



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDES FW 21/22
SNOWBOARDS, OUTERWEAR, GOGGLES,
WETSUITS, CRUISERS, SNOW SAFETY

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collection



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COLLECTION



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COLLECTION



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WELCOME

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In 2021, we are going even further in our environmental approach by democratising our neoprene made from oyster shell powder. Our best-sellers, the FIGHTER and DIVINE ranges, will now be in **OYSTERPRENE®**.

FIGHTER

DIVINE




The aim of this label is to identify our most environmentally friendly products and reduce our ecological footprint.

FREDERIC LECOQ - Rider: JORGAN NI COUZINET



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HELLO SOURCE#105

For large parts of Europe, winter 2020/21 will forever be remembered as the winter that was - but wasn't. Splitboarding's had its upward trajectory turbocharged with lift access a no-go for most. But the snow came, and boy, did it come! Those lucky enough to be in regions where ski lifts remained open, lucky you. For those who had to mine lines, it'll be a winter to remember.

German, French, British and Italian snowsports tourists have been deprived of their annual pilgrimage to the Alps, but it's also been the toughest winter season in memory for the snowboard retailers who usually pay bills with their Euros. Many shops employed innovative click and collect features through Whatsapp, websites and Instagram, but the bottom line is without regular tourism, it's been a brutal winter.

Consequently, retailers are currently sitting on large amounts of 20/21 stock, unable to sell to their regular footfall, leaving the industry

wondering, 'to carry over, or not to carry over'... that has been the question on everyone's lips. Having been through all the 21/22 product categories, I can report that, well... the answer is most certainly not unanimous. In short, brands who have something to shout about, will shout. Those who are trying to prolong the life cycle of their products are continuing to do so. But I don't think we are going to see a seismic shift in the product life cycle across the industry - at least not yet. There are brands for whom carry-over just suits better, but there are brands who are built around snowboarding's art, culture and technological progression and telling these stories to stoke out their customers each year is in their company's DNA.

Being completely honest about the true effect Covid has had on the snowboard industry in Europe; just as the disease has preyed upon the frail and the weak, it's done the same to companies within our industry. Those who lived on small cash reserves or had been facing a declining business environment pre-Covid, have had their demise fast-tracked. This hasn't been a case of businesses run poorly, more just the straw that broke the camel's back for companies (brands and retailers) suffering from snowboarding's decline in participation figures over the past decade. As is with everything in life, it's the lessons we learn from life that makes us stronger in future.

For any of my regular readers, you'll know positivity is my editorial's usual shtick. But for those in the European snowboard industry, you'll know that's really pretty hard to come by right now. But just this week we witnessed the birth of a new live snowboard competition format in Travis Rice's Natural Selection Tour. It breathed life into our industry at a difficult time and all viewers were stoked throughout its entirety. Combining this with the solid efforts many brands are finally ploughing into the kids category and I am fully stoked for the future of snowboarding.

The European snowboard industry has been well and truly kicked in the nuts the past two winters, but as we saw with last summer's boom in surf, skate and the outdoors in general, when resorts are allowed to open, the consumer's thirst for the outdoors and riding on snow will be ravenous.

As we head into spring I hope our skate and surf brethren have learnt their lessons from last summer and as long as their supply chains can keep up, summer 2021 could turn out to be the best in recent memory.

Always Sideways
Harry Mitchell Thompson
Ed-in-chief

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On the cover Amplids's Peter Bauer. Photo by Manue

NEWS

#105

ARBOR 25TH ANNIVERSARY

Back in 1995, Bob Carlson and the late Chris Jensen founded Arbor, the first action sports brand to focus on protecting the planet. Arbor is built on the importance of using sustainable materials and giving back to the environment; principles that are still at the brand's core today.

CROWDFUNDING OPEN FOR 2021'S INTERNATIONAL REPORT ON SNOW & MOUNTAIN TOURISM REPORT

For the 2021 issue of the International Report on Snow & Mountain Tourism, Laurent Vanat has launched a crowdfunding campaign to raise the funds necessary for its publication. The report covers ski areas and key industry data for 72 countries and therefore give businesses in the industry an insight into skiing around the globe. Contributions can be sent by Paypal with following link www.paypal.me/laurentvanat

WIRED SNOWBOARDS WELCOMES DEVUN WALSH TO THEIR TEAM

Heading back to his roots in Vancouver, snowboarder Devun Walsh has joined the team at Wired Snowboards, who are also based in Vancouver. Wired Brand Manager Rob Dow says he is excited about working with Devun and his future at Wired.

JD SPORT BUYS DTLR

JD Sports Fashion Plc entered into a conditional agreement for the acquisition of 100% of DTLR Villa LLC. Based in Baltimore, Maryland, and currently majority owned by BRS & Co. and Goode Capital, DTLR was established in 1982 and is a hyperlocal athletic footwear and apparel streetwear retailer. Originally named Downtown Locker Room, the company later re-branded as DTLR and, in 2017, merged with Sneaker Villa Inc (previously based in Philadelphia). DTLR currently operates from 247 stores across 19 states, principally in the north and east of the United States.

WHEELS & WAVES ANNOUNCE EVENT DATES FOR 2021

After last year's 9th edition being cancelled, Wheels & Waves is looking to return better than ever for their 10th anniversary. The event is set to take place from June 30 to July 4, with 5 days of riding, races, contests, parties between sea and mountain... providing it is safe to do so.

GIRO HIRES JOSH REID AS GIRO SNOW BRAND MANAGER

Josh Reid, Rome Snowboards Co-Founder, has been appointed Snow Brand Manager at Giro, maker of high performance snow helmets and goggles. At Giro, Josh will oversee all aspects of snowsports marketing communications, advertising, and public relations while also boosting Giro's global brand image by overseeing the production of creative content, generating marketing collateral and liaising with international distributors. Josh plans to relocate to Utah to work from Giro's Park City office.

FORCEFIELD PROTECTIVE CLOTHING OWNERS MERGE WITH VALE BROTHERS

The owners of high performance & protection clothing brand Forcefield Protective Clothing, Davies Odell Ltd, has merged with Vale Brothers Ltd; a move that will enable Forcefield to broaden its product range, strengthen its presence in its current markets and expand to others. This merger doubles the size of both companies and has resulted in a new entity that is stronger for the future, whilst also being more competitive in all areas.

EMERALD HOLDINGS (SURF EXPO & OUTDOOR RETAILER) ACQUIRES B2B E-COMMERCE PLATFORM PLUMRIVER

Emerald Holding Inc. Has acquired PlumRiver, provider of B2B e-commerce platforms and digital merchandising solutions. The addition of PlumRiver, and their Elastic Suite platform, to Emerald's portfolio (which includes Surf Expo and Outdoor Retailer) will enable Emerald to offer a wider array of digital / ecommerce solutions and opportunities to expand their live events business and will Extend PlumRiver's Elastic Suite B2B platform to thousands of Emerald customer brands. Elastic Suite's platform streamlines the wholesale buying process for both brands and retail buyers, creating a digital year-round transactional platform for use by Emerald's customers. PlumRiver, which was founded in 2002, is integrated with preeminent manufacturers and retailers across numerous industries, most notably in the outdoor, surf, cycling, footwear and sporting goods verticals, and will complement Emerald's portfolio of leading show brands including Outdoor Retailer and Surf Expo, among others. Key client brands include: Patagonia, The North Face, Burton, Shimano, Scott Sports, Rip Curl, Boardriders, Volcom, Timberland, New Balance, Vans, Orvis and Puma.

UNION BINDING COMPANY UNVEILS NEW GLOBAL HQ, THE BOX

Union Binding Company has revealed The Box, their new base-camp in Colico, Italy. The Box will be Union's Global HQ, a place where Union can continue working on producing high quality products. Union is the only conventional binding supplier who owns and operates its own production facility. A dedicated collective of binding designers, production experts and passionate snowboarders – the team at the Box can design, build and test prototypes all within an 8-hour workday.

OUT OF STEP LTD ADDS POLER TO BRAND PORTFOLIO

Out Of Step Ltd, UK-based distributor & brand agency, has been appointed to manage camping brand Poler in the UK. Out Of Step will manage Poler's UK DTC website and wholesale distribution.

PRO-TEC WINTER PRODUCTS TO BE DISTRIBUTED IN THE UK & ACROSS EUROPE BY BB AGENTUR

Effective immediately, Pro-Tec, the original action sports helmet and protective gear brand have chosen Denmark-based BB Agentur Asp as their new European trade partner for the Winter sports category. BB Agentur's decades of history in the action and winter sports business, working with brands like Etnies, Emerica, éS and Thirtytwo, make them an excellent partner for the nearly 50 year-old heritage skate and snow brand.

NEW EUROPEAN PADDLE SHOW LAUNCHING IN LYON

Following the decision by Paddleexpo to close its doors, The Paddle Sport show has been launched in Lyon as a pan European b2b paddle event. The inaugural event will be from September 29th – October 1st, 2021. The show features 150+ booths of apparels, boats, boards and accessories and a complete line-up of special events, including talks & summits, the Paddle Sports Product of the Year Awards, film festivals, races, and on water-demos. For more information go to www.thepaddlesportshow.com

JONES LAUNCHES OUTERWEAR

This season Jones is launching into mens outerwear as a further brand extension. The idea is to develop new winter apparel concepts that blend together comfort, performance and sustainability with a fresh look and functional fit. With a laser focus on essentials and a clear intention for each piece, they have designed three unique, movement focused collections that will keep you cool, dry and comfortable through a wide variety of conditions and situations. The three collections are the Shralpinist, Uphill and Mountain Surf.

ARBOR

INTRODUCING...

THE ARBOR SINGLE



This season, we stepped back from much of the thinking on powder board designs, to re-envision how to provide more of the versatility we need when we head out to ride deep snow. Knowing how similar water and powder dynamic are, we turned back to surf to create a shape that provides tremendous float, all condition turning performance, and the edge control we need on the hardpack or mixed conditions we often encounter to-and-from a session. The new Single features a highly tapered, pintail design, which provides the tracking and stability of a single fin surfboard. The tail creates the perfect angle of approach for the deepest days and added stability when pushing through the biggest pow turns. We used our Thunderhead Tip design to add surface area for buoyancy, with notches that channel snow around this wider shape. Our Pow Fenders make turning in deep snow easier, while Grip Tech makes the Single hold an amazing edge when reality kicks back in.



STALE COLLECTION

STALE COLLECTION



Designed by the international wundershred himself, Ståle Sandbech, the Stale Collection is his take on an all-season quiver. For the second year of the collection, Ståle tapped into a more minimal yet vibrant surf-inspired graphic package. Careful, this collection has a high risk of powder explosions, going full send or having the best time ever.



STALE MOD



STALE CREWZER



STALEFISH



STALE CLEAVER



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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE SNOWBOARDS FW21/22

As with all other hardware categories, board-builders had a decision to make for their 2021/22 line; what approach would be best for engaging with the (hopefully) post-COVID snowboard retail market? Up the amount of carryover, in order to take the pressure off shops with large inventories? Or focus on the new and exciting, to get the stoke levels back up as quickly as possible? Or does the answer lie somewhere in between? Andrew Duthie does the full spectrum.



RIDE

FORK IN THE TRAIL

When we asked the industry at large what they had planned, the responses we got were uniformly thoughtful and considered (well, almost: there's always one, and in this case it was the brand genuinely puzzled as to why we were asking so many questions about "the current virus scenario impacting the world"....). Almost immediately, it became clear that there was to be no consensus. Companies will tackle the upcoming winter cycle in wildly differing ways, depending on what they reckon is best for them and their partners.

"We have to make sure they [retailers] are healthy before we are selling them more technology," says Academy's Jeff Baughn. It's a similar sentiment over at Nobile, according to Marketing Manager Jan Korycki. "We hope that our actions will help retailers simply survive and allow them to keep the prices of older products with full margin." Salomon, Burton, Rossignol and Jones also all cited the need to make life easier for retailers as the main reason for increasing their percentage of carryover in 2021/22. So too have Rad Air - although with a 30th anniversary to mark, there will be a smattering of new models from them too.

Self-proclaimed pioneers of the carryover approach Dupraz will be

"We have to make sure they [retailers] are healthy before we are selling them more technology."

Academy's Jeff Baughn

staying the course: "Our approach to make the ultimate all mountain snowboards with a limited collection of ultra durable boards now makes more sense than ever." Relative newcomers Canary Cartel are following a similar path. "Actually, skateboard companies are carrying over logo products since forever now," points out Christian Kirsch. "We think that, unless you are dropping something new, there's no more need to change colours and design every season if nothing changes under the top sheet." That's also been Stranda's approach, although they do plan to add some more lengths and widths to their existing range.

At the other end of the spectrum is Ride, who are coming in hot with "26 fresh boards" according to Sales & Marketing Manager Joerg Schramm. "COVID or not, we are not stopping to develop our snowboard technology or to give the boards a new fresh design. People will love the new designs, and they will make you smile even in these tough times. Watch out!" CAPITA are also going heavy

Gigi is using ecommerce experts Quivers, which allows him to sell boards D2C on his website, but his retailers claim the sale locally.



CANARY CARTEL

on new (carrying over the Neo Slasher splitboard, but refreshing everything else), as are Nidecker. “Our strategy is simple”, explains Thierry Kunz. “We need to bring innovation and novelties to market, and that goes double in these hard times.”

Gigi Rüt’s brand Slash is celebrating 10 years for the 21/22 season and so he’ll be working with re-issues of the very first Straight and ATV graphics, sold to key retailers across the globe as well as an exciting collab, under wraps for the time being. Pre-pandemic, Gigi had already been working with retailers to deliver a collection that struck a balance of newness and enabling sell-through: “By introducing my 20/21 Present Future collection, I had intentionally taken out half the models to create a two-year fluctuating demand model. So, for 21/22 you’ll have the chance to buy the models that weren’t available this season.” And now Gigi is using ecommerce experts Quivers, which allows him to sell boards D2C on his website, but his retailers claim the sale locally. Read more on this on our website.

Even with the Mervin manufacturing facility being closed for ten weeks, Roxy will be offering more new products than in a typical year, and only the GORP splitboard will be carried over in Gnu’s line. It’s a slightly different story across the factory floor, however; while Lib Tech do have some new releases lined up, they’ve also, in the words of Pete Saari, “trimmed a little here and there to keep the SKUs in check and make sure we could manage the workload in the COVID-challenged environment.” Other brands cutting back in some way are Never Summer, whose reduced production capacity led to “tough decisions to cut some models and sizes”, and Moonchild, who are ditching the twin-tip models introduced last year in favour of concentrating on their oddball pow shapes. “We will go back to our roots and build premium boards for the niche market,” says co-owner Jure Sodja.

RIPPING UP THE RULEBOOK

So the jury’s definitely out on which way to go - but in any case, isn’t a once-in-a-century global event exactly the time to try something completely different? That certainly seems to be the case over at Endeavor. “COVID-19 has allowed us to get more creative when creating our 21/22 line,” says Joel Giddings, Brand Manager. “We will be offering ‘timeless’ boards which we won’t put on sale and we will continue to purchase stock as necessary. Like many brands, we had a few boards in our line that the main difference year-to-year was a graphic. By offering them for multiple years it will keep overproduction down, discounting down, and allow us to offer an amazing board for multiple years. We will still offer new technology and shapes seasonally, but not in every product.”

That word “timeless” crops up again in WEST owner David Fernandez’ vision for his brand. His plans predate the pandemic and are more to do with generally reducing over-production and over-consumption - but however they might have been received in the Before Times, the world will doubtlessly be even warmer to his ideas post-COVID. In short, there’ll be no new line dropping at the start of each winter. Instead, certain key models will be sold until they’re gone. Expect the odd limited edition deck to appear at any given time throughout the year, but overall the days of over-production at WEST are over. “We know that we might lose some sales (especially reorders) but

“We will be offering ‘timeless’ boards which we won’t put on sale and we will continue to purchase stock as necessary. Like many brands, we had a few boards in our line that the main difference year-to-year was a graphic. By offering them for multiple years it will keep overproduction down, discounting down, and allow us to offer an amazing board for multiple years. We will still offer new technology and shapes seasonally, but not in every product.” Joel Giddings, Brand Manager at Endeavor

we think that it is time to really change the consumption habits as they have been so far the most harmful to our planet,” explains David. “By producing high standard products which last longer and having great attention to the graphic design’s details, we’ll try to motivate the consumers to use their board till the end.”

While the above examples see brands breaking from the norm, it’s a slightly different story over at Tur Snowboards. Having only made their debut this winter, they’ve ditched the ‘September drop’ right from the off. Board models and graphics will be present in the line for at least a calendar year, says co-founder Hampus Mossesson, but other than that, all bets are off as to when they’ll be refreshed or replaced. “Graphics [for a new model] are ready as I’m writing this,” he continues, “and hopefully the board will be released

NEVER SUMMER

21.22 PROTO FR

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“Our strategy is simple. We need to bring innovation and novelties to market, and that goes double in these hard times.” Thierry Kunz, Nidecker

before anyone reads this!” Another newcomer is Hokkaido-based Island Snowboards, who are getting off the ground slowly using Japanese small business culture for inspiration. “There are countless businesses that only produce a fixed amount of something, and when it’s sold out for the day or for the season, that’s it,” explains founder Owain Bassett. “We’ve always planned to grow sustainably and organically... a model that I think works well given the current world situation.”

Over in Canada, Yunika Snowboards have settled into a three-year product cycle, of which the current one is at the midpoint. They’re wagering that such an approach is right for these times, given the extra security it provides retailers. As founder Jean-Marie Thil explains, “The situation for the industry is extremely challenging and we haven’t fully seen yet the impact and change that will occur. This is sadly only the beginning...”

FRESH DECKS

However they’re choosing to approach the 2021/22 season, just about every brand has something new and noteworthy lined up. Some are either resurrected models from the past, or at the very least inspired by an old favourite - some COVID-induced nostalgia for the good old pandemic-free days, perhaps?

Amplid are bringing back what Peter Bauer calls “our first real powder board, from almost 10 years back” - the Morning Glory. It’s been redesigned for the ‘Future Shapes’ line, and should bring a smile to the face of anyone with rose-tinted goggle lenses. The Burton Leader Board hasn’t been missing for nearly as long, but it’s nevertheless a rare re-entry into the brand’s Family Tree line, presumably back by popular demand. “It’s all about big-mountain stability for riding steep lines and holding an edge when mistakes are simply not an option,” says Jan Grimm, Hardgoods Specialist. While the much-missed Ride DH isn’t coming back, Joerg Schramm invites us to consider the new Benchwarmer, a fresh freestyle board that “will follow in the footsteps of the legendary DH.” And for anyone who remembers the Ride Zero, there’ll be a new version next year.

As for what’s brand spanking, a few new carvers will be hitting the market, including the K2 Excavator which, as the name suggests, is built for digging trenches. The Gnu Banked Country, designed by Temple Cummins and his son Cannon, will feature a new take on the wavy Magne-Traction edge that gets more pronounced towards the tail for maximum power out of turns, and Amplid are adding to their Centrifugal range of carvers with the Souly Grail. While details of Nidecker’s forthcoming Instinct series are still thin on the ground, they’ve got form in offering something for the elbow-droppers. In any case, we’re intrigued to see more details of what a very animated Thierry Kunz calls the ‘APX’ construction method. “The factories all said it couldn’t be done, but dozens of prototypes later we proved them wrong!”

Freestyle fans have plenty to get excited about too, especially those who like to log their air miles in the powder. Both the Lib Tech Orca and the Jones Mind Expander will be joined by directional-twin-shaped versions in 2021/22. Look out for the former (named the Golden Orca) under Travis Rice’s feet on the Natural Selection tour. Over at Salomon, Louif Paradis is getting his own addition to the Hillside Project series, that aims to “mix street style riding with

powder riding.” Someone else who’s pretty handy at that is JP Walker, whose new pro model from Santa Cruz is designed to do it all. Fans of the Korua Tranny Finder, one of their more freestyle-friendly offerings, should look out for a new shape in 2021/22, as well as a new name. It’s getting re-christened the ‘Transitionfinder’; not as catchy, but less likely to be mistaken as offensive, according to co-founder Nicholas Wolken.

A couple of new boards, while not directly influenced by COVID, nevertheless serve as a sign of the times. Gone is the K2 World Wide Weapon, and in its place comes the World Peace. Granted, it’s much the same as its predecessor, albeit with the base up-spec’d from extruded to sintered, but if replacing weapons with peace isn’t a good message for the post-pandemic era then we don’t know what is. Likewise the Nitro Optimysm is a beacon of light in dark times; there’s the name, obviously, as well as the fact that it might well be the first board we’ve seen that’s designed primarily for flatland tricks. So even if every resort shuts for good, all you need is a bit of snow, a bit of gradient, and one of these...

SHAPING THE FUTURE

Even as the world goes tits up, you can count on snowboard brands to tinker away at their latest innovations with all the diligence of an AstraZeneca lab technician. While we’re not seeing anything to rival a pandemic-busting jab, a few things have got our attention. Head will be bringing their EMC tech over from the ski line; having applied a version of the KERS system to some models for a few years now, they’re no stranger to harnessing the kinetic energy generated by turns, and this latest feature promises to improve dampening for a



NEW 21/22

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ALPINE
 CLÉMENT BOCHATAY PRO MODEL

“COVID or not, we are not stopping to develop our snowboard technology or to give the boards a new fresh design. People will love the new designs, and they will make you smile even in these tough times. Watch out!” Ride Sales & Marketing Manager Joerg Schramm.



NIDECKER

smoother ride. Bataleon have been working on an improved carbon-infused fibre, to be found only in the extremely-limited-edition (150 for sale, delivered in a custom-made sleeve) Thunder Bolt. “It will make power transfer so nimble and controllable you feel like you’re driving a F1 car,” says CEO Dennis Dusseldorp.

For some brands, the advancements lie in how much more sustainable their products have become. Borealis is just one brand that’s going greener in 2020/21. In addition to the bio resin, FSC-certified wood cores, eco-friendly ink and other planet-friendly processes, they’re now adding the substitution of basalt for carbon, and recycled ABS sidewalls. Sandy Shapes have also been developing a new bio resin during lockdown (as part of a wider sustainability drive) and should be ready to roll it out next winter. Over at Jones they’re also trying to do their bit for a better world; it’s not a massive leap forward, and indeed you might not have clocked it without us pointing it out, but the topsheet of the 2021/22 Jones Hovercraft will be the first to feature zero ink, with all logos and detailing delivered instead by laser etching.

Shape-wise, more brands than ever are preparing to leap into the



DUPRAZ

third dimension. The new K2 Special Effects will feature 8mm of contour in the nose, Slash have worked 3D shaping into their existing ‘float camber’ profile, and Burton will be building upon this winter’s pilot of 3D Family Tree boards with an expanded line for 2021/22. It’s also something that Konvoi continue to work on at their factory in the Czech Republic. “The most interesting thing to come is more three dimensional cores and running surfaces,” says Ben Dietermann. “There is still a lot left to discover and thanks to our well-equipped workshop we can keep at it full throttle.” Naturally there aren’t as many avenues for innovation when it comes to profile, although the Canary Cartel guys have a new combo of camber and flat base to show off next year. By then, however, they may regret calling it ‘the LockDown bend’...

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

2020 was rough for the young ‘uns, so it’s great to see how many brands are stepping up their grom offerings next year. Directional/true twin models still dominate, predicting that kids will most likely be following the freestyle path, but 2021/22 will be throwing up a few freeride-specific boards too. It’s a sign of the times, says Elevated Surf Craft’s Aaron Lebowitz, who makes proper surf-inspired kids’ boards: “an area like Mammoth has 100+ groms between the age 9-12 who can carve hard and navigate powder, often surpassing their parents.” Allesandro Marchi of Sandy Shapes agrees, explaining the reasoning behind their new kid-friendly all-mountain board: “We decided to create a radically different product, not a toy: a new shape specifically developed for the progression of the young riders, but maintaining the same construction and performance as an adult snowboard.”

Winterstick will have both bases covered with the new Yute Twin and Yute Swally. The former is pretty self-explanatory, while the latter, says Factory Manager Peter MacDowall, is, “a powder board for kids who don’t want to get stuck when it snows, and actually lets them enjoy powder.” Meanwhile Bataleon will be releasing a ‘Mini’ version of their unmistakable Surfer shape that first appeared a few winters ago. Like its bigger brother, this one is built primarily for the powder but gets on famously with piste too.

“We have updated our Junior board programme,” says Baptiste Chaussignand, Senior Product Manager at Salomon. As with most of their kid-friendly output in recent years, the new arrivals are smaller versions of what you’ll find in the grown-up’s collection. Now it’s the turn of the Sleepwalker and Oh Yeah boards to get the ‘Grom’ suffix, for boys and girls respectively. Likewise Ride are releasing a scaled down version of the resurrected Zero from their adult line.

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CLICKER X HB



STYLING: JAMES
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HAIR: JAMES
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It seems that the kids aren't just alright - they've also been eating their greens. Both Nitro and West are keeping a beady eye on changes to the youth market and have noticed that the average foot size of young riders is increasing. As a result expect to see wider versions of the Nitro Future Team and WEST K-West. Factor in the new unisex youth model from K2, a 115cm version of Easy Snowboards' Wallride Mini (their smallest yet) and the new Arbor Cheater, and it's clear that younger riders will be well looked after in 2021/22.

VISUAL AIDS

As for what will stand out on the racks, there's no shortage of conversation-starters coming our way for 2021/22. As Rome's Matt Stillman puts it, "we find boards to be a challenging category to carry over graphically." Indeed, the brand's Stale Sandbech-inspired mini line, which dropped just this year, will be refreshed with "a more abstract texture-based approach that has some echoes of surfboard vibes." Moving from the water to the concrete, DC's EMB board will once again draw inspiration from the brand's skate heritage; Nick Pourfard, who upcycles old decks to create his Prisma guitars, has been drafted in to do the topsheet honours.

When it comes to bold new approaches with a bit of artistic flair, leave it to the Italians to lead the charge. Comera have retained the services of one of the country's leading tattooists to create a new graphic, while the latest Rusty Toothbrush collab from Drake has been designed by Aldo Rebuli using what they describe as "an interesting new interpretation of Caravaggio."

The artwork on next year's Weston Eclipse women's board is the work of Brooklyn Bell in collaboration with the American Institute for Avalanche Research and Education, and reflects the fact that sales of the board will fund the brand's 'Powder to the People' scholarship programme. Through the scheme, cash towards sitting an AIARE course is provided to members of communities that have

traditionally been under-represented in the backcountry, including women and people of colour.

Interestingly, the latest creations from Verdad's Demir Julià have been directly inspired (if you can call it that) by the mess we currently find ourselves in. "Due to the COVID crisis, and all the B*S* that comes with it, I have recently found my inspiration and inner peace in Art Deco, which was an artform born between the two World Wars. Back then, people needed to dream big, they needed hope and to grasp that 'sky's the limit' feeling again. This style is immense, magnificent and precious; our 'Classic' and 'DJ Aguila' series graphics are pure Art Deco and we are loving it!"

While the pandemic hasn't prompted Kjetil Bjørge over at Fjell to change his approach, he reckons there's never been a better time to consider one of the Norwegian brand's minimalist topsheets: "with the noise in the world, we think for us it will be even more important to keep the silent expression in our design." Alternatively you can choose to just wind the clock back to a simpler time, courtesy of the reissued artwork dropping in the upcoming YES illustrated graphics designed "to echo the history of snowboarding".

CONCLUSION

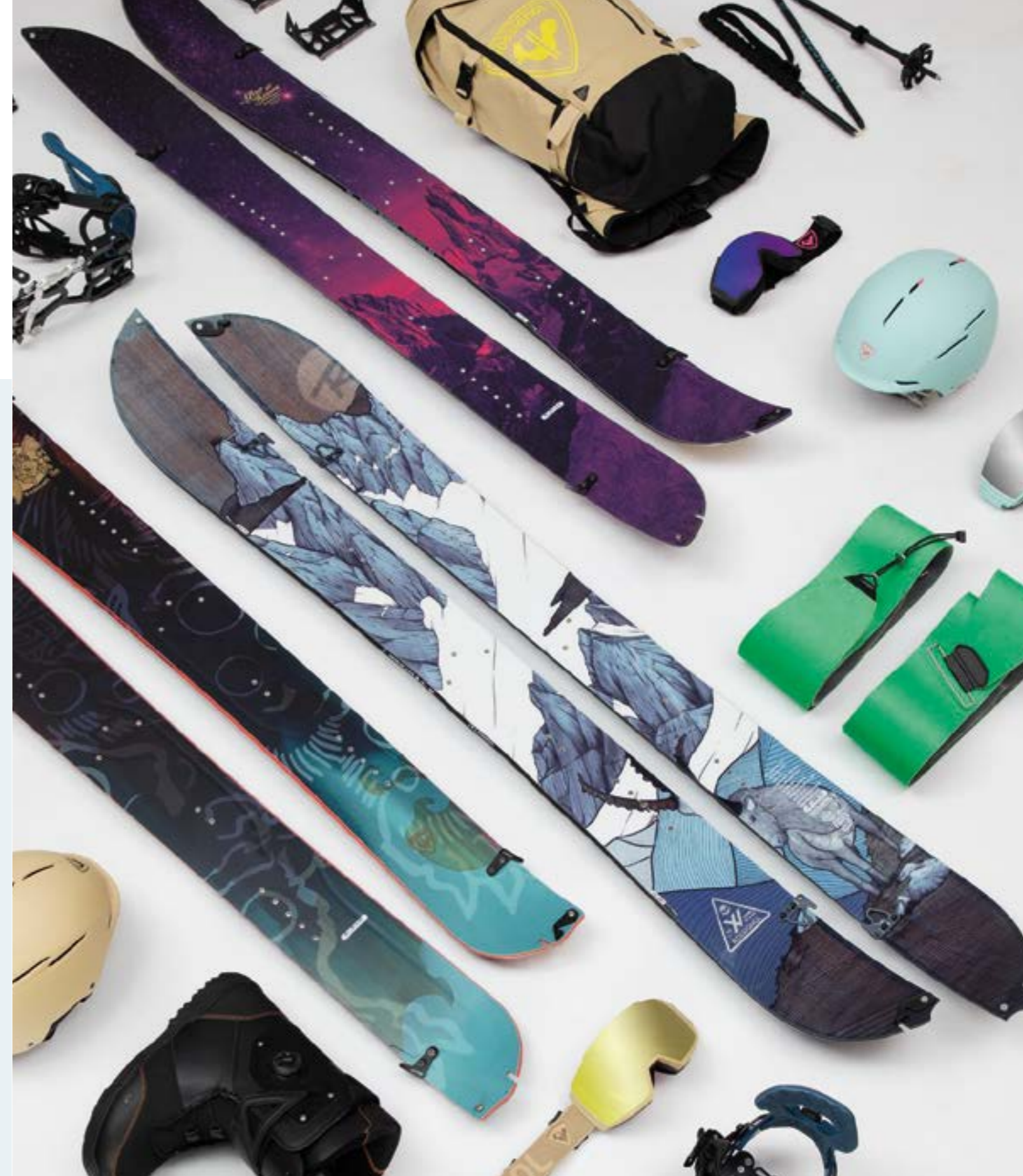
Things will no doubt continue to change at a breakneck pace, but here's how things stand in the snowboard world for the moment. Time will tell as to who has made the right call, and who hasn't - but with any luck, the 2021/22 season will see brands and retailers alike thriving in the post-pandemic world, regardless of which path they've chosen. ☺

Visit our website to see in depth brand previews of this category.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Mixed consensus on carry-over
- 2 Kids boards beefed up
- 3 Time to innovate
- 4 3D on the rampage



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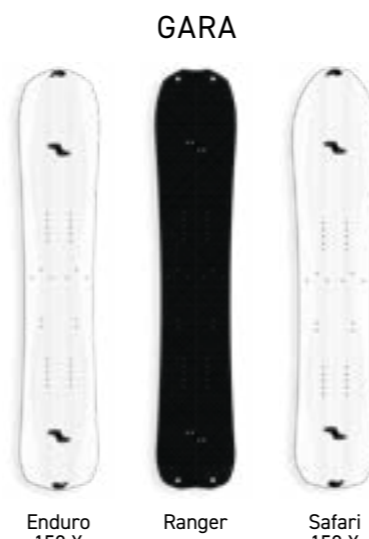
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GNU



Velvet Young Money Recess

GOODBOARDS



Capra Deep Reload

HEAD



e-Instinct LYT Powerhouse LYT Pulse LYT

ISLAND



Volume One 153 Volume One 163 Volume One 148

JONES



Aviator Mind Expander Twin Storm Wolf

K2



Geometric Special Effects World Peace

KONVOI



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Cafe Racer 56 Pencil Tugboat 51

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BOARDERLINE



RETAILER PROFILE BOARDERLINE, SCOTLAND



Simon Burnside has run Boarderline in Aberdeen since 1996, with a recent move taking the store out west of the city to Banchory where a café offering has been a game changer for the business. We catch up with Simon for a fantastically insightful chat on their project with installing snow cannons at their local mountain, COVID's effect on business and how a more collaborative approach is needed from brands and retailers. You can read an extended version of this interview on boardsportsource.com.

Tell us about the history of Boarderline.

I came to snowboarding via skiing. My mum had a ski shop in the 80's and 90's and I'd always helped out as a youngster. In the early 90's snowboarding was fast emerging as a fun, creative and youth-lead sport that was the complete opposite of skiing which had (at the time) become a bit staid and traditional. Once I got involved, I never looked back! I persuaded them to stock a couple of Sims boards in the shop and some Wave Rave outerwear and things grew from there! A small shop came up for rent next door, and I branched out on my own, focussing entirely on snowboarding, quickly followed by skateboarding. Just as the last skateboarding boom hit, we moved to a larger city centre store in 2001 and remained there for 17 years.

It has continued to be me as the sole owner/director, as it has been since the beginning. However, I have had many, many talented and cool people work in the business over the years – all of whom have contributed a great deal to its success and longevity.

We opened the Ride Coffee House in November 2018, moving from Aberdeen to Banchory – a small town, 18 miles to the west of the city with Boarderline now located in the lower ground floor. The idea was primarily to give us another string to our bow, provide a more consistent year-round revenue stream, and make us less dependent on the vagaries of snowfall, and all the other factors affecting snowboard retail. It's been really successful and great fun diving into a new area, with a really strong crowd of bike riders stopping off for their flat whites!

This winter you're working with the Lecht Ski Company on a crowdfunding campaign...

We have a store during the snow season at The Lecht and it has been my local 'go to' mountain since I was a nipper. Climate change and milder winters has meant that snowfall is far from guaranteed in Scotland these days. Scottish resorts need a strong snowmaking game to survive, and fortunately companies like Technoalpin in Italy are keeping pace and producing some great products to assist with this.

The Lecht got a generous offer of a grant for ¾ of the cost of installing 4 new snow cannons to add to their existing Snowfactory. We reached

£65,000 of funding, which was almost entirely funded by enthusiastic Lecht customers and locals! It was really cool to see the level of support and love for The Lecht. The aim was always to get them in for this season, and with looming uncertainty surrounding January 1 and 'no deal', it was decided they had to be shipped in quickly, so they arrived a week before Christmas.

Can you talk to us about any advice you have for brands?

Recently, there's been a lot of discussion about how COVID has just accelerated what was already happening across the retail sector, with the demise of high street stores, increase in online etc... There's no doubt that the past 10 months have really forced everyone to take stock and rethink and, if necessary, adapt their business to survive.

It's been great to see the boom in skateboarding, slowed only by the unavailability of product – never seen that before!

For the snowboard industry, I'd like to see a change in the relationship between brands and their retailers. I think brands are missing a trick by not utilising (the ever-decreasing number) brick and mortar stores that are still around more effectively. Brands are obviously very actively pursuing a DTC model; however, I feel they should be offering greater support in terms of making stock available when stores need it and using these stores to offer the kind of experience that cannot be replicated online. I think the age-old method of expecting retailers to commit to large pre-orders in order to get stock, with little or no in-season availability, whilst simultaneously competing against brands selling direct, is just not sustainable for independents anymore.

I'd like to see a more collaborative approach, where dealers don't have to shoulder the same level of risk in terms of stockholding and have a greater flexibility in-season to provide the customers with what they want. Done right, this could work to everyone's advantage and ultimately keep the stoke of snowboarding alive, something which will not happen with just 2 or 3 large .com's slinging out products... ☺

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IN DEPTH

WHY SNOWBOARDING IS EMBRACING THREE-DIMENSIONAL BASE DESIGN SNOWBOARDS.

BY TRISTAN KENNEDY.

For years, three-dimensional bases were a niche idea in snowboard design. So why is that changing now? Tristan Kennedy investigates.

There's a story that the Co-Founder of Netflix, Marc Randolph, is fond of telling, about a meeting in the year 2000 with top executives from Blockbuster Video. The confirmation had come in late, so Randolph had to fly straight from a booze-fuelled company retreat. He was feeling hungover, overwhelmed, and distinctly underdressed, in his California tech-bro uniform of shorts and a t-shirt. Still, he thought Netflix, who were asking for investment, had a pretty good pitch. But when he and his colleagues laid out why they thought the internet would revolutionise video rental, the smart-suited Blockbuster executives basically laughed them out of the room.

Around the same time, a Norwegian named Jorgen Karlsen was trying to explain to representatives from several big-name boardsports brands why his patented idea - for a snowboard with a three-dimensional base - would change the industry forever. Like Marc Randolph, Karlsen didn't look the part. He wasn't even a snowboarder, his background was in biophysics. In meeting after meeting, the biggest players in the snowboard industry gave his ideas similarly short shrift.

Karlsen, however, was undeterred. In fact, he was so convinced that his idea, which he called 'Triple Base Technology', would work, that he set up his own company, Bataleon Snowboards, to prove it. "As well as being one of the smartest guys on the planet, Jorgen is also one of the most stubborn," says Danny Kiebert, now the brand's Creative Director.

"It's been a huge job working out our manufacturing process so we can keep the prices down. Without giving away too many trade secrets, we've created tooling and machinery that allowed us to quickly change components without having to change the entire setup." Scott Seward, Burton

Over Zoom from the Netherlands, Kiebert explains that although Karlsen is no longer involved in the day-to-day running of the brand, his patented ideas still underpin every board they make. Karlsen's idea might not have revolutionised the snowboarding world straight away, but if you look at recent design developments across the industry, it's hard to escape the impression that, like Marc Randolph of Netflix, the Norwegian maverick was right all along.

Preaching the 3D Gospel

In the last five years, snowboard companies have been falling over themselves to make boards with three-dimensional base profiles. Yes Snowboards launched their 'Powder Hull' shape four years ago, and updated it again last winter. Their sister brand Jones Snowboards now features '3D Contour Bases' on most of their range, and this winter they added it to a splitboard for the first time. Three-dimensional tech is increasingly being used on park and all-mountain boards too. Arbor, for example, have been including 'Uprise Fenders' on all of

their camber snowboards since 2016, while last year, Burton's Fish 3D, a three-dimensional update to their legendary powder board, was joined by the Kilroy 3D, a park board.

None of these, to be clear, is a direct copy of Jorgen Karlsen's original idea. "All of these guys are aware of our patent, and respectful of it," says Danny Kiebert. But while each of these companies puts their own, subtle spin on three-dimensional bases, the basic principle is the same: by lifting the edges of the board, particularly around the contact points near the nose and tail, you make them harder to catch. This makes the board easier and more forgiving to turn, and also helps it float in powder. Karlsen's genius, according to Kiebert, came in realising that "you have to shape the snowboard to the shape it will take when all pressures are applied to it". Despite not being a rider himself, "he figured out what the correct shape of a snowboard should



be."

Unfortunately, the rest of the industry wasn't quite ready to listen to a crazy Norwegian with no snowboarding experience. "For years, people looked at Bataleon snowboards and were like: 'that's weird,'" says Danny Kiebert. Conventional wisdom held that rocker, introduced to the masses with the launch of the Lib Tech Skate Banana in 2007, was a better way to achieve that 'catch free' feel.

"I get it," says Kiebert, "our shape is much harder to understand. And say what you like about rocker, but calling it a banana is genius. It's way better than calling it 'Triple Base'." At the time, Bataleon and their acolytes were telling anyone who would listen that these 'reverse camber' boards, by definition, sacrificed some of the pop and stability you get from a traditional camber profile. But with rocker boards disappearing from shop shelves quicker than free beers at ISPO, these arguments largely fell on deaf ears.

Word gets around

Yet although Bataleon were the only brand who fully committed to the three-dimensional shape for over a decade, they weren't the only people ever to have dabbled. According to Scott Seward, a Senior Design Engineer for Burton, Jake Burton was "prototyping and building boards with convex bases as far back as the 80s," and even Kiebert is careful not to claim that his company invented the concept outright.

"Any time you claim you were the first, someone will dig out some guy who built some board back in the day," he says. "Like we met a surf shaper in California called Bill Stewart who was putting bevels on his longboards, and he made a snowboard in '81 [with something similar]".

What is beyond doubt is that Bataleon's steady growth helped make

"I'm blown away by the new Aviator 2.0. The pop, edge lock and stability are unlike anything I've ever ridden. This is my ultimate freeride board and the perfect board for shredders who love the power of riding full camber."

– Victor De Le Rue

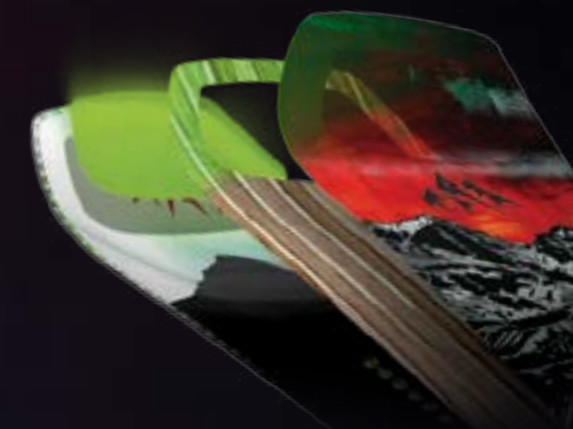


Introducing the new Aviator 2.0, designed in collaboration with Jones Team rider Victor De Le Rue.

The completely re-designed Aviator is a hard charging directional twin built for expert all-mountain riders who like to rail turns and stomp airs anywhere on the mountain.

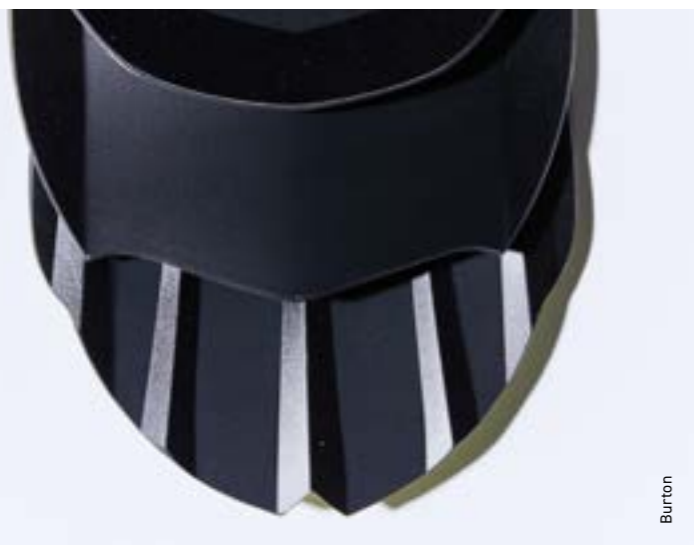


The Aviator 2.0 features Koroyd® in the core of the nose. Koroyd® absorbs vibrations and adds response at a fraction of the weight. It's the lightest, most advanced core material we've ever tested.



these fringe ideas more palatable, but there were other factors at play, too. The way people ride has changed significantly since the mid-2000s. Carving has come back in a big way, the Yawgoons have spawned a thousand imitators on Instagram, and a whole new generation of riders have decided that, actually, camber was a good idea after all.

Investments in new tech and manufacturing processes have also been key. Making a board that's not a conventional camber or rocker shape requires not only moulds, and in some cases, a whole new set of finishing tools. While Bataleon's three flat base sections can be ground down using conventional tools, other more rounded shapes present greater difficulties. "You can't grind these boards, or sand them, or wax them for snow, like a conventional board," says Scott Seward of Burton. "It's been a huge job working out our manufacturing process so we can keep the prices down. Without giving away too many trade secrets, we've created tooling and machinery that allowed us to quickly change components without having to change the entire setup," he explains.



Burton

"It's been a huge job working out our manufacturing process so we can keep the prices down. Without giving away too many trade secrets, we've created tooling and machinery that allowed us to quickly change components without having to change the entire setup." **Scott Seward, Burton**

As much as snowboarding would like to consider itself an open-minded industry, when it comes to promoting new ideas, companies are often better off paying for the endorsement of a big-name pro than they are pumping money into genuine R&D. To get something to sell, Danny Kiebert says, "you just need to get the right people to go 'sick, bro'."

That's not to say that big name pros and genuine R&D are mutually exclusive. Some of the most interesting ideas around 3D snowboard design in recent years have come from Slash Snowboards, run "as a one-man army" by none other than Austria's Gigi Rűf. When I reach him in his home office, he digs out cardboard models, sketches and prototypes he's been working on recently, delving into detailed descriptions with a boyish enthusiasm that's so infectious it cuts through despite our dodgy Zoom connection. But as we talk through his ideas for "a sort of taco" style board, it emerges that even his efforts to push new tech has been stymied by people's reluctance to consider new, outsider, approaches in the past.

"It's one of the biggest engineering challenges we've ever faced," he says. "A 3D splitboard mould is a work of art compared to a simple 2D snowboard mould. We made dozens of prototype[s] before we got it right" **Xavier Nidecker, Jones Snowboards**

"Ten years ago, in the early Slash catalogue, look, I had a technology called reactive flex," he explains. The tech, developed by a tiny Austrian brand called Silbaerg Snowboards, used tension, and a particular kind of fibreglass layup. "When you bend the board in the turn, the base becomes convex, so the edges grip more, and the opposite happens when you get on a rail - it becomes a concave." Unfortunately, when he was forced to move his production to another facility, this potentially revolutionary concept fell by the wayside. Silbaerg Snowboards still exist, but without Gigi's buy-in, it's hard to imagine their tech being embraced by the wider snowboarding world.

Hopefully, Kiebert says, attitudes in the industry are changing, and if a new Jorgen Karlsen was to emerge onto the market today, with an equally crazy-sounding idea, he would get a more receptive audience.

Whether or not three-dimensional bases are the innovation that finally convinces snowboarding to judge tech on its own merits, it's an idea that's here to stay. "I don't think this will be a quick fad," is how Burton's Scott Seward puts it. "We're going to be spending time and resources developing these boards, we're not planning on stopping."

As for Jorgen Karlsen, the man who did more than anyone else to set this ball rolling? He's long since moved onto his next project. "You know how the biggest challenge in science is the Unifying Theory?" says Kiebert, referring to the discovery which would explain the discrepancies between quantum mechanics and Einstein's theory of relativity. "Well, Jorgen now has a theory. He's working with mathematicians from the Ukraine to prove it. You laugh, but that's what he's doing now." ©

Karlsen's genius, according to Kiebert, came in realising that "you have to shape the snowboard to the shape it will take when all pressures are applied to it". Despite not being a rider himself, "he figured out what the correct shape of a snowboard should be."

Xavier Nidecker, of Jones Snowboards, explains that they've also had to put a lot of time and effort in making their three-dimensional bases, which feature a continuous curve inspired by surfboard shapes. Their splitboard versions, introduced this year, have been particularly complicated. "It's one of the biggest engineering challenges we've ever faced," he says. "A 3D splitboard mould is a work of art compared to a simple 2D snowboard mould. We made dozens of prototype[s] before we got it right".

An end to trends?

Perhaps the most important shift driving the new-found enthusiasm for three-dimensional bases, however, is not a rider-driven trend, but a change in the industry's attitudes to trends full-stop. It wasn't just the fact that Jorgen didn't look the part which made him stand out, according to Danny Kiebert. "He basically took a hardcore scientific approach to [snowboard design]". This, Kiebert says, is the opposite of the industry's normal way of doing things, which is just "trial and error".



The Future is 3D

For more than 17 years, Bataleon has led the industry in 3D shape technology. We've perfected our patented Triple Base Technology™, producing boards with traditional camber and lifted contact points, making snowboarding more enjoyable for all. The future is 3D. Ride the future.

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BIG WIG INTERVIEW UNION'S MARTINO FUMAGALLI

Martino Fumagalli is CEO and General Manager of Union Binding Co. Arguably the best recognized and respected binding company in the world and with a fresh new HQ, we catch up with Martino to discuss the effects of the business, how they're tackling sell-through and how they're tackling the D2C challenge faced by all snowboard brands and retailers in 2021.

Please tell us about your background and what led you to your position within Union Binding Co.

My name is Martino Fumagalli and I'm the Ceo/General Manager of Union and have always been based in Italy. My background goes pretty far back. I started working on snowboard products and bindings back in 1992, I was a founder of another binding brand (Drake, before selling to Northwave) back in the ice age of snowboarding.

In 2004 we saw an opportunity to start something more focused on the product, and less about traditional marketing. Union was born, and we have always strived to have a genuine approach to the product, the production and really every aspect of the brand. That's how we started out, and that's how it will always be. Today we maintain direct control and direct ownership of one production facility in Italy and one production company and facility in China.

What have been the top three pieces of binding technology the company has introduced?

1. Binding Base Bushing system, which we hold patents on.
2. Baseplate / Heelcup connection. We invented this male / female connection, which has huge performance and durability advantages, not to mention a clean design.
3. Forged Carbon.

Carry over is a good strategy if everybody participates at the same level, but if one big shop or country starts to dump carry over product, the whole plan is ruined. Hopefully our customers will be happy to see no carry-over stuff from us.

How are your splitboarding clips and bindings working out?

Obviously, we saw solid growth this year on all our Expedition Products. The actual split binding (now called "Explorer") works very well and we will continue to increase our presence and product in this category. We started providing clips to many board brands at the moment, they are simple, and they work very well. Moving forward, the Expedition category has grown quite a bit, and we offer just about everything you'll need to have a great backcountry experience.

Please tell us about your new office/factory facility.

We designed our new facility with basically the same process that we design product. All the ideas, the layout and aesthetics came from the binding design team. We even built 3D renderings and a scaled prototype. The bottom line; this is a building designed with binding process in mind. We are very proud and happy with the result, the

We love our distributors and have long lasting business and personal relationships with them. They know who we are and where we come from. We are by no means trying to be a D2C brand, but rather evolving with the times.

final result as you can see from our video introduction. We feel the new facility represents the strength of the brand - Clean, clear and with open door mentality. Everything starts with the idea of a binding box, so we call the new facility "THE BOX", following our original bindings box back in 2005; black / orange. When you open a Union binding box there is an aspect of each person involved in the company.

What were your biggest learnings from the pandemic and how it affected the snowboard business? How are your future-proofing your business with this in mind?

The pandemic hit very hard, especially in Europe, but with the experience of several bad snow years, our distributors and retailers are used to challenging situations. Each country has its unique challenges, and we are here to help as much as possible. Union is a mean and lean brand, so we've been able to keep all employees and team riders.

Please can you talk to us about the carry-over model and whether you adopted it?

We decided in the beginning to continue with our product plan, and thanks to very good early sales there is less of our product on the shelves now. Again, we have a plan in place for retailers. Carry over is a good strategy if everybody participates at the same level, but if one big shop or country starts to dump carry over product, the whole plan is ruined. Hopefully our customers will be happy to see no carry-over stuff from us.

Pandemic aside - what are the biggest opportunities facing the snowboard industry and how do you intend to tackle these issues? Well, it's no secret that the outdoor business in general is doing well right now. Consumers prefer a good day out then a bad day in (shopping center, videogames, etc). The spirit of snowboarding is strong at the moment and will continue to grow.

The majority of our sales are through brick-and-mortar retail partners. I think the main example of Union "working with" them is by not competing with them or opening up a store across the street.

How are you introducing children to snowboarding?

The best thing we can do is offer high value products at the best possible price, with no shortcuts. We have the best kids binding collection for 2022 and the category as a whole is our biggest area of growth. A lot of parents are buying kids gear and know the difference between quality and cheap junk.

For those who don't know, please explain the relationship between Union, Capita, Coal & C3.

Union, Capita, Coal and C3 are all separate businesses. The majority of ownership is common, with some unique minority partners. Every member is actively involved in either one, or all companies and we've all worked together for over 20 years.

Please explain your D2C strategy.

We just opened our D2C channel in several EU countries with the clear goal of giving our consumers the opportunity to find products they can't get locally like parts, accessories, softgoods etc. We will also offer the complete collection of bindings of course. We are not in competition with our dealers and won't be offering anything the dealer can't get. We have a very large fan base at this point thanks to all our work and investments. We love our distributors and have long lasting business and personal relationships with them. They know who we are and where we come from. We are by no means trying to be a

D2C brand, but rather evolving with the times.

What are the main marketing pushes for the coming winter months? We have invested in Travis Rice's Natural Selection Industry Alliance, and are super excited to watch that whole event roll out and take place. Otherwise we are supporting numerous film projects that our team riders are either involved with, or creating themselves. We are also investing in our own platforms internally, and creating exclusive product and rider-based content.



How are you working with retailers to push the brand and product?

The majority of our sales are through brick-and-mortar retail partners. I think the main example of Union "working with" them is by not competing with them or opening up a store across the street. Customer service, communication, building on past successes and overall consistency is how we've always worked.

How are you leveraging your athletes during the pandemic?

Again, we are super proud of the fact that we have retained and renewed contracts with all our team riders. At the very beginning of COVID-19, we prepared for the worst in terms of protecting the Union Brand. The key factor in maintaining our momentum was (and is) the people. Our employees, our sales representatives, and our team riders are the most important piece of the puzzle.

What are your biggest and best performing markets globally and which ones do you see the biggest potential for growth?

Our biggest, and best performing markets at the moment are China, Japan, Australia and North America. Good snow and the general desire to get outside and be active has amazing sell through for Union, and many other brands I'm sure. Moving forward, we hope to see Europe bounce back in a big way for our industry as a whole. From the marketing side, once things are back to normal, we will be pushing all of Europe as hard as possible. ☺



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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

GOGGLES FW 21/22

Winter season is rife with insecurity due to the pandemic. But performance optics are still in demand, as leading brands confirm in our Snow Goggles Retail Buyer's Guide for 2021, by Dirk Vogel.



MELON

"2020 was the year our playgrounds became more limited in a way we have never experienced before. It was a year for consideration and restraint. We all had to adapt and change the way we interact with each other, be smart in how we play to keep everyone safe – and we still need to be cautious."

Staae Moeller, Sweet Protection.

This winter sports season is overshadowed by pandemic uncertainty. Most European countries have returned to strict lockdown protocols, reducing retail to 'essential' businesses and closing borders, while sports facilities and ski resorts remain closed. "2020 was the year our playgrounds became more limited in a way we have never experienced before. It was a year for consideration and restraint. We all had to adapt and change the way we interact with each other, be smart in how we play to keep everyone safe – and we still need to be cautious," said Staae Moeller, Director of design and development at Sweet Protection. "The market in Europe suffered from the Covid-19 pandemic and is facing major restriction in the commercial skiing, especially with the restriction in ski areas. Nevertheless, touring is growing in the mountain areas and so are profits from the 'individual outdoor sports' approach," said Michael Schulmeister, Head of Marketing at Red Bull SPECT Eyewear.

Overall, brands remain optimistic. "Despite the situation we have seen some good sell through so far with key accounts in many regions for Dragon, with each territory having their own tiers and lockdowns, it really is dependent on where you're looking and what happens next of course", said Liam Barrett, Brand Manager at Dragon Eyewear. "The entire winter sports industry feels the impact of the current situation. With lockdowns and many ski resorts currently closed in Europe, it looks like we are all facing a tough winter season in 20/21. However, there are also some positive signs, especially for accessories like helmets and goggles," said Katharina Acham, Junior Marketing Manager at HEAD.

MARKET & PRICE POINTS

Several have responded to the new reality by adjusting their collections: "Our entire collection is carry-forward. Normally it is 80-90% of the

collection and for now we have chosen to make no exceptions. Due to this there will be no big close out deals needed, so the dealers will have less pressure to sell with a discount," said Steven Daemen, International Sales at Apex. Speaking of retailers, brands across the board are lending support by being flexible on pre-orders and payment plans. As Stephanie Leuridan, Product Manager at Quiksilver said: "We are making daily contact with retailers, trying to arrange the deliveries the best as we can, and managing be flexible as much as we can."

On another positive note, price points remain unchanged: Quality goggles for kids start as low as €29.00. Adults will find mid-range goggles featuring high-definition optics and quick-change lens systems for €99 to €119, while the hot price point for premium goggles has dropped to €219. At the same time, the market is under siege: "The flooding of the market with lots of Instagram brands now selling their goggles for 2 for 1 or 30-50% off definitely doesn't help things, but we believe if we continue to offer the best lenses out there by Zeiss, and stand behind our custom concept with some fun designs, we will continue to appeal to the

right consumers." said Neil Slinger, International Sales at Melon Optics. Dragon sweetens the deal with a gift for customers: "We implemented a gift with purchase for a neck gaiter face mask. All resorts are requiring face coverings, and this provide a solution and encourages Dragon purchase." With so much happening in the segment, it's more important than ever for retailers to choose a brand portfolio that separates their store from the rest of the pack. Let's look at season trends to help write those orders!

SEASON TREND: High-definition optics

Out on the slopes, riders want protection from glare and blinding UV light, but with enough contrast to detect bumps and obstacles at high speeds. That's why high-definition optics have been the arms race in the goggles segments for past years, and it's coming to a head in 2021 with major tech upgrades. HEAD is launching a new technology called 5K, rolled out across key models: "The challenging and ever-changing weather and light conditions on the mountain require lenses that help you to see crystal clear in any conditions. This is why we invented 5K lens technology." At Rossignol, Product Manager Marine Cessans is on the same page: "Instant recognition of features on uneven terrain like moguls, crevasses, and icy patches is key to avoiding injury. Rossignol has selected the technology and the specific know-how of ZEISS as a specialist in optics." Dirty Dog is banking on the Spectate Toric lens for clear optics. SPY+ is implementing Happy lens technology for contrast and alertness while Sweet Protection relies on RIG lens technology to, "increase contrast, provide natural colour perception and reduces eye fatigue." At VonZipper, Greg Tomlinson (Founder/President) announced, "further refinement of our WildLife Lens Technology with new lens tints and chromes."

The 6 Hottest Snow Goggle Trends for 2021

1. GO BIG OR STAY HOME

Last season's trend towards oversized goggles with maximum peripheral vision kicks into overdrive in 2021. These frames maximize face coverage and all-round vision, like the Airis SONAR goggles from Rossignol, "featuring ZEISS SONAR optics for an unmatched field of vision and terrain-defining contrast in all light conditions. The open frame design creates a seamless interface with your helmet for a pressure-free fit and all-weather comfort." At Oakley, "enhanced vision was the driving factor in developing the new Oakley Flight Path XL snow goggle." Look for XXL goggles from brands like Apex (Styx model), Rossignol (Spiral Mirror), Melon (Magnetic), Oakley (Flight Path XL, Line Miner Stale Sandbech, Flight Tracker), Sinner (Olympia and Emerald), HEAD (Magnify), Bliz (Nordic Light), AZR (Masque), TSG (Goggle Four), VonZipper (Clever), Anon (M4), SPY+ (Marauder Elite), Quiksilver (QSR), Flaxta (Episode), Red Bull Spect (Magnetron), Dragon (PXV, NFX2), Electric (Kleveland and EGG), Cébé (Cébé X Superdry Reference) and Zeal (Portal XL). For customers looking for that extra-wide field of vision but for a medium-sized face, GIRO has made an update of last season's large Contour model: "The Countour RS reduces the size of the original and features EXV+ as our largest panoramic view. Due to its great success, we were requested to bring it with a medium face flange," said Darius Heristchian, EMEA Snow Category Manager at GIRO.

Despite the situation we have seen some good sell through so far with key accounts in many regions for Dragon, with each territory having their own tiers and lockdowns, it really is dependent on where you're looking and what happens next of course"

Liam Barrett, Brand Manager at Dragon Eyewear.

2. UPGRADED LENS PLATFORMS

Following the season's push for high-definition optics, new optical advancements are pouring into collections. At Spektrum, co-founder Robert Olsson announces new BIOptic lenses: "They are a 3-layer sandwich with 2 layers of crystal-clear cellulose with a polarized sheet in between, the cellulose is biodegradable, and this construction eliminates the need for an inner lens which is quite ground-breaking." GIRO is pushing the boundaries with the EXV+ for "the widest field of vision we ever featured in a goggle." At Oakley, Britta Dornick, Business Brand Manager DACH, said: "The latest extension of the Prizm lens portfolio is Prizm Snow Clear for heavy snow and overcast conditions." HEAD is upping the ante with LDL Laminated Double Lens technology, as Katharina explained: "With LDL, the inner lens is laminated directly onto



ELECTRIC

the outer lens. Therefore, there is no more space between the lenses which increases the field of vision by 15%." POC has won awards with Cornea Solar Switch tech that allows for adjusting to light conditions with tint-changing liquid crystals. Sinner is implementing Sinrast Lens technology at attractive price points in models such as Mohawk, Olympia, Batawa and Vorlage. Red Bull SPECT heads into the season with I-BOOST enhancement and Pano View: "In combination with a thin frame design it offers an up to 15% increased field of vision by avoiding the 'tunnel vision' that results with thick frames that have the lens sit far away from the face."

TSG heads into the season with, "colour-optimized lenses that filter out blue light for more contrast and better view available in all our S3 lenses," said Nadja Herger-Bondarenko (Marketing & Communication) at TSG. At POC, a main focus lies with "clarity base lenses and Spektris mirror coatings which feature very specific and precise light transmission profiles, produced in collaboration with industry leaders, Carl Zeiss." Bliz is bullish on Nova Nano Optics while Anon sees continued success with Perceive technology introduced in W21, featuring true colour contrast and high-definition injection. Dragon is proud of Lumalens "colour-optimized lens technology. Delivering superior vividness, enhanced clarity, improved depth perception, and reduced eye fatigue." At Zeal, the Automatic+ lens is a huge focus: "This lens combines polarized and photochromic technologies to gradually transition both tint and colour with changing light, providing a unique visual experience for every condition," said Marketing Director Mike Lewis. Flaxta implements Enlight lens technology that maximizes contrast in the Episode goggles. Meanwhile, brands are also upgrading the way in which lenses are cut, including Apex with a new goggle: "The Styx is looking a bit more 'aggressive' due the sharp angles and straight cuts, but still has a spherical frame."

3. MIRRORED AND COLOURFUL TINTS

Oversized goggles look even more advanced in combination with the season's hot style trend: mirrored lenses. At Dirty Dog, Sales Ops Manager Tom Lazarus said: "We have seen a significant increase in our Gold Fusion Mirror over the last year, pairing well with a more muted frame colour palette." For 2021, Apex rolls out gorgeous rainbow-colored lenses that almost look tie-died in their colour flows. At Head, Katharina points out, "red (CAT S2) and blue (CAT S3) 5K lenses as our trendy highlight colours within our goggles line for season 21/22. The blue lens in combination with our orange frame and strap design looks stunning!" Quiksilver



GIRO

is styling the NXT Varia winter, “the fastest photochromic lens in the market, with the same base tint of our colour luxe to increase the contrast and reducing the eye-fatigue. Offered this year with multilayer coating on it in blue, silver and red.”

VonZipper suggests the Clear Fire Chrome tint for low light conditions, Gamma Chrome for mid-range and Black Fire Chrome for high sun days. At Rossignol it’s all about multilayers, like brand-new colours for the Magne’lens goggle. Robert at Spektrum suggests “a dark smoke polarized lens for glacier riding or a Sonar Infrared for white-out navigation.” For Roxy, the focus is on “Lens Enhance, a kind of orange/bronze base, with multilayer coating, where the blue and red colours are still the best,” said Stephanie Leuridan, Product Manager at Roxy. Meanwhile, Staale at Sweet Protection points out: “Sorry, we work with tints and colours for performance, not for trends.” Also speaking on colour trends, Neil at Melon said: “This year has been killing it with Neon Yellow in frames, so most likely that will continue into the mainstream next season.”

4. SUSTAINABLY MADE SNOW GOGGLES

Snowsports are increasingly trending away from designated pistes and into the open backcountry, so eco-consciousness is at an all-time high. At Spektrum, Robert Olsson introduces a full-fledged push into sustainability: “We are introducing a new concept called Östra Bio RAW where we present the main ingredients of our award winning Östra frame in their undyed, raw versions. Also new BIOptic lens technology that is a polarized 3-layer laminate made of 75% biodegradable wood cellulose with fantastic performance.” Quiksilver is implementing new BIO TPU frame injection, in production Made in Italy (all the Hubble line) using natural oils based on corn, alongside Repreve from recycled plastic bottles in goggle straps. At Zeal, Mike Lewis said: “On the eco front, we’ve worked with our factory to increase the percentage of recycled and plant-based materials in our frames, to reduce their emissions and to make all of our packaging 100% recyclable.” The team at Melon has “product testing underway with Bioplastics for our performance sunglasses such as the Alleycat.” Roxy is using new BIO TPU frame injection, a cleaner plastic production using natural oils based on corn. At VonZipper, Greg Tomlinson is proud to announce the Shift Into Neutral Collection, “utilizing recycled thermo-polyurethan and straps derived from bamboo.”

5. OVER-THE-GLASSES COMPATIBILITY

Constructing goggles with multi-layered lenses without fogged vision is already a feat in itself. But customers demand more: The ability to wear their own optical glasses underneath their goggles without compromising clear optics or comfort of wear. This season, the number of brands heeding the call is at an all-time high, as over-the-glasses

“The latest extension of the Prizm lens portfolio is Prizm Snow Clear for heavy snow and overcast conditions.” Britta Dornick, Oakley Business Brand Manager DACH

compatibility (OTG) moves from ‘nice to have’ to must-have. Rossignol is proud of the Spiral goggle featuring a double cylindrical lens with anti-fog coating while the “OTG compatibility is designed to fit comfortably over glasses and deliver a wide field of vision for all-mountain exploration.” The Magnify goggle by HEAD boasts OTG functionality, “allowing the wearer to wear prescription glasses under the goggle as it offers enough volume on the inside and as the face form is moulded on the sides to give space to the temples of the glasses.” Quiksilver praises the OTG features of the Storm model as part of the Made in Italy line.

6. NEXT-LEVEL QUICK CHANGE SYSTEMS

Last but definitely not least, next season brings a spike in quick change systems in the goggles segment. Indicative of the trend, HEAD makes a first entry with the Magnify model, the company’s “first goggle with a magnetic lens exchange solution enabling to swap lenses on the go.” SPY+ raises the bar with the Marauder Elite, said Martin Jones, VMDDUK General Manager: “The Marauder is a high-powered, magnetic Toric snow goggle built for the ultimate visual experience. Equipped with six super-strong magnets for fast and easy lens changes, our patent-pending Deadbolt lens locking system provides worry-free snow-sliding.” At Oakley, “Ridglock EV technology helps the Flight Path XL maximize upper field of view for greater visibility in aggressive ski racing positions.” Rossignol makes a contribution with MAGNE’CLICK: “A very quick lens switch to keep the best vision possible when weather changes.” Quiksilver is adding Speed Connect technology to the Switchback goggles, while Smith has Quad Mag lenses that can be changed without taking off the goggles. Dirty Dog is expanding the Mutant Interchangeable range with the Mutant Entity, while Sweet trusts in the Interstellar interchangeable lens goggle. VonZipper trusts in the strength of its patented 4Play quick change lens system and Red Bull SPECT has the Magnetron Slick with extra lens included.

Sinner makes a strong proposition with the Avon Sintrast Goggle, shipped with two Sintrast exchangeable lenses at a competitive price. On the TSG Goggle Four, “the lens can be swapped out with the flip of a thumb - even with gloves on - thanks to a magnetic locking system and easy-grip changing tab.” Roxy has a brand-new easy switch lens system, applied on the Rosewood model. Dragon is confident in the performance of its Swiftlock 2.0 system. Cébé has a real novelty in store with the Slider model: “Slide up the lens to benefit from enhanced ventilation. This unique system also makes switching lenses easy.” Melon will have a new quick-change model for next season, but the name is not decided. Mike at Zeal is excited about the new Lookout model, “the first goggle to combine our patented Rail Lock System (RLs), the simplest most secure lens interchange on the market, and the revolutionary Observation Deck Technology (ODT) that adds an additional 20% to your field of view.” Speaking of field of vision, Electric said: “Carrying on the tradition of more lens and less frame, the EGG features a thoracic lens that mimics the curve of the human head and provide peripheral vision, ensuring less distortion and improved clarity,” said Arnaud Gaillard on behalf of Electric California.

Protecting goggles from scratches and damage is key. Here’s where gogglesoc protective sleeves comes in, the number one brand in the North American goggle accessories retail market with more than 75% of the sales of the entire market segment, launched in Europe last season. Gogglesoc’s fun designs are made out of rPET fabric, a reusable and sustainable material made from recycled plastic bottles, keep on trend. ☺

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Stable prices despite pandemic
- 2 High-definition optics
- 3 Oversized goggles still trending
- 4 Maximum peripheral vision
- 5 Bio-engineered materials
- 6 Innovative quick-change systems



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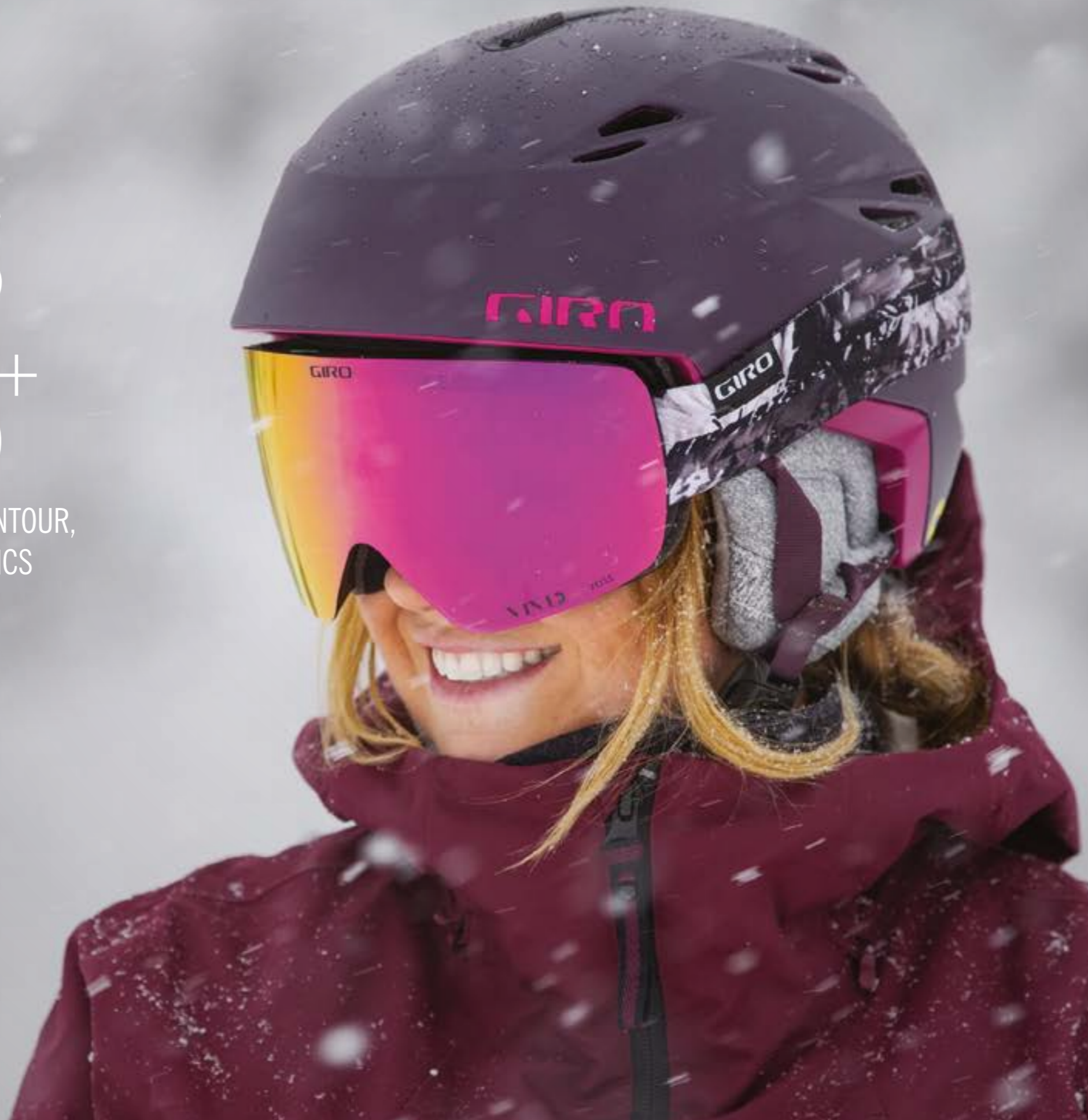
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FW21/22 GOGGLES[®]



Anon - M4 Toric



Anon - Sync



Anon - WM3



Aphex - Oxia



Aphex - Styx



Aphex - XPR



AZR - Comet



AZR - Cyber



AZR - Earth Magnetic



Bliz - Nova Nano



Bliz - Rave Nano



Bliz - Split Nano



Bolle - Mammoth



Bolle - Nevada Neo



Bolle - Torus



CEBE - Reference



CEBE - Silhouette



CEBE - Slider



Dirty Dog - Bullet



Dirty Dog - Mutant 2.0



Dirty Dog - Mutant Entity



Dragon - DXT OTG Block



Dragon - PXV2 Gigi Ruf Sig



Dragon - RVX OTG Boulder



Electric - Charger XL



Electric - Egg



Electric - Kleveland



Flaxta - Episode



Flaxta - Plenty



Flaxta - Prime



Giro - Contour RS



Giro - Contour



Giro - Method



Head - Contex



Head - Magnify



Head - Solar 2.0



Melon - Magnetic



Melon - Parker



Melon x Eivy Parker - Bloom



Oakley - Flight Tracker



Oakley - Flightpath



Oakley - Line Miner



Out Of It - Electra



Out Of It - Katana Men At Work



Out Of It - Void Peaks



POC - Zonula Clarity



POC - Opsin Clarity Comp



POC - Opsin



Quiksilver - Browdy



Quiksilver - QS RC



Quiksilver - QSR



Red Bull Spect - Magnetron Slick



Red Bull Spect - Soar



Red Bull Spect - Solo



Rossignol - Airis Sonar



Rossignol - Magne'Lens Strato



Rossignol - Spiral



Roxy - Feenity



Roxy - Izzy



Roxy - Storm Women



Shred - Monocle Bigshow



Shred - Amazify Bigshow



Shred - Smartefy



Sinner - Batawa OTG



Sinner - Mohawk



Sinner - Olympia



Smith - 4D Mag



Smith - Proxy



Smith - Squad



Spektrum - Bio Ostra



Spektrum - Bio Sylarna Essential



Spektrum - Bio Templet



Spy - Legacy



Spy - Marshall



Spy - Maruader Elite



Sweet Protection - Boondock



Sweet Protection - Clockwork



Sweet Protection - Interstellar



TSG - The Goggle Expect 2.0



TSG - The Goggle Four



TSG - The Goggle Five



VonZipper - Capsule Halldor Helgason



VonZipper - Cleaver Mossy Oak



VonZipper - Encore B4BC



Zeal - Beacon Timber



Zeal - Lookout Weston Collab



Zeal - Portal



Gogglesoc - Phylogenetic parallel



Gogglesoc - POW 21



Gogglesoc - Visor Aurora

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE WETSUITS FW 21/22

Covid is blowing both hot and cold air onto the boardsports market: with snowboarding going through one of the worst seasons in history here in Europe, cold water surfing is hot as hell. This means that brands should be pretty confident when it comes to winter 2021/22...or just about. Wetsuits Buyer's Guide FW21 by a hooded David Bianic.



O'NEILL

Even though COVID remains very much at the forefront of our minds at the start of 2021, you mustn't forget about another phenomenon that is sure to outlast it: global warming. With hotter and hotter summers and less and less cold winters, such temperature changes may start to have an impact on the winter surf wetsuits market. "The water was particularly warm this autumn and people kept their 3/2s on a lot longer than in previous seasons," reports Benoît Brecq, Global Brand & Marketing Manager for MDNS (Hoff) but the water chilled considerably this winter and people kitted themselves out with 4/3s and 5/4/3s later than usual". This change was confirmed by Marion Jouanine, Product Manager at Hurley EMEA, whose deliveries were pushed back a month, which meant they were "delivering new seasons products to customers on the exact moments they need them". Lance Varon, Design Director at Xcel Wetsuits also confirms that they closely study seasonal weather data which varies greatly from one part of the world to another: "We utilise the farmer's almanac and NOAA (National Oceanic

"The main reason thinner wetsuits are so popular is because of improvements made to liners, allowing thinner models to retain the same heat."

David Mariot, ION Products

and Atmospheric Administration) to see what is happening around the globe such as water temp and ocean currents which affect such changes in temps. As much as we have seen mild seasons in some parts of the world, others have seen colder than normal."

Even though it is possible to surf for longer into the winter in a 3/2mm, this is not to the detriment of thicker models, quite the opposite. The technical advances made to neoprene has encouraged surfers to wear really thick models that are now as flexible and comfortable than 4/3s of times gone by, as confirmed by Tom Copsey at O'Neill Wetsuits: "We have seen a good increase in our warmest and our hooded wetsuits.



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However, the popularity of the 4/3 is on the rise when we look at the whole year." The figures speak volumes and Brand Manager at Vissla Europe, Adrien Waller, reveals that they are selling as many 5mms as 3mms. And this phenomenon now also includes the ladies' section, a market that Jobe Sports are prevalent on with their "ultrafeminine" 5/3 Aspen, as are Roxy whose focus for 2021 was the perfect fit, "for optimum

"We have seen a good increase in our warmest and our hooded wetsuits. However, the popularity of the 4/3 is on the rise when we look at the whole year." Tom Copsey, O'Neill Wetsuits

comfort and flattering silhouette". No chance of looking like a deep-sea diver... Another sign of winter surfing's excellent form is the presence of accessories like the EverRobe poncho from GUL, which is among their top 3 best sellers: made from GCX2 water and windproof fabric and lined with an ultrawarm Sherprotech liner (Sherpa style fleece) and waterproof stitching. Before and after-session gear represents a really juicy market but that's another story altogether.

COUNTING ON ORDERS

After the nice surprise of an outstanding 2020 for the surf equipment market, brands have had to make choices in terms of producing their ranges for winter 2021/22. What level of growth should we expect one year later? And how can we guarantee sufficient supply from factories that are behind due to COVID? "It is a double effect with the surfing boom combined with the hiatus caused by COVID as the factories now try to catch up," relates JL, Technical Manager at C-Skins Wetsuits. The English brand assure that they can count on a solid supply chain as well as good sales forecasts but concede

that "production space is key". Tom at O'Neill is even talking about waiting times twice as long as normal for 2021's manufacturing and isn't expecting it to return to normal before the end of 2022!

Pedro Towers at Onda also mentions a development in the market's segmentation with the arrival of a large number of new participants looking for good deals and low prices, so much so that "the challenge for brands (and their FW21 productions) is to understand what habits these newcomers will follow". At Patagonia, Surf Category Manager Gabe Davies is nonetheless urging caution amongst the optimists: "we never want to overproduce stock, wetsuits don't age well like fine wine."

David Mariot from ION reminds us on another note that travel has been significantly restricted and so "many needed thicker wetsuits than on their usual vacation to warmer destinations", and the brand has tweaked its production accordingly. These increased orders pressurise manufacturers and "the first in, first served" basis becomes tougher than ever on this one", assures Sébastien Boulard, Product and Marketing Manager at Pride. This situation is confirmed by Yann Dalibot, CEO of Soörüz whose entire production for SS21 is already "reserved before the arrival of the containers", which goes to show to just how "preorders have become so important", he adds. Another, and most simple solution consists of simply rerunning the same products from one year to the next and this is the case at Jobe Sports: "Our 2021 Fall/Winter range consists of continuing products which we also sold in 2020, so no innovations this year", reveals B2B marketer William Doornekamp. "Our dealer network is happy with them so why change a winning team, right?"

20 — 21 NEOPRENE



PHOTO : Nick Green - SURFER : Dion Agius



EXPERIENCE THE FIT OF AN INNOVATIVE 3D PATTERN-MAKING.



When the industry standard is to develop 2D patterns and try to fit it on a 3D body, **we decided to break new ground** and take the opposite direction. We use computer design to model good-fitted wetsuits in 3D, then **we employ an innovative software** that converts it into a precise 2D pattern for the factory.

It creates a natural, second-skin fit that makes the MANERA wetsuits stand out.



FW21 WATER LINE,

An eco-friendly surf range for responsible adventurers !

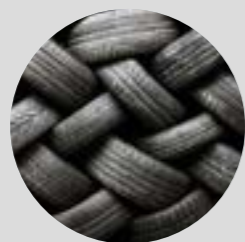
Our goal is to combine surfing and the adventurous spirit: seeking the perfect wave, looking to share the authenticity of travel, diving fully into nature's wonder. Since materials play a big role in a product's lifecycle, we have improved quality while reducing our environmental impact by opting for alternatives such as eicoprene, recycled polyester, and recycled nylon. We have improved the wetsuit construction, ergonomics, and design to enhance performance and increase confidence in the water.

EICOPRENE SUSTAINABLE RESOURCES

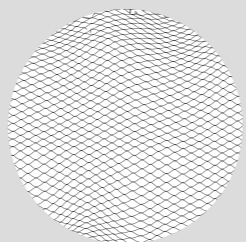
NON ALLERGENIC - NON-USE OF NEOPRENE OR SOLVENTS

Along with other surf-industry brands committed to the cause, we would like these "alternative" materials to become more mainstream and contribute to making surfing a much cleaner activity for the environment. even if picture is still relatively new to the wetsuit market, we have to show that solutions do exist and evolve over time.

Let us all work together to effect change!



All carbon black made from recycled tires and limestone



Polyamide linings made from recycled fishing nets



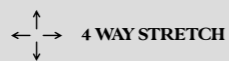
AQUA α

Eco-friendly water based aquaglu

Eicoprene is a foam material that has the same technical features and profile as conventional neoprene. However, there is nothing conventional about the origins of this new material. Whereas neoprene is petroleum-based, Eicoprene is made from a mix of limestone (70%) and recycled tires (30%)

Flex Skin

Flex Skin is an eco-friendly and extremely stretch neoprene that allows full freedom of movement while surfing. It provides both comfort and resistance but is also highly flexible around the arms, shoulders and upper-body. Flex skin merges naturally with your body during your ocean adventures. It provides a real second skin effect !



4 WAY STRETCH



SECOND SKIN EFFECT



SUSTAINABLE FABRIC

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MANERA

POLARISATION OF THE RANGES

Because of the sheer uncertainty in manufacturing times, the trend for simplifying ranges has grown: instead of multiplying collections, the brands are for the most part going for a maximum of three ranges or less. As well as providing better technical understandability for consumers, the reduced number of different style is undoubtedly a safety net on a manufacturing level. This process is already paying off as Benoît Brecq from MDNS confirms: "We really tried to simplify our ranges by reducing them and by getting rid of the middle of the range which only suits a small number of

"The challenge for brands (and their FW21 productions) is to understand what habits these newcomers will follow." Pedro Towers, Onda Wetsuits

people. Nowadays customers who start off with an entry-level wetsuit quickly move onto a high-end model without going through the intermediate version." Similarly, ION Products used to offer different fits, (two for men and up to three for women) whereas today the ranges have merged under a single label, Seek for men and Amaze for women. Even a brand like O'Neill that has several "sub-ranges" agree that the concept of simplification is a good thing: "This not only assists with marketing the technologies and educating the stores but, most importantly, helps the end consumer make the correct purchasing decision", assures Tom Copsy. For his part, Jack Knowles, commercial director at GUL Watersports highlights a pretty progressive cycle in which "the use of premium materials in higher proportions on lower-end models...which of course creates a demand for new innovations on the higher end."

SUMMER TRENDS 2021/22: FLEX VS DURABILITY

For a long time, winter surfing has generated two types of buying behaviours when it comes to wetsuits. For the first bunch of surfers, the key criterion was warmth while others allowed some warmth to be sacrificed, putting comfort and movement, i.e. flex, over calorific effect. But generally speaking the more a wetsuit flexes, the worse it ages. So how are the brands striking the delicate balance between flex and durability? "It is tempting to follow the trend to provide a suit that is so flexible that it makes the product irresistible in the fitting room... but we know these suits are often too easily damaged and sometimes even before they hit the water." That's why at Picture, one of the technologies on offer only comes with a one-year guarantee because "the stretchier it is, the weaker it is", with the brand preferring to push their Equation and Dome ranges whose stretch/durability ratios are more balanced. But materials aren't everything, design also comes into play with the accent being placed on fit in recent years and more precisely body mapping: "We do not use the elasticity of the neoprene to fit the body, the flex is only used when you're moving", explains Julien Salles, Brand Manager for Manera. Equally, the external liner of a wetsuit plays a big role in a product's durability because it protects the neoprene foam, which is "the fastest material to degrade", reminds Pedro from Onda who are favouring recycled and upcycled materials for this external layer. A lot of them are still made of polyester but brands such as O'Neill are going for nylon, using recycled versions for their premium models as well as promising that this will soon be extended throughout the rest of the range. We should also mention the external Nova Skin liner featured on the Blue Print range from O'Neill, "which has the ability to be glued and blind stitched due to its strong Graphene microfiber backing". Dakine are also showcasing an original new production method that employs reinforced elastane meaning that "Our Hex and FLX



SOORUZ

lining have superior resistance to abrasion and fatigue in all of our tests," asserts Designer Phil Bridges.

On the inside, liners are also employing graphene, like at ION whose Select models dispose of Graphene Plush technology whose heat gain is estimated to be 20%. As for Hurley, they are putting a new infrared liner on their Advantage Max models, while the Advantage Plus uses a hollow fibre that traps in the heat. At Xcel, the Celliant Black infrared technology will be enhanced for autumn 2021 on their Drylock range, now being combined with a new Ultra Stretch IR liner, while the outside surface will see the addition of a new Channel Flex 2.0 layer. For all brands, the objective is to reduce the thickness and the weight of these internal liners while improving water drainage, just like at Alder: "We have a unique lining called "Fireline" inside many styles and "FDL" (fast dry lining) is used inside higher end styles", cites John Westlake, Production Director.

ECO VS ECO

As a consumer, it's not always easy to find your way through the different brands' approaches: so-called Limestone neoprene, made from the rock, is often hailed as an ecological solution but it's also frequently called out for greenwashing. At Manera, Julien Salles opts for transparency, affirming that: "We would never say that Limestone is sustainable, and I don't think this is the greenest option, yet that's the one we chose to use today". It's a similar story at Pride who have chosen Yulex, assuring that the environmental impact of Limestone is just as bad as traditional wetsuits made from petrochemicals, "except for 1 point", concedes Sébastien Boulard, "chemical waste is easier to treat than the good old petrol wetsuit". Julien Durant, CEO of Picture Organic Clothing reminds us of a residual economic reality, saying that Yulex costs three times as much as a traditional neoprene. As Phil Bridges from Dakine sums up, "a perfect eco suit makes no difference if no one buys it".

Furthermore, you have to distinguish between limestone extracted from mining and that coming from oyster shells, "used as the source of Calcium Carbonate", explains the technical team at C-Skins who don't hesitate to question the 'super clean' label given to Yulex neoprene from rubber sap: "there is cost to the planet getting Yulex to the factories as Yulex is not even produced on the same continent." The pioneer of oyster-based neoprene was Soörüz with their Oysterprene, mixing recycled calcites from shells and recycled tyres. The French brand were then followed by Alder, Vissla and O'Neill who opted for oyster calcite as a (partial) substitute for Limestone: "the new I-Foam is now combined with Limestone, Eco Carbon Black, Recycled rubber and now with recycled oyster Shell Calcium Carbonate", explains Adrien from Vissla on their FW21 High Seas model that brings all their innovations together, including the Fever Fiber Thermal liner.

Soörüz have recently gone even further with the Biöprene featuring on their Green Line range, a foam "using waste products from sugar cane, rubber, oyster powder and inedible seeds..." explains CEO Yann Dalibot. Rather than focussing on sourcing and production alone, he also brings up the issue of wide-scale wetsuit recycling with the shredder "constantly in operation" with the aim of recycling 20,000 wetsuits in 2021. So before throwing out your wetsuit, try and have it repaired, a service offered at Patagonia with their Ironclad total guarantee and the Worn Wear repair programme. Be Kind, rewind! 🔄

Visit our website to see in depth brand previews of this category.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Over 5mm with hood
- 2 More women's thick models
- 3 Simplified ranges
- 4 Improved liners
- 5 More Yulex and 'oyster' neoprene
- 6 Recycle/repair

LOCATION SCOTLAND



RIDER MARK BOYD / PHOTOGRAPH GRUMPY OLD SURFER

HEAD OFFICE EUROPE UK & EIRE Alder Sportswear Ltd Lewdown, Okehampton, Devon. Tel 01566 783444 WWW.ALDERSPORTSWEAR.COM



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

WOMEN'S OUTERWEAR FW21/22

As women's participation in snowsports increases so does the variety of female-specific outerwear options available. From high-end technical products to mainstream price-point options, the growth of the sport is providing females with the right equipment that they need to shred hard on the slopes. But how has COVID-19 impacted the womenswear market in snow and what trends are emerging next season? Ruth Cutts explores how the market's looking for FW21/22.



Key Trends

A trend that has been in flux for a number of years since brands realised that not all women wanted tight-fitting, ultra-feminine pants and jackets, and which doesn't show signs of stopping, is the trend for urban-inspired aesthetic. As Brethren Co-Founder Aisling Kyte explains, "we actively decided to not run separate lines for our male and female followers. The cut and style of clothing is completely unisex, and we hope this reflects throughout our catalogues." Many women continue to seek out outerwear that mirrors the men's lines, with a sporty vibe and a silhouette that allows for a full range of movement on the mountain but that is equally as suitable to wear in the streets.

Many a post-COVID consumer will be looking to invest in outerwear that is adaptable by design and for FW21/22 this is manifesting itself in the introduction of a number of crossover products. Columbia, for example, are bringing longer parkas and anorak styles, as are

Many women continue to seek out outerwear that mirrors the men's lines, with a sporty vibe and a silhouette that allows for a full range of movement on the mountain but that is equally as suitable to wear in the streets.

Horsefeathers with the inclusion of their long parka style Pola jacket and sporty mid-length Derin anorak. ThirtyTwo's Ava Jacket takes distinctive cues from classic vintage mountain parkas available in a block colourway or a stylish camo print, and ColourWear, similarly, are introducing their Cake 2.0 Jackorackin FW21/22 which has the look of an anorak, and their Track parka is being brought back to the collection which features white trims and other stylish details to make it the perfect versatile jacket for riding or city walk.

Roxy's Deltine jacket has been given more of an urban edge, Rojo's Bailey pop-over jacket is a great trans-seasonal multi-functional jacket, L1's Freya jacket features the stylings of a traditional parka, DC's Liberate jacket is the perfect blend of on-the-town style and on-the-mountain performance, Kari Traa's Agnes jacket features a longer and looser silhouette with an adjustable waistline for a distinctly urban look on the slopes, and Burton's news Amora collection (built with European Designer Heida Birgisdottir) includes an insulated and waterproof technical parka so there's no need to choose style over function, not when you can have both.

Many brands are bringing mainstream fabrics into their collections as well, such as Protest's Cissot winter jacket which has been made from functional corduroy. The brand is looking to create clothing that you can wear for a city stroll, your favourite woodland hike or a session on the mountain. "It's not just because we want to create clothing that truly helps you get there, we're inspired by the idea that if one garment can have many purposes, then we'll need less, and use what we have more", explains Head of Womenswear Design Ine Wouters. O'Neill, similarly, are introducing their Lolite jacket, which features a luxurious corduroy fabric and is the warmest jacket in the whole of their women's collection.

Technical Gear

The increasing interest in backcountry riding (participation figures have shown an upward trend for a number of years as snowboarders

"We're inspired by the idea that if one garment can have many purposes, then we'll need less, and use what we have more."

O'Neill Head of Womenswear Design, Ine Wouters.

try and escape the on-piste crowds and push their riding abilities further, only heightened by COVID), means that the need for brands to sell high-end technical gear that provides effective protection against the cold and the wet is paramount.

"Despite the pandemic, consumers are looking for continuity and freshness" explains Picture's CEO Julien Durant and the brand's new women's MT Xpore jacket for FW21/22 is just that. Providing excellent all-weather protection in a softer and more breathable product, Xpore's nano-porous membrane technology provides targeted breathability for a high-intensity ride during the most extreme of winter expeditions. The new Xpore nano-porous sustainable membrane is made with recyclable polyolefin and coated with a PFC-free and solvent-free DWR treatment.

FW's women's Manifest Tour 3L jacket and bib are new to the line-up in 21/22. 100% seam-sealed, the jacket is created from high-quality, waterproof, stretch fabric, which has been cut precisely to avoid excess weight. The bib pants are constructed from a lightweight, stretchy, 3-layer fabric and have been cut for ergonomic efficiency. Both items feature a silhouette which was coveted by splitboarders and backcountry enthusiasts when it was first launched in the men's collection for 20/21. FW have taken the concepts and fabrics from the men's model and cut them for women to ensure that every trip to the backcountry is as outstanding as it should be.

Columbia's Black Dot Powder Keg jacket and pants feature their innovative Omni-Heat™ Black Dot Technology (initially introduced in 20/21). It's the industry's first external thermal shield built to protect the wearer from the cold. Specially designed black dots trap warmth

and capture solar heat from the outside in, trapping the heat to retain more warmth. These dots are focused on the main areas that you generate heat such as your core and upper legs and arms to help keep you warmer whilst you're outside and active.

Burton's Pillowline anorak provides the necessary reliable storm coverage and all-day utility to keep the wearer warmer, drier, and riding for longer; thanks to the 2L GORE-TEX with bluesign® approved, 60gr ThermacoreECO insulation. The anorak also features lots of handy pockets (interior mesh dump pockets, zippered hand-warmer pockets, zippered kangaroo pocket, and zippered sleeve pass pocket), for easy-access to equipment pieces.

Silhouettes & Fit

More than ever the need to cater for different body types and personal styles is essential, so brands that offer a diverse selection of silhouettes within their jackets and pants will prove popular.

L1's standout new silhouettes for 21/22 are the Snowblind and Lovecat collections which feature their most relaxed / oversized fits in the line paired with a contemporary interpretation of 90s snowboarding. New for this season they're also introducing the Quin pant, a relaxed technical interpretation of a classic chino silhouette built to pair perfectly with their aforementioned technical parka jacket (Freya).

Brethren continue their legacy of unisex fits, ensuring that each new garment is tested on both men and women to ensure the cuts are as reflective of this as possible. And new fits for Nikita include the 'modern jacket' fit; a little wider through the body than the classic fit, the 'relaxed long' fit; their take on the boyfriend fit featuring a dropped shoulder for a baggier feel, and their 'loose fit' pant; a





686



Airblaster



Black Diamond



Black Diamond



Brethren



Brethren



Burton



Columbia



Columbia



DC

straight legged pant that provides ample room for all-day shredding.

Volcom are looking to urban styles inspired from the 90s with, among others, their new Hailey jacket (choice of team rider Hailey Langland). It's a shorter and wider silhouette with a removable hood and colour-blocking design. When it comes to their pants, Volcom have a new fit with the Hotlapper pant which features an elasticated ankle finish to mimic sportswear joggers.

For retro snow brand Elho, they're benefitting from the nice coincidence that 'comfy' styles combining the past with the trends of today are proving popular.

"Despite the pandemic, consumers are looking for continuity and freshness." Picture's CEO, Julien Durant

Oversized sweatshirts with soft brushed fabric and eye-catching colour blocks were worn in the past for a super cosy and warm feel on the slopes and, for 21/22, Elho are introducing products that not only pay homage to these designs but also feature contemporary fabrics for effective warmth on the mountains.

Picture are showcasing new fits in their women's collection, with a range that is dedicated to more athletic frames to meet the Nordic, Scandinavian and North America markets, with the Latin fits now sitting very close to the body.

Print & Design

When it comes to colour palettes, the approach for many brands is similar to what has been successful in seasons past; strong neutral tones throughout the majority of the range with bright accents included as a point of difference.

Desert rose and red clay are the standout colours for 686; it's stone blue, parchment, woodsmoke and shocking pink for Roxy; glacier blue and resin gold for Volcom; limeade, purple, a rich green, and a subtle slate blue for Nikita; nostalgic 90s retro brights combined with rich burgundies for Burton and autumnal hues fixed with bright contrasts for Picture.

Traditionally feminine infused palettes are key for brands such as Kari Traa who are introducing three main colour themes in their 21/22 range; firstly their 'trendy traditional' palette which features a marine dark blue with fiery flame red, denim blue and peachy pink, secondly a 'pastel harmony' theme with a light green combined with pastel pink, dark grey and a neon yellow for a fun pop contrast, and thirdly their 'modern chic' theme, with olive green, burgundy red and dark raspberry combined with mango orange and 'oh so girly' pink.

When it comes to colour palettes, the approach for many brands is similar to what has been successful in seasons past; strong neutral tones throughout the majority of the range with bright accents included as a point of difference.

Black Diamond have included new colours such as dark patina, a kind of bright aquamarine, persimmon and grenadine, alongside their popular pastel colours styles as well.

When it comes to prints many brands are looking to the outdoors for inspiration. Burton's Waveless collection features a print inspired by Icelandic landscapes, Rojo are showcasing a snowscape print; a photographic pastel and icy water colours matched with tonal blues alongside two other floral prints, and Protest are featuring a unique Japanese spirit on a topographic map background alongside a vintage floral print.



DC



Eivy



Elho



FW



Horsefeathers



Horsefeathers



L1



L1



Nikita



Nikita

Other brands have chosen to go bold with their prints with O'Neill, Nikita and DC all featuring animal prints in their collections, Volcom, Kari Traa, ColourWear and Nikita are going back to the 90s with their tie dye patterns, as are L1 with their grid check print. ColourWear and ThirtyTwo are bringing their camo prints and Protest are including a distinctive houndstooth, weave design.

Oakley continue to work closely with their athletes during product development and team rider Jamie Anderson's collaboration was inspired by her love of mixing her favourite prints as well as incorporating blue in the colour palette. Her love of traditional Native American patterns mixed with cheetah print, has been developed into a chic pattern peppered in jackets, one-piece suits and hoodies for a feminine but chic look.

Sustainability

As in the men's outerwear collections for FW21/22, sustainability plays a major role in the women's ranges as well.

Nikita are using a new Eco-Aquarius fabric made from recycled PET bottles which remain completely un-dyed to maintain the natural green hue from the green PET

"Whilst we could see the reports of summer sports and related outdoor products booming during the northern summer, we were experiencing a winter COVID-19 lockdown restricting snow resorts down south." Rojo Founder Jo Buckle.

bottles. Volcom continue their journey towards increased sustainability with their 'ECO TRUE Program', using REPVEVE fibres from recycled plastic bottles, as well as PFC free GORE-TEX layers. The entirety of O'Neill's range has been certified as 'O'Neill Blue' (a product is considered 'O'Neill Blue' when it is made from at least 40% recycled materials), and Kari Traa have introduced recycled polyester lining to all of their three-layer garments as well as the use of REPVEVE fibres in their Voss Ski Jacket and Voss Ski pant.

Roxy are looking after you as well as the planet with their Hydrosmart technology which features an organic, and eco-certified skincare formula within their collars, neck warmers, pocket linings, and chin guards to care for your skin even in the harshest of conditions.

For Australia-based brand Rojo, they learnt pretty quickly how the COVID-19 lockdown would impact their supply chain and retail base in the southern hemisphere. "Whilst we could see the reports of summer sports and related outdoor products booming during the northern summer, we were experiencing a winter COVID-19 lockdown restricting snow resorts down south", explains Founder Jo Buckle.

Out of this unknown situation the Rojo 21/22 range concept of 'Tread Lightly' and 'Positive Change' was formulated. In an acknowledgement to their 'Positive Change' philosophy of reducing their carbon footprint and environmental impact, the concept of 'Tread Lightly' ticked their goal of waste reduction in the fashion industry.

Consequently, the brand has reviewed their supply chains, introduced new key recycled fabrics and yarns, and looked at a sustainable approach to the clothing 'loop' ensuring that all fabrics and trims meet, and where possible, exceed global sustainability practises.

Picture continue to focus on bio-sourcing (moving away from fossil fuels to look for cleaner materials with a lower carbon footprint) for next season, whilst continuing to work with Xpore on their membranes which are to be implemented



O'Neill



O'Neill



Oakley



Oakley



Picture



Picture



Roxy



Roxy



Volcom



Mons Royale

in more women's products next season. The membrane will be integrated into the high-end stretch Expedition range, in the form of body mapping in the necklines, in order to improve the breathability of the products.

Baselayers

Regulating your body temperature on the slopes is the key difference between an all-day session and an early, soggy lift down to the resort. Once a potential oversight for many, effective baselayers are now considered an integral part of any snowboarder's outerwear arsenal.

Baselayer brand Eivy are not only bringing the goods in terms of performance with their entire range being made of GRS® certified recycled post-consumer waste fabric and their ribbed fabric featuring moisture wicking 4-way stretch and UPF50+ properties, but they're also proving that baselayers don't have to be boring with cheetah prints, dark florals, hockey shirt inspired designs and bold retro colour-blocking adorning their range.

Mons Royale will continue their use of Merino wool and wool blends across their entire line, but this time with the inclusion of their Cascade series in which they introduce their Merino Flex technology. Bringing together all the warmth of Merino alongside effective 4-way stretch fabric. When it comes to colours, they're keep it neutral with rich, earthy tones, and have added pop colours and all over prints as a point of difference.

Rojo's FW21/22 range of baselayers are all made from 92% recycled poly spandex

Once a potential oversight for many, effective baselayers are now considered an integral part of any snowboarder's outerwear arsenal.

and feature prints that co-ordinate with the outerwear prints and colours from their most popular styles, and Picture's layering range features anti-odour, anti-UV and anti-bacterial treatments for all-day freshness.

Horsefeathers continue to push their successful Mirra top and pants within their baselayer offering. Made from stretchy and lightweight fabric with Silverplus antibacterial and odour protection, they feature flat seams and are made from quick-drying and highly breathable Bluesign approved fabric.

Black Diamond's baselayer range is designed with innovative technologies, such as the Nuyarn, which produces 35% stretch and loftier fabric while making it dry 5x faster, thanks to its special spun, and BD Solution Wool, which is responsibly sourced wool, certified non-mulesed merino wool.

Kari Traa' are introducing the WASTELAYER in FW21/22 in which they will use any wastage from their heritage Rose baselayer design, which is gathered from the cutting process and shredded back into fibres. Combined with lyocell Re-Fibra (based on cotton scraps and wood) it becomes the WASTELAYER.

W RAW is FW's merino baselayer collection for women. The collection includes a lightweight merino three-quarter tight, crewneck and a midweight jogger all made from naturally technical merino wool. FW's classically understated aesthetic shines through and all products are featured in black merino with minimalist logos. ☺

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Retro prints (animal, tie dye, check)
- 2 Baggy silhouettes mirror men's collections
- 3 Adaptable pieces
- 4 Mainstream fabrics
- Neutral tones with bright accents

EMPOWERING WOMEN EXCLUSIVELY SINCE 1990



ROXY
ON THE MOUNTAIN



Style & Comfort from the slopes to the streets.

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

MEN'S OUTERWEAR FW21/22

As we enter 2021, off the back of one of the most challenging starts to a winter season for resort owners, retailers, and snow brands alike, there is definitely an air of caution about the future. Consumers have been in lockdown for so long that there is a huge amount of pent-up demand to go outside and be active though, and as soon as they are allowed to, these customers will seek continuity and freshness - brands can't afford to disappoint. Ruth Cutts reports on the trends for Men's FW21/22 Outerwear.



HORSEFEATHERS

ADAPTABLE OUTERWEAR

Multiplicity is key for many pandemic consumers, with value for money being important to those who may have been hit financially over the past year. Tapping into that mentality with an adaptable range is a smart move for brands. Burton's Christine Egger explains how their AK Fall Collection is designed "for riders that think about riding as a part of their bigger outdoor lifestyle - not separate." Meaning that items in the range such as the Softshell jackets with their breathable and stretchy fabric are ideal for "taking on long tours and skinning track laps alike." For Oakley, gaining insights from their Team Athletes is an integral element of product development, and in their 21/22 collaboration with rider Ståle Sandbech they sought to meet his needs for style and functionality. Preferring pieces that transition from on-mountain to off-mountain without sacrificing comfort, style or technology, the collaboration includes classics like flannels and hoodies with more durability and tech round out the collection.

For many brands, the need for their outerwear items to be both functional and stylish continues to be of paramount importance.

Burton's Christine Egger explains how their AK Fall Collection is designed "for riders that think about riding as a part of their bigger outdoor lifestyle - not separate."

Brethren, for example, will maintain a focus on the technical streetwear vibe that is currently dominating snowparks, and DC are focusing on "balancing advanced mountain performance with city street wearability" through items such as their DC-43 Anorak which performs well in the mountains but looks comfortable in the streets thanks to the bold colour blocking design. Black Diamond are introducing their Vision Hybrid Hoody which features a revolutionary Japa-nese liquid crystal polymer ripstop construction in high abrasion areas for extra durability, fall-ing in line with the brand's ethos of being "Built To Last".

"In a time where we need to be consuming less, it's important that our clothing is made from quality fabric with classic cuts and functional details." **Ingrid Kalma, Head of Menswear Design at Protest**

Similarly, Protest are focusing on the idea of hybrid clothing, wanting a range that is adaptable, comfortable, and functional with an urban edge. Ingrid Kalma, Head of Menswear Design describes how "in a time where we need to be consuming less, it's important that our clothing is made from quality fabric with classic cuts and functional details." Jackets such as the Komodon and the Meltin can be worn heading into the mountains, but also for a weekend walk along the beach.

A big news story at vintage brand Elho for FW21/22 is their range of down jackets. Elho has a huge reservoir of styles from the 80s and 90s, a time when the brand was a forerunner for serious down jackets with bright colours, signature down quilting and removable arms. "We are going to take the spirit, look and feel of these heritage jackets and adapt it to today's needs" explains Elho's Ulrich Hautzel.

Similarly, ColourWear are going back to their roots in FW21/22 and are paying homage to some of their early styles. Items such as functional anoraks, puffas and parkas are seeing a comeback once again from their initial popularity "back in 2010 when the ColourWear brand was challenging the industry status quo", as well adding some new styles to the collection finding inspiration from skate and urban culture.

For adventure brands such as Columbia, the pandemic proved a somewhat fruitful time with outdoor exploration being more or less the only activity which allowed the public to exercise whilst also respecting social distancing. They saw the situation as a massive opportunity to bring new and younger consumers to the table, and this is reflected in the expansion of their winter outerwear collection. They've created a range that is not only suitable for those that enjoy hiking or snowboarding, but which also appeals to the emerging urban active consumers that are eager to seek out micro adventures. As Yoann Patural, European Merchandising Manager, explains, "we really worked hard to inject a lot of inspiring products in that range in Puffers, Sherpa fleeces, and insulated jackets for all consumers who wanted to have a piece of the outdoors with them anytime, anywhere."

HIGH-END TECHNICAL GEAR

At the other end of the spectrum, the need for high-end touring outerwear is still palpable. Recent winters have seen a boom in snowboarders venturing into new locations, due in part to the more readily available and higher quality backcountry touring equipment but also, in part, to a cultural change in which there is now an accepted norm that backcountry is here for all to enjoy rather than it being the specialist activity it was potentially once viewed as. This has increased furthermore during the 20/21 season with a number of resorts opening but with their lift operations remaining closed leaving snowboarders no other choice but to don a splitboard and head off piste to go riding.

For Arc'teryx, their Procline & Shashka Stretch ranges are set to be an extension of their already extensive offering of backcountry friendly gear, "in recognition of an ongoing explosion of interest in that realm" explains Senior Product Designer Sarah Wallace. The collection is a new performance proposition, offering a differently weighted prioritisation of breathability and protection. Built entirely out of Gore Infinium, it offers excellent breathability with good weather protection. To complement the performance attributes of the materials, both jackets and pants have been designed with generously long vent zippers for quickly shedding heat build-up.

FW are staying true to their premium positioning with a collection that successfully combines high-end backcountry functionality with their signature, understated aesthetic. Their MANIFEST Tour 3-Layer Jacket and Bib, boasts premium waterproofing, breathability and stretch characteristics in a modern cut with minimalist branding.

Black Diamond's BoundaryLine Mapped Jacket, a carry-over product, includes EMPEL Technology for sustainable water-repellency, alongside the brand's own BD.dry Technology water-proof/breathable/windproof solution, which is engineered to shield you from whatever the weather holds.

Patagonia's touring garments have been refined to suit the hardest of mountain dwellers with 100% waterproof 3-layer stretch (54% recycled face) fabric and H2No® Performance Standard featuring in their Stormstide jacket. Innovative modifications such as extra degrees of hip and knee articulation in their Upstride and Stormstride pants cement their purpose as products for those going the distance.

For Sweet Protection, their aim has always been to create the perfect armour for those who enjoy the backcountry with some of their classic best-sellers, such as the Crusader X GORE-TEX® jacket and pants having been revamped with all-new GORE-TEX® materials for FW21/22. The focus is similar for Marmot whose overall theme for FW21/22 surrounds Pro Team athlete Jérémie Heitz and his new movie project - a sequel to La Liste. The collection is built on the genetics of their EIGER X mountaineering pinnacle collection and offers the ruggedness and durability needed when riding down from peaks in 6000m altitude.

Picture are a brand trying to bridge the gap between functionality and adaptability with their products. The Utility range which has replaced the previous Adventure range, is moving away from the hybrid, urban and first price product, and toward a very technical product (albeit with an urban visual connotation), but which remains above all a technical product dedicated to mountain use.

FIT / SILHOUETTE

It's no secret that surf, snow, and skate all take influence from each



PROTEST



32



32

The direct environmental effects of COVID-19 lockdown are far-reaching (the reduction in transportation and industrial production, reduced CO2 emissions, improved air pollution to name a few), and for many brands continued greener processes and improved eco-friendly materials are at the forefront of their company manifesto.



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other and that themes can emerge across the board. It's hardly a surprise therefore that the baggy style that's been circling back around in skating is set to appear in snowboarding outerwear too for many brands.

Last season, Brethren's first range of outerwear was launched to big praise, so for this winter they've gone back to the lab, made a few tweaks on the items to improve functionality, but have kept the same old school early 90s/2000s baggy vibe.

L1's Ventura collection is a fun and playful silhouette and introduces their most relaxed / oversized fit in the line paired with a contemporary interpretation of 90s snowboarding. Oakley's Ståle Sandbech pants have been updated to a baggier style with adjustable features, and Horsefeathers, having noticed a "comeback of the regular/baggy pants", have included a number of looser silhouette pants which sit in their range alongside popular anorak-style jackets, such as their long-fit Norman anorak and other sporty designs.



Black Diamond



Black Diamond

For ThirtyTwo, the Sweeper Pant (the brainchild of Scott Stevens and JP Walker), continues its legacy as a super stylish, easy riding pant on the mountain. With its unique mix of old school sweat pant styling, and modern functionality, the Sweeper Pant is a shred ready pant that can hold its own from deep pow to down rails in the park.

COLOURS / PRINTS

Many brands are looking to nature for inspiration, Protest, for example, have four main colour groups on offer which all feature grey and a clay hue. In the first group, brown and black are combined with an electric lime. The second group is made up of red, forest and sea green, dark yellow and a berry purple. The third is a high contrast group with red and black and the last group has blue and the same deep-sea green. Black Diamond's FW21/22 collection is bringing warm colours such as amber and crimson along-side different variations of blue.

FW are also looking to the great outdoors with rich monochrome and vibrant accents. Vivid colours such as deep teal and fresh mint are inspired by coastal shorelines, and luminous red tones represent wild berries and red maple. Darker hues include a warm pine bark and a deeply saturated dark stone inspired by the alpine skyline at dusk. As Jon Kooley, Art Director Anna Smoothy, Head of Marketing states, "whether it's the mountains, valleys or the ocean, nature is at the core of our brand and inspires our colours."

Others are looking to the past for influence, such as Sessions' retro street look from the 90s which focuses specifically on the retro arcade games of the era. The brand has chosen certain colours that would best complement and showcase their silhouettes such as neon green, deep sea, and orange.

L1 are taking it back to a similar time with a grid check print that is reminiscent of the 90s, DC send a nod to this era with tie dye and paisley prints within their collection, and Protest join this trend with plaids and stripes as a point of difference.

Retro in its entirety, vintage outerwear brand Elho are looking to FW21/22 to celebrate life and being free again after a disrupted pandemic winter season. Elho's choice of bright colours in the 1980s were always in homage to a positive lifestyle, and this is what the brand continues to promote to this day. However, they are going to be adding a few more basic colours for riders who do not want to be as prominent on the slopes.



Bonfire



Bonfire



Brethren



Brethren



MAKE YOUR MOVE ON THE SLOPES



SEBASTIAN TOOTS WEARS THE ORIGINAL ANORAK



O'NEILL BLUE IS OUR COLLECTION CONTAINING SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS. ALL MENS FW21 SNOW WEAR IS O'NEILL BLUE.



Burton



CLWR



Columbia



Columbia



DC



DC



FW



FW



Horsefeathers



Horsefeathers

Camo continues to be a proven classic print and can be found at Strafe in an oversized black and navy print combo on a heavier nylon ripstop, at Protest in a new form of their classic camo print, at ColourWear in an updated print, and at Thirty Two in traditional green hues alongside a sandy alternative. At DC they kitted out some of their popular outerwear pieces with the Mossy Oak® camo Country Roots Midnight print, and O'Neill are featuring three distinct camo colour stories: red and yellow combined with a warm beige and black, navy and military green are combined with cobalt blue, and black and military green are combined with poison green.

For 686, their new off-white colour, called Putty, is the superstar of their upcoming range with their most popular GORE-TEX® jackets and bibs all available in this colourway for head-to-toe styling. Whilst Oakley are bringing introducing a unique golden colourblock pattern in their collaboration with Team Rider Yuki Kadono.

LIGHTWEIGHT PROTECTION

In order to be effective, outerwear undeniably has to keep the wearer warm, but this cannot afford to be at the compromise of performance. Bulky insulation simply does not cut it. The team at Bonfire are bringing in a new lighter weight Cordura® fabric to support their Zone Mapping Technology from last season within the Aspect Jacket, Master Bib and Torch Pant. By using different fabrics to best suit the coordinating body zones, it will add breathability and lighten the overall garment weight.

The all-new Jones outerwear line consists of environmentally minded, movement-focused technical apparel that's designed to be extremely functional for dynamic days in the mountains. Every piece in the collection is also made from unique recycled fabrics and materials.

Strafe are continuing to expand on the use of Primaloft Gold Cross-Core insulation in items such as their Aero full-zip and pullover insulators and also their Conundrum jacket. Its warmth-to-weight ratio is unmatched by any other synthetic insulation, which in turn makes their insulated products packable and less bulky. Volcom will continue to use their Thermal Defense System (TDS) within a number of their key products in the 21/22 season. The TDS technology features infrared thermal panels filled with RDS duck down, that are then strategically placed to ensure the wearer's natural body heat is recycled efficiently back to the core. Columbia's Omni Heat Infinity lining technology works similarly by reflecting the wearer's body heat to increase warmth, and next season they will be increasing the reflective surfaces from 30% to 50% using materials similar to what you would most commonly find in emergency blankets.

Keeping warm is key and keeping dry is an integral component of this. Next season, Airblaster will be (re)launching their limited-edition Sasquatch line which features fewer than 100 pieces per colour per style based on their most popular silhouettes but built using technical fabrics available from Schoeller® for ultimate water-repellence and excellent breathability.

For Mammut, the core element of their La Liste PRO HS outfit is the innovative bib, which features a comfortable hardshell pant with a removable vest-like bib functioning simultaneously as wind and cold protection. The robust and waterproof 3-layer GORE-TEX® Pro material guarantees durable water protection with excellent breathability.

SUSTAINABILITY

The direct environmental effects of COVID-19 lockdown are far-reaching (the reduction in transportation and industrial production, reduced CO2 emissions, improved air pollution to name a few), and for many brands continued greener processes and improved eco-friendly materials are at the forefront of their company manifesto.

The all-new Jones outerwear line consists of environmentally minded, movement-focused technical apparel that's designed to be extremely functional for dy-



RIDE, PROTECT & SHARE

Ride, Protect & Share, these three words represent the essence of who we are: a snowboard, ski, surf, and outdoor clothing brand who, while not taking ourselves too seriously, still want to effect change.

At a time when the textile industry is responsible for 8% of the world's carbon emissions and where the climate crisis has reached its peak, we all have our role to play to make a difference. Since Picture started in 2008, we have always sought to push one step further to minimize our impact on the environment. Our commitment to a sustainable, ethical, and environmentally-responsible approach covers every aspect of our business, from the supply chain, to manufacturing, to shipping.

Okay, great, but alone we are just a drop in the bucket. This is where B-Corp certification has meaning: using business and our influence as a force for good. We need to galvanize as many people as possible from our community – partners, and stakeholders in the outdoor and apparel industries - to participate in the energy transition and in removing carbon from the global economy.

To reduce the consequences doing business has on both the climate and people, we need to wipe out our dependence on fossil fuels. Curbing our impact on the environment and limiting growth, changing conventional production models, and promoting reasonable consumption are all key pillars of this evolution.

Fighting climate change through our passion for boardsports and great outdoors, this is our mission.

TOURING WOMEN



MT XPORE JKT Cloud Blue
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Jones



Jones



L1



L1



Oakley



Oakley



O'Neill



O'Neill



Picture



Picture

dynamic days in the mountains. Every piece in the collection is also made from unique recycled fabrics and materials.

The Peak Bagger jacket in the Uphill collection is made from a ground-breaking fabric that was developed in partnership with Tenjin. Exclusively made for Jones, the four-way stretch, soft touch fabric offers an impressive 20K waterproof / 40K breathability rating, and is made with 100% recycled polyester, 40D knitted face fabric and PFC-free DWR.

The Jones Shralpinist collection has been designed to withstand the harshest conditions whilst being extremely breathable, the zones where the wearer would most likely get wet are made with rugged 100% recycled GORE-TEX® Pro fabric, and the areas where you move and sweat are made with the most breathable 100% recycled GORE-TEX® Pro fabric available.

DC will be launching their 'DC RE/SOLVE' sustainability program which will result in increased recycled content within their fabrics, a revamped headwear line with Polylana® yarns, post-consumer recycled insulation with the introduction of PrimaLoft Black and PFC-free DWR coatings.

For 686, their new off-white colour, called Putty, is the superstar of their upcoming range with their most popular GORE-TEX® jackets and bibs all available in this colourway for head-to-toe styling.

The overall theme for the O'Neill range is sustainability with the entirety of their range being labelled as 'O'Neill Blue' (a product is identified as 'O'Neill Blue' when it is made from at least 40% recycled materials). Every item in their range has a Carbon O durable water-repellent finish, in a bid to move away from harmful finishes.

Protest have challenged themselves to 'Green Up' on their path to improved sustainable practices and the PVRE Green series is a part of that journey. Within this range, every part of the garment from the fabric to the zippers and the other trims are made as sustainably and ethically as possible. This season also sees the introduction of an exciting new fibre created from fusing coffee grinds with recycled polyester.

Another key theme for Protest's FW21/22 season is bio-sourcing (moving away from fossil fuels to look for cleaner materials with a lower carbon footprint) with 60% of their volume being conceived in bio-sourced material. The Anton jacket uses their brand-new bio-sourced hardshell made from repurposed sugarcane waste that is converted into bio-based polyester. It also features a 20K/20K membrane with a Teflon EcoElite™ PFC-free durable water-repellent treatment for an impressive waterproof and breathable performance.

BASELAYERS

Fewer things are more capable of spoiling your day on the slopes than getting cold when you're out snowboarding, sitting shivering on a chairlift because you didn't layer up properly. The job of an effective baselayer is to help regulate your temperature whilst you're out and about on the hill, and the emerging global growth of participation in outdoor activities and sports is anticipated to be one of the prime factors for an increased demand for this market.

For Airblaster, their focus continues to be on their Ninja Suit. "Simply put, it's the best base layer on the planet" claims Marketing Manager Ricky Hower. Designed for alpine touring, the Ninja Suit protects the wearer from falling snow and ridgetop gusts with a 4-way stretch Schoeller® NanoSphere® softshell that provides excellent water-repellence and breathability. The merino fabric panels also provide a barrier of warmth at the core.

Horsefeathers continue to push their successful Riley top and pants in their base-layer offering. Both made from stretchy and lightweight fabric, they feature Silverplus antibacterial odour protection with flat seams and quick-drying, breathable



Gigi Ruff / Victor Daviet
@686





Quiksilver



Quiksilver



Sessions



Sessions



Sweet Protection



Templeton



Volcom



Airblaster



Airblaster



Mons Royale

Brethren have partnered up with the Snow Camp Charity. "We felt we could use our small but loyal following to do some extra good, and actively support the charity who help young people from inner city communities build positive futures through snowsports. We donate £1 from every online sale to the charity and have also left an option for every customer to leave a tip when they complete at checkout ... and it's been working!" explains Co-Founder Chris Kyte.

Bluesign approved fabric.

Baselayer brand Mons Royale will continue their use of Merino wool and wool blends within their FW21/22 range, sourcing their materials from New Zealand's ZQ Merino; the world's leading ethical wool brand. Within their Cascade series they will be introducing Merino Flex technology that provides all the warmth of merino with a 4-way stretch for added performance power.

RAW is FW's merino baselayer collection and it features lightweight merino crew-necks, t-shirts, three-quarter tights, a midweight balaclava hoodie and warm joggers. The collection is made from natural merino wool, which is both breathable and warm, and features anti-odour properties too.

Black Diamond's base layer selection is designed with innovative technologies, such as the Nuyarn, which produces 35% stretch and loftier fabric while making it dry 5x faster, thanks to its special spun, and BD Solution Wool, which is responsibly sourced wool, certified non-mulesed merino wool.

The Jones Layering collection includes a fleece button down shirt, a short sleeve sun shirt and several technical tees including a merino tee. All of the Jones technical layers are made with no less than 95% recycled fabric.

COLLABORATIONS & MARKETING

Every year brands collaborate with other brands, organisations or simply with creative artists to add something new to their products. For FW21/22 a lot of focus has been put on 'give back' campaigns.

In line with their 'people over profit ideology' and heightened by the current economic difficulties the planet has endured lately, Brethren have partnered up with the Snow Camp Charity. "We felt we could use our small but loyal following to do some extra good, and actively support the charity who help young people from inner city communities build positive futures through snowsports. We donate £1 from every online sale to the charity and have also left an option for every customer to leave a tip when they complete at checkout ... and it's been working!" explains Co-Founder Chris Kyte.

And Brethren aren't the only ones to prioritise philanthropy. Within Airblaster's Erik Leon C.O.R.E. outerwear range (C.O.R.E stands for Community Outreach Riding Equipment), each product is designed to be at the lowest price point possible to reduce the barrier to entry as well as keeping the environment in mind during production. By offering affordable products Airblaster and Erik Leon are working to make snowboarding more accessible. ☺

Visit our website to see in depth brand previews of this category.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 90s influenced fits and patterns
- 2 Adaptability key
- 3 Camo still king
- 4 high-end backcountry gear
- 5 Sustainability is key



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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

BACKCOUNTRY SNOW SAFETY 2021/22

The pandemic is sending snow lovers into the backcountry, away from slopes and infectious crowds. A lot of novices are entering avalanche terrain, where safety equipment is needed. Brands are making sure this equipment is as reliable as it is easy to use. **By Rocio Enriquez.**



The boom in backcountry riding is bringing along an increased interest in snow safety. New users want to feel 100% protected in their off-piste adventures. "Protection and avalanche safety are becoming more important", says Jan Sallawitz of Evoc. The most reliable equipment is of no help if the rider cannot use it properly. "Rookies should be able to easily use the equipment in the right way", says Lea Winkelbach of ABS. "Education is more crucial now than before", says Manuel Duermoser of Recco.

AVALANCHE TECHNOLOGY

Airbag equipped backpacks must match safety with user-friendliness. BCA's Float airbag system has a small air compressed cylinder that fits into the same compartment of the airbag, freeing up space and reducing weight. A display lets you check the pressure of your cartridge at any given moment. Black Diamond's JetForce Pro is lighter, smaller and more rechargeable, allowing users to train with their own pack. The airbag automatically deflates after three minutes to create an air pocket and has self-automated diagnosis. Other packs in the JetForce series use the Alpride 2.0 canister system, which boasts complete inflation of a 150-litre bag in less than 5 seconds, and the Alpride E1, which is electrically powered.

ABS' unique system can deploy two independent airbags. The twin bags guarantee a stable position, preventing serious crash injuries. ABS' A.Light pack features RescUnit to perfectly integrate the shovel and the probe. The colour coded emergency flap allows quick and easy access, even while you are carrying the pack.

Evoc pursues the communion of safety and ergonomics with its Line RAS Protector pack. It incorporates the removable Mammut RAS 3.0 airbag and a lightweight, certified, removable back protector. The comfortable and breathable design makes sure that safety does not get in the way of performance.

Ortovox keeps a full offer of avalanche safety products, including the lightweight AVABAG airbag system, and announces a new launch for late February.

Avalanche safety largely relies on technology. BCA boasts the beacon with the strongest signal. The new A.Way beacon and app by ABS allow users to tag their equipment with Bluetooth receivers and track it through the app. The app provides all you need for a tour, too, from planning to navigating and even booking Allianz insurance directly. ABS' P.Pride pack comes with Protegear's emergency beacon, which makes an instant emergency call when the airbag is triggered, or when you are unconscious or buried. It is the only system that can call for help even when you cannot. Recco's SAR (Search and Rescue) helicopter programme expects to have eighteen operative units in

seven countries in Europe and North America by the end of 2021. They are also testing their first rescue drones, which they expect to have up and flying within one to three years.

If fully tech'd comes first, easy to carry comes second. "When it comes to airbag systems, shovels and probes, there is a focus on lightweight", says Dieter Kotlaba of Ortovox. "A constant eye is set on staying lightweight", says Christian Lehmann of Black Diamond. Their shovels and probes come in aluminium and carbon versions. The Recon LT is the lightest digital beacon in the market. The Transfer LT shovel only weighs 450 g. The riveted blade is thin enough to slice through debris, while large enough to move snow around.

NON AVALANCHE TECHNOLOGY

Some non-avalanche products round up the snow safety catalogue. BCA offers the Link radio system with the interface located at the fingertips, so you don't have to get the radio out to change the settings. ABS introduces a new minimalistic day pack for after work tourers who move in safe terrain. It has a safety compartment for probe, shovel and first aid kit with a quick access emergency flap. Evoc presents a tour-oriented backpack with the new Liteshield Plus back protector. Protegear offers the A*Live SmartSafety tool which works all year round for all outdoor sports.

RETAILER SUPPORT

Education is key. All brands invest efforts in training retailers, through meetings and visits to stores, or digitally in times of restrictions. The aim is to educate retailers in avalanche prevention and to provide guidelines about how to behave, so they can transfer this know-how to consumers. Shops can expect the visit of many first-time users with very basic knowledge of snow safety. Offering the right training along with the right product will turn these visits into sales. ☺

Visit our website to see in depth brand previews of this category.

BOARDSOURCE.

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Increase in first-time buyers
- 2 Reliability and user-friendliness key factors
- 3 Constant adaptation of latest technology
- 4 Education key form of retailer support

BUSINESS INNOVATION IN THE BASQUE COUNTRY FRANCE

Bayonne CCI promotes business in the Basque country and company founder François Applagnat talks to us about a year where local businesses pivoted to produce products demanded by the pandemic. François also talks to us about the influx of businesses since Covid hit and how sustainability is a key issue for all involved.

In this unusual year what have been the main positives from your activities in the Basque country?

From March 2020, most entrepreneurs understood that they will face a lockdown period and that they will have to imagine the future of their jobs, the future of their companies, new ways to create jobs and values, a new way to work and keep the connection differently with suppliers and customers.

I have been in touch with entrepreneurs from all over the world for the last twenty years. I was surprised how fast entrepreneurs had decided to move to the Basque country during the pandemic. It has been not only their home offices but their families, and sometimes the whole company with offices, workshops, factories and collaborators too.

Between March and July, we had much more demand for help to locate to the Basque country than we normally do. We helped them to connect with local communities of entrepreneurs and Basque suppliers.

Our country, the Basque country, showed a lot of resilience. We have been mainly autonomous for food and local companies have switched their usual production to produce what we needed the most urgently: masks, Covid tests, hydroalcoholic gel, breathable masks for doctors and nurses, equipment for hospitals. Discovering this new way of working, they decided to stay longer. Now it is understood and accepted that we can decide, manage and engage with the help of digital tools (Skype, Zooms etc). It is not necessary to suffer restrictions imposed in the big cities. We offer a countryside escape, ocean and mountains, which are so necessary during the lockdown period and uncertain times.

You were key in seeing some local textile and tech businesses pivot from surf industry production to supply essential PPE... tell us more.

From June, the importance of wearing masks has been proven to fight against Covid and we needed to produce some 300,000 masks for local needs from local companies. We have created an online platform to group the offerings of local companies. 15 companies, and mainly from the local textile industry, have participated with 45 local needlewomen working from home. We had committed the local logistic platform to deliver the masks within a 48-hour period. This operation has helped some companies adjust to the lack of Asian suppliers and less turnover during lockdown periods. It has been a huge success and had created stronger relations between the companies that contributed to the platform.

How is this influencing your future business strategies and consultancy?

Some of the local companies have switched from supplying the aeronautical industry to the medical industry accessing new markets with new offerings. With strong help from the regional council (conseil régional de Nouvelle Aquitaine), we have supported

investments especially for new production machines, new innovative processes to produce more with a strong productivity to counter the Asian pricing problem. Now the health industry has become stronger and we are helping more companies to locate to the Basque country. Concerning the textile industry, we have helped them with government support so that they lay off as few people as possible and keep their services available. We have helped to relocate production companies who were using Asian countries before to European countries to prepare for another lockdown period that could happen in the next month. We have helped these companies to imagine a more circular economy.

Tell us about some of your star performers.

A star performer which has set up its business during this difficult



time is Polyola <https://polyola.com/>. Originally from Germany, they set up their business in Anglet in March 2020. They propose new foam blanks to shapers from a low impact material made of recycled PU and bio material from the wood industry. During the first lockdown period, they supplied 100 foams to shapers between Hendaye and Hossegor. Now they have big plans to produce them from Anglet and help more than 50 shapers in Europe to have this beautiful natural foam.

The other champ is Silk on board <https://silkonboard.fr/fr/>, managed by Jonathan Bunel, who runs a company proposing printed silk for board graphics. He totally switched to a mask selling platform and saw a big year for his company.

Why is sustainability so key in the new businesses you are setting up in the region?

It becomes more and more necessary to provide sustainable products for mainly two reasons: end-customers demand products that have less of an environmental impact. Consumers want to buy less, with more high quality AND less impactful products. The second reason is that the European commission will require by law for companies to produce greener and less impactful products. It will become compulsory to do so and it becomes urgent to design, study and anticipate because of these laws. The future will be brighter for the European market as we try to save our planet... ☺

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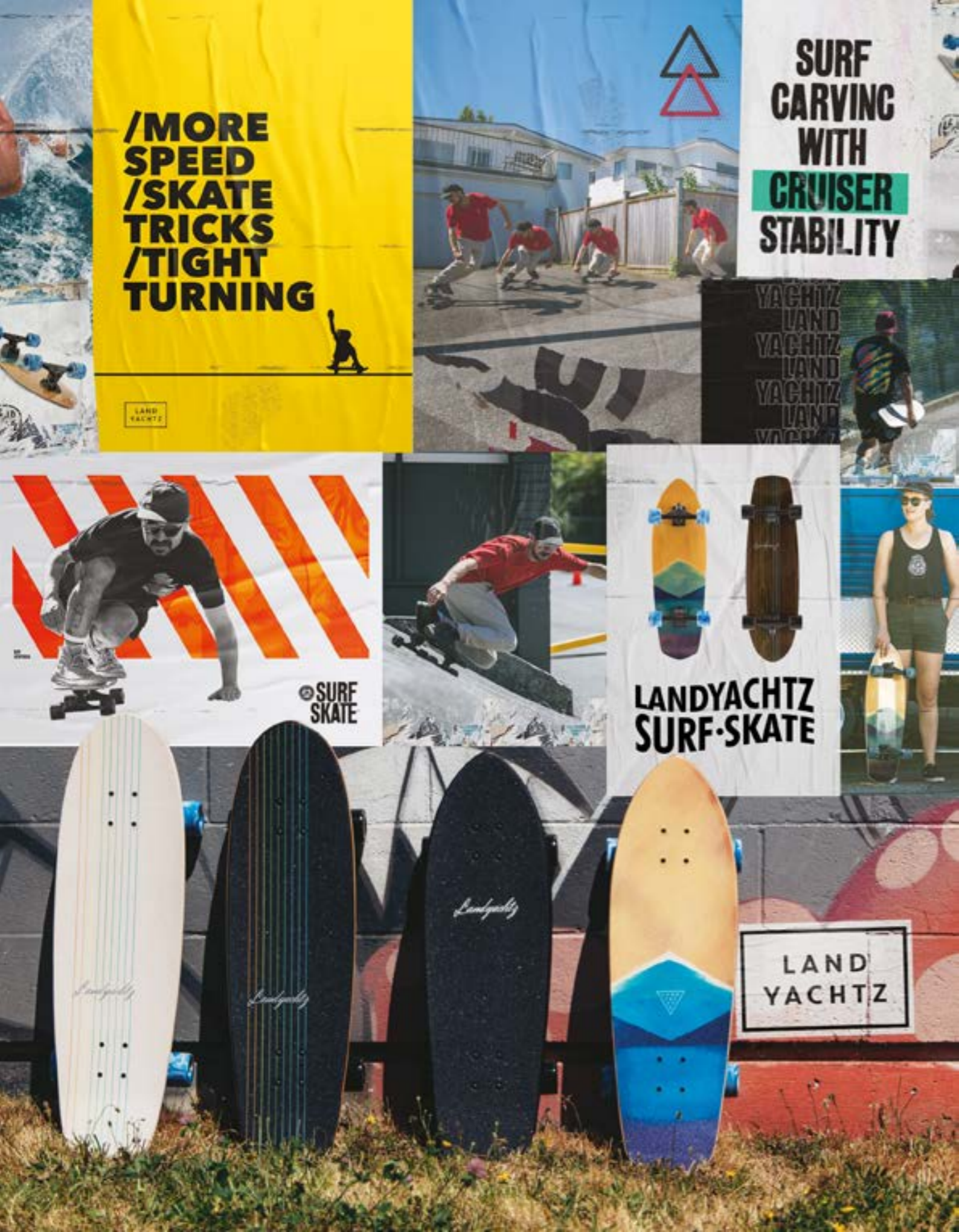


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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE SKATE CRUISERS 2021

Was the 2020 cruiser boom a fluke or will 2021 continue the trend? Find the answers in our Skate Cruisers Retail Buyer's Guide 2021 by SOURCE Skateboard Editor Dirk Vogel.



The year 2020 was dominated by the social implications of the coronavirus pandemic. With the majority of Europe under strict lockdown for months at a time, skateboarding emerged as a socially distanced pastime and our industry experienced a dramatic market boom. Especially cruisers! "Lots of first-time skaters are buying cruisers because of the pandemic. Cruisers are perfect for these new riders because they're a little easier to ride than a traditional street board, and more portable and affordable than a longboard," said Shane Maloney, Brand Manager at Madrid Skateboards. Speaking on new beginners, Philippe Clarisse, Vice President Europe at Globe, noted: "We're also seeing a lot of female customers and people who are a bit older picking up cruisers. With lockdowns across Europe, many have had to give up their usual team sports or activities."

These are positive signals. But after the first year of living with Covid-19, experts believe that 2021 will be dominated by the economic impact of the pandemic. As industries such as hospitality and travel have been ravaged by shutdown measures, and other business segments had to downsize and furlough workers, consumer spending power is bound to take a hit, inevitably. Nevertheless, the majority of brands remain optimistic about the future. "We're seeing continued high demand across Europe in the cruiser category which should last through the 2021/22 season. Skateboarding is a great way to get outside to safely socialize and escape the house! Consumers saw this in 2020 and we expect to see continued demand well into 2021," said Nate Schumacher, Marketing Manager at Landyachtz.

Market & Price Points

Now, how big is this 'skate boom'? Some companies were willing to share numbers from 2020, and the sales spike is pronounced. "We have seen a HUGE increase with global demand and Europe is in line with this at 180-250% growth," said Steve Douglas, Brand Licensee at Ocean Pacific (OP). At Flying Wheels in France, Brand & Marketing Manager Benoit

"Lots of first-time skaters are buying cruisers because of the pandemic. Cruisers are perfect for these new riders because they're a little easier to ride than a traditional street board, and more portable and affordable than a longboard,"

Shane Maloney, Brand Manager, Madrid Skateboards.

Brecq said: "Last summer was really crazy in terms of sales. We increased our sales by 81.5%. The main problem right now is the production and supply for 2021." Meeting demand with enough supply will be the key issue this season. Mindless Longboards is helping retailers by, "making sure everyone gets a split of the stock, as ever our sales team do an amazing job, keeping in continuous communications with everyone, helping however we can," said Andy King, Brand Manager. At Origin Distribution, Tim Mackey (Production Lead & Designer) said: "We have scaled up production activity at our home base in Washington State, USA. Our staff has doubled since the start of the outbreak, helping us meet as much demand as we can."

Final products are not the only part of the chain currently under pressure: "Despite some price increases on raw materials we will remain competitive against our larger competitors while still staying core and keeping our boards of high quality," said Liam Morgan, CEO and Team Rider at Prism Skate Co. Across the board, prices remain stable, with Flying Wheels even starting a new Classic Series with six different designs under €99. At the same time, the cruiser segment offers everything from attractive beginners' choices to top-shelf quality. This includes LA-based brand Loaded, where Pablo Castro tells us: "We continue to offer a variety of board models ranging from premium composite construction

at \$300-400 per complete to more economical maple layouts at \$199 per complete." While price points are stable, the following new trends are unfolding in 2021:

SEASON TREND: SHREDDABILITY

Zippering around town on cruisers for mobility is very well. But today's skaters also want to pop ollies. That's why Pablo at Loaded sees a strong trend towards, "shreddable cruisers like the Coyote and Omakase." In the process, Andy King at Mindless sees shapes shifting towards, "wider boards 8-8.5 inch rather than the 7.75 that used to dominate our sales." At Globe, Philippe Clarisse (Vice President Europe) also sees the market, "longer shapes instead of the smaller board trends we have seen in recent years." As the weapon of choice, Andreas Maurmeir, Sales and Marketing at Sector 9 recommends the Chop Hop Noh, "a Hybrid board for park and cruising with killer graphics from Artis Jor Ros." Arbor has the Axel Serrat Pro 34, "a scaled down version of his 39 inch model, an ideal choice for daily cruises, street spots and steep urban hills with 58mm Suave wheels." Look for shreddable cruisers from brands including Landyachtz (Dinghy Cruisers), Mindless (Grande Gen X, Octopuke), Prism (Kentaro Yoshida Series Grit), Flying Wheels (Palm Springs), Dusters California (Cazh Cosmic), Madrid (OG Classics), Miller Division (Clowing), DB (Crook, Minotaur, & Dad Bod Guanabana), and Arbor (Martillo Artist), and Globe (Phantom, Burner and Aperture).



"We're seeing continued high demand across Europe in the cruiser category which should last through the 2021/22 season. Skateboarding is a great way to get outside to safely socialize and escape the house! Consumers saw this in 2020 and we expect to see continued demand well into 2021,"

Nate Schumacher, Marketing Manager at Landyachtz.

THE 5 CRUISER TRENDS TO WATCH IN 2021

1. QUIVER: STATEMENT PIECES

Customers may already own a functional cruiser or two, but they are willing to invest in a statement piece that says 'Wow'. Dusters California has just the thing with the Cazh Cosmic in a trippy new update: "This year we have taken it to another level and created an all-new holographic design with clear grip to show the iridescent top. The board is detailed with holographic foil art, full holographic top, wheel wells and 83A wheels to ensure a smooth ride." Globe also has a special series in store: "Our Surf Glass modern fiberglass cruisers are a totally wood-less construction, modernizing a nostalgic era of surfboard shapers making skateboards out of leftover glass and rollerskate trucks." Arbor has created something unique with the Pilsner Solstice, featuring art by Montreal based tattoo artist Hilary Jane, with a premium palisander top-sheet and ultra-clear recycled glass re-grit. Other premium standouts include the Prism Pizza Boobs, Loaded Coyote Hola Lou model, Sector 9 Hopper Handplant, Ocean Pacific Surf Design classics, and Madrid OG Cruisers.

2. SHAPES: WIDE AND STABLE

In line with the shreddability trend, next season's cruisers are no longer the skinny 'banana' boards crafted from plastic. Benoit Flying Wheels said: "The trend for 2021 in Cruisers is short boards between 29 to 32 inches long and between 8.5 to 10 inches width. Pocketable boards but stable." At Miller Division, Ivan Garcia Arozamena (Product Manager) said: "We continue with the argument of making wide cruisers, especially in the area where the feet are placed. As for the shapes, it is important that a cruiser or surfskate is well balanced." Tim at Origin Distribution is banking on, "directional and functional double kicks." Expect lots of 1980s shred sticks with pointed nose and blocky tails, alongside early-1990s shapes with long noses.

3. SURF SKATE: HERE TO STAY

Surf Skating has been a major trend in 2020 and is not slowing down any time soon. Liam at Prism said: "I see lots of surf inspired shapes doing really well right now." Ivan at Miller Division is on the same page: "Surf skate is the best way to have fun, stay fit and get on the go. This means that all families of both cruisers and surf skates, regardless of the shape

or size, are selling in large quantities. As for the trucks, we continue with our XRKPII axis that has 12 degrees more turn in all our surf skates." Ocean Pacific is serving the trend with specifically designed surf trucks in models like the Sunset Surf Skate in 29.5- and 32.25-inch length and 9.25 inch wide for stability and decorated with a 1980s surf design. Aside from functional deck shapes, Maui at Sector 9 points out, "Important to us are the very turny trucks, so that that thing gives you the right drive and lean in as much as possible." Brands featured in this report offer surf skate completes as well as add-on kits to turn any skateboard into a surf skate, including baseplates and surf-specific trucks.

4. STYLING: PREMIUM FLAVOUR

Following the demand for statement pieces, customers want premium styling such as exclusive wood veneers and upscale finishes. This has been a calling card for Arbor Skateboards, said Ross Druckrey (Marketing Manager): "Our wood-forward aesthetic uses the beauty of premium wood grain tell the story of our broader emphasis on sustainability and quality craftsmanship." Origin Distribution continues to, "incorporate stained maple as an element of the graphic and recycling as much as possible." Steve Douglas at Ocean Pacific believes in Evergreen styles that are offered season to season as well as a timeless, recognizable aesthetic: "OP focuses on the heritage designs and shapes, OP tries and NOT change and keep the authentic look at feel, OP is a classic and the line respects that."

5. FEATURES: WHEEL WELLS AND FINER DETAILS

Speaking of timeless style, the must-have for 2021 are wheel wells, which are indentations above the wheels to avoid 'biting' into the wood during sharp turns. The bright-pink Tropic model from Dusters California features neon inks, custom wheel wells and Tensor Trucks as a true statement (see Season Trend). Other 2021 models adorned with wheel wells include Arbor (Axel Saerrat 34), Mindless (Grande Gen X), Ocean Pacific (Classic Cruisers), Prism (Kentaro Yoshida), Madrid (OG Cruisers), Flying Wheels (Hannya) and many more. In terms of new wheels, Madrid presents smooth 80A Cadillac Clout Cruisers, Flying Wheels has the Forward Wheels collection including the Climax, Bumper and Gyro models. As an added detail, Nathan at Landyachtz announced: "We're continuing our '1 Board, 1 Tree' program. So, for every cruiser purchased we will plant a tree, which is awesome!" As a sustainable novelty in accessories, Globe Skateboard Designer Dave Gitlin is stoked on the 2021 launch of "recycled rubber grip", strongly used in kids boards: "As a heritage boardsports brand and manufacturers of shoes and clothing as well as skateboards, we have to think about the lifecycle of all these products." ♻️

Visit our website to see in depth brand previews of this category.

BOARDSPORTSOURCE.COM

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Demand exceeds supply
- 2 Shreddeable completes
- 3 Wider decks, retro shapes
- 4 Special finishes (holographic, veneers)
- 5 Surf skate trending
- 6 Sustainable griptape



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NEW PRODUCTS

01 / NORTHWAVE DECADE LTD 30TH ANNIVERSARY SNOWBOARD BOOT

To celebrate their 30th anniversary Northwave have revolutionized the already impeccable NW Decade. This LTD anniversary model is fitted with a stylish updated upper and the quick, reliable and snug SLS lacing system. The brand-new POP CORN outsole offers the best blend of board feel, grip and shock absorption making this boot an industry leader for all styles of snowboarding. NORTHWAVE.COM



01

02 / BBCO ELAN BEANIE

The Elan beanie continues to evolve with a retro theme inspired by colours found on old snowboard jackets and surfboards around the late 80's early 90's. For AW21/22 expect the introduction of more sustainable fibres in to their best sellers such as recycled polar fleece linings plus a decrease in the percentage of Acrylic. 8 new colourways will be available for the AW season. BBCOHEADWEAR.COM

02



03 / THE DRAKE RELOAD FYVE FREESTYLE BINDING

The new 'change up strap' made from injected TPU allows the user to really dial in their ride, the straps can be inverted offering support in preferred areas. The stylish new shovel highback is an evolution on the existing spade highback with a priority set on comfort and tweekability. The binding is solid but light thanks to the tool-less Light Saber baseplate and magnesium MG12 buckles. NORTHWAVE.COM

03



04 / HEAD FOUR BOA FOCUS LIQUID FIT BOOT

Built for intermediate to advanced riders this boot boasts excellent comfort, fit and response for the progressive freestyler and freerider. It's Liquid Fit ready and can be fully customized to your individual foot shape in less than 10 minutes! While the sole of the boot delivers maximum grip and shock-adsorption, its upper features a zonal BOA® Fit System, which guarantees an individual, solid fit. HEAD.COM

04



05 / DAKINE PACKABLE DUFFLE 40L

The duffle is part of a Dakine line launching in 2021 that also includes a full collection of packable bags featuring lifestyle backpacks and tote bags, Surf Water proof roll tops and duffles, and larger travel duffle bags. The whole collection offers versatility and is definitely purpose driven for any kind of adventures. This duffle is packable into its internal pocket, has a exterior zippered pocket and deployable lightweight mesh backpack. Dual web handles and straps with snap loop make for easy carrying and it also offers adjustable side compression. For Spring Summer 2021 sun flare and grey scale will be the dominant colourways, for winter we will see more Mustard and electric tropical. DAKINE.COM

05



06 / PAG NECK PRO AIR GRID

Designed for performance, the Neck Pro is the most technical neckband developed by PAG. Fitted, it hugs the curves of the face, a stretch bias for a perfect outfit. AIR GRID a material developed by PAG and 37.5 Technology for optimal breathing has a HEIQ Eco Dry treatment and water-repellent micro-fleece for higher protection against the cold. It has a new holographic marking for high visibility and is made in France. PAG-NKW.COM

06



Backside Nollie 180 transfer

Lake Elsinore, CA

Photo: David Swift



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NEW PRODUCTS

07 / BBCO SUMMIT SEEKER BEANIE

The new Summit Seeker beanie collection carries on BBCo's fundamental mission to provide the best headwear in the most sustainable way to modern day explorers and adventurers. The new Summit Seeker collection is made from Repeve recycled materials. Adding new sustainable products to our headwear range has been BBCo's target for 2021 and the Summit range will follow up on BBCo's new range of carbon reduced British made caps launching this S/S. BBCOHEADWEAR.COM



07

08 / YES X NOW BINDING COLLAB.

The YES collab is now part of the Select Pro family. This binding has gotten a full facelift for 22, with a new H3 (base) which has the bushings moved 3mm closer to the board's edges for added power and a new Freestyle Highback to name a few. This new Select Pro X Uninc embodies the anything goes, fuck-you attitude of the glory days of snowboarding and it is designed to be paired with the YES Uninc. boards series.

NOW-SNOWBOARDING.COM



08

09 / STANCE BOYD SOCK

Style demands fluidity and their Boyd is a jack of all trades. Show off this classic look in all the comforts of combed cotton, a timeless number that's ready to become a staple in your everyday wardrobe rotation. Now featuring their ultra-durable Infiknit technology, more than up to any task and comes with a lifetime guarantee. No quibbles or questions, if it breaks, send it back and Stance will send you a fresh pair.

STANCE.EU.COM/COLLECTIONS



09

10 / DEELUXE DNA BOOT

The DNA is the freshest addition to DEELUXE's freestyle line. With a slightly softer flex, it pairs out-of-the-box comfort with all of the features you need to have a great day. Its traditional laces offer a classic ride and appearance while the boot's BOA® Fit System allows you to quickly and effortlessly attain a precise fit in the heel and ankle area. A Power Strap delivers additional support at the shin to further enhance response.

DEELUXE.COM



10

11 / DAKINE DIABLO GORE-TEX 3L MITT

The Shell is waterproof and breathable with a Gore-tex 3L plain weave 70d (100% nylon) with fully taped seams, Tricot backer (100% polyester) lining and durable water repellent 100% goat leather Palm. Inside is a removable down mitt made from Ripstop (100% nylon) / 250g PrimaLoft® performance fleece (100% polyester) and the removable storm liner glove is touch screen compatible 280g 4-way stretch fleece (94% polyester, 6% elastane)

DAKINE.COM



11

12 / GIRO THE GRID SPHERICAL HELMET

This is one of the lightest backcountry helmets. When you're splitboarding its extremely lightweight construction allows you to make powdery turns and tour back to the top without being weighed down. If you are taking laps on some corduroy, its comfort makes the turns that much more enjoyable. The Grid features Spherical Technology, powered by MIPS, a Polartec lining that dries quickly and provides unparalleled breathability.

GIRO.COM



12

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Daniel Yeager @daniel_yeager

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STRANDA

Bringing surf carving style to the mountains, Stranda founder Mats Drougge has been standing sideways since the 1970s. The brand makes products that are built to last and don't follow a seasonal production flow. With that in mind, we sat down with Mats to find out about the brand started in 2015 is witnessing its best winter to date, despite the pandemic.

Please take us through the history of the brand.

The roots of Stranda goes back some 20 years ago to when I - by luck - met Mike Doyle and Joe Cabell in Aspen C.O, both 60's surf legends. Mike and I became friends and I learned massively from him. (R.I.P.) His style of carving was very surf inspired, riding the undulating terrain in Buttermilk like it was a giant wave - surf style carving. We were all riding in hardboots back then and I couldn't find boards fitting the kind of over fall line riding I was looking for. Skinny race boards with too big of a sidecut didn't do it for me. So I set about creating my first shape in 2003, collaborating with Chris Prior of Prior Snowboards, creating niche brand Alpinepunk. Fast forward to 2015 and I could see that there was a renewed interest in carving and freeride. Building on what I had learned I started Stranda and today we can offer a more or less a complete quiver of directional snowboards and splitboards, staying away from freestyle and twin tips.

What is your brand's USP?

All our boards incorporate ash in their cores, a hardwood with outstanding tensile strength and vibration dampening, giving our boards a superior ride quality and durability. We can



offer a 4-year limited warranty due to the bullet proof construction. We're doing carry over design, there's no risk of getting stuck with last year's models, thus avoiding fire sales. Environmentally, we're low on plastic, using bamboo top sheets covered with nine layers of waterbased laquer on all snowboards except the Descender and using plant-based plastic on our splitboards.

How is it being the owner/manager of your own business?

Most of the time very rewarding as I can use so many of my skills. From product design to business plans over to meeting passionate snowboarders all over the world and ride with them. Last season I spent 123 nights in the Stranda Camper van - starting with glacier openings in Austria in October and ending the season splitboarding above the polar circle in Riksgränsen in mid-May. If you love snowboarding, I'm living the dream.

How were your supply chains affected by Covid, and how have you worked to overcome these problems and futureproof your supply chain?

Deliveries were delayed into early November, as sourcing materials for cores and bases was cut due to lockdown in spring. But otherwise the have been no hiccups due to Covid.

Please talk us through your backcountry product successes this winter. Have you been able to keep up with demand?

The new Descender Backcountry split has been a real hit for us. And the fact that we got some really good reviews in specialist magazines and sites didn't hurt either. The first run sold out already in mid-December. Luckily, we reordered before running out and



got new splitboards almost seamlessly, being able to meet demand. Our round tail Shorty Backcountry is more or less sold out now. It's been the best season by far for snowboards. The previous four years of hard grafting has paid off.

Who's on the pro team?

We work closely with two time Scandinavian Big Mountain champ Stefan Östling and Finnish big mountain rider Niklas Hollsten on splitboard development. But for brand building Stranda relies more on ambassadors, partnerships with guides and sharing the stoke of riding powder and groomers than names riding our boards.

How are you working with retailers to promote the brand and products?

We have a selective approach to retail, wanting to work closely with a few shops. Our goal is definitely not going mainstream as we want to stay a premium brand. We're doing Stranda nights and on snow demos and splitboard tutorials in partnership with retailers; building local following from word to mouth. ☺



RIETVELD

Rick Rietveld, an award-winning creative director and a co-founder of surf-wear company, Maui & Sons is spreading his surrealist art to clothing. Founded in 1995, Rick's brand is making a resurgence for 2021 with big plans for European expansion afoot.

Who is Rick Rietveld?

Rick Rietveld, a Southern California native, began his journey in art and surf culture in 1971. After studying at the prestigious Art College of Design in Pasadena, California, Rick co-founded the popular surf-wear company, Maui & Sons, in 1980. He held the position of creative director for 10 years, during which time his artwork can be credited to the success of the company's image and popular appeal. He has received numerous awards for his work through his 40-year career including the Federation Award for Excellence in 1986 and an OBIE Award for Creative Excellence in 1988, as well as being featured in books such as 'Stoked: A History of Surfing' and several magazines including Surfer, Surfing and Action Sports Retailer. Rick has also worked on projects for Quiksilver, Nike and held invitation art exhibitions all over the globe.

Concerning his work, Rick says: "My art tells stories of better lands, fairer seas, adventure, spirituality, beautiful women... - but the story's ending is left up to the viewer. It's a reaction to my daily experiences ensconced in my passion of the surf and beach lifestyle that I have enjoyed for the past 40 years."

How did the brand Rietveld begin?

In 1995, Rick took the next steps in his story co-founding his art derived surf-wear company Rietveld USA, by launching printed tees, hoods and boardshorts with his unique surrealist designs. This brand grew quickly across the world with the largest territories being



mainland Europe and the US. In 2013, Wings Italia Spa, the then global license holder, sold to a larger US business and the Rietveld brand ceased to be manufactured as part of their reorganisation. The market and retailers were very saddened by the quick departure of this iconic brand with everyone wondering, would it come back? In 2017, Rietveld International Ltd took over the global license for the Rietveld Clothing and Art brand, initially launching in the UK but with aspirations to re-enter all original territories within 3 years.

What's your USP?

Rick's amazing surrealist art is the key stone to the brand and gives it global appeal. It's art on clothing as opposed to being just a clothing brand. With over 400 back catalogue designs and more being commissioned, the brand has something for anyone to be able to "Wear Their Passion", be it surf, Einstein or 6 arm octopus ladies.

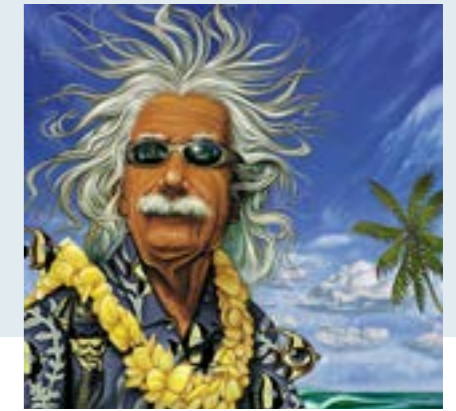
What is the brand doing to become more sustainable?

Rietveld International are passionate about driving sustainability through our sector. We are currently working on future carbon neutrality solutions with manufacturing processes and have recently moved to a 100% carbon neutral delivery company. We only use recycled craft card swing tags, recyclable poly bags and strive to limit distance travelled of all products.

By 2023, we aim to have 65% of our range made from eco or sustainable materials and aim to work with only factories registered with BCI (Better Cotton Initiative) and Fair Trade, to ensure all parts of the manufacturing process are clean and labour is paid fairly.

Where is your brand distributed and what is your most successful territory?

The brand is currently distributed in the UK,



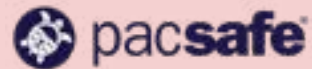
Ireland and Benelux, with the UK being our most successful territory to date due to having 6 permanent agents covering this market. In 2021 we are launching in Italy, Portugal, Greece, Cyprus, UAE and the US with a mix of agencies and distributors. We'll see who's the most successful next year.

Tell us about your SS21 collection.

Due to the nature of the artworks' history, we run a selected core range of 10-15 designs each season based on popularity and also launch 10-15 brand new designs following a chosen theme. In 2021 we are introducing a beautiful selection of new "Ocean" designs from single colour sketches of a kraken taking down a whale to incredibly detailed multicolour art pieces you could look at for days and still not see all Rick's hidden easter eggs.

Why should retailers carry Rietveld?

Rietveld adds something new to the current surf and outdoor market that hasn't been there since its departure in 2013. When displayed in store, Rietveld's t-shirts and clothing add the colour and personality this sector was missing, until now. ☺



PACSAFE

Pacsafe, originally founded in 1998 by Australians Rob Schlipper and Magnus McGlashan, is now a globally distributed anti-theft backpack brand. Pacsafe has pioneered bag protection technologies, launched the Pacsafe Turtle Fund and continues to develop backpack safety features using sustainable, recyclable materials. We talked to the brand to discover their history, tech innovations and goals for the foreseeable future.

Tell us about the history of PacSafe.

What have been the key moments in the development of the brand?

Pacsafe was founded by two Australian globetrotters in 1998 – Rob Schlipper and Magnus McGlashan, who are still the owners of Pacsafe. Their own experiences from visiting more than 80 countries and those of other travellers convinced them of the need for no-nonsense travel security. Beginning with the invention of one product, the Pacsafe anti-theft backpack & bag protector – a lockable eXomesh net to fit around any backpack to protect your valuables; a protector that is still available in our product range. This was followed by a series of award winning and patented technologies, that are at the core of the world's most acclaimed anti-theft travel gear. This strong portfolio of innovative security features includes cut proof straps, lockable zippers, cut resistant materials, puncture proof zippers, pockets with RFID protection – to protect your bag – your belongings – your identity.

Tell us about the Pacsafe Turtle Fund.

In 2014 the Pacsafe Turtle Fund was launched with the aim of supporting the conservation efforts of endangered sea turtles globally. The sea turtle conservation projects we support via the Pacsafe Turtle Fund, funded through a

portion of our sales, work to rescue turtles that have been caught in discarded fishing nets, build hatcheries for nesting mothers, patrol beaches against threats like egg poaching, and promote sustainable practices among coastal communities where turtles live. The turtle has been represented in our logo since the very beginning.

What about sustainable production considerations?

In 2019 we launched our first sustainable collections. For the first, we recreated our top-selling styles using Econyl yarn – made of recycled nylon waste, such as fishnets and other nylon discarded in our oceans and landscapes. The unique Econyl regeneration process results in durable, long lasting yarn that performs the same as brand new nylon. It can be recreated and remoulded, again and again. It's all part of our commitment to reduce ocean plastic. We've turned ocean plastic into the best anti-theft bags.

The next collection was a brand-new, urban-style anti-theft collection made out of 100% recycled PET bottles that would otherwise have ended up as waste. Pacsafe continues to pioneer and advance the technology by putting sustainability and people first, treating them as individuals, and servicing their needs through innovation, aesthetic, craftsmanship and the desire to always do better.

Your bags are enabled with anti-theft carry solutions; how do you stand out from your competitors with similar ideas in the market?

The Pacsafe anti-theft features are unique and patented. We are a group of thoughtful travellers dedicated to protecting what is valuable – our belongings, our experiences, and our planet. For more than two decades we have worked to create the best anti-theft travel gear using sustainable materials and processes along the way. In 2021, 74% of our bags will be made of sustainable materials. All of our sustainable collections are always

combined with our patented Pacsafe anti-theft technology. We're committed to eliminating virgin plastic from our supply chain by 2025 – protecting our planet for future generations of travellers to enjoy.

What is your most successful territory?

We have a global presence which means that Pacsafe has locations in Hong Kong, EMEA, APAC and North America. The Pacsafe locations work in the different areas with respective distributors and wholesalers who are active as brick-and-mortar or online stores. Our store locator on our website assists the end-consumer to find a store nearby or an online shop in his/her country. We're represented through our distributors and wholesalers in more than 40 countries.

How did the pandemic affect your business?

The majority of local retailers across many different countries had to close due to COVID-19 and, of course, we also felt the ups and downs. Nevertheless, there is still a strong demand for sustainable backpacks and bags.

How do you see the market in 2021?

We think that the first half of 2021 will be still shaky, but the second half will be more positive for all of us. ☺

SPARK

Spark R&D, based in Montana (USA), are splitboarding innovators and their tech-driven approach has seen them garner one of the finest reps in the backcountry biz. They manufacture a large number of their categories domestically and with the uptick in backcountry participation in recent years (in particular 20/21) we thought we'd see what solutions they used to meet such unprecedented demand.

What were the key moments in the development of the brand?

Spark R&D is a design and manufacturing company for splitboard bindings and accessories based out of Bozeman, Montana USA. We are rider-owned and operated and, as you might imagine, we're pretty obsessed with backcountry snowboarding. There have been a number of pivotal development moments for the brand over the last 14 years; none were perhaps more important than Will Ritter's first splitboard tour in the early 2000's. He loved it, but he had a binding on a slider plate, essentially a binding on top of a binding – the industry standard at that moment in time. It was heavy and clunky; so, he got to work and designed the first binding specific to splitboarding with puck compatibility built right into the baseplate. In 2014, Spark introduced the Tesla system eliminating the pin and cable attachment. This was a huge breakthrough and dramatically improved transition times and the overall user experience. It is also worth mentioning that in 2016, Spark bought the building it had previously been renting. This allowed the company to grow in physical size, improve its manufacturing, and optimise all its operations.

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

The company's co-owners are Will and Becca Ritter. Will has a master's degree in Mechanical Engineering and leads Spark's product design efforts. Becca, who has a master's degree in Biology and Education, is the company's CFO and works closely with the sales and marketing team.

What's the company's USP?

There are a couple of things that really help us differentiate from our competition and remain at the top of the splitboard market. First, our authentic and tech driven, yet simple, approach early on has gained us a solid reputation in the core splitboard world. This core group of Spark fans and customers has been huge for us, especially as splitboarding has increased in popularity. We also manufacture nearly all our own gear in our own factory. Splitboarders appreciate the fact that the gear they depend on is not being outsourced; it is built by real people making a living in snowboard/splitboard industry. Lastly, our price point is in a sweet spot in the middle of the market.

How are you dealing with the tremendous increase in demand this year?

Ha! The best we can. When this year wraps up, we will have produced more splitboard bindings than in any other year in our history. The hardest part this year, beyond the sad and inconvenient aspects of 2020, has been telling people that we don't have any bindings left for them. We are communicating with our dealers and end consumers the best we can to realistically explain the situation. We will fulfil every order that we accepted and build every binding we originally planned on building, but we cannot extend the production season to meet 20/21 demand. We must begin making plans for 21/22 so we can go into the upcoming season strong.

Which are your best performing regions, and which have the biggest potential for growth in the next three years?

The US and Canada are our biggest markets, followed closely by Europe. In Europe, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, and France lead the way. These regions continue to grow for us and are likely to provide the best growth over the next couple years.

How do you see the future for the splitboard business?

We think splitboarding will continue to grow, and do not see this recent boom as just a blip in time. While it's true that some people turned to backcountry as a result of the uncertainty surrounding the reopening of resorts, we believe that many of these people will be splitboarders for life even if their main hobby is riding at the resort. The feeding frenzy for gear may mellow out after next season, but we expect to see a steady increase in demand for the foreseeable future. As we lay plans for Spark to keep up with this demand in the next few years, we are working with the idea that we will need to grow to keep up. That means more manufacturing space, more employees, more machines etc... We can't wait! ☺



ISLAND

Last issue we featured John Bassett on our cover, having started Dragon Lodge Snowboarding with his brother, Owain 20-something years ago in Tignes, France. Now we present Island Snowboards, the Bassett brothers' latest venture, based out of Hokkaido, Japan where Owain has lived for the best part of two decades. Owain's brainchild, Island is all about small-batch, quality snowboards made in his converted farm shed in the powder capital of the world, where he lives with his local wife and two kids (who shred!). With sustainable growth and entry to the European market in mind, we caught up with Owain. Read an extended version of this interview on our website.

Please tell us about the idea and concept behind Island Snowboards.

I've always been interested in making stuff, understanding how things work, working with friends and family on projects and business ideas... from making skateboard ramps when I was a kid; starting the Dragon Lodge in the Alps with my brother; building our own house here in Niseko with my wife... so understanding how boards were made and if and how I could make my own was always something I'd thought about. Initially the idea was to do just that, lots of research on board construction, materials, shapes and profiles etc... The initial project was definitely more to do with the craft of making a great board. As I progressed with this, over a couple of years of making and testing boards, the concept of Island as a company or brand developed organically and grew to where it is now with the help of my business partner Stu, my wife Monzen, and my brother.

Tell us about the production process and board

run numbers.

We hand pick all of our wood for the cores from a local merchant here in Hokkaido. We then mill, laminate, shape, and profile all the cores ourselves in house. Sidewalls are attached after the profiling so we can keep plastics and wood offcuts as separate as possible. We've bought an old Hokkaido farm shed, which has all the characteristics that come with age, and converted it into our factory and future office/showroom. All of our boards are made here by us. For this first official season of production, we've planned a limited production number of the Volume One shape, working to pre-orders received from last season's demo & test sessions. The boards are to be sold directly and online and we're currently working with two local core snowboard shops. We've always planned to grow sustainably and organically... a model that I think luckily works well given the current world situation.

Talk us through your material usage.

We want to use the best quality materials: materials that work exceptionally well and have the perfect properties and characteristics for board performance - while also being locally sourced. The cores are made from wood from two locations on the island. The Honoki (a type of Magnolia) is from central Hokkaido and the Tamo (Japanese Ash) is from the south. We'd tested and researched the properties of various types of wood for the core and found that these two, laminated in combination, are a perfect balance of strength and flex for what we wanted out of a board. We use TriAx glass above and below the core, Kevlar reinforcement around the inserts for retention and carbon stringers are used to keep the board light and enhance flex, strength, and snap. Edges are made with hardened Japanese steel and we use the best IsoSport 7000 grade bases.

Are your shapes mainly focused on Japanese terrain?

We came out with the Volume One shape first which is designed as a directional all-mountain board that can be ridden anywhere, a board

that is just as at home in the Alps as it would be in Hokkaido. Although obviously we wanted it to excel in the super light powder that we mostly like to ride here, it's also great at carving on perfect groomers, blasting side hits etc... The feedback we got from the crew in the Alps was that it rode equally well on the piste, backcountry and the spring slush there as it does here. This winter we're working on a model with a couple of our local Japanese riders, more specifically for Hokkaido terrain and deep powder snow.

Talk to us about the graphic design process... what takes the lead/inspires there?

I wanted something simple both in a topsheet and the base. We keep the base clean apart from the logo, which is die cut into the nose so as to maximise performance.

Inspired by art and music, rather than a clean, commercial / graphic design look, our topsheets were originally hand painted, then, to make it a bit more consistent while keeping that analogue look, we took that simple idea and burned it into silkscreens, another 'handmade' craft and process we enjoyed learning and playing with. A simple one colour print against a black background pops out effectively and differentiates each size model in the range. ☺

ISLAND-SNOWBOARDS.COM

MARKET INSIGHT

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What is there to say? If you are a skate retailer then things continue as close to 'normal' for this time of year and as the change of season comes along then, alongside watersports retailers (lockdown allowing), you can find some form of optimism. If you are a winter sports retailer there really is no good news at all apart from the vaccine roll-out which appears to be gathering momentum - but all too late for this winter.

At the time of writing this [Jan 25] the UK is in lockdown. Travel corridors are closed and there appears to be no chance of any real winter sports business this year. The retailers and distributors are feeling it right now and the hurt is real, very real ... in the till.

Reports of 2% sell-through and sales reductions of over 90% are common and whereas, during last year's lockdowns, eCommerce could take up the slack this time there really is close to zero demand from the consumer.

Looking forward to the sell-in, all brands need to be aware that a lot of retailers have almost all the stock they need to get them through next year.

"I'll not be buying any outerwear at all..."
"We've got enough gloves to get through next year"
"I simply don't need any more boards".

These are the sort of comments coming through thick and fast.

Some retailers will not be here to see next year. Board Basement have gone. It was simply too much - they've closed their doors. The staff have been made redundant, the stock returned to suppliers, the website 'Closed for Maintenance' and Google advises 'Temporarily Closed'. Will it be temporary? Will they find a buyer? In these times that may be a big ask. Full respect to the owner, Stu, who made sure that suppliers got their stock returned - he did the best he could to support those who have supported him over the years.

So where can I find some hope. I turned to Jeremy from TSA/Ellis Brigham and I asked him to give me some good news. "We're not dead and it's not raining". From the tone I could tell that the good news was over. I did ask him if he had seen the weather forecast for today as record rainfall was on the way. "...yet" he added - referring to the rain of course.

"Vaccine" said Jeremy "that's really probably the only good news that you can find. That and the fact that some of our snowboarders have now missed a complete season, maybe even two seasons, so they are going to be frothing to get out on the snow next year."

Is anything selling? "Yeah, some stuff - but nothing like the quantities we need - nowhere near - and there are no signs of this changing any time soon."

Jez also had some concerns for the way that brands are perceiving what is happening in the UK: "They've got a big reality check coming. When the order deadlines come round only then will they fully appreciate the impact. I have tried to tell them but it's like they don't hear me - the reality of the situation is that we need very, very little for next year. And I mean very little. So much will depend on March - but don't hold your breath."

You have to look into the future to find any kind of optimism. In The Snow magazine recently quoted Crystal ski holidays - "Current booking patterns suggest that customers are more confident about next season with sales for winter 21/22 up significantly. This is not just customers transferring their holidays, but also new bookings being made".

I checked in with Olly Lambourne from 'Mountain Mavericks Holidays'. "Yes. Not only has everyone who had a booking for this year simply shifted it to next year but the overall appetite to book is very good. Especially considering how far in advance of the next season we are. It appears that everyone has accepted the fact that they will not be getting to the mountains this season but they also want something to look forward to and so are committing to next season. This is a great sign."

So there's hope!

There's one guy in this business that you can always rely on to be upbeat - Ben from Big Dreams. Now, I have said this before, but Ben is a pretty rare breed in this day and age - he is a good, old fashioned shop (I mean a real bricks and mortar shop) and whilst he has a website he does not have eComm. If you want something via mail order from Big Dreams then you can phone or email him ... but no online ... is he mad? Apparently not.

"I cannot be arsed with all that stuff. We're a dedicated, enthusiastic, passionate good old fashioned shop and my customers love coming here and getting their snowboarding fix." But how can that possibly work through lockdowns? "It doesn't - we're shut. But tell you what - when we opened on December 3rd our loyal customers could not wait to get back in here. I cannot say we're having a great time but I am amazed at how loyal and supportive our customers are. They want us to survive... I really got quite emotional about how passionate they were for our little shop - for our 'brand'. And they're not just local - first day open we had a customer from Brighton and another from Plymouth."

And now? [Jan 25] "Nothing doing - I'm keeping myself busy but there's no business. But ... when we reopen, and when the 2 local dryslopes open - I know we'll be busy. And the dryslopes will be busy. There'll be a massive kickoff - the snowboard smackheads will need their fix - slopes will be busy and so will we."

Has he had to discount the stuff to get it out the door? "No - that's the amazing thing - this year's stuff is all going out at full whack."

Ben has been in business since 2003 and with his approach to it all, keeping it small, niche and with 100% enthusiasm, 100% dedication to the local scene and zero desire to grow and grow I think Big Dreams will be around for some time to come. I sincerely hope so.

Postscript: The Vaccine rollout in the UK continues apace and today (6th Feb) there is growing optimism and talk about the 'post-Covid boom'. There's no escaping the negative impact and the loss of jobs that is ensuing but there's also no escaping the pent-up demand and the 'forced' savings that some households have experienced. Additional savings (to November 20) are estimated to be equivalent to £4k per household. Given staycation, increased outdoor activity coupled with this increased disposable income we may soon be complaining about a lack of stock. Let's hope that the 'experts' are right.

GORDON WAY

MARKET INSIGHT

FRANCE

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On October 28, 2020, France entered into a second phase of lockdown (confinement) to combat the second wave of the COVID19 epidemic. In terms of returning to life as it was before, i.e. walking down the street, going shopping and celebrating Christmas with family, the lockdown easing strategy in France comprised of three stages. The first stage began on November 28, 2020 with the opening of all shops and therefore retailers, albeit with strict sanitary protocols. The Christmas holidays marked the second stage. From December 15, French people were

allowed to move around freely and if the situation improved, there would be no need for a travel certificate during the holidays. For winter sports resorts, this was tainted by the fact that the ski lifts remained closed for the holidays and would have to wait for a third stage before (maybe) opening. The third stage was supposed to start on January 20, 2021, with the chokehold on predisposed spaces to be loosened. This related to places where mask wearing is not possible like restaurants, bars and sports halls.

On November 24, 2020, Emmanuel Macron announced this gradual easing or 'deconfinement' plan but the President also clearly stated that new infection rates had to drop to around 5000, an objective which was far from achieved. This situation gave the government a real problem when it came to the second stage of 'deconfinement'. The available options were to delay the reopening of cultural activities or to impose an earlier curfew, from 9pm to 5pm. However, the government's main fear was that the infection rate would not be low enough by the critical Christmas and New Year celebration period and that a proliferation of family gatherings would reignite the epidemic.

At the time of writing these words, the pandemic situation in France and on a global scale is far from being sorted. Despite the vaccination campaigns being launched, new variants of the Coronavirus have emerged all over the world, notably in the UK and South Africa. In January 2021, the situation in France seems to have been maintained and the fear of a spike after the end of year celebrations finally put to rest. However, the government imposed new measures on January 16 in the shape of a nationwide curfew brought forward to 6pm to try to limit the spread of the virus with the presence of these new variants all across Europe, thereby postponing the third stage initially set for January 20.

Non essential retailers and so clothes and sports shops had to once again close their doors from October 28-November 28 and had their opening hours curtailed to 6pm on January 16. How have shops fared with this second closure? How have they adapted?

Depending on the shop, this second round of closures seems to have been quite different. Shops with little online visibility and without an E-commerce platform seem to have suffered the most from this new phase of closures. As François Berthier, manager of ClicNRoll in Nîmes explains: "We set up a CLICK&COLLECT and local delivery system (20km) but the loss to turnover in this second confinement is in the region of 50%," although he does add that "despite all that we are actually up thanks to a really good summer." Louis Adrien, manager of Clinique De La Planche in Caen explains: "we were forced to suddenly close our shop and just keep the web operation going and the CLICK&COLLECT. These sales remained limited because watersports were prohibited." He states: "we had a really sharp drop in turnover in November and at the beginning of December when we reopened - the travel restrictions did not help at all considering how large our catchment area is." It was a similar story

at Terre de Surf in Saint Quay Perros where Hervé Euzen tells us that: "Although turnover for the whole year is pretty stable, having to close and attempting to maintain our business through CLICK/CALL&COLLECT meant we lost 85% of our turnover for November." At HOFF Outlet in Bayonne it was the same story, shop manager Damien Trautmann confides that: "Not having an E-commerce website as such, we tried to bring in sales through social media and CLICK&COLLECT but that didn't work. So we had to close the shop and had no turnover in November at all." Shops with greater online presence seem to have better withstood this period of administrative closure, as is the case for the shop SEN NO SEN in Arcachon where manager Mathieu Desaphie tells us: "We did a bit of CLICK&COLLECT but because people were confined it didn't really make much sense. Fortunately the online sales did work pretty well and partly made up for the lack of turnover in the physical shop." He adds: "Despite 3 months of administrative closure, this year our turnover is pretty much the same as last year thanks to a really good summer." At Hawaii Surf in Paris, sales manager Maud Tonin explains that: "With the Paris boutique closed, we concentrated on the E-commerce site, supplying it with stock from the physical shop. Online sales went pretty well and we even had better turnover in the month of November and over the whole year than last year."

With Black Friday falling at the end of November, this year it would have been during the lockdown so the government decided to put it back a week (start of December) to allow physical shops to set up once they reopened. Shops took differing approaches to deal with this situation: some like SEN NO SEN or Clinique de La Planche decided not to do Black Friday, a choice justified by the strange year and having the right stock levels. At HOFF Outlet on the contrary after their non-existent November turnover, Black Friday seems to have worked pretty well, tripling the turnover for this period. It was the same feeling at E-shops like ClicNRoll and Hawaii Surf where Internet orders did more than just perform in this key online sales period.

When it comes to the best-selling products, as already seen after the first lockdown, skateboards, scooters and also rollerblades seem to have provided the best sales during this traditionally strong Christmas period. For watersports, being prohibited in November didn't help sales at all but wetsuits and surfboards were the best sellers this winter. We are also told of the significant rise in interest in wing foils with its growing number of participants. As for the mountains, the government announcing that ski lifts were closing didn't exactly drive sales although we have seen a resulting interest in splitboards to keep on riding in spite of the closures. In resorts, shops are debating whether to open at all, as is the case for Laurent Descaves, owner of the No Limits shop in Cauterets. He explains: "with over 25 years of experience, the years with a good month of December are good years," he adds: "December normally makes up 1/3 of our turnover and with a tourist office detecting zero activity, from ski lifts to hotels and restaurants being closed, the resort is empty and there are no seasonnaires, I can't see any reason to open my shop. With a potential reopening on January 20, two months late, I had to cancel my winter orders from my suppliers and my curtains will definitely stay closed this season." With a rise of over 40% in turnover last summer thanks to an influx of tourists to the mountains in summer 2020 some resort-based shops are wondering whether they should bother opening at all this winter.

This unparalleled health crisis has not yet settled down, possible hopes for improvement are pinned on the arrival of a vaccine. We'll see if the impact of the vaccination campaign can raise hopes for a better situation for spring/summer 2021.

BENOIT BRECQ

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Happy New Year! Welcome to the super election year 2021! The federal parliament and six state parliaments are up for election. Candidates for chancellor are being sought and new party leaders appointed. In the country with the world's second-largest parliament, many jobs, as well as influence and power, are at stake. This notoriously casts its shadow a long way ahead, which often translates into months of walking on eggshells and trench warfare within the parties. Whether

such manoeuvring is compatible with a pandemic scenario, whose key insights can only be classified as "positive" or "negative", is and remains the most crucial question right now.

A look at the timeline of measures taken to contain the spread of COVID-19 since Q4/2020 reveals something similar, to say the least, to a salami tactics blueprint: partial lockdown from the 2nd of November, extension of the partial lockdown on the 2nd of December, hard lockdown from the 16th of December and extension of the hard lockdown on the 5th of January 2021 until the end of January. An extension of the lockdown for February seems to have been already decided, and more stringent regulations are currently under discussion.

The individual measures to contain the infection have been repeatedly changed and adjusted, and in part also often implemented in different ways in each federal state. Still a few days before Christmas, no one was really sure anymore in which setting they would be allowed to celebrate Christmas, or where they would be allowed or not allowed to set off the New Year's Eve firecrackers, sales of which were not permitted. Predictably enough, in such a state of confusing uncertainty, the appeals made by the Chancellor and by the heads of the federal states did not really resonate with the public.

And so, in the days around the turn of the year, we witnessed spectacular scenes as Germany was covered in powde. The Winterberg mayor's pleas in the media for people not to come to Sauerland went largely ignored. Max Bechen runs Stylefish snowboard shop in the town with one of the largest ski areas in Germany. He describes days of chaos caused by the influx of crowds from the Ruhr and Rhine-Main conurbations. For his shop, this has brought nothing. The ski area will remain closed until at least the end of January, and the shop had to close again two weeks after opening, when the hard lockdown began. "We are missing 100% of the income from our snowboard school and about 95% of the turnover from our shop. Normally, our work involves extensive on-site consultation. And that is something you can't just do via WhatsApp." In the neighbouring Postwiese ski area, Stylefish is in charge of the snowboard park. "I don't know if Postwiese will open at all this season. We depend on artificial snow here. And that has to be produced two weeks before the opening of the area. If we don't have any planning security, this investment doesn't make sense anymore. There's simply no other way to put it, at the moment things just look like absolute shit!"

Similar words come from Jacqueline Gruber, who doesn't feel like celebrating despite the upcoming 30th anniversary of her shop Edge 2 Edge in Garmisch. "We are missing about a third of the revenue for November compared to the year before. We lost over 40% of the important Christmas shopping revenue due to the hard lockdown. Without an online shop, we are trying to find buyers for our goods via a pick-up and delivery service, but that's just a drop in the ocean." With the mountains just

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outside the shop door, splitboarding was a hot topic, but due to the shortage of splitboard-specific bindings, it yielded limited success. "Snowboard hardware is giving me a hard time at the moment. Freestyle equipment sales are close to zero. Outerwear is also very sluggish. So far, streetwear remains our strongest category." The bridging aid announced by the government for the second lockdown is currently nothing but a castle in the air, says Jacqueline. "No one knows what this aid will look like and when it will arrive. We haven't been able to apply for anything yet and feel abandoned by the State! In two months, the summer goods will be here, and their cost also needs to be covered. The question is: from what revenue? If the war of discounts on winter goods kicks off, we'll be facing big problems."

In Münster, too, things are getting down to the wire, according to Jörn Schulte from Westside. "Every time new measures to tackle COVID-19 were introduced, they had a direct impact on our sales figures. When the press voiced some hope, sales promptly improved, only to collapse further each time new restrictions were announced. We are currently over 90% behind our result from last year as far as our retail business is concerned. Only our online shop is currently bringing in a little revenue. In addition to those from southern Germany, we receive a relatively large number of orders from other EU countries. Especially from Austria and the Balkans. But also online, we are losing about 50%.

In contrast to the snowboard market, which is a cause for concern, skateboarding continues to experience a boom. "The last quarter of 2020 has seen a significant growth compared to 2019, as had already been the case in the previous quarters," summarises Jörg Ludwig of distribution company Urban Supplies. "This applies to skateboarding hardware. Our sales of clothing continue to be modest. There was a particular increase in the sales of complete boards and trucks." However, the problems associated with the pandemic are affecting this segment as well. Limited production and transport capacity meet higher demand. As a result, deliveries are increasingly delayed. "At the moment, the waiting time ranges from one to four months and also means that our orders have to be dispatched as partial shipments over a period of several weeks, rather than all at once." In the hope that the supply chain will continue to perform, Jörg is very optimistic: "Judging by the orders already taken for Spring/Summer 2021, the outlook is very positive. The growth we had already had from Spring/Summer 2019 to 2020 has been surpassed. Now all we have to do is hope that the production capacity suffices to deliver all orders as planned."

The boardsports market presents itself as very ambivalent at the moment. More than trends and seasonality, what currently seems to influence demand are the restrictions and measures taken to combat the pandemic. "What am I allowed to do where?" is the question consumers are asking. And demand is met based on the answer.

We now wait for the meeting of the Federation and the heads of the federal states, which has been brought forward to 19 January. We wait for the likely extension of the lockdown and for a further package of measures. Various mutations of the coronavirus with significantly higher transmissibility are putting the chancellor and the heads of the federal states under pressure. The start of the vaccination campaign at the end of December was expected to be the light at the end of the tunnel and to provide a certain degree of reliability in planning, but that is exactly what the politicians cannot currently deliver. A pandemic does not follow a timetable. Difficult times for large parts of the retail trade.

ERIC BRUWELEIT

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2020 was crazy and 2021 is already shaping up the same way with so much still going on. For 2 weeks over Christmas, the whole country was in the red zone which meant people had to stay home, and household mixing was prohibited - 2021 was off to a bumpy start. Times are tense and uncertain, where, due to COVID-19, shops and restaurants hop between being open and closed. Through the uncertainty spanning the nation, everyone is waiting on vaccinations to give us some space to breath and relax. Most companies closed the year

with a loss in turnover, however there were some winners. Online stores, grocery stores and pharmacies, for example, had a killer 2020; overall, it was a very hard year for a lot of businesses, and many might even need to close.

2021 began with the news that ski resorts would not be able to open before mid-February, creating a difficult situation for many snow retailers, some of whom had already been heavily discounting products since late December, whereby they are struggling to make outerwear and hardgoods sales. However, retailers have reported splitboard sales have been doing consistently well throughout the pandemic, mainly due to the fact that splitboarding isn't reliant on the use of cable cars, etc.

Alex Ricci from Asa Agency out of Faenza states: "Stores need help from companies (brands) to survive this winter, and with ski resorts closed, sell-through has been very low." Alex, who is responsible for Jones sales in Northern Italy, also confirms the splitboarding boom by reporting that Jones splits had sold out way back in November 2020.

An absolute winner in 2020 which has continued into 2021 is skateboarding. Sales exploded in 2020 and so far in 2021, there's no end to demand in sight. Wheels and trucks from US companies are hard to come by and completes are selling out before they're even put on the shelves. The high demand for skate products has been very positive for Italian skate stores, as had hardgoods sales been low, many core stores would not have survived the COVID pandemic in 2020. There's also been

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So here we are in the midst of a second wave at the start of January and the Swiss are trying their best to hold their own. Just like anywhere else, it is extremely difficult to know what to do with this pandemic period, we've already endured this uncertainty for over 10 months but this time around we are in the middle of the winter season with high stakes for the Swiss boardsports business. Here are a few lines to take stock of the situation.

Switzerland, unlike its neighbours, did not decide to lockdown its population like it (semi) did in springtime but the situation is changing so fast that it might well have already changed by the time you get to read these lines. Our government took measures based on the gravity of the situation for each region and that created huge disparity between the cantons despite the small size of our country. Some shops, restaurants and other cultural and sporting activities pulled through quite well while others struggled. Another particular of our country was that our ski lifts remained partially open during the holiday period and again, not in every canton and of course with protective measures in place, but we were able to go out and enjoy winter sports in any case. As for restaurants, they have been closed for a few weeks.

Despite all this, some people have managed to work pretty well. Obviously online shops got raided and came out big winners from this crisis, while some retailers with physical shops were also able to work pretty well considering the economic and sanitary situation. Restrictions are still in place but the desire to consume is strong. Specialist shops that are focussed on sales have managed to maintain good figures up to this

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some other positive and exciting news in the Italian skate world: Jacopo Carozzi has become a pro skater for Baker Skateboards, one of the most recognisable US skate companies. At Baker, he has two signature boards. Congrats to Jacopo, an awesome dude and one of the best Italian rippers over the last decade.

Shoe sales are still struggling as bigger companies such as Nike, Vans & Adidas have near enough taken over the entire skate shoe and lifestyle market. A monopoly which has been confirmed by many retailers, including Lukas Höller from Sub skateshop in Bolzano.

2021 is definitely the year where all retailers will be trying to improve their online business, as with shops closed (as they were for many months last year), online is the only way to make turnover. Being an online business has become increasingly relevant month after month as 2020 has pushed digitalisation forward quicker than expected.

Italy's vaccination program started in late December and everyone is pinning their hopes on the program providing some relief in late April / May. A good summer season will be crucial this year as spring is looking at a very slow start, on top of dropping sales in January, due to very cold temperatures and people being accustomed to staying home.

As if we didn't have enough problems already, the Italian government entered a bigger crisis in early January; regrettably, the crisis has occurred during a pandemic, a time where a stable government would be crucial to get our economy growing again. However, this government crisis is nothing new as we've had over 60 different governments over the last 72 years. Prime Minister Conte is fighting to stay in his seat and his current opposition, Prime Minister Matteo Renzi is trying to crush the actual government as he claims Italy needs a stronger leader and overall government in these critical times.

Let's hope that 2021 will give us a bit of a break and good attitudes from North to South as people are tired of the COVID pandemic.

I'm out. Stay healthy & wear your mask.

FRANZ JOSEF HOLLER

point. However, everyone is in agreement that while sales aren't seeing a steep decline, the same can't be said for rentals, which are posting some worrying results. The target market for the big players on the rental market are occasional customers who normally wait and see the snow arrive on the mountaintops before going to rent their equipment. Nowadays these same people are waiting to see what a ski resort might look like during a pandemic before looking into renting equipment. This had a clear impact on rentals and they were well down on previous years by the end of 2020.

Max Lecomte from On the Mountain in Haute Nendaz personally reported the same outcome; a lot less interest in rentals but good results in sales. The lack of tourists in resorts is one of the main reasons for the significant drop in rentals for shops located in the mountain resorts.

Something else of note this season, is the the explosion in splitboard sales we've seen, as foreshadowed this summer by what happened to outdoor activities in general, a similar "covid" effect took place for splitboarding. This phenomenon is mainly due to wanting to avoid the crowds through fear of contracting the virus and/or fear of ski lift closures in which case this activity would then stand out as the best solution to continue to ride this season. Whatever the cause, splitboard sales have seen an unprecedented upsurge. Most brands providing boards, bindings or skins found themselves short of stock in November already.

Although the snow conditions are pretty optimal, it is clear that the crisis we are enduring will leave its mark, either in the short term or for the seasons to come.

FABIEN GRISEL

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Record amounts of snow in the South of the country, mountains covered in deep snow in the North: what a winter we have this year! Gorgeous winter landscapes and perfect conditions at winter sports destinations across the country, something you can only describe as dreamlike! Things couldn't be better... if only we weren't still accompanied by a virus that continues to keep us firmly in its grip. After spending 11 months already

living a life of restrictions, we are all longing to return to a more "normal" everyday life. For now, however, our daily life continues to be regulated by Lockdown #3, and public life remains largely shut down. It is mandatory to wear a mask unless a minimum distance of 2 metres can be kept, an all-day confinement, a contact ban and travel restrictions are in place, people work from home, shops are closed except for those selling items of daily use, and restaurants and hotels are closed as well. At least the ski resorts are open for locals, which is good in principle, but which has now also sparked a debate in Austria about whether it is sensible to practise winter sports during a lockdown. A debate that the current infection figures are not helping to quell. However, it is clear that we are still in the middle of the second wave.

Those who can, though, are enjoying off-piste descents and solitary pistes, empty winter sports resorts and very little traffic. On the one hand, we ask ourselves more and more: "does it always have to be faster, higher and farther?" On the one hand we "slow down", while on the other hand our worries about the future intensify: "will it all work out fine?" But Austria, the tourist stronghold of the Alps, is more dependent on tourism than most other regions in the Alps. Winter, in particular, is traditionally an important factor in the economy. Many Austrian citizens make their living in winter, not only directly in the tourism industry such as with hotels and cable cars, but also as bakers, advertising agents, suppliers and many more - there are countless industries that rely on tourism for their existence. Last but not least, the sports and leisure product trade,

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The hype for boardsports keeps growing. Snowboarding presents extra challenges, but riders crave the mountains, and shops stand ready to meet their needs.

The economic growth predicted for Spain by the end of this year stands in contrast with the rising unemployment, expected to peak in 2021. The hospitality and trade sectors have claimed seventy percent of jobs lost so far. This means fewer visitors to buy from fewer shops.

Boardsports retailers who have relied on the business of locals will make it through the crisis unscathed. Oscar Ramos of Tactic Surf & Skate Shop in Barcelona thinks the popularity of these sports keeps on increasing. Good sales of boards and footwear will deliver a positive result for 2020. Snowboarding presents other challenges. It needs a resort that is away from populated areas. This makes virtually every user a visitor. Added to international travel restrictions are the mobility restrictions within Spain. Locals of Baqueira reside in Vielha, just outside the resort town limit. Travel between the two is forbidden, forcing Baqueira to refund all season passes with a Vielha address. In Sierra Nevada, a purchased ski pass works as a travel safe-conduct. The goal is to help the resort remain open until the Spring when, hopefully, restrictions will be lifted.

There is reason to look forward to Spring. Snowboard retailers wondered if people would hit the slopes as eagerly as they hit the ocean and the skate parks. The images left by storm Filomena in Madrid cleared any doubts. "People used the underground as a ski lift and snowboarded their way downtown", says Gonzalo Rubí, of Happy Riding distribution. Gonzalo had orders changed

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our retailers with their know-how and unrivalled expertise, our brands, who work with their teams on future products, and we as a trade agency, as an interface, are also affected by this. The situation in the retail sector at the moment can probably be described as tense. Many government measures designed to support the domestic economy are working, but these are generally only addressing the short term and can never fully replace an open shop. Expressed in hard numbers: retailers report a drop in revenue of up to 90%, which is only partially covered by the government measures.

Also in general, the economic situation in Austria remains tense. Unemployment figures continue to be high. Private consumer spending plummeted again at the end of 2020 and in January 2021 due to the high degree of uncertainty, and value creation in trade also fell after the economy had picked up in Q3 2020. The prevailing sentiment among domestic companies can be described as fairly pessimistic. Companies expect the COVID-19 crisis to continue to shape the business situation in the coming months.

The current situation also makes it difficult for all of us to plan the orders for the coming autumn/winter. Most of the shops are still well stocked with this year's winter products. But we should not forget that there is also positive feedback from retailers, and pessimism will not get us anywhere. So what can we do to survive the current situation? We all have to adapt to the situation as individuals and try to find joint solutions, that's the only way we can get through it together. So it will still take a lot of effort from all sides! Let's try to make the best of it! Let's enjoy the moments out there and the time we can spend with our children, and let's look to the future together! Snowboarding has always been an expression of creativity, let's stay creative! See you out there, see you soon in the mountains!

BJOERN BETTERMANN

and cancelled, but he remains optimistic, as he knows people are craving the mountain. Frost Rice shop in Sierra Nevada and Cabin Fever shop in Baqueira report an excellent Christmas. With hospitality businesses closed, visitors did not have much else to do after their ride but visit shops. This was not enough to throw a positive balance to Q4, as the season started a month later than previous years. They are counting on the Spring snowboarding business, the real money maker. The boom in ski-lift free disciplines, evidenced by the sell-through of related products, does not make up for lost sales in snowboarding. It is a very small market. "Splitboarding requires a great level of fitness and the kit is much more expensive", says Suso Rada of Frost Rice. Marta Villavecchia of Cabin Fever explains: "Splitboarding requires much more mountain knowledge. It does not attract families, the biggest sales drivers in shops." Splitboarding is in vogue, but it is no season saviour.

Deliveries have been challenging. Surf and skate shops suffered the lack of stock from manufacturers. Oscar is following brands' advice to pre-order bigger quantities, to secure enough stock throughout the season. Unsold stock led snowboarding stores to amend FW20-21 pre-orders. Most brands responded with flexible payments. Stores have sympathy for their situation and expect the same in return. So far, there are not many FW21-22 pre-orders to report. Brands seem to be pushing the campaign a bit later this year. A good spring or lack thereof will determine whether stores place pre-orders or not. The relationship built between brand and store will be a key factor. Suso will prioritise brands who have helped him with this Winter's deliveries. He will also ask for delayed payments and discounts, in case of closure. Marta announces much smaller pre-orders, none at all from those who did not help. Brands cannot control the evolution of the pandemic or the snowfall. What they can control is their relationship with stores. It is worth investing in this.

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Blue Tomato

Online Marketing Analyst (m/w/d)
 Für unser Blue Tomato Headquarter Schladming oder Graz

Blue Tomato ist der führende Omni-Channel Händler im Bereich Snowboard, Skate, Freeski & Surf mit Hauptsitz in Schladming/Österreich. Neben dem internationalen Onlineshop ist Blue Tomato mit einer stetig wachsenden Anzahl an Retail Standorten in Deutschland, Österreich, der Schweiz, den Niederlanden und Finnland vertreten. Aktuell beschäftigt das Unternehmen mehr als 600 Mitarbeiter*innen.

DEINE AUFGABEN

- Erstellung datengetriebener Analysen, Reportings relevanter KPIs im Bereich Online Sales
- Datenbasierte Optimierung von Performance Marketing Kampagnen und SEO
- Mitarbeit bei der strategischen Entwicklung und Bewertung von Touchpoints entlang der Customer Journey für die kanalübergreifende Kommunikation von Kampagnen
- Anwendung von Attributionsmodellen, Verknüpfung von Tools, Data Matching und Einrichtung von APIs sowie Erstellung von Scripts
- Mithilfe bei der Entwicklung von Lösungen zur Automatisierung von Kampagnen
- Marketing Controlling

UNSERE ANFORDERUNGEN

- Abgeschlossenes Studium in den Bereichen Betriebswirtschaft, Wirtschaftsinformatik, Informationsmanagement, Medientechnik oder eine vergleichbare Ausbildung
- Mehrjährige einschlägige Berufserfahrung in vergleichbarer Position
- Gute Englisch-Kenntnisse
- Sehr gute Kenntnisse von Webanalysetools wie Google Analytics
- Erfahrung mit MSSQL Power BI, Google BigQuery von Vorteil
- Sicherer Umgang mit MS Office, insbesondere Excel
- Hohe Team- und Motivationsfähigkeit

WAS WIR DIR BIETEN

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

BEWERBUNG

Nähere Infos und Bewerbung unter:
www.blue-tomato.com/jobs

Ansprechpartner: Matthias Steiner
 Blue Tomato GmbH
 Hochstraße 628
 8970 Schladming
 Österreich

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BOA DIALED IN™

MONDSEE, DECEMBER 2020
 JOB ANNOUNCEMENT

CUSTOMER PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT (CPD) TEAM LEAD EMEA - m/f/d

BOA Technology, the creator of the award-winning, patented BOA Fit System, is reinventing how shoes, medical braces, and equipment performs. As BOA looks ahead to the future, there is contagious excitement radiating across our offices in the United States, Europe and Asia. We are a collaborative, growing company where details matter and customer satisfaction with our product is paramount.

OVERVIEW OF THE ROLE

Reporting to the Customer Product Development (CPD) Manager, you will help lead the CPD team in ensuring that all Brand Partner configurations provide superior fit, performance and durability. You will oversee the Development Support Specialist and be a resource for them throughout the BOA development process. You will also build a deep understanding of BOA's products, including how components interact with each other, the materials they are installed in and the environment in which they will be used. Using your knowledge and leadership, you will help direct the workflow and project priorities for your team, and you will be a contact when needed for Brand Partners and their factories so that the CPD team can meet the individual requirements of each project.

Please see full job description on our homepage.

YOU HAVE

- Engineering degree or equivalent required
- 3+ years experience in plastic products development, plastic injection technology, injection molds and/or technical footwear
- Strong mechanical aptitude to quickly learn BOA's products and how to seamlessly integrate them into technical footwear and equipment
- Experience working on projects where limited standardization exists and variables change
- Demonstrated planning and execution skills, highly organized, team oriented and open minded
- Demonstrated knowledge of CAD software, ideally Solidworks
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office suite
- A customer service approach to your work, with the ability to communicate to diverse audiences, including audiences with limited English
- Ability to travel domestically and internationally, up to 30%

If you are interested, please apply online.

For legal reasons, we are obliged to point out the minimum salary for this position according to the collective agreement, which is 2517,- EUR gross per month. However, our attractive salary packages are based on current market salaries and are therefore significantly above the stated minimum salary, depending on your experience and skills.

BOAFIT.COM

BURTON

As the world's leading Snowboard Company, Burton designs and manufactures industry-leading products for snowboarding and the snowboard lifestyle. Privately held and owned, Burton's headquarters are in Burlington, Vermont with offices in Austria, Japan, Australia, California, Canada and China.

For our European headquarters in Innsbruck we are currently looking for an

E-Commerce Specialist
 Full-Time (m/f/d)

Reporting to the E-Commerce Manager, you will support and maintain marketing & user-generated content, onsite search, visual merchandising as well as various projects on Burton.com to drive conversion rate and growth. As an e-commerce champion you will be the go-to person for anything website-related and collaborate with DTC, Marketing, IT and our tech development team to create the best-in-class user experience.

THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THIS POSITION ARE:

- Responsible for on-site merchandising for all EU Burton.com sites to optimize the conversion rate
- Build category and landing pages (including asset briefs and strategy outline, in collaboration with digital marketing)
- Gather, create, update and monitor web content and trouble shoot if necessary
- Optimize website layout, navigation, features and functionality based on Google Analytics insights
- Work with Global team on EU product presentation on the website
- Own the feature and functionality development for on-site search to improve findability of products and conversion rate
- Help define strategy to grow KPIs and execute e-commerce sales programs
- Support external vendors regarding website software and services
- Conduct quality assurance testing, track issue resolution and load data into content management system
- Be an ambassador for digital commerce within the company and support other teams on their digital learning curve

ESSENTIALS FOR THIS ROLE ARE:

- Minimum 2 years of e-commerce experience or equivalent experience in the digital space
- Proven experience of working in Salesforce or equivalent e-commerce platform is required
- Strong analytical and project management competencies, excellent interpersonal communication skills
- Hands-on mentality with a proactive work attitude
- Fluency in English required, further language skills are a plus
- Additional degree in e-business, digital marketing, digital media or a related field is beneficial

OUR OFFERING:

- A strategic position at the global market leader in the snowboard & snowboard lifestyle industry
- Very good team spirit, flat hierarchies, shared outdoor activities
- Working as part of a multinational team, located in the heart of the Alps
- Competitive, rewarding compensation package, depending on your qualifications and experience
- min. gross € 33.000 p.a.

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