

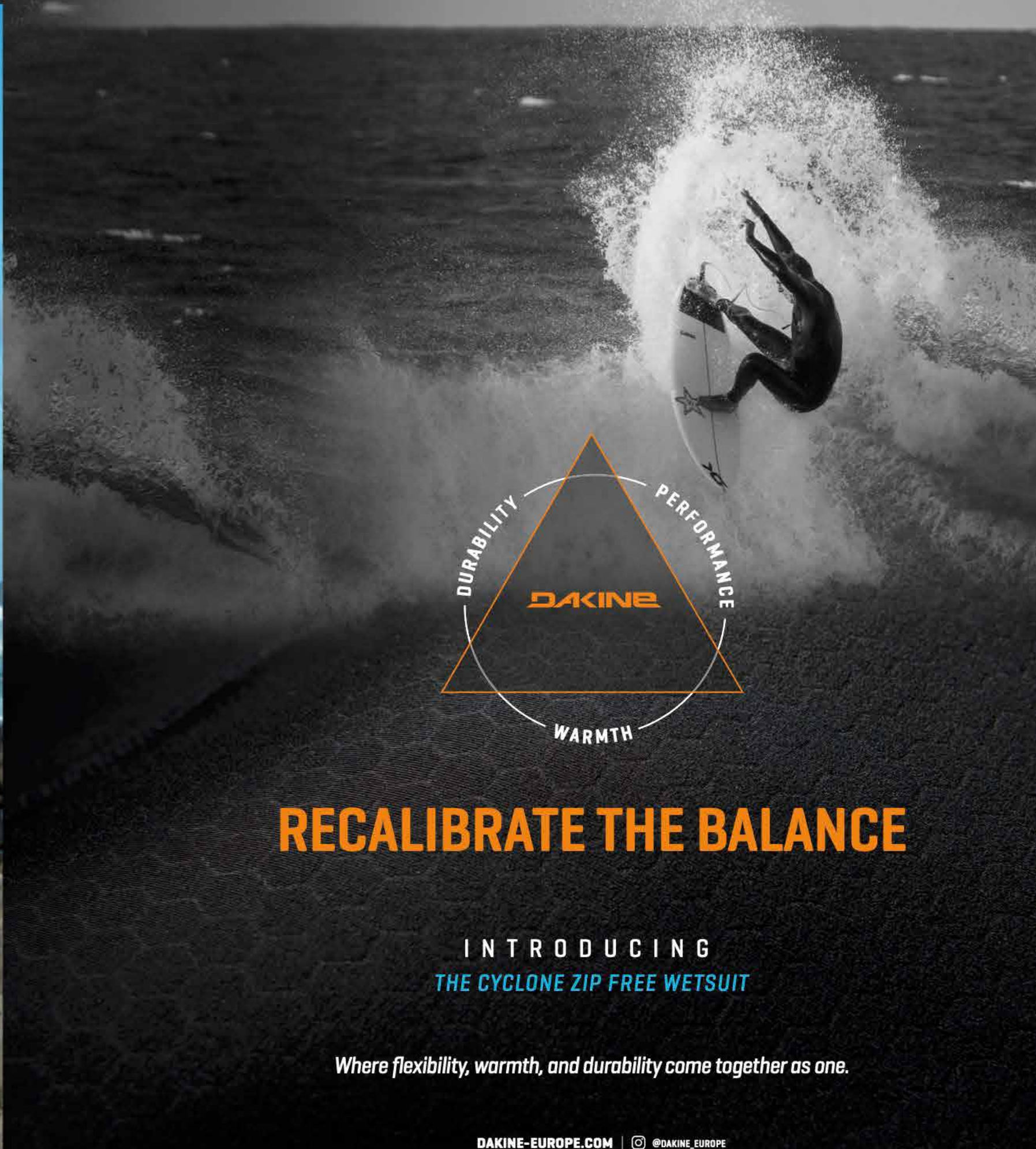


**BIG WIG: PAT O'CONNELL - FLORENCE MARINE X
EURO BOARDSPORT BUSINESS ANALYSIS**

RETAIL BUYERS GUIDES:
SURFBOARDS, LONGBOARDS, KITEBOARD, SUP, IMPACT VESTS,
HANGING SHOES, SOCKS, SUNGLASSES, SUNCREAMS



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Lookbook 2022

Rider: Nina Dürrenli. Foto: Denis Klein.

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CLASSIC 9'10"	LET'S PADDLE SERIES	SUPVENTURE SERIES	SUNSET 10'6"	SUNRISE 12'0"	SUPRANA 10'8"	SUPKAYAK SK10	SUPKAYAK SK12
ALLROUND FUN	ALLROUND FUN	PREMIUM ALLROUND	PREMIUM ALLROUND	PREMIUM ALLROUND	WOMAN ALLROUND & YOGA	MULTIPURPOSE	MULTIPURPOSE

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TRAVEL	TRAVEL	TRAVEL	TRAVEL	PRO TOURING	PRO TOURING

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HELLO SOURCE#111

There are too many clichés that could be used to talk about the current situation, but one that seems fitting is, «out of the frying pan and into the fire». Just as Covid seemed to be disappearing from the rear-view mirror, the atrocious scenes from Ukraine now make a virus seem somewhat insignificant. And indeed, boardsports pale in comparison, however it's our job to talk boardsports biz, so I'll try and put things into context.

Good winter season sell-through for most winter sports retailers in Europe has meant healthy POs placed for brands too. However, with many brands growing their endeavours in Eastern Europe in recent years, the uncertainty presented by the Russian invasion of Ukraine has left many brands with large gaps in order forms, where sales managers have to decide whether to take a chance on shops in these regions taking their orders in Autumn, or the brand being left with unwanted stock. This is looking at problems faced

by our industry with those countries immediately involved including Belarusian, Russian and Ukrainian boardsports businesses. However the knock-on effects this war will have on the wider industry, consumer spending habits and purchasing powers is immeasurable at present.

Did I say Covid was in the rear-view mirror? Well, apparently not with Shanghai heading back into lockdown and yet another huge impact excepted on global manufacturing and supply chains. We also have Covid to thank for the soaring costs of living we are seeing, of which many of us have never been exposed to before. Due to all of this unpredictability, we're hearing many businesses are making decisions on a daily and monthly basis, due to the difficulty of making medium and long-term plans.

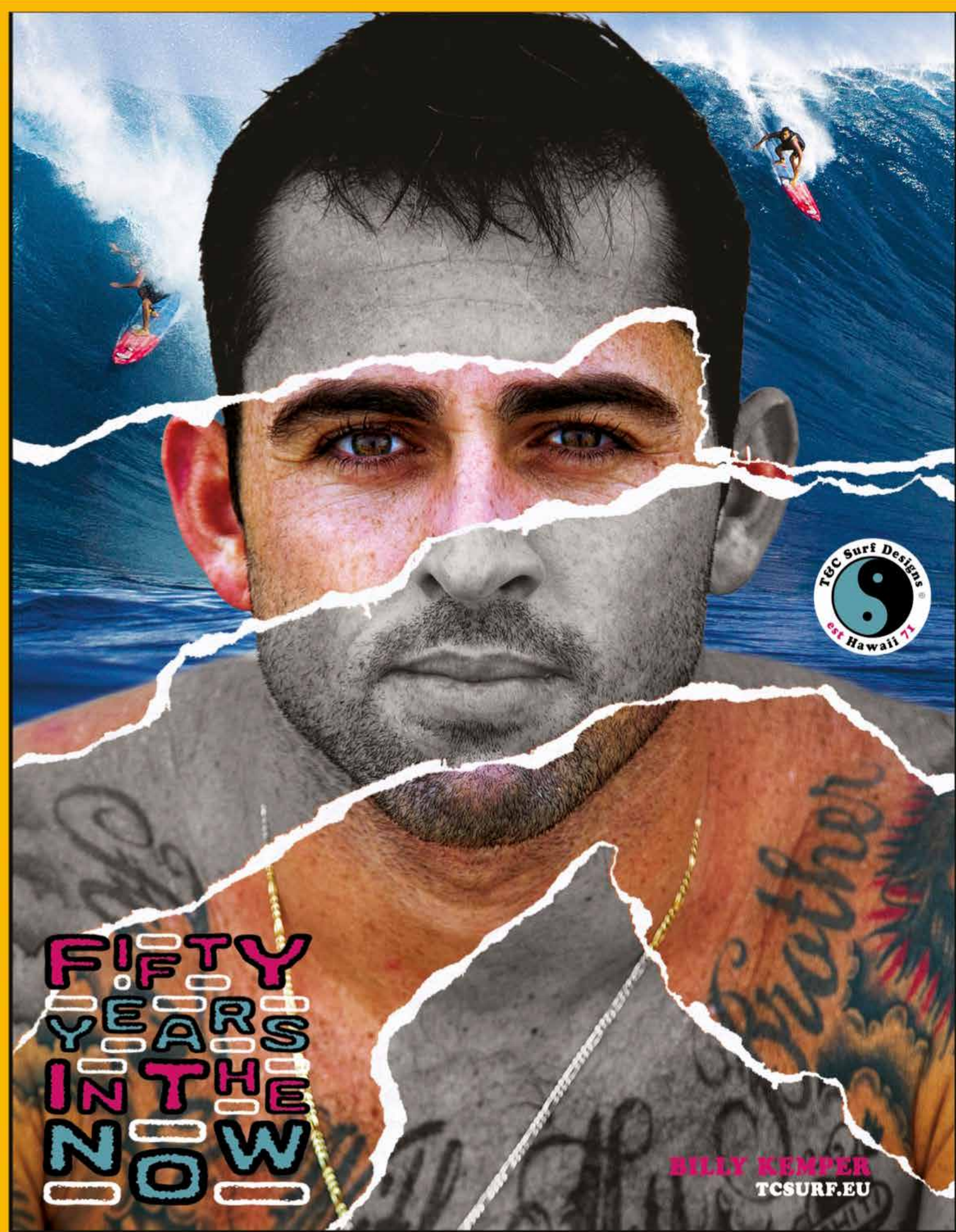
Some good news is those OEMs who popped into our skate and surf biz to try and mop up exploding demand have now retreated, leaving those in it for the long run to battle

it out for sales. There's a glut of skate product in the market but with the Ukrainian war, supply chain constraints should be eased as product for those aforementioned nations is likely not to be produced.

And filling my glass up to half full, all one needs do is examine the local line-up, speak with skate parks about booming beginner (& progression) sessions and look at the appetite in Gen Z for partying like never before at festivals such as Snowbombing to see their appetite to go and live the lives they haven't been able to for the past two years.

Hoping for a continued upward curve in boardsports participation is our constant hope, but with the horrendous scenes being faced in Eastern Europe at present, our wish for a quick resolution to Putin's madness is our true North Star.

Always Sideways
Harry Mitchell Thompson
Ed-in-chief



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On the cover Henry Jackson - Photographer, Dan Mullins

NEWS

#111

North Devon Becomes 12th World Surfing Reserve

North Devon has become the 12th location from around the globe to be selected as a World Surfing Reserve, an international designation that recognises and celebrates the area's outstanding quality surfing beaches and brings together the local community and experts in actions to protect them.

The area has been recognised not only for its high quality and diversity of surf breaks, but also for the unique natural beauty of its surroundings, its deep-rooted and historic surf culture, and its importance to the wider community.

North Devon joins an exclusive list of World Surfing Reserves that includes Malibu and Santa Cruz in California, Ericeira in Portugal, the Gold Coast, Manly and Noosa in Australia, Punta de Lobos in Chile, Huanchaco in Peru, Guarda do Embau in Brazil, and Bahia de Todos Santos in Mexico.

Mike West Elected Chairman of the Board at Snowsports Industries America

Snowsports Industries America (SIA) has welcomed 4 new members and a new Chairman, 686's Mike West, to their Board. The new appointees will aid SIA in the continuation of industry innovation to poise the snow industry in the best possible position to support and encourage future generations.

F51, Folkestone's 3-Storey Skatepark & Climbing Centre England

Folkstone's brand new multi-storey, £17m skatepark, F51, opened its doors to the public in April. 3 skate disciplines – Park, Bowl and Flow – each have their own dedicated floor; from beginners to pros, there's space for everyone to develop and progress.

American Company Vail Resorts Acquires 55% Stake in Andermatt-Sedrun Sport AG

American mountain resorts company Vail Resorts has acquired 55% majority stake in Andermatt-Sedrun Sport AG, Switzerland's luxury resort and hotel complex; an investment totalling CHF 149 million.

USA's Outdoor Retailer Tradeshow Moves Back to Salt Lake City, Utah

The USA's Outdoor Retailer tradeshow is moving back to Salt Lake City in Utah for 2023 and beyond. So far, the show's pencilled in for January and June 2023, with the exact dates yet to be announced.

VOITED's UK PR & Communications to be Handled by Lephyr

Lephyr have been appointed to develop eco-conscious outdoor lifestyle brand VOITED's UK PR & communication strategies. This will include developing VOITED's influencer strategy, brand awareness and storytelling.

Vans Appoints New Global Brand President

VF Corp have appointed Kevin Bailey as the new Vans Global Brand President. The move sees former Global President, Doug Palladini depart the company after 18 years at the business. Bailey most recently

served as VF's President of Asia-Pacific Region and Emerging Brands.

Racoon Events Partners With Snowsports Industries America to Create Snowbound Expo

Racoon Events are taking their successful snow expo running skills across the Atlantic. In collaboration with Snowsports Industries America, Racoon are transforming the existing Snowbound Fest into Snowbound Expo which will take place in Massachusetts, 2022.

Global Investment Firm Carlyle Acquire Dainese Group

The Dainese Group, owners of sportswear and protective gear brand Dainese, has entered a new investment partnership with global investment firm Carlyle. As a result, ownership of the Group and its brands will transfer to Carlyle, who now hold majority shares.

Pri Shumate Appointed Chief Marketing Officer of Columbia Sportswear Company

From March 14, Pri Shumate will assume the position of Chief Marketing Officer at Columbia Sportswear Company. The former World Surf League CMO moves to this role from her current position as Head of Marketing Experiences & Olympics at Airbnb.

Greenover Sports Appointed UK Distributor of Euroglass

Technical surfboard shaping & manufacturing brand, Euroglass has appointed Greenover Sports, action sports distributor for the UK and Europe, to distribute their products within the UK.

Surf Brand Gotcha Makes Grand Return to Europe for 2022

Surf brand Gotcha has risen from the ashes and will be available in Europe again from this spring. The brainchild of legendary surfer Michael Tomson – RIP – Gotcha will be available in Europe through Estar (2018) Ltd (apparel) and New Day Fury Ltd (hardgoods, also in The Middle East) via Nuno Fonseca, formerly of Maui & Sons.

Josh Nielsen Appointed Marketing Director of Jones Snowboards

Moving on from his 10-year stint at Patagonia, Josh Nielsen has been appointed as the new Marketing Director of Jones Snowboards. During his time at Patagonia, Josh worked a variety of marketing positions, working his way up in seniority, from Grassroots Marketer to Senior Director of Brand Global Marketing.

Heritage Brand Mistral Acquired by Dutch Investors NMG

Since becoming a huge name in the SUP biz, lifestyle and watersports brand Mistral plans to continue to expand their international reach and grow in existing markets. To help do this and build Mistral internationally, the brand has been acquired by Dutch investor Nederlands MerkGoed (NMG).

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

SURFBOARDS 2022

The surfboard market is now worth billions of dollars and has an increasingly diverse population of surfers so it would be nice to get an insight from its players to help build your in-shop line-up, now wouldn't it? Buyer's guide and trends 2022 by David Bianic.



Whether it's with your partner or in the waves, size shouldn't matter but it must be said that the surfboard market has grown a hell of a lot... in turnover. According to the latest study on the Surfboards Market Share and Size 2022-2026, global board sales in 2026 could reach a staggering \$3.1 billion, up from the 2020 estimate of \$2.7 billion, that's an average growth rate of 7% per year. The geographical distribution of this business volume is equally interesting with the U.S. accounting for \$1.2 billion in 2021. But it is the projected growth of the Asia-Pacific region that is most striking at 600 million by 2026.

"I think surfboards in general have always had that element of the search for old magic. It's a bit of a pendulum. It's a good sales thing and keeps people interested." Nick Urrichio, Semente Surfboards

There are various drivers for such growth starting with the paradoxical effect of the COVID pandemic on the leisure sector but the study also highlights other factors such as improved accessibility to the sport of kings, i.e. the boom in surf tourism, easy to use equipment and the expansion of women's surfing.

The figures should put a smile on the faces of surf industry players but these days they are more concerned with sustainable growth than

making bank, as Brett Savage, Chief Marketing officer for Firewire Surfboards, explains: "We are closely monitoring surf hardgoods saturation levels by user moment to ensure our growth is healthy and not forced by unrealistic financial growth expectations." Brands and shapers even admit to having exceeded the 7% growth cited by the study. This is the case at NSP, attributing this success in part to changes to key distributors in Europe such as Daniel Surf and SurfCloud. For Pyzel, we're even talking about double-digit growth, says Rémi Chaussemiche, European Marketing Manager, while the brand's objective is to continue at this rate for 2-3 years.

But if like many others you are counting on this golden future, just be careful that it doesn't backfire. Co-manager and shaper of Semente Surfboards, Nick Urrichio reminds us that the cost of materials has soared, as has the cost of living, and that international contexts such as the war in Ukraine could slow down this growth: "Right now I am not going to put my money down on it as the world is at a turning point." That slowdown may already be a reality, according to Johnny Cabianca (Cabianca Surfboards) who reports a declining pace of work among his suppliers, just as surf shops around the world have reported a particularly quiet few months.

SURFBOARD TRENDS 2022

1 - A foot in the door

Behind the figures in the introduction lies a multitude of different designs and set ups. Obviously, the increase in the number of surfers means that there is wave of beginners looking for learning boards, in composites and softboards. So it's not surprising to find boards

"For 2022 I think we will see an evolution of the midlength trend going to a bit shorter version of them, playing with fins and channels adding more versatility and performance edge to those boards."

Rémi Chaussemiche, Pyzel Surfboards

like the 8' Premium Softboard at the top of Flowt's sales list, a model mainly intended for

"Thunderbolt boards have three times the processes than that of a standard PU build and include variable carbon flex patterns inserted into each build that allows for the board's incredible performance. The boards are all hand laminated and finished to the highest standard." Brett Savage, Firewire Surfboards

schools, which comes in standard (23" 1/2) and wide (25") versions, followed by the 7' Standard Softboard, "A board for those who want to start catching waves on their own" explains Marketing Manager Diogo Cecilio.

We'll come back to this in the next issue, with our Softboards Buying Guide, but we can already say that the trend for "foamies" is continuing, much to the surprise of traditional shapers like Johnny Cabianca: "It feels more like everyone wants a soft top board... even in higher price ranges." However, this should not be seen as a threat, says Nuno Matta, convinced that this segment will naturally go for classic PU models and to whom he is offering "specific models more open to beginners" at very contained prices through the No Logo range.

2 - Twins & Mids: Nostalgia or progress?

As soon as we target an intermediate to good level surfer, a trio of designs clearly emerges among the bestsellers. As proof, you only have to look at a foam blank supplier like Polyola: "Our best selling blanks are definitely our fish and midlength blanks followed by our longboard blanks," reveals Aristide Schöndienst, Co-founder of the eco-blank (recycled-recyclable) brand.

Nick from Semente gives us a poignant analysis of a recurring trend in recent years, the craze for retro fishes, midlengths and funky old-school shapes: "I think surfboards in general have always had that element of the search for old magic. It's a bit of a pendulum. So, it goes back and forth, picking designs that were fantastic at the time and rehashing them. It's a good sales thing and keeps people interested."

A good example comes in the form of the Saint from Town & Country, a modernised replica of the board that Martin Potter used in the 1980s (with irresistible graphics). Manager Wilco

Prins confirms increased interest in this model since last year, also reflected on two other T&C flagship boards, the Sinr and HRT, bridging the gap between the 80s and the 2000s although the colours remain distinctly 80s flouro!

How long will this cycle last? For Rémi at Pyzel, 2022 might well be the peak, with a segment of people using these alternative shapes remaining faithful to them and others returning to their good old traditional shortboard. Going deeper into the interpretation of this phenomenon: “For 2022 I think we will see an evolution of the midlength trend going to a bit shorter version of them, playing with fins and channels adding more versatility and performance edge to those boards.”

For Thilo von Osterhausen, Founder of Kanoa Surfboards, this trend is not just a fashion thing, it’s about the benefits of these shapes’ extra volume. Amongst the top models of 2022, he highlights the Twice Fish, a retro twin-fin designed by the legendary Spider Murphy. We should also mention the significant potential that static surfing on rivers and artificial waves holds for the Franco-German brand, making up half of their sales between rigid boards, softboards and poolboards.

At Firewire, Brett Savage also sees more than just a fad in the midlength phenomenon: “they are a stepping stone product for graduating soft top beginners and ageing surfers who still want to get in the water but need the extra volume.” It’s fair to say that Firewire has a solid line-up of midlengths: after the Seaside & Beyond and the Sunday (Rob Machado), the Outlier (CJ Nelson) and the Moe (Harley Ingleby) comes the OVA from Ben “Skindog” Skinner. A modern egg with hull on the front and 50/50 rails meaning that you can turn the OVA from the middle of the board.

Lib-Tech, until now associated with the performance shortboard, are also following this craze. Co-founder Pete Saari confirms the success of mids like the Pick Up Stick - although more funboard oriented than pure retro mid - and notably the Crowd Killer by Matt Biolos, a bestseller appealing to shortboard addicts and

fans of Biolos. Lib-Tech are expanding this range with the addition of Alex Lopez’s Terrapin 7’4”, “a more forward template single fin retro meets progressive design”, summarises Pete.

3 - Longboard: transgenerational

Too often overlooked in our pages, the longboard occupies a separate space: neither board for beginners nor for experts, not really a transition board either, it is simply in a category of its own. But that doesn’t make it irrelevant either and it has become the cool kids’ board par excellence. The proof is in the success of the Vans Duct Tape Invitationals with Joel Tudor, now part of the WSL. The funniest thing about the longboard market is that the younger the surfer, the more they want old-school logs, while the older longboarder tends to go for more versatile/performance oriented EPS models. A finding that debunks all the clichés!

As a leader in this sector, Surftech has long understood the importance of the label in attracting customers, signing various partnerships with big names such as Stewart, Walden, Takayama, Mickey Munoz, Gerry Lopez. Similarly, NSP collaborate with the Hawaiian Carl Schaper (Pro-9, performance longboard) and the Australian Tully St. John (Sleep Walker, classic log).

Also advocating EPS longboards, Brett from Firewire is eager to clear up a misconception about this technology often associated with factory mass produced, moulded, cheap “popout” models: “Thunderbolt boards have three times the processes than that of a standard PU build and include variable carbon flex patterns inserted into each build that allows for the board’s incredible performance. The boards are all hand laminated and finished to the highest standard.” For example, the new Velvet Hour, designed by Soleil Errico, a classic log for women by a woman, completes a huge range of longboards at Firewire.

4 - High-Perf Shortboards: Summer All Year Round

Shortboards for shredding about on have become scarce in recent years, overshadowed by the glam of the models mentioned above.



This category isn’t exactly dying out though and continues to progress. We can see that summer boards or “grovellers” have gone beyond being just a seasonal thing to become a year-round phenomenon, appealing to shortboarders for the extra fun they provide. We’re thinking here about Firewire’s new Mashup from Rob Machado and Dan Mann, a mix of their respective successful shapes, the Seaside and Spitfire, which works in a wide range of conditions. Another example is the Little Wing from Mason at Lost x Lib-Tech, a “short shortboard” with generous dimensions and great playfulness, or the Astro Pop from the Funformance range at Pyzel.

When it comes to new constructions, we can see rare exceptions to traditional PU/polyester in the performance category. The ElectraLite from Pyzel is a battenless EPS board with Web-Fused Carbon reinforcements for stiffness and torsion control. Matta Surfboards’ SMARTech construction features fibre reinforcements “going in 6 directions for more flex and strength than traditional EPS constructions.”

Firewire are launching Volcanic Tech, an eco-friendly alternative to carbon using basalt. Finally, Lib-Tech are unveiling a new Tecno POP

technology that’s lighter, around 450 grams per board, but just as difficult to sink, says Pete Saari.

Faced with such a huge range of Surfboards, retailers obviously have to make choices when it comes to placing orders, unless they can complement their physical, in-store offer with online ranges, especially by using drop-shipping. Norden, for example, explain that they have reserved part of their stock so they can offer this distribution method to surf shops. ©

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

- 1 More and more softboard**
- 2 Retro-modern: twin & mids**
- 3 Longboard: from kids to grandpas**
- 4 Shortboard: summer boards in all seasons**



RETAILER PROFILE

SECRET SPOT KIEL, GERMANY



Secret Spot Kiel in Germany is a surf hardware and apparel specialist located in the country's booming northern surf district. With fuel prices rocketing, the store is seeing more and more locals opt for thicker wetsuits and surfing closer to home. We catch up on their business and talk products and brand performance with a retailer celebrating its 25th anniversary.

Please give a brief history of your store.

In 1997, everything started at a different location. A bit hidden just before the cemetery, which is where the name Secret Spot comes from. At that time, we had 37 square metres with a colleague. We even still had windsurfing in our range. In 2000, we moved to the city centre. In 2009, we added the board shop. So now we have two shops, one for clothing and the other for boards, hardware and so on. We now have 140-150 square metres per shop and since 2014 I've been running both shops. But of course, not alone, we are a team with about 10 people. Mostly more towards the summer because that's when our season really starts.

What percentage of your sales are from online business compared to your brick-and-mortar sales?

Most of it is sold locally. I would say 40% clothing and then 40% our hardware shop. 20% is from our online shop, which has grown a bit recently. We would like to work on it even more, but it's hard to keep up with the big companies, because they all have their own shops and can do a lot with discounts that we can't do. We are also lucky to have many water sports enthusiasts in Kiel. That's where our shop can score points. However, our online presence also serves as a shop window, and you notice that the next day when people rush into the shop. We are also active on Instagram, which is very noticeable.

What are the benefits of having a physical shop over simply having an online store?

We can respond much better to our customers and give them better advice. Especially in the board shop, it works much better with hardware. It's very difficult to do that online. You chat for a couple of hours and at some point, the customers also chat with each other. That's where the advantages of such a shop become apparent. It's very similar with clothes. How soft is the fabric, etc., is not possible online. Take boards in your hand. Fashion fits and which fabric.

What were some of the best things surf brands have done for you since the start of the pandemic?

The big distributors mostly relaxed their billing deadlines. And they merged seasons, so you had less problems with overdue rebates. It really wasn't easy because the orders arrived much later. The winter orders only came in December or January. We had to turn away a lot of customers.

All the winter suits and accessories that we actually wanted to sell in autumn and winter arrived in

December and January are now available. That's good, of course, because the things ordered for spring are currently delayed again and will probably not arrive until May. So despite the situation, we currently have a good selection in stock for the start of the season. Chinese ports were closed again, but that's the way it is. Pre-financing was also necessary. But we are still at it.

Which brands and products have you had the best success with in the past 2 seasons?

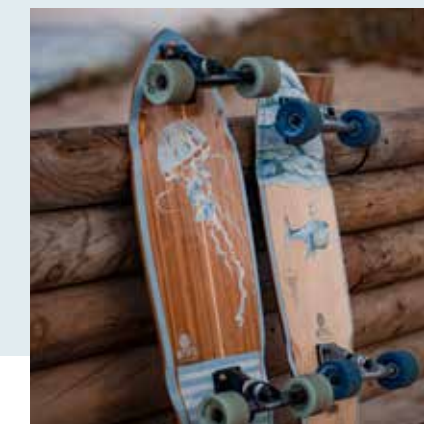
O'Neill, Rip Curl, Xcel continue to work great in wetsuits. There is something for every type, whether kiter, windsurfer, surfer, we have a wide selection as every brand has something special for every activity. C-Skins have developed their high quality segment a lot lately. The Hyperfreak from O'Neill is still one of the most flexible suits, the Rip Curl Flashbomb is really warm and fast drying. Sooruz Oysterprene is on the rise as sustainability is also becoming much more important for our customers. Wetsuits for children are in high demand as well, especially the high quality ones.

In terms of boards, longboards and mid-length boards are currently in high demand, and in Germany there is also growing interest in more special shapes, construction methods and designs, such as the boards from Thunderbolt or tinted designs, etc. Softboards for beginners are also important. In the meantime, there are many high-quality models that give beginners a more secure feeling and still deliver good performance. Boards that also work well in our area, such as the Norden First Rides or Time Machine, which are designed here in Kiel and therefore fit well with the needs of our customers, always sell well. When it comes to shortboards, we always try to have a selection of exciting models to look at in the shop, and in the end we order them together with the customer as a custom order so that everything fits exactly.

What opportunities do you see on the horizon for the German surf scene this summer?

Above all, longboarding is becoming more and more popular. There is clearly high interest. Wingsurfing and foiling are also becoming more and more popular. People are surfing closer to home, for example Denmark instead of northern Spain or France due to the current fuel prices. So, there are still a few uncertainties, but basically everyone is on fire! ☺

SECRETSPOT.DE



BTFL is a female-specific longboard company based out of Cologne, Germany. We speak with the team about how they are servicing the boom in female skating to talk business and find out why European retailers should be stocking them.

Please tell us the idea behind the launch of the brand.

BTFL was launched in 2015 as a longboard brand - made for girls by girls. Behind "beautiful longboards" - BTFL - there is a team of young female designers and experienced technical specialists, who develop boards and designs especially for women. According to the motto "by women for women" we want to make it easier for female riders to get into longboarding. We as BTFL support motivated female skaters through sponsorships, so that they can practice their favourite sport and at the same time be a role model

for other women and girls. Not only because we are enthusiastic longboarders ourselves, but also because we work closely with the team riders, well thought-out shapes are created. These self-designed shapes cover many areas of longboarding.

Who's on the management team and what are their backgrounds?

Our two chiefs working in the background have a boardsport background and both studied sports. Both are enthusiastic boardsportmen and look back on a long past here. Due to her passion in longboard dancing our product designer

knows well the technical side of our products. She originally studied graphic design, so her passion and profession come together in her work.

What's the company USP?

We make boards for women by women. The components are perfectly matched and also lighter riders have their fun. Visually all BTFL boards are characterized by their truly unique look. The designs are created by us in the team and accordingly nowhere else to be found. Because of the good quality and the good price-performance ratio more and more boys and young men become fans of BTFL products.

Please give us an overview on your product line

We offer almost 30 models with different shapes. The shapes range from drop through longboards to kids longboards, dancers, mini cruisers, skateboards and surfskates. Furthermore, BTFL offers beautiful rollerskates in different shapes and colours. We offer models for beginners and advanced riders. Today they are a large and successful part of our product range as well.

Please tell us about your team

We are a team of young people who are mostly into boardsports. This is why our products are very well thought out. Due to our backgrounds we contribute our ideas whenever it comes to developing ideas for new products. Most of us are female, but not all. In the background there are the two wise men for planning the strategic direction and the finances.

Which is your best performing European market and why?

We are based in Cologne in the middle of Germany. So the German market was the first where BTFL was sold. Since BTFL started we maintain personal contact with our dealers. That's why Germany is still our best performing market in Europe.

How do you support retailers who sell your products?

We are a small company and can certainly respond well to all individual requirements. Our retailers are well supported with product pics, video material and mood shots. Whenever new material is available, we provide it. Our social media presence is organically growing and we are in close interaction with our customers there. Last, but not least we have more than fair margins!

What has been the highlight of the past 12 months?

The highlight in the past 12 months has been our growth in some markets abroad. BTFL is well sold in the US market, in Thailand and South Korea. We were also very pleased

about our new partners in Benelux, Austria and France. We are more than happy about this growth and we believe that there will be more in future.

How did Covid impact your market?

We have had supply chain problems like all producers. There were delays in the delivery of goods. In general, however, Covid has brought significant sales growth to our market. A lot of people have been at home and engaged in this kind of leisure activity. Especially the women's part in longboarding has grown.

How do you see the future of the women's skate market?

The women's longboard market has always been very strong, but it has grown a lot in the past two years. We see a big development, also for the skateboard market and especially in surf skating. Through social media more and more female idols are coming, which finally motivates more women to start longboarding.

MARKET INSIGHT

SPAIN

PORTUGAL
FRANCE
UK
GERMANY
ITALY
SWISS

Spain’s recovery is interrupted again for the third time. The global political climate has pushed inflation out of control. This is drying up consumer spending capacity. However, Spain still has a couple of cards up their sleeve. Combined with the new “one’s gotta live”

mentality, sales in boardsports should not suffer too much.

Inflation has skyrocketed to 9.8%, its highest since 1985. Salaries are not increasing at the same rate as prices. Saving and spending capacity are impacted. This new challenge arrives when Spain is still recovering from the pandemic’s GDP drop. Employment rates have increased significantly. People with a salary are generally keen on going out to spend after months of not being able to do so.

Electricity prices account for over a third of the inflation rate. Spain is unique within the EU, though. Their main source of gas is Algeria, not Russia, and 40% of their energy comes from renewable sources. This has allowed the government to negotiate an “Iberian exception”. The cost of energy will no more be linked to the standard EU price. The electricity bill of Spaniards will get lower.

Two years after the pandemic started, tourism has not reached half of its 2019 figures. However, the conflict in Ukraine could have a positive repercussion. Eastern Europe, Greece or Turkey are not appealing destinations in the current geopolitical situation. Spain could welcome tourists who are now looking for safer destinations.

So, there are glimmers of hope on the horizon. Nevertheless, the government should see these projects through as quickly as possible. In the meantime, they are spending a lot of public money in help measures, while lowering taxes to smooth the daily grind. Public debt has increased to record levels, a debt that will have to be paid by future generations.

The post-pandemic shift in mentality has fuelled sales in boardsports. Values have been revisited. “People have realised that life is not just about having, but about living”, says Serio Mur from La General Surfera, in Barcelona. After the boom in skate and surf, everybody looked at snowboarding. Two seasons off the menu kept everybody wondering. The impact has been different. There are not many newcomers, but a lot of comeback kids. Snowboarders who hadn’t practised in years decided to get back to it. Their decade old gear seemed outdated, so they invested in new kit. Sales of boards, bindings and boots have been excellent. Sergio celebrates this with mixed feelings. He is out of stock, but he only got 30% of his orders delivered. He could have sold much more. Many retailers cancelled orders last winter when resorts closed. “Retailers did not forecast due to the uncertainty and the amount of stock they had from last season”, says Gonzalo Rubí from Happy Riding distribution. He secured much more stock than he had been ordered. It was a leap of faith that proved worthy.

Careful planning has averted some problems, but the general situation is far from smooth. Factory backlogs and the prohibitive cost of transport are disrupting delivery times. Surf sales were impacted by wetsuits scarcity. Winter suits were only delivered recently. What’s the point of buying a new board if you don’t have a wetsuit to get in the water with?

Bold initiatives like Happy Riding’s represent the synergy needed to move forward in these uncertain times. Specialised retailers remain the favourite purchasing channel of sports fans. They value the human behind the sale. Sergio’s website is a success, but not in the form of direct sales. “It is a spectacular window”, he says. “Many customers come to the store after checking the website to finalise the purchase in person”. The human touch seals many deals in the boardssports industry. Brands should remember this when they build their D2C sites. Offering a 20% off will secure short term profits but will endanger the soul of the sport in the long term.

ROCIO ENRIQUEZ

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

SUNGLASSES 2022

Trends echo the general shift in mentality. Eye health, sustainability and statement designs drive the development of outdoors eyewear. **By Rocio Enriquez.**



QUIKSILVER

Sustainability is standard practice. Collections feature the new materials that heavy R&D provide. Eye health is in every consumer's mind. This focuses attention on technical features and innovative designs. Versatility is an asset. People value styles that can transition from beach to bar. These trends reflect a shift in mentality. For a long time, people could only go outdoors to practice sports. Preservation of nature became as relevant as the preservation of human life. Health moved to the forefront. Sport outings were the only opportunity to wear statement pieces, so looks became

"Oakley has developed a whole family of Sutro versions, including Sutro Lite and the all-new Sutro Lite Sweep" Mirco Trendel, Oakley

important. The increased interest in retro designs hints to nostalgia. Brands offer sustainable materials, technical features, and shape designs for all sunnies wearers.

FRAMES

Wraparounds and shields remain strong. Bajío adds nine styles to their successful Bales large-fit wrap. Bolle's most demanded

retail buyer's guide

for sports are half rim shields. CeBe developed its own S'Tech technology. A spatula on the inside of each temple curves the frame to a V-shape. Oakley builds on the success of their Sutro shield. "Oakley has developed a whole family of Sutro versions, including Sutro Lite and the all-new Sutro Lite Sweep", says Mirco Trendel. They are also launching a reinterpretation of the Subzero to celebrate its 30th anniversary. Revo combines navigator and wrap shapes in the Alpine and the Freestyle. Zeal and Spy+ also introduce new wraps. Mono shields are core business for Spect and Melon. Melon offers smaller versions of the Alleycat for smaller faces. Loubsol has some full speed shapes, including the ultramodern and sleek Scalpel. Spektrum presents two new shields, the Lom and the Klinger. The Lom gives great coverage from wind and dust. VonZipper meets this demand with the Quazzi and the Hyperbang. Quiksilver offers variations of the Slash according to field of use. "Each universe will focus on dedicated technologies", explains J.P. Bonnemason. Electric has developed three new wraps. The Bristol's top and side flanges add solar and wind protection, without blocking peripheral vision. The Tech One S is a reengineered version of their rectangular Tech One. The Cove is a semi-rimless ultra-lightweight style.

Panto styles are popular for their vintage look and unisex appeal. CeBe presents the Iconic rounded frame with a keyhole bridge. Otis' Omar style adds sophisticated temple

"Each frame is now made from 45% plant-based resin" Samuel Nelson, Dragon

detailing. Zeal adds performance with the Z-Lite ultralight material and ProFlex rubber. Loubsol introduces their Subzero modern round glacier shape. Von Zipper glams up their oversized Opal style with metal temples. Roxy's most popular frames are the rounded Junipers and Moanna. "We had to

"They do not only cut glare, but also blocks 99.9% of blue light" Greg Tomlinson, Von Zipper

invest in moulds to produce more quantities and colours", says J.P. Bonnemason. Dragon's most popular are the round Opus and Hype. Electric's new round shape is the Bellevue, lightweight and perfect for smaller faces.

Angular shapes have a solid demand. Bolle's lifestyle best-sellers are squares and rectangles. Dragon's Monarch and Finch are large square shapes with keyhole bridges. VonZipper's Television has interesting chamfering and temple design. The Stray is an angular style with a retro flair. Quiksilver has a few retro square thick frames. Electric presents a few new styles. The thick, angular Journey and Jalousie, the slightly arched Portofino, and the oversized square August. The Satellite is a more rectangular and thinner version of the Swingarm. The Noli adds cat eye styling, as does Loubsol's Wildcat. Cat eye is trendy. Other offers include Electric's Stanton, Von Zipper's Bayou and Revo's Iconic style from their 1998 collection. Roxy has a thin retro cat eye shape in their lifestyle segment, too.

The biggest trend in materials is the use of sustainable alternatives. Most brands choose injected thermoplastics for their performance styles, and acetate or metal for their lifestyle ones. These options are now found in eco-friendly versions. Castor oil derivatives have proved themselves worthy. They are lighter, more flexible and stronger than other bioplastics. Some brands trust the bio-based version of Grilamid TR90. There are other bio-based thermoplastics, like Rilsan G850. "Each frame is now made from 45% plant-based resin", announces Samuel Nelson from Dragon. Other brands joining this trend are Bajío, Bolle, Spy+, Spect, Melon, Spektrum, Quiksilver, Roxy, Volcom and Electric. Z-Resin is Zeal's own take. Oakley introduces the bio-based version of their own O-Matter composite. Practically every lifestyle collection is using handmade bio-based acetate. Electric chooses Mazzucchelli's M49 for their premium collection. Zeal, Quiksilver and Roxy work with recycled PET from water

bottles. Zeal also uses Seagrass, a combination of recycled plastic and grass fibres. Each pair in Dragon's Upcycled collection equals five 100% recycled water bottles. Loubsol is expanding their recycled range. Naked created their own CO2RE®, combining plastic and plant-based materials. 50% of their Hawk style is made with CO2RE®, and they plan to expand. We find metals in many premium collections. Revo Black features lighter frames made of 100% titanium or stainless steel / carbon fibre combinations. Quiksilver and Roxy also feature metal in premium styles.

LENSES

Lenses are made in either polycarbonate or mineral glass, depending on intended use. Polycarbonate offers lightness and good impact resistance. Mineral glass ensures the best optical clarity and scratch resistance. Most brands offer the two, with technology to enhance vision and keep our eyes healthy.

Polarisation is widespread. Dirty Dog uses top grade TAC layered lenses. Electric infuses the polarisation into the lens, rather than coating it. Their Polarised Pro lens adds other performance coatings. Loubsol's Apex Polarised lens is more scratch and impact resistant. Spect and Otis add anti-fog and anti-reflection treatments. Zeal chooses Ellume polarised lenses, made from a castor plant-based polymer.

High contrast is key. Bollé's Volt+ lens increases contrast across the colour spectrum. CeBe's Sensor high contrast lenses have a unique transmittance curve. L.I.T. is Otis' proprietary technology for mineral glass lenses. It lifts primary colours while blocking out inter-primary shades. Loubsol's Apex High Contrast lenses feature a pink base contrast boosting with multilayer coating. Quiksilver's Slash has high-definition lenses too. Naked produces a high contrast purple / green lens. Spy+ introduces the Happy Boost lens. The colour and contrast enhancement is tuned to boost the user's mood and alertness. Anon announces the launch of their first sunglasses range this Summer. It will feature their polarised Perceive lens that



reduces light intensity while improving contrast and colour.

Blue light is addressed. Electric uses synthetic melanin. "We are the only brand that chooses melanin-infused lenses for all sunglasses", says Noémie Wiegenhauser. VonZipper relies on its very own Wildlife Polarised Lens. "They do not only cut glare, but also block 99.9% of blue light", says its president, Greg Tomlinson. Revo utilises NASA technology. Bajío's own LAPIS technology blocks up to 95% of blue light up to 445 nm. CeBe's lenses filter up to 94%.

Automatic adjustment to light conditions is important. CeBe offers their Zone Vario photochromic lenses. Revo introduces this

technology with Serillium lenses. Zeal combines photochromic technology with polarised protection in their Auto Sun lenses. Loubsol introduces the Apex Photochromic lens. Quiksilver and Roxy also have them on offer.

There are more technologies worthy of mention. Oakley is expanding the selection of styles made with their physiomorphic technology. Their Prizm lens reveals nuances that would normally be missed by the naked eye. Otis’ Reflect lenses reduce glare by reflecting the light back out instead of absorbing it. Dragon’s Luma Lens enhances clarity and reduces eye fatigue. Spektrum, Spect and Quiksilver use hydro and oleo-phobic treatments. Spect’s new seamless lens construction creates an aerodynamic front that protects from the wind. They focus on cylindrical lenses with flatter optic and maximum field of vision. Zeal introduces their RAW concept featuring a high-performance bio-based lens from Zeiss.

SUSTAINABILITY

There are interesting sustainable practices, beyond materials. Packaging is greener too. CeBe will deliver their glasses in a new glue-free origami box made of FSC certified cardboard. Bajío has replaced standard leather for cactus leather that they grow in their backyard. They print their recycled cards with 100% natural algae-based ink and the paper tape used for sealing is biodegradable. Melon’s glasses come in a Repreve microfiber bag. Loubsol is switching to cardboard or paper and is bringing their production to Europe. Zeal works with a zero-waste lens lab. Dirty Dog uses agencies to monitor their factories for ethical practices.

RETAILER SUPPORT

There are exciting marketing stories that will roll out online and in-store. Bajío launches the Odissey Expedition to identify and address environmental issues. Bollé launches the “Athlete Tested” Performance campaign, and their “Shaped by the Elements” Sports Lifestyle campaign. CeBe celebrates their 130th anniversary, we expect some noise about that. Revo pushes their founding idea of using

NASA tech, which resulted in the Revo Light Management system. Dragon relies on athletes such as Bryan Iguchi and Rob Machado for their push. Zeal’s motto is “Follow the Sun”. Loubsol has teamed up with The Freeski Academy and LS Factory Team in the Alps. They will have over 100 kids and 15 coaches testing their products and creating content. Melon has a collaboration with the brand Eivy and another one with MTB legend Rob Warner. Spektrum will push their new RAW concept, while Naked celebrates “being back outside”. Electric has two powerful collaborations. One with world champion surfer John John Florence, and another one with actor and activist Jason Momoa. Oakley continues to roll their “Be who you are” campaign, celebrating self-expression through storytelling. These stories will serve as a vehicle to communicate about the technology, supported with store staff training.

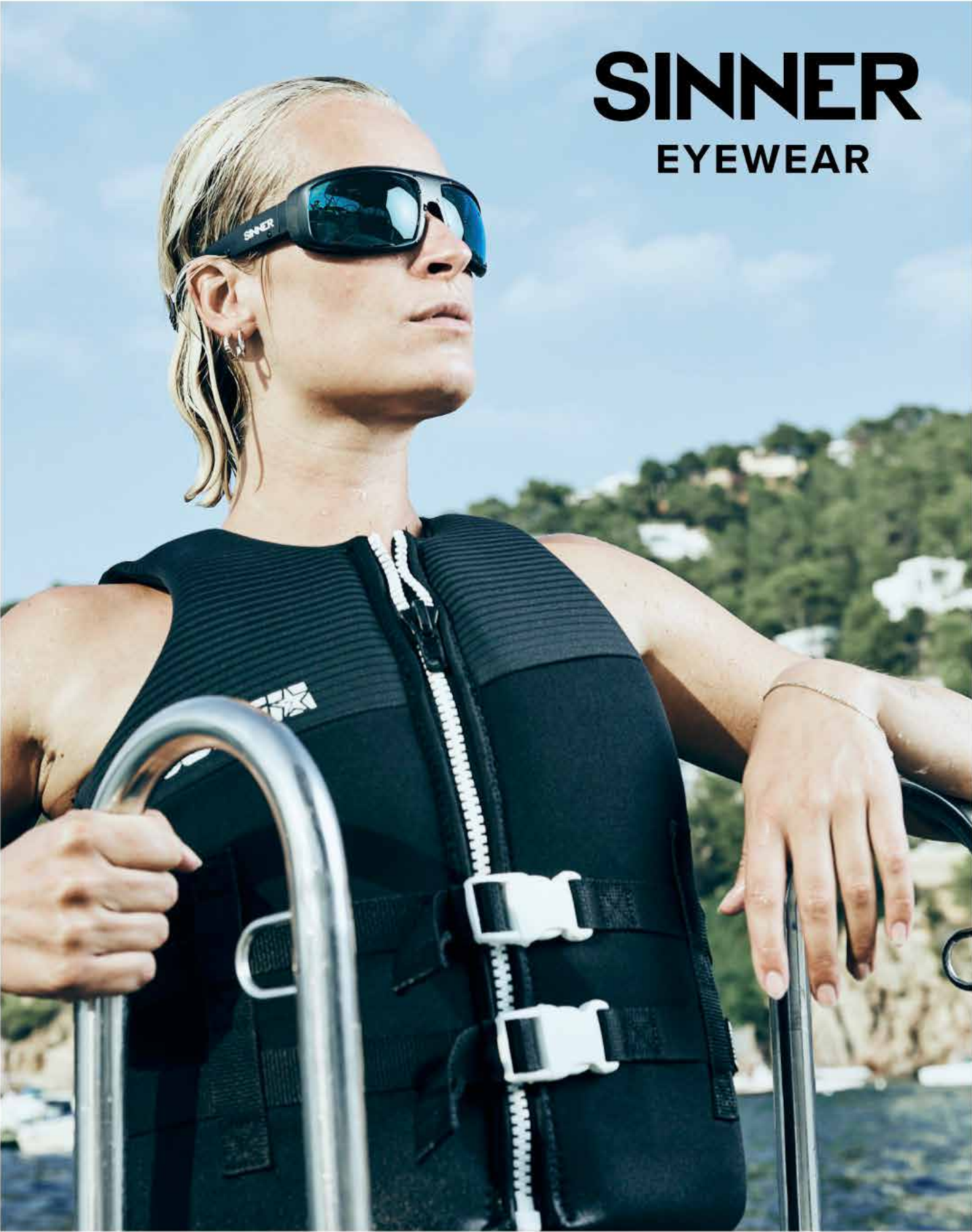
Most brands report mild stock and delivery issues, if none at all. Most of them learned valuable lessons from the past two years. They already had systems in place to avoid delays due to bottlenecks in production. They advanced forecasting. They increased stock monitoring and purchasing. In some cases, they moved the production closer to their markets. Brands offer a rich catalogue of technologies and well managed stock levels. Retailers will be able to satisfy any demands they come across.



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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Sustainability standard practice
- 2 Eye health and versatility main demands
- 3 Vintage designs trending
- 4 Production closer to marketplace



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Bolle - Ascender



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Bolle - Chimera



Cebe - Kult 130 Anniversary



Cebe - Outline



Cebe - Sleepwalker



Dirty Dog - Magnitude



Dirty Dog - Raccoon



Dirty Dog - Volcano



Dragon - Finch



Dragon - Opus Bryan Iguchi



Dragon - The Jam



Electric - Crasher



Electric - Birch



Electric - Knoxville XL



Loubsol - Jalousie



Loubsol - Plasma



Loubsol - Serac



Melon - Alleycat



Melon - Alleycat Small



Melon - Kingpin



Oakley - Kato



Oakley - Leffingwell



Oakley - Sutro Lite



Otis - 100 Club



Quiksilver - 03171



Revo - RE1193



Sinner - Belle



Smith - Lowdown Split



Spect - Steady



Spy - Hangout



Volcom - Macho



Von Zipper - Radio



Otis - Crossroads



Quiksilver - 03178



Roxy - 03105



Sinner - Morro



Smith - Resolve



Spektrum - Klinger



Spy - HotSpot



Volcom - Subject



Zeal - Easterly



Otis - Omar



Revo - Descend



Roxy - 03109



Sinner - Pace



Spect - Casey



Spektrum - Blank



Spy - RebarANSI



Von Zipper - Defender Party Animals



Zeal - Northwind



Quiksilver - 03160



Revo - Jasper



Roxy - 03114



Smith - Bobcat



Spect - Daft



Spektrum - Lom



Volcom - Alive



Von Zipper - Opal



Zeal - Paonia

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

KITEBOARDING 2022

Innovations keep pushing kiteboarding forward. The only limitation is the availability of raw materials to bring these innovations to the marketplace. **By Rocio Enriquez.**



CABRINHA

Big Air continues to drive growth. Its popularity, boosted by big competitions, relies on the spectacular nature of the discipline. Viewers are as excited watching the jumps as riders are to boost them. New measuring devices and dedicated gear have enabled riders to push their limits. The level has exploded. "We've seen effortless double kite loops on a twelve meter, previously unheard of!", says Cai Wagget from Ocean Rodeo. This trend is driving the development of lighter yet strong materials for kites and boards. Foiling keeps growing

"It's important to find the material mix that makes the kite lighter but also dynamic"

Robert Bratz, Eleveight

as well. The ability to take advantage of any wind conditions is too good to pass on. The Olympic status of the modality has sealed the deal. There is an added appeal in the crossover capabilities of this discipline into winging or foil surfing. Big Air and kite foiling are where most brands expect their growth. They are the areas getting bigger chunks of the R&D budgets.

KITES

Every brand aims for lighter material, yet robust and still affordable. R&D is extensive, but results are not always convincing. Performance cannot be compromised. There are other factors that developers need to keep in mind. "It's important to find the material mix that makes the kite lighter but also dynamic", says Robert Bratz from Eleveight. Nevertheless, there are successful projects on the market already. Ocean Rodeo kick-started Aluula some time ago. It remains at the forefront of material innovation. Light Aluula composites not only allow for light wind riding. They also influence the performance and handling of big wind kites. This year all their kite models are available with a full Aluula airframe. They claim they are 50% lighter than other kites, with improved response and control. Duotone has had great success with their SLS and D/Lab series of premium materials. "If we could organize more raw material, we could probably sell about 20% more", says Philipp Becker. Crazy Fly has invested in the brand-new TerTex material, two times stronger than Ripstop and 40% lighter than Dacron. It can be found on all their struts, central strut, and wing tips. Fluid introduces a new custom fabric this year as well.

New construction ideas are boosting performance even with traditional fabrics. F-One redesigned the trailing edge using Dacron and doubling the stitches per inch, improving the bar feeling. They stabilised

"If we could organize more raw material, we could probably sell about 20% more" Philipp Becker, Duotone

the flight by adding vertical panels on its side to reduce cloth deformation. Gaastra has had a great response to the ultra-light triple ripstop canopy with special PU coating. It

"The new Marabou is a hybrid kite that can be used on land, snow and water" Tiana Laporte - Gin Kiteboarding

minimizes water absorption and maximizes tear resistance and stability. Cabrinha uses high performing Nano-Ripstop in each kite. This ultra-durable canopy material provides long-lasting lifespan and rigid performance.

Versatile kites are popular. Many brands report their best-selling models as all-round kites. Reedin has done well with their Supermodel. It performs equally well in underpowered foiling and overpowered Big Air, including strapless and wave riding. "Our philosophy has always been to have

a kite that does it all. If a kite is good, it will be good for all types of riding", says Co-Founder and Head of Design Damien Girardin. Cabrinha's most popular style, the Switchblade, is full of performance features but still user-friendly for all levels. The new design increases performance and handling. North has a new iteration of the Reach, in which they introduce a new lighter Dacron exoskeleton. They have tweaked the arc design to offer a snapper response, more direct steering, and more dynamic recovery. The result is a kite that boosts, loops, surfs, and foils. Most importantly, it performs on all levels, from novices to seasoned pros. Eleveights' RS freeride kite is popular for its versatility. Fluid has added an all-rounder to their line-up, the new Air. Nobile is very satisfied with their new one strut, light wind kite, The One. "The One won The Kitemag curveball award due to its insane manoeuvrability and light wind abilities", says Jan Korycki. Gaastra's namesake also experienced a great demand. Their One

kite is now offered in added smaller sizes. This expands the wind range and enables its use by lighter riders and foil riders as well. F-One's best-seller was the Bandit, for its versatility too. Good for freestyle, mega loops and freeriding. Gin takes versatility beyond the water. "The new Marabou is a hybrid kite that can be used on land, snow and water", announces Tiana Laporte. Gin also offers the Spirit and the Instinct HB, good for snow kiting and foiling.

Some Big Air specific kites have experienced good sales too. It is the case of the Machine kite by Slingshot, the XS kite by Eleveight, and the Sky model by Fluid Kiteboarding. Freestyle and wake style kite Pulse by North has been redesigned. It now features lighter bladders in sizes ten metres and up. It performs better in light wind conditions. It

also has excellent high-end power and the lightest bar pressure out of all their kites. Slingshot has experienced a wild success with their foil model UFO V1.1. It sold out instantly every time they managed to fill up stock.

"Larger board sizes with lighter construction allow all users to enjoy riding with all weather conditions." Jan Korycki, Nobile

There are innovations in kite accessories. Reedin reports success of their DreamStickX control system. Clients can use it with any kite brand to take full advantage of the MonoBloc system with auto-swivelling. Ocean Rodeo has refined their pulley systems, bridle designs and build. The result is an even lighter and more robust kite. Their 2022 Roam comes complete with new Roto Bridle Performance Kit for enhanced pivot

turning. The Flite and the Crave have refined their wing tip shape to provide more lift, control, and smooth power delivery. North's Navigator Control System has had over twenty small refinements for 2022. It has a unique interloop system that allows you to switch disciplines in moments, no tools required. It has one bar and a choice of five loops. They have introduced a new Standard Freestyle Loop with finger that you can use for both freeriding and unhooked riding. For freestylers, they offer an extra-long loop with no security finger. Both freestyle loops come complete with the Freestyle Leash Ring. This allows you to hook back in quickly without the leash getting in the way. Lastly, they have upgraded the geometry of the HyperFlow Inflation Valve. It is now easier to grip the valve lid in colder conditions. Cabrinha has new ceramic pulleys on their

updated bridle design. This speeds up the turning, while offering a slightly lighter feel on the bar.

BOARDS

It's not just kites getting lighter. Weight reduction is the quest of every board brand. A lighter board helps everyone. Big Air fans jump higher. "Big air customers are looking for a board with a lightweight and powerful pop", says Maëlle Riccoboni from F-One. Lighter boards also improve performance in light wind conditions. "Larger board sizes with lighter construction allow all users to enjoy riding with all weather conditions", says Jan Korycki from Nobile. Lightness cannot compromise strength, though. Construction is as important as material.

Duotone has experienced great success with their D/Lab construction, particularly in their surfboards. The pure surfboard feel it offers has won the trust of many a customer.



DUOTONE

F-One had a great response to their SlimTech technology. This allows them to create very thin and light boards that are also very resistant and offer great board control. They offer two models in this construction: the surfboard Magnet and the kite foiling carbon Pocket. Their most popular board, however, is the Trax Carbon, due to the popularity of Big Air. Gin announces a new board, the Geek. It is built in Switzerland with the same state-of-the-art technology used for skis. Cabrinha is proud of the construction of their Ace Hybrid twin tip. This free riders' favourite mixes a pauwlonia core with honeycomb foam. It offers a very lively underfoot feeling. The core is locked at the top and bottom with unidirectional carbon strips, creating an explosive pop. Also for free riders we find North's new Prime, Astra, and Trace. The redesigned Prime has a rounded outline and

narrow tips that allow you to edge and track upwind with ease. The single concave at the bottom provides a controlled and even flex. It is stiffer between the feet, with forgiving tips for a splash-free ride and softer landings. North has also redesigned the Focus and the Flare. The new Focus has quad-concave channels running all the way into the tips, a progressive rocker and a squarer, flatter outline. It delivers exceptional traction. For the new Flare, they have placed the strap inserts down the centreline, so riders can mount their boots in either direction. This extends the lifespan of the board. Fluid's bestseller is the XTR, a full carbon board with real gold and silver colouring and no spraying. Goodboards has attracted a lot of attention with their new ACT (Anti-Chop) technology. Their collaboration with Boomtag that equips all their boards with



an NFC chip is also popular. Gaastra's best-seller is an all-rounder, the Watts, suitable for advanced riders as well as less experienced ones. It is followed by the freestyle, high-performance Pact, and the easy-to-use Blend, perfect for light wind performance. Reedin's most popular styles, the Kev Pro and the SuperE twin tips, are designed with comfort and grip in mind. They are proud of the quality of their EU produced boards. They build their twin tips in Poland and their wave boards in Portugal. Slingshot has sold their Misfit and Formula V1 boards very well, but it is their foil boards they have seen flying off the shelves. Foil boards have meant good business for many a brand. Crazy Fly introduced the lightest pocket foil called Pure at only one and a half kilos in 77cm. They have extended their Cruz hydrofoil range, now offering three front wings in 690, 1000 and 1200 cm². This way they cover beginners and all the way to experts looking for speed and agility. Nobile is reaping the benefits of their

patented connection system for their split boards. Their travel friendly NHP Split Board is a top seller.

SUSTAINABILITY

It is challenging to go completely green with products that are so demanding in performance, but the efforts are there. Most of the brands are ditching plastic in favour of recycled cardboard or no packaging at all. Factories are monitored for sustainable practices. Gaastra has optimised the production process to use as much of the raw material as possible. Reedin and Nobile also pressure their factories to reduce waste. Bringing production closer to the marketplace is a great way of reducing carbon footprint. Both Reedin and Goodboards speak proudly of their manufacturing in Europe. In terms of product materials, Cabrinha has swapped their standard Dyneema® flying lines for their bio-based version. This new fibres offer the same performance but with a carbon

F-one



Mitu
PRO CARBON

More than an icon or a best-seller, the **MITU PRO MODEL** is first and foremost Mitu MONTEIRO's own board and this can mean only one thing: the board just as the man behind it remains firmly at the top of its game year after year.

5'2 - 5'4 - 5'6 - 5'8 - 5'10



footprint 90% lower than generic HMPE fibres. They offer extraordinary strength and a high resistance to UV, cuts, and abrasion. All processes from production, to packaging and shipping, are assessed through a sustainable lens. “We have a new Sustainability Team at HQ that meets every other week”, says Elliott Tauscher from Slingshot. Brands implementing changes are F-One, Reedin, Cabrinha and Slingshot. Other brands subscribe to third party projects. Gaastra collaborates with their manufacturers. Duotone has selected two CO2 projects to get involved in. One is with rider Lewis Carthern, ambassador for wind farms. The other one is with Sebastian Romero, the first completely CO2 neutral athlete.

RETAILER SUPPORT

In such trying times, communication with the customer is the most important form of retailer support. Providing accurate, up to date information about stock levels and availability dates is key. Gaastra provides automatic stock updates. Gin has developed a new, easy B2B site to simplify the daily work. Reedin has hired a new agency for the German market to keep retailers properly served. They have increased their customer service team and developed a B2B platform to simplify relations with dealers. Cabrinha offers a direct customer service with emphasis on the availability of product information and descriptions. The second most important marketing tool is demos. F-One has test days. Nobile organises demo tours in countries where they are distributed. Reedin is increasing the number of demos they’ll do this season and have secured the necessary gear for it. Cabrinha is also confident about the availability of test material for their demo events. Goodboards keeps their test stand around for 180 days a year. To them, this is the most honest form of marketing.

Stock problems have affected most brands.

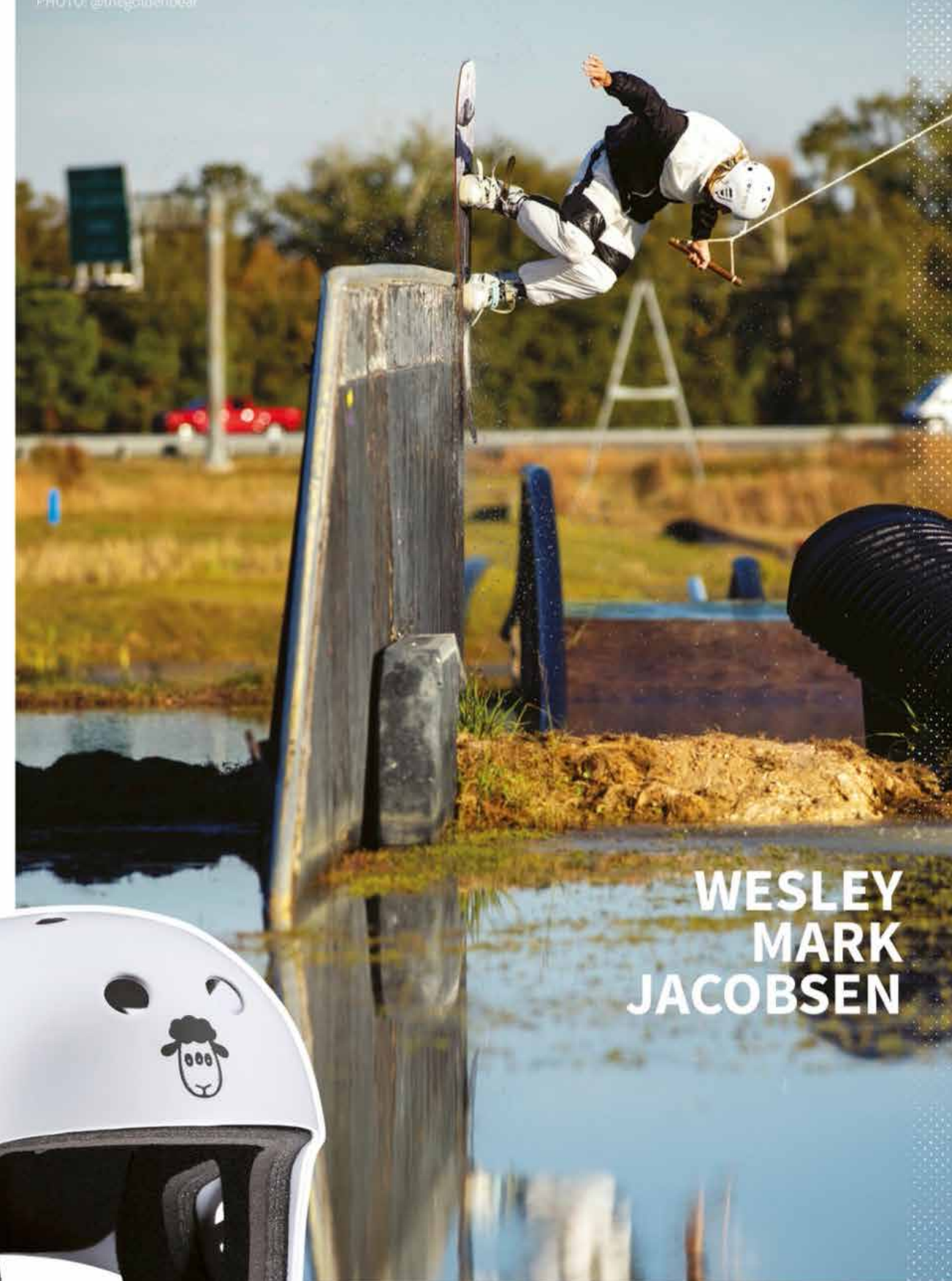
Raw materials are scarce and expensive, cost of shipping has skyrocketed, and there are bottlenecks in production. However, brands learned very valuable lessons from the pandemic. They have already put systems in place to smooth these difficult times. Duotone is optimizing the purchasing chain and looking into new materials and production in Europe. Gaastra has secured a steady flow of shipments into their warehouse to keep stock levels of popular products high. This is possible thanks to more detailed plans with retail partners. Nobile ordered earlier their outsourced materials. Gin has adapted some fabric colours to secure a regular delivery schedule. Reedin has nurtured their relationship with their main raw materials suppliers. Now they can organize production directly with them. Fluid found a new supplier of canopy material. Splitting their production between two factories enables a consistent flow of product. Cabrinha has clarified the delivery capabilities of their suppliers very early. This way, they make sure that their communication to the retailers is accurate. They have also reorganized their warehouse structures and container use. Overall, communication with the retailer is prioritized. Brands aim for transparency and tailored support to suit individual needs. It is the synergy of dealers and brands that move the industry forward. Brands are acknowledging this. ©

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Big Air trending
- 2 Lighter yet strong boards and kites
- 3 Versatility rewarded
- 4 Big focus on sustainability
- 5 Systems in place to secure stock

 
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**WESLEY
MARK
JACOBSEN**

THE ORIGINAL
PRO-TEC
FULL CUT - WMJ PRO MODEL



Starting from a simple desire to rinse and dry a wetsuit, Exit now offers a range of products based around wetsuit care. Founder Kieran Sammon gives us the lowdown on his niche business starting to make waves in the surf accessories market.

What was the thinking behind launching the company?

After a session I simply wanted to rinse and dry my wetsuit and accessories as efficiently and quickly as possible. I came up with the idea for the XRail in 2014 and built a prototype in my shed. I knew it was a practical and useful invention but had never developed a product from scratch. The Exit business was created then with a vision of creating products to help the user look after their wetsuit and accessories better than anything else on the market.

Tell us about your launch product XRail and its design process.

From the early days of making a prototype in my shed, it took three years and a few wrong turns along the way to find the right designer to work with on the product. Eventually a Dutch designer, Rudo Enserink, came on board and his process involved using 3D printing to refine the design to what you see now, the side view of the XRail is intentionally shaped like a surfboard, the hex structure has three functions (i) to keep the XRails weight to a minimum but maintaining strength; (ii) to reduce the amount of material in the



product; and (iii) to allow air to circulate around as many surfaces of the wetsuit as possible, which no other wetsuit hanger can do.

Tell us about the materials you use and what are you as a company doing to be more eco-friendly.

Our aim is to use recycled materials in as many of our products as possible. Where we can't use recycled materials in a product, we will only go ahead with that product if we see it fulfils a purpose, serves a need in the market and ultimately indirectly reduces waste by lengthening the use and life



of the end user's gear. For example, during the process of designing the HUX(Hang Up XRail) the original design used recycled aluminium but this wasn't cost effective so we ended up changing the design completely and instead now use recycled fishing net.

How will you market the brand in Europe?

We are actively looking for influencers for Exit across Europe to help us promote our products and the benefits of looking after watersports gear, to reduce environmental impact on the planet. We are also happy to support local watersport gatherings and events with prizes, anything which helps a 'get out and live' attitude.

What makes your brand stand out in the surf hanger space?

Quite simply it is the only hanger which carries a wetsuit and five accessories. It is also the widest hanger on the market without being

cumbersome, so air can actually get to all parts of your wetsuit. Having said that, Exit is not just a hanger brand, in less than a year we have added four more products to our range. One of our mantras is "Why copy when you can create". There are lots of wetsuit hangers on the market, most of which are the same and not as clever as the XRail. We are also actively not selling on Amazon, we only sell through retailers and directly from our website, we are here to support local watersport shops.

What's in the pipeline for you in terms of new products?

Our current range of products is based around wetsuit care but we are now looking at surfboard protection and travel systems. We are also excited to be developing a very interesting B2B offering for how wetsuits are displayed for sale in retail outlets. Made from cardboard and 100% recyclable we



see huge potential for this product, for both shop owners and brands supplying display hangers with their wetsuits.

How do you see the surf accessories market over the next few years?

We anticipate huge growth in demand for all things watersports from increasingly discerning buyers over the coming years. Covid shone a light on the importance of exercise for mental health and attracted huge numbers to water-based activities. Pretty much everyone engaged in watersports has a close affinity with nature because they are quite literally immersed in it and therefore have a heightened consciousness of protecting that environment. We at Exit share this ethos and want to bring people products that have an eco conscious genesis and extend the life and usefulness of, what is often expensive, equipment. ©

LONGBOARDS BY
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**NOTHING
HOTTER**



MARKET INSIGHT

SWISS

SPAIN
PORTUGAL
FRANCE
UK
GERMANY
ITALY

With the winter season coming to an end, you could say that the situation in Switzerland is pretty merry. Although it was really dry from a business point of view, the season

was a big success. Let's look at why:

Firstly, as I said, the winter was dry... but with the snowfalls in December and a few more here and there, there was enough snow coverage to ensure the pistes stayed in good nick all season long. Also, it should be noted that it was sunny every weekend as well as during the main holiday weeks. As a result, the mountains were overrun by our compatriots.

As well as all that, we were finally able to count on the arrival (en masse) of our beloved English, Dutch and Belgian tourists and obviously this was pleasing for our resort-based shops for whom it was a record year. Rentals and sales as well as peripheral activities were all on the up. Customers showed up in good numbers and clearly didn't have too much wallet trouble or didn't pay as much attention as they normally do when it comes to the cost of activities and their stay.

Shops in towns also showed positive results, visitation numbers were good and once again it seems as though outdoor activities are back in fashion. As already mentioned and probably as a result of the pandemic and its lockdowns, what was once considered a peripheral activity for the majority of the Swiss population seems to have new-found importance. The call of the open air has become a necessity and the equipment associated with it is no longer a luxury but a need. Looking for reasons, we can add the 'savings' that some people made through not being able to

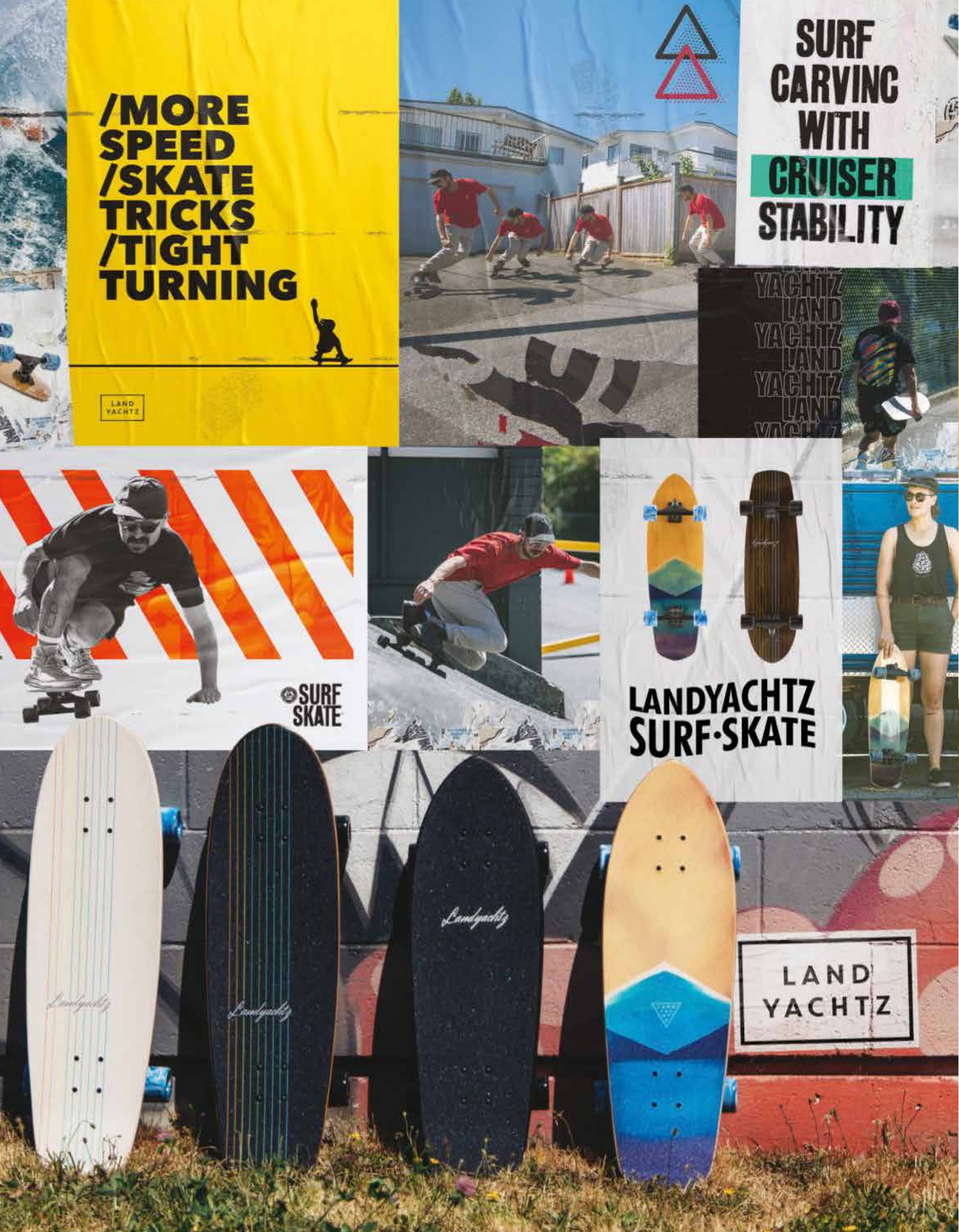
carry out their (sometimes costly) pastimes during the pandemic. Buying power for a large number of Swiss has not decreased much and we are now seeing very different buying habits. This is much more orientated towards immediate need than to searching out the best price.

On the other hand, we can see that payments were sometimes taken through gritted teeth and like so many other sectors - for fear of what's to come - bosses decided to take on less workforce, so shop staff and in particular those in resorts bore the full brunt of customers arriving in their droves without as many colleagues as normal to deal with them. Add to this the lack of staff caused by the quarantines and sick leave and you can easily imagine the state of exhaustion that our seasonnaires and shop employees found themselves in. Many have made the same observation, visitations numbers were so steady that as a joke they're saying that the January lull happened in mid-March this year... that shows how intense it has been.

In towns, life has also picked up again, people are going out and, as I mentioned before, are hesitating less to make a purchase than normal. With the winter having such pleasant weather, it was particularly suitable for skateboarding whose sales practically never dipped, or otherwise picked up again very quickly.

Now we are happy to have Spring poking its head out; this is associated with a rest for the players in the alpine business and the start of the season for those active in the water-sports sector. Now we just have to hope that the peak season works normally so that we can replenish the coffers a bit.

FABIEN GRISEL



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

LONGBOARDS 2022

With the pandemic easing its grip on reality and the warmer months in sight, just how are longboard brands shaping up and what's in store for 2022? We take a look with skateboard editor **Dave Morgan**.



The world is slowly returning to some form of normality in regards to Covid-19's restrictions & limitations. It's been a very interesting year for businesses who've had the tables turned from having no stock to order from, to now an abundance of everything they were so in need of before. The demand for longboards still remains high, with social media influencers bringing lots of new customers to the market. For those that are attracted to skateboarding, but more inclined to a low impact cruising option, longboards offer the perfect alternative, whilst still going forwards sideways.

"Creating a more sustainable deck also uses a USDA certified biobased resin. Super Sap® comes from a company called Entropy Resins and is made with recycled industrial waste-stream components and renewable raw materials in place of petroleum-based ones." Dave Gitlin, Globe

One main impact the pandemic had on the industry was the constant delays with shipping/deliveries and the price of getting containers sent across the globe. Brent Futagaki - Global Marketing Manager at Arbor said "We are seeing a light at the end of the tunnel, as



ARBOR

production has caught up, and shipping lead times are improving.” Timothy Mackey - General Manager at DB Longboards did notice however that “some raw materials here and there still have hiccups with delays and supply issues.” It looks like brands are trying to work with partners outside of Asia to prevent supply

“Above all, we seek functionality when it comes to skating, and we escape from strange shapes that do not serve to skate better.”

Ivan Garcia Arozamena, Miller Division

troubles going forward. The availability of product again is great, although “the lingering issue remains the cost and availability of shipping containers” as Dave Gitlin – Global Hardgoods Manager at Globe said. Dave Price, International Accounts Manager at Landyachtz agreed, noting that “Rising shipping costs and container availability are a constant issue.” Ivan Garcia Arozamena- Product Manager at Miller Division noted something very important: “Now the problem is no longer Covid, now it is the high rise in electricity, gasoline... and on top of that, the war.”

BOARDS

Hiked up shipping costs and material prices aside- brands are still determined to make the best quality gear on the market, and from what we can see already, 2022’s Longboard season will be no different. Pablo Castro - VP at Loaded Longboards has noticed lots of “new interesting brands pop up and are stoked at all the creativity and excited to see where it goes.” It looks like every part of the industry will be drawing new innovations to the scene which can only be something to get excited about. One thing a lot of brands are noticing is the rise in popularity for Longboard dancing, both through social media and general influence and brands are catering to this trend, just as they have done with surf skates too! DB Longboards ‘Moonwalk’ and ‘Rumba’ Dance Decks have been a huge hit for the company for example.

SHAPES

Longboard brands seem to be sticking to their guns when it comes to shapes- “Drop-Through boards are always a popular choice”- Jordi Quinto- Skate Specialist at Hydroponic explained. Arbor have noticed that “Longer



HYDROPONIC



AVAILABLE IN EUROPEAN SKATESHOPS

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DB BOARDS

Shapes are coming back into fashion, as people continue to bring elements of surfing into their skateboarding”, whereas brands such as Gotcha have actually “reduced the size of all-out longboards to 36”, adding a drop-through and a pintail to the range.” Mike Jucker - Co-founder of Jucker Hawaii spotted that Mini cruisers are the really popular shape for them currently, as for the more commuter-orientated skater, these offer the perfect balance of function

“We’re really excited to be more involved with events as restrictions lift and larger gatherings begin to take place. This year we are focusing on community and are working with some very active community builders in the scene.” Dave Price, Landyachtz

and practicality. Downhill riders on the other hand, prefer “smaller boards with advanced concave and rigid construction” as Shane Maloney - Brand Manager at Madrid skateboards said. Ivan Garcia Arozamena of Miller Division put it simply “Above all, we seek functionality when it comes to skating, and we escape from strange shapes that do not serve to skate better.”

COLLECTION THEMES FOR SS22

A wide variety of collection themes are being brought in for next season, with brands trying to keep things fresh and interesting! Arbor will be dropping a new artist collection with the husband and wife team of ‘Boss Dog Art’, inspired by the mystical energy of Legendary Joshua Tree High Desert as Brent Futagaki explained. Gotcha’s CEO, Nuno Fonseca said they will be “matching the heritage graphics and prints to the apparel and swim ranges so that the consumers can get the full brand experience.” Ivan Garcia Arozamena of Miller Division keeps on the same path as before, “making fun, colourful skates that get you out of the routine, digital prints on the sandpaper and anything that makes us escape from the established.” Globe, known for their earthly approach “focused a lot of attention on the outdoors. Flora, fauna, earthy materials like terrazzo, and working with featured artists that are in tune with relevant themes.” as Dave Gitlin explained. Hydroponic will be releasing The HYDROPONIC X SOUTH PARK collaboration, which features must-have Drop-Through and Dancing decks, as well as the DT small versions we have for kids as their first contact with longboarding.



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SURFSKATE COLLECTION /



RIDER: SEAN GUNNING EUROPEAN SURF CHAMPION UNDER 16

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MORE
SUMMER



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TECHNOLOGY

The boundaries of technology are continuing to be pushed, and brands are wanting to experiment more with new ideas. Madrid's Shane Maloney said they 'are really leveraging our in-house woodworking team to create boards with advanced features based on feedback from our riders.' Miller Division are "testing new painting techniques to achieve mixed effects (colour changes depending on the perspective) and some new digital printing techniques both on the decks themselves and on the grips" as Ivan Garcia Arozamena announced.

Andy King, Brand Manager at Mindless spoke of a different route: "For us this is working towards the removal of 'stock' off the shelf trucks from their entire range." Stock trucks are perfect for a beginner, however any experienced rider knows the true benefits of more high-end trucks! Affordability is a tough one, as normally one has to sacrifice performance for such, however with brands striving to create affordable high-performance set-ups, it will give those on a lower budget a true experience of how a board should function.

SUSTAINABILITY

In my opinion the most important aspect of an industry, especially one focused on making things out of wood, is the sustainable approach brands take for it. It's inspiring to see every brand is contributing in some way to giving back to the environment. Pablo Castro of Loaded Longboards said that "Most of our line uses Entropy bio-resin and we are expanding the use of bamboo and basalt to more and more of our lineup." Other brands too are heading more towards maple alternatives like bamboo. Mindless' Andy King said "We are looking for alternatives for the future in terms of wood and construction." So there is hope yet!

Arbor's Brent Futagaki spoke of their "Returning Roots giveback effort has helped to plant over 500,000 trees in forests being restored and protected in Hawaii". Brands such as Hydroponic & Gotcha are moving away from poly bags and

choosing to use environmental protection glues within their board construction, which is definitely moving in the right direction! Globe have an all-new deck construction that was developed to be a much 'lower velocity' alternative to their standard decks. Dave Gitlin explained "Bamboo is the fastest growing 'tree' on earth – and is one of the most sustainable alternatives to traditional timber we have when it comes to manufacturing premium skateboards. We've made our new G3 decks with bamboo veneers and additional Canadian maple support plys. Creating a more sustainable deck also uses a USDA certified biobased resin. Super Sap® comes from a company called Entropy Resins and is made with recycled industrial waste-stream components and renewable raw materials in place of petroleum-based ones."

EVENTS

A definite upside of the aforementioned 'normality' resuming is that outdoor public events are once again starting to happen. Whilst skateboarding and longboarding have offered the perfect solitary activity to get out and exercise and enjoy, a huge part of why we do it comes from the community aspect we all love so much. Pablo Castro at Loaded Longboards said "We believe that bringing people together post-covid and in the fractured environment is more important than ever for everyone" Dave Price at Landyachtz agreed saying "We're really excited to be more involved with events as restrictions lift and larger gatherings begin to take place. This year we are focusing on community and are working with some very active community builders in the scene." Arbor's Brent mentioned they "are really looking forward to participating in the Annual Boarding For Breast Cancer "Skate The Coast" Event in Los Angeles this summer". So, it looks like all being well, 2022 will be packed full of some great events. @

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Dancer boards gain popularity
- 2 Increase in alternative, eco-friendly glues/resins
- 3 Artist collabs
- 4 Mini cruisers, but at the same time, longer boards
- 5 REAL LIFE EVENTS!

THE HEART SUPPLY ILLUSION EMBOSSED PRO SERIES



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French surf brand Saint Jacques' very existence is about being different and they run this approach through the soul of the business. Founder Stan Bresson gives us the details on his unique company. Viva La difference!

How did Saint Jacques get started and what was the idea behind the brand.

We were tired of black wetsuits and the ultra standardized neoprene market. Our aim is to offer high-performance, high-quality wetsuits while creating elegant designs, which incorporates the codes of the great classics of French fashion. This is the very essence of Saint Jacques Wetsuits. First and foremost, the goal was to gather a community of dedicated watermen and women, within which aesthetics and performance do not collide and differ. The name 'Saint Jacques' appeared as obvious. It brings together 3 essential criteria: the sea / French / high-end.

What are your best selling products?

Saint Jacques targets different customers depending on the season and the location by offering 3 categories of products which are almost balanced in terms of sales over the year. Firstly, elegant neoprene vests and jackets which embody our "wet à porter" concept, in particular the "Noé" sailor top and the famous "Paulo", secondly technical full suits for men and women, including the new Yamamoto neoprene collection and finally quality accessories such as our cotton ponchos, boardshorts and lycras.

Tell us more about your key technologies used in your wetsuits.

In 2022, we teamed up with the Japanese company Yamamoto, an international reference when it comes to neoprene, to create a line of high-end and technical full suits. As versatility is very important in our concept, we attach great value to patterns in order to feel comfortable whatever the watersport: surfing, kite, sup, wing, wake... We have also developed a tubular compression system for our wetsuits which strongly limits water entry via the ankles, in particular for wind sports such as kitesurfing or windsurfing. And finally we

put great attention to detail and finish, with embroidered logos for example, and using colours that stand out from the standard black offer in the neoprene market.

How did COVID-19 affect your business?

Like everyone else, we suffer the consequences of Covid: slower production rates, higher transportation costs, shortages of raw materials... But demand is very high in our field of activity. Covid has consolidated the trust in our relationship with our distributors, and our concept has seduced and attracted new retail points during this period. We work on pre-orders within our network, which allows us to anticipate our production lead times, while ensuring stock availability for the season. We think this period is beneficial for an alternative brand like Saint Jacques because we are an agile business and we can adapt quite easily. Finally, our concept of a non-seasonal

range takes on its full meaning during this difficult period: we have no schedule constraints on product releases, and we offer our collections until they are sold out without selling them off.

How do you deal with competition from major brands?

Our offer is an alternative to the - already seen - black wetsuits. We strongly believe that watersports should also offer different options in terms of styles and designs to their customers. This is why we are just as legitimate as any other brand and are not a direct competitor because the products we offer are attracting different customers. As our products are being tested and developed in various watersports and conditions, they are very much appreciated by watermen and women for their performance and design. Finally, we noticed a lot of interest regarding the fact we are a human scale company

with a distinct state of mind, different from the majors in the sector.

How are you as a brand working towards a more sustainable future?

The eco-design in the wetsuits business is something that is difficult to achieve. The materials and manufacturing sites, mostly located in Asia, are difficult to relocate but we are working on it. We have always used limestone-based neoprene. We are against the seasonality of collections, which pushes brands to sell off the remaining stock to cope with the release of the new collection and leads to an unnecessary overproduction of new products. We have decided to offer durable products that last longer. Finally, we have also implemented a neoprene recycling campaign to give the material a second life, this is our Néocycle project. ©

FRANCE

GERMANY
ITALY
SWISS
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
UK

The French economy has to get ready for a hard landing. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the knock-on effects are disrupting all the potential scenarios put forward thus far by forecasters. While our executive still maintains his estimated 4% GDP growth

in 2022, everyone else seems to be revising their forecasts for the worse. Banque de France are now charting growth of 2.8% depending on the price of a barrel of oil. Productivity growth may come in at around 2.5%-3%, far from the 7% posted last year. Normally after such an impact on energy and raw materials prices - because of the conflict in Ukraine – we would soon see an abrupt economic slowdown.

After a month of conflict, the French economy is beginning to really feel the effects of the war in Ukraine. Morale of business owners has dropped by 6 points in one month according to Insee. This is particularly bad for industry due to shortages, price rises and sanctions on Moscow. The Rexecode Institute are even predicting growth of just 0.4% in 2023. A shocking figure and one that the presidential candidates seem to be completely ignoring. Alongside the war in Ukraine, France has an unusual year in 2022 because the presidential elections to choose a new head of state are due to be held this April. Many candidates are promising aid packages aimed at protecting buying power against inflation. However, these spending promises seem to lack concrete financing and are based on growth predictions that are too optimistic. In his proposal, Emmanuel Macron, the current president and candidate for re-election has growth at 1.8% in 2023 while lots of candidates are not even publishing their plans. The potential presidents of the Republic are mostly setting out their agendas based on a balanced situation, even though the deficit will exceed 5% in 2022. In addition to sluggish growth, interest rates for France’s debt went back above 1% last March 24th for the first time in over 4 years. The candidates’ economic proposals do not factor in the effects of the current war which seems to be set to continue for some time, with

consequences that will be accentuated further. The deficit problem seems to be unpublishable and the wake-up call could be a tough one. The price surges in energy, products in general and the war in Ukraine will weigh heavily on French growth in 2022 and 2023. Next year, the rise in GDP could be well under 1% according to economists. So what is the current situation like for our industry and in particular for our retailers?

The 2021/2022 winter was pretty good in shops, as confirmed by Jean-Philippe Ozler, Manager of the shop Terres De Surf which has been in Saint Quay Perros in Brittany for over 25 years: “The winter season was a big success, unprecedented, a record for the shop.” It was the same story at Neway, opened in 1995 in Nantes, Loire-Atlantique from where Sales Manager Rémi Harnois tells us: “The figures are pretty good for winter sports. With the resorts closed last year, customers kitted themselves out this year, turning more towards top-of-the-range products.” However, the first quarter of 2022 and the start of Spring does seem to have been pretty quiet. Rémi adds: “Visitation numbers are pretty low.” At Terres De Surf, Jean Philippe confirms: “The start of the year and season have been quite sluggish but we are within our targets so far.” He adds: “We are at the same point, give or take a few Euros as last year, having been open for more days compared to last year when we were closed for COVID.” At Cocoa Gliss on L’Île d’Oléron in Charente Maritime, Fred Groot, Owner of the shop established in 1997 confirms that: “Until Christmas, visitation numbers were GREAT but the first third of the year is down. The sales have been pretty quiet, February non-existent and March was more in line with quieter years.” Fred explains: “the war in Ukraine has already had an impact on French buying power with the sharp rise in energy costs, especially fuel. Our clientele often come from the peninsula and think twice about travelling with the cost of a litre of fuel easily above 2€.” Fred adds: “As well as all that we are in an election year which doesn’t help with two weekends written off in the month of April because of the two rounds of elections.” This is a point of view shared in Normandy at Clinique De La Planche in Caen where Pierre Adrien, Manager of the shop

set up there in 1982 tells us that: “Since the start of January, visitation numbers dropped sharply, the presidential year and the war in Ukraine effects are significant, uncertainty for tomorrow is palpable and the lifting of sanitary protocols hasn’t changed anything.” Pierre adds: “The Easter holidays traditionally launch our season and in the last two years this has been affected by COVID19 and the associated sanitary measures. This year the presidential elections prevent our customers from just going on holiday whenever they want, and from freely consuming since buying power is so low, there’s also an infection rate that’s back on the rise.”

The month of March is generally synonymous with deliveries of pre-season orders and the shops seem to have thought ahead and increased their orders for this 2022 season. This is the case at Terres De Surf where Jean-Philippe tells us: “We have increased our orders by around 30% on last year given the interest in boardsports in 2021.” He adds: “apart from neoprene that continues to arrive drip by drip, deliveries are going pretty well overall”, although he has noticed a sharp rise in product prices: “there is clearly a rise to our prices, reaching up to 30% for some products!” Somewhat along the same lines at Neway in Nantes, Rémi tells us that: “Our pre-order volume is identical or slightly up and we have already noticed some delays on neoprene with average rises of between 5-10% over the majority of products.” From Clinique De La Planche, Pierres relays that: “We have been getting a head start on supplies since last September to meet demand between last season’s delivery delays and early deliveries in anticipation of new waves. With the drop in productivity at the start of the year, we are now over-stocked with pre-orders continuing to arrive.”

When it comes to products, wetsuits seem to still be the products that shops are going for, Fred from Cocoa Gliss tells us that: “Since 2 years ago new surfers are surfing all year round and we have a shortage of equipment to meet the demand, especially on neoprene accessories where we can only meet 1/5 of the demand through lack of stock.”

New disciplines like foiling and wing foiling have enjoyed growing interest and the shops are starting to increase their ranges like at Clinique De La Planche who are counting heavily on the activity by offering introductory lessons and courses for customers. On the other hand we have seen skateboarding and surfskating sales slow down. Rémi from Neway says that: “we had a big shortage last year in these activities and we are now overstocked.” Fred from Cocoa Gliss explains: “The big web groups wanted to shift their merchandise really early with reductions from November onwards which has flooded the skate market for now but things should be back in order in the coming months...” Another activity that seems to be slightly receding is SUP, although the beginning of the year is not the high season for it. Pierre from Clinique De La Planche tells us: “the trend that began last summer for Stand Up Paddle has declined quite a lot this winter, we’ll wait and see if the nice weather can change that.”

There is one thing that everyone agrees on and that’s the changes to consumer buying habits at the start of this year, 2022. “Purchases are much more considered”, says Fred “with a telephone in the hand to compare the prices”. Jean-Philippe confirms: “We are noticing that customers are paying much more attention to spending and that snap purchases are becoming rarer.” Pierre adds: “Customers are buying more sustainable products from French or European origin.”

The desire, passion and guidance to match products to the customer’s needs is still alive and kicking at our shops. This is what keeps customers walking through the doors of our retailers who are ready to welcome them in. Let’s hope that despite the current affairs and inflation, customers can enjoy this 2022 season which is just kicking off but in a pretty uncertain context.

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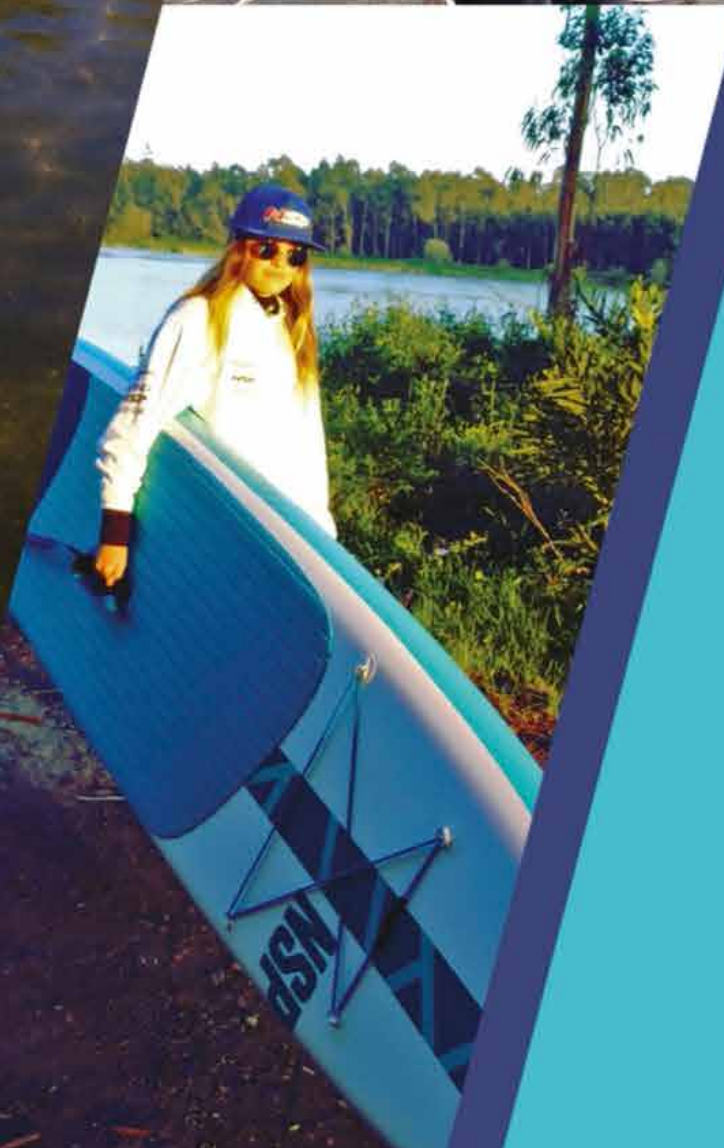
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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

SUP 2022

Fully reinflated, iSUPs are continuing to provide a boost to stand-up paddle boarding, retaining a customer base that is now turning to a more athletic, varied range of uses. Meanwhile, rigid SUPs are searching for a second wind by eyeing up leisure and recreation. 2022 trends by David Bianic.



In periods of huge stress - the virus, international conflicts, inflation - human beings need to redress the balance and leisure activities have provided a breath of fresh air for everyone. Boardsports equipment and especially SUP has nothing to worry about when it comes to demand, this is the paradox of these uncertain times.

What hurts is that manufacturing and delivering SUPs has become challenging for the sector's players in the last two years or so, weighed down by an increase in costs of materials and transportation. But as the masks drop this spring 2022, is there hope for brands of returning to the world as it was before?

"It seems that our end-users are more rational when making their purchasing decisions, and we haven't seen a dramatic surge in demands as last year." Chap Zhang, Aqua Marina

"Unfortunately the word 'normal' seems to have disappeared from the market dictionary", sums up Alberto Girolimetti, CEO of Outride. Nonetheless, a return to previous habits does seem to be happening, remarks Chap Zhang, Senior Product Manager for Aqua Marina: "It seems that our end-users are more rational when making their

purchasing decisions, and we haven't seen a dramatic surge in demands as last year." To put things into perspective, Chap also reminds us that the volume of business represents double that of before Covid. For many, this (relative) slowdown in the activity is good news, leaving a market



that is "more healthy and sustainable for the whole industry", thinks Tony Yeung, Founder and CEO of Aztron, adding that "Now, many Amazon bandwagon brands and resellers from other industry have faded out of the inflatable SUP scene."

As informed clients, this time around brands have made orders from the factories well in advance as Mingo, Marketing Director from Glory Boards tells us: "we placed our order for 2022 very early last year." And that's not always enough! Despite ordering just as early, Nikolaus Dietrich, Director of Sales at Indiana reveals that 20% of their spring/

"The idea that laminated boards are the domain of experienced riders only, is a catastrophic failure on the part of the industry to provide sound advice."

Steve West, Mistral

summer orders are still "in the water". Local production is therefore a big advantage for the likes of Nahskwell whose SUPs are designed and developed in France then manufactured in Tunisia, a route that maintained good transport links, even during the Covid period, assures Antoine Raffarin, Chief Marketing Officer. It was also easy for the Tahe/SIC Maui group who produce some of their rigid boards in their own factory in Vannes, France. A simple shortage of materials for deck pads slowed

the whole chain down says Steve West, Brand Manager at Mistral.

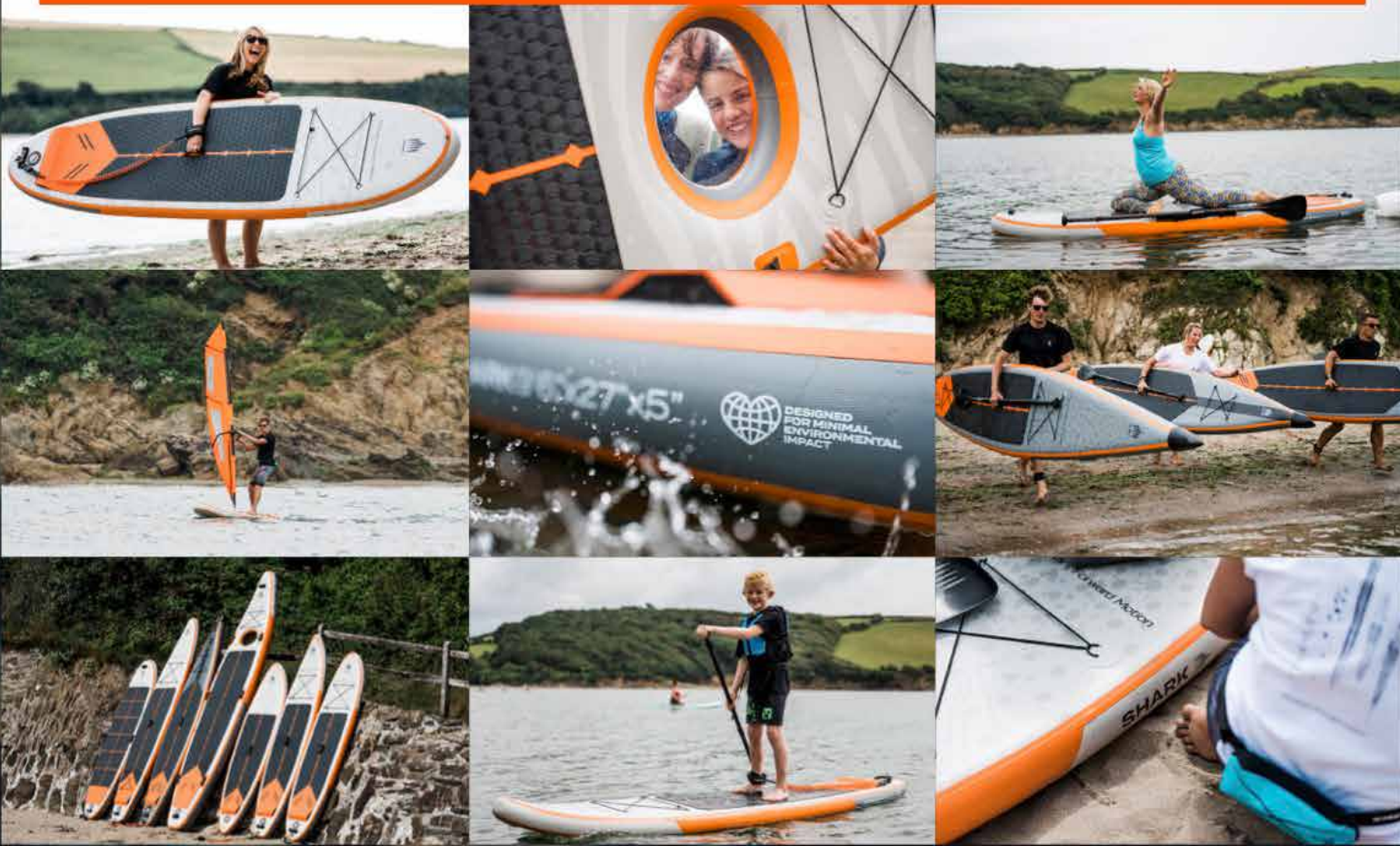
The market has learned to live with the effects of the pandemic in the last two years and now the safety strategies, leaning on total or partial reruns of previous years' products have been shelved. For 2022, the brands are moving forward, banking on innovation or even further still, on invention: "I don't like the word "innovation", as innovation means making something better which does already exist", explains Stefan Klare, Founder and CEO at Tripstix who prefers the word "invention" as "most of our developments are completely new things, which never existed before." Sounds promising!

INFLATABLE SUP: INTEL INSIDE

In the world of inflatables, designs and usages are evolving (we'll come back to that) but it's above all technology that is driving this category year after year. Dropstitch constructions with single skins previously associated with entry-level models have really improved. As an example, we have the Fun, Cross, Trip and Raw iSUPs from Glory Boards, made with a single layer of PVC and Woven Dropstitch, a weave that provides much more rigidity but has less fibres so is lighter. To pre-empt the previously-voiced concerns about the watertightness of single layer SUPs, the rails are reinforced by a double layer on the welding at the hull/deck. This weak point has been improved at Starboard by introducing Welded Rail Technology 2022, a glueless hot weld that literally fuses the upper and lower parts together. The return rate under warranty has dropped to 0.1% for air leaks assures Svein Rasmussen, Founder and Chief Innovator, that's one board out of a thousand. In the same way at Sroka, they are pleased to have counted only 20 SUPs having experienced a technical problem out of 6000 sold.

As soon as you move up the range and/or for more athletic use instead of leisure, Fusion type double skins (fused rather than glued layers), reinforced by stringers and carbon belts are favoured for their superior rigidity, at the cost of a little extra weight. One example comes from SIC Maui with their CFL technology for the Carbon Fusion Lite and its band of carbon/PVC that runs through the whole length of the board, on top and underneath, providing incredible rigidity even when inflated to just 15

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psi. Another variation of the Fusion construction is the Heat Bonded Tech from Jobe Sports, which is like “melting two layers into one” says William Doornekamp, Brand Manager. In addition, Jobe use an X-stringer dropstitch (crossed threads) reinforced with two PVC stringers. Aqua Marina joins the technological one-upmanship with the

“as macro-economic pressures push on consumers, it's important to remember that brand wins.”

Zack Eckert, Bote

patented CFR (Carbon Fiber Reinforced) technology that calls upon a quadruple stringer, featured in the new Race Elite model.

These multiple layers and reinforcements allow for impressive inflation pressures, like at Shark SUPs whose recommended pressure is 20psi and up to 25psi.

We should salute Gladiator Paddleboards' complete makeover of their range for 2022, now offering great readability. Instead of presenting its iSUPs by discipline, the brand has opted for segmentation

based on three levels of construction: Origin (double skin Fusion), Pro (+triple Xstrong reinforcement at the rails) and Elite (woven dropstitch). “We do have a wide range of boards but it's a very simple range to understand” says marketing manager Gary Willingham, adding that “each range has 3 boards that do the same thing but for different size people, Allround, Performance All round and Touring”.

The Germanic brand Tripstix stands alone in terms of construction with their VacuuAir and Cluster technologies, multi-chamber designs whose tubes with their various diameters allow them to create more refined shapes than with classic dropstitch. And this brings us on neatly to the next section!

INFLATABLE SUPS: REFINED SHAPES

2022 will not be a year of massive upheaval, the all-round models will continue to supply the overwhelming majority of the market and will bring few innovations apart from in their constructions as mentioned above. But - and there is a 'but' - we note that year after year, brands are successfully refining the shapes of their iSUPs, bringing them closer to the shape of rigid boards. For example, the new whitewater model from Aqua Marina, the aptly named Rapid, benefits from Arch Edge™



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technology, i.e. a raised centre bar and tail to provide more responsiveness underfoot. Another practice along the same lines is on the 12'6" Ocean Touring from Indiana, equipped "with some rocker instead of a straight shape for a smoother ride on waves or downwinders without a nose dive", explains Nikolaus Dietrich. At Shark SUPs, their new Performance Touring features a nose cone, an appendage that mimics the shape of rigid SUPs and cuts through the water's surface better. It's the same idea on the Voyager from Red Paddle Co who are continuing the V-Hull system launched in 2021 - a profiled hull shape under the front third, which helps to "break the tension on the surface of the water" and to paddle with less effort. Also worth mentioning are the channels on the Adventure Duna 11'6" touring model from Jobe Sports, which are not shaped on the hull like a rigid board, but are an accessory attached underneath the board to channel the water flow.

The design of Starboard's iCON allows for a concave deck and hull on an inflatable SUP, which adds stability and allows you to place your feet close to the rail without any trouble, explains Svein Rasmussen. To round off this trend of "shaped" iSUPs, let's use the Beluga 8'4" SUP, described by Tripstix as

"These multiple layers and reinforcements allow for impressive inflation pressures, like at Shark SUPs whose recommended pressure is 20psi and up to 25psi." Alan Xu, CEO of SHARK

an example of "an inflatable hardboard". Having such rigidity at a thickness of just 4cm at its ends is impressive and it also has a true rocker throughout the whole length.

INFLATABLE SUPS: SPECIALTY BOARDS

Beyond this design-based trend, iSUP continues to evolve as an activity. Touring boards are of course the second board of choice for paddlers who started out on all-round models and now want to go faster, further and with a board that has a more racy look. These are the exact attributes showcased by Spinera with their new Suptour Light, a 12' in ULT construction (double skin, ultra-light) and the 12'6" Alpha from Sroka (Fusion tech, 3 layers on the rails).

These longer and more imposing models are not necessarily more cumbersome to transport either: here we're thinking about the 12' Compact from Red Paddle Co, which occupies half the volume of a classic 12' once it is stored in its carrying case.

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Jacques Freydrich is also announcing the upcoming arrival of an E-power SUP, with integrated motor and battery.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, some very exciting performance iSUPs are on the menu for 2022, like SIC Maui's new 5'8" and 5'11" inflatable foil/wingfoil SUP boards, the Raptor Air: "Don't let the word inflatable fool you. The Raptor Air was created with performance in mind for the avid wing foiler ready to travel and explore or the beginner looking for something softer and less intimidating under their feet." explains Casi Rynkowski, Global Brand Manager. Moai are exploring yet another avenue with the new 10'8" Wing Paddle Board, an SUP that can be used with a wing, but without a foil. Moai sells three wings of between 4 and 6 m2 to go along with this model.

"Every part-time paddler that stays with the sport for longer will end up on a hard board one day."
Andy Wirtz, Norden

On the racing side of things, the new 14' version of Aztron's Meteor is an ultra-narrow racing beast with a very straight outline and mini square pintail.

Wind SUP is also becoming more and more popular and new models are coming onto the market, such as the 10'6" Blade from Aqua Marina.

INFLATABLE SUPS: "INCLUSIVE" MODELS

Another segmentation from the last two years sees an increasing number of models designed for ladies and kids: the Coral Touring (ladies) and Vibrant (kids) from Aqua Marina, a 9' light touring model from Tahe for kids/teens or the Astro Kids 8'8" all-round from Vast Boardsports and the Suprana 10'8" from Spinera, which is proof of the trend for versatile yoga SUPs with its generous dimensions (34" wide). In contrast, at Shark SUPs, CEO Alan Xu explains how their new Kids 2022 model has revised dimensions for kids: 5" thick and 27" wide at 198 litres, "unlike some other brands who market their short boards for children which often still hold too much volume". Another kid-friendly model, this time from Moai is an 8'2" that's 28" wide and 4" thick (140 litres), a mini touring model with a lovely design that ticks all the boxes of a successful SUP.

RED PADDLE CO

Other more specialist iSUPs still occupy some of the market, starting with the SUP/Kayak hybrids. They have pretty much been around since the beginning of stand-up paddle history, but only in the last few years have they exploded. Launched last year, Tahe's Beach SUP-YAK has proven to be a big sales success, a convertible 10'6" with optional flip-up seat, footrest and hybrid paddle. Bote also have a wide range of Rackham-compatible SUP kayaks, including their innovative Apex Pedal Drive, an accessory that can turn the SUP into a pedal boat, complete with propeller and rudder!

Most brands are also highlighting the four "D-ring" attachment points that allow models to be transformed into pseudo kayaks by adding a seat, like the 10'6" Terra from Aztron or Mistral's 13'2" adventure board.

Another trend, still marginal, but one that brands are watching closely, is that of E-SUPs. Motorized SUPs are far outside our precious boardsports world, but they are capable of seducing a new, non-endemic customer base. Jobe Sports are presenting the E-Duna 11'6" version, whose "engine in the board not only propels the board but it also acts as a portable pump". At Tahe, global brand manager

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Not forgetting the 9'0 kid from Tahe, also meant for touring. Finally, with the Nova 10'2", Vast are offering an SUP for lighter paddlers, only 4.75" thick compared to the usual 6" for an "adult" model- a lighter and less bulky board, on the water as well as on land. Sroka also have two women's models called Girly, a 10' Malibu and an 11' touring board, both 5" thick and in Fusion technology to reduce weight.

We should also mention the release of a special carbon paddle for girls at Glory Boards, the Cracky SUP, with a reduced blade surface and a weight of 620 grams.

RIGID SUPS: NOT DEAD YET

In a market where leisure use constitutes the overwhelming majority of the customers, rigid SUPs hold almost no space any more. This is a very sad fact and is sometimes the result of a huge misunderstanding, as Steve West of Mistral explains: "The idea that laminated boards are the domain of experienced riders only, is a catastrophic failure on the part of the industry to provide sound advice." For him, the only reason to buy an iSUP is if you have trouble storing/transporting a rigid SUP, while composite models "last longer, are easier to repair, are higher performing, provide a better ride and on water experience in most all cases."

Norden are considered to be rigid board fundamentalists, but Founder Andy Wirtz, is convinced that "Every part-time paddler that stays with the sport for longer will end up on a hard board one day." This confidence in the future has led him to continue with most of his existing lineup with the addition of a few new products like the 14' Freerace, the 12'4" Glider and the 8'4" SUPer Fish Pro.

At NSP, rigid race models are at the apex of their savoir-faire, with world championship titles to prove it. The 14' Carolina in Pro Carbon is the best in racing, a board you can find under the feet of Travis Grant or Titouan Puyo, using advanced materials such as Innegra carbon or the carbon fibre used in aerospace. A treasure that costs over 3000 euros in shops...

Among the fervent defenders of the "accessible rigid", Tahe (ex-Bic) have had great success with their Ace-Tec and Tough-Tec technologies for beginners and intermediate level riders, with models such as the Beach Cross, Breeze Cross and Breeze Performer. Let's take this opportunity to point out the upcoming arrival of an E-power



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board from Tahe, an electrically powered SUP, perhaps one of the most promising opportunities for rigid SUPs aimed at a wider market. Another advocate of rigids, NSP are able to offer models at very attractive prices with their HIT technology featuring proven durability and they can also seduce the most eco-conscious customers with their CocoFlax construction, with coconut stratification and flax fibre on the rails. The same “bullet proof” proposal comes from Surfttech with the Utility Armor constructions, a classic EPS-epoxy technology, wrapped in a heat-moulded ABS/polycarbonate shell.

Brands that were once 100% inflatable but now investing in composite model may just be proof of the potential of rigid boards.

This is the case for Aztron who have developed a complete range: All-Round (New Callisto), Touring (Europa & Apollo), Race (New Sonic), Surf and Foil (Falcon X).

It remains to be seen whether it is the right

time for retailers to invest in high-performance rigid SUPs (race, surf, foil, wing, whitewater...). Unless you know your customers inside out, it is advisable to leave this market to direct sales or to use dropshipping. In general, for inflatables and rigids alike, “as macro-economic pressures push on consumers, it’s important to remember that brand wins,” says Zack Eckert, VP of Sales at Bote. On a similar note, John Hibbard, boss of Red Paddle Co reminds retailers that they need to offer more to the customer than what direct brands can do on the cheap and that is to provide quality and after-sales customer service.©

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 More refined iSUP shapes
- 2 Touring- inflatable and rigid
- 3 SUP for ladies and kids
- 4 The SUP kayak
- 5 “Bullet proof” Rigid SUPs

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Entrepreneur and SOURCE Mag alumni, Russell Field has launched a new surf traction company based out of the English North East. A lifelong surfer, Russel's engineered the SurfDek product to offer maximum grip and has done so through extensive R&D. Offering good terms on small MOQs, custom pad options and a product that straddles both surf and kite categories, Russell gives us the details.

Please tell us about the history behind SurfDek and about its launch.

SurfDek came to fruition in early 2021 when I started working with a local company in the North East of England to test a new material that performs well in the marine industry. The idea was to apply the material for use in surfing and strapless kitesurfing. After testing it, we quickly realised this new material offered a leap forward in surfboard traction and offered the potential to bring a great product to the market. The website was launched late last year and the brand came to life. You can now purchase through our website, as well as a handful of retailers across the UK.

Who's on the management team and what are their backgrounds?

Currently, I am spearheading the business. I have been surfing since a young age and kitesurfing strapless with a surfboard since 2005, which has seen me compete nationally in years gone by. Professionally, I run a marketing agency with a number of clients in the action sports industry and have a background in sales. I have a team of testers throughout the country who are helping me with the project.

Walk us through your design process?

There are two major components to the business;



our pilot product SurfDek Hex Pad packs and our custom and bespoke OEM offering. When designing the Hex Pad packs it made sense to use hexagons. You can easily cover any area of a board to your preference, due to their modular nature. There is nothing new about using this shape in surfboard traction however, when combined with SurfDek's new material, you get a brand new style of performance.

From our state-of-the-art design centre in Tyne and Wear, fully bespoke traction pieces can be created to meet your needs. We use a computer-aided machine that can create half/full traction pads (tail pads,



front deck pads, full surfboard deck pads) to specification for any type of board. This can include your branding/artwork/logos using laser engraving.

Tell us about the materials you use?

In your hand, our brushed PE/EVA material looks smooth, but when you get it wet you can really feel what its benefits are. Unlike traditional deck pads, there is no need for diamonds, stripes or pyramids (although we can still produce them). This creates an even better feel under your feet, whilst still maximising grip. Some of our initial feedback has been that the pads seem thick, as we use 3-5mm materials. After testing, everyone agrees that your feet sink nicely into our pads; it's what makes them work.

We have had really positive feedback so far from testers of the product and it's great to see surfers and kite surfers starting to adopt SurfDek

pads on their boards in our home market. Recently one of our customers said to me after trying our hex pads, "You know, it makes you realise that regular deck pads are kind of slippery", which made me smile. Being able to move your feet to trim your board is obviously important. When we talk about maximised grip, we mean when your feet are engaged.

What sets you aside from other brands on the market?

Our pads work on all board types – Epoxy, PU, Wood and Foam. They also bond extremely well to second hand surfboards and our Hex Pads easily blend into un-even, pressure-dinged decks. You often hear of other products currently on the market losing performance with continued use. We have tested our new material rigorously with no deterioration. It's safe to say there has been a huge increase in surfer numbers worldwide. Our industry is thriving and SurfDek Hex Pad



packs are a perfect add-on sale for beginner soft boards. Unlike our international counter-parts, we can offer short lead times and low minimum quantities.

What can we expect from SurfDek in the upcoming years?

At the moment we are continually testing new variations of the product, working on 1-2-1 projects and some collaborations for bespoke and custom pads. We are working on a couple of kick tail options (currently in testing), so you can expect our portfolio to rapidly increase as SurfDek expands. I'm looking to get heavily involved in sponsoring surfing/kitesurfing events, as we continue through 2022. We will be holding beach demos across the country and focusing on expanding our athlete teams. ©

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After the pandemic comes the war. The trade situation in Germany and on international markets remains very tense. No one knows what the future holds. Gas and oil prices are skyrocketing. It really says a lot if you get cheaper petrol in

Switzerland than in Germany.

We do not intend to go into detail here about what is happening in Ukraine. I think we all agree that what Mr Putin is doing is not right.

The one positive development that has taken place Germany-wide is that finally, since Sunday, 3 April 2022, the obligation to wear a face mask when visiting shops has been lifted. Admittedly, it still feels very strange and it is up to the individual to decide how to deal with the situation. Unfortunately, the number of Covid cases in Germany remains at an all-time high.

We all hope that there will be no more shutdowns or other such situations in the future.

Meanwhile, the supply chains are once again experiencing disruptions and being put to the test following a new shutdown of the port in Shanghai, one of the most important ports in the world.

Should China go into a complete lockdown, we can only hope that there will be no major impact on the supply chains for the remaining summer goods or the autumn and winter goods. In the next German Market Insight we will know more about this.

But let's move on to the good news from this winter: according to the German association of cable cars and ski lifts (VDS), the past winter season can be seen in a positive light. After the standstill caused by Covid last year, most cable car operators are very satisfied. VDS

state: "The guests' excitement and happiness at finally being able to get back on the slopes was huge."

Especially at the beginning of the winter, there had been concerns that Covid would derail yet another season – a fear that was shared by retailers. In the end, however, the season has turned out to be highly successful. Old stock still sold very well, thereby making up to some extent for the lack of sales from last winter.

We have spoken to Pryde Group (German distributor to Nidecker, Flow Bindings, Cabrinha, JP Australia, NeilPryde & more)'s Sepp Hass about the season. "It has been a very good season for us until the end of the carnival holidays this year, with revenue really picking up. Furthermore, we have been able to fill 90% of the follow-up orders with fast-moving items that we had in stock." On the topic of pre-orders, Sepp is buoyant with things back at pre-pandemic levels. However, some of our customers have chosen to discontinue snowboards from the product range." Swinging back to the positive news, Nidecker introduced a new easy entry binder: "The new binding has received a very positive response from all sides – everyone who tested it was completely satisfied with its functionality and subsequently placed an order. The popularity of the new binding has by far exceeded expectations in our sales region (Germany/Austria) as well as at NDK int. This is probably also due to the hype around easy-entry bindings." So how are schedules looking for next winter? "We are perfectly on schedule and expect to be able to deliver in full again by mid- to late September. As regards pre-orders – late orders for smaller quantities are still trickling in – retailers cannot expect a large amount of excess stock for subsequent deliveries during the next season, neither from us nor from Nidecker. It is all pretty tightly planned, except for a few models going through from 22/23 to 23/24."

Many brands, as we heard, had a similar experience as Pryde Group. Unfortunately, the key issue of concern continues to revolve around production capacity and the associated supply chains. We will give you more feedback on that.

Let us now move on to talk about surf, which is currently a hot topic. The surf industry is currently experiencing a major surge in Germany and Europe. The demand for wetsuits and surf hardware has reached an all-time high. Soon, every week will see the launch of new wave projects such as Land-Locked Germany. The wave in Nuremberg has only just opened and the blackforestwave opens on 10 April. Surfing is growing and growing...

We talked to Guillaume Marage, CEO of Poncho brand After Essentials and Sugarmill Europe (Pyzel), about the situation with his brands. "We have very few difficulties as far as After Ponchos are concerned, given the fact that we manufacture in Europe. Thus, we could already deliver 80% of our pre-orders and we still have stock available. However, with products like SUPs or hats, which, in part, we import from Asia, we have delays of up to one month. At Pyzel Surfboards we have no delays, we have delivered pre-books, and custom boards take 6-8 weeks at the moment. However, we are also struggling with shipping prices from us to the shops. As oil and gas become more expensive, prices are rising here as well. The status quo, however, is still the same." And what about the upcoming months? "We expect surf to grow again, but because of the war, the purchasing behaviour is rather hesitant at the moment. We are trying to do everything we can to make sure we have stock available. And there are good signs. However, everything depends also on other factors that are not entirely within our control. But we are well prepared for the next few months."

Turning to SUP we spoke with Robin Kassel

from Main-SUP, one of the biggest SUP operators in Germany. "We are all set, ready to start. We've even kept our location running on standby this winter and have been offering courses on a regular basis." And how's product availability? "Everything we have planned actually arrives within plus/minus 2 weeks of the delivery date. But we are actually already very well equipped." Talk to us about foiling... "Our focus is of course on SUP, but we are also present in the foil sector. We have everything needed and offer courses and equipment for testing. In general, we keep a close eye on this entire segment to make sure we don't miss out on anything."

Wakeboarding saw huge growth last summer. We spoke with Elisabeth (Lisi) Lindinger, who in addition to the water ski park in Aschheim, at the end of last year she also became the proud owner of the Turncable in Thannhausen. "We intend to create an appealing offer for wakeboarders at both locations. We want to redesign the wake park and offer camps. The infrastructure in Thannhausen offers so many amazing possibilities, and we want to make full use of them. Camping, hostel, two full-size cable parks, 2x System 2.0 and a miniramp. Everything action sports addicts could wish for." And what are her hopes for this summer? "That everything keeps looking good and positive and that we can open normally. But most importantly, that wakeboarders have fun and that we see a smile on people's faces." And finishing off our April/May German Market Insight, Lisi warns, "wakeboarding is undergoing a transformation. At the moment it is experiencing a steady growth. However, the curve will only maintain this direction if everyone, from lift operators to the wakeboard industry, continues to promote this sport by working together."

TOBI HAMMER



BIG WIG INTERVIEW

PAT O'CONNEL - FLORENCE MARINE X

One of the nicest guys in the surf industry, we first spoke with Pat O'Connell at the inaugural WCT event at Kelly Slater's Surf Ranch Pro 2018, then serving as VP of Sports Marketing at Hurley. Since then, Pat went on to head up competitions at the WSL and is now back working with the Hurley family and John John Florence on the world champion surfer's brand Florence Marine X. Launched to great fanfare within the surf industry, they are positioning the brand as more than just a surf company. We speak with Pat to find out more about their bespoke wetsuit programme and discover how they are leveraging community with great effect – often with exclusive offers for brand membership holders, selling within a day. We also gauge Pat's thoughts on how a newly formed company balances D2C efforts with the wholesale channel. Interview by SOURCE Editor Harry MT. Interview by Source Editor, Harry MT.

Once you place your order, you'll get a confirmation email and 6-8 weeks later the suit will land on your doorstep. We'll just warn you: once you wear one, you'll never want to wear another wetsuit ever again.

Pat, please give us an insight into your work background after being a pro surfer?

So in 2005 I left the Tour and was looking for my next adventure. I rang up Bob Hurley and asked him if I could run a region for him. I thought to myself, how hard could this be? Thankfully he had the wisdom to ask me to come in first and try my hand at just being in an office to start. I was still at the point in my life where I was chasing swells, and if the waves were good, I definitely wasn't going into

I've always told my colleagues: anyone can send an email. The ability to pick up the phone and call someone and make things happen is the reason we are in the positions we're in.

the office or replying to emails. But Bob was – and still is – a great mentor and coach. He was understanding and over time I was able to get some small wins in the sports marketing realm. That helped me see what I was good at and let me focus. During that time, we took on the Hurley Pro, the US Open in Huntington Beach and redefined what was thought possible in terms of a brand putting on an innovative event. Additionally – and what I'm most proud of – is that we assembled arguably the best surf team in history in partnership with our then parent company, Nike (including the

signing of John John Florence). After 15 years, I left my Hurley family to join the WSL to lead competitions, which is something I've been passionate about since the beginning. Today I've re-joined Bob, John Florence and some great people from the Hurley days and we've launched a new outdoor venture called Florence Marine X.

Pat, talk to us about what makes FMX a unique brand on the market.

Florence Marine X stands alone in that it's truly an athlete-founded and athlete-led brand. John John is the best surfer in the world, and he's the ultimate test pilot for our gear when he's out in the water. We're 100% focused on building gear to help you get outside and thrive in the elements, and that all stems from John. He's the most passionate and focused outdoor person I've ever been around. He wakes up, looks out the window and picks his adventure for the day. Surfing, sailing, foiling, open-ocean paddling – whatever the weather and the ocean is dictating for that day is what guides him. This never-ending pursuit and curiosity is what sets our brand and our products apart.

Talk to us about the bespoke wetsuit programme.

When we decided to bring wetsuits to market, we had a choice: deliver an average wetsuit at an average price,

or offer the best of the best. For years, a lot of the top surfers in the world received their wetsuits from some select manufactures in Japan who are the best on earth at what they do, including John. We said, how cool would it be if we could offer that same experience to our members? We have 9 different thicknesses/styles and 4 different colours for you to choose from on our site, ranging from hooded fullsuits to padded impact suits, and each suit is made to order. Once you place your order, you'll get a confirmation email and 6-8 weeks later the suit will land on your doorstep. We'll just warn you: once you wear one, you'll never want to wear another wetsuit ever again.

We've made them available exclusively to Florence members, and they'll usually sell out in a day.

exceptionally well to both the gear and our brand overall. John has a special relationship with Europe. He clinched his first world title in Portugal, and he's been exploring the coastline since he was a young kid. The ethos of Florence Marine X, with its focus on exploring the unknown and leaning into curiosity beyond just surf, seems to mesh really well with our customers in the region.

Part of our membership program is the ability to apply to become a wear-tester for our brand. We call them our Florence Test Pilots, and so far we've had a professional sailor, a downhill skateboarder and a few other members from around Europe participate to give us feedback on our gear. It's been great to connect with the local community and also for us to get real insight in how our gear is helping them get outside and enjoy their surroundings.

Overall, we've had a warm welcome in Europe, and we're excited for what's on the horizon.

Your membership model is interesting... and presumably a great way to find out more about your customers to enable the company to better communicate with and sell to them?

When we launched, our goal beyond just producing high-quality, responsibly-made gear was to build a community and offer an ongoing conversation - that's why we started the Florence Marine X Society.



How has the company been received in Europe? We hear it's in high demand...

We launched our first products along with membership online in the EU and UK late last year, and we'll be delivering to wholesale accounts very soon. So far, our community there has responded

It's a one-time cost to sign up, with a portion of that going to environmental causes. And once you're in, you're in. Once you sign up, you get first access to new gear, we'll drop new edits from John early or exclusively for you to watch, and you're able to sign up to be a Florence Test Pilot where members get to test our products and give us feedback on how to make it better. It's been a really cool journey so far, the response has been epic, and we're really looking forward to the horizon.

Will you guys ever add any other pros to the team?

While I don't see us creating a traditional 'surf team,' we definitely see opportunities to work with great regional ambassadors and people doing amazing things that inspire others.

What have been the best selling products since launch?

We're an outdoor brand anchored in the water, and people are coming to us with an expectation that we'll make the best gear in the world to help you thrive in a marine environment. From the beginning, we've had a maniacal focus on boardshorts and sun-protective gear. As people begin to get their hands on either our Block Boardshort or our UPF Active Shirts, word of mouth spreads and oftentimes we are selling out online before we get the chance to let people know we've got new products available. A great example has been our Hooded Rashguard. John had a unique need for this piece, and he wore one almost every day he went surfing at home on the North Shore. We've made them available exclusively to Florence members, and they'll usually sell out in a day. It's really cool to see people react

so positively to the gear, and we're so thankful for their support.

We've got some great new products on the horizon and we're confident people are going to enjoy them.

What are the 3 biggest lessons you've brought to the company from your time at Hurley & the WSL?

- Authenticity first. You have to start from a good, honest place or else you've already lost before you've begun.
- Community above all. You can't go it alone. It takes a team working together towards a common goal to make great stuff happen.
- Nothing is possible without relationships. I've always told my colleagues: anyone can send an email. The ability to pick up the phone and call someone and make things happen is the reason we are in the positions we're in.

What new opportunities do you see for the brand going forward?

We're really excited for the future. I see our potential as limitless, and as long as there is a horizon out there to chase, we see an opportunity to bring great products and inspiration to people all around the world.

What does the company see as the perfect harmony of selling in the wholesale channel while also selling D2C on your own website?

Both wholesale and DTC have their own strengths, and each share unique abilities to reach people and curate experiences in their own way. Our goal is to be accessible to those who are looking for responsibly-made gear to motivate themselves to get outside, regardless of the channel.

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

IMPACT VESTS 2022

Despite recent turbulence, the wakeboarding market continues to grow - especially the demand for impact vests, which are vital for all segments of this sport. And work in other disciplines as well. Retail Buyer's Guide
by Anna Langer.

MARKET SITUATION

With everything going on, the last two years have been a roller coaster for everyone. Challenging manufacturing timelines, material shortages and logistical issues, which can be countered with strategical planning as O'Neill report. This is paired with high demand as Hyperlite state, Liquid Force recorded one of their best years so far and Soöruz also mention high pre-orders.

Most brands' products are created as crossovers, catering for all disciplines of wakeboarding. "We put our best design first, and push it across every market. If it floats and protects, it works on all bodies of water and in all wakeboard riding scenarios." says Jeff McKee from Slingshot Wake. With Europe being a cable heavy market, most inspiration comes from here. "As Liquid Force has enjoyed success in the cable market, we look to this market for colour trends and features. The cable/park market definitely has more of a street/skate vibe to it compared to the boat market and tends to lead the overall design, colour pallets, etc," says Marketing Director Aaron Grace. O'Neill state that park and boat are their strongest growth areas with a slight resurgence in boat use. Jobe on the other hand "cater to the boating market in general, from families who have fun on a towable, to wakeboarders who want to send it" says William Doornekamp, Brand Manager.

Soöruz also mention the uprising of foil, especially Wingfoil as promising for the impact vest market and Liquid Force agree with seeing increased growth here.

STYLE

New here is a completely white jacket by Trevor Maur from Hyperlite and an earth tone colour palette by Liquid Force. In general designs are clean and simple. Soöruz keep their design technical and elegant with a touch of punk/rock design for some pieces, Jet Pilot favour strong style lines with fits that are comfortable, safe and unique to their brand and Slingshot state that "simplicity is key when it comes to jacket design and styling. Function is first, and after that the rest is up to the individual."

Another trend is "Mix 'n Match", as sported by Jobe: "If you buy a wakeboard in the shop, you need to be able to buy a matching vest as well. This goes for all our products because we see that this works." O'Neill also use many colours, prints and materials from their wetsuit line-up to merchandise throughout the impact vest category.

FIT

Yet function is the most important: "First and foremost comes performance at O'Neill so finding the perfect combination of fit and

protection whilst using the lightest materials available, is often what dictates the style of each vest." Jobe agree that "people want to feel safe and regulations are making this mandatory for multiple occasions." Hence brands aim "to find that sweet spot where flexibility and performance / protection all work together without sacrificing movement or comfort" muses Jetpilot.

Hyperlite increased the foam content for all Impact Jackets in their line: "Not only does this increase the buoyancy of the jacket, it also provides more protection in case of gnarly wipeouts or folding on a feature" and Liquid Force also trend toward more protective foam: "Our challenge is to use thicker foam but not at the cost of flexibility and comfort."

O'Brien on the other have a different approach: lifejackets, since after a bad crash, most people like to float effortlessly in the water. "They flex and move with the rider, provide padding in the places that need protection, and keep you safer on the water than a standard impact vest."

In the end, it all comes down to personal preference. "The end-user's choice of vest is purely based on THEIR preference not on the occasion they use it for," finds William from Jobe Sports. He adds that: "you hear that a lot don't even always think this through and just buy what they feel has a nice fit." Since there are so many different preferences through boat, park, surf and skate, it's just a case of offering everything to everyone find O'Neill.

TECH FEATURES

Liquid Force highlight the Spector Vest with plastic amour panels for cable riders and their exclusive Bio-Spine pattern for more

shoulder space to flex. Soöruz introduce the FIFTY jacket especially for Wingfoil and Wakeboard: "We developed a special system



allowing our customers to hook the wing in order to relieve some pressure from the arms to ride longer without restriction and avoid injuries" explains Product Engineer Marin Mauriac.

Jetpilot feature 360 Stretch Neoprene, Flex-Lite Ultra Neoprene and bevelled edge buoyancy foam. O'Neill highlight their unique Nytrolite Foam that is lighter and provides more protection for its size compared to regular foams. Most life jackets from O'Brien incorporate BioLite, an eco-friendly alternative to traditional neoprene. ©

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Increased buoyancy
- 2 Functional fits
- 3 Signature series
- 4 Clean designs



UK-based I Five Skateboards have established themselves as one of Europe's finest skate distros and are now pushing the boundaries of what's possible in skateboard printing. We speak with company founder Adam Wood (who also started Karma Skateboards in 2002) about their cutting edge printing techniques and find out more about their setup.

Please could we have a history of I five/skateboard printing and yourcustomskateboard.com

Growing up skateboarding, working in several skate shops and then as a buyer for a skateboard distribution company, it was a natural progression to start my own company in an area I already knew well. Subsequently, I Five Distribution was created in 2002. We started with importing unknown USA Skate brands like Capix, Randoms, Momentum & Colosseum. After a short while I saw there was room for another UK skate brand and created Karma Skateboards in late 2002 (now under different ownership). Over the years we had spent much time & money growing brands, importing, and distributing Deck Brands/

Clothing Brands/Accessory Brands etc, but this version of our business model had some great success and a fair share of tough times too.

Why did you enter the skateboard deck printing market?

I decided to invest in our own printing equipment to run alongside the distribution operation as importing printed decks from the USA had become somewhat difficult. We wished to reduce errors and speed up customer order turnaround times. So by creating our own decks, we could control all production factors such as the deck quality, transfer printing and finishing. We now have much more flexibility and less money tied up in printed stock.

Tell us about your board printing set up.

We initially bought the first heat transfer machine in the UK back in 2007. This allowed us to create our own bulk/long run high-definition prints on our decks, and for our customers own brands of decks as well. In 2016 we were the first in Europe to develop a digital hybrid process which enabled us to print 'on demand' singular decks and short runs. We now have a B2B website www.skateboardprinting.co.uk and a B2C website www.yourcustomskateboard.com here's our 5 star rated trustpilot reviews. uk.trustpilot.com/review/yourcustomskateboard.co.uk

What printing options do you offer?

We have 23 shapes and sizes in 100% Canadian Hard Rock Maple. This consists of a full range of popsicle decks from a Kid's specific 7.25 mini popsicle deck right up to 9" popsicle, Old School shapes, Old school meets new school, 90's football shapes, Cruisers, Pool shapes etc. We also offer spot colour prints, CMYK Prints, Metallics, Full Digital Prints, Complete Skateboards, Stickers, Laser Cut Grip Tape, Printed Grip Tape, OEM Printed Wheels, OEM packets of Bolts. We also still distribute trucks, wheels, bolts, bearings, grip tape, T Tools etc.

Why do you feel this market has been so buoyant over the last couple of years?

Lockdown 2020 coincided with a long spell of great UK weather, bringing out all ages to try new activities, plus the old school skaters had the time and means to rekindle their love of skateboarding. The summer Olympics now featuring skateboarding were postponed to 2021 and this kept the momentum going through the dreary winter months. Sky Brown's popularity & influence attracting more girls & women to skate and 80's fashion & skate inspired clothing added to the revival. TV advertisements were and still are littered with positive messages such as the mental health benefits of skateboarding and primetime sskate/BMX documentaries on terrestrial TV channels highlighting the inclusive culture of the skateboard community, create excellent positive messages.

What's the advantage for retailers and businesses to use your printing service?

Customers have confidence in our quality and attention to detail, as we sell only the very best decks. We have 20 plus years of industry experience and are still skater owned and work closely

with our customers to ensure that their artwork is of the highest quality possible and make it easy for them to speak directly to us with any questions. We offer the option to purchase just 1 sample deck before committing to a bulk run. This is less scary particularly for someone for whom it's their first foray into getting their own brand of decks printed. On the green side our decks are pressed individually with an environmentally friendly water-based glue and our shrink wrap is fully recyclable. Finally, we have an exceptional eye for quality control and no duty for UK customers. We have (directly & indirectly) printed decks & completes for brands such as: Sony, G-Shock, Virgin, 7UP, Mountain Dew, VICE, H & M, Jimmy Choo, Rolls Royce, DC Shoes, Cartoon Network, Uncommon, Universal Music (QUEEN 50th Anniversary) Hospital Records, Island Records, Sunday Brunch, Keith Lemon ...to name a few.



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

HANGING SHOES 2022

Two years wearing nothing but slippers may have invited consumers to value comfort over looks. Brands provide the aesthetics and versatility to take the habit outdoors, beyond the beach and into the workplace. **By Rocio Enriquez.**



When it comes to hanging shoes, the priority remains comfort. A light, easy on and off, comfortable shoe adds to the relaxed mood wearers are aiming for. Nevertheless, sustainability is pushing its way to the top of the list of demands. Versatility offers added value, especially for women. “Consumers look for sophisticated styles that transition well from beach to bar”, says Karl Read from

“The new fanning Baja is perfect for any excursion and offers total comfort and stability, with our iconic built-in bottle opener” Jenny Cooper, Reef

Foam Life. This is pushing the development of sandals and slides. Men pay special attention to their soles and footbeds, looking for tech and textures.

STYLES

Most brands are launching styles that meet the above demands. Cool is adding more styles with side straps that cover the sole. "It gives a new vision to the sandal", says Product Designer, J  r  my Lagrost. Sandals are key for the Havaianas 2022 collection too. They announce many novelties in this category. They are particularly proud of the reinvention of their popular You St. Tropez style. Keeping the same shape, the new You Malta and You Malta Mix have a mixed fabric single strap. Reef steps up comfort with the Santa Ana. Their Ridiculous Comfort MaxTM technology provides a roomy sandal with complete contouring, arch support, and cushioning. For men, Reef has redesigned their popular Fanning style. "The new fanning Baja is perfect for any excursion. It offers total comfort and stability, with our iconic built-in bottle opener", says Jenny Cooper. Sliders continue to be trendy. Foam Life announces their own version for this season, offering two options for men and three for women. Havaianas expands their range with the Slide Classic and Slide Brasil. Flojo's focuses on slip-ons. They announce two new styles for women. The Kinsley is a versatile elastic lace slip-on. The Myra is a striped, twin-gore style. The waste repurposing brand Indosole launches a new concept this summer with recycled sneaker soles.

"We have introduced cork and a Sugarcane EVA foam that's used on the footbed and outsole"

Karl Read, Foam Life

MATERIALS AND CONSTRUCTION

Sustainability is a big topic. Indosole was born from the idea of giving discarded tires a second life. This Summer, they use their same SETT technology to repurpose discarded sneaker soles. They source them

"This year we introduce natural materials in our production" John Lodge, Beachy Feet

from the two hundred thousand defected soles discarded in 1ndonesia every month. Reef chooses sustainable materials too. Their webbing, toe posts and liners are made with recycled PET. They use natural materials like cotton, wood, cork, jute and paper. Their leather is responsibly sourced, conserving over one million gallons of water. They are introducing a carbon-neutral midsole made of renewable sugarcane. Foam Life joins the sugarcane experiment. "We have introduced cork and a Sugarcane EVA foam that's used on the footbed and outsole", says Karl Read. Styles that do not feature this novelty, have recycled EVA foam and brushed TPE foam. Their entire range is PVC free, and 30% of it uses a soft webbing toe post made of recycled plastic bottles. They have also increased the use of hemp and organic cotton canvas. Havaianas also experiments with recycled materials. The residual strap material from their Top and Tradi styles goes back into their manufacturing process. Beachy Feet launches a whole new plastic-free collection

called "Naturally Beachy". They are soft, lightweight, durable and FSC certified. "This year we introduce natural materials in our production", announces John Lodge.

There are more things happening in materials and construction beyond sustainability. Beachy Feet's "Aquaticos" collection is made from lightweight, stretchy and breathable material with a slim rubber sole. Havaianas is working with a new rubber mixing technique. They have also developed a new printing technique that allows them to create fluid metallic textures. Flojo's is using lots of elastic and gore. They aim for an easy on-off feeling,

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LIVING AROUND THE GLOBE.**



cool-shoe.com



while keeping the shoe secure on the foot. Cool announces new footbeds and ergonomic sandals, both for men and women.

COLOURS AND PRINTS

Brands keep a good offering of neutrals with nudes and classic colours. It is on their pop offering where they develop their own stories. Beachy Feet draws inspiration from their Andalusian heritage. They have Mediterranean flavoured tilework and patterns in their prints. This summer, they add two more collections. “Club de Playa” is inspired in the Beach and Resort culture from the 80s, with geo patterns, neon and fluoro colours. Their Action Sport and Sport Lifestyle collection features tropical and floral prints. Cool keeps the predominance of dark and classic colours but introduces three colour stories this Summer. “Coolifornia” explores the Cali beach roots of the brand in the 80s. “Ethicool” offers patterns and colours inspired by the different surf trips of their team around the world. “Tropicool” displays elements of fauna and flora of tropical seaside locations. Foam Life’s keeps black, grey, and different shades of browns as basic colours. Their pop colour of choice for this Summer is spearmint. We find it as a solid base colour and as a highlight in retro stripes for men. In women’s collections, it leads the pop colour range along with hot coral pink and pink apricot. Animal prints are present too, in monochrome or in bright colours. Flojo’s likes to combine natural tones with inner lining patterns and contrast stripping. Havaianas main colours are pastels and the new metallics. They are also launching a “Slim Neutrals” collection with nude colours, an all-time fan favourite. Reef is satisfied with their mixture of core colours. Men’s key colours are Caribbean blue, vintage nasty, slate, and red/raven. For women’s they have chosen cloud, sand, rose and purple. Their prints are a celebration of summer, with floral, tropical, and sunset prints. Indosole will be offering white and orange soles for the first

time. Burgundy is their choice of pop colour this season.

SUSTAINABILITY

We’ve seen a lot about sustainability in materials. Nonetheless, there are other efforts worth mentioning. Packaging ditches plastic for recycled versions, or natural materials



like paper. Cool’s swing tags are made from recycled cardboard and attached to the shoe with a cord. They have also introduced biodegradable polybags. Foam Life has the same formula for swing tags, extending the use of recycled cardboard to their hangers too. Their packing tape is made of paper. Their shoe pouches and mailer bags are made from biodegradable corn starch. Instead of silica gel, they use non-toxic, natural clay anti-moisture sachets. Reef’s hangers, shoe boxes and hang tags are made from recycled paper. Their new

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polybag is made from 100% recycled plastic and certified by Global Recycling Standard. Brands are as conscious as possible in their manufacturing processes. Havaianas claims that 60% of the energy used in factories comes from renewable sources. Reef only works with suppliers who don't use restricted chemicals.

MARKETING AND RETAILER SUPPORT

There are marketing stories supporting these collections. Beachy Feet rolls out "Our Inspiration" message. They have planned campaigns around Beach Club culture, Resort Life, Action Sports, Clean Beaches, and Exploration. Cool focuses their communication on the three colour stories they are launching. They will also make some noise about their 40th anniversary. Foam Life pushes their new sugarcane derived foam. They will also communicate about their "Live Less Ordinary" slogan. The emphasis is not on the product but on the lifestyle and the feeling that beach culture brings to each of us. Flojo's ties everything to their core slogan "Just hanging out since 1972". They celebrate their 50th anniversary this summer, so we'll see some communication about that too. Havaianas came up with a new manifesto and tag line recently, "Designed for a free life". The essence of this message is that their shoes are a fresh of breath air, allowing people who wear them to feel free. All campaigns will align with this mantra. They are launching the International Free Feet Day on June 24th. They will promote people attending work or school in their Havaianas. They have some collaborations too. They have already launched one with Vibram, that will feature the Top and Luna strap styles with the iconic Vibram sole. It is expected to attract the attention of street style lovers. Reef focuses their efforts on three styles, the Fanning Baja for men and the Santa Ana and Water Court for women. They will keep rolling their "Ridiculously Comfortable" marketing campaign. Indosole launches their "Lost Sole" campaign in April. It'll come with a short video

and marketing assets to communicate about the repurposed sneaker soles.

POS units and visual content are the key forms of retailer support. Reef and Indosole offer staff training. Reef is doing an extra effort in the UK this season. They will have stands in different trade shows and a targeted online and social media presence. Beachy Feet and Foam Life keep their prices consistent and their margins competitive, avoiding discounts. Beachy Feet is very reactive to customer feedback. Sometimes this results in capsule collections for specific markets. Foam Life had a great response to their "Gift with Purchase" action. They teamed up with Wideye to supply a tin of foot balm with each purchase. They plan to repeat the action this year. Havaianas has rolled out their "Take Back" programme into several strategic retail partners. They provide in-store materials to promote the recycling of Havaianas.

Most brands suffered delays due to the ongoing bottleneck situation in supply chains. However, most of them found the solution in moving their cycles forward. This has allowed them to deliver with reasonable timing. Beachy Feet has adopted a "never out of stock" mentality, producing more than they are ordered. Foam Life has also ordered extra stock. Brands have found ways to secure retailers are stocked for the warmer days. With a touch of sun and heat by the weather gods, good sales will be guaranteed. ©

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Widespread use of sustainable materials
- 2 Versatile styles
- 3 Sandals and sliders trending
- 4 Production cycles moved forward to secure deliveries

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EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

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WHITESPACE



In case you missed it, Shaun White launched a snowboard company. He cleverly debuted the boards during his final Olympic outing at Beijing 2022 and says he wants to use the brand to sponsor up-and-coming snowboarders, much the same as Jake Burton did with Shaun as a kid. Operating through the Kemper Snowboards sales network globally, we spoke with the team at Whitespace to find out more about their production, board line-up and marketing.

What was Shaun's thinking behind launching his own brand of snowboards?

Throughout Shaun's entire career he had lucrative sponsorships with the likes of Burton, Oakley, and Target. Shaun retired from his halfpipe competition career and wanted to have a brand he could call his own as he embarks on his next chapter of snowboarding. Whitespace will be the catalyst to sponsor up-and-coming snowboarders just like Jake Burton did with Shaun when he was a kid.

Why was season 22/23 the right time to launch?

Shaun made his final run at his 5th and final Olympics and this winter was the perfect platform to springboard the Whitespace brand into the market internationally. As everyone saw, Whitespace was everywhere during this last winter Olympics.

Who else is on the management team?

Whitespace is a partnership between Shaun and his older brother, Jesse who is famously the reason Shaun switched from skiing

to snowboarding while growing up.

Talk us through the initial offering of boards

For 22/23 there will be three models offered within the Whitespace collection. There will be a Shaun White Pro (SWP) which is modelled around Shaun's pipe/freestyle board, the AMF (All-Mountain Freestyle) which is the park board, and the POW board for slashing epic powder turns.

White doesn't want his boards to have all types of

flashy graphics; if anything, he feels that will detract from the fact that, with his decades of experience and name backing the brand the boards' performance is the selling point. Shaun likes the cleanness of the boards. There are some things in his life where he is very clean and organized and everything has to be perfect, but there's some chaos in there as well. The brand's aesthetic really matches what Shaun is all about.

How would you describe the brand's board offering?

The Freestyle Shaun White Pro was developed through insights from Shaun and his years of riding experience. The board is built to hold an edge, snap through the flats, and go super fast. The SWP has an X-Wood core, traditional camber flex, and VelocityEdge Control.

The AMF Park Twin has high-speed pop, forgiving flex, and total control. This board will eat up anything you throw at it. The POWDER! is a surf-inspired powder snowboard that was developed to snap high-speed carves and handle deep snow in tight situations. The Shaun White Pro Youth includes a responsive design, forgiving flex, and the same graphic package as the Shaun White Pro.

Where will the boards be made?

The boards are made in the same locations as Kemper Snowboards which is at GP87 factory in China.

How will you be marketing the boards? Can we expect Shaun to be on top these from now on?

Shaun is currently riding his model now and rode it all through the 2022 Winter Olympics.

Shaun has been the face of snowboarding for many years, so he brings immediate exposure to the Whitespace brand. In addition, the brand will be marketed through Whitespace and Shaun's personal social channels and sold and distributed through the Kemper Snowboards sales team and channels.

How is the brand being sold in Europe and other regions across the world?

In Europe, the Whitespace brand will be sold through Kemper Snowboards' existing sales relationship with Centrano Distribution. Throughout the rest of the world, Whitespace will be sold through the Kemper Snowboards sales team and distribution partners.

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

SUN CREAM 2022

Whatever their sport of choice, your customers will need some kind of sun protection if they do it outside. Our Retail Buyers Guide for Sun Cream by Anna Langer summaries what's on offer in 2022.



Fortunately for the planet, virtually all sun screen products that target action sports clients take special care of the ingredients they work with, ensuring no additional harm is done to endangered ocean life. From Greenbush, who work with Eco-Cert, to Natural Index certified Nuura, Suntribe, Sun Bum, Sett Surf, EQ, and SeventyOne Percent all the way to the pioneers Himaya, who have worked with mineral filters/zinc from the

"We really made it our mission to make a product we feel good about using on our own friends and family. Products that feel good to use, that are better for you, the animals, and the environment"

Jamie Shohat, Sun Bum

start, you will find mineral only based formulas without chemical filters.

EQs certified organic sun cream is made in France of mostly all natural ingredients and without parabenes,

silicone, alcohol, PEG and natural Vanilla and Patchouli instead of synthetic perfumes. “We really made it our mission to make a product we feel good about using on our own friends and family. Products that feel good to use, that are better for you, the animals, and the environment”, says Sun Bum Director of International Business Jamie Shohat. SeventyOne Percent use what they call: “Clean Beauty ingredients: recognised as good for the skin and

“This year we launch a return empty product scheme with those retailers that want to partner with Himaya on this new policy” Stuart Knowles, Himaya

PACKAGING

Which is a great start but certainly not the end of the journey, especially when it comes to the packaging of the product. Sun Bum design their products to be recyclable, as do Greenbush. Himaya launch a new food-safe 100% recycled plastic and SeventyOne Percent use 55% product recycled plastic and reduced their secondary packaging in 2021 by 80%. Sett Surf recently introduced new “100ml pouches which use 50% less packaging as well as 100ml aluminium bottles which contain no plastic” says brand owner Jane Belcher. They’re also introducing a recycling scheme for their pouches whereby customers get 20% off their next pouch when they return the old one for responsible recycling.

Nuno Viegas, Brand Manager at Nuura explains: “All of our packaging is designed to minimize their environmental impact, even if this means that we have to use different materials with each product. We use cardboard, aluminium and “I’m green-bioplastic” which is made of renewable organic sugarcane; meaning that our packaging is biodegradable, reusable and/or recycled and recyclable.”

Taking this one step further, Himaya expand their refillable system, which is the first on the market: “Every bottle sold means a bottle is removed from the

ocean and disposed of correctly. This year we launch a return empty product scheme with those retailers that want to partner with Himaya on this new policy.” UK based newcomers Sett Surf follow along these lines, with pouches and aluminium bottles are refillable in shops which stock the SETT 5 Litre Bulk container.

SeventyOne Percent also partner with 1% For The Planet, “investing 1% of our turnover in specific actions. We are partnering with Pure Ocean to help fund research projects to protect and rejuvenate the under-water life. We are also encouraging our community to take action and get out on Ocean Day to clean up the beaches,” says Raphael Vannier, Co-Founder and CMO. Himaya have been 1% Partners from the start and engage in projects like planting Mangrove trees in Kenya to help biodiversity, local village employment, protecting the shoreline, ecosystems on the reef and making fishing sustainable.

ACTION SPORTS APPEAL

If the above mentioned efforts in protecting their playgrounds isn’t enough to catch your customers’ attention, there are a few more arguments to opt for with brands dedicated to our sports. Nuura combine their own passion for surfing with the knowledge in dermatological formulation acquired during four generations of pharmacists to provide “maximum sun protection which is needed to be able to enjoy our favourite sports to the fullest.” Sun Bum also are surfers, snowboarders, hikers and bikers themselves, making their products the way they like them

“and for that reason we think you’ll like them too,” says Jamie. Himaya have bagged over 20 years of experience after creating the first waterproof SPF60+ in this market segment, working with world-class athletes and instructors and guides. Also SeventyOne Percent was born from the passion of surfing, looking for an extremely efficient sun protection that would not impact life in the oceans.

EQ remind customers to come back to the pure essence of body movement: joy, by providing a worry-free product and Island Tribe offer an extremely waterproof product that does not sting in the eyes during sweating and water activities.

And if as a shop you’re looking to support other small businesses, you might want to look at stocking Sett Surf, “a small British company trying to do some good. We’d love retailers to give us a chance to prove how great our products are. Plus we offer favourable terms and freebies depending on how many products are ordered.”

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

Seeing that all brands included in this guide have expertise in their field, you can trust them to deliver what they’re meant to do: protect skin from the sun. For which, of course, they need to be waterproof, which is mainly achieved by formulas without water, as EQ and SeventyOne Percent advocate: “By formulating our product without water, it’s a technical and pragmatic way to answer the action sports needs and to avoid sunscreen dilution in the ocean,” says Raphael from SeventyOne.



the planet and no nasties formulation policy.” Island Tribe also state that all of their products are vegan, free of animal testing and contain no perfume, parabenes or oxybenzone.

It seems like the message really got through to the industry here.

Himaya promote their revolutionary Dry-Grip technology, which “ensures the oils in the sunscreen are completely absorbed in the skin leaving it grease free and does not leave a white layer when applied correctly. It can be applied to wet skin, even underwater!” explains Stuart Knowles, founder and CEO.

Sun Bums hypoallergenic formula is water resistant for 80 minutes and is “developed to moisturize and enrich your skin with Vitamin E, an antioxidant that helps to neutralize free radicals, which are the main cause of premature skin aging.” Sett Surf products contain Kalahari Melon Oil, Argan Oil, Jojoba Oil and Aloe Vera, “all of which will nourish, hydrate and moisturise your skin whilst it’s being protected from the sun!” says Jane. Nuura add vitamin F and vitamin E, that offer an additional sun protection while also having an antioxidant effect and help to regenerate the skin as well as Shea butter, Carnauba wax, Sunflower oil, and Aloe vera, which all come from organic farming, offering an anti-inflammatory, hydrating and protective effect. Extracts from sustainably sourced alpine flowers and seaweeds add a moisturizing effect to the Himaya offering and SeventyOne Percent have a special moisturizing face fluid that uses Hyaluronic Acid Prebiotic.

MARKETING

Sun Bum launch a global Skin Cancer Awareness campaign every May: “We show up at planned events and activations around the world and provide sun protection and education to the local community.” EQ launch a new SPF30 Range in May and Greenbush highlight their newly created wooden displays that

are “adaptable according to the season (winter/summer) with magnificent photos printed directly on the wood” says brand owner Hervé. SeventyOne Percent’s campaign is called “Daily Dose of Summer” and encourages nature lovers to fully enjoy the pleasures of nature and make that feeling last all year long.

POS SUPPORT

“We train resellers with a specific guide to all our products and explain to them the qualities and strengths of our entire range. Brochures and visuals are distributed to points of sale, and soon also the brand new wooden displays,” says Hervé. Himaya provide sustainably sourced displays for the counter and self-standing island style POS. Sun Bum are known for their custom wooden floor fixtures topped with their world-famous Sonny vinyl figure, which “does an awesome job of showcasing the vibe of who we are as a company.” SeventyOne Percent offer three sizes of display to adapt to the space available in store, SETT Surf have 3 tier branded bamboo displays as well as branded wooden display trays and Nuura give two options of displays: small and large, both of high quality and built from recycled and completely biodegradable materials.®

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 No white residue on skin
- 2 Non-harmful ingredients
- 3 Refillable containers
- 4 Wooden displays

Rider: Joost Vink

www.islandtribe.eu

UK

FRANCE
GERMANY
ITALY
SWISS
SPAIN
PORTUGAL

F-Putin!

What a difference one issue makes! It is really hard to focus on day-to-day business and our so-called ‘normal’ life when war is raging Ukraine. A war in Eu-

rope? A war on our near neighbours, on our friends, on colleagues creating the largest refugee crisis since WWII. WTF?

Almost impossible to comprehend. Almost impossible to believe what havoc one mad-man can reap on his neighbours. Almost impossible to think of those friends and colleagues that you shared a laugh, a joke and a beer with at ISPO are now facing this reality, now fighting to save their homeland, their homes and families... their lives. F Putin.

So how can you go about writing UK Market Intel? Calling colleagues in the boardsports business and asking them “how’s business?” It all seems a little futile and, if I am honest, it makes you feel guilty going about your daily life as if nothing is happening. F Putin.

As an industry I know that the boardsports community are compassionate and I am pretty sure that we are all, as individuals, brands and companies trying to do something to help.

For those based in the UK, I would encourage you to consider offering a room or a home to refugees even if our government seem to want to make it as hard as they can - but it is possible... with some perseverance.

And so back to the day-to-day. How is it? Winter season has ended really well and it was a good lesson for everyone as to how good business really can be later in the season. As a distributor, we were virtually

sold out with next to nothing on closeout. Indeed one of our key brands experienced sales more 10 times over the forecast for Feb/March – yeah the forecast was modest but even so it was a pleasant surprise. Retailers are reporting clean shelves and only now (early April) are some retailers going on sale. Let’s all please take note of this for future years ... please.

Lorraine from Subvert was upbeat: “I love the fact that we’ve got to this point and nobody has gone on sale. It just proves that people will pay the price and there’s no need to panic sell... and no need for Black Friday. And not one customer has been questioning the price – they’re generally just happy to be getting their hands on some nice kit. Boot fitting has also turned a corner – we usually get people coming in for a fit and then they go search out the cheapest deal – not this year – it’s been great. I hope we can all learn from this.”

Has it been great from the get-go? “No. Of course, it was only when the lockdown was lifted and people could travel – that’s when it picked up”. And what about next season? “We’re optimistic and we’ve bought for growth. There are still loads of people who did not get away this year and, assuming no lockdowns, they’re determined to go next winter. We’re forecasting for a better than a normal season. Fingers crossed”

Generally, it seems that winter pre-orders are at, or better than, pre-pandemic levels and all we have to do is hope that the current massive increases in covid infections do not result in new lockdowns. That said I simply don’t think that the UK has an appetite for lockdowns and it’s pretty obvious that they would not get the same public support as previously.

So winter is looking brighter than for a long, long time. What about skate?

Paul from Black Sheep Manchester had a classic Mancunian response to my question as to how it is? “All right... mustn’t grumble”. Some say that it rains so much in Manchester that nobody grumbles about anything at all.

Paul continued. “It’s interesting – after an amazing 18-24 months, things have settled down now. The drop in business is quite dramatic. Some people are moaning about it but let’s face it, we’re still above pre-pandemic levels so that’s why we mustn’t grumble. The base-level has improved significantly. The main issue I see is the outrageous stock levels that some people have which does present a problem because that stock has to go somewhere. That’s my biggest single concern.”

So, are you having to discount to shift the stock? “No – not really – I am having to be creative in some areas as I want to win the sale but I’m still wanting to make a profit. What’s great is that skating is now very much a ‘norm’ and the business is solid and more viable than probably ever”.

Any other positives? “Yes – as I said last time we spoke more girls are skating. That’s continuing and they have really fully blended into the skate scene and are a solid and important part of the scene. It’s now truly, finally a real unisex sport.”

Last but not least, water. It’s been a tough winter! The covid bounce is well and truly over and after two great summers it was, from a business perspective, a long, hard and cold winter. Hardgoods sales were slow in all areas, winter wetsuit sales were low and stock left on retailers’ shelves is high.

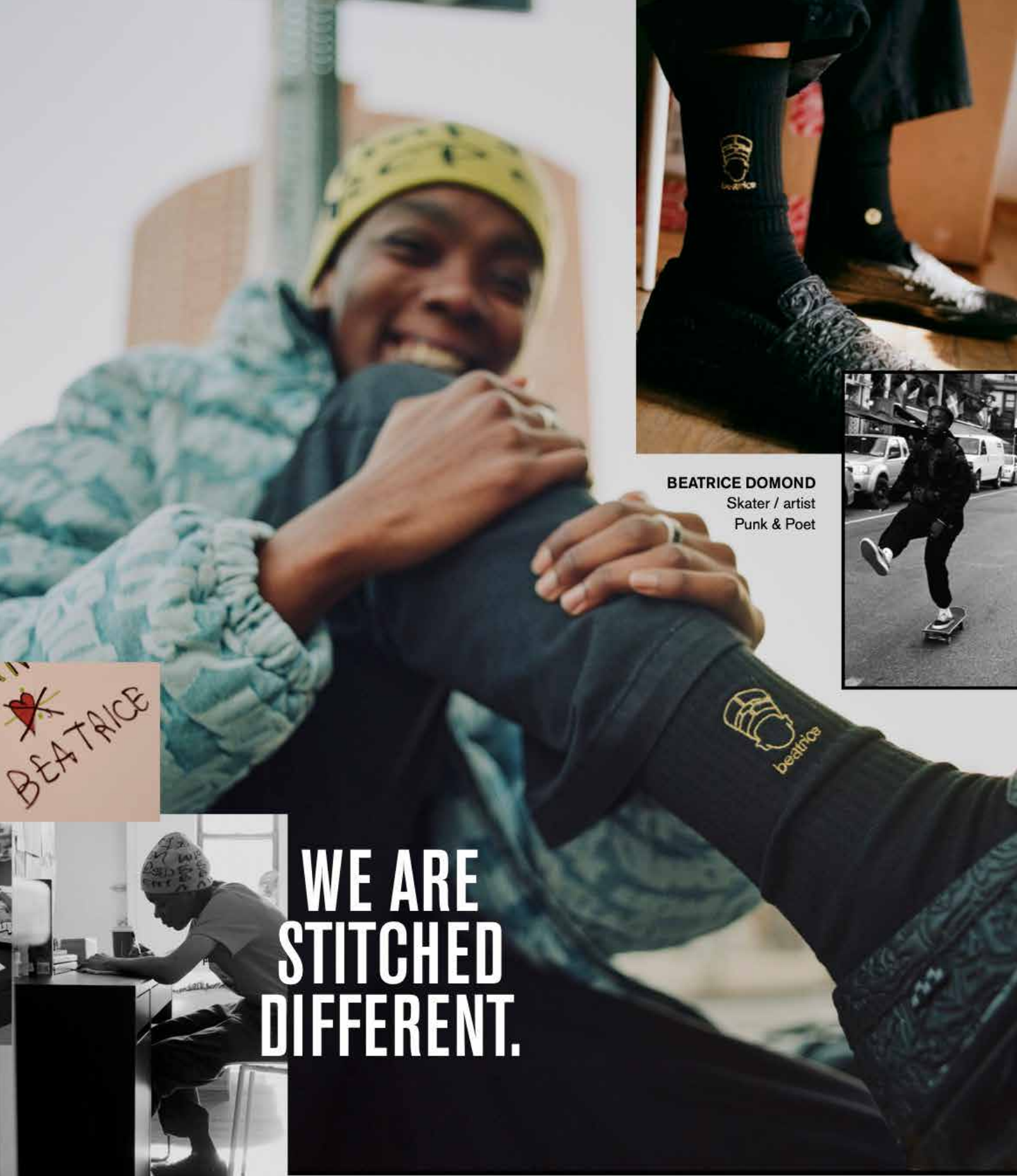
Henry from Shore Watersports: “Business is challenging to say the least. Covid absenteeism is not helping things but there is also a distinct lack of customers. Indeed, if you had asked me two weeks ago I would have been pretty down about it all.”

Is it better now? “Yeah – it’s better. The brief spell of good weather teased us a little but the weather has dropped back and so has business – it’s certainly not been the best winter for watersports”

I asked how he felt about the future “Sadly I don’t have a great feeling. It seems to me that there have been some very optimistic orders placed with factories and there’s going to be a glut of both surf, iSUP and wetsuits. You only have to look at the iSUP D2C websites to see what’s happening and what is really in the pipeline. Same story on wetsuits – you can get just about anything you want with immediate delivery – quite a turnaround from a year ago. This, on the back of a poor winter sell-thru means we’ve had to cancel out on some pre-orders. Brands are understanding but I think it is a sign of things to come. Our stocks are high and we know we’re not alone”.

So to summarise. Putin is a F-wit. Winter business is ending (has ended by the time you read this) really positively with the minimal end of season sales, happy retailers and good pre-orders. Skate and water both look like they may be facing similar difficult issues. That said it could be too early to tell... not as to whether Putin is a F-Wit ... I think we all know the answer there.

GORDON WAY



BEATRICE DOMOND
Skater / artist
Punk & Poet

**WE ARE
STITCHED
DIFFERENT.**

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE **SOCKS 2022**

Whatever your sports of choice, you're probably going to wear socks at one point or another, at least while you get there. Find out what 2022 will bring to the shelves in our Retail Buyers Guide **by Anna Langer.**



TRENDS

"Customers are willing to invest in accessories, apparel and fashion that lasts. The pandemic has moved a whole raft of customers away from throw away, single use fast fashion and allowed them time to focus and invest in their core basic, those staple lines," says Rich Philip, Marketing Director at Stance. Merge4 notice a "big shift in consumer preference towards sustainability" which has always been a priority for them. Arvin also focus on "impact reduction by making stylish low-impact basics that

never compromise on performance, comfort, quality - or ethics. "To leave our world better than we found it, we actively partner with those who share this commitment. The root meaning of our brand 'Arvin' says it all: Friend of the people." Plain classic looks are also what Stinky Socks have their focus on this year: "the crazy designs and printed socks are more for the mainstream now, where the trendsetters are wearing simple, plain socks, that still stand out in a unique way," says Founder & CEO Risto Petkov. Stance serve this trend with clean lines, on-trend colours and simple, understated designs.

Many Mornings on the other hand find that "people seem to be more and more interested in products that allow them to express themselves or to break the routine. In our case that can be done by adding colourful, mismatched socks to your suit for example to brighten up your day" says Przemek, Customer Relationship Manager, adding that the "general interest in colourful socks is increasing". American Socks' Brand Manager Olek Burek agrees that "socks is already a really saturated market and we're seeing a lot of e-commerce

based brands which offer a wide range of socks. Their lack of design makes American Socks pop out with colourful illustrations.”

THEMES

For 2022 we will continue to see signature collections from American Socks, collaboration with legendary professional skateboarders like Tony Alva, Steve Caballero and Eric Dressen from Merge4 and young riders like Beatrice Domond, Kader Sylla or Jackson Dorian to the industry heavy weights such as Andrew Reynolds, Chippa Wilson or Jed Anderson from Stance.

Stinky Socks carry on their theme of telling the stories of the underdogs: “We’ve always aimed to work with those passionate about what they do and are all in no matter what the outcome is as long as they stay true to what they believe in. Stinky Socks are made for those who know exactly who they are and what they want from life.” Many Mornings follow along similar lines: “Each sock model we offer tells a different story or, to be more exact, allows its user to tell its own story. This is our trademark.”

MATERIALS & TECH

Of course, performance properties are just as important. Merge4 feature compression, elastic arch support, strategic plush cushioning and moisture-wicking materials, next to the COOLMAX® Core Technology that “uses a temperature-regulating fiber structure to keep you cool and dry on hot days and provide warmth on chillier days”. This can also be found in American Socks’ collections. Stance highlight three core

technology programmes: Butter Blend for comfort, Infiknit™ for durability and Feel360™ for performance. When it comes to materials, sustainability is on the forefront. Arvin use discarded fabric scraps, Merge4 feature Organic Cotton, a Hemp/TENCEL blend and REPREEVE® fibers made from recycled materials with Plant Dyes. You will find merino in the high-end performance socks from Arctic Fox, a Stinky Socks sub-brand. “For Spring22 we are proud to announce that we 100% switched our secondary packaging from plastic to compostable materials made out of corn starch.” says Risto.

RETAIL HELP

All brands offer various merchandising materials and POS displays. Stance are making a big effort to migrate their product from the floor to the wall, “allowing a much broader offering to be displayed” explains Rich. They also launch a brand new education program for all sales partners utilising their in-house tools and new central asset bank, StanceInsider.com. “We know that floor staff are incredibly passionate about Stance so we will be building programmes which give them access to our full product offering, including our new categories, along with educating them on how to confidently promote our brand in their stores.”©

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Colourful prints vs plain & classy
- 2 Athlete collabs
- 3 Sustainable materials
- 4 Coolmax technology

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PORTUGAL

FRANCE
UK
GERMANY
ITALY
SWISS
SPAIN

Welcome to an unbelievable new world. The Perfect Storm is here with the risk of a nuclear war along with fuel, gas, energy and food inflation not to mention the crisis in raw materials production and transportation. Consumers

have a declining purchasing power and are more concerned about ensuring they have money to pay bills and buy essential goods even more since interest rates are expected to rise.

After a landslide election success meaning the current government will see a other four year term, the Portuguese economy forecast remained positive with a 4.9% growth for 2022 but below the 5.8% announced in December due to the conflict in Ukraine. War unpredictability means the economic forecasts of all European countries are now less credible and may change at any time of course.

Words such as uncertainty, anxiety, worry and fear define the feelings that boardsport brands and retailers are experiencing right now because of the war in Europe. The increasingly serious problems in raw material shortages and rising prices, transport and running out of stock that affect the world economy also have an impact in Portugal obviously. Due to all this unpredictability, business managing is done more on a daily and monthly basis due to the difficulty of making medium and long-term plans. There are delays in Spring/Summer collection deliveries due to logistical issues. If until 2019 stores usually received this collection in mid-February now it's happening in April which means a shorter sales season for this collection having the risk of hurt sales.

After the hardgoods boom over the last two years there are stores that now have skateboard full stock and are delaying the new order delivery. On the other hand, some stores are having problems restocking wetsuits. There are several segments of skateboarding and surfing products that have increased their retail price.

Grua Surf Co is a core surf shop specializing in

MARKET INSIGHT

surf, bodyboard and skate technical gear with a personalized customer service. They have a premium location close to Matosinhos beach in the north of Portugal attended by ocean lovers throughout the year. The store is visited by customers from all over the country and also from Northern Europe and Germany. Although they have products for beginners the main business positioning targets the customer a need for quality products for performance and with environmental impact in mind. They are a key surf account. "The beginning of 2022 was way more positive business-wise compared to the two previous years in which we were closed due to the lockdown because of the pandemic", explained the CEO, Diogo Lamares. "We had to adapt to the new reality with our online store at www.gruasurf.com which was the main tool for us to survive. Because of that today it already accounts for a significant amount of our business volume". To deal with the current problem of restock they chose to anticipate their moves ordering in advance at the end of 2021 to ensure they always have product available. But the rise in prices is something unavoidable. The question is how much. "Due to the increase in freight transport costs, prices had to rise. However, some brands are bearing part of that cost so that retail selling price don't make such a heavy impact on customers," he said. The war in Ukraine also has a negative effect. "We started the year with rising sales compared to 2021. But since the end of February, we felt a demand contraction. Still, we think positive and when this conflict is solved, we know sales will rise and everything will come back to normal," he predicts. Grua Surf Co aims on selling more focused in quality than quantity bringing more value for the customer choosing anti-fast fashion collections that have more longevity and products made with sustainable materials.

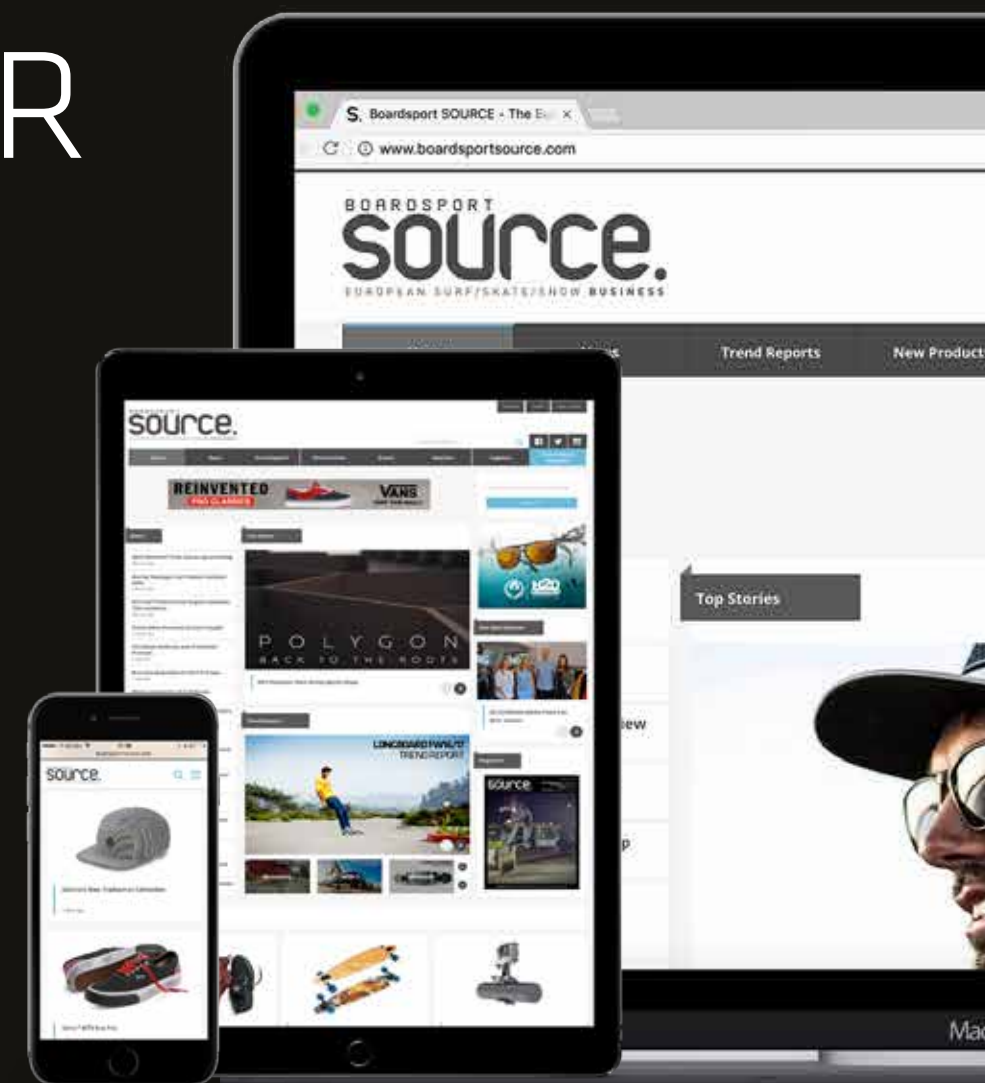
Well, I'm not sure what's going to happen in the next months in Ukraine and all over the world but I'm certain that what everybody wants is one thing: peace.

NUNO PRINCIPE

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NEW PRODUCTS

01 / ISLAND TRIBE SPF 50 LIGHT LOTION 200 ML

This sunscreen has a high UVA and UVB ratio and is easy to apply to the skin. It provides excellent sun protection for those who are outdoors every day and for use at the beach. The lotion can be used by the whole family (safe for children). The light lotion contains antioxidants in the form of vitamin E that help to combat rapid skin ageing caused by the sun. Water-resistant, fragrance-free, paraben-free and oxybenzone-free.

ISLANDTRIBE.EU



02 / GOTCHA S/S PRO NEOPRENE TEE

A premium long sleeves 2mm body neoprene shirt designed for performance and flexibility with lycra sleeve panelling and flatlock seams. This heritage Gotcha product is designed for warmth on windy days yet flexible for movement and perfect for surf, windsurfing and kitesurfing.

EU.GOTCHA.COM



03 / NIXON HIGH TIDE WATCH

The future of performance surf watches is bright with the High Tide Watch from Nixon. Its design centres around durability and comfort and is made with recycled ocean plastics. It features a bright and bold high-res screen that's customizable to your preferred configuration and features 550 pre-programmed locations with precise tide and sun & moon data.

NIXON.COM



04



04 / GOTCHA 8’ SOFT TOP SURFBOARD - GHOST RIDER

This 8’ Soft surfboard is built with a HD EPS 4mm closed Core and iXPE deck. It features an EVA Re-enforced Tail and 3 Stringers (2 bamboo and 1 fiberglass). This Soft Top surfboard is the new standard for performance, style, ideal for beginners and schools and includes a MCD@ pro leash.

EU.GOTCHA.COM

05



05 / REELL REFLEX® MEADOW PANT

With this pant Reel are bringing it back to where it started, core skateboarding. Reell created a perfect pant for skateboarding. Imagine baggy Reflex® pants with the ultimate freedom to move - the Reflex® Meadow. The name refers to one of the world's most legendary skate spots, the Flushing Meadows Park in Queens, New York City. A homage to one of the favourite 90's skate spots.

REELSHOP.COM

06



06 / DAKINE KAINUI + LEASH

Dakine took all of their riders' feedback to build a new series of leashes. The Kainui Plus and Comp Plus borrow trusted features from our pinnacle and legacy leashes to offer a low drag, streamlined product with plenty of padding. New cuff and rail saver waterproof materials, speed pocket cord tech and molded ankle cuff padding ensures distraction free security.

DAKINE.COM

MARKET INSIGHT

ITALY 2022 started pretty solid, which is quite unusual for recent years but with the invasion of Ukraine by Russia, many companies are once more in trouble. The big price increase we already suffered from the pandemic with

logistics costs being the biggest problem, but now also with the added cost of gas and oil increases, this is spelling deep problems for families with all-time high costs of living.

Our government, led by Mr. Draghi reduced taxes on oil to give relief to our oil (diesel) prices which was much needed, but it is not enough as the actual cost of living is raising month after month... a problem which many experts fear greatly as the purchasing power could be the biggest problem in 2022, which will result in very slow or flat growth in GDP. General inflation is proving hard for the boardsport business as well. Luckily we are coming from a winter where most of the stores had a very good sell-through and shelves were cleared and cashflow came back. Everyone who could was on the slopes and so the FW22/23 sell-in was a good one especially on hardware. Splitboards are still selling very well. Alex Berger from Fakieshops in Merano and Silandro says “splitboarding is a new business for us, but one which is our DNA and we sell the category with pride as it combines staying healthy with backcountry riding - what more can you ask for!?”

On the other side, skate and snow stores are selling less and less skate shoes, as Nike and Vans are eating that slice of the pie with their D2C business. Unfortunately, traditional skate brands like Lakai, Ès, Etnies, Fallen or DVS are still loved by many skate fans are finding the market tough. One pure skate

shoe brand who is shifting the needle right now is Last Resort AB from Sweden, which is becoming more and more popular through their unique design and approach and as usual is popular for regular kids who don’t skate. Alessandra who owns Eightball Store in Bassano del Grappa confirms this trend.

National hardware distributors are running at a high level of stock and many distributors have also lowered their pricing which is unusual right now, but they have to in order to encourage stores to buy stock before the spring 22 skate season hits full swing. US labels such as Deluxe San Francisco (Real, Antihero, Krooked, Spitfire, Thunder) are constantly high in demand while the top EU brands stay stable as they have done over last seasons.

Something the whole industry takes note of is that due to different happenings world-wide such as Covid19 and the Ukrainian invasion, not many new businesses are being started and of course only a few smaller events can take place. This really hurts our boardsports family and business as the coming together and planning of new things and having a vision was our passion, which kept us healthy and alive.

Sales season is now over and was slower than in previous years but now at the end of March temperatures already hit 25 degrees and people are getting in the right mood again and retailers see sales number get back to normal. Let’s hope 2022 will have a better ending than start. Peace.

FRANZ JOSEF HOLLER

AVAILABLE NOW



ocean pacific
SPRING22



LONGBOARDS



SKATEBOARDS



SURFSKATES



CRUISERS



THE BOARD FACTORY

Please give us a brief history of the factory.

Our company is called The Board Factory Co. Ltd., because this is what we focus on above all. Making sure production, quality and technology is properly executed and controlled for every board by our team, every time. TBF was started by Klaus C. Mueller and Martin Jandke, who both worked in Cobra International for many years. They dreamed of creating a much smaller board factory with LEAN Manufacturing, based on the Toyota Production System (TBS). They then joined up with Bert Burger, Shaper of the Year 2007 and one of the founders of FireWire Surfboards, who

The Board Factory Co. Ltd is a Thailand-based surfboard manufacturer started by Klaus C. Mueller and Martin Jandke and later joined by FireWire co-founder, Bert Burger. Situated within just a few KMs of 25 different surf breaks, they have their R&D needs on lock and produce both their premium offering SUNOVA as well as their entry priced offering suns surfboards at the facility. Read on for all the details of the LEAN Manufacturing process they are championing.

had come to Thailand to set up the FireWire factory and never left.

Who are the key management staff in the company?

We are a mix of surf addicts that love to work like hell when it's about play. Each of us loves the sea and spends most of their time in it or creating and thinking how to build even better boards. On all levels the team is independent and motivated to continuously improve the status quo to the next level.

Tell us about the brands you work with.

Our factory focuses only on our own brands

SUNOVA surfboards and suns surfboards. We keep production capacity very minimal to focus on quality. These brands are a little like the Ferrari and Fiat. SUNOVA focuses on the most advanced and high quality, high performance technology boards. All boards are custom and hand crafted with wood sandwich construction. This allows for SUNOVA's totally unique look and feel as the material reflects especially in flex and durability as well as its light weight. suns is our entry level brand and its main feature is the perfect mix between durability and price. To stick with the car example, it's the city car for every day

rides. We pride ourselves in competing with top brands like Torq or NSP.

What makes your factory unique?

Our factory has many unique points that we are very proud of. First of all, we searched and found a location based on a pristine beach location with probably the best surfing spots in Thailand. We are 2.8km from at least 5 reef breaks and over 20 beach breaks and anyone can come and experience it. The factory is open to all with the nTrance Cafe to hang out in. You can watch surf movies at the skate park, skate out the front or go shopping at one of the coolest RipCurl shops in the world. All while watching your board being made right in front of you 24/7. On top of that over 50% of our staff are, or became surfers. Klaus and Martin have a long history with LEAN manufacturing and they created a ONE-PIECE flow system where boards

are produced one by one in an automotive manufacturing style. The goal is to cater for the surfer who needs many different shapes and designs.

Manufacturing is always evolving, which innovations are you most proud of?

There are a few technologies coming up soon, which we cannot discuss just yet. But what we are most proud of is Bert's parabolic rail system as well as numerous developments in sandwich construction. SUNOVA's and suns guarantee to work only with the best materials and that's why we use only Epoxy resins to ensure durability and longevity.

How has The Board Factory made its production more environmentally friendly over the last decade?

All the materials that people now move towards like epoxy have been used by us for over 30 years. The wood is obviously way

more sustainable than most synthetic material.

How do you ensure the quality of your production?

As we mentioned above, all our systems and ability come from the Toyota Production System. Thus, there are numerous steps build in to ensure quality and specification checks. Every board is CNC shaped with all fins.

What can we expect to see from the factory in the future?

All boards made by the sun. Solar power is the next thing, we have been planning for a while, which will be one of the most amazing things to be part of. Over the next five months we will set up panels to run the factory on solar energy. ☺



Außergewöhnliche Innovationskraft, hohe Qualität und leistungsstarke Produkte machen die Pryde Group mit Sitz in Taufkirchen im Münchener Süden und vertreiben exklusiv führende Marken für den Windsurf-, Kite-, SUP- und Snowboardsport in Deutschland und im europäischen Ausland. Am Standort München haben wir ca. 50 Mitarbeiter. Wir suchen zum nächstmöglichen Zeitpunkt eine/n qualifizierte/n

Produktmanager (m/w/d) für die Marken Neilpryde & JP Australia

Deine Aufgaben:

- Kreative Mitarbeit/ Ideenfindung bei der Produktentwicklung in Zusammenarbeit mit den Lieferanten
- Gestaltung des Sortiments sowie dessen operative Steuerung und Kontrolle im Rahmen der Sortimentspolitik
- Screening der weltweiten Beschaffungsmärkte und Marktbeobachtung sowie Auswahl von potenziellen nationalen und internationalen Lieferanten
- Produktoptimierungen und Anpassung an unternehmensspezifische Qualitätsstandards
- Unterstützung bei der Festlegung von Einkaufspreisen und Verhandlungsführung mit Lieferanten

Dein Profil:

- Erfolgreich abgeschlossenes Hochschulstudium, vorzugsweise mit dem Schwerpunkt Marketing, Materialwirtschaft oder technischem Schwerpunkt
- Erste Berufserfahrung im Bereich Produktmanagement ist wünschenswert
- Produktkenntnisse im Bereich Windsurfen
- Hohe Eigeninitiative, Zielorientierung, gesundes Durchsetzungsvermögen, Ausdauer und Teamfähigkeit
- Flexibilität und Kreativität sowie ausgeprägte Kontakt- und Kommunikationsfähigkeit
- Selbständige strukturierte und organisierte Arbeitsweise
- Verhandlungssichere Englischkenntnisse

Wir bieten Dir:

- Ein unbefristetes Arbeitsverhältnis
- Eine faire Entlohnung (inkl. 13. Monatsgehalt)
- Flache Hierarchien und eine offene Unternehmenskultur („per Du“) ohne Dresscode
- Kaffee, Getränke und Obst zur freien Verfügung
- Einen gut zu erreichenden Standort mit öffentlicher Anbindung im Süden Münchens

Haben wir Dein Interesse geweckt? Dann freuen wir uns auf Deine aussagekräftigen Bewerbungsunterlagen, mit Angabe der Gehaltsvorstellung und dem frühesten Eintrittstermin an die nachfolgende Adresse oder per E-Mail an jobs@pryde-group.de.

Pryde Group GmbH,
Frau Lisa De Luca
Bergstraße 7,
82024 Taufkirchen
Tel: +49 (0)89 665049 – 70
www.prydegrou.de



Deine Rolle im Team

- Grafische Gestaltung von **Printmedien** (Shop Kampagnen, Merchandise, Housebrand-Produkte, Anzeigen, Kataloge, u.v.m.)
- Gestaltung von **Digitalmedien** (Webshop, Promotions, Newsletter, u.v.m.)
- Erstellen von **Illustrationen** in Illustrator
- Gestaltung und Bearbeitung von **Fotomedien** (Bildbearbeitung, Korrektur, Retusche, u.v.m.)
- **Fotografie auf Events**

Deine Skills

- Abgeschlossene **Mediendesign-Ausbildung**
- **Erste Berufserfahrung** in vergleichbarer Position von Vorteil
- Erfahrung im Designen und Gestalten von **On- und Offline-Medien**
- **Sehr gute Deutschkenntnisse**, Englisch von Vorteil
- Sehr gute **Adobe Programmkenntnisse**
- **Animationskenntnisse** (After Effects) von Vorteil
- **Gutes Gespür** für aufkommende Trends, Grafiken und Typografie
- **Freude in einem Team** mit starkem Zusammenhalt **zu arbeiten** und eine **serviceorientierte Arbeitsweise**
- **Vertrautheit mit der Snowboard-, Freeski-, Surf-, und Skateszene** und dem dazugehörigen **Lifestyle**

Das bieten wir dir

Commitment, Respekt, persönliche Weiterentwicklung sowie **Empowerment** und **Recognition** werden bei uns groß geschrieben. Wir teilen die Leidenschaft für unser Business, schätzen die zugehörigen Lifestyles, entwickeln uns ständig weiter und feiern Erfolge gemeinsam.

INTERESSIERT? Dann bewirb dich jetzt unter: blue-tomato.com/jobs



Blue Tomato ist der führende Omnichannel Händler in den Bereichen Snowboard, Freeski, Surf, Skate & Streetstyle. Neben unserem Online Shop sind wir inzwischen mit über 60 lokalen Shops in Deutschland, Österreich, Norwegen Schweiz, den Niederlanden und Finnland vertreten und beschäftigen mehr als 700 Kolleg*innen.

JOIN OUR TRIBE. WRITE YOUR OWN STORY.



Customer Service Mitarbeiter (m/w/d)

Lust auf nachhaltige Abenteuer?

ABS hat den Lawinenairbag erfunden, PYUA ist Pionier der nachhaltigen Sportbekleidung. Beide Marken werden nicht müde, immer wieder neue Innovationen auf den Markt zu bringen. Agilität und vor allem zufriedene Kunden sind für unseren Erfolg verantwortlich.

Der **ABS** Lawinenairbag steht für Innovation und höchste Qualität. „Made in Germany“ seit über 35 Jahren ist unter anderem ein wesentlicher Schlüsselfaktor unseres Erfolgs, zu dem auch Felix Neureuther als Markenbotschafter beiträgt. **PYUA** entwickelt hochwertige und funktionale Outdoorbekleidung. Die Produkte sind aus bereits recycelten Materialien hergestellt.

Zum nächstmöglichen Termin suchen wir zur Unterstützung unseres Teams in Gottfrieding und München einen Mitarbeiter im Customer Service (m/w/d).

Dein Beitrag zum gemeinsamen Erfolg

- Selbständige Abwicklung und Durchführung von Service- u. Reparaturtätigkeiten
- Bearbeitung der Bestellungen und Retouren in unserem Warenwirtschaftssystem
- Abstimmung mit externen Dienstleistern (Logistik, etc.)
- Kundenberatung u. Betreuung bei Fragen rund um unsere Produkte, zu Bestellungen, etc. per E-Mail und Telefon
- Unterstützung des Logistikteams

Du bringst mit

- Talent, Willen, Neugier und Leidenschaft für Abenteuer
- Abgeschlossene Ausbildung
- Mindestens drei Jahre Berufserfahrung
- Erfahrung in der Sportbranche und/oder Modebranche sind von Vorteil
- Gute Kenntnisse im Umgang mit den gängigen MS-Office Programmen, SAP
- Gute Englischkenntnisse, weitere Fremdsprachen von Vorteil
- Eigenverantwortliche und engagierte Arbeitsweise
- Ausgeprägte Teamfähigkeit und Kommunikationsstärke

Das bieten wir

- **Flache Organisationsstruktur** in einem Outdoorsport-begeisterten Team
- **Mitarbeiter Rabatte:** Profitiere von Vergünstigungen in den ABS & PYUA Shops
- **Teamwork:** Zusammenarbeit in interdisziplinären Teams
- **Agiles Arbeiten** ohne endlose Hierarchiestufen

Möchtest Du bei uns die (digitale) Welt ein bisschen sicherer und nachhaltiger machen? Dann sind wir neugierig auf Dich. Sende Deine aussagekräftige Bewerbung inkl. Qualifikationsnachweise, Referenzen und frühestmöglichem Eintrittstermin an karriere@abs-airbag.com oder direkt über unsere Karriereseite <https://abs.jobs.personio.com>.

Kontakt

ABS Protection GmbH / PYUA Protection GmbH
Inga Hecker
Gundelindenstr. 2
80805 München
www.abs-airbag.com
www.pyua.de



Wir sind ein aufsteigendes und innovatives Unternehmen.
Wir entwickeln innovative Produkte und legen größten Wert auf eine nachhaltige Entwicklung.
Wir fertigen und entwickeln Snowboards am Standort in Feistritz an der Gail für den Weltmarkt.

Zur Verstärkung unseres F&E Teams suchen wir eine/n
Mitarbeiter Forschung und Entwicklung (m/w)
Feistritz an der Gail

DEINE AUFGABEN

- Aktive Mitarbeit bei Planung und Umsetzung von F&E Projekten
- Selbstständiges Durchführen von Analysen und Versuchsreihen (Labor)
- Mitarbeit in der Entwicklung von neuen Produkten
- Definition und Entwicklung von Prototypen
- Ideenfindung, Konzeption, Recherche und Dokumentation

DEIN PROFIL

- Idealerweise abgeschlossene technische Ausbildung (HTL/FH/UNI)
- Kenntnisse in der CAD/CAM NX Programmierung, bzw. in 3D Zeichenprogrammen
- Strukturierte und zielorientierte Arbeitsweise und Belastbarkeit
- Sehr gute MS-Office Kenntnisse
- Sehr gute Englischkenntnisse
- Persönliches Interesse und Leidenschaft für den Wintersport

UNSER ANGEBOT

CAPiTA MFG zeichnet sich durch eine offene Unternehmenskultur und hohe Professionalität aus. Die Leidenschaft für Snowboards ist die Grundlage unseres Erfolges. Es erwartet Dich ein sportbegeistertes und motiviertes Team sowie die Chance engagiert und eigenverantwortlich das innovative Wachstum des Unternehmens mitzugestalten. Wir bieten Dir für diese Position ein Monatsgehalt brutto ab € 2.300, -- welches sich aus Deiner individuellen Qualifikation und positionsrelevanten Berufserfahrung ergibt. Es besteht die klare Bereitschaft zu einer marktkonformen Überzahlung!

Haben wir Ihr Interesse geweckt?

Dann bewerben Sie sich bitte sich per E-Mail unter careers@capitamfg.com.

CAPITA MFG GmbH, Station 1, 9613 Feistritz an der Gail, +43 4256 203 25, www.capitasnowboarding.com



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- Knowledge of surfing and wetsuit market
- Business minded and results driven
 - Passionate and dynamic
 - Caring for the Environment




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Picture: Charlie Durand-Jézéquel - Photo: @LuKa Leroy



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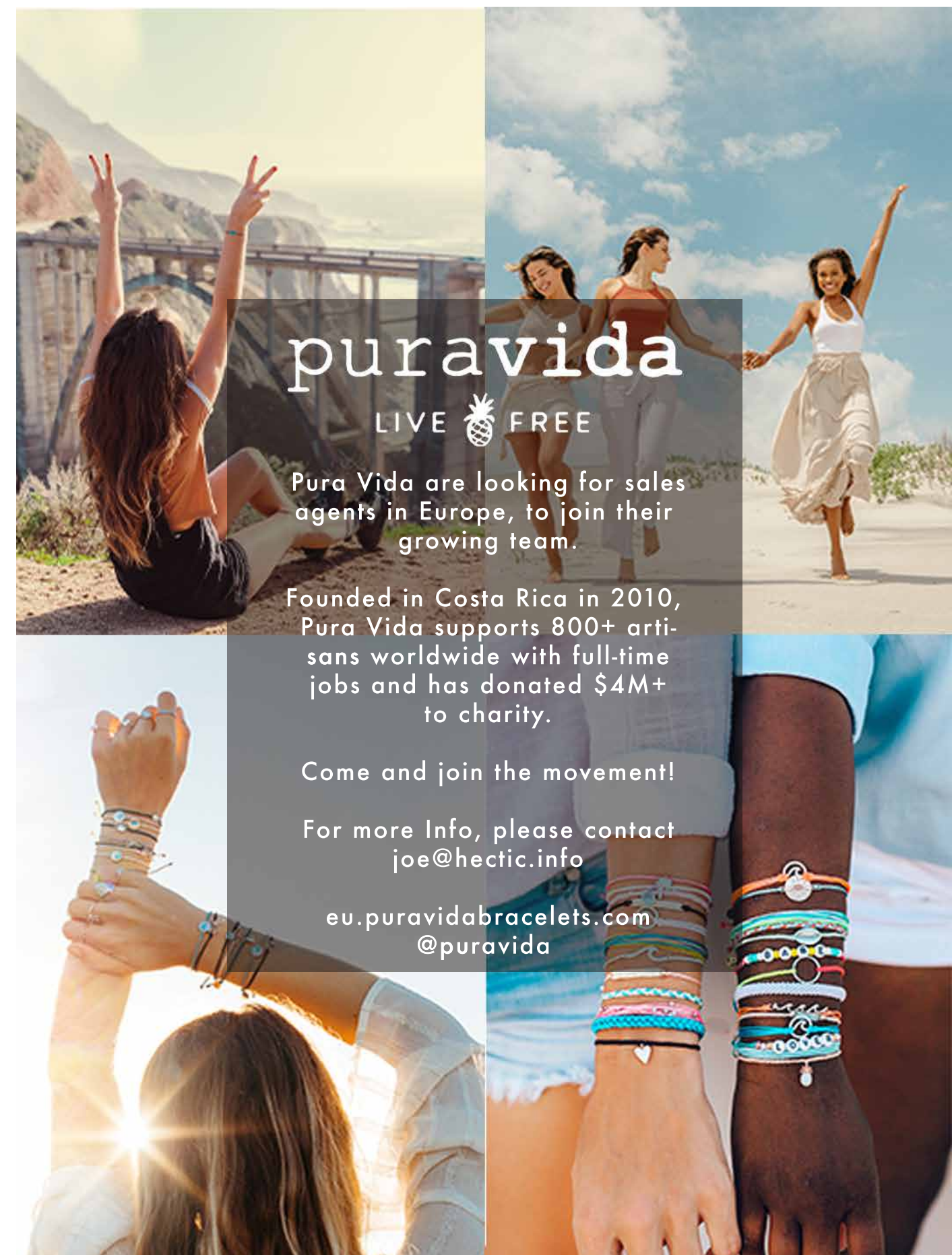



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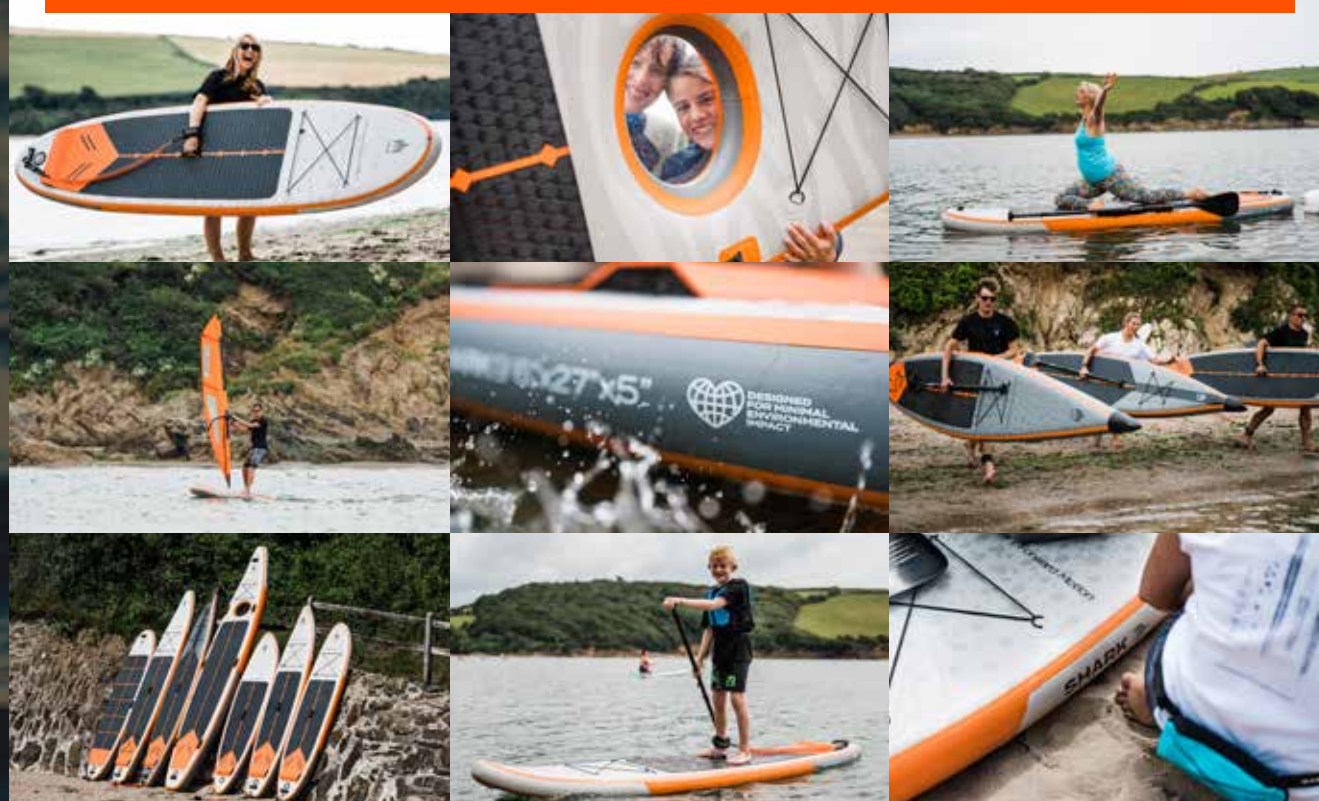
Founded in Costa Rica in 2010, Pura Vida supports 800+ artisans worldwide with full-time jobs and has donated \$4M+ to charity.

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- ||| locations include: Germany; France; Italy; Spain
- ||| knowledge and passion for stand up paddleboarding
- ||| environmentally responsible

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www.surfdek.co.uk

**WORLDWIDE
DISTRIBUTORS/
AGENTS WANTED.**

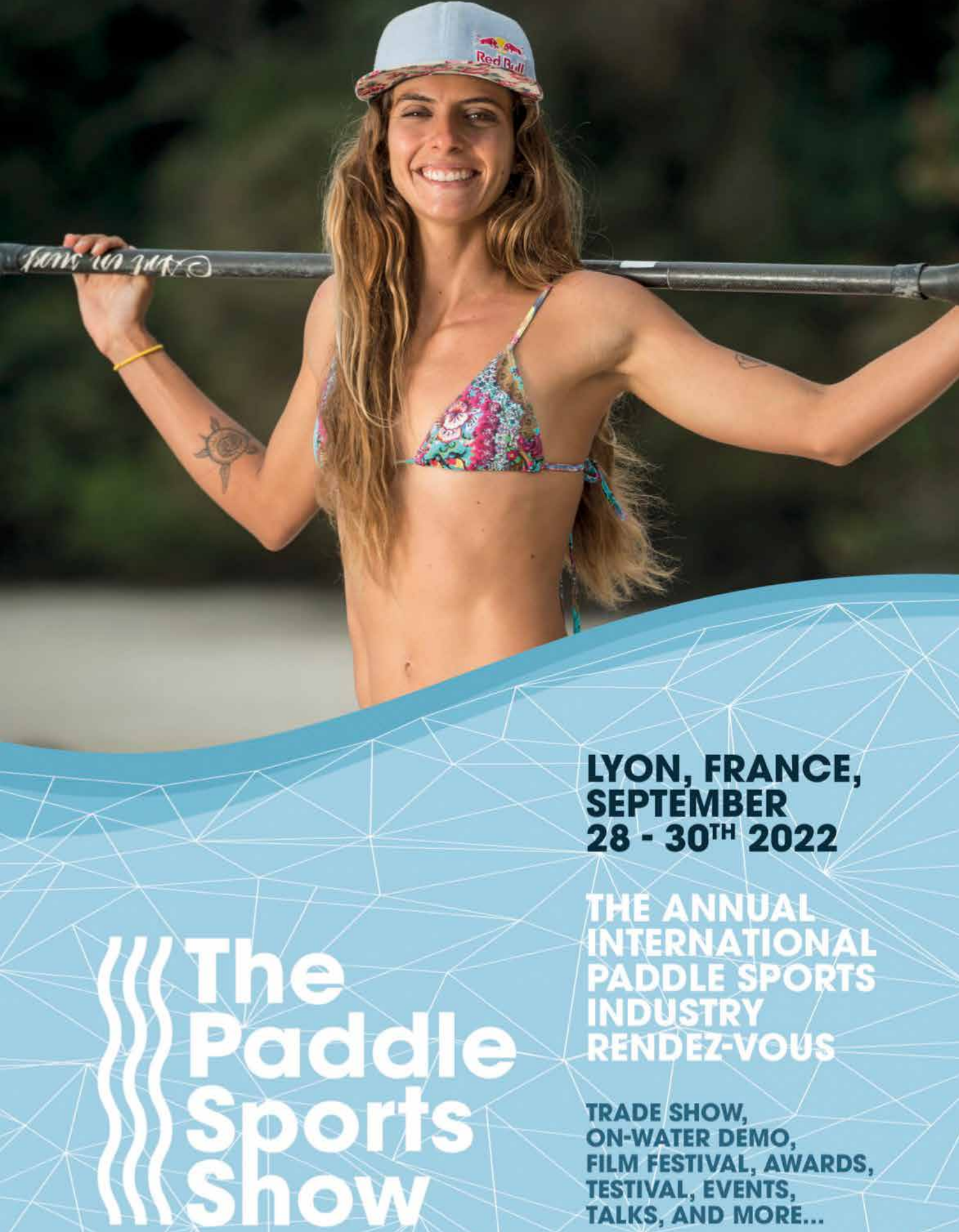
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SurfDek

EVENTS #111

	surf/kite	snow	street/outdoor	SUP/optics
surf	RIPCURL PRO BELLS BEACH	Bells Beach, Australia 10-20 Apr 22		worldsurfleague.com
surf	MARGERAT RIVER PRO	Margerat River, Australia 24 Apr-4 May 22		worldsurfleague.com
surf	GOLD COAST	Gold Coast, Australia 7-15 May 22		worldsurfleague.com
surf	MANLY	Manly Beach, Australia 17-24 Mayw		orldsurfleague.com
surf	QUIKSILVER PRO G LAND	G Land, Indonesia 28 May-6 Junew		orldsurfleague.com
outdoor	OTS	Liverpool, UK 7-9 Jun 22		outdoortradeshow.com
kite	GKA KITE WORLD TOUR	Galicia, Spain 8-12 Jun 22		global-kitesports.org
outdoor	OUTDOOR BY ISPO	Munich, Germany 12-14 Jun 22		ispo.com/en/outdoor
street	PITTI UOMO	Florence, Italy 14-17 Jun 22		pittimagine.com
surf	TRESTLES	San Clemente, United States 15-22 Jun 22		worldsurfleague.com
snow	WORLD SNOWBOARD FEDERATION GA	Vilnius, Lithuania 15-19 June 22		worldsnowboardfederation.org
kite	GKA BIG AIR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS	Tarifa, Spain 20 Jun-6 Jul 22		global-kitesports.org
kite	GKA KITE EXPO	Tarifa, Spain 21-25 Jun 22		global-kitesports.org
outdoor	NEXT SUMMER	Albertville, France 27-28 Jun 22		next-summer.com
surf	OI RIO PRO	Saquarema, Brazil 27 Jun-4 Jul 22		worldsurfleague.com
street	SEEK/PREMIUM	Berlin, Germany 5-9 Jul		seek.fashion
festival	NASS FESTIVAL	Shepton Mallet, UK 7-10 Jul		nassfestival.com
surf	CORONA OPEN J-BAY	Jeffreys Bay, South Africa 12-21 Jul 22		worldsurfleague.com
kite	GKA KITE WORLD TOUR	Fuerteventura, Spain 22-27 Jul 22		global-kitesports.org
surf	VANS US OPEN OF SURFING	Huntington Beach, USA 30 Jul-7 Aug 22		worldsurfleague.com
surf	MENS DUCT TAPE INVITATIONAL	Huntington Beach, USA 5-8 Aug 22		worldsurfleague.com
surf	BOARDMASTER’S LONGBOARD PRO	Fistral Beach, UK 12-14 Aug 22		worldsurfleague.com
surf	TAHITI PRO	Tahiti, French Polynesia 11-21 Aug 22		worldsurfleague.com
surf	RIP CURL WSL FINALS	Lower Trestles, USA 8-16 Sept 22		worldsurfleague.com
snow	HNTERTUX OPENING	Hintertux, Austria 30 Sept 22		hitertuxergletcher.at
SUP	PADDLE SPORTS SHOW	Lyon, France 28-30 Sep 22		thepaddlesportshow.com
surf	EDP VISSLA PRO	Ericeira, Portugal 1-9 Oct 22		worldsurfleague.com
surf	MEO VISSLA PRO	Ericeira, Portugal 1-9 Oct 22		outdoortradeshow.com
snow	KAUNTERAL OPENING	Tyrol, Austria 8-10 Oct 22		snowpark-kaunertal.tirol
surf	EUROSIMA SURF SUMMIT	Hossegor, France 13-14 Oct 22		eurosima.com/en/surf-summit
surf	QUIKSILVER PRO FRANCE	Hossegor, France 13-14 Oct 22		worldsurfleague.com
surf	ROXY PRO FRANCE	Hossegor, France 12-23 Oct 22		worldsurfleague.com
surf	SURF PARK SUMMIT	San Diego, USA 16-18 Oct 22		surfparkcentral.com
optics	SILMO	Paris, France 13-26 Oct 22m		-en.silmoparis.com
snow	THE SNOW SHOW	Birmingham, UK 23-24 Oct		telegraph.co.uk/travel/ski
surf	SUNSET PRO	Sunset Beach, Hawaii 28 Oct-6 Nov		worldsurfleague.com
snow	SKI PASS	Modena, Italy 29 Oct-1 Nov 22		skipass.it
snow	MOREBOARD STUBAI	Stubai, Austria 18-20 Nov 22		stubaier-gletcher.com
surf	HALEIWA CHALLENGER	Haleiwa, Hawaii 26 Nov-7 Dec 22		worldsurfleague.com
snow	ISPO	Munich, Germany 28-30 Nov 22		ispo.com



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