

**RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDES 2023**  
SNOWBOARDS, OUTERWEAR, SNOW SAFETY,  
WETSUITS, SKATE SHOES, SNOW HELMETS &  
PROTECTION, SNOW SAFETY

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**REGIONAL EURO MARKET INSIGHT**  
**ON SNOW DEMO PREVIEWS**

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# HELLO SOURCE#115

Winter trade event season is in full swing as I sit writing this editorial in La Rosiere, France the location of the French on snow demo WinterPro. ISPO, the first major show of the season is long gone after its move to a date at the end of November to tie the show closer to the ever-earlier pre-book dates. But, it's a crowded calendar in January as Source and much of the industry moves from one event to another across Europe. This year's tour starts with WinterPro followed by Slide (UK), The Pill Basecamp (Italy), Shops 1st

Try (Austria), Sport Achat (France), Future Try Laax (Switzerland) and Future Try Les Crosets (Switzerland). And for those who are real gluttons for punishment you can add US shows Outdoor Retailer, Interlude and Surf Expo into to the mix. After all the disruptions of covid the calendar is beginning to settle down. Firstly, national shows have grown in importance as retailers have become more sticky post covid and still prefer a local show without the risks that international travel may bring. Meanwhile events are constantly examining their dates as different product categories have different booking cycles but the one thing in common is all seem to be moving to earlier and earlier final booking dates. This is counter

cyclical to the last few years weather patterns as reliable snow fall has moved later, creating a squeeze. The specialist on-snow demos with their community spirit are increasingly popular with the core market retailers whilst multisport retailers prefer the ease of seeing multiple categories all at once. Meanwhile ISPO have reinvented themselves and made the transfer of knowledge as important as order writing, meeting a need in this increasingly complex business environment. See you on the tour somewhere.

## Always Slideways

**Clive Ripley**  
Editor

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**On the cover.** Rider: Jacco Bos, Slash Team Manager & Filmer and DIYX Operations Manager. **Photo:** James North.

# northwave



## DECADE PRO ETHAN

## NEWS

### #115

#### Ken Block, DC Shoes Co-Founder Dies In Snowmobile Accident

Our thoughts go out to Ken Block's family after the action sports hero died during a snowmobiling accident on his ranch in Utah. Block co-founded DC Shoes in the 90s and was responsible for the creation of the iconic DC Mountain Hub and has done more for skateboarding, surfing and snowboarding than many others in our industry. Block was a successful rally car driver and his impact on action sports is unrivalled.

#### CAPiTA & Union Appoint BlueBird Co As Sales Team For Belgium & The Netherlands

CAPiTA & Union have appointed BlueBird Co. as their European Sales Team starting on January 1, 2023- focusing on Belgium and The Netherlands - bringing a wealth of knowledge and experience in the action sports industry. Led by Mitchel de Roock, BlueBird Co. is comprised of passionate and dedicated members of the snowboarding community. In addition to his vast personal snowboarding experience, Mitchel holds a strong professional background, having managed action sports retail stores for over a decade, followed by key positions in sales and marketing for several leading action sports brands for many years. Currently BlueBird Co. represents a mix of outdoor, board sports and fashion brands, curating a successful sales and customer service experience for CAPiTA, Union, Volcom, Electric and Danner.

#### Paddle Sports Show Moves To New Location For 2023

The 2023 edition of the Paddle Sports Show is moving. Next year, the show will take place in the city of Strasbourg, situated on the border between France & Germany. The new, more central location makes travel to and from the show easier for everyone across Europe. Located 2km from downtown Strasbourg, alongside the highway, with the airport less than 15-minute drive from the show, a train station three tram stops away, and a tram stop on the show's doorstep, this is a "green" show. Once you reach, Strasbourg there is no need to use a car. The show is set to take place between September 27-29, with bookings opening on January 15.

#### Benjamin Schwarz Appointed Senior Brand Manager At Anon

Burton has announced the promotion of Benjamin Schwarz, formerly Country Manager for Burton in Germany, to Senior Brand Manager Anon for Europe. In this new role Benjamin will be responsible for the overall brand strategy in Europe and will strive to strengthen Anon's positioning as an inclusive brand for all mountain lovers. Benjamin's career now spans over more than twelve years of experience in marketing and sales. Prior to the new role, he spent years with Nike and the last 5 years as country manager for Burton, establishing an in-house team, setting up a store in Munich and driving the Burton brand back to growth in Germany.

#### Steve Rendle, CEO of VF Corporation Steps Down

VF Corp's CEO, Steve Rendle has announced his retirement from the company. While the group's Board of Directors searches for a permanent successor, Benno Dorer will take his place as interim CEO and President and Richard Carucci, a director on the Board since 2009, will serve as Interim Chairman of the Board.

#### Union & CAPiTA Open New Hub & Restructure Sales Team

Union Binding Company and CAPiTA Snowboarding are opening a new European sales hub in the heart of Milano, open for business from January 1st 2023. Based in the business and university district of Bicocca, the new office is strategically located in a zone submerged in youth and culture, art, music and an inspired but laid-back vibe.

**The office will be home to European and Italian Sales and Marketing management, and also a hub for technical and web integration along both brands channels.**

Operations at this location will be led by the appointment of Claudio Distasi

in a newly formed role as General Manager EMEA for both brands. He will oversee Sales and Marketing directives for EMEA, including the alignment of European distributors on multi-territory sales strategies and initiatives. Claudio brings extensive industry experience to Union and CAPiTA via a twelve-year career at Luxottica where he has served roles as Sales Representative and KA Manager, Sales Manager Italy, and most recently, Business Brand Manager APAC - all for the Oakley brand.

#### Burton Release Gril Master Snowboard In Tribute To The Late Marko "Grilo" Grilc

On November 23, 2021, the world lost long-time Burton rider Marko "Grilo" Grilc in a tragic snowboarding accident while filming in Sölden, Austria. Grilo's 26-year career made this Slovenian-born rider a legend of the sport, spanning multiple World Titles, unforgettable video parts, mentoring a younger generation of riders, and pioneering a vlog series and social content ahead of the curve. As a father of three, he and his wife Nina strived to show the world how snowboarding and family blended together perfectly. Grilo's impact on snowboarding is still felt a year after his passing. Just a week before his fatal accident, Burton was discussing inspiration and crucial shape developments for a special snowboard called the Gril Master. As a father that integrated parenting with his love of riding, Grilo wanted a product that would combine his passion for community, snowboarding, and family. He envisioned the Gril Master as a board that could cruise with the family or open up for a solo lap while the kids ate fries at the lodge.

Grilo passed before he could finalize the design, but Burton didn't want to leave his passion project unfinished. There was one clear option: invite Grilo's wife and children to complete his vision. Burton sent the family two large, blank board canvases and asked his kids to draw the top sheet. To honor their father's memory, they portrayed the story of Grilo's career and his final ascent to the stars.

"It's daddy snowboarding (first big air, then slopestyle), then he goes to the stars, and out of the star comes Alaska, his youngest daughter. The black footprints are hers. The arrow from the window shows that if you go high enough in the mountains and look out the window, you can see daddy's star," says the Grilc Family.

One hundred Gril Master boards will be available for purchase on November 23, exclusively through Burton.com in North America, Europe and Japan. In celebration of this limited release board, Burton will donate funds to the Grilc family to help families raise their children standing sideways. Each Gril Master board was made by hand in Vermont at Craig's (named after Craig Kelly), the most advanced snowboard prototype facility in the world.

In addition to the Gril Master, Grilo's family created an online shop and foundation to uphold Grilo's spirit and legacy. Thegriloshop.com sells merch and hosts action sports events to introduce young families to the joy of standing sideways in the mountains.

#### Vans To Close House Of Vans London from December 10th

Vans has closed the House of Vans, their iconic venue in the tunnels of Waterloo Station in London, England. House of Vans London has hosted more incredible music gigs, skate jams, movie premieres and amazing cultural events than we can remember. Not to mention running free open skate and beginner skate sessions every weekend throughout its 8 year timespan. A big thanks to the Vans and Black Sparrow crew for all the amazing times over the years.

#### World Surf League Announces 2023 Return of Rip Curl Pro Search Taghazout Bay

The World Surf League has announced the return of the Rip Curl Pro Search Taghazout Bay from February 18-26, 2023 as part of the African and European regional Qualifying Series (QS). The global pandemic forced the cancellation of the 2021 and 2022 instalments but the WSL, Taghazout Bay and Rip Curl have kept working hand in hand to bring back this event as soon as it became possible to host a high-profile, high-quality professional surfing event both for the athletes and fans in Morocco.

# TRADE EVENTS

PREVIEWS

## SHOPS 1ST TRY ALPBACHTAL WILDSCHÖNAU, AUSTRIA JAN 22-24, 2023

test area across Alpbachtal's wide and varied terrain. The test village is at the Pöglbahn Parking area in Inneralpbach, at the bottom of the main SkiJuwel lifts and is open Sunday, Monday and Tuesday starting at 7.45am for registration and wrapping up at 3.30pm. The indoor exhibition area is open from 4.30pm to 10.30pm on the Sunday and Monday with the dinner starting on both nights from around 6pm. Currently over 90 brands have registered to exhibit, as always this is dominated by hardgoods brands with most boards, bindings and boot brands represented but also includes a significant number of goggles, accessories and outerwear brands.

Organisers decided to add another area for exhibitors right next to the existing outdoor village because existing exhibitors wanted to increase their stand size. This of course also allows some more brands, who registered late to be part of the event.

The full list is a who's who of snowboard brands. New brands to the event this year exhibiting indoors only are Evoc, db journey and exhibiting outdoors and indoors BeExtreme, Boomtag, Cardiff, Double Deck, Fjell Snowboards, Kemper Snowboards, Kohla, OES, Pallas, Spark R&D, Telos, Transform Gloves, and United Shapes. In the outdoor Micro Brand Area, and in the test village you will find Åsmo, Clew, DRIFT, Plum, Pro-Tec and Tempelton.

At the last Shops 1st Try dealers made a total of 8255 tests with the event attracting retailers from all over Europe. Of the 270 participating shops 35% of the shops were German and 20% Austrian with the rest spread out across Europe, with a good contingents from Switzerland the UK, Poland, Czech Republic and Benelux.

This on-snow demo has become the biggest single gathering of the snowboard community in Europe with many riders and industry figures flying in from North America and beyond to attend. On hand as always will be the 'Shred Buddies' (Pros, Ams and ambassadors) to ride with you and offer their views on the products being tested.

As usual there's a packed evening schedule. Proceedings kick off with Shops 1ST Try Industry Welcome Dinner by Alpbach Tourismus at the Hotel Alphof which is open to all exhibitors after a hard day of stand building on the first night. For the next two nights it's the Highlight Exhibition Dinners at the congress Centrum Alpbach open to retailers and brands. These evenings combine a relaxed dinner surrounded by product displays from exhibiting brands. The outerwear brands will be

there in force, as this is the time of day when retailers have the time to talk about this product category after a full day of testing hardgoods. Organisers are also working on a book store that will introduce snowboarding books to retailers and The Highlight Exhibition Dinner will debut a book exhibition named Book-o-rama. Tassilo Hager (of Curator) has put together a fine selection of titles and the following authors will be attending the show: Patrick "Brusti" Armbruster with «Barely Made It», Peter Radacher with «A brief history of the snowboard», Carlos Blanchard presenting "Dreams" and of course Tassilo with his own books «CURATOR - Vol. 2 & 3» and «Snowboarding makes me happy.» Not confirmed at time of printing is the appearance of Jeremy Jones with «The Art of Shralpinism: Lessons from the Mountains». Other books that will be presented: Club Sandwich by Matt Georges & Perly, Heroes by Jerome Tanon and Hunting for Bluebird by Vincent Skoglund.

During the evenings the Retailers Choice Board Design award by, ahem, BoardSport Source will be voted on. And for those with stamina join the parties planned at the Jakober Pub and Postalm. On Sunday, Mortal Kombat Sound and MC Ucee will turn the night into day in the Jakober Pub and more chilled music will be played by Tricky Duke and Oida Leck in the Post Alm. On Monday, DJ BRX and Laima will play in the Jacober Pub.

Meanwhile Shops 1st Try has been working hard to reduce its environmental impact by separating waste, using reusable cups, sourcing local produce for the dinners and a lot more. Visitors are welcome to bring their own cups and a partnership with Go-Shred means shops can share rides. This year Shops 1st try takes another step forward thanks to a new co-operation with the Austrian doormat manufacturer, Kleen-Tex. Kleen-Tex doormats will replace single-use trade show carpets used in the past in the Highlight Exhibition Dinner area, which had to be thrown away after the event, the new Kleen-Tex doormats will be reused every year! Thanks to the green catering, reusable exhibition stands, functioning waste separation system and its own «cup washing system» for drinking cups in the outdoor area, SHOPS 1st TRY already meets the guidelines for the Austrian «Green Meeting» certificate. The cooperation with Kleen-Tex makes the event one of the most environmentally friendly trade fairs in the sporting goods industry.

The event is open to retailers from all over Europe, so book your flights and register immediately. Closest airports are Innsbruck followed by Munich or take a train to Brixlegg and then catch a taxi up the hill to Alpbach. See you out testing or in the exhibition dinner! At Europe's biggest on snow event.

**SHOPS-1ST-TRY.COM**

## THE PILL BASE CAMP, WINTER EDITION SESTRIERE, ITALY JAN 16-17, 2023

Sestriere. This popular ski resort in Italy is 17km from the border with France and 105 km from Turin. This is its second winter edition and third one considering also the summer Base Camp in Finalborgo. Unlike the other on-snow demos this is a combined snowboard and ski test, so caters for both core and cross over retailers. The event will see more than 80 brands exhibiting and the organisers are expecting around 200 retailers to take part. During the event a full program of presentations, previews, talks, clinics, product tests and workshops will also take place. Last year 71 brands, 103 shops, 242 buyers and 164 sales and marketing managers tested 1860 skis, 1600 snowboards, 640 boots and 480 bindings for a total of 4650 tests over the two days.

The event opens at 8.30am on the Monday with testing starting at both the Outdoor and Indoor Villages, this goes on all day till closing at 17:00. On Monday evening in the Indoor village from 7pm, until 11pm there will be The Pill Dinner plus an aperitif for all participants of The Pill Base

## SPORT ACHAT LYON, FRANCE JAN 30 - 1 FEB, 2023

After a Autumn show, Sport Achat will be returning to Hall 2 of Eurexpo in Lyon. With over 20,000 m2 of exhibition space and more than 500 brands and over 2,500 visitors already registered, the organisers are expecting a total of 3,600 business visitors to attend over the 3 days.

The biggest change is that the show has been brought forward to the end of January from its traditional date in late March. The has taken place to ensure the show remains relevant when pre-book deadlines are moving ever earlier. This is a trend amongst the trade shows with ISPO having just taken place in late November and Outdoor Retailer planning a similar move for next year. With its new dates Sport Achat will still be the final opportunity to see 23/24 products as all the other on snow demos and trade shows will have taken place. The earlier dates are expected to attract more exhibitors and visitors. Mathieu Kurtz of Sportair comments: "Retailers come to the show to meet clothing, ski, snowboard and outdoor suppliers. These face-to-face meetings are the strength of the show. We have increased the number of textile brands this year and still have the most important ski, goggle and glove brands and we are now struggling to find space for the lasts demands of exhibitors."

This year's event will mark the 20th anniversary of the show, which is a mainstay in the European trade show calendar. It's an essential show for

The Pill Basecamp is a ski, freeride & snowboard testing event for retailers and buyers that will take place the 16th-17th January 2023 in

Camp. So brands, agents, retailers and media will be able to interact in a friendly and relaxed way, and of course enjoy the live music in the perfect The Pill style. The second day has a similar schedule for testing

New for this edition will be the Indoor village just one step away from the Outdoor village. Here clothing, backpacks, goggles, and accessories brands will be exhibiting. The Pill use the opportunity to test all the products for their next season's Winter Outdoor guide, a 400 page magazine stuffed full of reviews.

During The Pill Base Camp there will be many educational activities for example mountain safety, where experienced mountain guides will offer training in preventive mountain safety and the use of safety systems such as beeps, shovel, probe and airbag. The Pill Base Camp is a great opportunity for the Italian snowboard community to come together to discuss the current market and the products they are testing and party hard. So don't miss the opportunity to build new relationships or to strengthen existing ones. See you there!

**THEPILLAGENCY.COM**

media, manufacturers, distributors, agents, retailers, online retail sites, leasing specialists, buying groups, specialised chains and procurement centres and the last opportunity to place those prebook orders for 23/24 products. The Fresh Zone near the hall entrance is dedicated to start-ups and will feature companies that are less than 5 years old, giving the opportunity for these new players to present their products cheaply and get themselves known.

The show is open from 9am to 7pm Monday 30 of January to Wednesday 1st February 2023. A conference program is being finalized and will include topics on the second hand business and how retailers can work and make money in this evolving market place. The event organisers will host a party to celebrate the show's 20th anniversary on Monday evening and many booth parties are planned for the Tuesday evening. Airports in the region include Geneva, Grenoble and Lyon Saint-Exupéry. Lyon is also well connected by motorway and TGV from both Paris and Marseilles.

So, jump on a plane or get in the car and come and see what's new for next year. Get involved and feel that collective snowboard spirit at Europe's last major winter show of the season.

**SPORTAIR.FR**



# TRADE EVENTS

## REVIEWS

**ISPO**  
**MUNICH, GERMANY**  
**NOV 28-30, 2022**

After a two-year break, ISPO the big daddy of the world's winter sports shows was back. ISPO was for many years the pre-eminent winter sports show globally. At the last show in 2020 nearly 3000 exhibitors and around 80,000 industry professionals attended the show, with international exhibitors accounting for around 90% of all exhibitors. For the new November date there were over 1500 exhibitors from 55 countries and 40,000 trade visitors. Just under 90% of the exhibitors came from abroad, and more than 50 countries and regions were represented. The most exhibitors came from Germany, Italy, France, China and Taiwan. Around 20% of them were at ISPO Munich for the first time. The trade visitors came from a total of 117 countries, and 73% of trade visitors were international guests. The top five participating countries were Germany, Italy, France, Great Britain and Austria.

Exhibiting brands were generally surprised by the level of turnout with many stands busy for all three days particularly along the key corridors. Part of this was due to the show having been reduced from four days to three and the reduction in the number of halls to visit. But even so German retailers and larger UK retailers were out in force. For German retailers this was their first show since the last ISPO in early 2020 as German covid restrictions had been harsher than those in other parts of Europe.

The biggest change was that the show has moved two months earlier to fit in with the change in product production schedules and ordering patterns. With ISPO Munich now being near the start of the ordering season it gives a transparency on new trends, innovative products and materials, solutions, and new brands. Exhibiting brands were happy with the new dates and being back in the Messe Halls and this is reflected by the confirmation of similar dates and the same location for 2023.

The halls consisted of three outdoor halls which were the central focus of the show and then halls for snowsports, sports fashion, therapy /fitness, Future Lab, Text trends, sourcing, health and Fitness and snowsports. The snowsports segment was dominated by outerwear whose ordering patterns best fit the new show dates, and then came goggles, helmets and accessories. Ski and snowboard hardgoods were hardly represented at all which given the number of retailers present was a missed opportunity. Multisport retailers - in order to use their time efficiently - need shows that represent all aspects of the winter sports market so they can see every category in as short a time as possible.

This new hall segmentation with the motto: «New Perspectives on Sports», marks a shift in the show. Before ISPO was very much an order writing show but now it is equally as important as an event for the transfer of information and knowledge. Many of the halls were organised around providing specific knowledge categories, e.g. sourcing for those looking for manufacturing and

material knowledge, text trends for those looking for information on the future of textiles, the Future lab for those looking for ISPO award winning products and interesting new companies in Brand New. A total of around 100 award-winning products and services were showcased there.

Then you had the sustainability hub for all things green, a vital area for companies with all the new European legislation coming in. The outdoor sector in particular is a pioneer when it comes to sustainability and this was demonstrated by the presentation of the ISPO Cup, to Patagonia for outstanding social commitment.

A prominent conference program was also central to this knowledge transfer environment with topics such as the future of winter sports in the face of climate change and energy shortage and how the sports industry can lobby for the good of people and nature. For any company operating in the sports field these knowledge hubs are key to their future success. So going forward one can see many industry people attending the show so they can tap into these knowledge sources. The variety, the number of visitors and their own knowledge diversity further enriched the event.

Many non-exhibiting brands were visiting the show and had planned meetings inside the show and so benefited from and were part of the information exchange going on throughout the show. A fair few will come back as exhibitors but even more will look to return to benefit again from this unique environment.

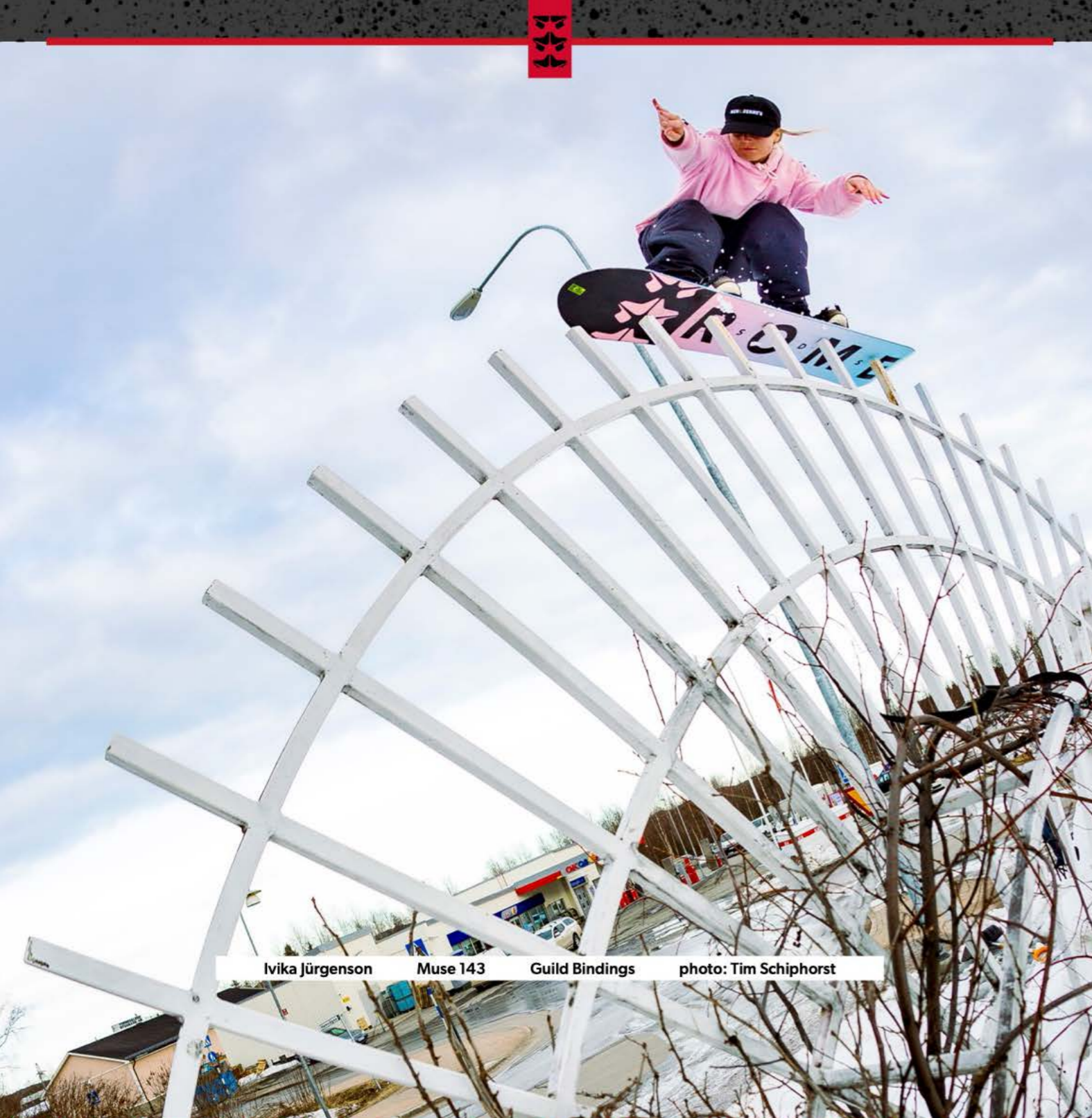
“The revamped concept of ISPO Munich, with the Future Lab as its centrepiece, scored particularly well with the international sports community, both exhibitors and trade visitors,” commented Stefan Rummel, CEO of Messe München.

Going forward this strategy will be further developed with sports fashion, tourism, digitalization, health and fitness, nutrition or esports further added into the knowledge mix. For example the ISPO Group announced a partnership with the streetwear and fashion blog Highsnobiety under the brand name 520M.

With all its different sports communities and nationalities congregated in one place, ISPO still uniquely offers opportunities and connections to develop retail and brand business and for retailers to find the products and brands of the future. So much food for thought, this was a trade show but not as we know it. This is the future model for all trade shows. Next year ISPO Munich will take place again at Messe München on Tuesday to Thursday, from November 28 to 30, 2023. Register now for your annual knowledge boost.

**ISPO.COM**





Ivika Jürgenson Muse 143 Guild Bindings photo: Tim Schiphorst



## RETAILER PROFILE SLIDEWAYZ, SOLDEU ANDORRA



Representing Andorra, the now legendary Slidewayz store in Soldeu ski resort fills this issue's retailer profile spot. We speak with shop owner Merlin about his business. He tells us which brands are doing it right, how online sales count for 2% of their turnover and we also talk about brands delivering late, yet having stock on their own Ecomm first.

### Tell us the history of Slideways. What have been the hardest lessons learnt through covid?

Slidewayz is a core snowboard shop located in Soldeu ski resort, part of GranValira in Andorra. We only open for the winter seasons, but just six months before covid we took an important step and invested in opening a big 450m2 Slidewayz store in the city. As you can imagine that was a drama, and we have to decide to close it after a year of battling with restrictions. Since then the decision has been made not to expand but stay small and strong.

### How has the kick off to the 22/23 season been?

We are having a good start to the season. Early snow has helped and I guess some customers didn't manage to get their gear last season. The delays on deliveries are causing much more work than usual and make it very hard to keep up. This isn't fun at all because it takes time away from snowboarding.

### Were many brands late in delivering?

Deliveries are better than last year. Bigger brands seem to be having more trouble. Snowboards and Gore-Tex have been hit the worst. It's very upsetting when our prebooks haven't showed up but the brand has their products on their website.

### How will your 23/24 pre-book look?

Our prebooks for 23/24 are looking a little more conservative than the current season's, but our orders were record breaking this year due to last year's lack of stock and big demand.

### What marketing activations do you have lined up for this season?

We have four events that we organize. On January 15th, World Snowboard Day board test, Riglet Park and other fun in the resort. February 11th we have our 686-supported stair set & jib contest with BBQ. And on April 2nd we'll celebrate the end of season with a pool party at Sunset Park Peretol. We sponsor other local events too and our team always represents.

### What makes Slidewayz Slidewayz?

I think that what differentiates us is our own limited edition clothing line and collabs. We have everything from goggles to boards and this year we have collabs with Brethren apparel, Rad gloves, Easy

snowboards, Stinky Socks, Overdose Skateboards also our premium selection of brands and models and the expert advice we give. We love snowboarding and it's not all about the money.

### Which brands are doing it right for you? Marketing, sales incentives, good ecomm presence without stealing your sales etc.

Unfortunately not many brands are supporting core shops in the right way. It seems to me that most are pushing for direct sales or big online dealers. I want to give a shout out to 686, Korua Shapes and Vans who are doing things right in my opinion.

### Which products are selling best so far this season?

Our best sellers are always hardware. We have a big demand for boots since many customers are realising that it's a bad idea to buy them online. Vans and 32 are our best sellers. Union bindings are killing it as usual and Jones, Capita and Bataleon are in the lead for now for boards.

### Have you noticed the effects of energy price rises on customer spending?

The high cost of living is having an impact on quantity of smaller sales but compensated by a few bigger sales, the rich are richer and the middle class are poorer.

### Are you doing anything special with social media to promote your sales?

Yes we work on our Instagram but organic reach seems to be very inconsistent lately. Not too sure if it's still worth it?

### Do you sell products on your website? What percentage of annual revenue does this make?

Online sales are about 2% of our business. We've been trying to push things there since covid but it hasn't really taken off. The big online shop are way too aggressive and customers only look for the cheapest price. Yep.. that's right, I'm saying that the few online shops that do well do not respect retail prices. Luckily there will always be people who appreciate good advice, good service and a place to share and learn about snowboarding.📍

SLIDEWAYZ.COM

# RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

## **SNOWBOARDS FW23/24**

What a time to be alive, what a winter awaits us, and what a new era is emerging for snowboarding. The big guns are happy, small labels are blooming, and the scene is striving. All hail snowboarding! And luckily, we're here to help you navigate the landscape and understand the new challenges and opportunities that are on the horizon. We also aim to spread the stoke by showcasing the kick-ass products brands are cooking up. Ladies and gents, welcome to next winter's Retail Buyer's Guide for Snowboard 23/24, brought to you by **Matthieu Perez**.



Sit tight and buckle your seat belt. It's going to be a hell of a trip through the creations and plans of the industry's leading minds. To start, let's throw some high fives to all the small labels out there who fight, create, and rise. Ex-Pro and Founder of West Snowboarding David Lambert is happy to announce, "We will have our ten-year anniversary the coming season. Therefore expect a lot of limited projects for that and a lot of novelties". As part of its twenty year anniversary, Bataleon will showcase its rich history of timeless and provocative design in the forthcoming Goliath deck.

Amplid's Peter Bauer lays down the current context of the market, explaining, "Just like everything else in the world, things are going up and down, and developments are difficult to forecast." Kjetil Bjørge at Fjell offers, "the market seems to increase despite the world situation affecting [the industry] at every stage, and that it is most important to try to get people inspired to get out into the mountains by focusing on satisfaction and joy when riding the boards."

Korua's Marketing Manager, Geoff Brinkhaus, likes to point at lift rates and accessibility, noting that "it seems like snowboarding is as strong as ever, and the focus on carving and surf inspired riding is growing, which we are excited about. As costs everywhere go up, we see potential challenges with the cost of participating in this sport." However, Eddie Wall at Arbor explains how much the sport can contribute to a positive dose of energy. He explains, "the snowboard market is currently strong."

“The market seems to increase despite the world situation affecting [the industry] at every stage, and that it is most important to try to get people inspired to get out into the mountains by focusing on satisfaction and joy when riding the boards.”

Kjetil Bjørge, Fjell

Covid changed people's outlook on activities and forced them outdoors. Skateboarding, surfing, camping, biking, and most other outdoor sports, including snowboarding, saw substantial growth. This gives us the opportunity to welcome new customers into the snowboarding world. With resorts closed, splitboarding gained more popularity, and once the resorts opened, they were busier than ever."

Pete Saari, MC at Mervin Manufacturing (Lib Tech, GNU, Roxy), believes, "Snowboarding is, and always has been, an escape from life's biggest challenges. With major world events weighing heavily on the human population, most people could benefit from more time in the outdoors, more carefree adventure, and more fun. Snowboarding is that vehicle for action. It's fun, it (most often) gets people outside, and it inspires creativity and positive energy."



“The name of the game remains your brand strength in the eyes of the consumer base. This is what will make your brand go through these uncertain times with more ease.”

Paul Batsch, Salomon

WHAT’S THE HAPS?

While global events—including the pandemic and the war in Ukraine—shape the world as a whole and inform our collective experiences, they impact each person and each brand in unique ways.

Elevated Surfcraft chose to hold consistent through the pandemic, continuing to work with its factory to craft small batches of each model. “Timing is a bit slow but we have already presold most of our inventory and set aside a batch for EU distribution,” says Elevated owner Aaron Lebowitz. At Arbor, Covid-19 also presented challenges with material, supply chains, increased costs, and congested ports. This forced the brand to move its timelines ahead and be certain to ship ahead of schedule.

Bataleon has continued working towards its goal of simplifying supply chains and managing risk. It has also expanded an already successful partnership with Titan Sports Co. “We’re excited to build on this relationship with a commitment to innovation, quality, and efficiency,” says Bataleon’s Michael Chilton.

In contrast, Head has made no significant changes to its manufacturing or sourcing processes. In general, despite the effects of the current situation, the brand saw generally saw a V-shaped recovery in the main markets, as well as extremely strong results in overseas regions.

Salomon is eager to see what’s next. “The biggest question now is the size of the 2023 open to buy in the different part of the world”, says Jacopo Lazzari. “We witnessed drastic drops in other industries and we will soon know what’s going to happen for snowboard equipment.”

David Pitchi at YES. notes, “Other challenges are outside the industry and involve the consumers’ buying power for the next year or more and this will put a lot of pressure on the retailers and on stock management and the industry.”

For the smaller guys, staying true to their roots and focusing on the core is a one-way street. They’re all in, but it comes at a cost. Demir Julia at Verdad observes, “I cannot really say anything positive. If we were a big brand, I wouldn’t be in this mess since the big guys have the shotgun in the production planning. If we want to produce in time we need at least to do 20,000 boards in pre-order and this is impossible for us without a huge investment. So for the small brands, things have become more difficult.”

GiGi Rűf, owner at Slash By GiGi’s shaking up how his company is operating: “We’ve been dabbling with carry-over models for the past few seasons, assigning more mellow graphics to a board we want to give retailers more time to sell. We’ve also had success with limited capsule releases and because creativity and freshness are the bedrock upon which the brand stands, we’re evolving how we come to market with our products.”

West’s David Lambert sees a challenging landscape, explaining, “Unfortunately, I don’t see many changes around me, it seems like most of the players are sticking to the same old habits and schedules, just making them even worse and more stressful. This is how we see the industry. Fortunately, on snow, the vibes are huge and I see a long and bright future for snowboarders and snowboarding in general.”

Never Summer touts the inherent flexibility it has by manufacturing its own boards. “All of our design, production, and distribution are done in one facility at our Denver, Colorado, USA Headquarters” explains Tony Sasgen, international sales manager. “For us, it’s always been about quality products first and unmatched customer service beyond that. We continued to focus on keeping the quality, durability, and timing of the production consistent so our distributors, retail partners, and end consumers are happy. You can’t sell it if you don’t get it!” Fact.

Other brands are focusing on their next steps and how to keep evolving. David Pitchi mentions, “We need a new, disruptive innovation that could bring a new wind to the Market. YES. is bringing new technologies to the market that are in line with its constant drive to make snowboards



“We are advocates of supporting our brick and mortar and we don’t run ads promoting direct sales. When a true snowboarder is helping you size up your next snowboard and taking the time to get to know your style of riding a little bit, it can help greatly to keep people having a good time out on the hills.” Jeff Baughn, Academy

ride better, and we are also constantly trying to make the best value-for-money product so that everyone that wants to can get on the hill.”

Rome takes the challenge from a line management perspective by trying to find the sweet spot for new products, carry overs, and incremental, tiered tech updates. Salomon offers a strong assessment of what it takes to thrive in today’s market. According to Paul Batsch, “The name of the game remains your brand strength in the eyes of the consumer base. This is what will make your brand go through these uncertain times with more ease.” Word.

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL DEALER

Different companies, different people, different visions. Let’s start with Academy’s approach towards brick and mortar retail. According to Founder Jeff Baughn, “We are advocates of supporting our brick and mortar and we don’t run ads promoting direct sales.” Never Summer’s Tony Sasgen points out that “When a true snowboarder is helping you size up your next snowboard and taking the time to get to know your style of riding a little bit, it can help greatly to keep people having a good time out on the hills.”

Nico Compan at Easy Snowboards illustrates some of the challenges brands face in their pursuit of supporting retailers. He explains, “We faced a big increase in material costs during last production [season] but



“Heading into 23-24, we see a lot of people realizing that although quiver boards are fun in powder, for example, they still need something that functions well once they hit the groomers”

Eddie Wall, Arbor

we tried to maintain good prices for customers and good margins for shops. Our goal is to work as a collective so it’s a win-win situation for everyone.”

Elevated Surf Craft sells direct-to-consumer in the US and is working with Good Question Supply to distribute to select shops in Europe. Telos has a new setup in Europe, run by Kolja Keetman. Since last winter, the brand has been working step-by-step to strengthen its salesforce all over Europe to deliver the necessary service to retailers.

On the endless carry-over topic, which has always existed for some brands and simply become a necessity for others, we get different approaches. Approximately 50% of Amplid’s boards are 2-season models. Amplid had already introduced this cycle prior to Covid. “It helps retailers keep the value of their inventory, and avoids a price deathmatch right after Christmas,” asserts living legend Peter Bauer.

Some brands use their carry-over products as an advantage in terms of flexibility and reactivity. Yunika’s Owner, Jean-Marie Thil says, “With a carry-over strategy, we are luckier than other brands by having some extra inventory which comes in handy when needed.” Borealis is another brand that touts the benefits of the carry-over approach and incorporates it heavily into its long-term plans. “We’ve always done carry-over on most models for up to three consecutive seasons. From 23/24 on, we plan on implementing a two-year graphics lifespan combined with construction and technology updates following that same pattern”, says Founder Ben Hall.

WHAT’S NEW?

For next season, brands are ready to serve up a range of new products and no shortage of compelling stories. Easy Snowboards grounds its strategy on its product. “Our marketing is our product so we can better adjust our margin. We try to do a smart and cheap marketing [approach],” explains Nico Compan.

For 23/24, Salomon will offer a completely refreshed collection of performance freestyle boards in collaboration with its team of park riders. “We pay a lot of attention to entry, mid-level products because we know that these are the ones that will trigger passion for snowboarding,” insists Paul Batsch. Following the same mindset, youth products are important too, and Salomon will keep supporting the All-Mountain segment with its most sustainable product construction.

The brand will keep evolving its Hillside program with Wolfgang ‘Wolle’ Nyvelt, the mastermind behind Åsmo powsurfers. This include the addition of a new powder board to the quiver that is inspired by Japan riding style.

Mervin Manufacturing also has a strong program with its different brands. First and foremost, Roxy and Chloe Kim developed the XOXO Pro utilizing the brand’s most premium technologies and materials to perform at the highest levels. Roxy has positioned that board as the pinnacle model that influences the rest of the boards in the collection. On the Lib-Tech side, the brand’s “Experimental Division” is always working hands-on with materials, shapes, contours and processes to make better snowboards that are easier to ride, last longer, and have better board feel.

Capita will introduce a new series developed with Arthur Longo. This series will be called the Aeronaut and is designed by Arthur to function as a perfect board to tackle both all mountain resort and powder conditionsn and features a narrower waist width than many of the boards in the collection.

The new up-and-coming Doubledeck is based on a patent cooperation treaty worldwide. As the name suggests, the brand’s signature technology revolves around an innovative double-deck design. Terje Haakonsen has partnered with Doubledeck Snowboards and is responsible for future product development.

For many brands, the freeride and all-mountain categories are a large part of their collections and are benefiting from a greater focus. Weston is continuing to focus the majority of its effort into powder and freeride categories. With Weston being a niche brand in the solid snowboard space, they’re continuing to focus on their high-end models vs. entry level.

Never Summer has deep roots in the big mountain freeride side of things and firmly believes this segment will always be important to snowboarding. The new Valhalla and the Proto FR, which was introduced last year, will help round off the entire line-up.

“Ultimate Diversity” has been Nitro’s philosophy for many years now and the brand never gets tired of supporting every type of rider out there. “We try to avoid the chasing-trend game while striving to be relevant for our pro team, as well as consumers from beginner to expert,” says bigwig Tommy Delago.

For 23/24, all of the boards in Telos’ backcountry-oriented collection will feature graphics related to the TELOS saga. The all-new Legend, Legend Massif, and Adit designs were created by French graphic designer Nicolas Thomas.

Arbor notes that, over the past few years, customers have taken more interest in quiver boards yet there will always be a need for daily drivers. Eddie Wall explains, “Heading into 23/24, we see a lot of people realizing that although quiver boards are fun in powder, for example, they still need something that functions well once they hit the groomers.”

Flux confirms that freeride-type boards are increasing. The brand sees user needs becoming more diverse. As a brand from Japan, Flux would like to differentiate itself by offering higher quality than its competitors. “We would like to promote and propose a product line that has its roots in Japow, spreading the joy of snowboarding from Japan to the world,” claims Kyosuke Ogata.

Gender inclusion is an important topic for many. For K2, unisex is key and the brand places an emphasis on making snowboards for everyone. “Creating a snowboard with the entire tech our masterminds come up with and open it up to every gender, make the advantages visible for everyone that steps on this board from the first turn on,” notes K2’s European Marketing Coordinator Sebi Schmitz.



“Creating a snowboard with the entire tech our masterminds come up with and open it up to every gender, make the advantages visible for everyone that steps on this board from the first turn on”

Sebi Schmitz, K2

Freeride and non-binary/unisex boards are in focus for Burton. The brand also aims to tailor its products to specific riding styles and terrain. “People want boards that fulfil a certain purpose, that work in specific terrains or for specific types of riding” explains Jan Grimm.

There are no big changes for Drake, as the brand introduced the unisex board Tao of Drake and is trying to expand this concept to other models and add new sizes. On the team side of things, Tao of Drake is a unisex concept where the goal is to have the same number of paid riders between men and women within 2025. For Elevated Surfcraft, it’s become very clear that the highest demand for its product comes from the females.

Shaped boards and the “surf the snow” ethos are currently very popular and serve as the foundation of brands like Korua and Dupraz. While Dupraz has promoted shaped boards for almost 20 years, many manufacturers are enhancing this category by placing their own spin on it.

Jones has collaborated with Christenson Surfboards for nearly ten years and Lib-Tech has been collaborating with Mayhem for many seasons as well. This cross pollination has led to fresh ideas in both snowboards and surfboards. “All of Matt Biolos’s Lib Losts are feeling really good with progressive ‘bottom turn carving minded’ progressive sidecuts and floaty soft snow friendly noses,” states Pete Saari.



This year, Elevated Surf Craft is working with a local California surfboard shaper who specializes in midlength egg designs. Together, they are developing a 165 cm mid-length board for the mid-life cruiser.

YES. has worked with legendary surf shaper John Pyzel to develop a board that suits the all-mountain rider who wants a board that can help push one’s limits. Stranda is doing some experiments with channels in the base of its very limited edition Starliner.

Harry Gunz explains that “Rad Air has been and will always be a surfing inspired brand. For almost 30 years we have had surfing related graphics or segments that you’ve seen on classic hot rod cars. For winter 23-24 our focus is a mix of vintage and classic surfboard graphics.”

According to Nidecker, there is no single or massively leading trend at the time. Instead, every brand is finding its own voice and approach to innovation. For next season, the brand found inspiration in the science of biomimicry science. Its Biomimicry series showcases nature-oriented shapes. For 23/24, shaping is Rome’s biggest focus. New shapes will be seen on the Rene-Gade, the Stalefish, the Heist, the Hype, and the Agent Pro.

Head’s Ops Marketing Manager, Kathatrina Acham explains that “since traditional carving on the freshly groomed slopes and cruising in the backcountry is what people love about snowboarding, besides freestyle, we introduce our all-new cruiser boards, including rather classic shapes with long floaty noses and short pintails, and also fancier models with swallow tails or completely new shapes.”

WHAT’S IN?

Board construction continues to evolve, leading to fresh collections that features innovative process and materials, as well as compelling graphics. New for 23/24, the Roxy XOXO Pro uses carbon strips to add stability and pop to the board while keeping it light. This model is made in the USA with eco-friendly materials, FSC-certified woods, water-based inks, bio solvents, and low VOC resin systems. “The materials and processes throughout the line remain the most advanced and sustainable in the industry,” asserts Barrett Christy Cummins. This year, Lib-Tech is excited about how things are coming together. “Travis’ boards are amazing with Adam Haynes doing the art for the Orcas and Parillo doing the T-Rice Pro series,” says Pete Saari. Austen Sweetin has a new Lib Rig pro model coming out that blends some of his favourite aspects of the Dynamo and BRD shapes into an all new directional FS all-mountain machine. Lib’s Experimental Division developed a new soft serve spoon nose 3-D tech that aims to excel in the pow without compromising hardpack performance.

Ride keeps it straight and simple. “Metal Slim Walls. Check it out. Your. Mind. Will. Be. Blown. Just saying,” claims Jim Linnberg. At Jones, the Hovercraft 2.0 will be the first snowboard model to incorporate a new snowboard recycling process that is tentatively named Recycle Tech. This revolutionary new snowboard reclamation process allows the brand to reuse upwards of 95% of the materials in a broken or retired snowboard.

Academy is all about camber. “Retailers are finally putting down the reverse camber Kool-Aid. Function over BS,” insists Jeff Baughn.

Slash are also big into camber, and Gigi’s go-to board the ATV powers into its second season with its redesigned shape having received rave reviews at retail and from the pro team. The slightly wider model, with deep singular sidecut and reactive camber now boasts the new 3D peppered

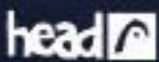
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into tip and tail and will be under Gigi’s feet for Natural Selection Tour this year.

As mentioned previously, Doubledeck has developed a completely new way to make snowboards. The brand has constructed a primary deck called the “Motherboard” that features a 45% bending option in its long axis while the bow construction above the Motherboard bridges the board convex. “This leads to a totally new feeling of riding a snowboard,” promises CEO Andreas Kramer.

Endeavor is using its Phonon topsheet in 50% of the line and is working to introduce it everywhere possible. By removing the need for a traditional plastic topsheet and integrating the combo of carbon and fiberglass into one, the brand has created a super lightweight, powerfully reactive board.

F2 will be using a new material, recycled carbon, in its TX carbon board models. Kemper integrates NFC chip in every single board. It’s going to have all the information about the board right there, all the tech specs via online registration with your serial number on the board. Lost, stolen or sold, it can be tracked.

#### SUSTAIN THE FUTURE

Some brands continue to make a strong case for local production and/or local sourcing, either in North America or in Europe. West is sourcing all materials within Europe to produce in Europe. “This is where we’re doing the best, when you know that 80% of your carbon footprint is coming from transportation. Our Retailers appreciate this honest communication,” says David Lambert.

Two years ago, Nidecker introduced a Swiss-made wood core into its Biomimicry series, locally sourced trees, locally transformed then shipped to manufacturers.

Rossignol aims to feature FSC woodcores in 100% of its snowboard line by FW25. And while still in development, the brand is gradually replacing carbon, basalt, and kevlar fibres with blends of FSC-certified wood species.

According to Josef Holub of Goodboards, by producing its models in Europe and using premium materials, the brand aims to create durable boards that have a reduced impact on the environment.

K2’s goal is to reduce its emissions by 50% by 2030 and to be carbon neutral by 2050. They are working on offering all boards with bio

“Our focus on quality products is helping boards stay in the market longer and, at this point, we’re stoked to see Nitro products sold second hand – it speaks for our quality and brand value, but also helps allow more people to get out and ride.”

Tommy Delago, Nitro

resin. Currently, most of the brands’ boards use a bamboo, aspen, or paulownia. Using these species of wood enables the brand to further reduce its environmental footprint.

Mervin Manufacturing - the mastermind behind Lib-Tech, Gnu, and Roxy’s boards - has made its home at the base of the Olympic Mountains. Its factory is wind and water-powered, uses non-toxic materials, fast-growing woods, and water-based inks. They also recycle wood and plastics while continuing to improve production processes and source emerging earth-friendly materials. They take their carbon footprint seriously. Their production partners are also committed to eco-friendly processes and materials, using solar power, having zero CO2 emissions, solvent-free printing, and using FSC certified woods like paulownia, which they started using in wood cores 23 years ago! Bataleon’s commitment to sustainability has always been driven by long-term solutions focused on performance, durability, and transparency and less about marketing and using sustainability to increase sales.

Capita’s commitment to clean-energy-powered manufacturing at The Mothership remains as strong as ever. The brand recently implemented a significant solar install on the roof of its factory to improve its ability to self-generate the energy needed in production. Capita is also finalizing the process to be a certified B-corp.

In 2017, Burton set a goal to reduce the average carbon footprint of each Burton hardgoods category by 20% over a 5-year period. By winter 23, they exceeded the goal for snowboards, reducing the average category carbon footprint by over 21%. Further, they have a goal to become carbon neutral as a company by 2025.

The best rubbish is the one we do not produce, Serge Dupraz likes to remind us. Making long-lasting boards is part of his environmental approach and commitment to respecting and supporting his customers.





“A strong board which you can keep for a long time is the best sustainability argument a brand can offer.” Ben Hall, Borealis

Tommy Delago offers, “Our focus on quality products is helping boards stay in the market longer and, at this point, we’re stoked to see Nitro products sold second hand – it speaks for our quality and brand value, but also helps allow more people to get out and ride.”

For Ben Hall at Borealis, “A strong board which you can keep for a long time is the best sustainability argument a brand can offer.” Borealis will increase its warranty period from three to four years on all gear for 23-24 on. Stranda also offers a four-year warranty, which speaks volumes about how much the brand trusts the quality of its boards. As overproduction is an issue for the snowsports industry, Stranda does carry-over designs from season to season and produces boards in several smaller runs. They are also certified as climate neutral.

Weston’s Sean Eno offers, “When it comes to the guts of a snowboard, consumers need to realize that snowboards are going to end up in a landfill at the end of the day. The best thing this industry can do, and Weston continues to do, is ensure that boards are built to last.”

The European Outdoor Group started a multi-brand pilot study on snowboard/ski shredding, sorting, and recycling, focused on finding a system for properly recycling boards and skis without downcycling. While this is a pilot, the outcome of the research is aimed at industrial scale applications. Apparently ahead of the pack, Jones’ Recycle Tech program will be a key component of the brand’s sustainability efforts. It enables the company to recycle old snowboards and use their parts to make new snowboards.

**NEXT GEN**

For Jones, the youth market is growing. The brand recognizes that more and more kids are talented riders who can take full advantage of boards built with premium materials.

Linnberg, Ride’s head man, offers, “we think the youth market is for kids that snowboard. So as long as we are making good product for kids, we think we’ve got the youth market covered.”

For the youth market, Amplid will now offer its award-winning Singular board in a size as small as 142 cm. Peter Bauer says, “We are confident that many snowboard dads will be happy to finally get their hands on a ‘real’ board for their kids.”

Slash By GiGi continue to grow their youth program, with feedback garnered from Gigi’s two boys (the older of which, Jona has now graduated from Slash Splash (kids board) to their reduced size Happy Place snowboard in a 135cm). The Splash offers rockered tips to minimise edge catch, with twin-shape and soft, simple flex.

After seeing a significant growth in interest in its youth collection over the past few seasons, Capita has completely redesigned and rebuilt its Micro-Mini series, offering boards down to 80 cm for riders looking to get their first experience snowboarding.

Rossignol is bringing some fresh air in the twin freestyle beginner-to-intermediate segment. It will offer three new shapes that are designed with lineage and progression in mind, with a variety of true twin models that go from size 80cm to 150cm and whose shapes and constructions vary.

When Easy started seven years ago, “We wanted to offer a product to every kind of budget and we are still doing it. It’s important for us that kids and young people could buy a good board at a nice price. It took time for us to do kids boards, we lose money on it but we made it!” Commitment!

After getting a glimpse of the future from some of the best minds in the industry, it’s fair to say that snowboarding is as strong as ever. There’s no shortage of creativity, fresh content, progression, community, personalities, and history. Let’s make sure that we bring the stoke to all retailers and all consumers. All hail snowboarding!🙌

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

- 1 Brands experimenting with carryover
- 2 Kids shapes coming through
- 3 Production hit hard last few years
- 4 Board innovation still progressing
- 5 Everyone boasting eco innovations



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Distorita    Goliath    Thunderstorm

BOREALIS



Artefact    Horizon    Tundra

BURTON



Family Tree Gril Master    Men's Process    W24 3D Fish Split

CAPITA



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Left: Ferrus Shearer | Andrew Hillier

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## BIG WIG INTERVIEW

### JEREMY JOIRE, SALOMON

Jeremy Joire started out as an intern at Salomon in 1999 and after working through a number of roles including boot product line manager, has now been Salomon Snowboard Business Unit Manager since 2008. Salomon's brand presence has been on the up in recent years, with notable moves in the US market – no mean feat for a French company. This issue's Big Wig gives great insight into the brand's plans for growth, how to harmonise D2C with b2b and Jeremy has some interesting perspectives on trade shows. Interview by SOURCE Editor, **Harry Mitchell Thompson**.

#### Tell us about your background and what led you to your current position at Salomon.

I grew up in the Alps in beautiful Annecy, Haute Savoie. As many kids from my generation, I started snowboarding in the early days. Craig Kelly's Board With The World made me quit skiing in 1990 and Critical Condition made me switch to soft boots in 1991. Since then, I have been totally hooked and it quickly became clear that my dream job would have something to do with snowboarding.

I have been working for Salomon for quite a while now! I started as an intern in 1999 and worked in different jobs and countries until I finally made it to the snowboard division. I started as a boot product line manager in 2004 and took over the management of the full Salomon Snowboards unit in 2008. I have been through a few cycles and industry mutations, but my loyalty and passion is intact.

I had the chance to meet and work with many great minds and people. I see my role as a facilitator. Making sure that the right people connect and work in harmony. Easier said than done! Snowboarding is made of strongly opinionated people and so is our team... That's what makes it so rewarding when things go well. I feel both grateful and proud to see where Salomon snowboards is at now, what we've achieved over the past decade. Salomon snowboards is arguably on the podium of snowboard equipment manufacturers in the world today. It took us patience and dedication to get there, and I know that humility and authenticity have something to do with it too.

#### What have been Salomon's best performing markets (product categories and regions) over the past two years?

Over the course of the past two years, it's been quite difficult to evaluate

We've been steadily focusing on the brand legitimacy in North America and it's paying off now on a worldwide scale.

performance in a classical way! Too many interferences... to many outside parameters. The most striking news is our outstanding growth in North America in 2022. As a French based company, we've always had to fight twice as hard to make a mark in USA. That's the reason why part of the international team is based in Portland, OR. Having this double headed team has been a tremendous help to our recent success. We've been steadily focusing on the brand legitimacy in North America and it's paying off now on a worldwide scale.

In terms of product line, the board line is leading the charge. We are happy to see boards like the Huck Knife or the Assassin become meaningful names in the industry and look at the Sleepwalker or the Abstract (our first unisex freestyle board) turn into classics in street snowboarding.

On the steeper side of the spectrum the fruitful collaboration with our long-time friend Wolle Nyvelt on powder and freeride shapes is continuously bringing great ideas to life in the Hillside collection. Not to mention the Dancehaul that quickly became our rider's secret pleasure toy... Long story short - we're killing it on boards and that feels great!

Bindings are also in good shape from high end Shadow Fit models to more affordable price points. The boot business on the other hand has

I look at salomon.com as a component of our omnichannel strategy. We are happy to see traffic increasing but we don't intend to overwhelmingly invest in conversion rate and for sure not with aggressive commercial weapons (pricing, bundles...etc). We know snowboarding will always rely on experts and specialty partners and that's clearly the direction we are supporting.

been a struggle for the past 2 seasons. Factory closure due to Covid, supply issues, transportation nightmare, material cost increases have been impacting our capacity to properly serve our shops and partners. Despite great efforts in product development and design our boot program is still not where it should be... the future definitely looks better!

Another area of focus for us has been China. Not the best timing you might say, not the most original idea either, maybe not the most sustainable resort ecosystem, but still. We now have a local dedicated organisation, and we are seriously investing in what is vastly considered to be the next big growth potential in snowboarding. Beyond the top athletes results and recognition, a true rider culture is developing, incentivised by government initiatives encouraging people to experience outdoor sports. Amer Sports being Chinese owned also gives us precious insights on consumer behaviours and local cultural trends. We still need to figure out a lot but we've been steadily growing both in cities and resort areas.

#### What was the best business decision you have made during your time at Salomon and why?

I wouldn't name one decision, but I think I've been able to navigate quite nicely the internal Salomon context. It's all about keeping the snowboard group core and independent while maintaining a healthy relationship with the Salomon mother brand. We are 100% focused on snowboarding while respecting the values and overall ambition of the Salomon brand. Continuously maintaining that balance allowed us to always be true to snowboarding and take free decisions about our team, our rider choices, product development, brand positioning, investments, projects and creative direction.

#### What are your views on the rapidly evolving trade show/onsnow demo/company demo environment?

The snowboard sell-in process has gone through a lot of mutations lately. Big names have left big trade shows half a decade ago and continental trade fairs such as OR or ISPO are no longer part of snowboard brand calendars. I personally regret it from an industry networking and social

Amer Sports being Chinese owned gives us precious insights on consumer behaviours and local cultural trends there. We still need to figure out a lot but we've been steadily growing both in cities and resort areas in China.

perspective. The good side is that most of the alternative smaller events are more intimate and usually include on snow demos. It's also more local which is not bad for the environment.

I wonder though. With more and more single brand launches, on snow invitationals, brand demos etc...retailers might realize that bringing more staff to one-time gatherings is not the worst option. Time will tell.

Anyway, if big trade shows want to come back in the game, they will need to attract brands and retailers with more creative hybrid formats.

#### Ordering seasons have moved earlier and earlier, what do you see as the best way to forecast for pre-orders, while actually allowing retailers to sell current season products as a guide?

It's indeed a fact that ordering season is reaching record deadlines... in my opinion that's the result of a high demand context. Retailers have experienced scarcity and brands have gone through frustrating shortage situations. The consequence is everything being pulled forward, which makes the assortment tactics more difficult to implement for both brands and retailers.

Due to a material shortage situation and high demand, factories are now dictating their rules which logically leads to flatter production curves and thus difficulties to meet our highly seasonal business.

That creates a way more uncertain environment for everyone. Less indicators, low visibility and more time pressure: risk management is now part of our daily lives. Forecasting is now a more difficult exercise relying more and more on trust, commitment and stronger partnerships between brands and retailers.

#### Can we talk pricing and how they've been taken on the chin by Salomon and at what point you'll need to pass on to retailers?

I think every brand is searching for the fairest way to share the pain



between brands, retailers and consumers. Timing and scale can slightly vary though. We will take our share of the hit and our moto is to limit the increase as much as we can to end users and retailers. Indeed, it's rather key for the future of our sport to keep accessible price points alive. On the other hand, snowboard equipment prices have been incredibly stable for the past 20 years (in comparison with lift tickets for example!) and I am afraid an adjustment is indeed necessary.

#### For a snowboard co, what's the perfect match of D2C and wholesale now and how do you see this changing in 5 years?

The D2C debate has been going on for some years now. I look at salomon.com as a component of our omnichannel strategy. We are happy to see traffic increasing but we don't intend to overwhelmingly invest in conversion rate and for sure not with aggressive commercial weapons (pricing, bundles...etc). We know snowboarding will always rely on experts and specialty partners and that's clearly the direction we are supporting.

#### What opportunities do you currently see in the market?

There are still a lot of opportunities in snowboarding. Youth is clearly back on boards. Creativity in content creation has never been greater. Social media reach is somehow limitless. New event formats are blooming. Female snowboarding is reaching new heights. Snowboarding is attracting newcomers in China... etc. But the biggest opportunity and responsibility that we all share is to make snowboarding more sustainable overall.

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## RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE SNOW HELMETS FW23/24

The move to the backcountry has given protective equipment a kick in recent seasons. Consumers know what to look for in a helmet and brands are working to deliver. **By Rocio Enriquez.**



Helmet wearing is unquestioned amongst consumers; there is no more wondering whether to wear one, but which one to wear. Safety demands welcome the latest technological innovations. Comfort is in great demand too. A helmet only protects you if you wear it. Optimal ventilation, fit and weight are crucial. These are the most relevant factors when choosing a helmet. Other features such as versatility and style, especially good matching with the rest of your kit, are appreciated. Most brands report their most technological styles as their best-selling ones. Growth is expected.

### NEW FOR 23/24

There has been ongoing technical innovation in the helmet segment for a few seasons now. Many brands have launched premium features that they will keep pushing next winter. The most popular ones will see their offer expanded and, in some cases, tweaked to offer enhanced capabilities. Giro relies on the Spherical Technology™ powered by MIPS. Their Owen Spherical style adds to this a Stealth Adjustable Venting system. “It lets you control the airflow but puts the control inside to keep the aesthetics intact”, says Darius Heristchian. Paired with the Ionic+ fleece finish, this helmet promises a full day of comfort. Bollé offers eight vents in their Eco V Atmos and 6 in the Eco Ryft Pure MIPS. The last one features AVID progressive EPS. Their Rift MIPS helmet is their most ventilated ever designed, featuring their patented Active Panel Ventilation system. Sandbox expands their MIPS offering. The Sandbox Classic MIPS and the Icon MIPS will feature their patented venting airflow system. Spektrum’s new Bunner helmet incorporates the latest version of MIPS plus Recco tech for additional safety. The Variable Airflow system is easily managed on the go. A similar on-the-fly temperature control system is found in Rossignol’s Alta helmet. It combines it with a multi-impact foam that enhances durability and shock absorption. Spy+ bets on their classic skate inspired Galactic MIPS, a durable ABS shell outfitted with MIPS and removable, washable

“It lets you control the airflow but puts the control inside to keep the aesthetics intact”

Darius Heristchian, Giro

ear pads. Dirty Dog adds MIPS to their split-shell helmet Trojan. The PC and ABS split shell is durable, weather resistant and easy to clean, while ensuring ultimate protection. They will keep pushing their Hydra and Solar helmets from last season. The Hydra aims for maximum airflow and minimal moisture build through specially designed vents. The Solar aims for maximum safety and features a specific mesh for the ultimate vacuum ventilation. Sweet is carrying their new 2Vi® helmet design into their racing category. This design features an advanced shell technology with shock absorbing structure and a unique MIPS implementation. TSG focuses on their All-Terrain. “This is our first triple-certified helmet”, says Nadja Herger. It has two ear pads, one for winter sports and one for water sports, twelve aerodynamic vents and airflow channels, and removable rain and wind blocker. Pro-Tec will keep pushing their best-selling triple-certified Classic Snow helmet. They also highlight their top-of-the-range Apex helmet with lightweight, in-mould construction, internal ventilation channels, and MIPS. Prosurf integrates the lens into their helmet, so there will be no more screws.

These safety and ventilation promises must be delivered in a good fit. Head has re-worked their premium Compact and Charter styles. These styles already feature their Sphere Fit system that creates a snug and secure fit without any pressure points. “The new Compact EVO and Charter EVO are now updated with an easy-to-use dial in the back for precise adjustment”, says Katharina Acham. Giro has their own “In Form

2 Fit” system that adjusts sizing and fine-tunes the vertical fit on the go. Rossignol’s Templar has their R-Fit Dial adjustment system. Smith has updated their Method MIPS with their lifestyle fit system that has improved beanie compatibility. Spektrum works with their proprietary ORM 3D Fit. Bollé uses the Click2Fit™ system. TSG combines their own Dial Fit with their Tuned Fit System to offer fully customisable styles. The TSG Dial Fit system adjusts the interior to the shape of your head, whilst the Tune Fit system offers additional fine-tuning when you change the pads. Sandbox has incorporated a fit system to all their helmets. Spy+ pays special attention to a seamless fit of the helmet with the goggles. Triple Eight emphasises audio compatibility while relying on their Halo liner for a deluxe, comfortable fit.

Many innovations appeal to sustainability. Spektrum has developed a biobased polyamide shell specifically for their helmet programme. It provides top end impact resistance at a slightly lower weight than conventional materials. This material can be found in their Bunner style, along with a Merino wool comfort liner and a host of other biobased and recycled components, including the EPS impact absorbent. Bollé places great importance on sustainable materials. The Eco V Atmos comes with a 100% recycled photochromic visor. The straps, dividers, fit system, goggles retainer, padding and ear pads are partially made from recycled or bio-based materials. The EPS is mixed with cork. This can also be found in their Eco Ryft Pure MIPS. Salomon continues their eco-friendly approach. “We ensure that we integrate liners made of recycled fabrics in all our new products for 23/24”, says Awena Jouannic. Pro-Tec is considering a move to eco-friendly materials in the coming years. “With protective gear, we want to make sure the eco-friendly products are as safe for impact protection as the current ones”, explains R.P. Bess.

The accessories category seems freer from overall trends, and brands freestyle their way through it. For some, goggle-helmet integration is paramount. Bern offers their B1 goggle which fits seamlessly on their helmets. Flaxta offers a goggle clip in an assortment of colours. The user can customise their helmet through their Flaxta ID programme. This programme also allows you to choose the colour of your hard-shell top. Spektrum comes from the eyewear industry, so their helmets are designed with goggle integration in mind. Audio capabilities are important. Bern and Sweet collaborate with Outdoor Tech offering audio drop-in chips. Smith collaborates with Aleck, making their helmets ready for integration of their wired or wireless audio systems. Following the success of their 006 audio system, Aleck focuses on improving fundamentals. “Our new snow helmet audio system for 23/24 gets sleeker, more comfortable and has double the battery life than the current 006”, says Adam Janecka. Some offer spare parts to convert or customise your helmet. Bern will release new summer liners that allow conversion of their snow helmets into bike ones in a snap. Smith and Salomon offer optional chin guards for their slalom helmets. Spare visors are appreciated. Salomon, Spy+ and TSG offer them. Head adds a reusable fabric visor cover to their Radar and Rachel helmets.

SUSTAINABILITY

The use of biobased and recycled materials is becoming widespread. Flaxta uses a recycled EPS core. All the plastic parts in Spektrum’s helmets are biobased. If they cannot source a biobased material, they choose a recycled one. Salomon’s MTN helmet has 70% of recycled

“Our new snow helmet audio system for 23/24 gets sleeker, more comfortable and has double the battery life than the current 006” Adam Janecka, Aleck

materials. Most of their liners are made of recycled fabric or Merino wool. Bern also chooses sustainable materials for their soft goods. Head uses natural, recycled, and certified materials, with future steps planned to increment the ratio.

Packaging display of helmets are carefully considered from a sustainable perspective. Head and Smith use certified and recycled cardboard boxes. They have also eliminated plastic see-through windows and protectors. Smith has re-engineered their boxes to cradle the helmet without the need of blocks or pads. Salomon’s boxes, user manuals and hang tags are now made of FSC certified paper. Aleck has eliminated the packaging from their retail boxes. All brands have reduced or eliminated the use of poly bags.

Certain production practices also help the environment. Bern recycles any unused material for new products. Head uses water-based ink for

“We ensure that we integrate liners made of recycled fabrics in all our new products for 23/24”

Awena Jouannic, Salomon



their printing. Spektrum avoids dangerous chemicals by injecting the dye into the raw material, rather than painting it. Factory monitoring is helpful. Sandbox is now B Corp certified. Dirty Dog choose Bureau Veritas for their monitoring. Spektrum does the monitoring themselves and is a member of POW and 1% for the Planet.

Most importantly, there is an overall belief that only a long-lasting product can be sustainable. This is mainly achieved through the quality of the materials and construction. Rossignol uses EPP multi-impact foam on all their helmets. “This is an important point for sustainability, as it enables to keep the helmet longer”, says Marine Cessans. Repairs also help to prolong the helmet’s life. Salomon offers a wide range of spare parts to keep the helmet alive for longer.

RETAILER SUPPORT

Most brands manage the current shipping challenges by buying earlier and bringing production closer to their markets. Products will be delivered in time. A slight increase can be expected, but the product in stores will be a high quality, high performing one.

Retailers will be supported with in-store displays, staff education and visual content for online platforms. Product training is becoming a common practice. Flaxta, Spektrum and Sweet offer product clinics for staff. Smith uses platforms such as ENDVR to provide training tools and incentives. Video content with ambassadors will carry the brand message in the digital sphere. When customers go into helmet research mode, shops will be ready to meet their demands, online and offline.📺

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Safety and fit main selling points.
- 2 Fit and ventilation adjustment on-the-go.
- 3 Widespread use of sustainable materials.
- 4 Product clinics to support retailers’ staff.



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## RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE **WETSUITS FW 23/24**

It has become the black gold of the boardsports market: neoprene is hot property in shops and online, to the point where stocks are almost out. For fall-winter 2022/23 the mission remains clear: be warm, flexible and durable. Let's see if the recipes have changed at all... An overview of next winter's wetsuit range by **David Bianic**.



While the U.K. is covered in a blanket of white at the time of writing, climate change is causing more and more extreme weather - summer heat waves and snowfall on the coast. Is this good news for winter wetsuit sales? That would be too easy. On the one hand, during the Covid boom consumers (over) equipped themselves and the renewal rate of this type of surfing equipment is about three years so it's too early for them to be back at the cash register. On the other, double-digit inflation affects both parties in this economy: the manufacturers and the participants. Wetsuits have been hit hard by this price increase with psychological barriers being crossed when 5/3s are on sale for over 400 Euros...

### **BREAKING THE BANK**

Before we talk about the wetsuits themselves, let's look at the thorny issue of pricing in 2023. "A £10 increase," reveals Gul Watersports' Commercial Director. "I don't think they will be too shocked considering what we know."

"If you bought a wetsuit 30 years ago for DM 549 (€ 275), you can now buy a much better wetsuit, with much more stretch and warmth for € 379."

Alex Cretier, Prolimit

And indeed, they are not, confirms William Doornekamp, Brand Manager at Jobe, "every brand has a rising price." All of them? Not all it seems, 9 Beaufort have not touched their prices "but tried to find ways to keep the cost down", much like Soörüz, Saint-Jacques and Hurley, except one model (Advant) which sees an increase of 5 to 10 Euros, "because we added an extra insulated panel in the front part of the wetsuit", justifies Fernando Rivero, Hurley EMEA Product Manager.



PICTURE

“From 8 to 16% at Manera, 10% at Roxy, 15% at Picture, 15 to 20% at MDNS, these increases are not only the result of ballooning production/transportation costs but also due to an unfavourable Euro/Dollar rate.”

Benoît Brecq, MDNS

The miracle solution of the last three years - partially rerunning ranges - doesn't necessarily work any more, regrets Julien Salles, Manera's Brand Manager. They still suffer from price increases and “that's the hardest to justify”. The brand have warned their partners of this increase at the pre-order stage to avoid nasty surprises upon delivery. From 8 to 16% at Manera, 10% at Roxy, 15% at Picture, 15 to 20% at MDNS, these increases are not only the result of ballooning production/transportation costs but also due to an unfavourable Euro/Dollar rate, explains Benoît Brecq (Marketing Director at MDNS).

Before gulping a Xanax and sinking into the gloom, it is important to put things into perspective by looking at the past, says Alex Cretier, Director of Prolimit. “If you bought a wetsuit 30 years ago for DM 549 (€ 275), you can now buy a much better wetsuit, with much more stretch and warmth for € 379. In the same era, if you bought a VW Golf you paid €8,500, now a Golf costs €36,000.” That's a factor of x4. And he is right, wetsuits will not cost 1100 € in 2023! The same goes for historical brands like C-Skins,

a 3/2 was worth 100 pounds 35-40 years ago and you can still buy a full-length Element C-Skins at that price today. Feeling better now, starting to relax?

#### FW23 WETSUIT TRENDS: BLOWING HOT AND COLD

Let's put the wallet issues to one side and look at more exciting topics such as the developments in winter neoprene usage and the consumption of surfers. On the one hand, cold water surfing has shaken up the codes for “heavy duty” models and surfers now love hooded models that were considered uncool for aesthetic reasons just ten years ago. On the other hand, autumn and early winters are getting warmer and warmer, and this has given rise to 4/3 fulls with “more 3 than 4”. “The range of wetsuit specs available now (thickness, distribution of panels etc) is more nuanced today than it was even, say, 5 years ago,” confirms James Trevelyan, Director of Circle One. How brands react to these new trends is a good question. Thanks to their warmer liners (Thermal Rebound, Zodiac), Prolimit are seeing widespread use of thinner wetsuits, and “even good 3/2mm suits are being worn by people in winter and some prefer layering with our innersystems undergarments,” says Alex Cretier. Historically, O'Neill have always had success with their hooded models due to their location in Santa Cruz, Northern California, while 5 and 6mm models are outpacing 4/3s in terms of sales. Conversely, MDNS are offering 2mm full-lengths with fleece lining (Pure Yulex range) for the beginning of autumn in Europe.

A close-up shot of a surfer in a black wetsuit riding a wave. The surfer is smiling and looking towards the camera. The wave is breaking to the right, creating a large splash of white water. The background is a clear blue sky. The Picture logo is visible in the bottom right corner, along with the tagline "RIDE, PROTECT & SHARE".

**PICTURE**  
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"I never want to hear about a customer being cold in a MANERA wetsuit." Julien Salles, Manera

It should also be noted that women seem less attracted to models with integrated hoods, says Valerie Hill, Global Manager Wetsuits & Swimwear at Roxy.

Another subtlety is revealed by Julien Salles from Manera, namely 4/3s that have only a 4mm panel on the chest and the rest in 3mm. This is an option that the brand refuses to take, their 4/3s have more than 50% 4mm neoprene: "I never want to hear about a customer being cold in a MANERA wetsuit." The same is true for Dakine and their Wetsuit Designer Phil Bridges who regrets the lack of norms for measuring neoprene thickness: "some measure only the foam, some measure foam and lining." Dakine chose to take into account the thickness of the foam before lamination, which in their opinion is more reliable than with liners included since they can vary.

Another question crossed our minds: since the trickle-down theory also applies to wetsuits and yesterday's premium technologies are now found on entry-level models, will GBS (Glued & Blind Stitched) seams soon appear on entry-level models, signalling the end of flatlock



seams? The short answer is no. In addition to its lower cost and durability, flatlock technology will remain because "You don't need a GBS wetsuit in warm water; it is a waste of money," says Patrick Watin, Sales Manager for West. He points out that flatlock seams are not watertight and therefore reserved for temperatures closer to warm water. Tom Copsey at O'Neill adds that blind stitched seams are very difficult to make on thinner neoprenes and water ingress is unavoidable because of the stitching, even when using internal tapes. Once again, "less is more" applies!

#### FW23 NEOPRENES

It'd be nice to save some oysters for the New Year, wouldn't it? The use of oyster shell powder is being extended in 2023, providing us with cleaner neoprene. Pioneer in this field, the French brand Soörüz are ahead of the game and are integrating the latest generation, Y8, into its Guru range for fall-winter 2023. Alder are also relying on this powder for the Luxe and Evo Fire ranges, as are their British compatriots C-Skins on their Halo X2 neoprene. O'Neill are being totally transparent by indicating that this powder is used in up to 10% of their neoprene (Hyperfreak and Hyperfreak Fire, Psycho Tech, Blueprint): a detail that is rarely provided. We're actually talking about a mix of technologies, like for example in Picture's Eicoprene, which uses oyster shell powder, limestone neoprene and recycled tyres (carbon black). It's the same principle but with big innovations at Saint-Jacques with their Bio II range, "a closed-cell sponge made from renewable raw materials such as sugar cane, oyster shells, rubber and non-edible vegetable oil". Tested by independent laboratories, this material has obtained a USDA Biobased certification.

New brands are joining the Yulex movement as well, proving that price is not a barrier. Manera are introducing a newcomer to their range, the ALT model, 100% Yulex and 100% recycled jersey. While we're on the subject, Patagonia are highlighting another benefit of this foam made from rubber tree sap, in addition to its carbon impact that's 80% lower than conventional neoprene, there are also terrible consequences from the production of chloroprene on the workers and communities living nearby. Prolimit are offering a rubber-based solution other than Yulex: Nature Prene. Their PF2 range is based on this rubber produced from FSC-certified trees, with recycled polyester linings and solvent-free glues.



MANERA

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"I remember when I first started surfing, I would call my local shop to hear their morning surf report. It also created a surf team which brought more people into the community and created a good camaraderie. Plus, I always just loved walking through the shop and looking at the boards and wetsuits. In fact, I still like doing that today!"

Brendon Gibbens  
Pro Surfeur

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Our brand - Core principles



The rest of the herd is divided between chloroprene-neoprene and limestone-neoprene, the latter of which holds performance benefits for many surfers with its flex/heat properties, especially when it comes from the Japanese manufacturer Yamamoto or Circle One. Dakine are opting for it too and the brand are even offering it in biodegradable FriendlyPrene form as well.

#### FW23 LINERS

Even more so in winter, the inner/outer liners play a crucial role, both in conserving warmth and preserving the dynamic properties of neoprene over time. Some inner jerseys have names that make you feel warm just reading them. Such is the case for Prolimit's Thermal Rebound (on the Mercury and Vapor lines), inspired by the principles of survival blankets. This is an extra layer of aluminium inserted between the neoprene and their Zodiac liner. You

get the same warm feeling from Soöruz' Thermo-Loop, a fleece liner (recycled polyester) that covers the upper thighs, stomach and back. Better still, on the 4/3 and 5/4/3 Fighter hooded models, it lines the entire inside of the wetsuit to make a real slipper!

At Manera, watch you don't get burned by the new Magma+ liner! This fleece insulation has proven thermal and quick drying properties so comfort comes guaranteed. GUL have renewed their Graphene-X technology, integrating graphene into their inner jersey, and you only need minimal quantities if it to warm you up. Let's finish with Dakine who will soon be naturally combining their FriendlyPrene with biodegradable liners.

#### FIT & ZIPS FW23

Beyond an already pretty elaborate sizing system (e.g. "medium large" vs. "medium tall"), wetsuits nowadays are adding even more into "fit". Adjusting the silhouette of a wetsuit is a delicate balance, as Phil from Dakine explains: "The usual compromise is between fit and everything else – the best fitting wetsuit needs more panels and more curve. But more panels equals more seams, more construction, more cost, more areas for failure, poorer neoprene yield." Each brand is coming up with their own solutions, but there are a few recurring patterns to note. For example, at C-Skins, the Future models offer a very high performance fit, while the classic fit on the entry-level models is more neutral. Picture recommends the Dome models for surfers looking primarily for warmth, while the Equation suits will focus on comfort and stretch. Similarly, the AIR models at Hurley meet the demands of experienced surfers who prefer flex and lightness, surfers "who want to maximize their energy and avoid getting tired by paddling," says Fernando Rivero.

At Manera, fit has been a priority from the start, says Julien Salles who uses specific software to design models





in 3D: “Doing everything in 3D allows us to choose our mannequin body morphology and position, and then adapt it to our sports and customer’s body type.” In a second phase the software flattens the panels, taking into account the thickness and elasticity of neoprene. “Lay one of our wetsuits flat on the ground and you’ll see how it is pre-shaped and actually looks like human arms and legs are already inside.” Impressive, as is the number of silhouettes in the O’Neill line, no less than 20 between men, women, kids and girls, plus 8 more in the Bahia women/girls collection.

Patagonia do not change their models unless it is for the sake of durability and in fall-winter 2023 this applies to the new Regulator range (Yulex of course). This pays special attention to fit through new, more flexible liners,

“The usual compromise is between fit and everything else – the best fitting wetsuit needs more panels and more curve. But more panels equals more seams, more construction, more cost, more areas for failure, poorer neoprene yield.”

Phil Bridges, Dakine

leaves out seams on high stretch areas and abandons “liquid seams” to “improve repairability,” explains Gabe Davies. The founder of Saint-Jacques, Stan Bresson offers an interesting perspective on fit: “It must be said that with the current levels of interest in water sports and the new clientele that this involves, brands and factories are going to have to adapt to offer wetsuits for different silhouettes that are less sporty and aging.”

Fit is also a credo for Solite, the accessories brand famous for its booties. Their Thermofoam, a proprietary heat-

mouldable foam used in their booties, is evolving into something more flexible and “sticky”: “It is very malleable and conforms even better to every little curve or bump of your foot,” explains Co-Founder Jamie Meiselman. This features on the Custom Pro 2.0 and Custom Plus 2.0.

Finally, let’s talk about closing systems, which indirectly constitute part of the fit. Not much new except the return of back zip options at Hurley, on the Advant models and particularly on Kids models, “especially at those ages where they don’t have sufficient ability to fit on a front zip and need parents help”.

Brands have a lot to offer for FW23 and it’s down to you to give something back by thinking about your used wetsuits’ end of life. Benoît from MDNS reminds us about the new eco-tax in force since January 2022 which applies to wetsuits, encouraging us to recycle them. Solutions do exist, like from Manera who are partnering with Circular Flow to recover neoprene and recycle it into various accessories. The brand have installed collection bins in the 10 largest French surf shops with a target of 2,500 wetsuits in 2022. At Soörüz, the Second Life program has already upcycled 20,000 wetsuits to date and the brand are aiming to reach 60,000 between 2023 and 2024. There are local solutions on the other side of the Channel too with Circle One teaming up with a recycling partner in South Wales to turn used wetsuits into bags and other neoprene accessories. And it should be noted, “we accept all brands,” adds James Trevelyan, all in the same boat.🌱

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

**BOARDSPORTSOURCE.COM**

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Modest price increases
- 2 5mm hoods
- 3 Oyster shell neoprene
- 4 Tech & thermo liners
- 5 More silhouette options
- 6 Recycling



## PERFORMANCE & SUSTAINABILITY



NEW OYSTERPRENE®   
UNMATCHED FLEXIBILITY



686



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Brethren



Brethren



DC



DC



FW



FW



Horsefeathers



Horsefeathers

## RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

# WOMEN'S OUTERWEAR

What to wear is a major question for many women and not made any easier to answer when you add in cold temperatures, wind and a sweaty sport. Luckily, the outerwear industry is as wide and versatile as it is functional, so literally any female will find something to her liking in the FW23/24 collections. Report by Anna Langer

### THEMES

Alongside their male companions, female snowboarders are also invited on a trip through time and back to the roots of their beloved sport. "For the third year in a row, Roxy wind back the clock to where it all began. Roxy Life draws inspiration from styles we made iconic over three decades of dedication to women. Sporty & fresh cuts are slouchy yet feminine and retro details bring a unique touch of cool. Enjoy the ride in vintage threads made with modern technology," says Global Design manager for Snow and Active, Gwennan Davies. OOSC also take inspiration from the early days of snowboarding and snurfing, while Oakley mention organic, rounder shaped products.

Rojo also delve into their heritage, bringing to new life past combinations and retro notes. Yet their main influence comes from the riders, says Founder Jo Buckle: "This is celebrated through beautiful prints and colours combined with old-school and contemporary silhouettes staple to Rojo." Oxbow dedicate their range fully to the riders and Orage's design vision is inspired by their culture, their roots, the pure aesthetic of open spaces, wildlife and the beautiful mountains of their country.

There is also a strong focus on more high-tech to comfort backcountry missions and freeriding. "For 23/24 we really focused on building products that work well in a system for light and fast touring missions. At the same time, we really focused our insulation offering to fit well within those systems," says Martijn Linden, VP of

"Roxy Life draws inspiration from styles we made iconic over three decades of dedication to women. Sporty & fresh cuts are slouchy yet feminine and retro details bring a unique touch of cool. Enjoy the ride in vintage threads made with modern technology." Roxy

Softgoods at Jones Snowboards. Oakley also have a deeper focus on products for touring/splitboarding, with greater depth in the layering program that includes new pieces to be used in different weather conditions. L1ta redesigned every piece of their technical Theorem collection and coming from the deep winters of Canada, Orage create technical and functional products that meet the needs of these weather conditions. Horsefeathers state that their primary goal remains: "to create an on-trend, high-end product at an affordable price with our unique Horsefeathers style," says Tomas Koudela, Head of Marketing.

The topic of inclusivity is also becoming stronger every year. Combining comfort, sustainability & style for all riders is the main aim for Roxy. "With design & fits that are specifically tailored for women and for movement, with both skiers and snowboarders in mind; and our unparalleled breadth of styles ensures we meet the needs of all riders out there. Roxy remains inclusive from shapes to type of riders: any women out there can be sure that Roxy designs for her." Kari Traa too see their mission beyond trends and themes: "It's important to encourage everyone to be part of this amazing activity, while constantly keep fulfilling the needs of the expert users. The autumn ripe Norwegian nature and beautiful female body has inspired KT to create the super inclusive silhouettes with standout KT design to attract both the pros and the beginners," says Senior Designer Hanna Haring. Norrona also vouch for timeless designs: "We design a concept to last for a minimum of 4 years. So every four years we relook at that concept and ask ourselves, do we want to build on what we have? Do we want to redo? This year we focused on Tamok. We still love the overall aesthetic. It's very technical but has a bit of a western look." Horsefeathers used their experience from the past years to adapt their approach to carry-over as well: "for the bestsellers, we keep the style and the name while always creating new colours in the theme of the whole collection."

### FITS

When it comes to fits, the biggest trends in Women's Outerwear are genderless cuts. "We're moving towards unisex and gender-less styles that bring more neutrality to our program. Although fit and colour might be a bit different, all of our new designs are the same for both men and women," says Orage Creative Director Frederic Dorais. L1 have also broadened their genderless offering, "knowing that there are key oversized

styles (Ventura and Axil) that we have equal parts men and women buying into. We simply expanded the size offering to accommodate the demand."

Volcom highlight their gender-neutral, Desire Melancon signature Gore-Tex Kit and 686 introduce a new model called 'The Outline Pant': "This is a completely team driven project with feedback from all the women who were looking to our men's collection for wide pants. The legs fit exactly like the Dojo pant, but the inseams are shorter and waist is sized correctly for the corresponding women's size," explains Brent Sandor, Head of Marketing. Rojo have a new non-binary model with the She Ripz Pant and Roxy have also been pushing into looser, oversized fits, to match with the shift in trend and styling.

Bib pants are also common in the new collections, with an additional shell style based on the success of their softshell bib from Oakley, women's specific bibs from OOSC, the reinforced Katana bib from ThruDark to the new Johanne Ski Bib for advanced riders from Kari Traa. Orage introduce a new MTN-X Grade Light Bib, featuring lightweight and breathable Prime Alpha fabric. "These new bibs are virtually weightless and extremely stretchy, making for a versatile and comfortable product

"For the bestsellers, we keep the style and the name while always creating new colours in the theme of the whole collection." Horsefeathers

for aerobic activities." Horsefeathers continue their Stella bibs next to the Lotte shell, which is a technical non-insulated pants for the advanced rider.

Women can also still pull off fashionably slim styles on the mountain, like the new Norrona Hilflex200 slim pant which is more fitted and offers more warmth without the bulk, Oakley's Laurel Insulated Pant with slim silhouette and high waistband construction or the body hugging slim Benedicte Pants and Ragnhild Bib by Kari Traa.

Rojo highlight the re-development of their Plus Size range: "In our FW 23/24 range we are offering size extensions in some styles to cater for our beautiful plus size customers and various style options to enhance different body shapes and sizes within the range." And also the strongly re-emerging trend for baggy styles in boardsports is reflected in the women's lines by DC and Picture Organic Clothing.

On the upper body half, female riders have a choice of feminine and more unisex styles as well. Oakley introduce a new parka style next to new puffy styles: "The Autumn RC Vest has been developed in collaboration with Jamie Anderson. She is looking for a vest that she can wear over an oversized fleece when she is going to the Snowpark," says Laurent Vogt, Global AFA Category Manager Snow. Rojo combines Anorak styling with super easy Centre Front Zip access rather than pullover style. "For me, this piece embodies our Heritage and I love seeing how fashion revolves on its axis," says Jo Buckle. Horsefeathers continue their bestselling shorter anorak Mija, next to the technical anorak Derin II and the tailored long jacket Pola. And Jones highlight their Shralpinist Stretch 3L Jacket, which is 100% recycled three-layer 30K waterproof / 30K breathable four-way stretch fabric that's soft-to-the-touch and designed to offer supreme protection without ever feeling restrictive.

### COLOURS

With women buying and wearing whatever they like, many brands opt for genderless colour stories as well. 686 feature all of their colours in both the men's and women's collections, FW Apparel update their gender neutral colour stories from previous collections and Norrona use their new vivid royal blue in both collections as well.

Bright colours are often inspired by the heritage theme, such as Neons (OOSC), Purple

"This is a completely team driven project with feedback from all the women who were looking to our men's collection for wide pants. The legs fit exactly like the Dojo pant, but the inseams are shorter and waist is sized correctly for the corresponding women's size." 686

(Oakley) and Velvet (Oxbow) and 70's ski pop colours (Picture). Kari Traa combine cobalt blue Azure with a deep luscious red Rouge. "This most versatile mix of shades is brightened with sporty bottle-green cress" says Hanna Haring. Next to their new Sunrise Gold, Jones introduce one new women's specific colour called Terracotta: "It's an earthy red tone that's bright enough to be visible on the slopes. Other new shared colours with the Jones men's collection are the Mineral Gray and Dawn Blue. The Mineral Gray is light and fresh and works with every colour. The Dawn Blue is a very dark colour that has hints of blue and green."

Nature inspired shades is the other major trend in colourways. Oakley mix Hummus, Carafe, Sage Green and Soft Orange, L1 blend earth tone neutrals with softer pastel brights, as does OOSC. Norrona sport a new really dark green colour called rosin with



Jones



Jones



L1



L1



OOSC



OOSC



ORAGE



ORAGE



Oxbow



Oxbow



Picture



Picture



Rojo



Rojo



Roxy



Roxy



Thrudark



Thrudark



Volcom



Volcom

cumin, ThruDark pair Obsidian Black and Olive Green and Roxy also push green tones in FW23/24, which is a “really fresh direction for Roxy”. Horsefeathers pair Tea Rose, Raspberry, and Banana with a combination of Black and Spruce Yellow, Prune, and Phantom.

Since girls will be girls and some of them will always opt for the more “girly” variations, brands also cater to that of course. Norrona pair violet quartz and tawny port, Rojo continue their ever-present Lavender tones, with pops of Tangerine and Ochres, Passionflower is combined with Baked Clay and Kari Traa reflect “emotional understanding and empathy for others in restorative shades and mindful pastels, with a mix of beige Oat and selection of pinks.”

#### PRINTS

“Prints are very different than before, more organic inspired. We have developed a new pattern this season inspired by a traditional Norwegian artwork but translated in an Oakley design language with some topographical elements and lunar phases,” says Lauren Vogt. In collaboration with Jamie Anderson they designed a new animal print, with a mix of tie-die and Coachella vibes. L1ta are also stepping away from their historic approach to prints with a more sophisticated geometric print for FW23/24.

Roxy muse that prints are always important for them and serve this with a new really rich dark photographic floral which you will find in pieces across the whole range. Horsefeathers agree that especially “all-over prints are an important part of our women’s collection. You can find three new ones in the W23/24 collection: Dalmatian, Polygons, and Splash.” Picture highlight their Freeze print, which represents ice with an acrylic paint effect, as well as a feminine and sophisticated multicolor Baroque print, next to a combination of liberty prints forming a romantic patchwork. All the elements in the new prints in the Kari Traa collection are originally hand-painted with a direct inspiration from Nordic nature and fading away autumn-winter greenery.

#### MATERIALS & TECH INNOVATIONS

When it comes to technical innovations in Women’s Outerwear, Kari Traa’s new Female First Technology deserves a detailed look. Hanna Haring explains the process this stems from: “The technology inside the products has started and continued to be developed on average active male body. Meaning that everything that we are used to using and communicating as tools when describing technology, is based

“In our FW 23/24 range we are offering size extensions in some styles to cater for our beautiful plus size customers and various style options to enhance different body shapes and sizes within the range.” Rojo

on very masculine starting point. And I must admit, we at Kari Traa have also been chasing these same features to the products to be relevant in the industry. And most of it is valid and useful but is it all relevant to the female bodies or are we missing something?” Of course women also need waterproofing and durability, which their pair with a laminated shell fabric that has female gentle-skin matching soft hand feel, mechanical or added elastane stretch for no friction or discomfort and soundless movement. The Porelle super light but functional lamination of their FemShell Pro fulfils 20K/20K weather proofness while also allowing the design to drape beautifully on curvier silhouettes, feel lighter and adaptable to our activities. The materials used are sustainably sourced and consist of recycled content and will match seamlessly into the existing wardrobes.

To cater for the needs of ski touring and splitboarding riders, Roxy created a highly technical capsule called Boundless Snow. “We have been partnering with current and past Roxy team athletes on the creation of a full backcountry assortment. For the first time there are Gore-Tex 3 layer fabrics in our Lunelite jacket and Lunelite bib.” Also worth a mention is their Chloe Kim signature line with Dryflight technology, offering high-performance waterproofing & breathability while acclaimed lightweight Primaloft® insulation ensures you will not suffer from the cold between your runs, next to the HydroSmart technology, an all-natural & eco-certified formula encapsulated into the collars and neck warmers that cares for your skin and provides hydration to help you best fight the rough temperatures.

For brands that offer both Men’s and Women’s collections, efforts in the sustainability area are the same and outlined in depth in the Men’s Outerwear RBG on page XXX. Rojo are moving away from over sourcing too many varieties of fabrics, streamlining to the necessities and bringing together comprehensive ranges that focus on a more sustainable future. Their most technical jacket, the All-Terrain Jacket utilises a 20K/20K, 4 X way stretch fabric for comfort and fit and maximises movement.📍

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#### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Genderless Fits & Colour Stories
- 2 Female driven cuts & plus size offerings
- 3 Earthy & pastels
- 4 Retro vibes





# RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE MEN'S OUTERWEAR

From the 90s straight back to the future: Men's Outerwear takes us on a wild ride full of colourful memories and post-modern high-tech innovations. **Anna Langer** sums up the trends for FW 23/24.

Like all boardsports, snowboarding is a culture as wide and versatile as its participants, which brands reflect in their themes for their latest outerwear offerings. "We embrace boardsports culture, the culture of trend-setting, artistic innovation, and individual expression. We embrace this culture as a unifier of people from different backgrounds and places," says Irena Umek, Marketing Manager at FW Apparel. Oxbow "dedicate their range fully to the riders, developed in collaboration with our ambassadors. They are our inspiration," explains Product Manager Aurelien Silvestre. ThruDark's Samuari inspired Ronin theme aims to serve as an example of dedication to a unifying ethos above all else, following the mantra of "Endeavour Through Adversity". Oakley celebrates "community, empowerment and belonging" in their THE GREAT DISCOVERY brand story. "We will embrace individuality and transform humankind through sport." They also take inspiration from their heritage with organic, rounder shaped products.

Quiksilver also dig into their 90s archives for their Miles Fallon and Austen Sweetin High Altitude pieces: "this collection pays tribute to this era with comfy oversized silhouettes, bold colour blocking, curvy pipings and surf inspired details." By applying their unique 'surf the mountain' approach they are "not only talking about performance but about having fun, sharing with friends, connecting and respecting nature. In fact, we are infusing our Made Better initiative across the whole range, from basics to high-end technical products, without forgetting our unique style that brought us to the mountains over 35 years ago." says Mathieu Clément, EMEA Snow Product Manager. OOSC also feature retro neon and colour block/contrast styles inspired by the early days of snowboarding and snurfing.

ThirtyTwo mention the "return of colour in skateboarding" as the biggest trend for the winter apparel. "Graphics and colour schemes have gotten a lot louder lately and we always merge our snow and skate roots." DC's collection plays into a similar lane, taking inspiration from the street while consistently testing and improving weather technologies, while Volcom are enthusiastic about their 100% raw and street inspired collection, Dustbox. Hurley also sport an urban, workwear US theme/trend but mainly focus on developing their own style and personality for consumers that want to wear their product also out of the liquid water. To combine differing trends in snowboarding and the general public, Horsefeathers features colourful models and all-overs, as well as more earth-tone-oriented models and new cuts.

Besides roots and heritage themes, High Tech innovations for backcountry touring and freeriding are the most important topics in the FW 23/24 lines. L1 focus on the most technical portion of their line, the Theorem collection: "This season we wanted to revamp the whole thing, almost every style got redesigned with the utmost intention." says Creative Director Jon Kooley. For Jones the main aim for 23/24 was building products that work well in a system for light and fast touring missions, while also working on their insulation offering to fit well within those systems. To reach more backcountry riders, Oakley increased their offering in shell products: "We have a deeper focus on products for touring/splitboarding and we have a greater depth in the layering program that includes new pieces to be used in different weather conditions." Tapping

"We see on the market that wider styles are now established back as a standard, on vintage trend and more traditional designs. " Quiksilver

the knowledge of the likes of Travis Rice and Sammy Carlson, Quiksilver continue to build their Highline Pro and Highline collections, with high-end technologies such as Gore-Tex Pro or Primaloft Active Evolve insulation. Catering for a very special need of highest functionality in the worst of conditions, the new Norrona Trollveggen Rescue Collection is based on the feedback of the Norwegian Alpine Rescue Team and multiple other rescue groups with the aim of giving these groups what they need to keep their focus. We absolutely salute that.

On the other end of that spectrum, Brethren find their mission in showcasing that the majority of snowsports participants don't actually need gear that gets them on top of Alaskan peaks, offering affordable products that speak to the needs of the everyday joe, without being or looking cheap.



32



32



32



686



686



686



Brethren



Brethren



DC



DC



DC



FW



FW



Horsefeathers



Horsefeathers



Horsefeathers



Hurley



Hurley



Jones



Jones

And last but not least, many brands mention their continuing efforts to create more sustainable gear as major themes for FW23/24, which we will look at in more depth in the section on technological innovations & materials.

#### FITS & SILHOUETTES

Aligning with the 90s heritage vibes, pants are still big, getting bigger. “We see on the market that wider styles are now established back as a standard, on vintage trend and more traditional designs. Our freeride silhouettes had been slightly adjusted to bring more comfort and style, and the High Altitude is clearly taking the Wide direction with our new regular fit.” says Mathieu from Quiksilver. 686 also continue to expand on their wide fits. “We are heavily inspired by the way our team and our fans have gravitated to the oversized fit in our Dojo pant over the past two seasons” so they’re adding a GORE-TEX version of this model for the backcountry, a lightweight 2.5L wide leg pant called “The Ghost Pant” for resort and spring riding as well as a new Gigi Rüf signature bib style that is designed to travel from the backcountry to the streets with a shorter upper that is inspired by fishing waders. L1 highlight their new Rankin franchise, which took direct feedback from their team for some of the baggiest fits in the line. DC, too, rock baggy fits in pants as well as jackets, and ThirtyTwo see baggier styles and bibs as key players, but also notice them slowing.

If that’s all a bit “too cool for school for your” we’re happy to announce that there are also great offerings in regular fits available from many brands. FW Apparel have streamlined their regular cut to emphasize freedom of movement, DC highlight the regular fit Servo jacket and Code pant from DC and also Norrona’s Tamok collection sports a more regular and less of a technical fit giving more room in the shoulders and the hips. Horsefeathers introduce some new jacket fits with the shorter, street-

“We like to evolve our colours rather than go for a complete change season after season. The reason why we do this is because we want our consumers to look and feel good, and still be able to mix and match outfits even if they purchase our products over several years.”

Orage

looking regular-fit Blake, a basic yet fully equipped men’s anorak as well as a rideable coach jacket.

We’ve already mentioned the extended focus on layering offerings. Orage introduce a new MTN-X Grade Light Bib, featuring lightweight and breathable Prime Alpha fabric. “These new bibs are virtually weightless and extremely stretchy, making for a versatile and comfortable product for aerobic activities. Jones mention their Cloudripper is a sub 300 grams, stretch, 100% recycled 2.5L, packable shell that boasts a Pertex Shield 20k/20k membrane. Shralpinist Stretch 3L Bibs, designed for dynamic movement: “100% recycled three-layer 30K waterproof / 30K breathable four-way stretch fabric that’s soft to-the-touch and offers supreme protection to keep you warm, dry and moving at maximum efficiency through any terrain.”

Horsefeathers continue their Nelson and Medler bib pants and the new Mathieu Crépel signature series jacket and bib from Oxbow cater to his approach of snowboarding: splitboarding one day, freestyle in the park the next.

Additional highlights in fits & silhouettes that deserve a mention are Volcom’s new Jamie Lynn one piece, ThirtyTwo’s Springbreak Bib with drop butt panel and ThruDark’s Katana reinforced bib pants with magnetic FidLock system for easy fastening shoulder buckles, next to Hurley’s GOLDMINE 2.0 improved version that is lighter and more comfortable.

#### COLOURS

From our questionnaires, two main colour themes crystallize: earthy tones or brighter, heritage inspired shades.

“The new colour stories are inspired by the palettes found in nature, sometimes with an aurora borealis theme, or the change of season from autumn to winter, or the cutting of trees and the colours obtained in the drying process, and then in our comfortable interiors decorated in wood,” says Marion Bertrand, Product Manager at Picture Organic Clothing. Blue Mirage, Tile Blue, Spruce Yellow, and Iguana are the most important new earth tones in the Horsefeathers line. Obsidian Black and Olive Green are the main shades in ThruDark’s collection, who target a stealthy look: “True to its Special Forces background, ThruDark prefers its colourways to fly under the radar – ensuring that the only thing to talk about is our products’ function and your performance.” Norrona also highlight a “really dark green colour called rosin which is darker than the previous olive night. It is more saturated and we’re paring it with a cumin colour.” More variations of green can be found in 686’s line: “Dusty Sage is a very key colour that comes in Gigi’s signature ATV kit. It’s a light colour and we love the way it has a subtle pop against the snow and pairs with our darker

## RIDE PROTECT & SHARE



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

## BC/TOURING LINE

Technical, lightweight & ergonomic products, dedicated to backcountry touring.

Aligned with Picture’s community, its new Freetouring line gathers everything that defines the brand: riding off tracks, drawing lines with your friends, exploring local outdoors while always promoting sustainable solutions in everyday life. Looking for peaceful playgrounds, fresh powder and pushing out your boundaries, you’ll find a complete range of jackets & pants featuring Picture’s most performant technologies.

For FW23, all Picture’s technical pieces are part of The Circular program, made from fabrics using existing waste within our own industry (textile). The BC/TOURING range is part of them.





L1



L1



L1



Norrna



Norrna



OOSC



OOSC



Orage



Orage



Oxbow

“Zeb Powell’s Carolina blue is definitely a standout as well as Chris Grenier’s splinter camo, but one of our favourites is the nod to retro ski patrol colours with the Springbreak Bib and Parka.” <sup>ThirtyTwo</sup>

Cypress Green” next to dark denim by Forest Bailey. L1 mix earth tone neutrals with softer pastel brights, OOSC also mix earthy and pastel shades.

Having a colour palette that is inspired by nature also has a practical advantage, besides being in trend and in demand by customers: “We like to evolve our colours rather than go for a complete change season after season. The reason why we do this is because we want our consumers to look and feel good, and still be able to mix and match outfits even if they purchase our products over several years.” says Frederic Dorais, Creative Director from Orage. Quiksilver add that “with the experience of the difficult years we faced, we tried to avoid having too many different colour stories,” making things easier for everyone from brand to retailer to customer.

That said, you can’t dig into the roots of snowboarding without unearthing some really bright colours. Walking the line between both of these trends, Oakley use contrasts between earthy colours and bold, Oakley Heritage shades: “We’re keeping some of our CORE colourways in the line like Blackout, New Dark Brush, some of our HERITAGE colourways like Ultra Purple and we are bringing softer shades with Hummus, Carafe, Sage Green and Burnt Orange.” <sup>ThirtyTwo</sup>’s Apparel Merchandise Director Susanne Dachgruber highlights “Zeb Powell’s Carolina blue is definitely a standout as well as Chris Grenier’s splinter camo, but one of our favourites is the nod to retro ski patrol colours with the Springbreak Bib and Parka.” Graphics and colours straight from the archives can also be found in Oxbow’s collection, next to inspiration from Mathieu Cr  pel’s project to come back to Groenland 25 years after his first trip there when he was a kid: “The colours and shades are inspired but the colourful houses there, that contrast with the white landscapes.” Quiksilver mix of a vibrant Green Olive, some pop of Regal Orchid and more forward Nimbus Cloud silhouettes with a nice Brittany Blue and some pop of Grenadine in their High Altitude range. Jones added “a timeless Sunrise Gold” to their line up and OOSC feature a “neon after party range with bright and contrasting colours in a textured print/design. Introducing brighter, eye-catching colours inspired by iconic neon parties,” explains Co-Founder Aaron McLaughlin.

There is also a distinct trend to a genderless approach, which will be outlined in more detail in the Women’s Outerwear article on page XXX. Norrna for example purposefully introduce a vivid royal blue (between indigo and violet) for Men in their Lyngen collection that can perceived as feminine.

FW Apparel have already used gender neutral colour stories in previous years, refreshing them with Green Tea & Emerald Green to Trash Pink, Wisteria, Sulfur and On Fire for FW 23/24. And 686 offer an interesting new perspective as well: “We are really backing White in key silhouettes. We recognize it gets dirty over time, but that is also what makes it special – these marks become part of your history and fingerprints on your apparel.”

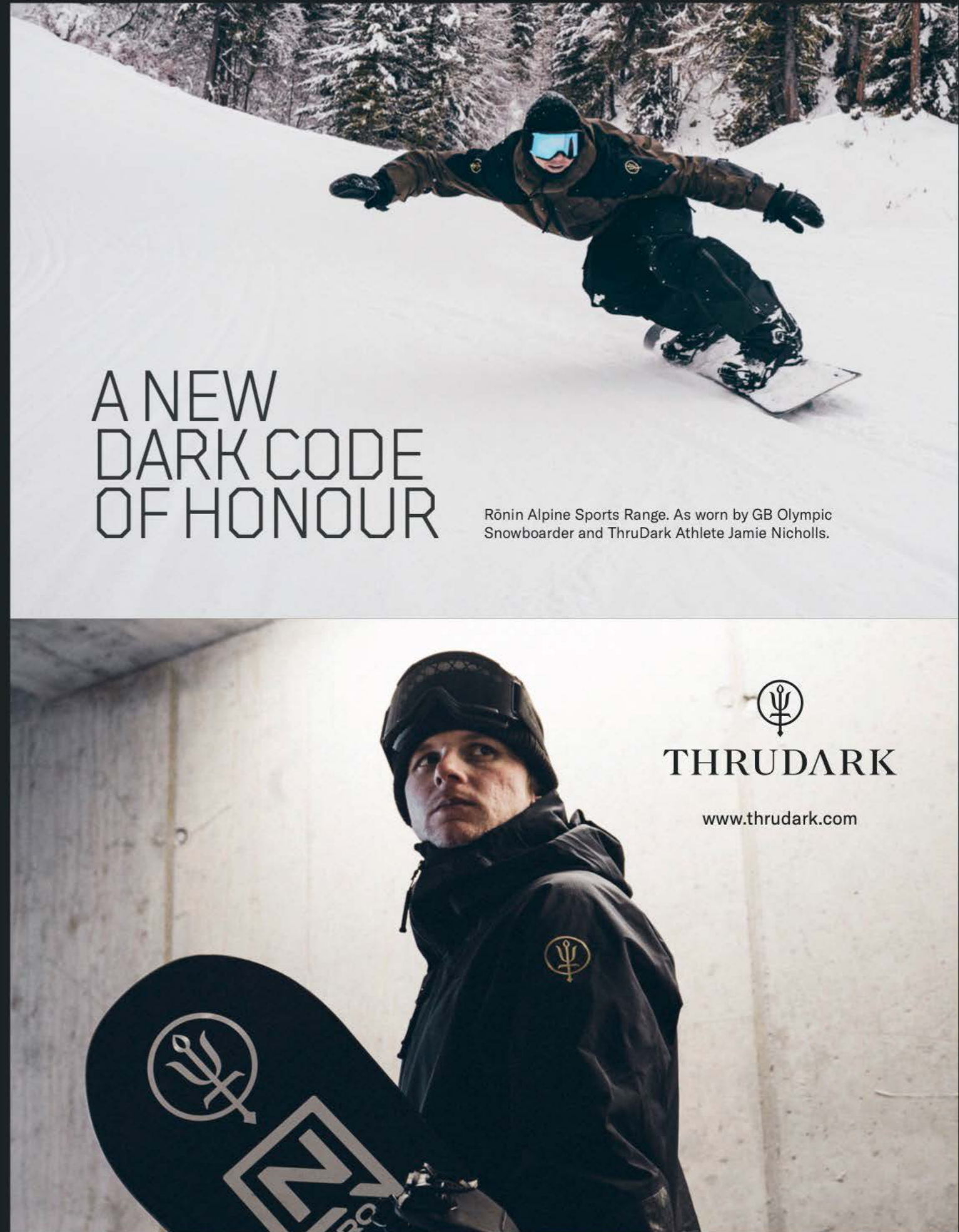
#### PRINTS

“Prints are very different than before, more organic inspired. We have developed a new pattern this season inspired by a traditional Norwegian artwork but translated in an Oakley design language with some topographical elements and lunar phases,” says Laurent Vogt, Global AFA Category Manager Snow. They also collaborate with their athletes to incorporate their personal needs and wants like prints and colours as well as materials and fabrics for on and off the mountain, like Stale Sandbech’s collection that is inspired by an all-over cloud camo-look mixing hummus and carafe (brown) colourways. Nature-inspiration seems to not only be trending in colours, but also prints: Oxbows graphics are a mix between snow tracks and waves foams, from that country where mountains meet the ocean; Picture Organic Clothing introduce a print entitled Mood which represents a landscape in mountain, Quiksilver work with Nimbus cloud silhouettes and Horsefeathers feature a Storm all-over. Jones have recoloured a great all over mountain print by RP Roberts.

Quiksilver have a Tie Dye Black that will be endorsed by Sammy Carlson: “Kind of an off-print combined with Pale Khaki details which create a super nice silhouette.” Hurley feature a Cherokee Camo print, while FW Apparel highlight their Root Overshirt, “a heavyweight fleece with the look, feel and warmth of brushed wool, minus the weight.” L1 mention that they stepped away from their historic approach to prints to bring a more sophisticated geometric print this season and Orage agree that they’re moving away from “Loud prints and fast fashion. We believe that the best way to minimize our impact is to create high-quality products that are durable and versatile.”

#### SUSTAINABILITY & MATERIALS

The road to a more sustainable snowboard industry is still long, but well-trodden by now and much more than a trend. Quiksilver’s Mathieu Cl  ment sums it up perfectly: “As everyone in this industry, we know that we are not perfect, we learn





Oxbow



Picture



Picture



Picture



Quiksilver



Quiksilver



Thrudark



Thrudark



Volcom



Volcom

“Quality is sustainability. By focusing on durable materials which are fit for purpose we make products that last and keep out of landfills.” fw

from past experiences to do things better. Sustainability used to be a trend, a topic on which brands talk about as a marketing story, on which we need to bring novelties every year. We all know now that we need to be consistent and focused if we want to have a true impact. Before going somewhere, we need to understand correctly where we are standing. For that we put in place calculation tool to correctly measure the amount of recycled content in our products (in weight). To be able to pilot during the development process, be more transparent with our consumers and, set targets for the future.” For that they are looking deep into their supply chain, to understand how they could contribute other than just being a ‘sustainability consumer’: “by connecting supply chain partners, we launched pilots of production waste collection and hope to be able to scale projects soon.”

Along similar lines, Picture continue with ‘The Circular’, their new sustainability technology, launched in SS23. For FW23, all Picture’s technical pieces will be part of The Circular\_ program, made from fabrics using existing waste within our own industry (textile). “Nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed.” Oxbow also name the delivery of the most eco-friendly products possible as their main target: “To do so, we do not only use recycled plastic bottles. We do produce in Portugal, the recycled yarn is from Italy (Newlife certified), the fabric is made and dyed in France, the Sympatex membrane is made in Europe, Primaloft padding recycled and made in Europe too.” Horsefeathers also work with Primaloft Bio, “the first-ever 100% recycled, biodegradable fibre, and our Ultratech Recycled material which is crucial when delivering high-performance, rugged, long-lasting products,” says Tomas Koudela, Head of Marketing.

OOSC use 100% recycled durable nylon sourced from sea waste predominantly fishing nets, topped with a ZERO carbon durable water repellent, ThirtyTwo use 100% recycled 2 and 3 layer fused fabrics, and L1 introduce a new lighter recycled poly 3L 4-way stretch fabric called NOVA-X in all of the 3L styles for Theorem while Jones feature a unique combination of stretch, breathable, synthetic insulation, in a puffy, packable silhouette that is 100% recycled in their Dark Start Recycled Hoodie. And while FW Apparel believe “quality is sustainability. By focusing on durable materials which are fit for purpose we make products that last and keep out of landfills,” they’re also stoked to have more and more products using almost only recycled materials, from the main fabrics, insulation, linings, and zippers.

Oakley have a new recycled lightweight zippered hoody and continue their commitment to develop more sustainably sourced and recycled materials as well as increasing the percentage of sustainable materials, especially in the Team Collection where all 20K Shell pieces are produced with Bio Earth materials: “Bio-Earth collection is modified by organic compounds to enhance the biodegradation of our products in a biologically active landfill and is tested no harmful substances being released to the environment.” Norrona highlight their new performance shell laminate that is introduced in three of their new tamok products: an ePE- based PFC-free technology. “As a heavily involved partner with Gore, we have been a part of testing more sustainable materials and are one of the first to implement this newest technology.”

Another area of innovation is insulation. Orage expand their Gilltek line with two new products. “Inspired by fish gills, Gilltek is a proprietary technology that features a completely unique and ultra-breathable insulation system. We employ special construction baffles designed to remove excess heat during high-intensity activity and provide warmth when at rest,” explains Alex d’Anjou, Marketing Specialist. DC vouch for primaloft insulation in their jackets, Thinsulate insulation for pants and the DC profill insulation in their fleece while Oxbow rely on Sympatex and Primaloft. ThruDark adopt an innovative Japanese fabric eVent DV Alpine membrane, reinforced with a hard-wearing ceramic coating and a 3-layer laminate that’s 20m water column tested and 20,000 g/m2 making it both highly waterproof and highly breathable.

True to their brand ethos, Brethren follow a different approach: “We will always be about the camaraderie in boardsports. We strive to be inclusive, accessible and honest, bringing goods to the market that every consumer can take value from. Whether that’s the most robust riding hoodie available, or pants and jackets that are stripped back to the necessities, we look to give you what you need for a great day on the hill. No more, and no less than that.” ©

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#### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Retro Looks - fits & colours
- 2 Earthy shades
- 3 Sustainable materials & production
- 4 Shells & Backcountry Gear

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# RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

## BASE LAYERS FW23/24

The days of dull, boring black and white ripped underwear are long gone. Baselayers don't just keep you toasty on the hill, they provide a perfect second layer for stripping down to during Après Ski. Anna Langer on the trends for FW23/24.



**THEMES & TRENDS**  
The main theme for FW23/24 on the baselayer market is functionality. “With consumers becoming more cost-conscious it has become important that we continue to develop products which can be worn in a multitude of conditions while still performing in its core environment (snow),” says Jassie Salveson, Sales & Marketing at Rojo Outerwear. Pally Hi add a new category for FW23/24 for the more price sensitive customer group: “We we still continue out 100% merino category, but have added a merino-bamboo blended collection,” says Peter Bauer, CEO.

Eivy, who have pioneered the integrated neckwarmer in their tops and keep on innovating in this area with neck warmer and hood designs as well as matching accessories, expand their vision of how multiFUNCTIONal base layers can be. “We have added the Journey top, that packs smaller thanks to a slimmer shape and lower collar.” They also introduce 3/4 pants and find that “trends come and go, for us it’s always been about merging a streetstyle aesthetic with technical lifestyle garments and focusing on multifunctionality so we can have less stuff and more adventure.” In general, attention for layers seems to be increasing, as Eivy note. . “People are looking for products that allow them to resonate with nature and urban life. It’s cool to wear active wear in the city which is a quest to the industry to make versatile products that combine function up in the mountains with fashion down in the streets,” agrees Mons Royale Marketing Manager Europe, Jana Linicus. They also see an increasing number of natural fibres in the base layer category. “We as an industry now have the chance to put our knowledge and experiences derived from nature into action. One of them is the pull towards circularity in products and businesses. This transformative process, the increasing awareness by the conscious consumer and a strong sustainability narrative will drive not only the base layer category but the whole outdoor sports industry.”

Also Smartwool aim to offer their consumers the most essential and versatile baselayer, which is everything they need to go anywhere, and introduce Thermal Merino Baselayer in Plus Size for Women – unfortunately only for the US market at the moment but every step in this direction is encouraging for the female customers. Kari Traa offers fresh silhouettes and details with modern patterns. Their Fierce Longsleeve also got a comfy pullover collar and a bit roomier body-fit to be perfect for ski and training outdoors.

**MATERIALS**  
Eivy use GRS® – Global Recycled Standard Polyester and Polylana® for accessories, Rojo use 90% polyester and 10% spandex, while ThruDark work with Polartec Power Grid: a patented grid construction knit that improves performance efficiency by increasing warmth and breathability at a minimal

fabric mass. On top of that they work with body-mapped ventilation as well as compression technology concentrated around the arms and legs to reduce muscle fatigue.

Another base layer favourite is Merino Wool: “a natural fibre boasting numerous performance benefits, comfortable and soft to the touch with a very high weight to warmth ratio,” explain ThruDark. SmartWool use ZQ certified Merino that is super comfy thanks to flatlock seams and shoulder panels. Kari Traa feature a new innovative jacquard technique in their 100% Merino Juliane baselayer set that eliminates seams on the belly and Pally Hi blend other sustainable fibres such as bamboo, hemp and organic cotton. Mons Royale also work with Merino as foundation, adding recycled polyester from PET bottles, depending on the purpose of the product.

**COLOURS & PATTERNS**  
While ThruDark stick with Obsidian Black and SmartWool offer solid colours and plant-based dyes in colour blocks and mountain patterns, the female focused base layer brands go a little bit wilder.

“For our carryover range we have established a range of muted, yet eye-catching colours that can be mixed and matched with each other from season to season as well,” says Eivy. Most of their prints are carry over as well, with a new Black Leopard pattern for FW23/24.

Signature styles for Kari Traa are their Norwegian inspired patterns, that sit next to prints from the graphical Nordic Forest leaf skeletons and winter flowers. Their colour pallet is also inspired by fading away autumn nature and a Watercolour universe, from pastel blues to space dust lilacs, next to staple purple rose and true black.

As always, Rojo design their pallet to Mix and Match, “allowing the wearer to create their own look which of course can be paired back to our Outerwear and accessories collection.” They pair camofoliage with eradescent blues of the icy snow and frozen flowers, next to bright floral kaleidoscope celebrating the divine feminine power found within. ☺

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- HIGHLIGHTS**
- 1 Multifunctionality
  - 2 Integrated Neckwarmers
  - 3 Merino Wool
  - 4 Earth tones, blues & rosy colours



  
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## RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

# SKATE SHOES FW23/24

Another year is wrapping up and whilst we're waiting for the frost to thaw so we can break out the shorts and summer shoes, we're equally excited to see what brands will be bringing to the table for the next cold spell. With a closer look into all things skate shoes, here's the Board Sport SOURCE Retail Buyer's Guide for Skate Shoes FW23 with SOURCE Skateboard editor **Dave Morgan**.



Another year is passing with the continued uncertainty of the market affecting brands - some in different ways to others. The pandemic's stronghold on reality is thankfully over with, however the knock-on effects are still visible in certain areas, with overstocking being a very real issue brands and retailers are having to deal with. Michelle Katz - Head of Public Relations at Cariuma said "The macroeconomic instability we're seeing inevitably results in demand volatility, and overstocking is often a consequence of that." Dennis Martin - Co-founder and Creative Director at Hours Is Yours furthered this point, saying "Shops are overstocked and need to move out inventory and do a basic reset on the amount of SKU's they are taking on from the larger brands."

This is, of course understandable and hopefully feasible in the near future, as it seems to be a universal issue. Sebastien Palmer - General Manager at New Balance Numeric summed up things perfectly, saying the market "is healthy but with obvious economic concerns on the periphery. Skate economics often go counter to world events."

Price points seem to be staying within a similar bracket to previous seasons, albeit creeping upwards slightly. It seems the majority of skate shoes will be starting out around €70 for basic models, with the more tech-heavy silhouettes going up to €120+. C1RCA, for example, has an average price point of €92 - Allesandro Usro- Sales Director at C1RCA said "Price points are a little higher than past seasons due to an increase of sea freight shipping and material cost hikes."

"Videos are the main thing I'm seeing across digital and social channels throughout. Community also plays a strong part in what brands are doing."

**Dennis Martin, Hours Is Yours**

### COLLABS AND COLLECTION THEMES

The 90's resurgence is fully back, with big shoes and tiny wheels becoming once more commonplace. Allesandro from C1RCA said noticed that "Slim shoes for skating, but also the return to 90's models such as our classic AL 50, are confirmed trends"

The coming season has a rich variety of stories from brands with some strong collaborations in the mix to boot! Everyone's favourite fast-footed Brit Tom Knox has a signature shoe- the NM600 coming out with New Balance. Emerica will be bringing a new pro shoe into the mix from kinked-rail rocker Dakota Servold- of which "he's had 100% say in creating" said Tim Cisilino - Global Brand Manager for Emerica. Tim continued to say "This shoe is great for those who love the flick of a vulcanised shoe but prefer the cushion and support of a cupsole." Servold's skating speaks volumes, so it's no doubt his first pro shoe will live up to expectations.

Globe will be releasing a collaboration with Former - the brand co-founded by their prominent pro Austyn Gillette. Alongside this collab, Globe's Footwear Designer Riana Hart said "We are excited to launch our Gillette Mid, the second pro model for Austyn Gillette."

DC's Marketing Manager EMEA - Emmanuel Labadie spoke of new releases: "We will also celebrate Josh Kalis's 25th anniversary with DC shoes with a specific model, and we will also propose a modern mash up with John Shanahan's 'Metric'. Etnies have a fully packed roster as always-new colourways and pro models coming out next season, including a shoe for French high-flyer Aurelien Giraud and a new colourway for the mighty Nassim Lachab. Rick Marmolijo, Design Director at Etnies said: "To follow up on Nassim's Marana white spot colourway, he will have a new colour inspired off Moroccan tiles." Sole-tech sibling Emerica will also be dropping a heavy collab with Biltwell Inc - the custom motorcycle company. Tim from Emerica expanded on this, saying "working with the Biltwell crew on a line of footwear that you have the opportunity to both skate and ride in, we couldn't be happier."

Last resort AB - the brainchild of Polar Skate Co's Pontus Alv, has been in the mix for a couple of years now, blending sleek looking durable vulc silhouettes with simple details designed by skateboarders, for skateboarders. Last Resort's Co-Founder/Designer Sami Tolppi said simply on the subject of themes: "There are no specific themes, we're just trying to keep things clean and simple." Which is pretty spot on in my book- no-nonsense skateboarding.

MARKETING

With the majority of marketing happening purely online these days, brands are focusing their output on social media and online platforms to get their products into customers' sights. Dennis from Hours Is Yours said "Videos are the main thing I'm seeing across digital and social channels throughout. Community also plays a strong part in what brands are doing." Brian Barber - General Manager at Osiris added that "any good collaborations seem to help boost brands." That is especially true when brands collaborate with those outside of the skateboard realm, bringing a more universal appreciation to skateboarding styles.

DESIGN

Skateboarders usually favour one of two styles - the classic, simplistic minimal, or the tech heavy, more sporty-looking shoe. Both serve the individual needs of skaters perfectly as everyone has their own preference in skating. Michelle from Cariuma said: "We're anti fast-fashion and short-term trends, and our shoes are very aligned with this. However, we believe that great performance also requires innovation and technology." New Balance Numeric have brought the tech know-how from their running shoes into

"I think we are past the point where not considering sustainability is an option."  
Riana Hart, Globe

skateboarding, as Sebastian from New Balance explained: "We strive for innovation and bringing technical advancement to our footwear. Even if our designs may look simple but they are designed with a lot of internal tech."

Some, already tech-heavy brands like Osiris will be "keeping the same technology in their shoes as before, but improving the quality of the materials used, which will in-turn improve the shoe performance" as Brian from Osiris explained. Last Resort's Sami said, "it's not a new technology but we have changed the insoles in all our styles to a removable PU injected Insole, we call it "Cloudy Cush" for fun." Globe's aforementioned 'Austyn 2' will "introduce some elements more seen in sport sneakers like having a mesh medial quarter panel for breathability and PU resin printed overlay." as Riana from Globe explained.

"any good collaborations seem to help boost brands." Brian Barber, Osiris



SUSTAINABILITY

An ever-pressing matter within all manufacturing is sustainability - especially within our current climate. Skate shoe brands are striving to incorporate new procedures and materials into the creation of their shoes in a bid to lower their impact on the environment. As Sebastian from New Balance said "There are ongoing improvements across our line to utilise more sustainable materials and practices, where this does not compromise performance." Etnies will "still be focusing on the Jameson 2 Eco with our Trees for the Future program" as Rick explained. C1RCA will be continuing their partnership with Repreve - a 100% recycled fabric company, whereas DC will be working heavily on their 'Resolve Program'. Emmanuel from DC said " We are bringing in more eco-friendly materials without compromising on that classic DC performance and style." Riana, Globe's footwear designer summarised: "I think we are past the point where not considering sustainability is an option."

A strong season is incoming for FW24, and from what we can gather, brands are managing to navigate the many curveballs the world continues to throw at it. Skateboarding will only continue to progress, as will the technology that goes into skate shoes, so things are looking up!☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 All-Black colourways
- 2 Recycled materials
- 3 90's 'big shoe' comeback
- 4 Minimal-looking, yet tech-heavy

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# FLOAT

E2 PACKS

## A NEW WAY TO STAY AFLOAT

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

BACKCOUNTRY SNOW SAFETY FW23/24

Innovations are welcome as long as they come in a user-friendly design. Brands respond with more technology and less faff. **By Rocio Enriquez.**



Snow safety focuses mainly on avoiding snow burial. Electrical airbag systems are popular. Cartridge-based designs get lighter, while remaining reliable. User-friendliness is critical. Other approaches aim to manage the burial, like assisted breathing systems. The influx of newcomers to the backcountry has boosted sales of entry level rescue bundles with probes, shovels, and beacons. Certification is appreciated and education has become the main form of retailer support.

**NEW FOR 23/24**  
Electronic airbag systems share shelves with cartridge-based ones. While the former is easier to operate and maintain, the latter is much more affordable. Amongst the electronic ones we find BCA's Float E2 and ABS' A.Light E, both powered by Alpride's supercapacitor. On the cartridge-based offer we find Aerosize's Hybrid Airbag and Mammut's Removable Airbag System 3.0. Thanks to the small cartridges, Aerosize can place 174L of airbag inside a compact vest. This system is easier to store and carry as a second set on longer trips. Mammut's RAS 3.0 is easy to use and deploys in seconds. "It is one of the lightest and smallest systems available", says Alexander Weijnman.

Smart designs offer versatile and easy to use backpacks. Users want smart storage and access to their kit on the go. They also appreciate the possibility to use their pack with or without the safety gear. Aerosize's Vest One is so compact that you can use it with a backpack and remain protected when you take it off. BCA's design allows access on the fly. The lower side pocket can carry your drinking bottle, skins, or crampons. "This way you don't have to take the pack off and give up your airbag insurance", says Simon Allwein. The back zip allows you to fully customise the position of the trigger handle, drinking system or radio. Dakine relies on their roll-top closure, available in all their Mammut R.A.S. 3.0 compatible backpacks. Mammut highlights the safety features of the bag in orange to enable intuitive handling under stress. Their packs have anatomically supportive 3D panels that tailor to the wearer's back. Their simplistic design enables easy packing and reliable mounting of additional gear. ABS promotes versatility. The base unit of their A.Light E. airbag fits with all their A.Light Tour zip-ons. They also present the A.Round, which transforms into a functional outdoor pack for all seasons.

Shovels, probes, and beacons are selling well. Customers look for certification. Mammut's new Alugator Ultra shovel is ultra-light. The aluminium welded construction can cut through avalanche debris. Their probes are stiffer and bend less while penetrating the surface. Both shovel and probes are UIAA certified. BCA uses the same certification. They offer very light carbon probes and touring poles, and the ultra-light Dozer-1T UL shovel. ABS relies on their A.Ssure set of shovel, probe and first aid kit. Geekier solutions are Mammut's Barryvox@ S and Recco SAR location services. Mammut

Barryvox® S has a Smart Search function that interacts with the rescuer during the search. Recco keeps growing their network of countries and locations. They are also working on drone projects. "We are having the first prototypes tested right now", says Julia Granhed. They produce helmet and backpack reflectors and the Recco belt for all-year round use. The novelty in avalanche safety devices is Safeback's SBX breathing system. This active air supply system keeps the user breathing during burial, without a mouthpiece. On a full charge, it can supply air continuously for 90 minutes at temperatures of - 22 to - 30. It will be integrated in DB's Snow Pro Vest and Bergans' Y Mountain Line Daypack.

There are non-avalanche specific safety products worth mentioning. BCA offers a wide range of snow study plus their own BC link radios. ABS' A.Way app allows you to check the snow conditions and train your safety knowledge. Aerosize announces new products for 2024.

**RETAILER SUPPORT**  
All brands offer their own education programmes. Mammut organises on-snow workshops with Swiss and German retailers, covering from rescue techniques to basic snow science. Dakine will be present at the Safety Shred Day. "This event is aimed at training and informing riders about avalanches and mountain risks", says Thomas Gachet. Recco has developed "The Plan", a small safety folder with basic safety information for the consumer. Their Recco Academy trains retailers to explain the products with integrated Recco reflectors. Safeback provides product pages to their partnering brands to help users understand how to use their device. ABS and BCA also offer in-store and online training for retailers.

Extended production lead times and raw material scarcity has presented some challenges. Electronic airbag systems have suffered scarcities of chips and boards. Nevertheless, good forecast and earlier booking has allowed timely deliveries. The slight increase in the final price will be justified by the quality delivered. ☺

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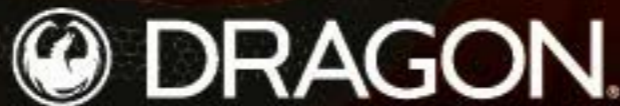
- HIGHLIGHTS**
- 1 Electronic airbag systems popular
  - 2 Focus on user-friendliness
  - 3 Education main form of retailer support
  - 4 Versatile backpacks

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## 25 YEARS OF DRAGON LODGE SNOWBOARDING

Legendary Tignes-based snowboarding chalet the Dragon Lodge turns 25 this year. Working with endemic snowboard companies like Vans and Dragon for most of that time, Dragon Lodge has become a home away from home for snowboarders, skaters, artists and musicians and has become much more than just a lodge, it's a snowboarding institution. We caught up with DLS owner John Bassett (issue 104 cover boy) to hear about a new partnership with Volcom and long-time friend of the Lodge, Schoph.

### John, congrats on 25 years...

Thanks man, can't quite believe it, definitely wouldn't have imagined still going 25 years later when we started. We just wanted something that would allow us to keep riding each winter, and creating a place that we, our friends and likeminded riders would actually want to stay at seemed a great idea at the time as there weren't really many, if any, places like that for snowboarders at the time.

### Please tell us about the new collaboration with Volcom.

The collaboration came about through Schoph. Schoph has been a friend of the mine and Will's for 20 odd years, riding, working and collaborating together. He's an official part of the Dragon Lodge family and permanent 'artist in residence,' with the Lodge itself acting as an unofficial gallery that proudly showcases his evolution and development as an artist over the years.

While riding together last winter, talking on a chairlift, and not having an outerwear sponsor since the pandemic, he just suggested he put us and Volcom in touch as he works with us both and though we'd be a perfect fit... "a no brainer" as he said in his intro email, haha!



Volcom apartment, and most excitingly, to commission Schoph to create an original, large-scale piece of art as a centrepiece. We went out in the summer and did just that: Schoph designed and painted the piece, Will and I helped with the woodwork, and Aaron Schwartz came for the week to shoot photos.

### Schoph's gone from strength to strength and is prolific with his artwork. Please tell us why you think Schoph's art resonates in the snowboard world as much as it does...

Schoph's also snowboarder at heart who really loves the act and culture, has been for years and always will be, so he instinctively knows what works artistically on whatever snowboard related medium he's commissioned to create on from boards to boots to outerwear...which is why it resonates in the snowboard world as much as it does and is why he's working with the best, from brands like Volcom, Vans and Lib-Tech and it's why he is asked by riders like Travis Rice & Pat Moore to put his mark on their signature lines, and why he's collaborating with Jamie Lynn on their joint brand 1910.

### Which other brands do you work with and what does this look like at Dragon Lodge?

Remind Insoles, Airhole and NOW bindings are more simple situations where they provide great product for us and our team to use each winter, and we promote and endorse them to our guests both in resort and in any promo.

Then there are Vans and Dragon, who we've been supported by for 16 and 20 years respectively. We do the same great kit for us / promo for them deal, but also over the years they have both helped put on events and gigs with us in Tignes, have run UK and European team and media trips to the lodge with their riders, hosted product tests & shoots, and run some great retailer incentives where they bring out shop staff to ride. Hopefully the Volcom partnership will develop like this too.

We started off hosting skate and snowboard shop trips 25 years ago so love those weeks. We always try and recommend good local shops to our guests, and work especially closely with a couple of shops (TSA in the UK and Tignes Spirit in France).

### What are the coolest things in snowboarding right now?

Honestly, snowboarding seems to be in a good place, more diverse as far as participation and exposure of different styles of riding, more women getting coverage, great edits of street, backcountry, carving, side hits... but one of the coolest things for us is to be involved in a small way with my brother's board brand Island Snowboards. He started the lodge with me 25 years ago, moved to Japan about 15 years ago, and started Island about 3 years ago. It's amazing to see him build & develop it slowly and it's been great to have a small involvement in that process, to ride and give feedback on prototype boards, and Will's been giving some design input on a new model that'll be out this year which we're super excited to get to try when we finally get back out to Japan in January for the first time in three years!

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Not only were Volcom down to support us with great gear, but they were really into the idea of creating something together. They've always been into supporting the art, music and creative side of boardsports culture, so the Volcom X Schoph X Dragon Lodge project was born. The idea was to turn one of the "mini-lodge" apartments upstairs into the



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## RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE SNOW PROTECTION FW23/24

Protective wear is no longer deemed just for beginners, with many pros and regular shredders opting to protect their limbs and bones from any eventualities the day may throw at them. Delivering second skin like pieces can drive sales. By Rocio Enriquez.



Protective gear is widely accepted in snowsports. Resort closures had an unintended positive impact on this category. Snow addicts who couldn't see a season go by without sliding down a few hills moved to the backcountry. They needed protection to enjoy their new off-piste adventures. Once resorts re-opened, the pandemic wave of enthusiasm for the outdoors brought new adepts to the mountains. This created great demand for protection, especially for the younger riders. Protection is not the only quality consumers look for. Freedom of movement and comfort are key in a product that you are meant to wear all the time you are riding. Users want light, thin, flexible, and breathable pieces that feel like a second skin. Consideration for the environment can seal the deal when purchasing your snow protection gear.

### New for 23/24

Wearable comfort is the main focus. Pieces become thinner, more flexible, and very breathable. Amplifi redesigns their MKX top from Exoskeleton to base-layer, with the promise of unrestricted movement. The Hex Flex construction makes it very light, protective and breathable. Their Reactor Waistcoat Pro has a super light, vented Exoflex back protector and super light SAS-TEC shoulder protection for bombproof comfort. The 4-way stretch panels secure a perfect fit. Triple Eight pushes their Bumsaver and Undercover Snow Wrist Guards and Knee Pads. The padded Bumsaver shorts protect your rear, hips and thighs discreetly under your clothes. They feature a lightweight, breathable and form-fitting mesh fabric for an extra comfortable fit. The Undercover snow knee pads and wrist guards deliver top-notch protection in a design slim enough to fit under first layers and gloves. Evoc launches their brand-new protection wear, featuring LiteShield technology. They use high performance textiles found in base layers and sportswear. They are smooth to the touch, highly breathable, moisture wicking, quick-drying, elastic and odour neutralising. The design is fine-tuned for comfort and freedom of movement. The LiteShield Flex is a specially balanced blend of thermoplastic elastomers (TPE) with a sophisticated geometry. It provides ergo-dynamic flexibility and up to 95% impact protection at a wide temperature range. It also reduces weight and optimises ventilation. Forcefield has halved the thickness of their new armour, while still hitting the higher CE Level 2 benchmark. Their GTech jacket comes fitted with a FreeFit CE Level 2 on the back. The user can then choose an isolator CE1 or CE2 for the limb armour. This provides more flexibility in terms of armour characteristics, temperature, and usage. Xion launches their new Air Series. "It combines superior high-performance protection with maximum breathability", says Michael Link. Prosurf adds one more seamless back protector and one pair of shorts to their D30 range. Re-Zro's biodegradable material offers incredible flexibility even in minus temperatures, while keeping the performance requirements needed for the CE standard.

### Sustainability

Most brands choose sustainable materials. Re-Zro enters the market with the first biodegradable and 100% recyclable impact protection material. Thanks to their technology, when a Re-Zro part hits the landfill, microbes colonise and consume the plastic. "Through third party testing, we know our parts will biodegrade fully in three to five years", says Marcus Hoenig. Other brands use proven recycled or natural materials. Forcefield's GTech jacket is made with a wicking, breathable fabric made of recycled ocean plastics. Amplifi uses Miharo, a natural fibre from a fast-growing, renewable source. It has become a leader amongst climate control and odour management fabrics. Evoc uses the innovative S.Cafe® for odour-neutralising. "We designed the protection wear with a cradle-to cradle approach in mind and made it as recyclable as possible", says Alexandra Hlawitschka. The user can easily separate the hip belt and the protector from the vest. The hip belt has got elastane, which cannot be recycled. The protector, made from TPE, and the vest, made from PET, can be separately recycled. Forcefield uses recycled materials in their packaging and hangers.

Production processes are as sustainable as possible too. Amplifi applies a zero-waste policy when injecting their MKX parts. Every offcut is carefully collected and upcycled into brand-new products. Re-Zro also regrinds the offcuts to reuse them in new products. Their production does not produce harmful gases or toxic waste. Evoc observes that treatments, finishes and production methods are as sustainable as materials. Xion sources all the fabrics in Europe, where their production is. That way they secure the highest ecological production standards, fair working conditions and good quality standards.

### Retailer Support

Brands have POS displays and extensive visual assets to support retailers in-store and online. Xion also offers training to educate staff about the product. Raw materials and shipping costs have increased. This will impact the final price to the consumer, but brands have worked to minimise it. They have also optimised their production efficiency to make sure deliveries are timely for next season. ☺

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

**BOARDSPORTSOURCE.COM**

### HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Wearing comfort main focus
- 2 Entry level market driving growth
- 3 Sustainable materials
- 4 Second skin design

# NEW PRODUCTS

## 01 / PLUM THE ETERLOU BINDING 2023/2024 EDITION

These are equipped with a new “Walk or ride” (WOR) system. This new technology, inspired by the one already used on the PLUM Feyan, will allow the user to have a better walk amplitude on the way uphill and a better and more accurate angle settings for the riding mode. [FIXATION-PLUM.COM](https://www.fixation-plum.com)



01

## 02 / DAKINE MISSION PRO BACKPACK SERIES

For 23/24 Dakine is renewing its iconic Mission Pro Backpack Series. For both for men and women, and available in different capacities (18L, 25L and 32L), the Mission Pro Series is entirely made out of recycled polyester. All buckles are glove friendly and a spine protector insert has been added to this iconic backpack. [DAKINE.COM](https://www.dakine.com)



02

## 03 / HEAD SCOUT LYT BOA COILER BOOT

This is one of Head’s best-selling boots and one of the lightest boots on the market. Its construction offers a comfortable, forgiving boot that is just simply fun to ride in. Although light in weight, the sole offers plenty of grip and has outstanding dampening performance. BOA® offers a fast, effortless, and precise fit. The liner of the boot is heat-mouldable and can be customized to your foot. [HEAD.COM](https://www.head.com)



03

## 04 / NOW VETTA BINDING

Watch out Ladies! Now has dug deep and done a complete overhaul on the Vetta for the 2024 sea-son. This all-mountain beauty features the new FM 2.0 highback, Asym-FS strap and 3D stretch-fit toe strap, guaranteeing plenty of epic shred days ahead. [NOW-SNOWBOARDING.COM](https://www.now-snowboarding.com)



04

## 05 / DRAKE SUPERSPORT BINDING

A brand new Supersport coming your way! This is definitely a high performing binding which fits re-ally well for freestyle-backcountry orientated riders. It’s got a system which allows you to lock and secure the base to the heelcup by having three anchor points. This keeps the heelcup stable and safe. Strapping in has never been easier with the comfy Grandmaster Strap you’ll be sure to have no pres-sure points and it’s got the brand new light toe wrap which is made with a double TPU injection which is the same material that is used in skate wheels. This gives the strap way more comfort and a way better grip. [NORTHWAVE.IT](https://www.northwave.it)



05

## 06 / NORTHWAVE DECADE PRO BOOT

When you’ve got someone like Ethan Morgan, you know that it’s going to be a success. Ethan’s second pro model boot has everything you ever wanted: style and durability. This boot is called the “DIYX” in honour of Ethan’s famous most creative snowboard event out there. It’s got similar tech to the Dec-ade but with the introduction of laces. Old school is the new school sometimes. The boot is a plain canvas as it comes in white but with the opportunity to pimp it the way you want it. [NORTHWAVE.COM](https://www.northwave.com)



06

**XION®**  
PROTECTIVE GEAR



**TAKE THE HIT!**

ULTIMATE BASELAYER  
IMPACT PROTECTION

**XIONPG.COM**  
SALES@XIONPG.COM

NEW PRODUCTS

07 / DRAGON NFX MAG GOGGLE

Dragon expands its MAG line with the new NFX MAG, a premium goggle with all of Dragon's best established features; Swift Lock Magnetic Changing system, LUMALENS (in both lenses), OTG compati-ble, Contoured Armoured Venting, a striking silhouette that's often mimicked but never bettered. And a colourway to celebrate 30 years in the eyewear game since 93'

EUROPE.DRAGONALLIANCE.COM

08 / NIDECKER KITA HYBRID BOOT

The gold standard premium all-mountain boot in Niecker's line, it's packed with technical features. Traditional laces for precision, Internal Heel Lock for power. Below, thee Vibram Approach outsole gives traction on icy surfaces, EVA inserts smooth chatter. ExoSpine seamlessly reinforces the back-stay. In short: Kita Hybrid is built to charge, hard.

NIDECKER.COM

09 / SP SLAB.ONE MULLT

ENTRY BINDING

The SLAB.ONE is a lean and mean working machine designed for fast laps, big jumps and all-mountain shenanigans. The lightweight aluminium base bears our new aluminium heelcup highback with a straight and direct flex, as well as top-of-the-line technology from top to bottom. True to you in good times and in bad, this binding is the pick of the bunch for the dedicated ripper.

SP-BINDINGS.COM

10 / DEELUXE AERIS BOOT

With the goal of creating the ultimate all terrain boot – and one truly capable of meeting his needs, Deeluxe worked with Kevin Backstrom to test out a slew of boots from their collection and identify his favourite features. They mixed together all of these ingredients for a truly custom fit that maximizes performance and comfort, showcasing DEELUXE's Stage 3 liner and Freestyle Tongue. The boot's Sidekick Pro technology uses a high-frequency welding process to fuse lateral and medial reinforcing elements to the boot's shell. This provides faster edge-to-edge transitions and bet-ter pop when ollieing. For exceptional board feel, the Aeris features DEELUXE's all-new Quantum sole. This sole provides an especially direct and responsive ride while also offering strategic cushioning to dampen vibrations and absorb impact energy. This enables you to stomp the largest features with ease.

DEELUXE.COM

11 / GIRO REVOLT GOGGLE

Bringing performance features to the most core style for 130 Euros. Working with team riders Giro created the revolt™. This new goggle combines a modern moto cylindrical design with the full power of the contrast optimisation of our vivid lens technology, with optics by zeiss® and exv+ (expansion view plus tech) to keep everything in sight. Revolt... see your line, in style.

GIRO.COM

12 / POW VERTEX GTX® GLOVE

Undoubtedly the cream of the crop in the POW line, the VERTEX GTX® Glove is designed with ultimate performance and protection in mind. Featuring Grade A water repellent goatskin leather, GORE-TEX® waterproof, and wind-proof and breathable insert, premium anti-pill microfleece lining for soft comfort and Primaloft® Gold insulation for a boost in warmth, this glove has it all! Plus, the VERTEX includes backhand compression foam protection panels to take on whatever obstacles Mother Na-ture – or some course designer – throws at you.

POWGLOVES.COM



07



08



09



10



11



12



SP FASTEC MOUNTAIN



WINNER VERBIER EXTREME 2022  
MANUELA MANDL, TEAM SP

PHOTO: © Niels SAINT-VITEUX

PHOTO: @ FWT, Jeremy Bernard



## RE ZRO®

Boasting 100% biodegradability and incredible flexibility even in minus temperatures, RE ZRO® have a product that sells itself. We caught up with the team there to find out more about this innovative new brand.

### What was the thinking behind the launch of RE ZRO®?

We wanted to design body armour with sustainability at the forefront of what we do. Part of this was ensuring that our products could be easily recycled but it didn't take too much scratching under the surface to realise that recycling alone was not the answer to the end-of-life waste problem.

**Who are the people behind the business?**  
RE ZRO® was founded by a group of like-minded individuals: Wil Marschall, Marcus Hoenig and Alex Yellowley who were looking to change the impact protection sector for the better.

Leaning on a wealth of product and material design experience, Wil was instrumental in setting the company apart by introducing the products biodegradable qualities. Combining with the 20+ years in commercialising technology that Marcus and Alex bring to the table. The trio looked to expand their team with the experience of Toby Glyn leading Business Development and Jake Tindall as their newly appointed Head of Marketing.

### Please walk us through your new technology.

RE ZRO® is the world's first 100% biodegradable\* and 100% recyclable impact protection. For us, it was really important when we started RE ZRO® that sustainability didn't come at the cost of performance. At the end of the day, these are performance products that need to protect! They have standards that they must meet, and ultimately, how comfortable and wearable they are is



important to the end users. So we tried to focus on building a range that was as lightweight, comfortable, breathable and flexible as we could achieve, whilst also maintaining the performance requirements that we needed for the CE standard.

When a RE ZRO® part hits a landfill, our technology is a catalyst for microbes to colonise and consume the plastic allowing the microbes to enjoy the taste of plastic and use the carbon in the plastic as its food source. Because of that, microbes continue to colonise the plastic and consume it much quicker. So through third party testing that we've done, our parts will biodegrade fully in three to five years.

\*Biodegradability as determined by the standard test method ASTM D5511 & ISO 15985-2014

### How is RE ZRO® an improvement on existing protection materials?

Not only are RE ZRO® products 100% biodegradable, we wanted to think about sustainability as a whole. Our products don't produce harmful gases or toxic waste, in fact a lot of the flashing (offcuts) from our production are collected, reground and reused in our own products. Furthermore, our materials offer incredible flexibility even in minus temperatures, something that other products on the market struggle with.

### Why is sustainability such a key focus of the brand?

Recycling rates globally are very low. So the sad truth is more often than not products that are destined for recycling all end up in the landfill and that wasn't good enough for us. The consumer so often gets blamed for what happens at the end of life of a product when the truth is, they often don't have much choice at all. So it's our responsibility as designers to do better, creating products that are not only better to use but also better for the environment.



### How and when will you be launching the brand into the market?

We're excited to be working with key brand partners to bring RE ZRO® to the consumer market across Wintersports, Mountain Biking, Motorcycle and Team Sport sectors, bringing product to market in 2023.

### How do you see the protection market developing over the next few years?

We've already noticed a lot of brands are turning their attention to sustainability, which we're very excited to see. We expect to see more and more of our competitors looking to improve their processes but it's important that the end-of-life of these products is considered from the start. Whilst we want to lead the charge for sustainability in impact protection, ultimately we want to see a change of process and a change of thought leadership, and champion making positive changes for the benefit of everyone.

### What other action sports will you be targeting and why?

The applications for RE ZRO® technology are vast, whilst we're initially looking to take on the Wintersports, Mountain Biking, Motorcycle and Team Sport sectors, we're also in talks with potential equestrian, sailing, skateboarding, industrial, and military brand partners.🕒



CARIUMA

## CARIUMA

Cariuma is a footwear company that's taken the skate and snow markets by storm since its launch in 2018. On the feet of the world's top pro surfers and skates, boasting an ethical standpoint and with a focus on those outside the core surf/skate markets, this Brazilian brand is an incredibly interesting profile. Interview with brand Co-Founder Fernando Porto & David Python.

### Please can we have a brief history of the brand.

Cariuma was founded by two Brazilian lifelong boardsport enthusiasts with vast experience in the footwear industry, Fernando Porto and David Python, who put people and the environment at the centre of their mission. Born and raised in Rio, skateboarding has been a part of Co-Founder Fernando's life since he was a child (with a plethora of injuries since then). They started Cariuma in mid-2018 with a clear vision of creating a conscious brand built with premium natural materials that skateboarders and surfers would actually want to wear in the streets, to the beach, and beyond. The company announced its skate team: a small but power-packed team of positively-minded individuals. And last summer, they performed at and dominated the biggest stage in the world - the 2021 Tokyo Olympics. Cariuma team riders Kelvin Hoefler and Jagger Eaton won the inaugural silver and bronze medals for the street skateboarding competition. Cariuma riders also took SLS Super Crown wins, both in 2021 and most recently in 2022. Now in its fourth year, the brand is expanding its presence to skate shops internationally, aiming to spread positivity by bringing sustainable, ethical and performance-minded values to more skaters through their local communities.

**Who are the people behind the the brand?**  
(David): Fernando Porto (a skater and surfer



since he was 10 years old) and I (surfer and snowboarder), are the two co-founders, but more importantly, our number one value in the company is "we start with who"; this is not only how we run Cariuma but also how we build our brand. It is fundamental for us to be with people we admire and with whom we share values; this is true from the people we recruit, to the factories we work with, to of course the skate and surf teams we build.

### How does Cariuma differ from similar products on the market?

(Fernando): We are obsessed with details, not only the ones the customer sees but the invisible technical ones. We are always developing new materials and/or pushing the property of the materials to their limits. I can say that when it comes to the outsole and insole of our sneakers, we have made a lot of progress in terms of weight, flexibility, and impact absorption, paired with resistance.

As a sustainable company we focus a lot on features that increase the shoes' lifespan and overall durability. On top of the shoes' quality and performance features, it's worth mentioning that we are particularly proud of our pair for a pair program, where we plant 2 trees in the Brazilian rainforest for every pair of shoes sold. We believe it's cool to care!

### What are your key models in Europe and why?

Our CATIBA Pro is our premier pro skate shoe, designed for the skater who strives to perform at the highest level, and who came to make a statement – about pushing the envelope, making an impact and being part of our team. It comes with an arsenal of performance-driven features and benefits, as well as innovations in lifespan and durability. From winning competitions at the highest level to conquering street gaps, it's no surprise that it's the go-to shoe for our team riders in Europe and beyond.

This season we are launching the NAIOCA Pro. The NAIOCA Pro is a next generation, ultra-



technical take on a skateboarder favourite. We designed a heritage skate silhouette built for a newer generation - clean lines and a classic single-vamp profile paired with next-level performance features.

### Who is your target customer?

(Fernando): Anyone who wants cool, great quality shoes.

From the core street guy who needs a comfortable and durable shoe that can perform well on the streets, to the girls and guys who may not even skate, but want a cool look from a brand that is doing things differently in a much more ethical way. And anyone else that is also tired of the same big corporate brands and wants to try something new from a brand with purpose.

### How is Cariuma distributed in Europe?

As always, we start with "Who", and the same core value applies to choosing the right partners we work with. Hence, we have partnered with key accounts and distributors across Europe who share our commitment to the skateboarding, surfing and wider boardsports community and to spreading positivity. Get in touch with us and we'll let you know who our distribution partners are in your market.🕒



## IRIE DAILY

Berlin-based IRIEDAILY are one of Europe's stand-out streetwear brands and with a focus on sustainable materials, we've profiled the German brand for our retailers.

### Please could we have a history of the brand since its foundation.

IRIEDAILY was founded 1994 in Berlin/ Kreuzberg and is still owner-operated by the founders and CEOs Daniel Luger & Walter Molt. IRIEDAILY is not simply a streetwear brand from Berlin, in fact it is a story about friendship, DIY, responsibility, respect and the challenge to remain true to the DNA "STAY DIFFERENT". From simply producing T-shirts to blossoming into a brand that confidently creates streetwear fashion.

### What benefits does being based in Berlin bring to the brand?

Berlin is one of the most inspiring and international cities in Germany in terms of street culture, music, art, diversity, alternative lifestyles, food and DIY ethics. All these influences are inevitably found in the DNA and design language of IRIEDAILY.

### What is IRIEDAILY's USP?

In terms of design, IRIEDAILY has created an unmistakable look on the market with its very individual, self-developed patterns. Likewise, our t-shirt artworks and our strong range of jackets are unmistakably identifiable with our brand from miles away. The brand is characterised by its agility and flexibility and is able to react quickly due to our lean corporate structure. The family and DIY philosophy as well as owner-managed structure eliminate certain constraints in contrast to investment-driven companies. Likewise, our DNA "Stay Different" as well as our brand values such as being fair, vegan and sustainable are all part of our USP. In addition, organic growth and loyalty to our consumers, business partners and producers are the foundation of all our actions

### Which is the best national market for you and why?

Besides Germany, Austria is of course an important and strong market. Overall, we are



growing abroad and especially in Belgium, Portugal and Italy.

### What do you see as the key trends in the streetwear market currently?

Baggy cuts, crop tops, oversized t-shirts, unisex looks, club wear, all is especially visible in the so-called Y2K trend. Also old school running shoes, dad sneakers, platform shoes in different variations.

### Please tell us about your FW23 line.

The Fall/Winter 2023 has been created under the claim IRIETOPIA that breaks down categorisations and offers trendy Fall/Winter essentials made for everyone who is passionate about fair, sustainable but also individual streetwear styles.

Collection stories such as Y2K, Unisex aka for Everyone and colour stories like Winter Pastels, New Naturals or Colour Pops create an exciting colour range for a fresh new look. A strong knitwear and jacket programme with new styles, patterns and materials and of course exciting colour updates of our Berlin Basics styles.

For the new F/W season we developed a new essential program. We offer basic styles such as for example washed jogging pants or hoodies, flannel shirts and pants for everyone. The perfect styles for fans of the unisex look.

As already mentioned, the Y2K trend also plays a role in the collection. Our FW23 collection includes several Y2K inspired styles featuring contrast seams or abstract nylon prints.

We also offer some Y2K inspired materials in this collection such as printed ribstop or metallic looking crinkle nylons. Here the focus is on the shine or the special print of the fabrics which gives the whole look a technical touch. Important styles for this look are for example, puffer jackets with technical Y2K inspired all-over prints.

Additionally, fleece is still a part of the collection and an ongoing cross-seasonal theme.



And we've got the perfect Christmas styles for you to make your holiday as fun as needed! Knit jumpers with slightly "different" Christmas motifs, embroidered hoodies and socks with figurative motifs complete this collection story.

New interpretations of the classic IRIEDAILY ethno patterns in form of pixel-inspired designs, embroideries as well as loud T-shirt artworks dedicated to the claim IRIETOPIA.

The continued use of sustainable materials such as organic cotton, recycled polyester & nylon is self-evident.

### How do you support your retailers?

Our retailers are supported with special POS for their shop floors to communicate important topics such as our membership of the Fair Wear Foundation and our sustainable fabrics. We also support their marketing campaigns, window decorations or events. In addition, we provide product images, lifestyle pictures and web content for their websites, social media channels or online shops.

But support is also present in all other business areas. As we always meet our customers at eye level and cultivate an active exchange, we are able to rely on each other, especially during the pandemic years, and to work in a solution-oriented and supportive manner. ☺



## PICTURE

Picture are stepping into the urban/commute market and we spoke with CEO Julien Durant to find out more about their motives and strategy to do so.

### Why have you decided to enter the urban clothing market?

Picture has always been involved in urban clothing with a skate and chill dimension/style when the brand started. The brand has grown towards a very urban/outdoor dimension and with its outerwear technical skills, this was reason enough to bring this technology to the city, for an urban customer who is more and more oriented towards technical clothing. Today, we have adapted the collection with a much sleeker style that corresponds to the needs of the urban consumer with all the technologies of our mountain and outerwear ranges.

### What can Picture bring to this market?

With Picture, we will be able to bring something very fresh and especially affordable. We are going to be able to use all our technologies linked to down, gluing, laser construction which will allow us to propose an urban technical garment to resist to all types of climates and temperatures and with a very sleek and sober design. This sobriety is the common point of all the urban brands, but the point of differentiation of Picture will be at the level of the proposed technologies and the eco-responsible dimension. There is practically no brand capable of producing urban clothing made of recycled materials, traceable down and an ethical dimension in the construction of the product and also in the DNA of the brand. We have a real card to play, because brands committed to sustainability and sobriety are almost non-existent.



Please can you tell us about your launch line. For the launch of this range, we intend to rely on Parisian department stores such as the BHV and Galeries Lafayette to really support the launch of technical Picture products dedicated to an urban environment. We are going to focus on the eco-responsible dimension, with a key story revolving around circularity and products made from post-consumer materials and down that is completely traceable. The launch will take place in Paris and will then be relayed on all social networks and digital. What Picture will bring is the affordable side of the range, when this type of product are usually sold on the market between 550€ and 800€; we will position them between 300€ and 400€. So we have a real added value today, for an eco and affordable product.

### Will sustainability be a key part of the offering?

As we said before, sustainability is the central element associated with technology: sleek design, completely eco-designed product and technically in line with what we are able to do on the touring/mountaineering ranges.

### How will you be marketing Commute?

Behind the term “commuting”, in Latin countries, we often associate this word with “velotaff” or “bike-work”, but the range has really been built for uses around urban mobility, whatever they are: walking, running, cycling, public transport... The objective is really to associate all mobility activities around this range and not a divisive dimension based only on the bike.

### Who will be your target retailers and why?

We will distinguish two categories of customers for this range: our outdoor customers located in the city (Montagne Nature & Style, Bergzeit, Espace Montagne...)



and our urban customers, i.e. department stores (Selfridges, Galeries Lafayette...) which will allow us to target the urban community that is looking for high-performance, technical and eco-friendly products. Online will not be neglected either, since we also plan a big online activation with key retailers of outdoor (Bergfreunde, Bergzeit, Blue Tomato, Snow Leader...) which are key but have also taken the commuting position in their offer creation.

### Why should retailers carry your new line?

For the first time, we will find an eco-responsible, technical and affordable commuting range on the market. Sleek design will be the common feature of the whole offer. On the other hand, few people are able to bring a level of technicality and technology in line with such a high level of eco-responsibility and a sleek design. In this sense, we are convinced that this line has great chances of success. We want to position it next to brands like Arc'teryx Veilance with a target consumer between 25 and 40 years old, who has a smaller budget than the 40+ year old consumer that Veilance targets, and finally we want to stop where Arc'teryx starts. ©



## PACSAFE

PACSAFE has become synonymous with heavy duty safety backpacks for travelers across the globe. Now with a renewed focus on sustainability, the brand intends to eliminate virgin plastic in their supply chain by 2025 and are now available in over 40 countries worldwide.

### Tell us about the history of PacSafe. Who are the people behind the brand?

Pacsafe® was founded by two Australian globetrotters in 1998 – Rob Schlipper and Magnus McGlashan, who are still the owners of PACSAFE. Their own experiences, visiting more than 80 countries and those of other travelers convinced them of the need for no-nonsense travel security. Beginning with the invention of one product, the PACSAFE anti-theft backpack & bag protector – a lockable eXomesh® net to fit around any backpack to protect your valuables. This was followed by a series of award winning and patented technologies, that are the core of the world's most acclaimed anti-theft travel gear.

2014 the Pacsafe Turtle Fond was launched with the aim of supporting the conservation efforts of endangered sea turtles globally. The turtle has been represented in our logo since the very beginning.

In 2019 we launched our first sustainable collections – one for which we created our top-selling styles by using ECONYL® yarn – made of recycled nylon waste, such as fishnets and other discarded nylon out of our oceans and landscapes. The other one was a brand-new urban style anti-theft collection which was made of 100% recycled PET bottles that would otherwise end up as waste. We are a group of thoughtful travelers dedicated to protect what is valuable – our belongings, our experiences and our planet.

### How do you stand out with PACSAFE from similar ideas in the market concerning the anti-theft carry solutions?

Our anti-theft features are unique and patented. Our strong portfolio of innovative



security features includes among other cut resistant materials, cut proof straps, lockable (interlocking) zippers, puncture proof zippers, pockets with RFID® protection preventing data skimming to keep your sensitive data secure. For more than two decades we have worked to create the best anti-theft travel gear using sustainable materials and processes along the way.

### What efforts are you implementing towards sustainability?

The materials we are using are ECONYL® yarn and rPET. ECONYL® is made out of nylon waste from discarded fishing nets and other nylon waste, otherwise polluting the Earth, is collected, processed and turned into yarn. It's exactly the same as brand new nylon and can be recycled, recreated and remolded again and again. We will research the use of further new sustainable initiatives and how we can use these in our products. Our aim is to eliminate virgin plastic in the supply chain by 2025. We are well on our way of achieving this, as 80% of Pacsafe bags & wallets in the 2023 collection are now made from recycled materials. We at Pacsafe continue to pioneer and advance the technology by putting sustainability and people first, treating them as individuals, and servicing their needs through innovation, aesthetic, craftsmanship and the desire to always do better.

### What has been the most popular product in the whole line and why?

There isn't just one specific product - but I would say the bestsellers are our versatile and sustainable “everyday” backpacks and shoulder bags that work in the city and on the go. Offering comfort, support, functionality with separate compartments to keep your belongings organized and secure.

### How is Pacsafe distributed in Europe/worldwide?

We have a global presence which means that we are situated with PACSAFE® locations in HongKong (APAC), EMEA and North America. The locations in the different areas with distributions respectively wholesalers who are active as brick-and-mortar or online stores. Our store locator on our website



assists the end-consumer to find a store nearby or an online shop in his country. We're represented, through our distributions and wholesalers in more than 40 countries.

### How do you support retailers who carry your brand?

Our retailers are supported individually, e.g., POS material, printed / digital material for marketing purposes resp. their websites.

### Please tell us about your 2023 line

Our most sustainable collection yet will be launched in 2023 – our Pacsafe ECO – made from rPET as well as of ECONYL®. Approximately 75% of the components – webbing, zipper tape, labels, sewing thread, some buckles - are made from recycled materials.

The collection offers 5 different styles in 3 colours: Black/Canyon/Gravity Grey. This collection is also 100% PFC free.

Our popular Citysafe CX series will be available in ECONYL® and extended by further colours and by a new style: Citysafe CX Petite Backpack, a super convenient, lightweight and chic way to carry all our essentials to bring to work or while exploring a new city. Popular classics like our Metrosafe350 backpack and Metrosafe LS120 Hip pack will also be available in ECONYL. ©



## THRUDARK

English-based ThruDark hail from a military background and make superior quality products to allow their customers to benefit from “expedition excellence”. Launching their first technical snow line this winter, named Ronin, we caught up with the team their to see why snowboard retailers should stock their product.

### Please give us a short history on the brand so far.

ThruDark was founded in 2017 with the launch of an Arctic Expedition Parka and several other insulated, technical garments aimed purely at cold weather climates. Since then, the brand has earned a host of notable ambassadors including former Special Forces operator Jason Fox, Olympic cycling champion Victoria Pendleton and upcoming stars of the sporting world from Brazilian Jiu Jitsu’s young prodigy Nathan “Nightmare” Johnstone and boxing’s Chris Billam-Smith. Arguably, ThruDark’s most notable achievement to-date has been making the Summit Suit that took Nims’ Purja MBE to the height of the world and international recognition on his 14 Peaks. As of 2022, the ThruDark range has expanded to include activewear, alpine sports and even fightwear for Brazilian Jiu Jitsu.

### What was the thinking behind the launch of Thrudark?

ThruDark’s co-founders, Louis Tinsley and Anthony ‘Staz’ Stazicker CGC, spent a combined 27 years within UK Armed Forces, 18 of which were spent in UK Special Forces among the most elite combat units in the world. Throughout their decorated and distinguished military careers, the two were constantly testing, wearing out and critiquing the kit they were issued in some of the harshest conditions on the planet. Upon leaving the armed forces, they decided to

continue their relentless pursuit of excellence in the field of outdoor performance clothing. And so, in 2017, ThruDark was born out of the need for outstanding kit in extreme circumstances – founded on the mantra “Endeavour Through Adversity”, underpinned by the ethos “Honesty. Integrity. Loyalty.” and built on the best in performance innovation and technology met with authentic, real-world testing. A Tier One brand built for expedition excellence.

### Who are the people behind the brand?

Anthony “Staz” Stazicker CGC 13 years distinguished and decorated military service, 10 within UKSF, last 3 years as a highly experienced, multi-skilled, chief sniper instructor & demolitions expert. Awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross for combat actions conducted in Afghanistan in 2013. Louis Tinsley, 14 years distinguished and decorated military service, 8 within UKSF.

### How do you differentiate the brand from competitors?

We’re not here just to take part, we’re here to take over. We are force multipliers in performance innovation. What sets us apart from competitors? We’re a brand built on a story, not a brand trying to find one and it’s this experience and ethos led approach that makes our kit stand-out and out-perform. They say that “the loudest person in the room is the weakest” and we don’t try to be something we’re not. We won’t compromise on quality to churn out bolder and brighter aesthetics or bow to fashion trends at the cost of function. We’d rather take our time building excellence in silence and let our performance do the talking where it matters most. We’re “if you know, you know” and we like it that way.

### Who is your target customer?

We sometimes get asked “do I have to be in

the military to wear the kit?” or are told “I don’t feel like I deserve to wear it because I’m not ex-military.” so the point we want to get across is that our experience defines our products, not our customers. That’s why our mantra “Endeavour Through Adversity” is more than an empty platitude – it is a call to action to absolutely everyone and anyone. We want people to wear our kit and feel like they can conquer any challenge they face. That’s our target customer, the person who wants to take what they have and do better.

### What marketing do you have planned for this season?

The third generation of our iconic Expedition Parka launches with a few short films by ThruDark Media Productions on a theme of “The End of Days”. A Parka built for the edge of the world, until the end of the world. Expect bleak conditions and environments and a foreboding narrative, centuries in the making.

Our eagerly anticipated “Ronin” alpine sports range launches with a short film showing product testing in the mountains, based around the tale of the 47 Ronin, narrated by an ominous traditional-style haiku. ☹

# BOARDSPORT source. EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

## PRO CONTENT

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MARKET INSIGHT

UK	“The first hurrah”
FRANCE	By the time you read this it will be a
GERMANY	new year and 2023 appears to have
ITALY	dawned with plenty of optimism.
SWISS	Whether that optimism is well
PORTUGAL	placed is another question. Putin
SPAIN	(F Putin!) continues to make life a

one and the same - that we see the back of Putin and his bloody war so things can get back to something like normal.

January will bring the ‘first hurrah’ for many winter brands – deliveries that should have been made to retailers weeks ago are only just arriving meaning that January is the first opportunity for many retailers to see how those brands sales are going to hold up. Joining the party late, but at a time when things appear to be a pretty good, is not always a disaster. Late to arrive was also a cold snap in the UK (which has focussed minds) whilst dropping temperatures in the Alps means you can almost hear the UK board community packing their bags. Bookings are good. Shops are buoyant.

And at the same time the UK is on strike. Nurses today (15th December) for the first time in history. They’ve have had enough. We clapped them through the pandemic but clapping only goes so far. I have huge sympathy with them – indeed with everyone – but quite when the money runs out is not clear. Running your own business, as so many of us in the boardsports industry do, really puts ‘affordability’ into perspective. Yet in a peculiar twist the strikes are helping some retailers.

If you are an online business it’s a nightmare ... phones are hot with people asking “where’s my stuff” whereas consumer concerns about delivery delays is boosting business for some. “People are driving a long way to call in store and actually pick up their stuff” this is Lorraine from Subvert, Manchester. “They’re so determined to make sure they get their kit in time that a visit to the store is the only solution. And of course, once they’re in store we have a great opportunity to remind them just how good a real bricks & mortar store is. This is all on top of an already great start to the season. We’re really happy with how things are going.”

Music to my ears. A happy retailer, a buoyant retailer... the music continued. “We’re really convinced that the season is going to continue to go well and looks set to be the best for years. Boarders want to get away and they want new kit – whether it be an accessory purchase or a board, boot, binding purchase. They’re on it.”

Deep into December and the cold is biting. Energy costs are hitting home and households are feeling the pinch – not all mind you – Boris Johnson has earned just over £1m since he stepped down ... from just 4 speaking engagements! He may be a complete dick with some stories to tell... but probably not worth a £1m, eh? I wonder how much Liz Truss is earning from her after-dinner speaking?

I would rather hear Jeremy Sladen (TSA) giving a speech and when I spoke to him he was his usual buoyant and ‘larger than life’ self but

there was something else – a heightened sense of anticipation. “It’s good. I mean it’s really good – both online and in store – although online is killing it! And strangely we appear to be benefitting from an influx of Chinese students in the UK and all seem to want to go to the snow.” Seriously? At this point I wondered if Jeremy was in the same conversation. “No seriously these students have money and if snowboarding is your thing then you’re not going to hold back.” So any University town look to your students - especially those from the Far East.

Jeremy continued: “November was an amazing month – best ever for outerwear and best on hardware since 2010. We started the season slow because we entered the summer with minimal stock and finished the summer with almost no stock so had very little to sell – but that’s all to the good. We’re now in danger of running out of kit.” Well that will get Jeremy’s phone going.

Writing this article was becoming fun again! Did Jeremy have any negatives. “I guess the hardest thing is the buying cycle but we just have to get on with it. Buying from a PDF should not be hard for anyone in this business and we have to get used to it.” Was there anything else that Jeremy felt was leading to their success? “Yeah – we’re organised. We were ready early and others were not – they’re losing out and we’re picking up that business. It’s pretty simple really” And last words? “This looks to me like it is going to continue. December is set to see significant growth - boarders are determined to get away and get their time on the snow – come what may. This is going to be a great season.”

So there – you’ve heard it from the biggest board retailer in the UK. Now... where do I go next to keep this positive roll going? It’s fair to say that Chris from Snowfit probably errs on the cautious side and, I hope he will not mind me saying, is not one for getting carried away. “Booming. Booming!” This is not a bad start. “Yes it’s really strong. Delivery issues have cost us turnover but the bottom line is that we have enthusiastic customers who want to spend. There’s definitely an air of “I deserve a break. I need to get away” and it seems that most people are going for more than one week... and with a fistful of new kit!

Is it really that good? “Yes – they’re keen, they may have a holiday credit from the covid times and this gives them more money to spend on kit. It’s great. And it’s good on everything – boards, boots, bindings, clothing – all good.”

Nothing going wrong then? “Yeah – supply chain issues, suppliers who shove stuff down our throats when we don’t want it and having to place orders almost blind – these are all problems but we just have to deal with them.”

And feelings about the follow-on season? “I’m a little nervous about next season and I think it will level out a bit – I will be cautious in my buy”. Ah now... that sounds like Chris.

What a lovely way to end the year! What a lovely way to start the year – the first hurrah is upon us... keep the hurrah going please.

GORDON WAY

FRANCE

GERMANY	Gross domestic product (GDP) shrunk by
ITALY	0.2 percent in the fourth quarter according
SWISS	to the French National Institute for Statistics
PORTUGAL	and Economic Studies (INSEE). Inflation,
SPAIN	on the other hand, seems to be stabilising.
UK	Indeed, the year-on-year increase was 6.2%

consumption and companies are producing less to compensate for the spike in energy prices: with these two growth engines slowing down, the French economy is ending 2022 on a cold note. Despite the energy crisis, France should escape a recession and the unemployment rate is set to remain stable. However, inflation could peak at 7% in January and February 2023 and so far wages are not fully keeping up. 2023, annus horribilis for the French economy? The Governor of the Banque de France is currently forecasting weak growth in 2023, not even reaching 2.6% like in 2022. In its latest estimate, the institution was predicting growth of between -0.5 and 0.8% GDP in 2023, a more pessimistic estimate than the government who are hoping for 1% growth. Given the signs of resilience and growth in France, which is expected to reach 0.1% in the fourth quarter of 2022, a hard landing for the French and European economy seems to have been ruled out. After 2023, the government expects to return to a more normal trajectory with gradually less inflation and more growth.

How did our industry fare at the end of 2022 and how does it look for the new year, 2023? It’s difficult to say because the situation seems to be quite different from one shop to another and one case to another. In resort, Romain Foché from Black Cats in Tignes, a snowboard shop opened in 2005 says: “The season has started pretty well with a good early December, both in turnout and turnover,” he adds: “We seem to be on the same path as last year which was all about the return of a post COVID clientele.” This observation needs to be confirmed though because the shop had only been open for two weeks - for the launch of the winter season - when we interviewed him. At GlissAttitude in Marseille, Shop Manager Eric Colard seems to agree: “business and footfall are similar to last year in the ski and winter sector in general”, but he does add that: “on the other hand, it’s a little bit weaker than last year for the nautical section.” At HAWAII SURF, a major player in e-commerce in France, the mood is a little more mixed. Purchaser Julien Rechú confides to us that: “Business is decent but online traffic is down compared to the beginning of last winter”, before adding: “technical snow products in particular are moving less than last year”.

As far as in-store stocks are concerned, generally they are quite high. For shops in resorts, it’s the very beginning of the season and the bulk of sales haven’t taken place yet. Romain from Black Cats confides to us that: “the stock is at its highest because we only really started to work 2 weeks ago”. However, he notes: “Deliveries are really messy this year: cancellations and delays are unfortunately much more common than usual.” At GlissAttitude, Eric is also suffering from the same problems: “Deliveries of

MARKET INSIGHT

pre-orders are quite late and we are having difficulties restocking winter products.” Others seem to be less affected, like at HAWAII SURF where Julien says that: “We have a fairly large stock for this winter so we will not do much restocking in this tricky context.”

Regarding the product lines at HAWAII SURF, it seems that the abnormally warm temperatures in autumn have held back sales in the winter section. As Julien tells us: “Winter technical clothing, ski and snow gear are overall down on last year” although he does add: “It’s true that last year was quite exceptional in terms of snow and with people returning to resorts after COVID.” As a multi action sport shop, he notes: “This year it’s more the neoprene, roller and street clothing sections that are doing better”. At Black Cats Romain notes: “The flagship product of the early season is the easy access bindings, just as it was last winter for Burton’s Step On,” adding, “the trend is for new generation bindings such as the Nidecker Supermatic.”

Purchasing behaviour also seems to have changed a bit compared to last year. In 2021 purchases seemed to be quite impulsive but at the beginning of winter 2022 they seem to be much more carefully weighed up. Julien from HAWAII SURF explains to us that: “Customers are once again spending a lot more time gathering information before buying”, adding: “Pleasure buying is less common than last year, general price increases mean that people are thinking twice before investing.” This feeling is shared by Eric at GlissAttitude: “The current situation with high inflation everywhere in France is forcing people to limit their pleasure purchases, like boardsports equipment, and we are starting to feel this in the shop.” It’s only the start of winter though so it’s still a bit too soon to generalise. We have to get through the holidays and the beginning of the season before the first signs of this slowdown can be confirmed.

Obviously the weather will play a role again this year. If the snow keeps falling then our enthusiasts will come for their holidays to make the most of it, despite the dreary situation on the news every day...

Could the football World Cup prove beneficial to growth in France? Could the superb performance and second place of the French soccer team give a (small) boost to the French economy? According to a study by the Dutch bank ABN Amro who have examined the effects on finalist countries since 1970, there is a small boost to gross domestic product when the national team reaches the final. Thanks to their superb performance, ‘Les Bleus’ might bring us back a few tenths of a growth point from Qatar.

How can this positive effect be explained? Well, first of all, the success of the national team affects national happiness. This means a bit more confidence, a lift to morale, a bit less saving and a bit more spending. For France in general, we could also hope for a positive effect on the country’s image and its reach, maybe attracting more tourists for example. Watch this space...

BENOIT BRECQ

MARKET INSIGHT

GERMANY

ITALY  
SWISS  
PORTUGAL  
SPAIN  
UK  
FRANCE

Early snow, no snow, some snow... Discounts, early sale, Black Friday... This Market Insight is actually just as full of suspense as most others in 2022. No one knows anything for sure. The world is still going crazy, and that’s also what the retail situation feels like. What a crazy but consistently good month for the German boardsport trade. At least according to the traders with whom I have regular contact, the turnover is very positive and at a good level, with figures similar to those in 2019.

The early snow and also the cold temperatures at the beginning of December contributed to a pre-Christmas sentiment here. December got off to a super positive start for the retail sector.

However, the impact of discounts and Black Friday was also still palpable. And these, incomprehensibly, also confused the end consumer. Why are hardgoods being offered at reduced prices at the end of November / beginning of December? Well, I’ve heard this question several times, but to be honest I have no answer. As a matter of fact, at such a moment in time no ski resort has opened yet. People can’t wait to do winter sports, and the prices get knocked down. The snow situation here in Europe was then very good with snow in the low mountain ranges and the Alps until mid-December. In some cases, ski resorts even started operating their facilities a week earlier. Excellent conditions for the sale of all winter-related goods. Outerwear, gloves, goggles, helmets and even hardware. A blissful feeling for the retailers.

Unfortunately, Old Mother Frost then decided to really hit hard in the USA with extreme snowfall and cold. The foehn wind swept across Europe, bringing warmer air and rain. As so often happens, many places thus had a green Christmas. Of course, this also affected the winter sports trade. Especially in the touring segment, many report a restrained buying behaviour, certainly due to the amount of snow. Without powder, there’s no point in going off-piste. All-mountain snowboards / boots, on the other hand, performed very well. Christian Meller, head buyer at Sport Bittl, confirms this: “We are satisfied here. Splitboards are still lagging behind expectations. But overall we are happy with the sales, considering that winter has only just begun.”

Snowboard boots are and continue to be a huge topic in the German snowboard trade, as it is quite clear that boots attract people to the good shops. That’s because boot fitting has become a big deal for snowboard boots as well. More and more, soles are also getting sold with the heat moulded boots. Service is the key to success here. Christian from Freerider in Hamburg, who focuses a lot on offering this service in the Hanseatic city, also

confirms this. “I actually spend most of my day sliding around on my knees to keep customers happy. And these customers are very grateful and come to our shop for that very reason. This kind of expertise is not something you can buy online.”When asked which brands in particular stand out here, he replied, “ThirtyTwo as a core snowboard boot brand, Salomon, and Ride. They’re all brands that work with intuition liners. There I can easily do a lot with heat moulding, like placing heel rings.”

I also had a quick chat with Dale Tayler, ThirtyTwo Sales Manager Europe. He confirmed that most of the ThirtyTwo stock is already sold out, although they had bought almost twice as much as in previous years. Sole-Tech is still owner-managed; ThirtyTwo is the biggest sales generator in the brand portfolio worldwide. ThirtyTwo is heading into winter 2023 with some carryover products. They are running a two-year carryover programme, which makes planning easier for both brand and retail. However, the same thing happens here as I’ve heard from some shops: early deadlines.

The deadline for textiles, especially for Gore-Tex products in this pre-book season, comes extremely early. That makes things very difficult for the retailers, as some have not even received their deliveries yet and already have to place a new order. This is also the case for Stefan at Switch in Straubing: “This doesn’t make things any easier. I will look at what we sell and then work with the brands that support us, even at the risk of not getting any goods. Which is what I’ve been hearing on the phone quite a lot lately.” He is very happy with the sales so far. “It tends to happen that some products just don’t get delivered and that’s why there’s less variety to choose from. December was very good, though, so we sold some vouchers.”

I also spoke briefly with Alex Schumacher, who is a mega specialist in both winter sports and water sports with his eponymous shop. I asked him how SUP sales went in comparison to the previous years before Christmas: “In the SUP area, there was some movement, but it is quite clear that the low-price set deals are now more a thing for summer supply purchases, which are thus also made in the summer. What has developed really nicely for us, however, is the wing and foil segment. We’ve had a lot of fun here. In the snow segment we’re unfortunately also having to deal with discounts and, at the moment, with the fact that there’s no snow in the Alps. So, of course, fewer people are coming.”

So, we now wrap up this crazy boardsports year 2022 and wish everyone a happy new year – hopefully on some board.

See you in 2023.

TOBY HAMMER

ITALY

SWISS  
PORTUGAL  
SPAIN  
UK  
FRANCE  
GERMANY

Let’s start as usual with our economic and political update. Mrs. Meloni is in full swing and she and her ministers are trying to bring some good news to the table. There is nothing super exciting but something is moving. But a bittersweet feeling remains, are we really are in good hands? And the lack of innovation and interest in modernizing the country is something that seems missing especially for the younger generation. Economically we are still in a tough situation as inflation is still above 10% or to be exact at 11.8% from October 22 onwards and there is still no improvement in sight. This has reduced spending power and rising interest rates are slowing down investments and company sales goals are way harder to reach than in 2021. From September store owners are quite happy with their sales compared with the first six months of the year when they were really bad. Also the mantra of shopping locally and spending less money online is something that is starting to show, as Italian online stores are ending the year with a lot of stock and discounting has began earlier. Overall in 2022 online shopping still grew 20% in comparison to 2021, but looking at the detail of physical products sold online the business grew only 8% but the year before it was 18%. Small store owners are now more careful when it comes to investing money into their online businesses as it requires a serious and well-planned budget. An online store is as much work as a physical store, something many business owners underestimated in the years before.

The snow season also started better than expected and most deliveries where in time, not like at pre-covid levels but sill early enough. The first snow came by the end of November and was perfectly in time for the ski resorts to plan their openings. The

SWISS

PORTUGAL  
SPAIN  
UK  
FRANCE  
GERMANY  
ITALY

To bake up a batch of Christmas frownies, the economic situation is highly unstable, consumption is decreasing and the catastrophic weather forecast isn’t promising anything good before plunging into the uncertainty of 2023.

As I’ve said before, years may follow each other but they are not the same. The fact that snow is rare or almost non-existent at Christmas seems to be the only constant year after year while the rest seems to change all the time, the cards are redealt each year and each season, what was true yesterday is no longer true today and although this may present opportunities for some, it tends to take its toll on most players in the boardsport market.

This autumn was really mixed, deliveries and supplies were sometimes good, sometimes catastrophic, other times surprising. Supplies of certain boots were troublesome with some brands unable to deliver to shops, thereby benefitting others. At other times, some retailers lacked bindings even though the gear seemed to be available (online for example) and they were given some dubious explanations as to why they were short or even cancelled. To top it all off, the supply chain is now under so much pressure that the deadlines for the next year’s orders (and no longer just for softgoods) are getting earlier and earlier, sometimes even before the season’s equipment has been put on the shelves. This puts some shops, and some distributors, in a difficult situation.

Consumption and attendance were generally down at the

MARKET INSIGHT

average price rise of ski resort tickets is up 20% and this will mean demand will be reduced as people spend their money more carefully this year.

Stores do not complain about sell through. Alessio from Zoopark in Varese comments: “The Winter months work great for us as we are a true core shop giving excellent customer service and support. Our core customers trust us and that keeps us alive with extra turnover we gain from outdoor brands, but the unstable circumstances made the first six months of the year a real challenge and not being able to work constantly throughout the years makes it a problem with our staff who need to work all through the year.”

Splitboarding & ski touring is still a huge trend in the north of Italy especially for 25-year-olds and upwards and is a category every core store has introduced. Outerwear sees the big outdoor names dominating the market followed by a strong Picture Organic brand who seems to touch the interest from many customers with their colourful line being produced in an eco-friendly way using recycled materials.

Shopping more sustainably is gaining more and more momentum than in previous years and people pay more attention. 2022 is coming to an end and was for sure a true rollercoaster. What remains is a lot of uncertainty in many ways. People are afraid of the future and many small store owners more than ever are questioning their business models, for many it’s the passion that drives them to go on as it is for sure a difficult time for many of us, financially and mentally. Let’s start with a positive mindset in 2023 even if world problems didn’t end at the end of 2022.

FRANZ JOSEF HOLLER

beginning of this winter and with purchasing power decreasing (and yes, even in Switzerland), the figures from this autumn were not very good. The outdoor sports rush we saw during the Covid period seems to be long gone. Nowadays people are well equipped and are either saving up or using their money to go out and bask in the sun. As a result, we are seeing a clear decrease in demand for splitboards. This time there is stock... and plenty of it. Retailers may have even gone a bit overboard when placing their pre-orders. As a result, stocks are well above what they should be this Christmas.

When it comes to foreign competition, it’s still fierce in Switzerland and, as explained many times, the strength of our currency poses seriously problematic price differences on the same products available in the Euro zone. As a result, Swiss retailers have had to react by lowering prices right from the start, and quite drastically, very often displaying -20% discounts as soon as they get the equipment; something that was extremely rare a few years ago is starting to become commonplace nowadays. Margins are therefore becoming increasingly tight for our shops, who find themselves in a rather precarious situation. The situation is even more difficult knowing that the warm weather at the end of December has forced some mid-altitude resorts to postpone their opening days while others were forced to close having only opened a few weeks earlier; they will not be able to accommodate winter sports enthusiasts during the Christmas-New Year period - an obvious disaster for tourism and all the businesses that depend on it. Let’s hope that January will be colder and whiter but for the moment, snowboarders will just have to wait.

FABIEN GRISEL

PORTUGAL

SPAIN  
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FRANCE  
GERMANY  
ITALY  
SWISS

When we are just one week away from Christmas retailers in Portugal aren't happy with the way things are going so far. Latest economic reports keep bringing bad news and people keep losing purchasing power at the same pace. In general, this means less customers in the physical stores compared to last year ending in a lower demand and sale drops. The expectation and hope for stores is to see if customers manage to "save Christmas" with last minute shopping in order to avoid losses. But consumers are also already thinking about waiting for January to take advantage of the sales season discounts. With the decrease in tourism, November and December have been difficult months on the boardsports industry but some stores managed to mitigate the negative trend with Black Friday or Black Week discount campaigns.

Latest OECD 'Economic Outlook' for Portugal mentions that real GDP growth is projected to decline from 6.7% in 2022 to 1% in 2023 and 1.2% in 2024. Inflation in December is now at 9.9% and Portugal is the third country in the European Union with food inflation above the general inflation rate, just behind Germany and Sweden. The government is taking some measures to support the population to face this situation having announced a cheque of 240 euros in December for the neediest families (in addition to the 150 euros that was transferred in October to everyone whose wage was up to 2700 euros). And also, a minimum wage increase by 7.8% from the current 705 to 760 euros.

Surfing and skateboarding hardgoods are on shelves and warehouses due to a slump in consumption in the last few months. Delivery delays that should have come in summer are now arriving but stores are short on cash flow. Consecutive storms brought bad weather and heavy rain and floods for several weeks keeping people at home (no surfing and just indoor skateboarding). Still the cold temperatures made people search and buy Fall/Winter clothing shaking the apparel market in a positive way.

SPAIN

UK  
FRANCE  
GERMANY  
ITALY  
SWISS  
PORTUGAL

Spain has resisted the financial hardships better than anticipated. Consumers are careful but confident, an attitude that keeps the footfall steady. Spain has made it to the end of 2022 with hopeful news. Forecasts point to 4.6% of GDP growth this year. The Spanish economy has weathered the crisis better than expected. It will actually lead the European growth charts next year. Nevertheless, there are uncertainties still looming. The threat of a global conflict, the possibility of another hard lockdown in China, and the persistent inflation, could tweak these figures.

It is no surprise that consumers are careful. There is increased interest in discounted products and promotions. However, sales have remained steady throughout the Autumn. The only issue has been the atypical warm weather that has lasted well into November. This impacted sales of warm clothes, traditionally the best-selling category in Autumn. Winter forecasts are optimistic. Snow resorts have good reservation figures. Winter sports enthusiasts tend to have more spending power than summer ones. If there is snow, there will be sales.

Snowboarding and skiing remain the most popular disciplines on the mountain. Splitboarding has slightly increased, but sales volume still falls far behind. "The sales ratio is around three splitboards for every 100 snowboards", explains Nicolas Ferrière from Viladomat in Andorra. The backcountry and safety knowledge required for the practice of splitboarding also limits the number of fans.

Schools have a lot of activity and that is good news for the sport. The number of kids learning to ride increases by the season. Some brands have acted on this trend, delivering gear for kids as young as 3 years old. Rules Snow Shop has their own school, Club Surfin'. They have an indoor facility with skatepark and trampolines to secure training on bad weather days and off-season. "The idea is to offer

MARKET INSIGHT

G3 Store was founded in 2008 out of a desire to share the passion for the ocean and the land that is Peniche, a city that breathes surfing, bodyboarding, fishing and diving. The store evolved from a surf shop to add a tattoo studio and a surf centre that includes a surf school and surf, bodyboard, SUP and skate rentals and also a surf camp. The main store has surfwear and skatewear by brands such as Volcom, Globe, Santa Cruz, Quiksilver, Billabong, among others. This business growth has only been possible mainly because the WSL's Championship Tour event arrived in Peniche in 2009, and since then an exponential growth in tourism. "Our main target turns out to be surfing as it is undoubtedly where we feel the greatest tourism outcome whether it's surf lessons, accommodation or rentals," said G3 Store owner, João Carinhas. But at this time of the year in November/December the seasonality effects are being felt in Peniche and the store had to adapt with a strategy. "Taking into account that the purchasing power in Portugal is not comparable with those who visit us, the strategy is to reduce investment this season by reinforcing it for the Spring/Summer collections," he explained.

As it happens in some other Portuguese stores the biggest issue is the lack of stock. For surf and skate products G3 Store has chosen to adapt to the "new normal". "One of our strategies is to manage stocks "on-the-go" purchasing products as we sell them in the store. However, the product price increase and reinforcing the idea that in these months we live a little more dependent on the national customers. We felt a sale drop around 15% compared to the same period last year," he said.

Despite the unpredictable situation due to the war in Europe and rising inflation, João is confident that 2023 will be a good year with growth opportunities. "Our biggest focus for this season and the ones to come will be to reinforce rentals because that segment in bikes, skateboards and surfboards has increased exponentially. As for skate and surf wear, the idea will be to reinforce the brands that have the best results in our store such as Volcom and Salty Crew," he finished.

NUNO PRINCIPE

kids action sports activities all year round", says Andrés Barroso.

Online sales, boosted during the pandemic, keep rising. Expert riders, who know exactly what they want, find it easy to shop online. For the not so expert, Viladomat provides an online service to offer advice about products. However, for highly technical product, brick and mortar remains very important.

Snow shops ended last season surprisingly low in stock. The overstock caused by resorts closure the year before made them order very limited amounts. When resorts re-opened, people flocked to the mountains and the shops. All their stock, old and new, was gone. This season it is not likely that shops will get all the stock they would like. Rising production and shipping costs have driven many brands to shrink their production. Raw material scarcity is extending production lead times, so pre-orders are made very early to secure timely deliveries. Gore Tex is an example." Everything that has Gore-Tex needs to be ordered really early", says Nicolas Ferrière. Trans-seasonality is a helpful practice that brands are practising more and retailers welcome. Making a product that lasts many seasons, keeping its margin, helps everyone, including the environment.

In this climate, the quality of the relationship between brand and retailer can make a difference. "Brands need to get more involved with retailers, beyond the purely commercial relationship", says Andres Barroso. He believes that marketing budgets should prioritise creating content with retailers and talented athletes. After all, they are the ones driving the growth of the sport. A lot of spending has gone to influencers that are more concerned by the number of followers than by the quality of the content. Nico Ferrière agrees with this. He thinks there should be more support to help the industry as a whole - consumers, shops, and brands - for the growth of the market. "Shops are important because they offer an experience to the client", says Nicolas. "Only specialised stores can surprise the clients with new brands and trends".

ROCIO ENRIQUEZ

EVENTS #115

	surf/kite	snow	street/outdoor	SUP
surf	SURF EXPO		Orlando, USA   4-6 Jan 23	surfexpo.com
snow	WINTER PRO		La Rosiere, France   8-10 Jan 23	actsnowboarding.com
snow	SLIDE & OTS		Telford, UK   10-12 Jan 23	slideotswinter.co.uk
snow	OUTDOOR RETAILER		Denver, USA   10-12 Jan 23	outdoorretailer.com
street	PITTI IMMAGINE UOMO		Florence, Italy   10-13 Jan 23	uomo.pittimagine
snow	KICKING HORSE		Golden BC, Canada   13-18 Jan 23	freerideworldtour.com
snow	PILL BASECAMP		Sestriere Italy   15-16 Jan 23	thepilloutdoor.com
snow	FUTURE TEST		Les Crosets. France   16 Jan 23	snowboardbox.ch
snow	INTERLUDE		Powder Mountain, Utah   16th-19th Jan 23	interludesnowshow.com
snow	LAAX OPEN HALFPIPE & SLOPESTYLE		Laax, Switzerland   17-21 Jan 23	open-laax.com
street	SEEK		Berlin, Germany   17-19 Jan 23	seek.fashion
snow	WHOS NEXT		Paris, France   21-23 Jan 23	whosnext.com
SUP	DÜSSELDORF BOAT SHOW 2023		Düsseldorf, Germany   21-29 Jan 23	boot.com
snow	SHOPS 1ST TRY		Alpbachtal, Austria   22-24 Jan 23	slideotswinter.co.uk
snow	SIGB SNOW TEST		La Clusaz, france   23-27 Jan 23	sigb.org.uk
snow	BAQUEIRA BERET		Baqueira Beret, Spain   28 Jan-2 Feb 23	freerideworldtour.com
surf	BILLABONG PRO PIPELINE		North Shore, Hawaii   29 Jan-10 Feb 23	worldsurfleague.com
snow	FUTURE TEST		Laax, Switzerland   29-30 Jan 23	snowboardbox.ch
snow	SPORT - ACHAT		Lyon, France   30 Jan - 1 Feb 23	sport-achat.com
kite	GKA FREESTYLE		Fuwairit, Qatar   31 Jan-01 Feb 23	gkakiteworldtour.com
snow	ORDINO ARCALIS		Ordino Arcalís, Andorra   4-9 Feb 23	freerideworldtour.com
kite	HURLEY PRO SUNSET BEACH		Sunset, Hawaii   12-23 Feb 23	worldsurfleague.com
kite	GKA FREESTYLE		Atlantico, Columbia   21-5 Mar 23	gkakiteworldtour.com
surf	MEO RIPCURL PORTUGAL PRO		Peniche, Portugal   8-16 Mar 23	worldsurfleague.com
snow	FIEBERBRUNN		Fieberbrunn, Austria   11-17 Mar 23	freerideworldtour.com
kite	GKA SURF		Sal, Cape Verde   17-25 Mar 23	gkakiteworldtour.com
snow	XTREME VERBIER		Verbier Switzerland   25 Mar-2 Apr 23	freerideworldtour.com
kite	GKA BIG AIR		Barcares, France   1-30 Apr 23	gkakiteworldtour.com
surf	RIP CURL PRO BELLS BEACH		Victoria, Australia   4-14 Apr 23	worldsurfleague.com
surf	MARGARET RIVER PRO		Margaret River, WA   20-30 Apr 23	worldsurfleague.com
kite	GKA BIG AIR		Tarifa, Spain   21 May-11 Jun 23	gkakiteworldtour.com
surf	SURF RANCH PRO		California, USA   27-28 May 23	worldsurfleague.com
outdoor	OUTDOOR BY ISPO		Munich, Germany   4-6 Jun 23	ispo.com/en/outdoor
skate	NASS FESTIVAL		Shepton Mallet, UK   6-9 Jun 23	nassfestival.com
surf	SURF CITY EL SALVADOR PRO		El Salvador   9-18 Jun 23	worldsurfleague.com
outdoor	OTS		Exhibition Centre, Liverpool   13-15 Jun 23	outdoortradeshow.com
street	PITTI UOMO		Florence, Italy   14-17 Jun 23	pittimagine.com
surf	RIO PRO		Rio, Brazil   23 Jun-1 Jul 23	worldsurfleague.com
kite	GKA HYDOFOIL FREESTYLE		Crossroads, Maldives   23-30 Jun 23	gkakiteworldtour.com
surf	MYSTIC SK8 CUP		Prague , Czech Republic   30 Jun-2 Jul 23	mystick8cup.cz
surf	CORONA OPEN J-BAY		J-Bay, South Africa   13-22 Jul 23	worldsurfleague.com





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The Eyewear Company

**Red Bull**  
**SPECT**  
EYEWEAR

**Distributor (UK)**  
UK

MPG GmbH, with its registered office in Graz/Austria and international branch offices, has been committed to the design, production and distribution of optical goods for precisely 70 years now. Although the group has gained an international reputation, serving a wide range of business areas, it is still in a position to act in a fully independent and flexible manner.

As a growing company, MPG is constantly looking for reinforcements. We are always searching for new partners that will help to foster the growth of the group. Red Bull SPECT Eyewear is a 10-year license between MPG and Red Bull, one of the most famous global brands recognized for its strong presence in action sports.

After several years, managing the UK market directly with our agents, we have decided to reorganize ourselves by searching for a distributor, in order to take our distribution in UK to the next level.

**YOUR COMPANY**

- is based in UK
- has an experienced sales team, with strong connections to the on- and offline sporting goods channel
- has a local warehouse to stock our products and deliver directly to clients
- will invest in marketing to promote the brand across the territory
- has a B2B website and a customer service to ensure operational excellence

**WHAT WE OFFER**


- a well-balanced range of sunglasses and goggles
- products featuring one of the most recognized brand logos in the world
- a very strong equation between image, price and quality
- a solid trade term model to ensure a sustainable go-to-market approach
- access to the world of Red Bull

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**Nicolas Melin**  
[nicolas.melin@mpg-eyewear.com](mailto:nicolas.melin@mpg-eyewear.com)

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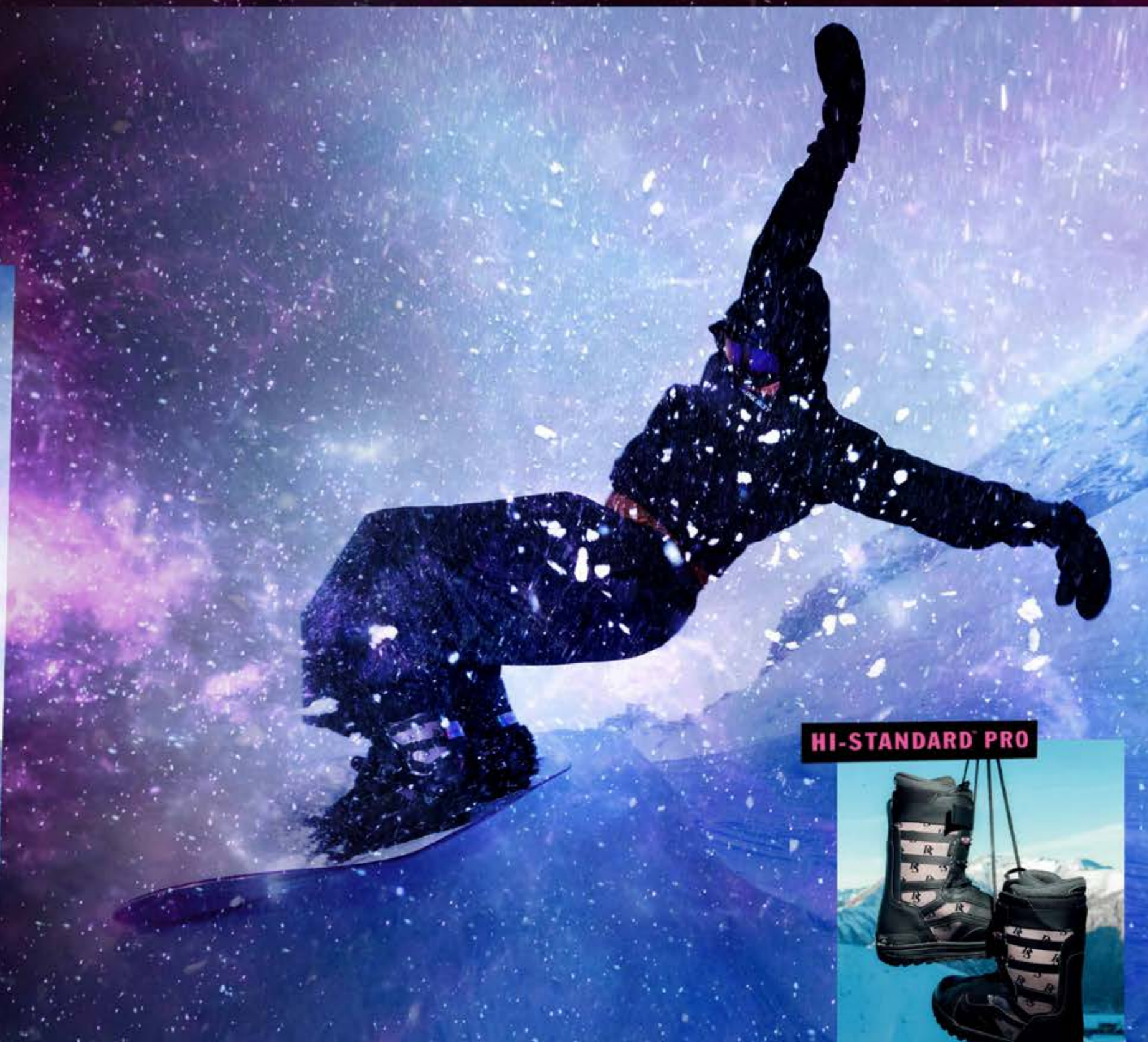
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