker are all means of providing more casual riders a stable, comfortable pushing platform well-suited for day-to-day transportation," said Nathan Pauli, VP Sales & Marketing at Origin Distribution (DB Longboards, Rayne Longboards, Cloud Ride Wheels, Atlas Truck Co.). Putting an exact number

"Much like in the USA, you better have a damn good story to tell and deliver good ideas and quality to stay in the game." Andreas 'Maui' Maurmeir, Retail and Marketing Manager at **Sector 9**

on board lengths, Maui at Sector 9 said: "We had shapes over 45 inches and do not exceed the 42-inch line anymore. But hey, that can change really quick!" According to Ebbe Centrano at surf-inspired company Ocean Pacific, kids and beginners are gravitating towards freeride shapes between 35–40 inches for, "low centre of gravity, good stability, easy to push as you don't have to bend the knee as much. A good board to progress with if you get ready to learn slides." Arbor has added the Axis 37 inch for fans who want something shorter than the Axis 40, Miller Division is back to selling tons of pintails, while Globe sees a shift from teched-out shape moulds to classic shapes."

2. GRAPHICS: TOP AND BOTTOM

Genuine art separates department store boards from the real thing. For 2019, Sector 9 features artist collabs with street artist Spencer Keeton Cunningham and The Minimalist Wave. Here's a hot trend: highlighted by clear grip or cut out via stencil, proper top graphics are as important as bottom artwork this season. OP delivers the full package with the Makai model in bright yellow and blue. Dusters California goes all out in their collab with rock'n'roll deities KISS: "The notorious photos of Gene Simmons (bottom) and Paul Stanley (top) have been used to create a tastefully loud and classy longboard to be appreciated by skaters of all ages," said Desiree Moore, Marketing Director at Dusters California, adding: "Wood burn, laser-etching and gold foil prints are just some of the methods we use to stand apart from other brands and add more value to our boards." The Globe Coconut series features exclusive top detailing and the DB Longboards Aeroglyph series presents the photography of Reuben Wu, joined by a series with colourful illustrations by artist Jose Mendez. The team at Madrid

Skateboards is stoked on, “this year’s hot-rod inspired graphics by Tanner Leaser, a super talented skater and pinstriper from Texas.”

3. SUSTAINABILITY: LOW FOOTPRINT

Consumers demand transparency and sustainability from brands they trust. Dusters California is working with the National Forest Foundation with its Regrowth Program. “In efforts to reduce our carbon footprint, we have been planting twice as many trees as we harvest to make our boards. Our new collections will include the Regrowth emblem as part of the top construction to show our support,” said Desiree Moore. Dave Gitlin at Globe is on the same page: “We’re doing a lot of work behind the scenes to green up our production and distribution chain.” At Carver Skateboards, it’s all about a conscious choice of materials. “From the eco veneers and minimal graphics on our new Haedron series, to our collaboration with Bureo, where we us a composite plastic deck using recycled fishing nets,” said Eben Woodall, VP of Sales at Carver. Miller Division is, “working on the development of sustainable materials and production processes in order to launch more eco-friendly products.” Sustainability goes beyond deck constructions: “The Sucrose Initiative is our aftermarket performance wheel program, utilising a sugar-based curative to reduce our reliance on petroleum, while adding life and response to the wheels,” said Nate Shute at Arbor.

Investing in moulds behind the scenes really allows us to produce boards that are unique and ride with the feel of boards much further up the pricing ladder.” Andy King, **Mindless**



4. MATERIALS & CONSTRUCTIONS: HIGH-TECH & LIGHTWEIGHT

Longboard companies continue their search for innovative board constructions. The main goal for 2019 is weight reduction. Maui at Sector 9 is proud of, “the ultra-light poplar wood vert-lam construction in our Downhill Division line.” Dusters California have, “recently experimented with hemp as a cosmetic feature but it also adds strength as a bio composite.” At Origin Distribution, Nathan points out: “The new DB Longboards CoreFlex Crossbows feature hand-poured resin art bases, a feature that has never been offered before on longboard decks. The Rayne Deelite series features a foam core composite construction that offers ultra-light, high performance boards.” Over at Globe, the development of coconut boards kicks into high gear: “Our up-cycled coconut material makes its debut on our signature cutaway longboards, The Geminons,” said Dave Gitlin, Senior Skateboard Designer at Globe, while teasing a new series featuring no wood(!) at all. At Mindless, Andy King said: “The Core Freeride offers unbelievable strength and quality at a price point that’s affordable for everyone. Investing in moulds behind the scenes really allows us to produce boards that are unique and ride with the feel of boards much further up the pricing ladder.” Madrid relies on Maple and Formica for performance boards, bamboo on cruisers and longboards for added flex.

5. TRUCKS: READY TO CARVE

Riders are pushing on concrete in 2019 but thinking surfing. “I see the trends starting to head a little more towards loose and flowy carving trucks,” said Eben at Carver Skateboards. Globe is serving the surf skate trend with the

“We continue to see a trend towards more compact decks that feature shapes and design characteristics traditionally seen in longer boards, especially when it comes to added ride stability.” Nathan Pauli, VP Sales & Marketing at **Origin Distribution** (DB Longboards, Rayne Longboards, Cloud Ride Wheels, Atlas Truck Co.).



Onshore complete series, featuring decks with fibre-carve constructions that rely on board flex to propel the rider forward in combination with new Revenge trucks and round-lipped wheels. Benoit Brecq, Marketing Manager at Flying Wheels, presents the perfect trucks for surfing on the streets: “The STR Surf truck with its Ultra closed Angle geometry allows extreme turning radius and increases kinetic pumping effect. Our Capitol truck are specifically designed to offer the most comfortable turning sensation.” Mindless has launched a surf skate series, while Carver aligned with female skate collective GRL SWRL to spread the surf skate vibe. Moonshine MFG just introduced the Arsenal Trucks, “cast trucks with a precision truck manufacturing process and feel.” At Jucker Hawaii, brand founder and namesake Mike Jucker announced: “We launched our own Longboard Truck in 2018 for which we got tons of good reviews and now we are working on a skateboard truck as well.”

6. WHEELS & ACCESSORIES: INNOVATION & ADDED VALUE

Get ready for an influx of transparent wheels in cool dyes that adapt to specific riding styles, like Sector 9’s 69mm Top Shelf wheels for fast carving and cruising and 58mm Nineball wheels for tight carves. At Origin Distro, Nathan said: “Cloud Ride will be dropping special edition versions of a few of the most popular wheels in the line-up – the Iceeez and Slusheez. These wheels will feature a modified urethane formula that offers easy slide initiation with predictable control.” Also keep an eye out for Orangatang, Blood Orange Morgans for sliding, Cadillac Cruisers for cruising, Hawks and Venom Magnums for racing. Customisation remains a major trend and several brands offer eight holes for adjustable wheelbases, like Miller Division. High-quality bearings such as Black Arrows are trending, so are premium bushings like the new Venom Plug Barrel Bushings for Caliber Trucks. And for those looking to join the surf skate trend without buying new trucks, Benoit at Flying Wheels has the Lombard Base plate for use with traditional trucks: “It’s the Ultimate Evolution in our surfin’ series. A spring compression baseplate allows maximum truck tilt. You can convert your classic longboard skate to a surf skate thanks to this baseplate.” With that said, everyone can be cruising into the 2019 season. ☺

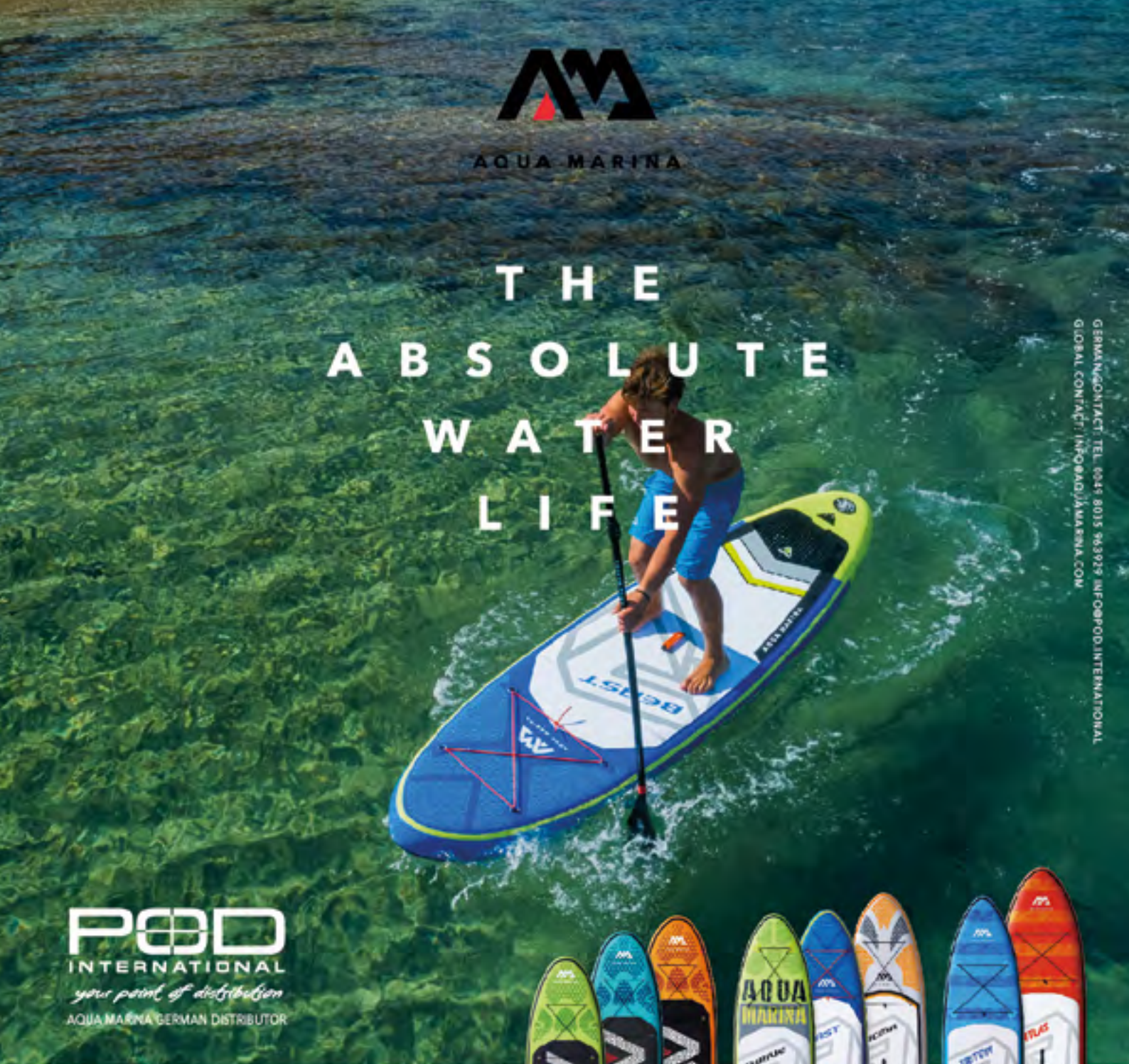
HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Shorter board lengths
- 2 Top graphics
- 3 Lightweight tech constructions
- 4 Sustainable materials and manufacturing
- 5 Surf skate trucks & decks
- 6 Clear wheels
- 7 Premium bushings & hardware

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BUYER SCIENCE

MARK STEWART SCOTLAND'S FREEZE PRO SHOP

As the name would suggest, Scotland's Freeze Pro Shop started out life as a snowsports retailer but with surfers on their perpetual hunt for empty lineups, Scotland (and Northern England)'s wave rich (but frigid) coastline is seeing participation figures soar. This married with the advent of wave pools has seen Freeze increase their surf market endeavours and we spoke with Mark Stewart, their Surf Buyer/Ops Manager to see how they're tackling the market.



want to be able to shop online and are willing to buy almost anything on the internet. A few years ago, I would have never imagined that people would be willing to buy a wetsuit or a surfboard online, as they're such considered and specific purchases, but that's exactly what's happened. When a customer has the choice of 10 or more retailers to choose from, all offering a similar service and prices, then customer loyalty becomes increasingly hard to gain. It was a very different scenario when you had the option of your local shop or a long drive to the next town.

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

We focus on the technical goods market and aim to deliver strongly there. There are some other retailers who do the fashion side of things very well, and we don't aim to compete directly on that. We obviously offer a range of soft goods so that customers can add on impulse buys, but we know our strengths and try to stick to them.

I've noticed some strange things in wetsuits over the past near-decade. The top-end suits are really pushing the technology further, but they aren't scared of an eye-watering price tag. The mid-range is becoming more and more relevant, which I don't think is a bad thing. People are realising that the product at the top of the tree is a bit of a niche and maybe isn't for everyone. The technology will eventually trickle down into the more affordable suits. It feels like less people nowadays are opting for the 'top-spec' wetsuits in lieu of a more affordable suit that still performs. When you can get two great suits for the price of one £500+ suit, then it's hard to justify spending that hard-earned cash.

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

There is no single thing which equates to a successful business partnership, it's a mix of the whole package. However, with the advent of online retailing, suddenly data and information are king. The customer is now rarely talking to us directly, so it becomes difficult to explain why a certain product is the right one for them. All that information needs to be rapidly and obviously accessible to a huge range of customer types in as easily digestible a format as possible. It is astonishing that in this day, there are still some brands which are unable to supply very basic information to us on their products (no photos, no barcodes). It feels like we, the retailer, are the first person to have seen the product sometimes. I get the impression it's a surprise to some brands that one of their products actually exists!

Where do you see the future of surf retail?

It will continue to evolve as it has done for the past few years. One huge change will be the advent of the wave gardens. That will suddenly mean a real opportunity for people to demo and try before buying. That is something that is really lacking in the sport, especially in the north of the UK, or in colder climates, or those with inconsistent conditions. Demoing boards, fins and even wetsuits to an extent would be a huge bonus for customers. It's also going to be a key first point of contact between newcomers to the sport and surf retailers – I see big things here. ☺

Please tell us about your background.

I've been working with Freeze since 2010. Before that I was a water sports instructor: Windsurf, sailing, wakeboard, kayak and so on. I've always been into the sports but moving to Freeze was a bit of a shock. Being office-based rather than on the beach is quite a surprise, but it quickly became a natural shift, and I haven't looked back since.

Surfing has been a major passion in my life since my first experience when I was 10. I remember my brother getting a surfboard and wetsuit for his 18th, and me being desperate to get out with him and try it out. He very kindly lent me his wetsuit gloves, so with only these and a pair of swim shorts as protection against the bitterly cold February North Sea, we both headed out into the surf. I was immediately hooked, and frozen.

What's the most challenging aspect of the surf industry at present?

Competition in retail is very tough. British surfing is having a great time right now, with a real boom in participant numbers, but there are more online retailers than ever. Although our focal point has always been our Edinburgh shop, there's no getting away from the fact that consumers

freezeproshop.com



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KANEHOE HAWAII COMPOSITES

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RS
COMPOSITE
10'6" X 20" 100L
10'6" X 22" 120L
10'6" X 23.5" 140L
10'6" X 25" 160L
10'6" X 27" 180L
11'0" X 21.5" 100L
11'0" X 23" 120L
11'0" X 24.5" 140L
11'0" X 26" 160L
11'0" X 28" 180L

RS
INFLATABLE
11'0" X 24" 100L
12'6" X 28" 120L
14'0" X 28" 140L
14'0" X 28" 160L

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE SUP 2019

The success of SUPs was so resounding that it ended up passing specialist boardsports retailers by. In 2019, the core brands are continuing their efforts by offering expertise and added technical value that sets them apart from the "no-name" inflatables on offer. A game of survival. By **David Bianic**

photo Starboard

After about fifteen years of commercial existence, the SUP should be starting to take a new turn and entering into adulthood. The crazy growth in the last ten years has sometimes placed the product before the demand. To avoid a crash, the sector has to float back down towards becoming a sustainable market. An opinion shared by most of the brands we talked to: "2016/17 seems to be a peak year for board sales from the brands to retailers", reckons Anthony Scaturro, Global Brand Manager at SIC Maui while "2018 seemed to be a decent year for retailers who were largely working to sell down older inventory". For Phil Mandeau at Dyna-Trade, distributor for Focus, it's no longer about the growth seen in the first ten years, with the SUP having "reached a peak of new entries into the sport, and now the growth will be much slower." At Ari'i Nui they prefer to talk about the market's "maturity" since many people already own an SUP and that "the turnover is not as big as in the past", as stated by Benoît Breccq, Marketing Director.

Of course, the facts are different according to whether you are talking about hard SUP or inflatable board brands, with this segment hugely boosting the market as shown by figures from Red Paddle Co.: "Many of our established stores reported upwards of 130% year-on-year growth", says George Shillito, Head of Customer Experience. Indiana are also celebrating a 50% increase in the number of pre orders between 2018 and 2019, made up of 90% inflatables while "The ratio of hardboards dropped down every year", says cofounder Maurus Strobel.

"2016/17 seems to be a peak year for board sales from the brands to retailers."
Phil Mandeau, **Focus**

INFLATABLE TRENDS

As Benoît Breccq from Ari'i Nui reminds us, "the iSUP category is 90% focused on leisure and casual". That poses the question: is there a solid outlet for performance-based inflatables (that are more in step with the boardshop world)? For Anthony Scaturro from SIC, the answer is a clear yes, with boards aimed at "the accomplished paddler who does not have the space or means to transport a hardboard to the water". According to him, this avenue of development will be largely based on the creation of a competition category for inflatables, an argument also subscribed to by Axel Bischoff from Siren.

There are even certain uses where an iSUP is favourable over a hardboard, starting with travel. Phil Bridges from Tiki confirms the growing interest for paddling expeditions, citing the excellent results from their Explorer model, "which can be a tandem SUP or expedition SUP". The space saved and convenience of inflatables is impossible to beat in this sense, illustrated perfectly by the 9'6" Compact from Red Paddle Co, introduced last year.

Still boasting the best of the MSL-PACT technology, the Compact only takes up half the space of a conventional iSUP once folded. The river is also the inflatable's domain, a credo held by Hala Gear: "Hala Gear incorporates the most leading technology into their inflatable SUPs, ranging from inflatable carbon to patented retractable fins to DoubleStack construction (two chambers providing different characteristics)," says Marketing Manager Victoria Ohegyi.

These multiple chambers represent a major innovation in the inflatable category after many years focussed on various dropstitch constructions. Initially developed as a safety feature (in case of puncture), this multi-chamber set up now provides further advantages. "We've a 14' Vortex Air and 12'6 Slipstream Air which utilise 4 chambers in a way which has permitted a narrow hull, added rigidity, adjustable hull shape and reduced weight in using true air chambers which have no dropstitch", explains Steve West from Mistral who is dreaming of hybrid boards that are half-rigid, half-inflatable. Also adepts of the double chamber on their touring boards, Aqua Marina are highlighting the "hardcore" character of the new generation of SUP, thanks mostly to reinforced DWF (Double Wall Fabric), which means

"BIC Sport continues to believe in the need for a solid range of hardboard for rentals, the entry-level and SUP beginners."
Benoît Tréguilly, **BIC sport**

"The designs and tech are changing on a daily basis" Andrew Mencinsky, **Boardworks**



"Nowadays we already have some models that can be inflated up to 20psi", assures Marketing Director Tony Lu, or "extreme rigidity that makes the iSUP very close to a hardboard". Naish are also getting in on this niche through a Stiffer is Better campaign that salutes their new iSUP range designed for pressures of 15-20 psi and whose rigidity is measurable by a standardised flex index (obtained by placing a 60kg weight on the board between two trestles separated by 2m75).

Other tricks allow also the shape of the iSUP to be tweaked, for example the two PVC rods placed on the hull of the inflatable RS Series at SIC Maui that "mimic the step channel offered in the RS composite board" to reduce the row effect and paddle in a straight line for longer. While on the subject we should mention the Airline range from Starboard replicated in 2019 that has a longitudinal aramid cable running through it to lock in the board's shape and to provide tension that's close to that of rigid race boards.

Innovation to inflatables has also reached accessories in the form of a telescopic paddle with integrated high-pressure pump, which brought Airboard the highest awards at PaddleExpo and the ISPO Awards 2019. Equally as astonishing is the Pecfin system from Riber, "penguin fins" that are fixed onto the board's rails allowing you "to navigate tight spaces by simply rocking from side to side"!

HARDBOARD TRENDS

The prosperity of the rigid SUP category is therefore largely dependant on its inflatable counterpart. Newcomers are turning towards iSUPs in a huge majority and, depending on the success of this first experience, will then opt for a composite model. Yes and...no. "The market is still growing a lot, it is very different than what we created at first", declares Sylvain Aurenche, Commercial Director at Lokahi and "now not only "action sports people" want to SUP but everyone who somehow has access to water own their equipment or rent. People also go paddle like they would go to the gym or for a power walk." The parent company of Lokahi, One Kin, are also the O'Neill iSUP manufacturer and indeed their models are aimed at a "casual" audience. Then again, they may move on from softcore to hardcore paddling: "A fun and innovative hardboard range is being prepared for next season", says Sylvain.

The rate of conversion to hardboards is still unverifiable: "A small percentage will move on with SUP (single figures is my guess), hop from an iSUP onto a hardboard and will form the core of the sport," reckons Andy Wirtz, boss of Norden, a 100% rigid surfing brand.

However, BIC Sport want to put beginners back onto hardboards to "maximise the user's experience on the water and maximise the value and long-term durability for both the user and the environment", argues Benoît Tréguilly, Head of Communication. BIC are especially leaning on their TOUGH-TEC and ACE-TEC ranges whose robustness doesn't mean added weight, "positioned just above entry-level prices between €600-700". Also behind the Oxbow SUP brand, BIC complete their range by offering more high-end models, "more



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photo Aquamarina

aimed at the speciality retail client". This niche of "hardboards for all" is also echoed by NSP, a label that lords over international podiums in racing with these thunderballs, at the same time as enjoying lots of success from schools and SUP rentals.

"We also had a late-year release of our new Cruiser model built in a new HIT technology. This board is great for fleets at retail centres and schools as it's based off one of our most popular, stable shapes, the Cruise", says Caren Forbes, Head of Marketing. The HIT construction uses an EPS SecureCell foam that's layered with military fibreglass and bio-resin epoxy. This trend for ultra-robust, rigid construction at a low price is also confirmed by Boardworks with their best selling Bombshell range (hull and deck made of thermoformed skin pressed onto an EPS foam and reinforced PVC rails).

The innovations to the rigid board category are paradoxically characterised by a trend towards "decrease" in the sense that most specialised brands have reduced their ranges for more clarity and of course...cost saving. "We have probably the lowest number of SKUs of any of the major brands", admits Karin Gertenbach, Head of International Marketing for Fanatic. The brand have decreased the options in terms of different technologies and are offering new, advantageous tariffs like "for example with our Vector Net Allwave and Stubby boards, so a real benefit to customers and dealers alike". Karin adds that a natural progression of 'all round' participants would be to travel longer distances and to go for touring SUPs that are "better than the oversized surfboard for this type of paddling", adds Anthony from SIC Maui.

The range on offer for surfers is now much more simplified and we can see two main designs, "the long SUP like the new Jimmy Lewis destroyer PM and new BlurrV2 short SUP from Infinity", cites Leonardo Lazzeri, distributor of these two prestigious American brands through JLID Distribution.

FOILS

Next comes the case of foils, which, beyond the wow effect of the last three years, is struggling to take off (no pun intended) at a commercial level. At Norden, Andy Wirtz reckons that the market "is a bit overrated from the industry at least where we sell (Northern Europe)". Even a brand leader like Starboard admits that the market is "still small in Central Europe but we see a growing group of paddlers flying downwind or on small waves", notes

Florian Brunner, CEO of Starboard Germany. A brand like Boardworks state that although the market is expanding, "the designs and tech are changing on a daily basis", representing a natural volatility for a young discipline but one that penalises everyone, from the rider to the brands and obviously the retailers in turn.

To make a range in this field as profitable as possible, the hydrofoil specialists at Slingshot are offering a modular system called Hover Glide that works on kitesurfs, wakeboards, surfboards and SUPs, to complement their high-end carbon foils and accessories (fins, mats). Indiana made a similar choice with their 7'8" Carbon Foil Hybrid board, a 3in1 model that can be used as an SUP surf, SUP foil and wind foil. Same idea, different interpretation with a new Airwave foil from NSP combining carbon and aluminium: "we designed the foil to be used by everyone and have included 3 varying degree tuning shims to provide beginners with the balance and stability they need while allowing advanced riders the ability to change out the shims to meet and challenge their skill level."

ORDER FORM

It's time to place your order if you haven't already done so. So what to remember from the 2019 SUP market? Once again, competing with the entry-level seems pointless for the specialist retailer who would prefer models with added value. For the inflatables, this means touring/race models while in composite boards, the ultra-specialised range of surf/race/touring boards can now be complemented by all-round models with "bulletproof" construction that will appeal to a leisure audience through their similar look to the top-of-the-range boards. As for foils, their commercialisation must be led by passion to ensure that services provided keep up with a discipline potentially carrying some risks. ☹

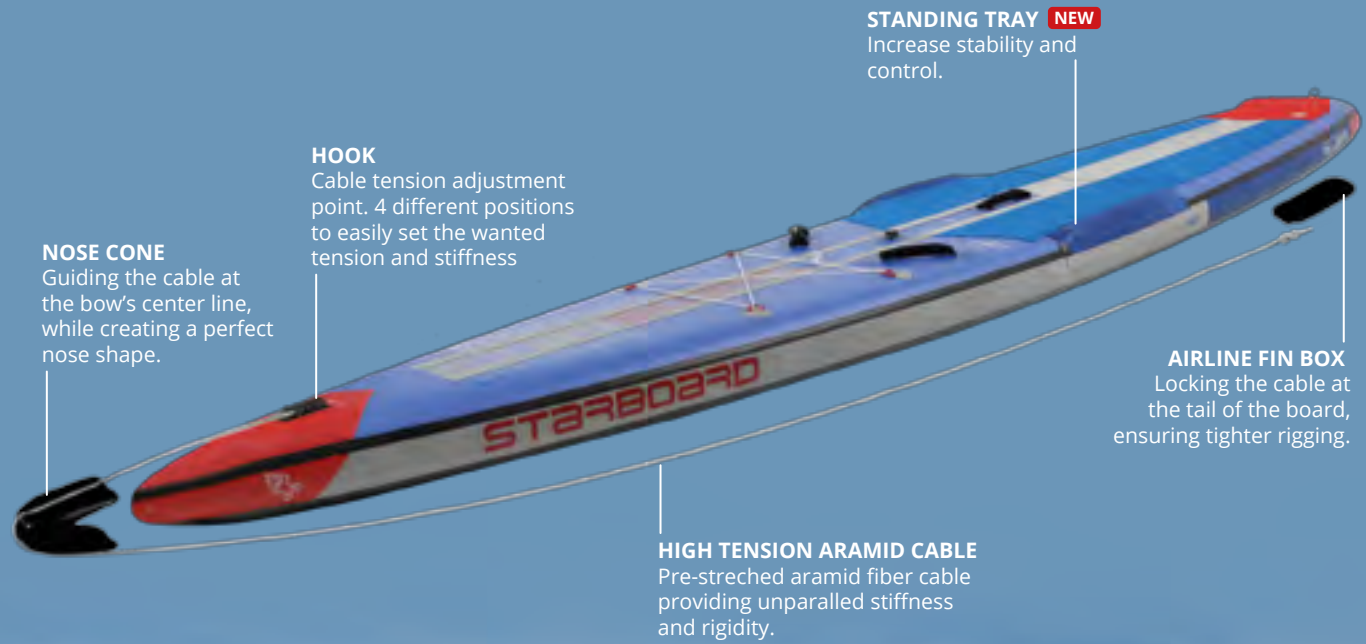
HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Sporty iSUPs for the retail core
- 2 Super rigid iSUPs
- 3 Multi chamber iSUPs
- 4 Rigid, super robust construction SUPs at accessible prices
- 5 Foil SUPs for the passionate retailer



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NOSE CONE
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HOOK
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NEW PRODUCTS

01 / MINDLESS SURF SKATE

The Mindless Surf Skate is designed for those who love carving, pumping and reminiscing about heavy waves. Even if you’ve never caught a wave, don’t fret – this board is stable enough for anyone to step on and enjoy. With two hardness bushing choices supplied as standard, adjust to your weight and riding preference. STATESIDESKATES.COM

02 / ISLAND TRIBE KIDS SPF 50 CLEAR SUN PROTECTION GEL

Island Tribe Kids SPF 50 Clear Sun Protection Gel 50ml is the ultimate protection for children who enjoy the outdoors. This sunscreen offers UVA and UVB broad-spectrum protection. This product is fragrance free, dermatologist approved and irritancy tested, Oxybenzone free and Extremely water resistant. ISLANDTRIBE.EU

03 / DAKINE SHANE DORIAN PRO PAD

Working in partnership with EcoLogic®, Dakine has developed a new technology for all EVA surf traction that accelerates biodegradation of the material. This provides a more eco-conscious approach to manufacturing and disposal when retiring the use of products. Known as “Friendly Foam”, by adding EcoOne® additives to the EVA foam, the materials will degrade only after entering biologically active landfills. “Friendly Foam” is available in all of Dakine’s traction pads for Spring/Summer 2019, including the new Shane Dorian Pro Pad. This features positraction grid pattern, three-piece construction, 7mm centre arch, 25 mm vert wedge tail kick with bevelled edges, 3M® high grade adhesive for a secure connection to the board and cut outs to enhance board feel and increase grip. DAKINE.COM

04 / THRILLA GORILLA AND THE DA'BOYS SOTFBOARD T SHIRT

For the first time in almost 30 years, the classic 1980s Surf Icon Thrilla Gorilla and the Da'Boys are back. This rebooted 80s art drawn by Steve Nazar is a must have for anyone that knows what’s up. This surf and skate heritage T features all the retro cool cartoon characters that the nostalgic enjoyed in their youth and the new generation will fall in love with. Welcome back to the Thrilla Krew where the summer never ends! SALES@WESTFRENCH.COM

05 / DAKINE JOHN JOHN FLORENCE QUAD SURFBOARD BAG

When you're traveling transcontinental to take advantage of the tradewinds, a broken or dinged board upon arrival is not an option. This custom-designed John John Florence surfboard bag comes with his pro surfer seal of approval for bomber board protection. Storing up to four boards, the durable, 420 denier nylon bag secures and protects your cargo with tie-down straps and foam cushioning. Multiple strap and handle options keep you moving, or attach the compatible John John Florence Carry On bag to add a convenient set of wheels. DAKINE.COM

06 / BOLZEN TRUCKS 180MM V2 50°

The new Bolzen trucks are available now. TheV2 hanger has got a totally new stiffer design when compared to the V1. The bushings seat is a little more open so the trucks turn even more than the V1 version. The baseplate is stronger and the bushings are now 87a. All in all this truck is a perfect and really precise all-round Longboard truck. #GermanPrecision. Designed and tested in Germany SEASONDISTRIBUTION.DE

01



02



03



04



05



06



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

WAKEBOARD IMPACT VESTS 2019

The importance of choosing the right impact vest cannot be ignored as the right vest will help improve performance through increased comfort while delivering ample protection. By **Ruth Cutts**.



photo Follow

Materials and Technology

All brands are introducing exciting innovations in their ranges with a continued focus on superior fit and flexibility. ION's Collision Select model features seamless spine protection and padded rib protection that offers lots of mobility ensuring that the rider has all the freedom of movement needed for a good session. Jobe are using their "Perfect Fit Technology", which was made in collaboration with research institute TNO, to help them create a vest that is the perfect fit for all body types - such as their popular Unify Jacket. All of O'Neill's impact vests feature NytroLite Foam Technology, which is stronger, absorbs 20% less water and is three times lighter than conventional PVC foam. This allows for a super light, minimal bulk design with maximum impact protection. For Jet Pilot, their new BODY LOCK system is an exciting development which uses a 360-stretch neoprene, combined with Jetlite foam, making a super lightweight, fast drying and flexible vest. And for Connelly Skis, Inc. their one layer stretch panel, cut to the shape of an "X" allows their Reverb vest to be snug and move with the contours of your body.

Sustainability

As with many action sports brands, a focus on sustainability is key to protect the very environments that they want their customers to be able to enjoy. Follow Wake have a Sustainable Performance Range (S.P.R) which is dedicated to contributing to a cleaner environment through a more sustainable production process. Their S.P.R Freemont model features Yulex Natural Rubber, recycled polyester jersey, PVC-free buoyancy foam, Aqua X Solvent free glue and arrives in a biodegradable shipping bag. ION and Soörüz are also using PVC-free foam in their vests, alongside a range of other eco-friendly features, whilst Ride Engine are using Limestone neoprene which not only has less of an impact on the environment but is also incredibly flexible for improved performance.

Aesthetics

Incorporating function and fashion is a continuing balancing act for safety brands. Many seek a synergy between the two seeing both as equally important, whilst others choose to remain focused purely on performance – Follow Wake founder Steve Anderson claims that "the colours and stylish are the last things [Follow Wake] worry about".

Many brands take influence from their team riders, street fashion, skate and snow styles. A reduced, minimalist look is key for ION and Ride Engine with an attention to detail being paramount to a unique aesthetic, such as the use of artist graphics (ION) and a low profile cut (Ride Engine). Connelly Skis, Inc. take their design a step further introducing a sublimation process on the lower half of certain models in 2019 that looks like "a nice tweed you could find on your grandpa's favourite hat."

For Jobe and O'Neill their focus is on compatibility with their wider range. Jobe work with a 'Mix 'n Match' mentality meaning that every vest, wetsuit and piece of hardware has multiple products which blend nicely to create a unique look. Whilst O'Neill's vests share materials, prints and colours with their etsy line up with most vests being reversible to change up your style. ©



KAESEN SLYDERHOUD - USA Ben Canavari



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Water based print
Water based ink that doesn't contain any endocrine disruptors, heavy metals or any chemical and dangerous substances for the environment.



Water based glue
Water based glue without toxic substance. Used for the three thickness' lamination of our neoprene

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

MEN'S BOARDSPORTS UNDERWEAR FW19/20

Sporty, stylish and sustainable: Next season's boardsports underwear for men offers the complete package. Catch all the latest trends in our buyer's guide by **Dirk Vogel**



Board sports-specific underwear is having its moment in the spotlight. It's the perfect storm of rising consumer demand and declining external involvement in market. "There seem to be a lot of big brands dropping the category, leaving the space for underwear-specialized brands that make less generic product and can service this category well," said Juan Gonzalez-Vega, CEO and Co-Founder of Moskova Underwear, while adding that for retailers, "underwear brings one of the best ROI per square meter in stores." This sentiment is shared by Nora Shaughnessy, Director of Product at BN3TH: "Our underwear is a large sales driver that takes up very little space in the store. While pouch underwear is relatively new to the consumer, with proper retailer knowledge our product helps to incrementally increase sales of all underwear on the floor."

MARKET & PRICING

In 2019, boardsports underwear aligns with current retail trends. "Consumers are placing a bigger emphasis on smaller categories such as underwear," said Danny Evans, VP of Marketing at Ethika, adding: "While other categories may be declining, underwear is leading to larger year-over-year revenue for our retail partners." The team at Stance said: "Underwear is still the fastest growing part of our business and this is without question been due to the quality of the offering." One of the main growth drivers is the fact that, "men are willing to pay a premium price for quality products that can improve their day-to-day lives," said Darren Wilcox, Brand Manager at Saxx Underwear.

How much are consumers willing to spend? At the entry level, fun boxer shorts with cool graphics sell between €14.99 to €29.99. Technical shorts with pouches and advanced fabrics range from €14.99 to €44.99. Premium merino wool – offering natural antibacterial and moisture-wicking properties – can raise prices up to €54.99, depending on the brand and technicality. For retailers ready to bank on underwear this season, here are the five major 2019 men's boardsports underwear trends:

1. Cuts: Longer legs

Boxer briefs with elastic waistbands and 'ball' pouches are still the number one cut for 2019. The big change is that leg lengths are increasing across collections. "The longer length holds the underwear in place and prevents the pairs from riding up," said Danny at Ethika. Meeting consumer demand,

Moskova is launching a longer version of the M2 model with 90% thigh coverage, while Saxx has long-leg versions of the Vibe and Kinetic.

2. Materials: All-season comfort

In terms of materials, merino wool is still king but proprietary blends – with every brand concocting its own mix – are trending. The common denominator is comfort in any situation. For Adrian Rief at super.natural, it's all about underwear that, "keeps you warm on cold days and ensures you stay cool and comfortable on hot days." Mons Royale has found its perfect blend with Merino Air-Con Single Jersey. "It's 83 per cent Merino wool surrounded by a 13-percent nylon yarn to get the right stretch and the benefits of merino wool right next to you skin, with four per cent Elastane," said Jana Linicus – Marketing Coordinator Europe Mons Royale.

"There seem to be a lot of big brands dropping the category, leaving the space for underwear-specialized brands that make less generic product and can service this category well." Juan Gonzalez-Vega, **Moskova Underwear**

3. Technology: The full package

Today's underwear packs major performance tech – including seamless construction, ventilation, plus male-specific pouch compartments – to satisfy customer demand. For 2019, Bawbags introduces "a more generous 'baw pouch' for extra comfort." Saxx incorporates proprietary technologies such as BallPark Pouch, Flat Out Seams and 3D Fit, and provides in-store torso displays to support retailers. Moskova includes cotton-lined inserts in the crotch region for added hygiene and polyamide back panels for flexibility.

4. Graphics: Bright and loud

Putting a finger on this season's aesthetic, Jana at Mons Royale identifies, "bold colours that are bright and loud." Design standouts include horizontal stripes in orange and blue (Bawbags), wavy black-on-white lines (Moskova), black and red scribbles (BN3TH), natural scenes and Tropicana (SAXX), and artist collabs with TJ Rogers and Lucas Beaufort (BN3TH). And of course, camouflage is always fresh in boardsports. And as the team at Stance points out: "The waistband remains the battle ground for branding, but subtle and clean is definitely the direction going forward."

5. Storytelling: That special something

Consumers want special brands with special stories. These range from pro athlete endorsements, like Ethika with pro skateboarder Danny Way, or commitments to positive causes. Bawbags continues its collaboration with the Teenage Cancer Trust to mobilize donations while proliferating flyers with self-diagnosis instructions. The underwear category is also seeing a major commitment to sustainability. Efforts include bluesign certification for brands such as super.natural and green materials like BN3TH's Tencel Modal from ethically sourced beech trees and Merino wool from Mons Royale that is ZQ-certified for animal welfare. The team at Stance said: "The consumer is definitely more aware of how every element of their wardrobe is made, and sustainability continues to drive innovation for us - ButterBlend fabric with SeaCell is a huge focus for us in 2019." With that said, wearing boardsports underwear feels good on your skin – and your conscience. ☺



GARA

Born out of his Gara-ge, ex pro snowboarder Ota Tyl’s backcountry snowboard brand Gara is growing from strength to strength. Ota treats all his products differently; when creating a splitboard, Ota doesn’t just split a board in half, he treats both shapes independently. Now making solids, due to popular demand, Ota’s growing reputation is an inspirational story.

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

I’ve been snowboarding for more than 30 years and the last 15 I’ve been more in the backcountry than in the park, so I need equipment to help me move around easier and to approach the summit easier. Naturally, as skiers around me had skis with ski touring bindings, I have been searching for a similar solution and it was a splitboard. As a long time Burton rider, I picked up the S series from Burton.

It was the beginning of splitboarding. It was heavy and complicated equipment, so for touring sometimes I used skis, but my heart was completely sideways, so I had to find a solution. From the first days, as a technical guy, I knew that I had to fine tune and make things lighter and more user friendly. So I started working on the bindings because it was the biggest weakness at that time. I put together a binding concept, which I later saw in the Spark binding. I made a couple of bindings for friends and friends of friends. I basically had a similar base plate to Spark R&D, which my friends from the aviation industry made for me with parts from SP bindings, who I sourced parts from. When I saw that Spark worked and I was happy with it, I shifted my concentration to the board and wanted to have the best equipment to get out there.



I have made tons of prototypes and 10 years ago I named the company Gara splitboards. The name came from a place where it all happened, from the Gara-ge...

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

This is basically a one man show with the help of many friends and ambassadors. I have friends who help me with CAD, who help me with understanding reinforcement technology. I have learnt a lot. I’ve worked in snowboard workshops before, so the “production” part wasn’t too hard for me. As I have been in the boardsport business for 25 years, I have an idea of how to approach the market. As Gara is growing, I am setting up a new team. But again, a small team that is close to the market and primarily into splitboarding.

What sets you apart from your competitors?

I’ve concentrated on splitboards since the beginning, only splitboards. I know all my boards; I ride and fine-tune them all. I don’t just expand or reduce what I already have in my product line, in order to add more sizes or just make different widths of board.

My approach to every size and model is unique and while I am developing boards I am thinking of who will use it and where. I also spend a lot of time on the balancing of board/skis when you skin up. I feel it’s super important and you can see big differences. From the production side, I do two skis and pair them together and don’t just cut an existing snowboard shape. A lot of attention is put into torsional stiffness and it isn’t that I want to get the biggest torsional stiffness on all of my boards; I balance torsional stiffness for every model and size. Freeride boards need something different than pow boards or even boards for women.



Last season I started making solid snowboards because there was a request from my clients who already have splitboards from me. Again, while the board/model looks similar to the splitboard, it is completely different in the developing of profile and flex, as a solid board has to work a differently than a splitboard.

The aim is to have one binding and to just easily adjust the binding you want for the right purpose on the board, so we support my solid board with the pucks.

Where are you manufacturing your splitboards?

I started the production in Prague and moved the pressing to a new lab in Poland and then finish them in Prague.

What do you see for the future of the industry?

I am happy to see that splitboarding is growing. I believe in the future, and it is already visible, that mountaineering will diversify as well as freeriding or just fitness.. There will be brands that make splitboards because it’s in fashion now, but at the same time there will be brands like Gara, that are totally dedicated to splitboarding, to backcountry.

I am working on new things I believe will move splitboarding forward again. ☺

GORILLA GRIP

Gorilla Surf have been helping surfers “grip and rip” for nearly 35 years. The first surf traction company to introduce printed tail pads, Gorilla have been promoting the functionality and creativity of the surf world since 1985. With some of the most “out there” surfers in the game on their athlete team including Ozzy Wright, Kai Otton & Eric Geiselman, the brand owned by Surfhardware International have a lot to shout about. We spoke with the brand’s European Marketing Coordinator, Hannah Craig based down in Capbreton SW-France to get the skinny on this iconic surf brand.

Who’s behind Gorilla and what are their backgrounds?

Gorilla is the original grip brand. Born and adapted by surfers everywhere. In 1984, three surfers, Graeme Bennett, Gary Mountford and Bill McCausland started a company called Sunbum PTY Ltd, with an aim to design and make innovative surfing products that really worked. Gorilla Grip was born in 1985 and launched with the first grip pad specifically designed for surfing.

With a team of surfers who epitomise the youth lifestyle market, each with their own unique character and interests, the brand and its personalities have always “coloured outside the lines”, pushing creative and performance limits along the way. A truly authentic and unconventional brand that sits left of the middle without ever compromising function over fashion. Celebrating four decades of gripping and still ripping!

How is the brand working in the European



region?

Our vision is to be the leading influence in youth surf culture and with a strong reputation since the 80s the brand is highly recognized for pads as well as previous collections featuring leashes, board socks and fin collaborations. Working within our European territory we are able to supply a diverse collection of “out there” and fun designs, to subtle and functional for all needs across the market. Our audience is fun-loving-folk between 13 and 30. We have a very strong market across Europe and see this reflected in our numbers, partnerships and feedback every year.

What’s special about the quality of the product? Where are you manufacturing?

Our products are manufactured with the most recognized supplier in Asia. We use lightweight EVA foam with ultra-strength glue, keeping our grip firmly stuck to your board. Gorilla’s grooves and sanded surfaces hold your feet in a vice like grip, with each groove and arch tailoring that gripping feel. As the first ever brand to introduce the world’s first printed tail pads, functionality is just as important as the art.

How are you helping retailers to merchandise your products?

Alongside our sister brands, we offer our retailers the opportunity to increase brand visibility within their stores by adapting our “corner concept” within their retail space. This includes a fully merchandised slatwall complete with branded prongs and bold artwork to really create a strong visual identity alongside the Gorilla products in their stores. We work with our retailers every year to ensure these spaces are kept updated, fresh and fun.



How has the traction market changed in the past 5 years and how do you see it changing in the future?

In recent years we have seen a real shift to go lighter, but increasing that grippy feeling. Although we like to “colour outside the lines” we have also seen big demand for softer, subtler colourways and artwork. Within the last few years and into the future, we see a “greener” approach from our customers as consumer responsibility is at the forefront of many people’s minds and the products they are buying.

Tell us about your athlete team.

Our team has always been divided between tour geek and free surfing freaks, however we are currently working more closely with lifestyle ambassadors than tour competitors. Our current team consists of Otis Carey, Ozzy Wright, Kyuss King, Kai Otton & Eric Geiselman.

Collaborations are at the heart of what you do – what do you have in the pipeline?

That would be telling... unconventional is the unexpected !☺



Blue Soup are manufacturing inflation vests as worn by British big wave surfer, Andrew Cotton. Cotty has been part of the team since day one and with other watermen including Garrett McNamara, Nicole Pacelli and Lucas Chianca putting the product through its paces and giving it their stamp of approval, SOURCE thought it high time we caught up with the people behind the brand.

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

Blue Soup Equipment have been producing the Inflation UP Vest for 2 years and it went on general public sale at the start of the 2018 Big Wave season after having been put through its paces by some of the world's top surf and water athletes including Garrett McNamara, Nicole Pacelli, Lucas Chianca and Britain's very own number 1 big wave surfer Andrew Cotton, who as part of the company and has been with us from the beginning assisting with the development of the UP Vest. The UP Vest is a close fitting water sports floatation aid, originally intended for big wave surfers/surfers, but, as with all new product design it soon became apparent that we needed to adapt it based on enquiries from other water sports athletes. So in early 2019 we launched the S-UP Vest for Stand Up Paddle boarding and foil-surfing and later in 2019 the new W-UP Vest will be launching for those involved in windsurfing and kite surf.

The core aim of the UP Vest range was to produce a device that would help get the wearer to the surface rapidly if needed, but, it was also incredibly important that it was available to every level of user both in ease of use and affordability.

The UP Vest is so comfortable, light weight and flexible that it is suited for virtually all water sports activities at any level of participation.



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

Blue Soup is owned and managed by a very small team, Co-Founders Mark Rees and Nick Sharpe and Nina Rees. Both Mark and Nick are former British Servicemen (Royal Marines and Royal Army Air Corps) and have utilised their experiences and attention to detail in delivering the product range to market whilst taking on the advice and expertise of those who have chosen to work with us.

How has the product developed in recent years?

Blue Soup's intention was always to manufacture the UP Vest in the United Kingdom where the design and manufacturing process could be closely monitored. Undoubtedly the most crucial element of the UP Vest is the inflation system which is made by our manufacturing partner SEASAFE Systems, a company with over 50 years experience in producing life jackets and sea safety equipment. The result is that the UP Vest is now manufactured entirely in the UK utilising virtually all UK manufactured industry standard components.

The UP Vest's high performance inflation system is composed of multiple manually activated inflation heads and combined with an overpressure and dump valve in a design that exceeds the industry standard requirements for a floatation aid. The inflation system has approximately 100n of buoyancy and is designed to rapidly inflate at depth and get the wearer to the surface as quickly as possible in a head back position.

The outer material is a lightweight, super flexible 4- way stretch fabric usually used in the production of contact sports clothing and is usually seen on the rugby pitch or American football field and it can be produced in any colour or design, especially useful for any co-branding with distribution partners or for specific events where sponsors logos, numbers or the athlete's names can be added.



What sets you apart from your competitors?

Everybody is entitled to be safe in their water sport of choice and shouldn't be excluded by price or availability, unlike the major brands we can provide an affordable product without impacting on manufacturing standards. Blue Soup has a close relationship with all of our customers and re-sellers and actively encourages them to talk with us and offer feedback. We value their support and input. Everyone that owns an UP Vest becomes part of the Blue Soup Family.

Who's on your athlete team and how are they helping to push the brand?

We have been incredibly fortunate to have had the world's best water sports athletes around. Andrew Cotton has been part of the team from day one and is an invaluable member of the Blue Soup team. Alongside Cotty, we have been honoured to be working with Garrett McNamara, Nicole Pacelli, Dany Bruch, Ian Cosenza, Grant 'Twiggy' Baker and Rodrigo Koxa who have acted as brand ambassadors for us to raise the profile of the UP Vest.

We have supplied bespoke UP Vests to Red Bull and their athletes (including Kai Lenny, Lucas Chianca, Carlos Burle, Justine DuPont), Obsession Surf, Oxbow, Magma Kitesurf, YUKI BRAND and Praia do Norte. 📍



Reusable bottle brand Mizu have been making waves in the sector for a number of years with strong ties to action sports through their founder, pro snowboarder Jussi Oksanen and a stellar team of ambassadors. Taking their products to the next level, Mizu have now introduced a filtration system allowing users to clean dirty water through an innovative new screw cap and are going deep with artist collabs and custom design for retailers, employees, trade shows and events. Interview with EMEA Sales & Marketing Manager, Craig Smith.

Tell us about the origins of Mizu.

Mizu was born out of respect and passion for the environment. Our reusable products are crafted with a refined aesthetic and ultimate adventures in mind. Founded in 2008, owned and operated by some of the world's top professional athletes, Mizu products are engineered to not just survive but thrive across all active lifestyles and help reduce the overabundance of single-use plastic and paper produced and discarded each year. Enjoy The Journey ... Leave Nothing Behind.

Collaborations and artist editions are a growing part of what you're up to.

We are honoured to partner with likeminded artists and collaborators. We have a lot of exciting projects planned with new artists in Europe in the coming months so watch this space. From the US we also have legendary skater Chet Childress and mural artist Skye Walker lined up for a variety of projects. It's amazing to work with people that have the same vision as our brand and can express this in their art.

What sets you apart from your competitors?

Our 360 filtration and purification products and our custom program.



360

Like all product ideas at Mizu, the 360 Filtration and Purification concept was born from our passion to help reduce the environmentally damaging waste from single-use products. This product is especially near and dear to our mission. We knew that if we could pull it off, it could completely change the landscape of how we think about drinking water and protecting the environment. Our goal was to not only give people a super high-quality reusable water bottle, but to also give them unlimited access to potable drinking water anywhere in the world. Having the small filter inside the bottle and making it super easy to adapt to the lid allows you to bring it anywhere – but only use it if necessary. So if you have access to clean water you just use the detachable straw, if you are not sure or know that the water is not clean, you use one of our filters. It's an easy way to always have access to clean water on the go and at the same time only use the filter when needed. Removing 99.99 per cent of bacteria, cysts, heavy metals and more, this product has been developed to last, with a technology that adapts easily to your daily needs and serves to reduce the use of single use plastics.

Custom

At Mizu we have the ability to deliver custom projects from a very small quantity within a short period of time. Starting at only 48 pieces we can put any logo, concept or idea on any bottle or cup quickly. It's a great marketing tool for a brand that wants to make a difference and invest in a long-lasting product for employees, trade shows, events or for retail and do something good for the planet.

What's important about the European market?

The use of reusable bottles and the education about the damage of single use plastics to our nature is very different from country to country, which dictates the level of effort needed to spread our mission of using reusable products, leaving nothing behind. But we can see a change



of mind and with the EU parliament banning throwaway plastics such as straws, single use plastic cutlery and plates from 2021 – we are a huge step forward, showing people how important it is to change habits and that every step counts.

How do you support athletes and boardsports?

We have a variety of local ambassadors, advocates and global athletes that share the same values of our brand. From Captain Liz Clark, snowboarder Jussi Oksanen to champion SUP surfer Sonni Hönscheid. We see the work with them as growing relationships and as a family we support each other as we grow. For last ISPO we showed a limited edition of bottles with exclusive artwork by six times world SUP champion Sonni Hönscheid. All profits of this project went to a charity of her choice.

What are your future marketing activations.



We will continue storytelling through our advocates and push our message of "Enjoy the Journey – leave nothing behind!" We will continue to pledge our partnership with 1% for the planet as well as EOCA, who we just joined. Together with EOCA and other likeminded brands we will try to eliminate single use plastics at trade shows such as ISPO and Outdoor by ISPO and spread the message of BYO (bring your own) bottle/cup to the show. 📍



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MARKET INSIGHT

Let's start with Andy Wochner of Follow Me, Lörrach, whose retail space situated in the far south of Germany had a weak start to the season due to lack of snow in the Black Forest. While January and February were fine, things went into a decline again in March due to the unseasonably warm weather. Follow Me has had the biggest success with brands that have been doing a fine job for years – among them Burton – or those brands that are attractive because they come across as somewhat exotic, for example Amplid, Bataleon and Korua. With boots it comes down to finding the right fit in store and that's where he thinks Nitro is way ahead of the competition. "When it comes to bindings, we've had good results with the Salomon 'Shadow Fit' bindings, but Union is also performing well. All in all, we're pre-ordering about the same amount. If stationary retail outlets want to succeed against the online competition, they don't only need to give competent advice but also offer a good range to choose from. One of the highlights of this winter was Burton's 'Step On', no doubt. The short supply and Burton's good marketing meant that we sold 100 per cent of stock at RRP. On top of that, the new shape concepts like future shapes, retro shapes and shortboot carving are taking off. While the turnover isn't great just yet, it serves as a good conversation starter; the customers are showing an interest and we do sell the odd unit as a result. Splitboarding is very complex, so a lot of retailers find the business too much hassle. We are putting the effort in and it's paying off. The online to retail ratio has shifted slightly towards online, particularly in winter. However, stationary retail still makes up the lion's share of our business. We're using our online presence as a shop window and also have an in-store terminal. A lot of customers are browsing our online shop and then come in for advice with concrete ideas", says Andy Wochner.

Marcus Geier's Epoxy shops are located in the Bavarian towns of Passau, Deggendorf and Straubing. The 2018/19 snowboard season went a lot better for him than originally anticipated. "The second good winter in a row has made a positive impact, but when it comes to pre-ordering, we're doing the same as last year. We definitely benefit from snowboarders looking for quality. Authentic advice wins people over, they don't exclusively buy on price alone. However, special offers are now essential. Innovations like 'Step On' are also going down well, and the same goes for carving. We're expecting 2019 to be a good year for skating in general. For starters, two new concrete skate parks have opened in our catchment area, one in Deggendorf, one in Plattling. Plus skateboarding has gone through such a positive development in recent years. We're reaping the benefits of our approach now. The omnichannel model allows people to collect their merchandise in the shop or to order online for home delivery. Both channels and our customers benefit from these modern processes." In the meantime, Blue Tomato has opened up a shop in the far south western corner of Germany, adding to the competition. "The cake gets divvied up further and further. But maybe both parties can benefit from this in the long run. There's potential for the location to become more attractive when you invest some work into the local scene and there's a healthy competition."

Markus Kirn owns Inferno in Eggenfelden, a shop that has been around for 24 years with 120 square metres of space in a prime location. "Of course, running a snowboard business in rural lower Bavaria isn't easy", says Markus who is discontinuing his snowboard department. "A few years ago it was a big advantage to have a huge catchment area as there was little competition. But hardly anyone will drive 30 kilometres these days to buy a snowboard when it is so much easier online. We're also very dependent on the weather. If they don't see any snow on their doorsteps, the lower Bavarians won't notice it's actually winter in the mountains. Things would be a lot easier for us if manufacturing could push back deliveries so the prices stay stable way into February. The snowboard business is a tough one and the industry isn't as big as some people may think. That means that some companies find it hard to be

happy with what they've got. Just because something is on trend doesn't mean you have to flood the market with it. A lot of companies are only interested in making a quick buck and never think longer-term. I believe that in the end there will only be a few big retailers left, the smaller ones will continue to struggle until things become impossible for them. I'm also assuming a lot of manufacturers are planning to sell through their own channels, anyways. Of course, there's still customers left who appreciate our advice, there's just not enough of them."

Benjamin Schwarz is the country manager for Burton Germany and is well acquainted with the current situation. He says, "The snowboard market is still in the process of consolidation. At Burton, we're keen to work even closer with our partners and support the experts in particular. Fewer retailers, customised ranges and the right depth are essential. Those that have been loyal to the sport and us are on the up again. Excursions, events, festivals as well as in-store campaigns like boot fitting and movie screenings create experiences and a sense of community with the customer – which is more important than ever. The current season has gone so well that our partners have had significantly better sales. We have also grown very well in the DTC sector, we have registered an increased demand for our products throughout. The onset of a harsh winter in January did of course help with this. Nevertheless, we continue to be careful and are keen to grow sustainably. We're not into filling our order books. 'Step On' sold out early again. We don't mind the customer thinking about snowboarding and visiting a store earlier in the season. At the same time it's essential that the retailers offer the products that the customer demands. This season we had no black bindings and boots left in stock from mid-January. We didn't want too much superfluous stock at the end of the season and we managed to achieve just that. We didn't want to lose customers. It's not always easy to find the right balance; we had an enormous increase in the demand for bindings. Premium products are clearly on trend, this is where we sell the most units. We have therefore adapted the quality of the 'Malavita' line. You can now get an improved cat strap across the range. The 'Step On' is now sustainably packaged in a rucksack (boots) and a cooling box (bindings), both can be reused."

There's also a sharpening focus on sustainability, which is something that brands, shops and customers will have to increasingly take into account and cater for. The main reasons why online shopping is becoming more and more popular currently are: no restriction through opening times (77 per cent), home delivery (76 per cent), time saving (67 per cent), a greater variety when it comes to products (66 per cent) and products you can't find on the high street (53 per cent) (Bitkom / Internet World Business Magazine 3/19). The demand for a bigger range of skating hardware also rings true with Nils Gebbers, Managing Director of 24/7 Distribution: "While I do see that shops want to play it safe by offering 50 Euro boards from Spain, southern Germany and Berlin, it will make the walls where the decks are displayed just look drab, draining all the emotion from them. Just check the Esel (by which he means SHRN, Munich) or Cologne's Concrete Wave – both are leaders in terms of diversity. Skateboarding is harder to define than ever before, and that's a great thing! There's Chico Brennes of SF Part with this Tommy Guerrero Reissue, kids training for the Olympics, creative skating like Welcome, growing Euro Squads on NHS brands and Ace Trucks. It's so multi-faceted and I think that definitely opens up opportunities to grow."

JOCHEN BAUER

GERMANY

PORTUGAL
FRANCE
SWISS
ITALY
UK

MARKET INSIGHT

UK

PORTUGAL
GERMANY
SWISS
FRANCE
ITALY

This will be really “old news” by the time you read this – writing this in early March, with daily Brexit updates, showing no progress at all – it’s all very boring.

I take heart from the fact that the pound has strengthened against both the dollar and the Euro. Why? Some money traders somewhere know something we

don’t! At this point in time a hard Brexit appears to be the most likely outcome – but do I really believe that? I’m honestly not sure what I believe anymore. Sadly whatever the outcome, the division that is now so evident in our country, in every walk of life, is set to continue and perhaps get worse. Whether the deadline is extended, whether we go for a ‘People’s Vote’ or leave under any deal or no deal – the sad result is that our society is divided and the divisions will take a long time to heal.

As I commented in my last missive – the UK will survive and prosper. We will overcome but there is no doubt that, in the meantime, we have been damaged in so many ways – not the least our economy and our reputation.

So how are things? The economy is not doing too bad and certainly a lot of the Remain doom-mongers have (so far) been proven wrong in many ways. The tax revenues in January were up significantly, giving the Government a perfect opportunity to buy (bribe) some votes - that aside, it’s a good indicator. Another positive is the pre-Brexit boost that the stockpiling fraternity are creating (can you really believe that people are stockpiling?). Although that chicken will come home to roost post-Brexit (if there is indeed a post-Brexit).

Consumer and business lending has grown, house prices are marginally ahead of forecast and consumer confidence remains ‘stoic’ despite all the concerns. Shop prices have started to increase (weak pound implications filtering through) and new mortgage approvals nudged upwards – these are all positive indicators. Just think what we could be achieving if it were not for Brexit bollocks?

I spoke to Matt at H2O in Dorset. The weather recently has been very warm (20 degrees + in February) so if you are a specialist watersports retailer like Matt, it has been a Godsend. “Yeah – it’s been really good. People are thinking about getting back on the water – this stimulates interest and some sales. It’s not manic but it does mean that we have actually had our best winter ever. Paddleboarding interest stayed solid through the whole winter.”

So what about your other watersports or is it all paddleboarding? “Kite and windsurf are good when the wind blows. Last summer was a bit slack but they’ve picked up nicely through autumn and winter – particularly kite, which has been good.” And wetsuits? “It’s flat and has been for years – the wetsuit business has gone like clothing – it’s an online purchase primarily. We’re not out of it by any means but we don’t want to get into the silly price wars that haunt the wetsuit market. Plus we’re not set up for the ‘buy-3-send-2-back’ customers. It’s just not our bag so we are sticking to what works for us.”

So confident and optimistic then? “Yes I am – particularly about paddleboarding and particularly about H2O. We’re storming ahead and set to increase business and continue to take market share. The only negative I see is Brexit. It’s disruptive at the very least and could be a nightmare at worst. I never saw the reason for it and it bothers me both

personally and from a business perspective. It just makes me wonder how well we would be doing if it were not for all this stuff – how good could it be?” Echoing my thoughts exactly.

H2O is a traditional bricks and mortar business that have developed their online business really well. Freestyle Xtreme on the other hand are an out and out online business with no B&M interest. They first started in 2003 selling MX and lifestyle making their first move into snowboarding in 2014. “We were all snowboarders and it was a heavy influencer in our lifestyles so it made sense to complement our SS business with an AW business as well,” this is Jake, one of the owners. “Snowboarding is now one of our biggest categories and we love being part of the industry.” So how was 2018? “As we all know it was not an easy year for UK retail but actually it turned out to be a pretty good year for us. So far 2019 has been great and new categories introduced in 2018 are gaining ground.”

Anything in particular going well? “Snowboard, MTB and skate all saw huge growth so these are real areas of focus for us going forward. Recent introductions such as freestyle ski and surf really complement our existing portfolio and show good opportunities for the future. We really want to offer technical products and brands and cater for the full spectrum of action sports. It’s developing well.” So are you buying for growth? “Yes, absolutely – we’re ambitious and growing. Brexit has presented challenges for us but we’re working through them and have contingencies in place to ensure we safeguard our business including opening a second warehouse in Slovakia.”

Freestyle Xtreme are HQ’d in Bristol – 240 miles east you find Norwich and Chris from Snowfit who was pleased with how the season has gone so far. “Considering all the negatives in the market, and by that I mean the uncertainty caused by Brexit. We’re virtually on par with last year and that, to me, is actually a good result. Right now [March] it’s very quiet – the February half-term has been and gone and the weather has made people think of Spring rather than snow which is annoying but nothing that we can do about it.”

Anything going well in particular? “Boots – both snowboard and ski boots have gone well – really pleased with that. And helmets and goggles. Always surprised by how many helmets we sell and goggles have almost sold out.”

So how is your approach to your ‘buy’ for next year? “Cautious. Very cautious. I will be buying 30% down.” I can feel another Brexit volley coming in. “We have to be cautious and there’s a couple of reasons. Yes - Brexit is a big part of my thinking. How can it not - I’ve got suppliers who have not fixed their pricing which makes it impossible to buy plus, being frank, it un-nerves me. Secondly I’m keeping some cash back to take advantage of over stocks. Every year we have someone come through with too much of this, too much of that. Next year I am going to be ready to take advantage of it. If I cannot get more of the brand I want then there will always be something, somewhere I can get.” Chris was talking to a distributor and he pointed out that this was not music to my ears. It was not! “I know you don’t want to hear that but for this moment in time I think it is the right thing for Snowfit to do.”

Reading this back you may get the impression that Chris was being a bit pessimistic – but he was not at all, “I know that there is a lot conspiring against us in the winter sports market – indeed against the UK – but I still think that our business will prosper.”

You know something. Brexit bollocks apart – he is right. We are going to prosper (If you say it often enough and loud enough...).

GORDON WAY

MARKET INSIGHT

On the socio-economic front, the reports from the first months of the year were mixed in France, so how is it in the boardsports world and more precisely for our retailers at the start of this year 2019? For shops in resorts the outcomes are rather different in the Pyrenees vs. the Alps.

In the Alps, visitation numbers seemed to be pretty consistent with 2018. For example in Meribel, Gäel Fabre, who runs Avalon Boardshop, tells us: “According to the tourist office, visitation numbers are up by 8.8% in the December school holidays and down 6.4% in the February school holidays.” That naturally translates to sales levels, which despite a nice increase of 15% in sales in December and +10% in January, February was a bit more complicated with a drop of -15% in the last 20 days of the month. Gaël explains it like this: “the early snowfalls last year undoubtedly encouraged our customers to book their holidays in the December 18/19 holidays but the snow wasn’t really in good shape at that time of this year. In January we had some good snowfalls and cold temperatures, which made our more sporty, last-minute customers come in and kit themselves out with specific equipment (freeride boards, stiff boots and bindings with good support) and to buy accessories (beanies, gloves, neck warmers, helmets, goggles). On the other hand, February was so hot and sunny (conditions never before recorded by Météo France) that sales of accessories, equipment and technical clothing dropped off a lot. We did see a slight rise in snowboard rentals in February 2019 though.”

In the Pyrenees, the start of the season was complicated, if not difficult, but the months of February and March seem to have fared a bit better as Laurent Descaves, manager at No Limit’s Snow Shop in Cauterets explains: “The months of February and March went a lot better than the start of the season, in visitations as much as in turnover. The Pyrenean resorts are now well snow covered, which of course brings loads more people up to the resort. More visitations means more sales at the end of the season.” As for product ranges, they are talking pretty unanimously about good quality technical products being sought after by customers in shops. As Laurent from No Limit’s tells us: “The fact we are in resort and on site means that clients have more faith in you and listen to recommendations on which technical, good quality products to buy.” It’s the same feeling at Avalon as Gaël explains: “The most sought after products are at the top of the range, which sets ourselves apart as a specialised technical shop; customers are looking to put their money into new products, whether in terms of their design, shapes or technical innovations, especially here in the 3 Valleys where we have quite well-off customers.”

When it comes to brands, again, whether it’s in the Pyrenees or the Alps, there seems to be a common thread. For equipment, the most coveted brands are basically Burton, Nitro, Lib-Tech and Jones who all have coherent, easy to decipher ranges. In technical clothing, the most mentioned brands were notably Picture, Burton, Volcom and DC. The shops do confirm that this aspect of differentiation really does entice customers, whether it be for their technical properties, with technologies such as Gore-Tex, their quality, their “core” appeal or for their environmental focus which also appeals greatly to a segment of the customer base. In accessories, Oakley and their Prizm technology seems to have enjoyed a great success amongst customers and Dakine continues to please in luggage and bags thanks to their own technical dimension. At the end of this season with the quite high temperatures even at altitude, naturally it’s light technical jackets and water resistant riding sweats that have seen good rates of sale in shops.

For the shops further away from the pistes, the winter season is often a little bit more troublesome and the socio-economic climate with its slow, drawn-out end to the gilets jaunes movement in France did nothing to help the situation. At Uncle Zaz in Saint Jean da Luz, shop manager Marka Fridberg tells us: “Our shop is quite seasonal so it’s pretty normal that

there’s a bit less activity at the start of the year and even though on the coast we didn’t really have a proper winter, we did manage to benefit from the ski window to spark some trade with the servicing and rental of ski gear that we launched this year.” He adds: “the weather conditions didn’t help us to raise the average basket price much by selling any heavier pieces as this year we had 26°C while last year we had -3°C on the 28th of February so we sold sunglasses, baseball caps and even sandals!” He does however go on to say that: “the conditions for surfing were pretty good though at the end of the winter and the start of spring, which meant we could boost our figures on neoprene and surfing accessories.” As for the most sought after brands in his shop he speaks highly of Patagonia for their technical image and ecological dimension and Rip Curl for their legitimacy and recognised technical know-how. He adds: “the technical dimension is highly appreciated by our clients and in boards we had great interest in the brand TORQ who, thanks to their new ACT impregnated resin technology, confirmed their customer recognition at our shop.”

At Vague et Vent in Palavas-les-flots, Paul Guieysse, in charge of their internet operation, recounts: “December’s social climate with the gilets jaunes movement led to a drop in in-shop sales to the benefit of our website. But customers started to come back into the shop at the start of the year.” As for products, he noticed a good rate of sale in the snowboard boots segment: “People are looking more and more for comfort and are renewing this item quite quickly especially at the end of the season when prices are more attractive.” In water sports, he noticed a growing trend in the foil craze: “Whether it was in windsurfing, surfing or SUP the discipline is continually gaining interest and more and more people are coming to the shop for information and to kit themselves out.”

At Nomade Shop in Paris, Lou Baro, the board section manager states: “The end of the winter was really difficult, whether in terms of the social climate or the weather. The end-of-year Saturdays were much too quiet in store to set up a good season but with the return of the spring and the nice weather, things went back to normal a bit, also for sales, even though it’s still quite quiet in the shop.”

When it comes to equipment, street skating makes up most of the in-shop sales but Lou adds: “classic skateboarding is working really well but we also are selling quite a lot of longboard type decks especially in the cruiser and surf/carver ranges.” As for brands, she says that: “because this period has been pretty skittish economically, people are naturally turning towards either the entry-level or the tried-and-tested with brands like Element, Mindless, Cartel and Enuff.”

So, it’s quite obvious that shops wouldn’t have had the same start to the year as others, depending on their geographical location: tough for some, decent for others. It was still nothing extraordinary either, even for the shops in resorts that did manage to come through well. Once again, their selections and the quality of the products brought into the shops, combined with their knowledge and advice meant that they were able to set themselves apart by bringing a more personal, friendly dimension to the act of buying something that a segment of their customer base are looking for when they push the actual shop door open. Here’s hoping that the start of summer 2019 brings us the right conditions for a successful 2019 season...

BENOIT BRECQ

FRANCE

PORTUGAL
GERMANY
SWISS
ITALY
UK

MARKET INSIGHT

ITALY

PORTUGAL
GERMANY
FRANCE
SWISS
UK

Starting into 2019, unfortunately we've seen many smaller skate shops close their doors from north to south. With very low margins on hardgoods and then losing most of their shoe sales to big players like Nike, Adidas and Vans are ruling the market many of them just don't make enough profit to pay rent and are not able to make a living out of a skate shop. It is very sad

but the hard truth is that it has become nearly impossible to run a core skate shop without selling lifestyle or hype products, including running shoes or outdoor jackets and backpacks. Skateboarding and its lifestyle has become a big trend in the fashion industry and is hyped everywhere but it has created a business which is not controlled by the skate shop, and instead by corporate companies who make a profit out of it. When switching to snowboarding, we've already had the loss of core stores for a few seasons and now the remaining stores seem stable, of course with a smaller choice in products, but they still manage to stay in business. Surprisingly, the north suffers more as freestyle skiing becomes a bigger trend in the regions located in the very north of Italy, whereas the south really stays true to snowboarding when looking at teenagers and kids. The closing of stores that we have seen in skateboarding is also happening in surfing but on a smaller scale as surf stores have already become more fashionable recently, but the brands now sold at surf stores have changed a lot and are now more in fashion than ever. A trend that is now seen in every store category from core skate, snow and surf to fashion is the outdoor trend with nearly every store

SWISS

PORTUGAL
GERMANY
FRANCE
ITALY
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Finally! Lots of us will be saying this: at last we have had the chance to enjoy two good winters back to back. Although the snow did arrive a bit late, it came right down to town level and almost the whole of Switzerland's mountains were covered, and in some cases abundantly. So, this was the second year running that we benefitted from good snowfall but this

time, not like last year, the sun also showed up for the key periods, i.e. during school holidays and at weekends. The conditions were optimal for shops to work well. We saw really good visitation numbers to resorts with customers coming from our own country as well as abroad.

This second proper winter allows us to correctly take stock of our business, after previously being a bit impacted by the lack of consumer interest due to the lack limited snowfall. Now we can see where the true potential lays, the reality of the market, where the opportunities and the threats lie. What we can see, for example, is that the snowboard equipment sales market is mostly centred on shops located in the plains during the months November to January. The mountain-based shops, with a few exceptions, seem to have had more trouble selling equipment while boasting record figures in rentals, accessory sales and services carried out. They've risen to the top, just in another way. The shops in the plains were also pleased with their rental departments and even though they are less common than in the mountains, they remain important

carrying at least one outdoor brand in their selection with The North Face leading the pack and Patagonia becoming the new must have brand. The popularity of US streetwear brands is still strong, much like with Italian streetwear labels. Brands from a snow and skate background like Iuter and Octopus coming out of Milan are steadily growing and can compete easily with US brands on the shelves.. The strongest Italian brands in the boardsport and streetwear marketplace right now are Iuter, Octopus, Doomsday and Dolly Noire all with innovative designs and good quality, a good sign as the Italian customer really shows loyalty when purchasing.

What storeowners really agree on, is that products nowadays must be showcased and explained well. Hardgoods in general still seem very price driven with online competition dictating the price, which means you have to be equal on pricing or offer a better service. The online business has most likely beaten the physical stores by numbers as it is very easy with hardgoods to buy online, and when the price is right the sale is done.

To support physical core stores more, it's only the brands themselves that can help by giving the core stores exclusive products or a better margin on certain products as the physical store is crucial to keep the skate scene healthy. It's the only direct contact with the consumer and we should never forget that almost all skate parks and events are only possible with the push of skate shops and their passionate owners. Alex Berger from Fakiestores in Merano and Silandro concludes, "with our 20 years in the business this year we want to go back to our roots and carry only brands we feel and like and on the other hand support us in what we do for the scene in general as for us it's still the passion which drives us not the profit."

FRANZ JOSEF HOLLER

players in their field in some specific parts of the country. This shows that we are tending towards replacing our sales with rentals, as is the case already in France and Germany. It's not a new phenomenon, but we are seeing it more each year and we have noticed in Switzerland, as well as France, that for the last few years we are selling less and renting more. That said, looking more generally, you can clearly see that it's the trend of the times we are in, as shown by how we do things with Spotify and Deezer for music, or Netflix for TV and film. We are probably just on the cusp of a new era of consumption that will most probably not exclude the world of boardsports.

While we're on that subject, it seems appropriate to mention the opening of Alaïa Chalet – a magnificent multi-boardsport centre that's home to indoor and outdoor skateparks, snakeruns, an airbag and last but not least, a trampoline area that converts into a concert hall. The Alaïa Chalet also has a bar, a shop, a space for meetings and coaching and even has a recording studio – everything a youngster (or not) could need for getting away from the crowds or for training when the pistes of Crans Montana, around 10km away, are closed. The centre forms the first stage of the two-part project launched by Adam Bonvin, Marc-Antoine Burgener and Romain Magnin, three young entrepreneurs from Valais whose goal is to provide access to boardsports for all, and now that the boxes for winter sports and skateboarding have been ticked, there's still one biggy on the list to cross off... and yes, you guessed it, this might just be the first wavepool in Switzerland. Their infrastructure in collaboration with Wavegarden Cove should be putting out its first wave in 2020 at a place called Les Isles, in Sion. For my part, as you can imagine, my wetsuit is already set to go.

FABIEN GRISEL

MARKET INSIGHT

Portugal's economy has been a European trend topic for a few years now. From the dark period of strong recession, structural economic reforms and massive international loans, to a much brighter context. One of steady economic growth and major uplifts in its market dynamics in areas such as exports, its start-up and innovation ecosystem, real estate and especially tourism. The heat of the downturn surely ignited Portuguese creativity and entrepreneurship and it's safe to say that this collective mindset is here to stay.

The incredible part is that surfing has been instrumental in this shift. Its growth has been supercharged and evolved into a whole different level. The rise of national surfers, surf events and surf spots has been extraordinary. Thus, hand in hand with a changing country we have felt an unprecedented change in the way Portugal acknowledges our industry, sport and culture. Moreover, Portugal as a leading international surfing destination is enjoying record influx and media attention.

As a result, businesses have blossomed, jobs have been created, and the direct impact of surfing in the national economy is now thought to largely surpass the €400 million barrier per year. We caught up with some of the industry's key players to understand how the development of the sport, economy and tourism has impacted their businesses and what's hot right now at a retail level.

For José Gregório, Country Manager at Boardriders Portugal, it's more than evident the impact of tourism has on sales, "there is a big difference on what stores can sell if located in a more touristic place in comparison to stores where the majority of customers are local". José is also confident about the company's strategy to increase the number of stores across the country: "We are working to open more Boardriders flagship stores with a minimum of 500 square meters. The idea is to have five of these stores in the near future".

Pedro Soeiro Dias, Marketing Manager for Despomar and owns amongst other successful ventures, the retail chain Ericeira Surf & Skate, adds that in some locations “tourists present a big portion of the average customer in store and naturally, sometimes our approach to the business and communication tends to be adapted to this type of customer.”

Although numbers have been generally good, Nuno Amado, CEO for Surf Cloud, distributors of Firewire/Slater Designs, Ocean & Earth and Sticky Bumps amongst others, believes that this year might not be as strong: "2018 was pretty good. We grew 4% compared to 2017. We don't expect any growth in 2019 due to the slowdown of tourism". Actually, a potential slump in tourism may not be the only challenge lying ahead.

"E-commerce business is the major threat to traditional retail shops. We need to be in sync with the latest products and trends to maximize sales".

For Deeply, one of the country's fastest growing brands, the sweet influx of foreigners is reflecting in their sales "especially wetsuits," claims Ricardo Aragão, Head of Marketing. Actually, wetsuits have been a big standout for the Portuguese company with their new range, including the already best-seller "Premium" line. Naturally Ricardo is excited for the summer, "we have high expectations. We have just launched the spring/summer '19 collection and will soon launch a summer wetsuit range with new materials, cuts and colours."

A final note to the products that are doing well recently at surf shops across the country. For the Ericeira Surf & Skate stores, Pedro Soeiro Dias explains that international surfboard models are highly sought by consumers with a special mention to JS Industries boards. Down south, in the Algarve, Surfers Lab shop manager Miguel Dias claims that lately it's all about the Firewire Seaside model, "sold out in one week in our shop".

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DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

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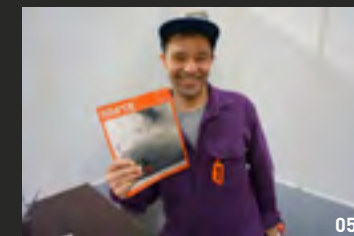
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01



05



09



13



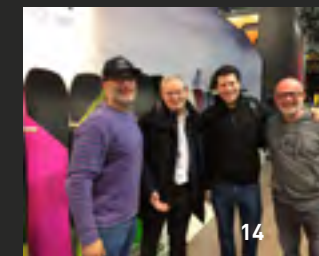
02



06



10



14



03



07



11



15



04



08

01 - O'Neill Frank Uyt
Den Bogaard and
Florian Siempelkamp

02 - Dragon crew: camera chap
Sam Ingles, Brand Manager
Jake Largess and Euro
Marketing man Sam Nelson

03 - ISPO's new snow community
manager Basti Dietz
and Protec's RP Bess

04 - Mons Royal's Holger
Blomeier and Jana Linicus

05 - Bataleons Rubby Kiebert
loves accesorisng
in orange

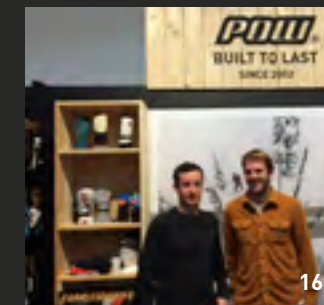
06 - Eivy's founder Anna
Vister with Anna
Marie Eschwey

07 - Landyachtz's David Price
and Ryan Theobald

08 - Head's Max Thurner
with ultra light Kizamu



12



16

09 - Union's JP

10 - Giro's Travis Tomczak
and Darius Heristchian

11 - Welcome to Snowsports
in the centre of B4

12 - Deeluxe's Florian Heim

13 - Nidecker's Thierry Kunz, Henri
senior, Henri junior
and Sepp Haas

14 - Picture's Julian, Frank,
Neal and Gerald

15 - Nitro's Andi Auhammer
with the longest swallow
tail in the market

16 - Rojo/POW's Michael
Belfrage and Michi Mohr

JACKET
REQUIRED



01 - DC's Andrea Watt and Andrew Moseley



02 - Dickies Kevin Penny



03 - Element's Gary Woodwood, Owen Dalamore and Tony Wood



04 - Sweet Skateboards crew

VANS SNOWBOARDING DAYS, CHAMPOLUC ITALY



01 - Blue Tomato's Raffael Neuner & Vans team rider Benny Urban



02 - Slopestyle Morzine's JP



03 - Vans Snow Product Category Manager, Matt Patti on the cover of SOURCE Issue 94.



04 - Vans Swedish rep, Martin Gustafsson & Inlandet's Ola Nygards

DRAGON RETAILER WEEK



01 - Dragon (Lodge) shred crew. Sam Nelson, John Bassett, Keiran Hammond & Sarah Martin



02 - Dragon Lodge main men. Co-Founder John Bassett & manager, Will Hughes



03 - Dragon Lodge, Tignes, France



04 - Dragon European Marketing & Team Manager, Sam Nelson

ROCK ON
SNOW PRO



01 - Dinner 686 style



02 - Northwave/Drake's Davide Smania and Thomas Brandolini



03 - Peter Bauer and the lucky winner of the Jean Nival commemorative board



04 - Rossignol's Adrien Orsicelli, Arnaud Repa and Vincent Gelin

SEEK



01 - Homeboys Founder and son, Wolf and Julian



02 - Dakine's Frank Heissat, Flavien Foucher and Emmanuel Lorenzato



03 - Stance's Nathan Hill and his tardis, put in your old socks and get a pair of news ones



04 - WAWWA's Emile Kulis and Shaun Ray

SHOPS
1ST TRY



01 - Never Summer's Nicolas Wendelken with their SFT Boardsportsource Good Design Award winner The Gunslinger



02 - Horsefeathers Hanus Salz with Tyler Chorlton



03 - Vimana's Tronna with Session's Bjarne Bergsager



04 - Shops First try team and their anniversary cake

SLIDE



01 - FAM Directors Andrew Styles Josh Cottrell. Andrew with their Puffa jacket and Josh with their Utility Parker.



02 - Mervins Lauren Lidford

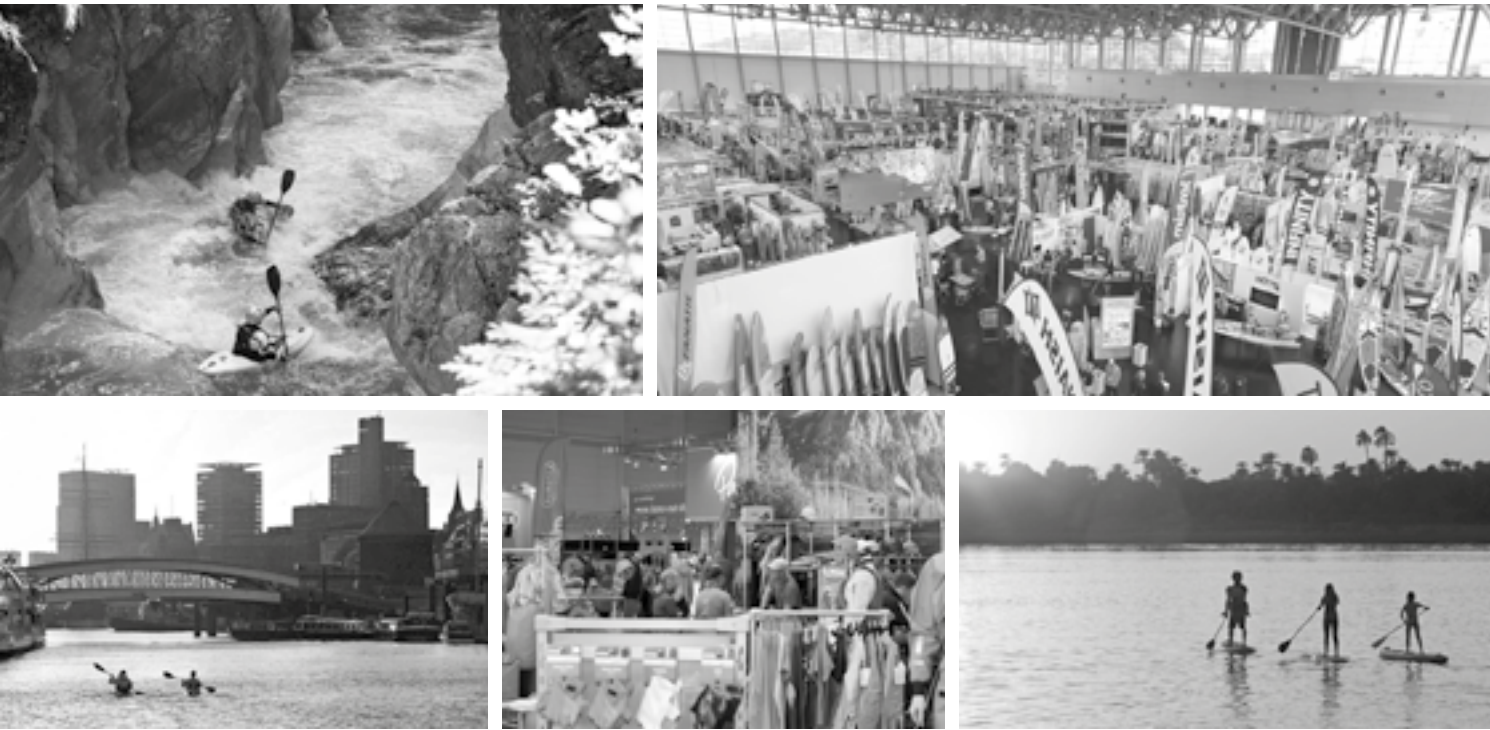


03 - TSAs Jeremy Sladen Chris Orchard The Snowboard Shops Darren and Salomons Fuller



04 - Volcom boys. Bucko Ed Kris

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PADDLESPORTS
TRADE SHOW



Melting pot, showcase and
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Nuremberg, Germany
Every year in autumn.



RETAILER SHOW,
EXHIBITOR DIRECTORY, VISITOR REGISTRATION
AND MORE DETAILS AT **PADDDLEEXPO.COM**

APRIL

- 03
13** **QUICKSILVER PRO
GOLD COAST**
AUSTRALIA
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM
- 09
11** **PRO WINTER**
BOLZANO, ITALY
FIERABOLZANO.IT/
PROWINTER
- 17
27** **RIP CURL PRO
BELL'S BEACH**
AUSTRALIA
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM

MAY

- 03** **THE BOARDROOM
SHOW**
DEL MAR, CALIFORNIA
BOARDROOMSHOW.COM
- 04
08** **SPRING BREAK UK
BOARD TEST**
KAUNERTAL, AUSTRIA
SNOWBOARDSPRINGBREAK.COM
- 08
09** **PERFORMANCE
DAYS**
MUNICH, GERMANY
PERFORMANCEDAYS.EU
- 13
25** **CORONA BALI
PROTECTION**
BALI
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM
- 17
18** **VANS PRO SKATE PARK
SERIES QUALIFIER**
SHANGHAI, CHINA
VANSPARKSERIES.COM
- 16
19** **VANS DUCT TAPE
INVITATIONAL**
ERICEIRA, PORTUGAL
VANS.COM

- 16
19** **JUNE,
FAR'N HIGH**
PARIS, FRANCE
WCSK8.COM
- 29
09** **MARGARET
RIVER PRO**
AUSTRALIA
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM

JUNE

- 20
28** **OI RIO PRO**
BRAZIL
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM
- 22
23** **VANS PRO SKATE
PARK SERIES
QUALIFIER**
SAO PAULO, BRAZIL
VANSPARKSERIES.COM
- 30
03** **OUUDOOR
BY ISPO**
MUNICH, GERMANY
ISPO.COM

JULY

- T
B
C** **CPH-AMS-BER OPEN**
DENMARK, HOLLAND, GERMANY
CPHOPEN.COM
- 19
21** **ITALIAN SURF EXPO**
SPIAGGIA DI
SANTA SEVERA
ITALIASURFEXPO.IT
- 09
22** **CORONA
J-BAY OPEN,**
JEFFREYS BAY, SOUTH AFRICA
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM
- 02
04** **SEEK**
BERLIN
SEEKEXHIBITIONS.COM
- 02
04** **PANORAMA**
BERLIN
PANORAMA-BERLIN.COM
- 11
14** **NASS FESTIVAL**
SOMERSET, UK
NASSFESTIVAL.COM
- 12
13** **VANS PRO SKATE PARK
SERIES QUALIFIER**
MONTREAL, CANADA
VANSPARKSERIES.COM
- 18
20** **OUTDOOR
RETAILER**
DENVER, CO, USA
OUTDOORRETAILER.COM
- 24
25** **JACKET
REQUIRED**
LONDON, UK
JACKET-REQUIRED.COM

- 28
29** **AGENDA**
LONG BEACH,
CALIFORNIA USA
AGENDASHOW.COM

AUGUST

- 01
04** **SUMMER
X GAMES**
MINNEAPOLIS, USA
XGAMES.ESPN.COM
- 03
04** **VANS PRO SKATE
PARK SERIES
QUALIFIER**
HUNTINGTON BEACH, USA
VANSPARKSERIES.COM
- 07
09** **REVOLVER**
COPENHAGEN,
REVOLVER.DK
- 07
11** **BOARDMASTERS**
CORNWALL - UK
BOARDMASTERS.COM
- 09
10** **VANS PRO SKATE
PARK SERIES
QUALIFIER**
PARIS, FRANCE
VANSPARKSERIES.COM



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Since your feet aren't numb, shouldn't you be able
to feel something?

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