



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDES 2023
SPLITBOARD HARDWEAR, SNOWBOARD BOOTS,
SNOWBOARD BINDINGS, SNOW GOGGLES,
TECHNICAL SNOW PACKS

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TEN BRAND PROFILES AND MARKET INTELLIGENCE

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Winter is almost upon us, as we leave a summer behind the industry will be only too pleased to forget. Never mind the issues specific to our industry, the general economic picture continues to create turmoil in the business environment which for decades had been benevolently predictable. The tail winds of covid, followed by a ramp up of inflation from historic lows, a war in Ukraine and now the Gaza/ Israel conflict all on top of continued global warming and the emergence of AI. Whoever can figure their way through this spaghetti junction without any hiccups will be a god! The fact is we are at a level of instability that most of us have not experienced before. So given this general economic uncertainty we can expect a cautious consumer, but at least they are still out there practicing the sports they love and buying product.

But it has all become a tale of two seasons, all the summer hardgoods categories which did well in covid are now in a very difficult situation

whilst those winter hardgoods that did badly in covid are now in a relatively good situation.

After all this negative general economic news lets start with the winter where the business in Europe is feeling more positive. Even though last winter was not the best by any means snowboard hardgoods sold well and with minimal stocks following the covid hiatus, shelves across Europe were pretty empty by the end of the season. For the 2023/24 prebook the figures were almost exactly the same as the year before, so yet again the industry was conservative with its ordering, with little to no surplus bought in. This has enabled the winter hardgoods industry in general to be in the most robust health that it has been in for many years. Obviously this could quickly turn around if the snow is late or patchy this season but the industry itself has done all it can to ensure its on a good financial footing.

This is all in contrast with summer where a combination of factors have created markets with masses of oversupply and the heaviest discounting anyone can remember. Right now its all about survival thorough the winter for most summer hardgoods businesses. Cashflow is the big problem for many brands, distributors and particularly retailers, as they struggle to stay afloat through their quiet season. The strength

of next spring/summer business is open to debate some are talking of light at the end of the tunnel whilst others believe next autumn will be the first return to normal business. For soft goods the summer was kinder even if the season was shorter, with both skate and surf apparel selling better than expected. Likewise product categories associated with travel such as backpacks, luggage, board bags and sunglasses all had a good summer season as the post covid travel bug continued.

So welcome to our first winter issue where we look at what's new out there next winter in the binding, boot, splitboard, goggle and technical backpack markets. Our bigwig interview is superstar Gigi Rûf with his off the wall attitude to life and business, now here's man whose been around long enough to have seen it all. With all this unpredictability around new opportunities are continuously to be found, just ask our ten brand profiles in this issue. Last but not least our last minute market intelligence news is the early signs are winter hardgoods sales are going well so looks like another Christmas of good cheer

**Long live going Sideways,
Clive Ripley
Guru**

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On the cover. Rider: Bruno Rivoire Vans EMEA Snow Team Manager
Photographer: Thibault "Titi" Viard

FLOW BINDINGS HAVE A NEW HOME.

Nidecker's cutting edge binding collection just got even better with the inclusion of Flow Design. The original reclining hiback system sits alongside our classic Two-Strap line and the groundbreaking Supermatic to offer riders the ultimate choice. Whether you want the precise feel of manual buckles, the unique flip' n' rip experience of Flow or a fully automatic binding that lets you shred right off the lift, we got you covered.

NEWS

#118

Authentic closes its acquisition of Boardriders brands

Authentic Brands Group fully acquired street and actions sports-lifestyle brands Roxy, Quiksilver, Billabong, RVCA, Element, VonZipper, DC Shoes, Honolua and Boardriders.

This seismic shakeup of this group of brands will have effects across the industry as Authentic deploys its proven playbook of brand development and value creation. Authentic is also quickly expected to announce a roster of best-in-class partners around the world to help drive the brands on their next stage of growth. With this acquisition, Authentic's annual retail sales are now \$29 billion globally. In boardsports, the American group already owns Volcom, Airwalk and Vision Streetwear brands.

How this will play out in EMEA remains to be seen. In the USA the licensing model is being rolled out, but in Europe what happens to the brands needs to be sorted by next summer. For now various parties are examining the opportunity to acquire all of boardriders in Europe as a single operation.

Db is now B corp certified

Premium outdoor travel brand Db has announced its certification as a B Corporation (or B Corp) and is now joining a growing group of companies reinventing business by pursuing purpose as well as profit by applying rigorous social and environmental standards which represent commitment to goals outside of shareholder profit. It includes the five key impact areas of Governance, Workers, Community, Environment and Customers. The certification process is meticulous and Db achieved a 98.1 score, compared to a minimum requirement of 80.

Bataleon hits 20

Bataleon Snowboards celebrated its 20th anniversary with a birthday bash in its home town at the Skatepark NOORD followed by an after party at the Skate Café. The venue was transformed into a captivating event space, featuring a retrospective exhibition spanning 20 years of iconic Bataleon boards, revolutionary 3D snowboard technology, artist collaborations, and a visual journey through the brand's marketing evolution via photos, videos and projections.

VF reports second quarter fiscal 2024 results and the launch of Reinvent

VF Corporation has reported second quarter fiscal 2024 results and the launch of Reinvent, a comprehensive transformational program. EMEA revenue was up 14% reflecting growth across all channels, but Vans saw significant sales declines in North America. Quarterly per share dividend of \$0.09 is a 70% decrease from the previous quarters dividend and as the company implements the initiatives associated with Project Reinvent, it is withdrawing its FY24 revenue and earnings outlook and updated its FY24 free cash flow guidance.

EssilorLuxottica publish Q3 results

EssilorLuxottica has announced consolidated revenue for the third quarter of 2023 totalling 6,294 million Euro, a year-on year increase of 5.2% compared to the third quarter of 2022. Highlights included Group revenue up 5.2% in Q3, North America in line with the second quarter which is supported by optical. EMEA is strong, driven by Professional Solutions and optical retail and Ray-Ban launched Meta, the next generation of smart glasses.

Trade Art Distribution GmbH to distribute Oxbow in Austria and Germany

Oxbow has appointed Trade Art Distribution GmbH as their distributor for Germany & Austria. Jens Hennefarth, Head of Marketing at Trade Art Distribution GmbH commented; "We are really excited and proud to welcome Oxbow to our brand portfolio. The structure and setup of the brand is amazing and the philosophy fits perfectly to ours. A historical, authentic and European brand like Oxbow needs to be established in the German-speaking market. That's our goal and we trust a 100% in a

successful partnership." Trade Art currently distributes Volcom, Electric, Dakine Captain Fin, Kaotiko and And Feelings and has showrooms in Berlin, Stuttgart, Cologne. For Austria they have showrooms in Salzburg and Fernitz which run under the flag of Reecom Trade GmbH.

Borealis moves to GP87

Borealis has moved 100% of their production to GP87, the premium American-owned snowboard factory and teamed-up with the owner Dan Agundes, who has 30 plus years of board design and crafting experience. This has allowed them to reshape most of their existing models. The result is superior quality, durability and performance throughout the line. And their guarantee is extended to an industry-leading 4 years.

Polartec launches new brand ethos

Polartec has unveiled its new brand ethos, which will be integrated into all aspects of the brand's communication. The positioning statement "Made To Go Beyond" represents an evolution of the brand and will form a base for Polartec's future communications; resonating with changing consumer preferences and market trends.

HDry and Burton Snowboards announce new partnership

HDry and Burton Snowboards have announced a new partnership focused on the expansion and evolution of HDry's direct 3D membrane lamination technology - the most advanced technology for waterproofing outdoor products. The initial partnership will focus on research and development efforts within an undisclosed product assortment.

Bell Brand Launch and store opening

The team from Euroglass, a market leader in crafting surfboards and surf accessories in Europe and Australia have launched a new brand BELL, which was celebrated with the opening of the Bell Store, a 400m2 space at 80 Chemin du branain Benesse-Marem. Far more than your usual store, it's an innovative community space for daily lunch breaks, educational workshops, as well as showcasing top-tier products. The store will feature Europe's widest range of surfboards, including key models from world leading brands. At the same time they have announced a brand new factory is in the works, complete with a captivating view of the shaping room through the shop. BELL will inspire surfers and water sports enthusiasts with a range of premium products designed to help them make their next move. Founder Stephen Bell aka Belly is also the owner of the iconic Euroglass factory in Hossegor in 1990.

POC appoint Derek Bouchard-Hall CEO

Experienced CEO and cycling industry leader Derek Bouchard-Hall has been appointed as POC Chief Executive Officer (CEO). Derek who had a successful professional cycling career followed by nearly 20 years in the sports and outdoor industry, said; "I feel very privileged and proud to join the POC team. POC is an iconic brand that is rightly held up as a benchmark in innovation and safety."

Unify Brand Partnerships named UK distributor of Colourwear

Sport-lifestyle brand Colourwear has teamed up with leading UK distributor Unify Brand Partnerships to build upon its presence in the active and outdoor UK markets. Colourwear is a youthful lifestyle brand, started by three snowboard and freeski enthusiasts from Gothenburg, Sweden. With marketing, design, and distribution backgrounds across various global brands in the action sports scene, the dynamic trio Fredrik Abrahamson, Thor Kruse and Johan Ulbro pressed the start button. Today, Colourwear is a fun-loving and practical lifestyle brand driven by community and street influences, rooted in freeride and board culture.

Bolle Brands has announced new distribution partnership for sport and optic products in the uk

Bolle has appointed the AMG Group as the official distributor for all their sports products in the UK. Simultaneously, The Eyewear Company will take on the role of official distributor for both Bollé and Serengeti optical products. These carefully considered partnerships mark a pivotal step towards enhancing channel specialisation and optimising local warehousing for an improved customer journey. Existing open orders will be seamlessly transferred to the new distribution partners, ensuring that negotiated terms and prices remain unchanged.



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TRADE EVENTS

PREVIEWS

ISPO

**MUNICH, GERMANY
NOV 28-30, 2023**

Last year after a two-year break, ISPO the big daddy of the world's winter sports shows was back with over 1500 exhibitors from 55 countries and 40,000 trade visitors. 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 for German retailers this was their first show since the last ISPO in early 2020. The biggest change last year was that the show moved two months earlier to fit in with the change in product production schedules and ordering patterns, for 2023 these earlier dates are maintained. 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.

For 2023 41% more exhibitors have booked to exhibit in the 11 halls and more than 50,000 visitors are expected. 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, all under the umbrella of this year's slogan "New Perspectives on Sports"

Many of the halls are organised around providing specific knowledge categories. For any company operating in the sports field these knowledge hubs are key to their future success. This

WINTERPRO

**LA ROSIERE, FRANCE
JAN 7-9, 2024**

WinterPro returns to La Rosiere for its third edition. The La Rosiere resort located in the middle of Haute-Tarentaise, just above Bourg Saint Maurice has a great snow record and 2,000m vertical drop (850m - 2850m). Last years event saw snow falling throughout the first two days, followed by a sun on the final day, ensuring perfect test conditions.

Winterpro will again be the first European on snow demo of the year, with shops visiting to test brand's 2024/25 range of snowboard products for the first time. Last year 55 brands exhibited, 212 shops visited and 2211 tests were made compared to the year before when 45 brands exhibited, 133 shops visited and 1623 tests were made. These significant increases with shops up 59% and tests up 36% demonstrate the event has really established itself as a key b2b event in the winter calendar.

WinterPro will be based like last year on three sites right next to the slopes. The 700 sq metre test village containing all the exhibiting hardgoods brands is located in front of the departure point of the Roches Noires chairlift, 30m from the car park. Next to this, the 200 sq metre Salle Jean Arpin reception hall open from 7.30am to 7pm, will be occupied by exhibiting accessory and textile brands and will also be the

year's centerpiece is once again the Future Lab, a curated area with a focus on innovations, megatrends, digital transformation, and connectivity.

Visitors to Hall B1 will find six themed areas focused on innovations and the transformation of the sports industry: in the Brandnew Area, start-ups and up-and-coming brands will present themselves. The winners of the prestigious ISPO Awards will also be exhibit here. In the interactive showrooms of the Digitize Hub, the focus is on the latest trends in retail technology, and in the Innovation Lab, visitors will experience visionary solutions with the potential to change the sports sector for good. In addition, Zeitgeistz, a platform for urban, streetwear and sports fashion, will make its debut as part of the Future Lab.

Following its successful launch last year, the Future Lab Mainstage will now accommodate up to 500 visitors and the the conference program with interactive and inspiring key notes, interviews and workshops is like a whoe's who of the international sports industry. ISPO Munich is the place, where the industry meets and finds solutions, trends and inspiration. So action sports retailers, no matter what their specialization, should make the trip to Munich to keep themselves at the forefront of market and technical developments.

ISPO.COM

location of the early evenings activities. The test village will be open from 8am to 4pm everyday with the Roches Brunes chairlift exclusively for WinterPro participants for the first hour of each day. And on top of the resort's terrain there will be a freestyle area built between the Antigal restaurant and the snow front (table, hip, rail, etc.). New this year is the midday meal on demand at the village test location so no need to leave the test village to rebuild your energy reserves.

The plan for each evening's entertainment this year is as follows: Before the event begins on Saturday evening a welcome aperitif by La Rosière resort at le Boréal restaurant and then DJ's, on Sunday free beers supplied by Volcom during a video screening and DJ set and on Monday night free beers thanks to Vans and a Nitro Film screening. During each evening awards will be presented for the Best tester and for the top 3 tested brands

There are regular shuttle buses between La Rosiere and the Bourg Saint Maurice station which is served by the TGV High Speed Trains direct to Paris, Marseille and Geneva. Nearest airports are Chambéry, Lyons, Grenoble and Geneva. Looking forward to seeing you there for the snowboard trade season opener

ACTSNOWBOARDING.COM

TRADE EVENTS

PREVIEWS

SLIDE/OTS

TELFORD, UK
JAN 9-11, 2024

Slide is the one opportunity for UK retailers to see so many brands under one roof, making it the key event in the UK snow industry calendar and a must visit decision for all UK winter sports retailers. Last years show was its biggest edition since it moved there in 2011, with the organisers reporting an increase of 12.3% in overall visitor attendance when compared to the year before. This reflected the enhanced appeal of the show to both traditional snow sports buyers and newer visitors from the outdoor sector since the decision to combine Slide with OTS, as well as the benefits of moving the event forward in the calendar to closer match order deadlines.

So far over 100 companies have signed up for stands and at time of going to press there was still limited space available for any last-minute interest from brands. Last year 561 visitors came to the show of those 65% were MDs, owners or buyers. Slide remains very much an order writing show, with brands and retailers holding back to back meetings. With such a good balance of brands and suppliers across both snow and outdoor the show continues to be a very efficient use of buyer's time.

SHOPS 1ST TRY

ALPBACH, AUSTRIA
JAN 21-23, 2024

After a 2-year covid enforced break Shops 1st Try returned last year stronger than ever, so expect this years show to yet again be a who's who of the Snowboarding industry. The test village at the PöglbahnParking area in Inneralpbach, at the bottom of the main SkiJuwel lifts, will like last year be expanded with additional exhibitors in the car park on the other side of the bridge. With the registration entrance to the village remaining in the same location, the test village opens Sunday, Monday and Tuesday starting at 7.45am for registration and wraps 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 76 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.

Last year retailers made a total of 6555 tests with the event attracting retailers from all over Europe. Of the 248 participating shops 101 were German and 50 where Austrian with good contingents from Poland, Italy, UK, Netherlands and Switzerland.

New brands to the event this year at time of going to press include Autumn, Reichmann, Rojo, ABS, Clover Protection, Boomtag, Goview, MDX One, Milo, Nomadik, Shred Sleds and Snow Wall

The Networking Drinks will take place at the end of the first day of the show, from 5 to 7pm and the SIGB Annual General Meeting on Wednesday evening will see the winners of the Slide & OTS Awards announced. The Slide & OTS Awards recognise the most talked-about products at the show, with the winners in each of the 6 categories: Outdoor Hardware, Software, Snowsport Hardware, Accessories, Fresh Brand and Eco all on display with the other finalists in a dedicated area for the duration of the show.

With visitor registration having opened on 25th October, Visitors are reminded that everyone will need to register to gain entry to the show which is free to attend for all visitors.

Telford is well served by the road and rail network. A free shuttle from the train station to the exhibition centre helps make the trip a seamless one and car drivers are offered free parking. On-site hotels offer reduced rates for visitors meaning you can easily walk from hotel to show and back. Doors open at 9am and close at 7pm on the first two days and close at 4pm on the final day. So make sure to get to Telford to hook up with all your winter sports brands, see you there.

SLIDEOTSWINTER.CO.UK

As usual there's a packed evening schedule. Proceedings kick off on the first night with Shops 1ST Try Industry Welcome Dinner at the Hotel Alphof, which is open to all exhibitors after a hard day of stand building. For the next two nights it's the Highlight Exhibition Dinners at the congress Centrum Alpbach. 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. During the evening the Retailers Choice Board Design award by BoardSportSource will be voted on and we look forward to this year's Book-o-rama, the bookstore organized by Tassilo Hager of Curator, that will again present the best of snowboard literature. On hand as always will be the 'Shred Buddies' (Pros, Ams and ambassadors) to ride with you, offer their views on the products being tested and too keep you well entertained.

Closest airports are Innsbruck followed by Munich or take a train to Brixlegg and then catch a taxi up the hill to Alpbach. 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 so book your flights or trains or organise car share rides with Go-Shred. For registration shops must first create an account on Shops 1st Base and then register for Shops 1st Try. So See you out testing or in the exhibition dinner! At Europe's biggest on snow test event.

SHOPS-1ST-TRY.COM



Rene
Rene-Gade 156
Cleaver FullWrap Binding
Photo: Tatu Toivanen

Rinne kangas.

ALL WAYS DOWN

Get into it



Bataleon™

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

SNOWBOARD BOOTS 24/25

It's the time of the year when you put those shred boots on again after months of being barefoot and free. They may go on easily . . . or feel awkward and uncomfortable, which is exactly what you don't want your customers to experience. Instead, let's give them the best of the best. Do you want to get closer to the perfect fit and flex? Are you ready to dive into what could be the most advanced snowboard boots season of all time? Let's glance into the crystal ball and see what's on tap. Ladies and gents, this is next winter's Snowboard Boots 24/25 Retail Buyer's Guide, brought to you by **Matthieu Perez**.



HOT STUFF

Newcomers are always welcome in the field and when it is a legit brand that's two-decades-old, such as Bataleon, bring it on! Rubby Kiebert, sales director is dropping: "It appears that the current snowboard market is ready for a fresh boot brand, and that's precisely what we're bringing to the table". He adds, "We will have sufficient boots for all Bataleon dealers to participate in our upcoming boot launch season. This initiative reflects the culmination of our efforts over the past few years. We have actively pivoted our strategies to accommodate this venture, emphasizing effective coordination between manufacturing, sourcing, and logistics". Adventure ahead!

Burton reports that it's continuing to push the envelope and heavily promote its Step On® system.

The focus at DC—whether for apparel or boots—is comfort, technical innovation, proprietary designs, and fresh collabs. As an example, look at this season's Andy Warhol capsule collection, which includes boots and outerwear. The brand is also continuing its partnership with Burton for the Step On® system.

At Deeluxe, the snowboard boot specialist, the up-and-coming ATV Pack can be seen as its own collection-in-the-collection. This lineup of boots will consist of three different unisex highlight boots with different lacing ways and different flex rates, but they all share the

"[The snowboard] market is not increasing, but for Northwave, which started in 1991 as a snowboard boot specialist brand, there are great opportunities to gain market share. This is why we just renewed half of the boot collection" **Davide Smania, Northwave**

same idea and color story. Flo Heim, marketing manager explains, "Our idea here was to create a pack of boots that perfectly work in any terrain. They all come in an outdoor-inspired team-highlight colorway with special logo prints on it. They all feature the Quantum sole – our next level all terrain sole and will come in a special ATV boot box. And last but not least - they all will be made with RISE by Bloom, which replaces a significant portion of the traditional EVA required for footwear foam".

Northwave is developing a new generation of boots. This is due, in part, to the new product team the brand hired less than a year ago. Product & Marketing Manager, Davide Smania shows us the ropes: "[The snowboard] market is not increasing, but for Northwave, which started in 1991 as a snowboard boot specialist brand, there are great opportunities to gain market share. This is why we just renewed half of the boot collection".

One area Vans is excited about is the Hybrid system (Boa and Lace). Vans will have an all new Infuse SnowSurf model for the 24/25 season. This new boot allows for the flexibility of the two lacing system design but with on-the-fly adjustment. The design team was inspired by the free flow and pure expression of Japanese riders in the mountains of Hokkaido, bringing the fun and joy that happens on a board no matter the conditions. Christopher Reed, global product director explains, "The Infuse SnowSurf was designed to expand the use cases with the successful Infuse model. The Infuse SnowSurf has an oversized PleasureCuff™ (with hook and loop strap for extra adjustment), which helps increase the boot's range of motion. With its asymmetrical flex pattern, the boot ensures fluid edge to edge transfer and enhanced mobility. This new boot is all about having just the right amount of mobility and freedom of movement, no matter the terrain or conditions. And with The North Face Flashdry boot liner, you can stay out for one more run". Thirty Two announces a Volcom Collaboration on a complete line. More as the story develops.

Head is traditionally strong in boots with mid to entry-level price points. Yet in the last two years, the brand has experienced a shift towards upper price points—in all categories. Therefore, it has extended the line and developed new boots with new technologies and features serving this target group. Katharina Acham, operative marketing manager explains, "We are introducing our most sustainable snowboard boot yet—the Team BOA Hybrid Liquid Fit. With this boot, we launch a snowboard boot for riders who demand the most, and that contributes to more sustainability by using natural and recycled materials in the production". These boots embody the brand's full commitment to its Rethink program, through which the brand addresses sustainability in every decision it is taking and keeps working to improve year after year.

Rome's current strategy is maintaining its existing collection while expanding its 'Pro Collection,' offering and reshaping key models. Matt Stillman observes, "We have seen strong growth with our boot



ROME

"We're stoked to introduce our new KPU construction on the Rift APX. It's a brand new shell construction that's never been seen in the market before and brings durability, simplicity, and consistent flex. We basically replaced the 3-4 parts in the lower section of the shell with just one injected piece of material." Julien Lefrançois, Nidecker

collection since restructuring into the family layout, and for the 24/25 we are expanding those collections with key 'Pro' offerings to add new energy into the higher-end performance side of things".

WHAT'S INSIDE THE BOX

In its first and brand new collection, Bataleon has incorporated premium components sourced from Vibram, Boa, and Thinsulate into the boot line. This addition is complemented by the same intelligent and aesthetically appealing design that has become synonymous with its boards and bindings. Bataleon's creative director, Danny Kiebert, has infused his distinctive flair, familiar to all Bataleon enthusiasts. According to Rubby Kiebert, "Anticipate a vibrant, playful boot collection, inspired by sneakers, setting itself apart from the multitude of black boots currently saturating the store displays". Hot stuff part two.

Nidecker Product Manager Julien Lefrançois claims, "We're stoked to introduce our new KPU construction on the Rift APX. It's a brand new shell construction that's never been seen in the market before and brings durability, simplicity, and consistent flex. We basically replaced the 3-4 parts in the lower section of the shell with just one injected piece of material". At the top of the boot line, Nidecker is also launching an upgraded Index, its freeride workhorse. It still features a protective Storm Cover, but for 24/25, it's made from a super strong engineered knit which wraps the outer and shelters your feet from any snow that collects on top of the boot. It's also paired with a feature called Custom Calf, which allows you to fine-tune the shape of the top of the boot for narrower or wider calves. Lefrançois exults, "In short, this unique platform has shot to popularity and this new iteration of Index is incredibly exciting".

According to DC Marketing Lead Emmanuel Labadie, the brand has been hard at work refining and developing its boot collection. Liners have been updated and improved, through the use of Primaloft insulation and the development of a 360° power strap that improves 360° internal support, stiffness, and fit. DC has also incorporated heat mouldable eva foam that moulds to your foot for a personalized fit. Expect heritage designs and new packaging to further amplify things. And finally, DC will roll out some eco-conscious actions with Algae-based insoles and recycled fabrics and insulations. Thirty Two keeps things exciting as well with new design improvements including a brand new toe-box one piece on most of the models. Entry line models got upgraded with gum outsoles and the upper range with Michelin outsoles.

In 2022, Deeluxe became the first brand to introduce a snowboard boot that was made with Rise by Bloom. Rise is a bio-based foam derived from algae harvested from compromised ecosystems. This approach leverages algae's ability to sequester carbon while helping clean water and restore aquatic habitats. To take this to the next level, the brand will have several models that are made with Rise by bloom in the 24/25 line.

K2 is using sugarcane EVA within its line to start incorporating more eco-friendly materials. Nico Steidle, snowboard marketing coordinator, explains, "The Orton, one of our strongest boots in the line, experienced a total makeover. The Rubber Lower Construction is a single formed piece of rubber that eliminates all stitching from the lower portion of the boot. This provides increased durability and extended life to the boot. A lace cover with a snow gaiter clip adds protection from snow and water". K2 also added wide boots to both its male and female collections. These wider offerings will be available in the Maysis and the Hanford models for men and the Trance model for women.

northwave

DECADE

A NEW ERA FOR THE ICONIC DECADE



LIGHTER

IMPROVED COMFORT

MORE REACTIVE

FASTER

FOR ALL TERRAINS
FOR ALL RIDERS

Shop 1st Try
21-22-23 Jan 2024
Alpbach, Aut

The Pill Base Camp
22-23 Jan 2024 Sestriere, It
29-30 Jan 2024 Folgaria, It

#RIDEYOURWAY

Stillman at Rome tours, "For 24/25 our boot collection has some subtle but impressive material and tech improvements. Perhaps the most innovative is our new DuraFuse shell material". This innovative welded TPU material is used on boots' outer shells for advanced waterproofing and abrasion resistance. It also increases the boot's overall structure. He continues, "We also went back to the drawing board and completely redesigned our HeelLock Harness system. The system is built into the boot's shell for a more locked-in feel and easier removal of the liner itself for drying". Rome will also be offering the HeelLock Pro Harness, which uses the same design but is made out of the robust DuraFuse material for additional stability and a locked-in feel. Rome will also debut its HotBox Foil next season. Found in higher-end boot models, it's an innovative, heat-retaining foil built between the boot's shell and midsole to keep riders' feet warm without adding any weight or bulk.

Head keeps capitalizing on its proprietary boot fitting system, Liquid Fit. Katharina Acahm explains, "It provides the most precise and quickest customization by using a 100% flexible, paraffin-based material that can be injected in Liquid Fit-ready liners. The Liquid Fit material then automatically adjusts to the individual foot shape, focusing on the most critical areas of the foot: the ankle and the heel section. This increases precision, performance, comfort, and heel hold. Liquid Fit material can also be added and extracted from the liner multiple times, according to the individual demands."

Nitro continues to push the Ultimate Fit concept with snowboard boots built from the inside out: softer, thermo-mouldable yet fully constructed liners are supported by various internal lacing systems all the way to the shell, providing the perfect balance of comfort and response. This multi-level construction also allows the brand to fine tune each boot model to the target rider's response profile. Nasa tech for your feet. Nitro Founder Tommy Delago also proudly notes that "After 7 years of development and extensive testing, Nitro presents the new TLS PowerCord lacing system. It provides more precise adjustment through minimal lace set, reduced risk of accidental unlocking, as well as superior holding force".

DEDICATION ÜBER ALLES

Every brand in the industry is doing its bit, innovating, monitoring, adapting, supporting and evolving.

Rossignol partnered with its Italian ski boot design center, which has over 50 years of experience, to develop a completely new rental boot program for 23/24. This program combines the precision fit of a ski-boot-inspired liner mixed with the comfort and style of a snowboard boot shell. "We will carry it over to 24/25 and make it shine", claims Snowboard Category Manager Arnaud Repa.

"After 7 years of development and extensive testing, Nitro presents the new TLS PowerCord lacing system. It provides more precise adjustment through minimal lace set, reduced risk of accidental unlocking, as well as superior holding force" Tommy Delago, Nitro

Northwave moved the production to one big supplier, which was already working for its bike shoe division. This allowed the brand to move its production from China and avoid the related import duties. Thanks to this new development, the brand improved its cost management to keep expenses under control and find technical solutions to reduce labor costs. For example, by using new injected components instead of several layers of materials, the brand is able to better manage expenses and create a boot that is better performing and longer lasting. One stone, two birds.

According to Steidle at K2, the brand sees many opportunities on the horizon: "There are emerging markets like China, which is just starting to develop a snowboard culture. While the male market in Europe is a predatory [i.e. extremely competitive] market, the



market on the female side is largely unexplored and has a lot of growing potential. At K2 we have products for all levels and genders, we just need to tell the right people about it".

At Vans, Reed emphasizes pricepoints: "The current pricing mentality has not changed at Vans. We sit within the boot market nicely. Vans provides amazing design, details, and performance features at a competitive price, so no matter what closure system you prefer or level of riding you are at, Vans has a boot for you at a great price (without skimping on features to achieve that price)".

For Deeluxe, it's important to have a deep production collection. The brand is constantly striving to build the best boots in the game for every terrain and every riding level. For the Austrian company, this means investing heavily in all parts of the range and striving to develop the best solutions for every boot and rider. All in.

Talking about terrain and style, Nitro is bringing the Daily Pow Surfing Boot to the market. According to Delago, "After the success of the Nitro x Konvoi Surfer, we also felt it was time to bring our boot knowhow and fit to pow surfing. The Daily boot features a specifically designed soft compound sole for maximum board feel and a naturally flexing construction. The Re/Lace system closes the boot in seconds and is protected by a zippered gusset".

Flux has been providing exceptional snowboard bindings since 1992 and debuted a collection of boots several years ago. Big Boss Kyosuke Ogata explains, "We changed our logo in the 23/24 season and the 24/25 season is the key year to settle into our new logo in the market. Flux will return to the origin of manufacturing and pursue the fun of snowboarding".

Often overlooked yet essential, snowboard boots are the foundation of a good day on the snow. Luckily, brands are unleashing their strongest collections yet—and the future looks especially bright. Step in, lace up, test 'em out, and spread the word! ☺

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

- 1 Dedicated product
- 2 Nasa construction
- 3 Dampening
- 4 Fitting liners
- 5 Bataleon new player

EVERY
MOUNTAIN
EVERYFACE



Photo : @Keegan Rice



rossignol.com

Kemper
SNOWBOARDS

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RETAILER PROFILE POWSTORE, KEMPTEN

VANS
"OFF THE WALL"

German retailer Powstore started life as an online business but now has a bricks and mortar location to connect with the local scene. We speak with Lars Wieters (Managing Director) and Peter Tadych (Founder and Owner) to talk business.

Can you give us a brief history of Powstore.

Where and how did it all begin?

(PT) Powstore was founded from an idea in 2010. In the circle of friends who were snowboarders, the topic was how I can make snowboarding easier for beginners and how can I achieve learning progress for others. The idea was simple: How can I find the board that best suits each snowboarder without spending days testing a board on the mountain. For most people, extensive testing before purchasing a snowboard is impossible. That's why I started to make a list that included almost all brands and snowboards. A short time later, I transferred this to snowboard bindings. This is the core, a database that is constantly being expanded with experience, specifications and extensive testing.

Having been a successful online shop you guys have bucked the recent trend of closing stores and opened a new flagship bricks and mortar shop in Allgäu, what was behind this decision and are there plans to open further stores?

(PT) Every snowboarder should have the opportunity to use the knowledge and service of Powstore. That is also a big part of our success. Everyone on the Powstore team is an experienced snowboarder and is concerned with materials, technology, sustainability and progress

How do you differentiate your shop from other retail stores?

(LW) The concept is clear: From Snowboarders for snowboarders! We are a shop with a clear focus on snowboarding. Whether it is purchase advice regarding your new snowboard setup, with us going through the depths of our huge snowboard portfolio, a relaxed talk about the scene with a beer or a coffee or adjusting your gear to the best of your expectations we try to make you feel at home. Our concept is more the one of a showroom, where you will spend time and get new knowledge about your beloved hobby and breath in the feeling of snowboarding. Like a clubhouse where you meet your friends to argue about whose got the nicest design or best new technology. We are going to establish this place as a fixed point in the local snowboard scene.

We want everyone to come in without the necessity of purchasing something and later go out with a great experience and a smile in their faces.

What do you think brands could do differently when working with stores like yours?

(PT) Powstore is not just about simply selling products. It's by snowboarders for snowboarders with everything that goes with it. It is the home of the snowboarder. This statement implies understanding for our business partners.

You have a team of in-house riders that test all the equipment you sell, who are these riders, and do you guys support the local snowboard scene in anyway?

(LW) Our team is split up all over the Alps. We have some riders from Munich, all over Germany, Switzerland and the Dolomites in Italy. This huge portfolio also allows our riders to always be there where the snow is. We represent all the different facets of snowboarding like freeride, freestyle, snowboard teachers, girls who really smash the mountain and old lads who are well connected in snowboarding. As much as we want to bring the scene together in our local shop we want to represent all areas of snowboarding through our team. We have professional park riders who can triple cork, and the most technical freeriders who are well attuned with their splitboards. But we care about everyday riders too, so we have a lot of influencers in our team who ride stylish and with the love for the sport down the mountain and give our customers a good feeling by being represented in our shop. Thanks to the new location we also are in contact with a couple of guys from the local scene around the shop and offer them our space for events, video premieres, lectures about new brands and equipment.☺

POWSTORE.SHOP



URO

Since its launch in 2022, Uro's blend of vegan high-end casual sneakers and skate shoes have been a huge success in their native market of Norway, and now the brand is looking to take bigger steps into the European market. We spoke with CEO Trond-Eirik Husvaeg, to see what's next for Uro and how they plan to market their shoes.

What was the thinking behind the launch of Uro in 2022?

We wanted to create a bridge between skate shoes and high-end casual sneakers. It's more of a skateable casual sneaker. A bit more finessed in every detail. Our goal was to craft skateable casual sneakers that stood out for their meticulous attention to detail while remaining steadfast in our commitment to sustainability. Everything we do is as sustainable as we can, we try to make the best possible choices along the way. Uro is here to add some finesse and proscocco to your lifestyle. At the heart of our mission was a desire to add a touch of finesse and style to everyday life, ensuring that our shoes could be worn in diverse settings – from after skate sessions to workplaces or even weddings.

Who are the management behind the brand?

The brand is a collective of creative people. From actors & musicians to action sport athletes and artists.

Uro's leadership is a dynamic collective of creative minds, bringing together a diverse group of individuals from various backgrounds. This management team includes myself (Tronna, known for my involvement with Vimana Snowboards), Per Bendiksen, a photographer with a wealth of experience, and Per Reime, who served as the Chief Financial Officer. The combination of these diverse skill sets, and backgrounds, created a well-rounded team that could drive Uro's vision forward. Collaborating with independent designers is



a significant aspect of the Uro brand identity. It allows us to infuse fresh, innovative designs into our products.

How was the brand received in the market?

We "silent" launched the brand with our website and open showroom. The brand will grow with our wide range of ambassadors and selective retailers. So far most of our limited drops sold out faster than we could expect. We have a few selected shops that have been crucial to rolling out Uro in Norway. So far, the response has been amazing, with returning consumers changing their entire shoe closet to Uro.

Please take us through your product range

Our main focus is casual sneakers. Everything from the classic prison shoe (slip-on), low tops that go with everything, mid top sneakers for the perfect après steeze and athletic shoes inspired by 70's tennis icons. All of them are vegan and we strive to make the best possible sustainability choices in every step of the way. We also have collabs with different streetwear artists with a clean basic line of streetwear to support it. Everything from safari hats to high-end casual jackets.

And tell us about your best-selling shoe.

Our best-selling shoe is our low-cut clean sneaker called the Elo. It comes in various different colourways. It is a unisex shoe, and we sell 50/50 to men and women. The second best-selling shoe is called the Harvey, this is a mid-top version of the Elo. Great for autumn and winter. Deep comfy heel cups and innersoles with eva dampening.

What are your marketing stories for the FW24 season?

We have a big campaign coming soon (or might be in action once this comes out). It is all built around Mari Hetland, a famous Norwegian clothing designer and our collab jacket.

We also have one-off designer shoes with Swedish shoe designer Lisa Sundvall. These



might go a little bit under the radar, since we have a waiting list for purchasing.

Our new shoe The Libertine is also launching mid-February with a campaign including concerts and launch parties.

Please tell us about your ambassador program.

Uro is a Norwegian word, "restlessness" would be the English translation. We support painters, actors, athletes and musicians. Keep an eye open, you just might spot Uro at your next concert or art exhibition.

In which territories are you looking for distributor/sales agents?

We are looking for the right distribution partners all over Europe. Uro is a new brand and do rely on the right fit with a distribution partner. The best possible fit would be partnering with a complementary brand to expand their market share.

We work dynamically and carefully listen to the individual markets; a perfect partner could also have direct impact on the coming product line-ups.

Currently we sell D2C outside of Norway, but we are looking to channel this sale through retail. ☺

CLWR[®]
COLOURWEAR

COLOURWEAR

Colourwear burst onto the scene in 2010 full of Scandinavian colour and style. 13 years later and under new ownership, the brand continues to push a bold, bright and youthful aesthetic. We speak with CEO for a full download.

How did Colourwear first get started and what was the idea behind the brand?

Colourwear was started by a group of mates who just loved riding together. The founders' experience in the industry led them to find this unique positioning; "they believe snowsports got too serious, and want to bring the fun, carefree, adventure back into the industry. So, they founded Colourwear in 2010 in Gothenburg, Sweden. And even if the HQ moved since 2010, Colourwear still operates from Gothenburg in Sweden.

These last 12 months have seen big changes within the company. Please could you explain what happened?

Colourwear has great and interesting history with ups and downs, like many other brands. In July 2022 the brand was acquired by us, Active Brands group Scandinavia, a Swedish house of brands who now also added Colourwear to the portfolio. Colourwear are placed in a daughter company. Since the acquisition of the brand, the brand has found a new head office and a slightly updated ecomm site. But maybe one of the most important changes are that the brand are now globally registered as Colourwear with the acronym CLWR.

Who is on the management team now?

Colourwear are today part of private owned company group, and we call



ourselves for house of brands. These companies operate in production and sourcing, distribution of brands in pharmacy, sports industry and Colourwear as a lifestyle, ski and board brand. The management team has different backgrounds from brands, production, sourcing and finance.

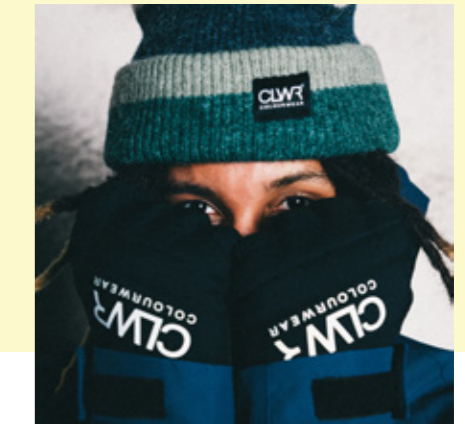
How is the brand being positioned going forward?

Colourwear has got an updated brand guideline on strengths behind the DNA of the brand. The brand is rooted in the board culture and lifestyle around in and will still be, we call this updated manifesto for Crew driven and it has a young and vibrant tone of voice and don't take everything too serious. We really want to inspire people to hang out with a bunch of friends and do things you enjoy. We have tried to set these types of feelings and energies as a guide for the brand with great vibes. From a distribution point of view we are adding more partners in Europe and adding local retailers for coming seasons. We also continue to strengthen the collection for coming seasons with three directions, women, unisex and men and for FW24 we also bring back the youth collection to Colourwear.

Even if F/W is the strongest season, we see more and more interest for our spring/summer collection, so for S/S24 we continue to inspire the wider board culture. We will continue to collaborate with the surf travel company, Lapoint.

ColourWear is HQ'd in Sweden, are your products sourced and made locally?

Colourwear's HQ is located in Gothenburg,



Sweden, the same city it was founded in 2010. We design and develop all products with our local team in our head office and source and produce the garments in Asia.

What are Colourwear's most popular product categories/ best sellers?

Colourwear are born and rooted in the winter season and still products for skiing and snowboarding are the most popular categories. Our best sellers come from anoraks and bibs like the Cake jacket for her and Trabajo Bib pants for him. But when the season starts to turn warmer, we're seeing more and more people like to ride in a Bowl hood.

How is Colourwear distributed across Europe?

We operate today with partners in almost all countries in Europe and deliver products to consumers to all countries from our ecomm site in Europe. You will find Colourwear products both for spring/summer and fall/winter in both regular sports retail, various of e-tailers, specialist shops and ski resorts. ☺

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE BINDINGS 24/25

Despite last year's poor snow conditions in Europe, the snowboard industry has apparently recovered from most of the challenges it has faced since Covid. Brands are almost unanimous in claiming a healthy start for the current winter. With a new wave of snowboarders hitting the slopes, last winter helped empty stock, support retailers, and keep building what snowboarding is – a form of expression that can occur in natural and urban landscapes alike.

There's no reason to stop this momentum and 24/25 is loaded with products that aim to satisfy this growing demand. Snowboard bindings are no stranger to this trending growth and our journey on snow can only get better! Ladies and gents, welcome to next winter's Snowboard Bindings 24/25 Retail Buyer's Guide, brought to you by **Matthieu Perez**.



#YES
WE MAKE BINDINGS



Trond-Eirik Husvæg at Vimana confirms the strong hype currently fuelling snowboarding, but also states that it has definitely changed in the past couple of years: "Snowboarding is a lifestyle for a lot of people, but a lot of riders see it more as an activity than a lifestyle". According to Barrett Christy at Bent Metal Binding Works, "A lot of people got in (or got back in) during the pandemic and are now looking to upgrade their equipment from rental to personal ownership, or from beginner to more advanced product".

Bataleon observes some of the healthiest stock levels in quite some time at both its warehouse and at its retailers. Sales manager Rubby Kiebert opens the gig with a new breath, noting, "There's a lack of older products in the market, indicating a renewed emphasis on selling the latest gear".

Some are perhaps more cautiously optimistic. Matt Stillman at Rome explains, "It feels like everyone is eagerly watching the European weather and markets to see how they might rebound after such a tough year, but stoke is high and vibes are positive".

Every brand is navigating this landscape in its own right. Flux is exploring new opportunities on the heels of a rebranding. The company changed its logo and is trying to focus more on promotion and marketing. And for Kyle Hansenkhan, Karakoram's marketing manager, "The last few years were a wild ride - high highs, then whiplash as the market returns to more typical levels. For us, the focus is on our core rider customers".

"Foster customer commitment. Monitor sell-out, demand plan, raw material availability and development timeline to reduce storage costs and optimize manufacturing." Arnaud Repa, Rossignol

HOT CAKES!

In the midst of new products and messaging for next winter, some brands are rolling out big news for their network and customers. David Pitchi at Yes Snowboards just announced that the brand teamed up with Now Bindings. He explains, "We've merged these brands to provide a more comprehensive and prominent range of products. This move gives us a stronger visibility, increased resources for development, and an overall better product offering".

At Nidecker, Tom Wilson-North hammers, "We're excited to announce that Nidecker has brought Flow Design bindings under our own brand umbrella, so we now offer the widest range and selection of snowboard bindings out there. Alongside the traditional manual Two-Strap line, we now offer a range of semi-auto Flow Design models, plus the fully automatic Supermatic models with Drop IN™ technology! We don't consider any of them to be better than the other, it just boils down to personal preference in terms of feel and function. In the end we have excellent options no

matter what the customer is looking for, and by stoking them out we hope to keep them snowboarding for life". It's definitely a noble mission.

STOCK IT OR NOT STOCK IT!

Different approaches to inventory are popping up. Overall, there is not much stock at SP Bindings. The brand notes that even its sales in Europe were better than expected. Head reports the same. According to Katharina Acham, Head operative marketing manager, "The warehouses were empty after winter season 22/23 and we were facing high order volumes for season 23/24. We are doing our best now to get all goods into the stores in time. We are looking ahead to season 24/25 with confidence as the orders are high again."

Nidecker is optimistic about the 24/25 season. "We will continue to operate our never-out-of-stock strategy and are convinced that popularity on items like Supermatic will continue to generate interest in the brand and other products we have in the range", says Tom Wilson-North.

Others are taking a more careful route. Barrett Christy at Bent Metal Binding Works states, "We believe in the prebook model which allows us to plan accordingly. As for at-once, we take a conservative approach with still being able to fulfil the demand but also not to over-produce. We live by 'sell out, don't close out'".

Bataleon is incredibly grateful for the steadfast support of its dedicated audience, as evidenced by the swift depletion of last year's inventory. "Looking ahead, we are confident in our prospects for the upcoming winters. Should the need arise, we have the flexibility to adjust stock levels in our warehouses on both sides of the ocean, ensuring optimal support for local demands", indicates Rubby Kiebert, sales director.

Snow Category Manager Arnaud Repa dissects Rossignol's strategy, emphasizing, "Foster customer commitment. Monitor sell-out, demand plan, raw material availability and development timeline to reduce storage costs and optimize manufacturing." Sounds like a plan.

OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW

Now come the freshies and everyone is shaking the tree of innovation and progression. Amplid is introducing two new binding models, the Proton and the Proton C.I. The brand is using a new nylon with carbon fibers, supplied by BASF. This allows Amplid to offer two very different bindings out of one mold set. One stone, two birds.



BENT METAL

"By merging Now and Yes, we've boosted our development team's resources, allowing us to work more efficiently and offer our products at competitive prices. This is the first year we're producing bindings under Yes, and there's no price increase" David Pitschi, YES Snowboards

At Clew, innovation is a constant pursuit, and they have indicated that developing new products and experimenting with new materials is a continuous process.

Same at Vimana, which is working hard finetuning its line. "We believe less is more, and want to make the line as easy as possible to understand and work with. Both from a retailer and consumer perspective", says Trond-Eirik Husvæg.

For its 23/24 line, Arbor introduced the first-of-its-kind BioStrap to the Cypress and Sequoia models which are composed of 64% Castor Bean Oil. Beyond using a renewable resource, the BioStrap maintains mechanical properties at cold temps, which maintain the flexibility of the straps—increasing comfort and durability. The brand is excited to announce that moving into 24/25 it will also introduce the BioStrap to the Hemlock binding.

The big news in the Jones binding collection for 24/25 is the debut of the Mercury Pro binding. Marketing Director Seth Lightcap explains, "The Mercury Pro is a high tech freeride binding that features a unique three-part highback. It's designed for expert freeriders who need a super responsive binding with a progressive flex. The three-part highback is super stiff in the heel for max response, slightly less stiff along the spine of the highback for manoeuvrability, and softer on the outer edges for max comfort".

Bent Metal Binding Works features flex control driveplates with unique flex patterns for dynamic binding response. Next year, it will bring a new canted footbed with a heel shock pad to several existing models, including the Axtion, Logic, and Transfer, as well as the women's Forte. The new Anvil model will also have a canted EVA footbed for increased precision and control. "These driveplates are unique to the binding market and set us apart from every other brand. They are a key component to our binding designs and they are made with environmentally friendly processes and construction", adds Barrett Christy.

Drake is developing a new TPU injected ankle strap, which is the result of the know-how from the last five years. Davide Smania, product and marketing manager elaborates, "It takes the best from our existing straps—maximum power transmission thanks to its volume, maximum adaptability thanks to its geometric pattern, and total comfort due to its 3D shape, which eliminates all painful contact point while it's almost 10% lighter than its predecessor".

Verdad is debuting a toe buckle with an additional small lip at the bottom that prevents it from coming undone after a large impact. Burton is introducing two new Step On bindings, combining the convenience of Step On with the underfoot comfort & performance of EST. These bindings feature a new design language built around the baseplate, heelcup, & highback.

Kemper which just got started with Europe, is using the same binding design for 24/25 and carrying over the Carolina Blue and Eggplant colorways from 23/24. The bindings are 'middle of the road' that cover all freestyle/freeride for men and women with fun colors at an affordable price.

For the 24/25 line, Rome is pleased to expand its Pro Collection, building on the name recognition and success of key models in the line, like the Katana. The Katana Pro features boosts of Carbon fill in both the baseplate and highback for a lighter and more responsive ride while still offering the unique customization options the Katana is known for.

Finally, the new Viva from Roxy features a new cored dual band ankle strap for increased flexibility, comfort, and control.

LADIES FIRST!

Nidecker opens the ball here. With their automatic, semi-auto, and manual binding categories, it clearly tries to cater to every snowboarder. Tom Wilson-North claims, "We do it all and we have it all! Another big leap we made for 24/25 is that our whole binding line is now unisex".

Nitro has expanded the Ivy model to include boot sizes from 21.0 to 24.5 Mondopoint and introduced the new 3D Optiframe Flex ankle strap. "These additions cater to the growing demand for advanced bindings among young

PROMISED



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COMPANY**

flux-bindings.com

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“The warehouses were empty after winter season 22/23 and we were facing high order volumes for season 23/24. We are doing our best now to get all goods into the stores in time. We are looking ahead to season 24/25 with confidence as the orders are high again.” Katharina Acham, Head

Karakoram is excited to have a local supply chain and one that truly supports snowboarders. “Offering bindings built with a local supply chain and built by snowboarders is something we’re really proud of. The local supply chain allows us better transparency in checking that environmental regulations are followed, as well as minimizing carbon emissions from transport”, offers Kyle Hansenkahn.


Bataleon’s simplified warranty process and the Never Miss a Day spare parts package that comes with every binding distinguishes it from the competition. Both shops and end-consumers value these minor innovations, recognizing the company’s authentic understanding of snowboarding culture.

For next season, Flux is focusing on all ranges in its collection. After all, the brand makes bindings to fit everyone.

Ruairi Collins, Jones’ European Marketing Manager emphasizes, “We want to make sure that we have a binding to match the riding style of all our customers. The Jones binding collection includes a high-performance binding option for riders of every style and skill level. And we are very excited to have dropped the price of almost all our binding models for 24/25”.

Amplid Founder Peter Bauer summarizes the design philosophy behind its 24/25 bindings, noting they’re “Simple, durable, and (super)light”. Yet still unbreakable.

Drake reminds us that one of the best ways to create sustainable goods is to ensure they are truly durable. Product and Marketing Manager Davide Smania, notes that “Having durable goods is always well appreciated”. Similarly, Acham at Head emphasizes that “One big key trend in the snowboard market – or rather in all industries - is sustainability. We call it Rethink and we address sustainability in every decision we are making and we keep improving year by year”.

With brands firing on all cylinders, healthy inventory levels, and plenty of innovation, Winter 24/25 stands to be especially promising. But perhaps more importantly, these brands are looking beyond next winter, inspiring riders to protect our playground for future generations as well. 

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

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Healthy inventory
- 2 FA23 Started Well
- 3 Optimism for FA24
- 4 Big mergers
- 5 Female sector growth

women and offer the ultimate riding experience for the progressive female rider”, reinforces Tommy Delago. And for 24/25, Nitro has also collaborated with team rider Alexis Roland, who is known for her creative style both on and off the board. This collaboration—and the resulting graphics—is available on the Ivy binding.

Bent Metal Binding Works has designed a new highback for the women’s Metta with a refined love handle and medium flex. The brand has also developed a new solid highback for the Forte for a more responsive feel. Robert Longin at SP offers, “We want to focus more on girls specific products”. Word.

AT YOUR SERVICE

Brands get creative to serve and involve everyone. David Pitchi notes that “By merging Yes and Now, we are aiming to reach all our current customers combined and expand to whoever is ready to ride innovative products. By offering a complete package of bindings and boards for different riding styles and levels we believe we have something to offer for everyone who wants to have awesome days on the hill”.

Pitchi adds another layer, noting that “By merging Now and Yes, we’ve boosted our development team’s resources, allowing us to work more efficiently and offer our products at competitive prices. This is the first year we’re producing bindings under Yes, and there’s no price increase”. So a word to the wise.

Rossignol hasn’t been able to relocate some of its production due to minimum order quantities and raw materials availability across the planet. But the factories they work with are conscious of the need to be flexible, from capacity to country of origin, and lower their environmental impact. Arnaud Repa explains, “This allowed us to join our raw materials purchasing across our factories and access cheaper products. Therefore to reduce our wholesale and retail prices on the associated products, snowboard bindings and snowboards in particular”.



SP FASTEC MOUNTAIN



WINNER VERBIER EXTREME 2022
MANUELA MANDL, TEAM SP

PHOTO: @ FWT, Jeremy Bernard

PHOTO: © Niels SAINT-VITEUX



MAS SNOWBOARD

MAS Snowboard stands proud as Turkey's first snowboard brand and manufacturer. Boasting European quality board materials backed by the manufacturing power of Turkey, we spoke with the team to find out more.

Can you give us a little background on the team behind Mas Snowboard?

Mas Snowboard is Turkey's first snowboard manufacturing company, founded by close friends in 2018. It was established as a result of years of research and development. MAS Snowboard, Turkey's first snowboard brand, also shows its influence abroad. MAS Snowboard, which makes boards that highlight the user's own style, also offers specially designed boards. Our own factory is located in Istanbul, which is the bridge between Europe's engineering quality and the manufacturing power of Turkey. We are constantly transforming our production. Together with our powerful partners every year we are improving our technology and production level.

You're Turkey's first snowboard brand and manufacturing company, what made you decide to take the leap into board production?

Our main purpose is to show the riders that they have a unique style needed to glow. When we set out with this idea, we established a boutique atelier. We realized that our passion was bigger than this boutique workshop and we enlarged the workshop and turned it into a factory. With our increasing experience, today we can produce snowboards that appeal to every style and every terrain from jibbing to splitboarding. Even in the first year, we have achieved podiums. This anchors our enthusiasm to produce and improve ourselves.



Please tell us about your production facility.

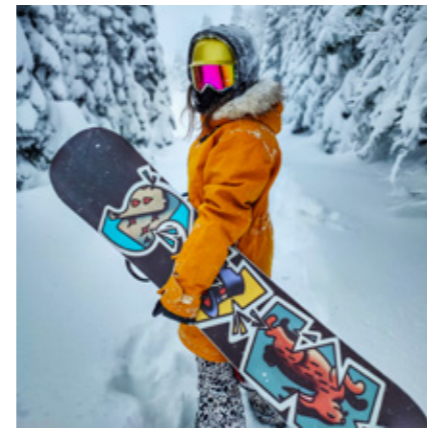
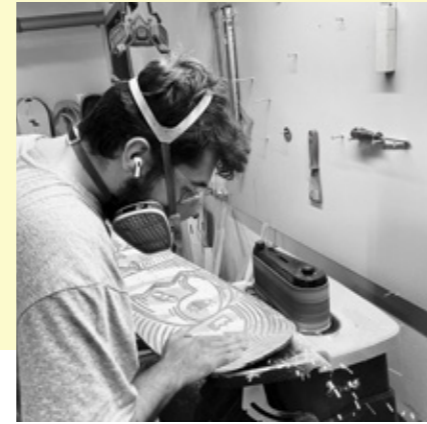
MAS Snowboard has a well-equipped facility with an experienced workforce, and we are using the same base materials, fibres, epoxies, steel edges, etc. just like the other big European brands. Our strongest part is, we have the flexibility to adapt to the needs of our partners. 100% rider-owned and operated with a close connection to the end customer. Additionally, the nearest ski resort to our factory is 1 hour away. In this way, we have a very high chance of simultaneously testing and analysing each snowboard we produce. This helps us quickly understand the true product and raise our quality standards. Snowboard production needs new technologies and improvements more than ever due to climate change. This challenges us to evolve to our best.

And what can you offer snowboard brands?

MAS Snowboard, which has 5 years of experience, continues its activities in the market in the USA and European countries such as Sweden and France, apart from the Turkish market. It aims to grow further with its Gothenburg branch and its representative in France. In addition, its branch in the United States was also active this year, with an experienced team managing it. The brands that we are producing for also get immediate support by these branches.

What are your boards primarily made from and where do you source the materials?

We use the same materials fibres, epoxies, etc. just like the other big European brands. We supply our raw materials mainly from Europe. But we prefer several materials especially from Turkey such as the wood in



the product. Because our local trees are as high quality as other trees and producing snowboards from them provides many advantages.

Your factory HQ is based in Istanbul, Turkey, but you also have offices in Sweden and the US, what function do these locations play within the brand?

Our factory is located in Istanbul. As it is known, the biggest two markets are Europe and the USA. These branch offices are mainly for logistics and meet the demands of our partners. We are looking for new representatives from all around the world. Only sending the boards is not enough to support the distributors and dealers, so our branch offices bear the burden.

Where do you hope Mas Snowboards, and the Turkish snowboard scene, will be in the future?

In the future, MAS Snowboard develops and produces products that meet consumer-oriented demands and appeal to everyone; In fact, by preserving what we have already done; We hope that it will become a brand that has gained respect globally and is preferred by everyone. ☺



CAPTAIN FIN CAPTAIN FIN CO

It's been a busy year for Captain Fin since its acquisition by Liberated Brands, exemplified by the brand's recent launch in Europe. We chat to the team behind the American surf brand about the thinking behind the launch and their distribution and marketing plans for the future.

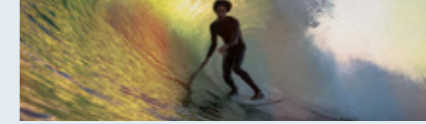
What was the thinking behind Captain Fin coming to Europe?

The decision to bring Captain Fin to Europe was a logical strategic move. The brand has been acquired by Liberated Brands Global and we wanted to tap into the opportunity to expand its presence within our market. Captain Fin seamlessly integrates into our brands portfolio, complementing the transversality of Volcom and the lifestyle appeal of Electric. The harmonious coexistence of these brands ensures that Liberated Brands offers a comprehensive and diverse array of choices, catering to the varied tastes and preferences of the European consumer. This strategic alignment not only enhances our brand offerings but also strengthens our commitment to delivering a well-rounded selection of products to the European market.

Where and how did you launch in Europe?

For Fall 2023, our distribution strategy will focus exclusively on Direct-to-Consumer (D2C) channels, ensuring a direct and personalized connection with our valued customers through a tailored shopping experience.

Come Spring 2024, we will expand our reach as our products become available for wholesale distribution, providing retailers the opportunity to share Captain Fin with a broader audience.



Who are the management behind Captain Fin?

The management structure behind Captain Fin is deeply embedded within the broader organizational framework of Liberated Brands Europe. Liberated Brands Europe implements a distinctive approach to management, organized by front and back departments, fostering a collaborative, and streamlined operational environment. This methodology extends to the management of Captain Fin, ensuring a cohesive and efficient structure that leverages the strengths of each department.

How will the brand be distributed across Europe?

The distribution strategy for Captain Fin across Europe is a strategic blend of continuity and innovation. By retaining our historical distributors Viral and Olatu, we ensure a stable and informed approach to the French, Spanish, and broader European markets. Simultaneously, by leveraging our own network within Liberated Brands, we open avenues for collaborative growth, direct-to-consumer engagement, and the exploration of diverse distribution channels. This comprehensive strategy aims to position Captain Fin as a dynamic and influential player in the European surf market.

What will be your key product categories for the brand in Europe?

Our product line up for the European market features high-performance surf fins as hard goods, complemented by a stylish array of tee-shirts and fleeces within the apparel category.



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

Despite a challenging year anticipated in 2024 for the surf market, we remain optimistic as we see a growing community of surfers driven by an increased interest for outdoor activities and aquatic adventures. In response to this trend, our strategic focus will be on targeting and engaging with this expanding demographic to navigate through the challenges and capitalize on emerging opportunities. We want to inspire people to have fun in the water, which promotes a healthier and happier lifestyle!

How will you be marketing the brand across Europe?

We plan to market the brand across Europe through strategic rider collaborations (with Yago Dora, Ethan Osborne, Kaimana Henry, and more), fostering authentic connections between our products and the surfing community. Utilizing product seeding initiatives, we aim to generate buzz and cultivate a loyal customer base. With media support and a strong digital focus, we'll amplify our brand presence, complemented by trade marketing efforts and special events to create impactful touchpoints in the European market. ☺

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- 2 ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE GOGGLES 24/25

Brands keep pushing lens technology and pairing it with the latest innovations in fit, to satisfy increasingly educated consumers. **By Rocio Enriquez.**



Consumers are looking for goggles that will effectively protect their eyes while sitting comfortably and stylishly on their faces. Lens technology innovations take care of the former, while design takes care of the latter. Vision needs to be no less than optimal. Contrast-enhancing technology, photochromic capabilities, and reliable fogging prevention form the trifecta of optical clarity. Quick lens changing systems play an important part in adaptability to varying conditions. Most brands' bestsellers align with this. The quality of the lens matters too. All these technical enhancements mean little if the lens breaks under the first impact. To benefit from the protection of a goggle, one must wear it all the time. Good fit and wearing comfort are key. By good fit, we do not only mean good adaptation to the face shape with no pressure points, but good integration with the helmet too. Once the performance side of things is covered, style is the next purchase deciding factor. There is a trend for modern, sleek designs that look timeless. This is the case of bestsellers such as Airblaster's Air Goggle, Rossignol's Spiral Mirror, Head's Contex and F-Lyt, Oakley's Flight Deck and Line Miner, or the Void by Out Of. At the same time, there is a particular type of consumer, mostly core freestylers, who are hunting retro looking styles that throw them back to the snowboarding roots in the noughties. Bestsellers of this style are Giro's Revolt and Salomon's Sentry. Anon's M4 offers versatility. "The M4 allows you to choose either a modern looking toric lens or a retro looking cylindrical lens", says Benjamin Schwarz. We see larger straps and the possibility to swap them to customise your goggles to match your outfit. Growth is expected in goggles that offer comprehensive vision enhancing technologies, with special attention to those that offer premium specs at a reasonable price.

"The M4 allows you to choose either a modern looking toric lens or a retro looking cylindrical lens" Benjamin Schwarz, Anon Optics

TECHNOLOGY

Lens technology is the main purchase driver, so it is the aspect of the goggle that attracts more innovation. Every brand offers state of the art vision technology; some of them have developed their own proprietary versions. Poc launches the new Vitrea goggle with their own ClarityTM technology. "Combined with a shallow angle toric lens, the goggle ensures that your all-round vision is always at its sharpest, particularly in your lower periphery", says Damian Phillips. Smith expands their ChromaPopTM lens range. Designed to filter specific light wavelengths to enhance contrast and natural colour, it will be available in five more tints. They also offer their BirdsEye VisionTM which creates a lens shape that extends and curves below the sightline, increasing the field of view by 25%. This technology can be found in their new 4D Mag XL, as well as their popular 4D Mag and 4D Mag S. Salomon also expands their contrast amplifying Sigma lens technology with two new tints, Light Blue and Clear Pink. "The Sigma range is now made up of twelve lenses", says Delphine Polycarpe. Dragon adds two new colours to their infrared Lumalens range, the Solace IR and Celeste IR. Red Bull Spect offers eight goggles with their photochromic Chrom X lenses. Sinner adds two more goggles to their range featuring their high contrast Sintrast technology. They add their Sintrast Trans+ lens to their Snowghost



RED BULL SPECT

goggle, which allows them to offer a high contrast, high clarity photochromic lens CAT1-3 with a full mirror finish at a very good price point. Zeal adds a patented line of lenses called Optimum Polarised Automatic+ that changes the tint gradually, offering up to thirty tint variations. Head has developed their own lens dye formula called 5K. "The filter characteristics focus on specific wavelengths of the visual light spectrum, hence controlling brightness, colour brilliance and contrast", says Katharina Acham. It is available in several goggle models and lens tints. They are also satisfied with their LDL construction which laminates the inner lens directly onto the outer lens. The lack of space between the lenses increases the field of vision by 15%. Out Of keeps the focus on their IRID electronic lenses, currently featured on their Electra 2 goggle. The electronic, photochromic lens adjusts instantaneously to the light conditions in less than one second. "IRID works thanks to a small photovoltaic cell that powers a thin liquid crystal film, because of this there is no battery", says Laura Righi. BOB is introducing a new solution called

"Combined with a shallow angle toric lens, the goggle ensures that your all-round vision is always at its sharpest, particularly in your lower periphery"

Damian Phillips, POC

ZeroFogTM. "It is not coated with any chemical substance, the structure of the lens is non-fogging", explains Pawel Jaworski. Zeal offers the Everclear anti-fog treatment, which is infused in the lens, so it can never be wiped off.

The brands that have not developed proprietary technologies make sure to use the latest innovations by the lens makers in the industry. Spektrum introduces the Templet Glacier goggle featuring category 4 Alpine Smoke lens from Carl Zeiss that neutrally filters 93% of all incoming light, protecting the eyes from fatigue. Their Östra Bio Premium Large also features the Carl Zeiss Sonar Rose Gold lens. Giro chooses Zeiss too. "The Comp Goggle features VIVID toric lens and an infrared bonus lens", says Darius Heristchian. Spy+ has included photochromic lenses in their Marshall 2.0 and Megalith goggles. GOG offers models with HRX optical rim and

give a polychromatic coating to their lenses. Anti-fog protection, photochromy, and polarisation are present across all offers. Lens changing systems get a lot of attention. Panda Optics, who offers a magnetic one, highlights their Dual Vision frame that is compatible with both a toric and a cylindrical lens. Quiksilver and Roxy have expanded their range with a speed connect system. "We have now two different systems, one with integrated magnets and another one with secured arms on the side", says Stephanie Leuridan from Roxy. Hilx works with their Quicky Magnetic Switch that allows the user to magnetically switch their lens in seconds. Dragon implements their Swiftlock 2.0 magnetic system. Salomon offers two high-end models in their magnetic offer, the radium Prime and the Sentry Prime. The last one features a locking system to secure the lens. Smith's offering is their MAG technology, designed with weatherproof magnetic contact points and patent-pending dual locking mechanisms. Oakley debuts in the magnetic lens changing systems with their SwitchlockTM technology. It features six strong, self-locating magnets around the goggle frame. The lens is quickly removed by pushing both lock-release buttons, one on either side of the frame. The new lens is attached by aligning it to the frame and clicking both sides into place. It has two mechanical locks on either side of the frame to secure the lens from accidental ejections. Poc's new Vitrea style features a quick lens changing system that can be operated while wearing gloves and with the goggles still on your face. Giro's Comp goggle has a snap-shot quick change lens system. Sinner introduces two new goggles with interchangeable lenses, the Snowflake with toric lens and the Aura with a cylindrical one. 100 Percent and Rekd opt for magnetic ones.

Fit, to the face and to the helmet, is a key factor when choosing your goggles. Spektrum's Östra Bio Premium Large is 10% bigger than its regular version. It is designed for riders who have a larger head, and for whom those extra mm in width and height make a big difference to the fit and the peripheral view. Their Husa Coordinates is designed with hinged outriggers that adapt the pressure to your face, so you can use it with different kind of helmets, or even no helmet. Oakley is launching their Flex Scape model with Physiomorphic Geometry. The lens design conforms to the contours of the face, increasing your view. It comes with a winterised, fleece-lined gasket that absorbs moisture and can be added or removed according to your preferences. Smith applies their Precise Fit Integration to their



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HELMET, GOGGLE, AND MAGNETIC FACE MASK KITS

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goggles, which makes the curve of the goggle frame match the their helmet designs. That enables precise alignment and eliminates gaps. Furthermore, the vent foam on their goggles aligns with the AirEvac system on their helmets, to move hot air and moisture up and out of the goggles and through the helmet. Airblaster is proud of the helmet compatibility of their Air goggles. "We focus on a flexible frame that fits closer to the face, allowing the same field of vision without a massive lens", says Jesse Grandoski. Rossignol ensures a watertight seal with their dual density foam. Hilx offers a triple layered foam constructed with three different materials. Head talks about their optimised traction straps. The strap outlets are placed in the front, optimising the traction applied and assuring a snug and secure fit when worn together with a helmet. They pair it with their dynamic ventilation system that allows air to enter the goggles from three sides, creating an airstream that provides the perfect climate inside the goggles. Rekd's Classic SnapFit goggles feature an ergonomic TPU frame designed to mould to all face types.

CONSTRUCTION AND MATERIALS

The most common materials, because of their quality and durability, are thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU) for frames, and Polycarbonate (PC) for lenses. Airblaster takes this up a notch by manufacturing in Japan. However, there is a big momentum in eco-friendly materials. Aphex is using bio-based plastic. Spektrum uses plant-based materials with injected dye colour technology in the frame and other plastic components. Out Of introduced their Bio Project line a few years ago, which uses exclusively sustainable and recycled materials. Quiksilver and Roxy feature bio-based TPU frame injection and recycled nylon straps in 70% of their range. They have also given up on varnish and solvent and use water-based glue. Instead of painting their frames, they use pigments directly in the injection. Rossignol factors in low environmental impact. "The glasses are made from 100% recycled materials to reduce the use of raw materials resources", says Margaux Joly. Their Essential range features recycled TPU in the frame, recycled polyester straps, and recycled PC adjusters. Zeal's straps feature a minimum of 70% REPREVE, a yarn made of recycled post-consumer plastic bottles and other pre-consumer waste. The soft portions of their frames are built with



SPY

"IRID works thanks to a small photovoltaic cell that powers a thin liquid crystal film. Because of this there is no battery" Laura Righi, Out Of

recycled TPU, made from discarded footwear. The harder parts of their Rail Lock System frames are constructed with 100% recycled post-consumer PC/ABS, sourced from discarded electronics. Poc continues with their use of Bio Grilamid. Dragon features recycled face fleece and nylon strap adjusters. Head also uses sustainable and recycled raw materials.

There are also some innovations in terms of construction. Out Of has a new, very resistant mirroring treatment that has passed the Q-UV test Cross Hatch - Adhesive Tape for more than 12 hours. They also integrate quality Zeiss lenses with Ri-pel hydrophobic and oleophobic treatment. Panda Optics has reduced the wasted lens space. "We increase the vision by 10% without increasing the lens size", says Oliver Heath. Head pays attention to size. Every person has different facial proportions, and the right size can have an impact on safety and integration with the helmet. Therefore, they offer several styles in multiple sizes. Oakley's Line Miner Pro features the first ever single layer goggle lens by fusing the anti-fog treatment onto the lens. Removing the need for an inner lens reduces distortion and light reflection. 100 Percent highlights the construction features of their Norg style. "It has 3D plane moulded injection lenses, triple layered face Foam, and Dual lens altitude compensating lenses", says Liam Barrett. Hilx builds their interchangeable straps with their anti-slip silicon jelly to keep the goggles strapped in place.

Accessories complete the appeal of the goggle offer. Aphex offers removable straps. "Our unique strap system allows us to offer great options to our shops and end consumers", says Tom Howells. Salomon provides a foldable and magnetic lens protector for the lenses that are not in use. Anon introduces the Day Case which can accommodate up to three M4 goggles, spare lenses and MFI masks. Fully padded, it features a removable divider, inner mesh pocket, and moisture management vent.

Giro delivers their Comp Goggle with a moulded, collapsible goggle and lens case that frees up space in your bag.

The dedicated brand Gogglesoc unveils two new products. The waterproof Goggleshell, and the Gogglesoc Pro that delivers exceptional grip thanks to a specially engineered elastic. While the original Gogglesoc is crafted from rPET, Gogglesoc Pro is made with a single jersey knit composed of 88% rPET and 12% Spandex. Goggleshell uses a durable ripstop made from 100% recycled polyester with a waterproof coating. Looks.

The seasonal colour palette for next winter is made of earthy tones and muted colours. This is what we'll find on offer, alongside the ever present classic white, black, and grey, and a variation of bright colours for the bolder. Amongst the seasonal colour offerings, we find Quiksilver's army green or Roxy's creamy tones, which they both mix with pop details in orange, coral, or lime. Rossignol offers sand and cream and keeps the popular Rainy Day and Olive Night. Aphex, Oakley, Head and Zeal also list nature inspired colours in their catalogues. Many brands offer colour matching with their own helmets or outerwear. Such is the case of Aphex, Rossignol, Zeal and Salomon. Giro offers the Matt Rosé and Light Mineral that match well with the colour trends of the main outerwear brands. Classic colours are a safe bet. GOG features mostly black, grey, and white TPU frames. For Red Bull Spect, the strength lies in the logo, so they rely on their emblematic dark blue, black, and white headbands. Quiksilver and Roxy keep a good range of black, white, and dark grey tones. So do Head, Salomon, 100Percent and Giro. There is room for some bold colours in next year's collections. Airblaster keeps the purple frames that have worked so well for them. Head adds some eye-catching, loud colours to the mix, which alongside their other colours ramp up the number of possible combinations in the Intermix Design to over six hundred. Oakley mixes their earthy colours with brilliant, jewelled hues, while keeping their heritage pop colours. 100Percent offers bright greens, reds and purple, and pairs their translucent frames with bold straps. GOG includes in their offer

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“It has 3D plane moulded injection lenses, triple layered face Foam, and Dual lens altitude compensating lenses” Liam Barrett 100Percent

some neon variations like red, pink and orange. Giro introduces two new bold seasonal colour stories. The Purple Syndrome is inspired in retro video games graphics, ideal for vintage lovers. Green Marble is a fashion camo that, along with the black and white version White & Dark Matter, will appeal to fashionistas. Salomon continues the unisex Grape Shake. Zeal throws some vibrant colours in their mix. Panda brings back their pink lens, paired with a bright blue strap on the Dual Vision goggle.

There are interesting collaborations to speak of. Brands featuring signatures series of their team athletes are Airblaster, Spy Optics, 100 Percent, Poc, Oakley, Dragon and Salomon. Apex has developed a signature strap for the Tignes core shop Black Cats. Smith continues their long-standing collaboration with The North Face and High Five Foundation and kicks off a new partnership with She Jumps. Gogglesoc has a new collaboration with POW and the artists Hayley Stewart and Kate Zessel. Anon is working with Canadian artist and guide Jessa Gilbert. BOB features a second collaboration with Osom Studio.

RETAILER SUPPORT

Brands continue to support retailers with proven strategies, mainly in-store merchandising, visual assets for online presence, and sponsoring of athletes and events. Apex, Quiksilver, Roxy, Red Bull Spect, Zeal, Gogglesoc, Smith, Hilx, Giro, and BOB, all offer in-store displays to their customers. Gog’s new rotative displays can hold up to twenty goggles. 100 Percent has a revamped goggle glorifier. Salomon’s POP materials offer information about their products and technologies. Head makes high quality and sustainable metal branded goggle slat wall holders and counter displays. Out Of

loans their displays to support customers who face post-pandemic difficulties. Graphic departments are busy creating visuals that retailers can use in their social media or other digital platforms. Out Of offers customised banners and graphics for installations. BOB, Gog, Anon and Hilx have significant amounts of photo and video content. Some videos offer education, such as the ones offered by Head and Gogglesoc. Staff training is also important. 100Percent and Smith use ENDVR to educate retailers. Oakley has developed an online training platform called Leonardo. Salomon has developed a dedicated training book. Anon organises clinics. Product seeding to athletes and events is key to maintain the brand’s presence on the mountain. Most brands have a dedicated budget for this. Not all support is visible to the consumer’s eye. There are ways to support retailers through their commercial relationship with the brand. 100Percent keeps their line streamlined to six styles and forty-two SKUs. Head has increased the number of carry-over products and multi-seasonal colours, alleviating the pressure of close-out sales. Out Of has developed a B2B platform that allows retailers to easily check availability and register orders. Pricing monitoring also helps. Panda avoids distributors so they can offer the best possible prices to retailers. Out Of and Zeal do not offer discounts on their online store to avoid competition with their retailers.

After a few challenging seasons and some fine-tuning done in the order and supply systems, most brands report good stock health and delivery schedules. The first snows shall find retailers ready for customers seeking their new goggles for the season. ☺

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

- 1 Lens Technology main purchasing driver
- 2 Widespread use of recycled materials
- 3 Innovative automatic lens changing systems
- 4 Nature inspired seasonal colours

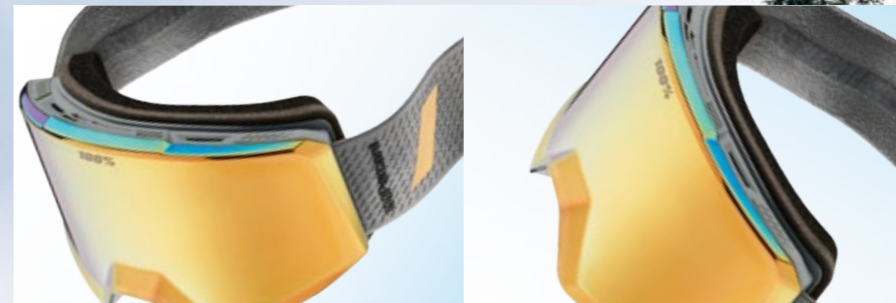
Est.82—US(OF)A We Deliver Vision

100% MMXXIV Collection



100Percent Winter Collection

Snow Goggles SP24



100P-SNW

(24)

Est.82—US(OF)A We Deliver Vision

100% MMXXIV Collection



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GOGGLES
2024/25
PICTORIAL[®]



100% - Norg



100% - Snowcraft



Airblaster - Rush Air



Airblaster - Rush Air



Anon - M4 Cylindrical



Anon - M5 Flat Toric



Aphex - Oxia



Aphex - Styx



AZR - Evolution



AZR - Globe



Bliz - Charge



Bliz - Flow



Bloc - Fifty Five



Bloc - Seventy Five



Bob - 808 Roulette



Bob - OsomTerrain



Dirtydog - Mutant Legacy



Dirtydog - Omen



Dragon - DX3 OTG



Dragon - DX3 Plus OTG



Easy - Cham



Easy - Valdez



Giro - Contour



Giro - Method

GOGGLES 2024/25 PICTORIAL[®]



GOG - Fury



GOG - Ryder



Head - Contex Rethink



Head - F-lyt



Hilx - Resurgent



Hilx - Vintro



Loubsol - LS2.5
Pamplemousse TD



Loubsol - LS5 Party
Crasher



Melon - Akira



Melon - Parker



Oakley - Line Miner
Jamie Anderson



Oakley - Line Miner Pro



Out Of - Electra



Out Of - Katana



Panda - Cobalt



Panda - RS1 Polarised



POC - Nexal



POC - Vitrea



Quiksilver - The Webb



Quiksilver - Storm MG



Red Bull Spect - Jam



Red Bull Spect - Park



Rekd - Ascent Magsphere



Rekd - Classic Snapfit

GOGGLES 2024/25 PICTORIAL[®]



Rossignol - Magne'lens



Rossignol - Spiral Mirror



Roxy - Feelin Roxy Life



Roxy - Storm Women Peak
Chic



Salomon - Radium Pro



Salomon - Sentry Prime



Shred - Amazify



Shred - Gratify



Sinner - Aura



Sinner - Snowflake



Smith - 4D Mag XL



Smith - Skyline



Spektrum - Husa



Spektrum - Ostra Premium



Spy+ - Marauder



Spy+ - Marshall



Zeal - Cloudfall



Zeal - The Open Hearts
Cloudfall



Gogglesoc - Chris
Benchetler



Gogglesoc - Hayley
Stewart

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ISLAND TRIBE

For over 30 years island Tribe have been leading the way in sun protection for action sports enthusiasts with its selection of gels and creams. Owner Carlo van Kleef drops by to talk sustainability, market performance and keeping those eyes free from stinging.

Please can we have a recap of the brand from when it was founded to the present day.

The island Tribe brand was launched in 1992 in South Africa with the aim of providing waterproof sun protection to surfers and other water sports enthusiasts. The range consisted of one product only, the island Tribe Clear Gel, which to this day has been unrivalled by competition for water resistance. The brand is now distributed in 25 countries worldwide.

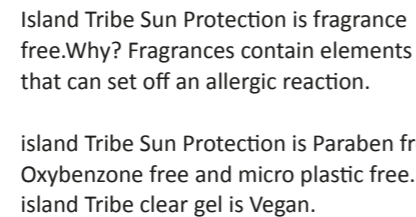
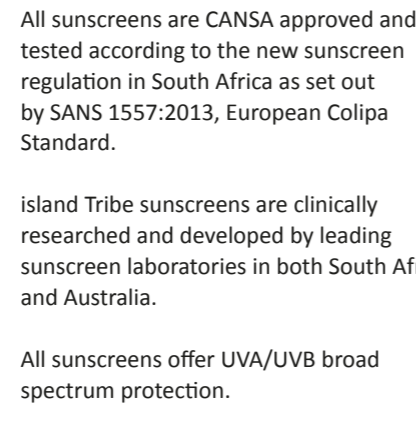
What is island Tribe's USP?

No stinging eyes!

island Tribe sunscreens (clear gel) are designed to give the user maximum protection against both UVA and UVB rays, more than this, the specific formula will stay on your skin for the duration of your activity.

Many brands claim to have water resistant sunscreens. Then you read the first ingredient and it says "Aqua"! Good one! We have learnt that a water-base in water is not the best way to have a long lasting water-specific sunscreen (See Sport Sun Protection). Don't pollute the ocean with a water-based sunscreen.

All our sunscreens are dermatologist approved and irritancy tested.



Please tell us about your distribution and supply set up in Europe.

island Tribe sun protection has been sold from the Netherlands since 2009 by island Tribe Europe. We deliver from stock from a new and modern distribution centre. Orders are dispatched within two working days.

Since 2010 island Tribe Europe has established official distributors in 12 different countries, some of which service multiple countries. Customers in approximately 25 other countries are supplied directly by island Tribe Europe.

How has the European market for sun care products been this summer?

Last summer was a good year for us - every year we see sales increasing in Europe.

All sunscreens are CANSA approved and tested according to the new sunscreen regulation in South Africa as set out by SANS 1557:2013, European Colipa Standard.

island Tribe sunscreens are clinically researched and developed by leading sunscreen laboratories in both South Africa and Australia.

All sunscreens offer UVA/UVB broad spectrum protection.

Island Tribe Sun Protection is fragrance free. Why? Fragrances contain elements that can set off an allergic reaction.

island Tribe Sun Protection is Paraben free, Oxybenzone free and micro plastic free. island Tribe clear gel is Vegan.



We are selling more and more in winter sports areas because the clear gel products do not contain water. Frost and water-based products do not mix.

What was your best-selling product and why?

SPF 50 clear gel sun stick, SPF 50 clear gel 100 ml and the SPF 50 clear gel spray 100 ml. No sunburn and no stinging eyes.

How have you made your products more sustainable?

Our products are vegan free of parabens, perfume, oxybenzone and microplastic free.

What are your marketing stories for the SS24 season?

The unique properties of the clear gel are also the story for 2024.

What is currently the best market for the brand in Europe and why?

Netherlands, United Kingdom and Germany because sun protection is probably a priority there. ☺

DRIFT

DRIFT

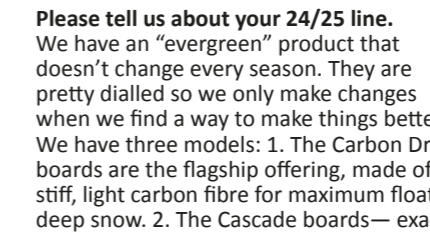
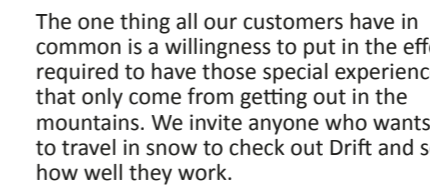
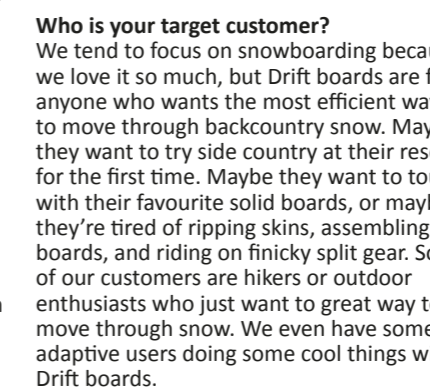
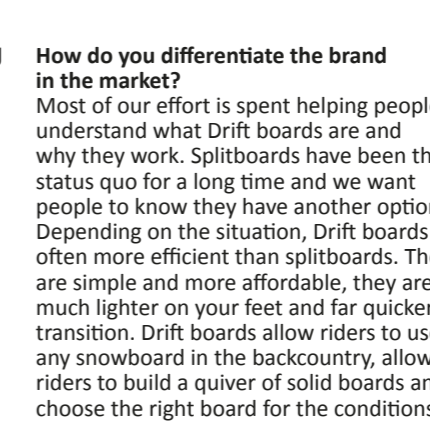
Utah-based Drift launched in 2016 and with a tagline "the convenience of snowshoes but the efficiency of touring skis, without the clunky transition," we had to check them out. Interview with Brigham Rupp, Brand Manager.

Provide a short history of the brand and share the thinking behind Drift?

Drift launched in 2016, but our story really started in the early 90s when my brother Dave (the founder of Drift) and I first started hiking and snowboarding the Utah Mountains on a 1988 Burton Performer Elite. Later we worked in local shops and began seeking bigger mountains and deeper snow. Dave, a mechanical engineer who designed composite bike components, was unsatisfied with snowshoes and splitboards for backcountry touring and pow surfing. He wanted something with the convenience of snowshoes but the efficiency of touring skis, without the clunky transition. With his background in composites, Dave started building prototypes and soon Drift boards were born. At first we were focused on pow surfing and quick local tours, but over time we found Drift boards were capable of much more. Today we happily use them for nearly anything someone might climb with skis or a split. Our biggest tour yet was over 2000 meters on Mount Shasta in California.

Who are the people behind the brand?

We are a small, family run business from Salt Lake City, Utah. Dave founded Drift with his wife Brooke in 2016. He is a phenomenal engineer, product designer, snowboarder, and mountain biker. Dave has a talent for seeing and solving problems that impact those who love to recreate outside. Brooke is a former ski racer and a financial guru who handles the financial side of Drift. I came on board a couple years ago to help with the creative side of things. I also get to do a lot of R&D and might have more time than anyone on the Drift boards. Along with a couple awesome shop techs, that's the team!



How do you differentiate the brand in the market?

Most of our effort is spent helping people understand what Drift boards are and why they work. Splitboards have been the status quo for a long time and we want people to know they have another option. Depending on the situation, Drift boards are often more efficient than splitboards. They are simple and more affordable, they are much lighter on your feet and far quicker to transition. Drift boards allow riders to use any snowboard in the backcountry, allowing riders to build a quiver of solid boards and choose the right board for the conditions.

Who is your target customer?

We tend to focus on snowboarding because we love it so much, but Drift boards are for anyone who wants the most efficient way to move through backcountry snow. Maybe they want to try side country at their resort for the first time. Maybe they want to tour with their favourite solid boards, or maybe they're tired of ripping skins, assembling boards, and riding on finicky split gear. Some of our customers are hikers or outdoor enthusiasts who just want to great way to move through snow. We even have some adaptive users doing some cool things with Drift boards.

The one thing all our customers have in common is a willingness to put in the effort required to have those special experiences that only come from getting out in the mountains. We invite anyone who wants to travel in snow to check out Drift and see how well they work.

Please tell us about your 24/25 line.

We have an "evergreen" product that doesn't change every season. They are pretty dialled so we only make changes when we find a way to make things better. We have three models: 1. The Carbon Drift boards are the flagship offering, made of stiff, light carbon fibre for maximum float in deep snow. 2. The Cascade boards— exactly



the same but an inch narrower for better edge hold in firm snow. 3. The Oxygen Drift boards, with the same footprint as the Carbons but with glass instead of carbon fibre. They are a bit heavier and about 20% cheaper. We also offer ski crampons, poles, and some soft goods.

How will Drift be distributed in Europe?

We are stoked to be working with Good Question Supplies for European distribution. Eric and company have been amazing since we first spoke. We love how excited they are about Drift and contributing to backcountry travel across Europe.

What marketing do you have planned for this season?

Most of our marketing happens organically as word spreads from friend to friend. Happy customers are the best marketing. We love connecting with shops, brands, and filmmakers for giveaways, demos, etc. You can find us at Shops First Try. In addition to meeting great people in the industry, we use advertising and social media to connect with our Drift community and provide product reviews, tutorials, and snowboarding educational material. It may sound cliché, but Drift really only exists because of our love for the mountains and snowboarding. We love the community we have built with people who share that passion! ☺



Gigi by James North

BIG WIG INTERVIEW GIGI RÜF, SLASH BY GIGI

Gigi Rüb sits among the top table of snowboarding greats. Known for his expressive style which has now become iconic, Gigi has released revered video parts for the best part of a quarter of a century and still rides pro for brands including Dragon, Union Bindings, Mons Royale, TSG, Evoc and 686 for whom he has just debuted his new GORE-TEX 3L ATV Collection Pro model series. Not bad for a 42-year old father of two teenagers.

We'll touch on Gigi's pro career in this issue's Big Wig interview, but it's his snowboard company, Slash By GiGi - which becomes a teenager next year - that we're here to talk about. As well as riding professionally, Gigi owns and operates Slash independently and we pick his brains to see how one of the greatest to do it runs his own board company.

GiGi, please tell us the circumstances that led you to start Slash By Gigi Snowboards.

The circumstances were simple, the market offered different sorts of cambers but not camber itself. There were seemingly no boards available that would work in the field of performance we were pushing towards so hard - big mountain freestyle. Leading up to Slash I spent 15 years with three very uniquely orientated projects; Seven, Uninc and Volcom Snowboards were my previous board lines.

What is Slash's place on the market?

It's about hearing the train coming. I am not all anti-establishment, for me it's just about communicating happiness around the world.

What have you achieved with Slash?

To a certain extent, everything I've achieved with the brand is just a byproduct of my creative output and I'm lucky that this isn't limited or held back by the need for a certain direction or "feel" that comes with being part of an established board line or company.

Everything I've achieved with the brand is just a byproduct of my creative output and I'm lucky that this isn't limited or held back by the need for a certain direction or "feel" that comes with being part of an established board line or company

What were your biggest lessons learnt from COVID?

If you are in sports you tend to go about your own stuff anyway. If you didn't lose your focus, I'm sure you managed to remain content. From a company perspective, the post Covid years definitely weigh much heavier. Every process shows its vulnerability, but being a small independent company certainly has its benefits.

What's your approach to carry over?

In the years before I thought it was just an excuse for brands to pretend to be the sober ones, not giving in to the lifestyle, simply producing on demand. The internet alone floods the

In an oversaturated, fast-paced consumer world carry over allows brands, who really want to deliver a well curated and designed product to the market, the time to get it right and deliver it at a time that suits.

market without the pre-order gauge of how much shop floor demand there is. Now doing carry forward graphics is a cost / value thing and it actually allows smaller brands to bridge a creativity gap and innovate. What I would call the new order, in an oversaturated, fast-paced consumer world, carry over allows brands, who really want to deliver a well curated and designed product to the market, the time to get it right and deliver it at a time that suits.

Where are you manufacturing?

At Meditec in Tunisia and NBL in Poland.

Who works for the brand?

Old friend and collaborator Mathias who also designs for the Pirates is Slash's graphic designer. Recently my wife Steffi has been helping me out when I get swamped in the high times from October to December. Then I have Harry MT on payroll for marketing and social media. Harry's been with Slash for 4 years now. And then I have Jacco Bos who serves as our team manager, with his ear to the ground for recruitment.

As one of the few pro-rider owned and operated snowboard companies, what are the hardest things with the juggle?

This round is dedicated to all the teachers that told me or made me feel like I'd never amount to nothing.

Which brands are you currently working with as a pro rider?

686, Dragon, Union Bindings, Mons Royale, TSG and Evoc.

What projects will you work on this winter?

A collaboration drop with graffiti artist and graphic designer Thumbs, which we'll be dropping on a limited number of Slash boards and Union Custom House bindings early in 2024, so stay tuned. Last time we worked with Thumbs, he brought our Looney Tunes x 686 collab design to life, it sold out within 24 hours, so I'm excited to see how this one goes down.

I'll also be pushing our Apartment Collection forward. The idea for this was born in a derelict atelier in Innsbruck next door to our designer Mathias' studio. He commandeered the atelier with our friend and artist Jakob, where they mounted snowboard wood cores to the walls, threw paint and created one cohesive piece of art. The collection has been received really well at retail and so, going back to the carry over subject, I decided to carry this line forward, allowing me and Mathias to grow our TopART project from the existing Happy Place model to now include the ATV & Vertical shapes for 24/25.

Tell us more about TopART.

TopART is a high-quality sticker sheet that allows riders to mount snowboard-sized stickers to their board. It's something I'd been thinking about for a while and we brought the idea to life earlier this year. There's a sustainability angle; it allows customers to prolong the life of an old snowboard. Creativity and fashion are big parts of snowboard culture and just as snowboarders like new and exciting products, they are also increasingly aware of their carbon footprint, meaning updating a board just because the graphic is old is no longer very cool. I'll be working with artists and designers to bring their work to TopART; like my first collaboration with photographer Blotto. It's something I think retailers will be into as it gives their customers a cost-effective

way of repping their shop. We trialed it with our friends at CrazyShop from Spain and those guys love it. It's something different and interesting.

To accompany the TopART sticker, I launched a Happy Place TopART edition in January 2023. A blank version of our best-selling freestyle board, which when purchased with a roll of TopART gives the consumer a discount. I'm rolling out the TopART boards to include the ATV and Vertical for 24/25.



Gigi by Theo Ackworth

How did your fundraising mission go in the summer?

All summer I had different things on my plate to deal with. I had one EU Distro go bankrupt and another global distributor hasn't been doing good business. But I did break new ground and signed a US distributor with warehouses and a better set up for B2B using a Shopify database.

I am still out there trying to raise the funds. There's been some helpful advice from people reaching out and generally caring about what I do.

All in all it's sort of a hard time to make up my mind as to whether to remain as an independent or to become a worker for someone else, so as not to run the risk of taking food off the table of my family. We have lots of ideas that now need to wait for better cashflow, but I can proudly look back at my original Slash ATV, the so often copied Slash Straight and the significant influence I have had on how the shop floor looks today.

Where do you see Slash in 5 years time?

Hopefully in my sons' hands.



PROTECTIVE SPORTS PACKS

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- PFAS-free finish
- Hitting stores in FALL/WINTER 2024/25

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE TECHNICAL SNOWPACKS 24/25

Consumers are favouring backpacks that provide the right amount of technical and safety features delivered in a design as compact as possible. This has sent many best sellers back to the designer's room. By Rocio Enriquez.



The backpack is that piece of kit that can make a difference to your ride in many ways. It can keep you safe by carrying essential safety gear. It can enable longer riding sessions by comfortably carrying your board in the ascents. It is not a question of whether wearing a backpack or not on your day on the mountain, but of which type of backpack to wear. Customers make their demands known. Durability and lightweight are a given. High functionality is the priority. They want a backpack with well organised storage that is also easy to access, and thoughtful carry options. Safety features, such as back protection and compatibility with safety devices, are important. However, they are not looking for a backpack overloaded with gimmicks. Minimalist, uncluttered designs are rewarded. The perfect backpack is compact but with all the right technical advantages. This taps into one of the most appreciated factors in a technical backpack: versatility. The ability to use your backpack on and off the mountain, or to use it for many different sports, seals the deal for many consumers. Most brands' bestsellers fall into this category. Some examples are Mammut's Nirvana packs, Picture's Komit range, Dakine's Heli Pro pack, Nitro's Slash 25L, Black Diamond's Dawn Patrol 25, or Jones' DSCNT 24L. Versatile back packs promise the biggest growth too. Amplifi bets on their cross-season and multi-sports styles. DB has great expectations for their Snow Pro Backpack 32L. Mammut is giving their Nirvana packs a more modern look to secure the business from the younger riders. Picture is sprucing up the Komit packs with a new Cordura material. Black Diamond has redesigned their Circle Pack series, aimed for riders who seek a versatile, technical mountaineering pack.

"For those looking for a very light and functional touring backpack, our new Summit can hit the sweet spot!" Jan Sallawitz, Evoc

FW24/25 PACKS

There is a general focus on improving existing bestsellers for next winter. Storage, wearing comfort and compatibility with safety kit are the main areas of development. Mammut is improving the gear organisation in their Nirvana packs and including the option of a back protector. Ortovox has updated their famous Ascent ski touring backpack into the new Switchback backpack. Picture is adding a 34L style to their Komit range, designed for ski touring but also for the resort rider looking for more load capacity. Rossignol adds an ice axe holder and a back opening. DB highlights their Snow Pro Vest. "A utility vest for resort and side country with a possible integration of the Safeback system", explains Lasse Andersen, Snow Category Manager Db. Jones has completely redesigned their DSCNT. "The DSCNT 32L, 25L and 19L all have new shapes and the back panels have been re-contoured for a more ergonomic fit", announces Ruairi Collins. Additionally, the goggle pocket gets bigger, and they have added removable ice axe loops and front/back daisy loops for attaching gear. The 32L model also features an external bottle holder and a redesigned back panel opening. Evoc launches the new Summit. "For those looking for a very light and functional touring backpack, our new Summit can hit the sweet spot!", says Jan Sallawitz.

Dakine keeps the focus on their three main snow technical backpack lines: the Heli, the Mission and the more technically advanced Poacher series. "All those packs are built for maximum comfort. The padded shoulder straps, the ventilated moulded back panel, the adjustable waist and sternum strap give an ergonomic adjustable fit", says Rémi Chaussemiche. The Poacher models also offer compatibility with security devices. Black Diamond has redesigned the Circle Pack line. Their new 25L strikes a balance between the previous 22L and 30L versions. It features running-vest style shoulder straps to enhance fit and comfort, drawing inspiration from their expertise in technical running packs. The newly introduced 50L version offers a more voluminous style to cater for multi-day ski mountaineering adventurers.

Nylon and polyester remain the main materials in backpack construction, only now they are 100% recycled. Other materials used are Picture's new Cordura and DB's carbon paper and titanium, all recycled too. Nitro introduces a new fabric. "The Waxed Lizard is a durable waxed nylon fabric", says Ludwig Hargasser. Black Diamond focuses on the optimal balance between durability and light weight. Their Circle styles feature a 210D nylon with Dynex grid. This material claims to be ten times stronger than steel per weight while so light that it floats in water. For their alpine style Vapor 35L they use Challenge Ultra fabric in its Ultra 200 and Ultra 400 variants, known for their exceptional abrasion resistance. Water repellent coatings are free from environmentally harmful fluorocarbons (PFCs).

There is a strong trend of classy, sober solid colours, with black at the top of the preferences. "All of our pack models are black as it is the most universal color", says Ruairi Collins from Jones. Amplifi does the same, highlighting the part that a longer life cycle of a black product plays in sustainability. DB also bets big on black. Ortovox has made all their hip belts and shoulder straps in black, whatever the backpack main colour. Mammut adds marine and sapphire to black to complete their classic options. Dakine plays a bit with this palette, offering the Naval Academy, a combination of blue, red and grey, and Silver Lining, a black and white combo. The next favourite colours seem to be earthy tones. Mammut offers a seasonal story in marsh and quartz dust. Nitro's new Waxed Lizard fabric is a natural brown/greyish colour with small details in red. Ortovox chooses toned down earthy colours for their new styles. Rossignol adds light pink and beige to the ever present black. Dakine has a neat brown colour called Rubber. Their B4BC collaboration next winter is developed in a light green pattern on a faded white, inspired by the forest. Black Diamond's new Circle packs are offered in Sulphur Green and Carbon with highlights in Octane, tying in with their outerwear collection. There are some bright colours in next winter's catalogues too. DB offers the Falu Red, "a very red line-up that will make you more visible on the mountains", says ... Red is also Mammut's choice, pairing it with white on their Aenergy ST packs for a sportier look. Dakine proposes the Night Skyline, a multi colour and pop pattern that brings colourful vibes with an artistic application of different tones.

SUSTAINABILITY

The whole industry has made a great effort to implement sustainable materials, particularly recycled ones, but sustainability involves other important factors too. It is good to see that many brands are taking these other factors into consideration. Long lifespan of products is key, and building durable items with quality materials is the way to achieve

"The DSCNT 32L, 25L and 19L all have new shapes and the back panels have been re-contoured for a more ergonomic fit" Ruairi Collins, Jones

it. Longevity is reinforced by the ability to repair a backpack, giving it a second lease of life. Mammut, Nitro, DB and Amplifi offer repair services. Waste reduction is another important factor. Mammut, Nitro and Picture constantly optimise their pattern cutting to reduce waste. Picture is big on the upcycling philosophy, reusing the unavoidable remnants for upcycling projects, and offering tutorials to clients about how to repurpose the back packs into new accessories. DB also upcycles their remnant material. Social responsibility is also observed. Amplifi and Ortovox work with the Fair Wear foundation. DB has recently become a BCorp certified company. Dakine gets involved in actions that give back to the community. Their Glove for Glove programme collects old gloves from users to give them to people in need. Their collaboration with B4BC donates part of their benefits to research against breast cancer. They have also recently made donations to the Maui community, their cradle, after the devastating wildfires. Decarbonisation is on the list too. DB and Dakine work closely with their factories to reduce the ecological footprint. Amplifi is committed to reducing air miles where possible.



RETAILER SUPPORT

The marketing focus for this category is set mainly on the functionality of the product. Safety and versatility are important purchase drivers and brands make sure they communicate their products' capabilities loud and clear. Some campaigns use the product as the main vehicle, and others use their ambassadors to tell their story. Dakine relies on their team riders heavily.

Evoc focuses on light and functional ski touring. "We will roll out a campaign together with our athletes and the product managers who developed this new backpack category", announces Jan Sallawitz. DB run a YouTube series called "Pack Heavy, Chase Light" telling their brand's story through the people they work with. Black Diamond will offer activity-focused stories that aim to be inspirational and educational.

There is a lot of investment in marketing materials that will carry the message. Picture highlights their videos with their product manager presenting the backpacks. They also produce stop-motion videos of assembled backpacks. Evoc develops graphic animations to explain the product. DB also produces online tutorials and demos. Dakine has developed a premium dealers' programme in which they allocate a special budget for tailored marketing actions for each participating shop. This could be anything, from events, to window displays, or digital marketing activations. Black Diamond has a similar 360° approach, comprising product PR, window displays, and brand stories told by their ambassadors. There are also specific POS initiatives, such as Mammut's merchandising aid, Dakine's new POS program, or DB's window activation to showcase their Snow Vest. Evoc offers modular, customisable displays. Mammut adds some retailer training in the mix. Nitro supports their retailers by alleviating their stock holding. "In Germany we have a big warehouse where the products are always in stock and ready to be delivered", says Ludwig Hargasser. After a challenging year and a half, inventories seem to be at a satisfactory level for all brands interviewed. There is sufficient stock to offer good availability, deliveries are timely, and relationships between brands, factories and logistic platforms seem back in health. ©

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

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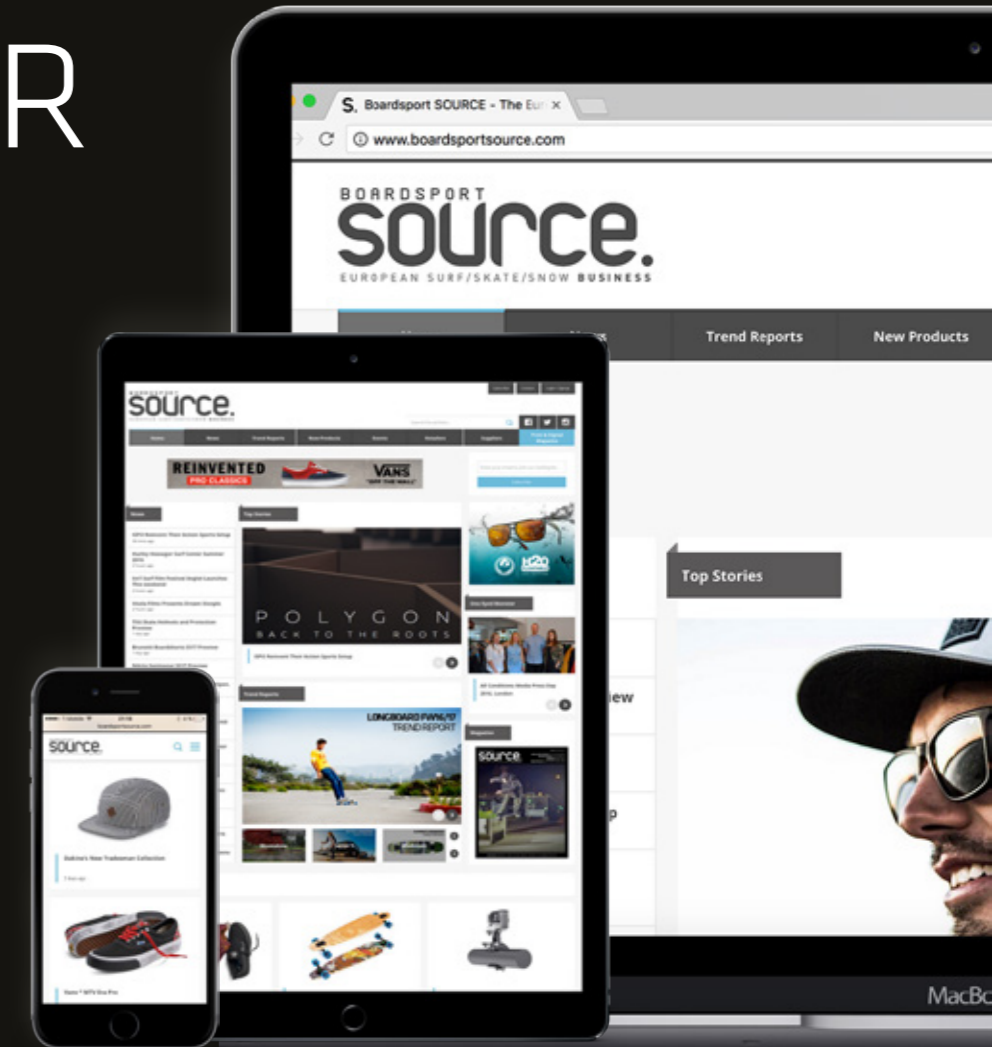
HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Multi-sports and cross-season back packs.
- 2 Focus on functionality and safety.
- 3 Minimalist, clean designs.
- 4 Classic muted colours.

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IPD

New on the surf scene, U.S. based IPD International is joining the market with the intention of taking surfing back to its roots, championing the culture that built surfing to what it is today. We spoke with IPD's co-founder Mark Simpson to learn more about how the brand is getting on.

IPD is a movement standing for progression, inclusion, and authenticity. Originally used as a stamp of approval by the finest minds in board building, we're viewing the iconic logo through a modern lens. The icon was one of Bob Hurley's (of Hurley clothing) first trademarks as a surfboard shaper in Huntington Beach, California.

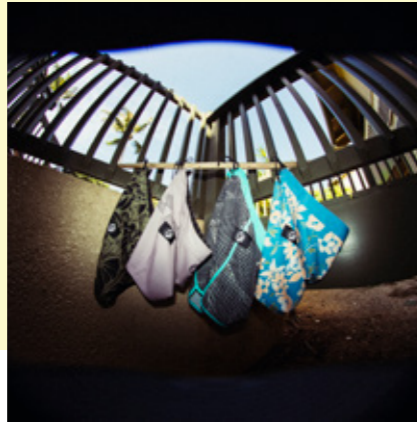
We're setting out to reignite surf culture. At its essence, surfing is about having fun, riding waves, and celebrating everything that made us fall in love with this sport and lifestyle. Our products serve as a canvas for fun and individuality, constructed from timeless silhouettes, comfortable fabrics, and signature details.

Our team of surfers and ambassadors speak to some of the unsung heroes of the sport. The underdogs. The guy that is always out surfing when the waves are pumping, but also has to get to work. The blue-collar surfers who live the lifestyle most of us can relate to. Always respectful and humble in the line-up, these surfers are scattered all over the globe, and we are here to help tell their stories.

Like stated earlier, IPD is a movement. A brand. A collective. We're all about the family and the movement more than the icon.

What was the thinking behind the launch of the brand?

Over the past 3 decades we've seen the



surf industry evolve from what was once a cottage industry with surf shop culture, inclusion, and unique attributes, to more of a mainstream, mass market appeal, which we felt took away the personality of surf culture. We wanted to help bring that back and champion it for future generations.

What sets IPD apart from its competitors?
Our distribution model is different from much of the industry in that we are singularly focused on core/specialty/independently owned retailers. We do not distribute through department stores, sporting goods chains, or mall-based specialty stores. We remain true to the core. Our only other point of distribution is our own digital platform, www.ipdsurf.com.

Who is on the Management team at IPD?
IPD has four founders; Mark Simpson, Seth McKinney, Erik Ingersoll, and Bill Hurley, all who bring decades of industry experience to the brand.

How has the brand been received since it launched?

We looked at the North American marketplace and singled out the top 50 accounts we wanted to partner with, met with them and shared our proposition. By our launch date of June 20, 2021, we were able to lock in 46 of the 50 accounts and we feel strongly that was as good of a launch by a new brand our industry has seen. Since then, we have expanded to over 100 accounts, 130 doors in North America, as well as many important international regions including Japan, South Korea, Israel, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, Ecuador, and Mexico with a few more regions in the works.

What are the current best sellers in your line up?

Our key categories have been boardshorts, walkshorts, tee shirts and headwear. While



a smaller portion of our line, our button-ups have had incredible sell-through at retail which has been a pleasant surprise for us.

How do you see the market for surf apparel developing over the next few years?

With the recent consolidation of the Boardriders brands, nearly all of the larger heritage brands are now owned and ran by licencing models. While certainly increasing top-line revenue through lower channels of distribution and mass market retailers, this model has been proven time and again to alienate the core/specialty consumer who wants authenticity that can only be found with endemic brands, of which there aren't many left. We feel this opens up a wide range of opportunity for our brand in the marketplace in which we specialize.

When and how are you looking to launch into Europe?

We are doing our very best to ensure our brand health and profitability in North America prior to committing to partnering in the 2 largest markets outside of NA, Europe and Australia. We have been talking with potential future partners and will continue to do so while we continue to gain strength on the home front. ☺



BOOOMTAG®
DIGITAL LOCKER ROOM

BOOOMTAG

Booomtag have utilised NFC technology to enable brands and users to connect via a single product registration platform whilst simultaneously offering a lost and found service. We grabbed the Dutch team behind the brand to chat about how Booomtags can be used to interact with our favourite brands whilst keeping our precious gear safe and sound.

Please tell us about Booomtag

Think of Booomtag® as a Digital Locker Room, designed exclusively for the sports and leisure industry. Integrating NFC/QR Booomtags into your sports products lets your end user easily register their gear to their personal Digital Locker with just the tap of a smartphone.

With the Digital Locker Room platform, we strengthen the bond between the user and their favourite brands and foster an active community. At the same time, we help gather invaluable insights about the market, user preferences, and product trends. These previously unavailable insights contribute to shaping the future of sports manufacturers.

What benefits does it bring to the consumer?

With a simple scan, consumers can access vital product information (POS) and register their gear to their free Booomtag Account, also known as their personal Digital Locker, protecting it against theft or loss.

This game-changing feature provides a comprehensive overview of their gear, proving ownership and enabling direct communication with their favourite brands for spare parts, product life extension, and warranty claims, all through a single-account login. All personal data connected to the product is shielded by the Booomtag Gateway, making a consumer connection possible without displaying the personal data.

Say goodbye to scattered information, and multiple logins, and hello to seamless and secured connectivity in the sports community.



And to the brands?

We help you elevate your brand's marketing game and unlock a new realm of insights and engagement. Thanks to the seamlessly integrated Booomtags, coupled with user-friendly product registration, and the many user advantages, our clients enjoy an exceptionally high product registration conversion rate that surpasses the industry average by a mile.

Brace yourself for our client dashboard. Offering an extensive range of data and providing a comprehensive understanding of your target audience. We can create user profiles based on (anonymised) user and product data, offering a holistic view of preferences, interests, product life span, and buying behaviour.

Witness the full spectrum of your products' journey, as Booomtag® reveals valuable insights about your primary users and sheds light on future (second-hand) users through product transfers across Lockers.

With Dynamic Content on your product pages, you can effortlessly communicate news and updates to your end users while respecting their opt-out preferences for newsletters. Rest assured, we prioritise data privacy and adhere to GDPR regulations, ensuring the utmost respect for yours and your clients' information.

By joining Booomtag®, you establish a strong foundation for your Connected Strategy, ensuring compliance with the communication of European Digital Product Passport (DPP) requirements, and empowering effective damage control in the event of a product recall.

Why do you focus on the snowsports industry?

Snowboarding gear is valuable, prone to loss, and often left unattended, making it an attractive target for thieves. An integrated Booomtag® acts as a digital guardian, rendering the product worthless for thieves and providing multiple options for finders to contact the owner or access important SOS/ICE phone numbers. Any finder of the product can easily reach out to the owner, ensuring their safety or obtaining crucial medical information in emergencies.

We understand the importance of seamless integration and user-friendly technology. That's why our NFC/QR Booomtags can be effortlessly



incorporated into snowboarding equipment, ensuring a hassle-free integration into our clients' strategy and production processes.

How will you be marketing Booomtag® to the snowboard market?

While we will have a strong presence at major outdoor and sports events throughout the year, we believe that the true strength of our marketing lies in the hands of our esteemed clients – the brands that incorporate Booomtag® and proudly showcase their exceptional sports products.

We believe our marketing approach for the sports market should be multifaceted. We combine direct consumer marketing efforts, social media advertising, athlete endorsements, and event sponsorships to ensure maximum exposure and engagement. By working closely with our clients and leveraging the power of digital platforms, we position Booomtag® as the go-to solution for consumers seeking enhanced safety and security for their equipment.

What other sports categories will you be targeting?

At our core, we firmly believe in the power of a unified platform which caters to all sports and all brands, ensuring that our clients receive unparalleled insights while delivering the ultimate single login consumer experience. Our focal point revolves around gear sports, leisure, apparel, and workwear/safety products, guaranteeing a laser focus on the essentials as we stay true to our sports-centric vision. ☺

2 CHOICES



SOK



ETERLOU

1 GOAL



PLUM splitboard

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

SPLITBOARD HARDWARE 24/25

During Covid, it seemed nearly everyone bought a splitboard and went into the wild. Since then, however, a mix of external and internal factors have shook the splitboard industry. Yet throughout all of these changes, manufacturers have never stopped innovating, building, grinding, testing, and releasing new gear. And while we don't know how this winter will shape up in Europe and beyond, we can take a moment to open our eyes and enjoy the fresh goods brands are working on for next season. Get ready for an info-loaded tour of the splitboard manufacturing landscape. Ladies and gents, welcome to next winter's Splitboard Hardware 24/25 Retail Buyer's Guide, brought to you by **Matthieu Perez**.



NEVE - SUMMER

WHAT'S UP SPLITBOARD WORLD?

Let's start with an in-the-face statement from Kemper Owner Jib Hunt: "With the addition of no snow in the northeast of the United States and in Europe, the snowboard industry as a whole took a big hit for the 23/24 season. I believe who makes it through the aftermath of this year will be set up for future growth and stability. If a snowboard brand tells you they are doing great, they are probably not telling the truth". The cards are set, but the table is empty. Who wants to play?

Rossignol's Snowboard Category Manager Arnaud Repa confirms that "23/24 pre-orders saw splitboard sales decline with the return of a more mechanized snowboarding. But the underlying tendency to ride away from the groomed courses is still there. Especially since the weather conditions are so variable that the slightest snowfall will cause an influx of splitboard riders for the day, no matter the time of year". So hopefully, with some snow, good days are ahead.

Key equipment also emphasizes that the splitboard market has had some challenges lately. But despite the situation, the hardboot brand has seen strong growth in sales in the last three seasons since making its debut. "Without a unique product that improves the overall splitboard experience, it would most likely have looked a lot different for us", says Product Manager Christophe 'Tal' Etallaz.

Amplid sees an evolution in how brands and riders are approaching the category. Legend of the art and trendsetter Peter Bauer says, "It seems the splitboard consumer is more willing to ride experimental shapes – until a couple season's back they were quite conservative and only wanted

"The year 2024 marks 30 years of Nitro Splitboarding since the introduction of the Tour 169cm Splitboard back in 1994. Today, Nitro offers a refined line of splitboarding gear. Starting with a board program of various shapes that are dialed-in for all types of touring and terrain, including custom fitted skins"

Tommy Delago, Nitro

a traditional big mountain shape. Now swallowtails, sparrow tails, and experimental 'uphill board concepts' are getting more and more popular".

Speaking of evolution, we can be grateful for what pioneers like Tommy Delago and Nitro brought to the market decades ago. He reminds us that, "The year 2024 marks 30 years of Nitro Splitboarding since the introduction of the Tour 169cm Splitboard back in 1994. Today, Nitro offers a refined line of splitboarding gear. Starting with a board program of various shapes that are dialed-in for all types of touring and terrain, including custom fitted skins".

Let's stick around the pioneers and celebrations for a moment. This winter marks the 20th anniversary of Dupraz snowboards and the D1 shape, which has been—and continues to be—a true game changer in the snowboard industry. Serge Dupraz has been shaping snowboards for 40 years so the man



KORUA

knows what's up: "From our side, we see the interest for our shapes growing year after year. Nowadays, people are really looking for the best quality and cost performance in a product that will offer them the best experience on the slopes – this is exactly what Dupraz brings to the table with the D1, a unique snowboard which excels in all conditions". A legend carving toward another milestone.

A kindred spirit to Dupraz, Korua will stay focused on its core customers and spreading snowsurfing among the masses despite "Wintersports facing ecological & political challenges in DACH markets", says Co-founder Jerry Niedermeier.

"With the change in the splitboard market and the difficult winter in Europe we are dedicated to supporting and working together with all our partners" Ruairi Collins, Jones

Silbaerg has a similar assessment, noting that the splitboard market has become very competitive and especially in German-speaking countries. Founder Jörg Kaufmann states, "Inflation and the decline in purchasing power are putting pressure on demand. Silbaerg is therefore focusing more and more on the niche in the high-price segment and is focusing on B2C via its own webshop".

Moonchild, as a small brand, remains committed to its niche within the market, specializing in freeride and powder boards. Co-founder Jure Sodja notes, "While the snowboard industry evolves, we continue to work diligently to develop high-quality products that cater to the needs of our dedicated customer base".

Borealis moved to its new factory for its 23-24 collection, and the whole line has seen a very positive development. Owner Benjamin Hall explains, "We shifted from a premium to an ultra-premium brand, focusing only on quality, durability (4-year guarantee), and performance. For 2024-25, our three splitboard models are carryovers from 2023-24. We tend to keep our models unchanged for 2 seasons unless we change something in the construction for better performance".

Talking about quality, Never Summer is producing top tier products that last a long time. "With the pressure life can bring, getting up on the mountain to slide around offers a wonderful distraction from the outside world," says Tony Sasgen, international sales manager. "When buying a new gear customers want to have the comfort that their money is being well spent on products that last. Therein lies the opportunity and we fit that description of products that are built to last".

Part of the shakers and movers category of brands, Kemper is making a big and exciting move for 24/25. "We are offshoring all snowboard and splitboard manufacturing from China to our own manufacturing facility in Heber City, Utah, USA," explains Hunt. "This will give us a better chance to control our destiny and to become agile with the highs and lows of production. We will be taking on production for a select number of snowboard brands as well".

Small label Gara Splitboards ends this chapter with a relevant analysis. Gara Owner Ota Tyl questions the current landscape of the industry: "For me it is very surprising that the bigger brands didn't learn anything from last season, and again already start the competition to overflow [the market from the beginning of September, when outside is 30°C, glaciers remain closed for at least two more months, and even loyal customers are still on the bike, hiking, and climbing. My opinion is that brands should push back their production and delivery calendars by at least two months. Customers are thinking about what they will do tomorrow, not what they will do in the next 4 months. They shop for what they need now, not what they will need". Anyone ready for a change?

WHAT'S NEW WITH DECKS?

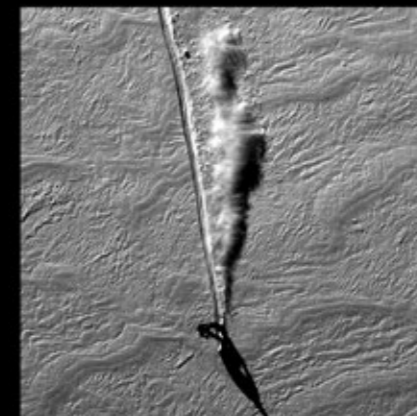
Lib Tech's Orca takes the soft snow directional performance of Travis's Natural Selection winning pillow blaster and makes it tour ready. Pete Saari elaborates, "For all our splits, we add significantly more Paulownia to drop weight and with the Orca we modified the tail curve and contours and shape slightly to make it ascend and clip friendly. Travis loves it and it's become a favorite with our crew". Lib's new stick is the Escalator, a short, light, micro-camber model. Lib's scientists went as light as possible on the paulownia core and reduced the size down to 153, targeting medium and large boarders. Saari adds, "We used a very low 3mm camber to help with skin hook up on ascents and, along with the large floaty nose, maximize fun and float on the down". Full program.

Amplid updated its award-winning Milligram, one of the lightest splitboards on the market, with a completely new shape concept. A new experimental shape came to light in the line, the Metamorph. It is a very short 155 board, but with lots of effective edge. This board is designed to master two tasks: being superlight and fast on the way up, and very nimble but stable in critical situations on the way down. Full program part two.

Since hardboot setups are becoming more and more popular, Amplid changed how it reinforces boards in the binding area. According to ex-hardboot wizard Peter Bauer, this prevents breakage and pressure dents and was needed "Because hardboot bindings transfer quite a lot of power onto the board".

For Arbor, while the Landmark and Veda offer an everyday splitboard feel, the Satori is the volume shift model. The Satori has a wider waist width, which eliminates toe and heel drag and allows the rider to downsize a few centimetres to reduce swing weight and have more manoeuvrability in tight trees and transitions. The wider waist and larger uprise Fenders also give added float in powder while the larger Grip Tech adds more edge control

UNLOCK A NEW DIMENSION!



NEW MODELS COMING SOON

GUARANTEED HAPPY CUSTOMERS!



“For all our splits, we add significantly more Paulownia to drop weight and with the Orca we modified the tail curve and contours and shape slightly to make it ascent and clip friendly. Travis loves it and it’s become a favorite with our crew” Pete Saari, Libtech

in variable snow conditions. All Arbor x Kohla SplitGrip skins are pre-cut to custom-fit to each model for out-of-the-box functionality. Full program part three.

Nitro has an impressive line of seven splitboards which range from the super lightweight Vertical for the up-hill oriented, high-alpine athlete to the Slash powder shape with its 3D surftech base shaped for those more focused on the ride down. In between, models like the new Nomad and Volta, now featuring cam-out camber and longer noses, set the benchmark for the most affordable board to get into splitboarding. The Team Split is the favorite among the backcountry freestyle riders, built solid and strong to go big. The new Squash is the perfect hybrid, a pow board with a long nose and swallow tail, yet the perfect sidecut to lay down turns when the resort is your destination for the day. Then you have the Dopperegangler, combining a high-end construction and well-rounded performance without breaking your bank. With the money they save, customers can then buy a Miniganger (available in size 134 and now also 141cm) and bring the kids on the next hike, making it a family experience. One for all.

Rossignol is adding a size 145 to the Escaper Split series to reach a younger and lighter-built audience. The brand is also reducing the prices of its high-end models by 3-7%. For the 24/25 line, Weston redesigned the Range and Rise, its men’s and women’s all-mountain category splitboards.

Korua sticks with snowsurf shapes in lengths suitable for male and female riders. Burton brings 3 new splitboard models. The High Fidelity Split is a big mountain shape in collaboration with Ben Ferguson and Kimmy Fasani. It’s inspired by the terrain found along the Natural Selection Tour. The Fish 3D Split, marks the first time the brand is offering a 3D shape in its splitboard line. And finally the Hometown Hero Smalls Split is the first kids’ splitboard from Burton. One for all part two.

Stranda is launching the Biru Split. It’s a volume-shifted shape for sidecountry and shorter, low aspect touring. It features a fat and floaty camber-dominant shape for fun and easy powder riding. It’s based on its award-winning volume-shifted Biru.



SPARK R&D



TUR

Gara will introduce a new series of splitboards for next year with the new Enduro II and Safari II. This evolution is focused on creating a user-friendly experience, especially when transitioning from riding to hiking mode. The board’s design saves weight without affecting performance or ride-feel.

Moonchild has developed a hybrid snowboard named Atlas. This board can be used as a splitboard for climbing or as a powsurf or powboard for riding. You can switch between modes in less than a minute, even with your gloves on. The primary innovation is the traction control plate, which seamlessly integrates with regular splitboard bindings’ pucks, of course, the board’s shape is also critical.

Fjell is working on some new shapes and more lengths in existing models. It is also further developing its Insert Traction Pad System for binding less riding with solids and splitboards alike.

Silbaerg carries over its Splitomat which has good driving characteristics in powder, on hard passages and even on slopes thanks to its patented A.L.D. Technology.

Nidecker carries over its award winning Escape Split, a versatile and performance-driven all-mountain splitboard. And Gnu carries over the Banked Country and Barrett splits. Both are effortless climbers and smooth riders, featuring a floaty nose, C3 camber-dominant contour, mild taper, and a lightweight paulownia and aspen core.

Telos is carrying over its full range. European Sales Manager Kolja G. Keetman confirms, “We have a solid stock for Europe and if we’re sold out we can usually react fast and ship some boards from our production”.

For next season, Dupraz will carry over the premium carbon D-tour splitboard. The brand will also be introducing a new split model with classic construction at a more affordable price point. The D-tour will receive a new top sheet with protection against pole and crampon strikes while skinning. It will also feature small improvements to the wood core and other materials and the brand will continue to manufacture its boards in Europe using high-quality European raw materials and adhering to European ethical standards.

For the 24/25 Snowboard line, Never Summer is keeping the Split series the same, only updating its graphics. Tony Sasgen explains, “A lot of work, time, and tooling went into the current split line in the last few seasons so making additional changes is not necessary from our perspective. For us, this market is small overall and your splitboard is not typically the model you buy new every season or two”.

Jones’ strategy is to support dealers across Europe. The brand carried several models over to help retailers with their own sales and inventory strategies. “With the change in the splitboard market and the difficult winter in Europe we are dedicated to supporting and working together with all our partners”, says Ruairi Collins, European marketing manager.

WHAT’S NEW WITH BINDERS?

This winter, Burton is launching the unisex Step On® Split binding, which uses tech based on the Spark R&D Tesla system. It features Voile puck compatibility and can be paired with Photon Step On® or Felix Step On® softboot models.

Nitro will unveil the new Vertical ST, which was developed in partnership with Spark R&D in the US. It features the new Smooth Travel tech on touring brackets and heel risers, Übergrip toe straps featuring recycled Vibram



VOY



EASY SPLITBOARDING.

An outdoor experience is never just black or white - once you set up your gear, it doesn’t matter if you go for the descent of your life or simply enjoy nature while hiking up a rolling hill after work.





NIDECKER

rubber for best fit with any boot shape, and cable-reinforced ratchet straps and connectors to maximize reliability in the backcountry. "With the addition of an EVA baseplate dampening layer and real handmade ankle straps, the Vertical rides just like a regular snowboard binding", assures Tommy Delago.

Plum will carry over most of the product range for 24/25 to avoid selling products with significant discounts and try to clean inventory as much as possible. It will then be back in the game on 25/26 with innovations.

For Spark R&D, this will be year three of ST Tech with updated color options and new colored puck options. The brand did a limited run of colored pucks in 23/24 and it was quite popular. Touring in hardboots continues to grow in popularity and the product team will be working to further address this next season.

At Karakoram, the biggest innovation is the new pad and baseplate construction of its Connect line. The new pads aim to maintain edge to edge feel while allowing for more nose/tail roll and a greater range of motion. It also stands to provide a better feel of the board's flex.

Rossignol continues to collaborate with Plum, the French splitboard binding company, for Xavier De Le Rue's signature model XV split. Plum also brought in a more affordable splitboard binding model last season through collective work between SP Bindings and Voilé under the name Escaper Splitboard Multientry. The brand will also continue to do this for 24/25.

WHAT'S NEW WITH BOOTIES?

For 24/25, Deeluxe is introducing an all new backcountry/splitboard-specific boot called the Spark Fusion. The boot features a significantly smaller footprint and a design optimized for skinning, hiking, and riding. It features the proven Rock Guard that provides protection from rocks and ice and a snow shield that protects the lower part of the boot from snow, ice, and moisture to keep feet dry.

Nitro still has the Incline, loaded with technical features like a Vibram outsole with Ice-trac sole technology, and a ride & relax option. It's strong and responsive enough to handle all semi-rigid crampons. For 24/25, the Incline also offers a zippered gusset to keep out the elements as well as a redesigned liner construction and footbed shape.

Key Equipment's sideways and heelside flex on the Disruptive have been updated to create a more comfortable feel while riding. This has been achieved by switching the cuff material to polypropylene, which is also substantially lighter than the previously used material. "The boots have proven to be exceptional on groomers as well. They combine the plushness and damping properties of softboots with the added advantages of precise control and direct power transfer that you'd expect from an alpine carving boot," adds product wizard Christophe Etallaz.

WHAT'S IN PERSPECTIVE?

Karakoram touts its "Built For The Ride" campaign. From Karakoram's

start, the brand has been driven by the goal of making bindings that give snowboarders the best ride down. This campaign will highlight how its products are engineered to give snowboarders the feel of responsive, damp, comfortable turns wherever they want to take their gear.

The biggest development for Jones's manufacturing is the Fair Trade certification that its factory received at the end of summer. This means that its factory meets the strict standards that Fair Trade requires. According to European Marketing Manager Ruairi Collins, "We aim to reduce the prices of our products where possible without sacrificing their performance or the treatment of those who produce them".

In the same field, Weston is now one of less than five snowboard manufacturers that is B Corp Certified. Environmental stewardship is at the forefront of what the brand does and sustainability is one of its key value pillars.

Spark R&D will continue to spread the stoke for splitboarding. Splitboarding is fun and can be enjoyed in a lot of different ways. "However you choose to do that is cool, what we try to do is encourage people to get out and go splitboarding," claims Marketing Manager Dan Ventura.

Key Equipment is shifting its focus to emphasize that the brand's boots are versatile and not limited to splitboard mountaineering only. Etallaz proposes, "Splitboarding has so much more to offer than just gnarly lines. After all, most of us venture into the mountains for the sheer joy of spending quality time with friends, hopefully riding some powder, and making the most of the terrain based on the day's conditions".

For Never Summer, early demand tends to be strong. The brand has always built to order based on what its distributors and US retailers order so there are not many leftovers. Tony Sasgen concludes, "We will see how the season stacks up with snow and by the spring season we hope to see our partners in a good place in terms of inventory. Only time will tell. Fingers crossed for a solid winter".

David Lambert at West is excited by the up-and-coming generation: "I see a lot of enthusiastic people on snow, which is a good sign for the coming years. I think that snowboard brands should look much more forward and less behind. We are giving more control of the brand to the youngest generation, because for some things, they know better". Is it not a natural generation turnover? Let's make sure we give them the right tools, knowledge, and a playground in good condition! In the meantime, get together with your friends, get out there, skin up, and ride down! ☺

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

BOARDSPORTSOURCE.COM

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Slowburn
- 2 Leftover stocks
- 3 Experimental shapes
- 4 Weight and tech battle
- 5 Youngster offer

BACKCOUNTRY MAG
**GEAR GUIDE
SELECT** 2024



BOREALIS SPLIT LINE

Sustainably-Built & High Performance

*Structured Electra Graphite & DS4001 Bases
DNA Bioplastic Topheet | Sustainable Wood Cores
Zero-COV Resin | Liquid Sidewalls | Recycled Steel Edges
Carbon Power Strips | Triax Glass | Glass Impact Pads
Phantom Hooks | Biodegradable Wax | 4-Year Guarantee*



10 YEARS 2014-2024



SUPER73

Fusing motorcycle heritage with youth culture and boasting A-list celebrities and professional athletes as its customers, Super73 is quickly becoming one of the world's most recognizable and popular electric vehicle brands. We chat to the US team about its UK distribution plans, best performing lines and why everyone needs to get hold of a Super73 bike.

Please can we have a recap of the brand since it was founded.

Founded in California in 2016, SUPER73 has quickly grown into one of the most recognisable electric vehicle brands in the world with a passionate customer base including A-list celebrities, professional athletes, and many more. SUPER73 is a lifestyle adventure brand, fusing motorcycle heritage and youth culture to create products which stand the test of time and adventure. The SUPER73 team have disrupted the e-bike industry to bring bikes which are technology led and community focussed to inspire adventure and bring people together.

Could we have an overview of the product range.

SUPER73 Electric Bikes lead the charge. Covering three distinct categories, the Z-Series (Neighbourhood) offers friendly entry-level electric motorbikes that pack a punch and are perfect for getting around town.

The S-Series (Urban) are multi-purpose urban e-bikes that are equipped with bright LED headlights and rear brake lights. The R-Series (Rugged) features the most powerful drive system, full suspension, and swing-arm aluminium alloy frames. In addition to the bikes is an extensive platform for customisation with a host of accessories to create a unique ride and a range of Apparel and Gloves to represent the brand.



What is the brand's USP?

The SUPER73 bikes have been specifically developed by experienced electric vehicle engineers who have put technology at the forefront of the brand. The team have worked hard to create bikes which they believe are industry definers with the most dependable batteries and motors which are proprietary to the brand. SUPER73 have community at the heart of the brand and ensure that whoever the rider, the experience is consistent and always most enjoyable.

What are the current best sellers in the line up?

1: R-Adventure (Performance Adventurer. AKA The Rugged Runner) The Adventure Series flagship model and everything you could possibly want from our Performance Adventurer. RRP £4'999
2: S-Adventure (The Cross-Terrain Conqueror) Featuring the classic styling and heritage of our S2 series, just with a little more grit. Sleek enough for the streets, but rugged enough for the trails. £4'199
3: ZX (The Comfortable Commuter) Featuring a lighter aircraft-grade aluminium frame and removable battery. Improved ergonomics and a more upright riding position makes the ZX one of our most comfortable bikes to ride. £2'799

How is the brand distributed in the UK?

Super73 will be managed through the Hectic brand group here in the UK.

What opportunities do you see for your brand in the market going forward?

The UK market is increasingly embracing e-mobility solutions as a means of reducing emissions and promoting sustainable transportation. Super73's electric bikes align with this trend, offering a clean and eco-friendly mode of transportation for both urban and rural areas.

How will you be marketing the brand?

Our main focus will be working closely

with existing, and future accounts to help establish Super73 in their stores whilst giving customers the opportunity to try a Super73 bike for themselves. For us, this is the key – getting bums on seats. We'll be hosting demo days with accounts across the UK to give customers the opportunity to try a fleet of SUPER73 demo bikes and experience the technology and thrill firsthand. We will also be looking at tradeshow opportunities across a range of audiences & interests within UK market. Whether you're a core surf store or an independent E-Bike store, our Super73 bikes will give your customer that same buzz, so we are looking forward to getting in front of new accounts who are looking to inspire and create adventure and community.

Why should retailers stock Super 73?

SUPER73 is born from the desire to inspire and create adventure and community, we are an American lifestyle adventure brand fusing motorcycle heritage and youth culture. Super73 is unlocking doors for many lifestyle retailers to have the opportunity to align with a brand, a community and product which is fast-growing, exciting, and totally unique within the e-bike industry. The SUPER73 product range offers scope for retailers across urban/street, action sports and Bike / Power Sports markets. The product range is suitable for a variety of audiences and terrains. ☺



SHEICO Group

SHEICO - OCENA

When wetsuit manufacturing powerhouse Sheico tells us they're creating a 100% neoprene free bio-based foam that has Neoprene-level standards in elasticity and durability, we listened. Find out all about their new material, named OCENA. Interview with Director of Sales, Jeff Shiue.

Can you give us a brief history of Sheico?

SHEICO is a professional manufacturer of water sports apparel. Established over 50 years ago, we developed our own neoprene know-how and used it to revolutionize the wetsuit industry through vertical integration. In the process, SHEICO became the largest wetsuits manufacturer in the world. We have developed innovative proprietary technologies for the production of wetsuits, survival suits, personal flotation devices, performance fabrics, and sports apparel. The company possesses the advantage of vertical integration over its competitors. Excellence in R&D, quality, and manufacturing capabilities allow SHEICO to respond rapidly to trends in the market and satisfy our customers' needs.

How is the global wetsuit market performing?

From 2021 to 2022, COVID caused a global boom in outdoor sports and the wetsuit market benefitted. Currently, many brands are adjusting back to normal market demand and have high inventory levels. However, we anticipate significant upswings in the global wetsuit market starting in 2024.

Sheico are about to launch a new 100% neoprene free bio-based foam called OCENA, can you give us more detail on what's it made from and how its produced?

OCENA is a new foam crafted by Sheico using FSC-certified natural rubber, and is completely Neoprene-free. Enriched with oyster shell



powder and soybean oil, OCENA's bio-based materials are USDA-certified. What's more, OCENA contains recycled carbon black derived from scrap tires, utilizing Eco-Infinic pyrolysis technology. OCENA is the new gold standard for eco-friendly foam in the wetsuit industry.

What is the benefit of using soybean oil and oyster shell powder in the manufacturing process?

Soybean oil and oyster shell powder in OCENA reduce our reliance on petrochemicals. These bio-based materials are renewable and allow for long term sustainability.

Can you describe the physical performance of OCENA Foam?

Drawing upon Sheico's 40+ years of foaming expertise, our aim is to create a natural rubber foam comparable in performance to Neoprene. With OCENA, we've achieved Neoprene-level standards in elasticity and durability, making it ideal for wetsuits used in surfing and diving activities.

Will OCENA be solely for use in the manufacture of wetsuits, or can its use be applied to other product lines?

Based on our current tests, OCENA is not only suitable for surfing and diving wetsuits but also ideal for water-related accessories such as hoods and gloves.

Sheico's company social mission is 'give back what you take from society'. Can you explain how this is incorporated when it comes to manufacturing your products and in relation to Sheico's Charitable Foundation?

As a socially responsible enterprise that values ESG, SHEICO has been donating to charities and participating in community development for over 20 years. In recent years, we have also invested in energy-saving equipment and carried out various carbon footprint reduction activities as a way of showing our dedication to nature and society. By the end of 2022, the



group obtained third-party verification of the ISO 14067 Carbon Footprint Standard and completed the first version of the ISO 14064-1 Greenhouse Gas Quantification Verification report. Currently, we are implementing the ISO 50001 Energy Management System.

Sheico partner with a number of high-profile board sports brands, the likes of Patagonia, Billabong, and O'Neill. How do you forge these partnerships and maintain your relationships with them?

Sheico provides one-stop production services for our brand partners, encompassing knitting fabric, rubber foam, and finished goods. We offer a tailored manufacturing approach, enabling brands to create products that reflect their unique identity by using distinctive materials and techniques. In response to the growing environmental consciousness around the world, we actively develop eco-friendly materials like Aqua α (water-based laminating glue), sustainable fabrics, and OCENA, a Neoprene alternative. More importantly, Sheico ensures quality and performance by carefully controlling each step of the vertically integrated production process, allowing us to meet the standards of even the most demanding brands. ☺

NEW PRODUCTS

01 / PACSAFE GO ANTI-THEFT SLING PACK

The perfect accessory for someone on the GO! The GO sling pack is ideal for city day trips, long walks or sightseeing, music festivals, bike rides, or a night out - handy, functional, and not to mention stylish, way of carrying all your day trip essentials. This product is made with post-consumer recycled polyester (rPET), equivalent to recycled plastic bottles. PACSAFE.EU



01

02 / ANON MFI FACE MASKS

Anon's MFI Face Masks provide effortless coverage by magnetically connecting to your goggles. They range from neck warmers to helmet hoods and balaclavas, offering hassle-free protection from the neck up. Forget about ill-fitting masks that bunch up or cause moisture build up. These masks, wearable up or down, connect directly to your goggles for a seamless mountain experience. BURTON.COM



02

03 / BRETHREN NECKWARMER

Brethren have simplified their 'Robbin Hood' range this year, removing the additional embroidery and replacing it with a simple woven label. They have also extended the length of the balaclava overall, to give a more relaxed fit. Brethren also have more colourways available, varying from muted tones to much more vibrant options, accompanied with matching beanies. Something for everyone. BRETHREN-APPAREL.COM



03

04 / DEELUXE TEAM PRO ATV BOOT

The Team Pro builds on the idea of the infamous Team TeamID LTD - the most wanted DEELUXE boot. Previously available only to their team, this freestyle boot is perfect for riders who want out-of-the-box comfort but still demand support. When it's time to hike, the Quantum sole provides impressive traction. Combined with a double Power Strap for maximum support at the shin the Team Pro gives you a truly unique riding experience. DEELUXE.COM



04

05 / GIRO TAGGERT MIPS HELMET

The new Taggert MIPS from Giro sport design with its updated design language and improved technology, is made for riders who are looking for a low profile and lightweight helmet for all conditions and riding styles. The Taggert MIPS is a lightweight in mould shell with a minimalist look, and is one of the Lowest profile design helmet of the market and an improved fit that is Giro's trademark. GIRO.COM



05

06 / POW CASCADIA GTX SHORT GLOVE + LEATHER

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06

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07

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MARKET INSIGHT

UK

A tale of two boardsports.

More than two, of course, but when comparing winter to water, you will get my drift. The winter season appears to be starting with a bang, while the water season has ended with a damp squib.

One retailer (who wished to remain nameless) reported that sales of SUP were "almost non-existent." With several hundred SUPs in stock, this is a serious issue. "We sold fewer than 20 boards in August – a month that should be our biggest for SUP sales. It's bloody dismal."

That is a pretty atypical description of the watersports market for 2023 – dismal.

We can blame the weather, the wind, the surf, the boom, the bust, Covid, the economy, interest rates, the war in Ukraine, and now the war in the Middle East. There are loads of reasons, but the blame game (or the excuse game) is not going to help anyone. Summer is dead – long live the winter! Long live Summer 2024. What will that bring? Surely it cannot be worse? It has to be an improvement, right?

Talking to some in the travel industry, there are early indications that 2024 may be another Staycation year. Is that just wishful thinking? But just imagine if 2024 booms, what will that bring? Imagine (or dream of) the echoing sound of empty watersports shelves.

Retailers, distributors, brands, and factories are all keeping a keen eye on stock levels – a very keen eye. If we are blessed with a good year, good weather, good waves, and a predicted staycation, will we run low on stock? [SUP excluded – I think we have enough!] The pendulum swings. But, I don't think anyone in the boardsports food chain will be stocking up anytime soon. Then again we all have a habit of wearing rose-tinted glasses. Indeed, if we were not wearing rose-tinted glasses, we would probably not be in this business.

Paul from Zuma Jay was, as always, pragmatic about the situation. "If you're doing okay, then you're doing okay." I think we must remember that from time to time, okay is okay. "Very few people are going to make a fortune out of our game. Give us good waves and sunshine, and we'll have a good go. If we don't get those basics, then we'll have to work harder."

So how was the summer? "I'm going to say it was good, it's always good. But not as good as it could have been." This is the positive Paul I've known for more than two decades. "We had a great autumn – that was the saving grace. We faced the cost of living, we had a miserable summer, we had no real surf, SUP was on its arse. But we got through it, and if we compare things to 2019, we're doing okay."

How are stock levels? "We've got a lot, suppliers have got a lot – and some of them are selling at silly, silly prices which does not help. I need to remember that when doing my buying. I do understand that they are overstocked as well, but it really does not help. Actually, right now, we are buying stuff - so that's at least a bit positive."

"Sales are harder, and consumer buying decisions are much more

considered, but those who love their sports are still investing in good products. On the other hand, lower-priced items are suffering. Predictability has gone a bit, and people are making travel decisions at the last minute depending on the weather – it's simple now - good weather brings them down to our neck of the woods. Crap weather and they stay at home".

And looking to 2024? "Go for it. Be positive. After the weather this year, anything is going to be better, although there is always something to kick you in the nuts – so turn the news off."

For winter retailers the empty-shelf echo was sounding well and truly at the end of last winter. Right now (early November), there is the thud of stock landing on those shelves, accompanied by a chorus of 'ping ping' as the tills are metaphorically ringing loud and clear already. Early-season sales are really, genuinely happening. At Ultra Sport we have already had retailers bring forward drops 2 and even 3. This is a good sign.

I checked in with the biggest snowboard retailer in the UK and spoke to Jeremy Sladen from TSA. "The buzz is back." Now this is a good start. "It really is. The level of enthusiasm for snowboarding has not been like this since the mid-2000s, and sales are great. We were up in September. Massively up in October, and now at the start of November, the signs are good. If this carries through, it is going to be a great season."

Is there one area, one category that is stronger than others? "No – it's across the board, boots, boards, bindings." And what about sectors? "Same – it's across the board - kids, big kids, women – it's all going. I seriously think that the buzz is back." Do you not feel that this could be a COVID reaction? "No – I am sure it's not. Of course, time will tell – we'll really know over the next few weeks. It is one thing being up in the current months but we need to maintain that growth in the serious turnover months, which we are just getting to. I'm really feeling positive about the season ahead."

Finally, skate – it falls between watersports and snow. "All good. Cannot complain." Nick from Route One. He's been with the nine-store retailer for 22 years and joined them as a young skater, so he knows his stuff. "Making a comparison with 2018/19, pre-COVID years, we are up, and so really cannot gripe too much. All sales are much more considered and you have to work harder to win the sale. Disposable income is obviously under pressure. Coupled with significant price rises from brands, it's not the easiest time for sure."

How about the run-up to Christmas and beyond? "We're in the Golden Quarter and we have to take advantage of it. Black Friday does not help, but it's here to stay and is part of the landscape. Right now [early November] some customers anticipate Black Friday and hold back purchases. It's a pain but we remain focussed."

And looking further ahead? "It's challenging" [Nick actually used that word four times during our call] "and will remain so through next year, but as long as we focus on our strengths, as long as we offer good service." And what threats to the business? "There's not much we can do about inflation and the money in people's pockets. There's not much we can do about the price rises, although discussions with suppliers are ongoing. There's nothing we can do about the daily miserable news. We just have to remain active and positive."

GORDON WAY

MARKET INSIGHT

FRANCE

GERMANY
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The French economy is almost in stagnation! Indeed, French GDP growth barely reached 0.1% in the third quarter of 2023 and was largely driven by a rebound in household consumption. This modest increase between July and September, however, represents a slowdown compared to the 0.6% growth recorded in the second quarter. For the entire year, INSEE forecasts an overall annual growth of 0.9%, which is identical to the Bank of France's prediction, slightly lower than the government's projection of +1%.

In this challenging environment, the French economy seems to be holding up, according to Bruno Le Maire, the Minister of the Economy, who points out that this resilience is happening against a background of high interest rates. According to INSEE, after a sluggish second quarter, household consumption of goods and services increased by 0.7% in the third quarter, driven in part by higher food consumption, as inflation moderated. Food expenditure were boosted by increased purchases of beverages, bakery products, and pasta, while tobacco consumption continued.

What about the market for sports gear, particularly in-store sales? Is this market also experiencing turbulence? With the increasingly tense Israeli-Palestinian conflict all over the news, we interviewed some retailers in France to assess the state of the market and review the summer and late-season, which are coming to an end.

On the Atlantic coast, the assessment is somewhat mixed. For example, at NEWAY in NANTES, Thomas Martin, the store manager, says, "The summer season was quite challenging, with a catastrophic July." He added, "It's one of the worst months in the past 8 years, with an overall drop in revenue across all product categories." As for the late season, Thomas notes, "the back-to-school figure is relatively stable compared to the previous year, with the rather warm weather making it harder to sell certain products like warm textiles." A bit further south in Bordeaux, Maxime Laboual, marketing manager at GLISSUP, tells us, "The summer season was a bit difficult with significant price increases and a decrease in foot traffic." Consequently, the assessment is mixed: "Our revenue is stable, but with lower margins because we implemented promotions to clear excess inventory." At HAWAII SURF in Mimizan, Adrien Charlet, the store manager, seems to agree: "We quickly realized from June onwards that we needed to forget about the pandemic years and their effects on consumer spending. The real summer rush didn't happen until around July 20, and foot traffic gradually returned to its usual seasonal level, peaking around August 20." He adds, "the late season is somewhat mixed at the moment; the weather was favourable in September until mid-October. On the Mediterranean coast it seems that we are once again on the same page. At KARUKERA Surf Shop in Saint Aygulf, Brice and Cédric Paque, co-owners, tell us, "The start of the season was quite challenging with very unfavourable weather. However, the end of September assessment was more positive, with the end of July and especially August and September, compensating with strong sales." They added, "Foot traffic is slightly down, but it's offset by a higher average purchase." Far from the coasts, the assessment is also fairly good. At DIGITAL Skate shop in Orléans, Nicolas Simmonet the store manager, said, "The summer season went quite well, with the classic collection, exclusive releases, sales, and clearance sales." Nicolas adds, "In the skateboarding industry, it's quite challenging to

compare one year to another due to the arrival of new brands and regular exclusive releases, we can't really make direct comparisons." In Reims, at MOJITO Skate shop, Franck Sisounol, the store director, observes, "The summer was rather good overall. Skate equipment sales weren't as strong, but clothing compensated nicely with a return to traditional foot traffic at the back-to-school period." He adds, "We saw a slight revenue increase compared to last year. However, it's clear that the majority of customers are more budget-conscious, even though a minority doesn't seem concerned at all."

Regarding stock, it seems that most stores have more than an ample inventory of equipment, though stock levels for textiles were lower. Franck from MOJITO tells us, "T-shirts are the best-performing category once again this summer, with Carhart standing out. As for shoes, it's a bit more complex, with the exception of New Balance Numeric, which is doing well, while most other brands are experiencing a decline." A similar situation at DIGITAL, where Nicolas tells us, "The stock level is okay, with our strong textile sales. However, customers are much more price-conscious, as most brands have become relatively expensive." Adrien at HAWAII Surf in Mimizan observes, "The stock level is rather okay, with almost an understocking in textiles, which performed well this season. The overstock is more apparent in technical gear like surfboards, skateboards, or wetsuits, which had a harder time moving this year. Customers negotiate prices more often and we can see that they are more budget conscious." Elodie from the same chain in Saint Jean de Luz notes a similar situation, "Textiles, especially swimwear, sold well, as did lycra's. The good weather in the late season has caused a slight delay in launching Fall/Winter sales." She confirms, "Stocks for technical items, particularly wetsuits, are somewhat more concerning, although they seem to be getting healthier compared to the previous season"

For specialists in technical gear, the assessment is similar. At Neway in Nantes, Thomas tells us, "Stock levels are quite high due to poor July weather. The surf department is performing well, with wing foiling maintaining revenue in that department." Conversely, "Paddle and Kayak are really declining in terms of sales." Brice and Cédric at KARUKERA seem to agree, "SUP, Skate, and Wetsuits are somewhat overstocked, and ongoing promotions due to high stock levels are disrupting the market. For us, textiles and surf gear are performing quite well this season, with very reasonable stock levels." A similar assessment at GLISSUP, where Maxime says, "We have quite a bit of stock in general, so we did very few restocks this year. Wing foil and surf gear performed well in terms of equipment, but in terms of wetsuits, the water remained very warm until the end of October, so we have excess stock in that category." He concludes, "Given the overall stock level we have, we won't take too many risks with the 2024 launches."

The assessment of the 2023 season seems unanimous: It was quite good, even though the euphoria of the pandemic is over, and stock levels are still higher than before COVID. Textiles seem to have performed well, and inventory levels for equipment are gradually reducing, although some exceptions remain, especially in skateboarding, wetsuits, and SUP. One thing seems to stand out: stores appear to have learned from this unique experience and are adjusting their stock levels. Will the customers still be there this year? Stay tuned...

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MARKET INSIGHT

GERMANY

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The warm weather is slowing down autumn and winter sales. There is a feeling in Germany's retail sector that is relatively difficult to grasp. Nobody knows what to expect: Will it snow? Will people buy like they did before COVID?, Will money be spent on winter holidays?, Questions that are difficult to answer. But there are some facts: According to a Federal

State Office report on the 8th of November, the inflation rate in October was 3.8%. The rate is continuing to slow down and reached its lowest level since August 2021

The first snowboard openings have also been cool, although there was still a lack of snow at the Hintertux opening. But in the Stubai Valley snow fell but unfortunately, it was very windy on the second day and a few of the tents blew away. Nevertheless, we still tested the products and rode quite a bit. The Kaunertal Opening took place last weekend and it was simply fantastic. There was a great atmosphere among the brands, there was a lot of screwing and testing going on and people were having fun.

There is something else positive to report: In conversation with a number of lift companies, including the operators of the Allgäu Glacier Card, I found out the figures for season passes sold to. They all told me that they are at the same level as last year and in some cases even slightly better. It's now time to bring this mood to the shops. Because winter is simply awesome - as we all know. There's no better feeling than feeling the powder under your board.

After a few phone calls with German shops, this positive mood is definitely noticeable.

However, it has also become clear that many have received too much product too early, as sales are now only just beginning. There is a feeling that everything is shifting. Summer starts later and lasts longer, as it did this year. The colder, autumnal temperatures only arrived at the beginning of November and the first snow arrived on the glaciers a week ago. This will probably continue to be a concern for retailers in the future.

Another big issue is delivery dates and deadlines. While some textile/outerwear brands already have their first deadlines at the end of November, it seems that some stores have not even received this year's stock. This means that orders are sometimes written with a crystal ball and by feel... But the brands can't postpone the deadlines (Chinese New Year, boat containers etc.), which creates a certain amount of pressure on both sides.

I also learnt from some shops that they will concentrate on several delivery dates and no longer need everything at the beginning of September. This also means that payments will be postponed. Of course, this is also associated with some risk, because what happens if it starts earlier again?

During my phone calls, I received two very positive news: Bastian Bendele has taken over the EDGE to EDGE store in

Garmisch Partenkirchen from Jaqueline Gruber. This long-time employee has renovated the store and has already brought in his unique style. The shop has been around since 1991 and is the go-to place for all board sports enthusiasts in and around Garmisch - a core hop where every board sports fan feels at home. We wish Basti and the crew all the best!

I also had Robert on the phone from the Panorama shop in Neu-Isenburg, which he took over from Daniel Klotz with two partners. Panorama has always been one of the go-to places for board sports in Hessen and we also wish them all the best and hope that many board sports customers will find their happiness here.

Let's stick to the good news: the 58 store in Ulm has moved back into the city. The new store offers everything you need to have fun on the mountain on two floors.

Let's move on to another store: Kai Fuhrer with his shop of the same name, Fuhrer Sports in Offenburg, was renovated in autumn. So you can see that the retailers want to continue to step on the gas here too and are working on presenting their love of the sport.

I asked Kai how things were going at the moment: his answer was similar to the feedback above: "Textiles and sales in the streetwear area are okay. However, it has simply been too warm to sell autumn jackets or even winter jackets, let alone hardgoods. I hope that picks up now. We have a good little selection and are looking forward to winter."

Finally, I spoke to Stefan from Switch in Straubing, who told me almost the same story. However, he described his situation as even worse. The frequency of customer visits is extremely low throughout Straubing and the surrounding area. "There are hardly any people coming." He also points out that some brands are offering extremely early discounts of 50% or more online via their B2C platform. In future, he will focus on this when placing his orders. In his opinion, the future will only work if brands and shops work together. Otherwise, things will soon look very grim. He adds: "The whole Black Friday hustle and bustle is doing the rest. It's crazy what's going on online right now." However, he also understands that shops need cash flow to pay their bills. But that raises the question: "Is that even healthy?" Stefan won't or can't go along with it, because "if I don't earn any more money now, then it won't work at all."

We boardsports fans have all seen what happened to fahrrad.de and Signa Holding. The biggest online players are gone in one hit. Not even the brands could compensate for this. As we know the bike industry is already in crisis. Hopefully it won't come to that for us board sports enthusiasts if all brands, shops and the media work together. So, let's take the positive vibes of the last two weeks into the winter season!

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Uncertainty and distrust continues to be part of Portuguese daily life. The economic difficulties caused by inflation which now stands at 3.6% combined with interest rates rising to 4.27%, their highest since 2009, have led customers to hold back on consumption due to their loss of purchasing power. The most recent forecast released by the Bank of Portugal in October reduced the previous GDP predictions for this year, down from 2.7% to 2.1%. The news is not encouraging for 2024 with a new downward revision to 1.5% instead of the 2.4% announced in June.

The boardsports market is struggling with a decline in sales due to lack of purchasing power and the need to get rid of stock. For Bana Skate Shop: "There are less customers in the store due to lower purchasing power. People are paying almost double for their house rent and think twice before buying hardgoods or clothing. Since the store's location is hidden away there are almost no tourists which leaves us very dependent on Portuguese customers. Products are more expensive which means we have a lower profit margin. We have been running promotions such as "2 in 1" where you buy one and get the second product for 10 euros. We have also extended the duration of our promotions. There is a corner on the store that always has products on sale and this is getting bigger and bigger, especially for shoes. Still, customers prefer to buy shoes at low-cost stores where the normal price is lower than the skate brand shoes that are on sale here. We've noticed that sales started to decrease since the war began in Ukraine. Sales fell by 35% this year compared to September/October 2022. Our skateboarding school made partnerships with several schools and this was positive because it brought people to the store." For Xen&Co Surf Shop: "What sets us apart is personalized customer service. After the pandemic, people began to value small

SPAIN

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Spain keeps avoiding recession, boasting record employment numbers, and maintaining a growth forecast. This does not mean that Spaniards are keen to spend, particularly in sports kit.

The Spanish economy keeps resisting the recession trend that dominates the rest of Europe, with high temperatures well into October prolonged activity in the tourism sector. More people have been employed for longer, with over 70% of the active population working, and this means more

money being spent. There is, however, indications that this activity is slowing down rapidly. All eyes are on the last quarter of the year, especially with the impact of new conflicts in the geo-political scene, but current figures throw a hopeful 2.4% of growth for 2023, averting recession once again.

Economic indicators and consumers mentality do not always converge though. Ongoing inflation and high interest rates combined with two volatile conflicts close to Europe invite caution in spending. For the boardsports industry this is bad news; snowboarding or surfing kit does not top the list of priorities. "Only consumers who are exploring a new sport, like wing foiling, or need a specific replacement are buying", says Borja Herrero who runs Kite Oliva shop in Valencia. Standardised prices for all of Europe do not help a market in which salaries are much lower than in neighbouring countries. "The cost of a snowboarding boot is the same as one month's rent", says Guillermo Colomer from Playgop Distribution. He suggests that brands keep a range of price point products in their catalogues that can suit markets with less spending power. Tourism helped Summer and Autumn sales, balancing a slow winter and spring, but overall, 2023 sales will not see good results for water sports

MARKET INSIGHT

local surf shops again. But with inflation, the war and interest rates constantly rising there was a contraction. Sales decreased by 42% in September and 12% in October compared to 2022. We reduced our Fall/Winter 23 orders and invested more in our own brand where we have a higher profit margin. We've been successful with this as the manufacturing material is good quality and the price is lower than the surf brands. They have sweatshirts for 89 euros and ours is 45 euros. In some cases, the wetsuit prices have increased by 40 euros. There is even a brand that suggested that we have wetsuits for consignment here which clearly highlights the urgency to get rid of stock. Big stores are full of stock and offer promotions above 40% that we can't compete with. We will open the online store soon, hoping this will also help with sales."

For the G3 Store, in Peniche: "We merged our two stores and brought our surf centre together in the same space. Due to the crisis, the local market is a little difficult to work with and in our surf centre the customer is mainly foreigners whose purchasing power is much higher than the Portuguese consumers. The crisis fear made us look at the Fall/Winter 23 collections differently and we worked heavily on reducing costs and products. Taking into account that brands have less and less stock, it's a little complicated to manage this but it's something we are used to doing since Covid-19. These last two months were much better than expected. Peniche and Baleal continue to have a lot of visitors and September and October are usually months with very good waves and slightly lower accommodation prices which year after year has been bringing more surfers to the region. Compared to September 2022 we had a 10% sales increase even without the store merge. In October, with the stores already together, we had an increase of 25%. We are confident that it will be a good end of the year with improvements in revenue compared to last year."

NUNO PRINCIPE

stores. Snow fall, will particularly during the early December bank holiday, seal the fate of snowboarding stores. The preceding winter had been a short one due to the warm climate, so retailers are praying to the snow gods again at this point. Their stock situation is healthier than in other boardsports and if they are open for business for the Purísima bank holiday from December 6th to 8th, when they make 25% of their season sales, then brands can expect FW24-25 pre-orders to roll in.

It is a different scenario for summer pre-orders. The overstock situation has flooded the online market with discounted product that steal customers from brick-and-mortar stores. Their stockrooms are filled with product that they don't know if they are going to sell. Playgop reports a general decrease of 30-40% in SS24 pre-orders and doesn't forecast a stock stabilisation until at least SS25. Kite Oliva shares that they are favouring drop-shipping business, so they don't have to commit to more stock. Stores with a school appear to be the ones with a good enough cash-flow to survive in this environment. Schools are a steady business, which is good news for the sport. The popularity boost that boardsports experienced during the pandemic has secured many new fans and keeps luring newcomers, especially young people and children. While there is an important shift in consumer's purchasing behaviour towards online discounts, there is also a demand for expert advice, product testing and community building that only core stores can offer. It is important that brands acknowledge this and think of solutions that can support the business of core retailers whilst developing their own B2C business. "Without retailers and ambassadors on the beach, it is difficult to give legitimacy to the best advertising campaign", says Borja. Guillermo agrees: "There are great professionals in Spain that offer experiences alongside the product, keeping the sport alive". Discounts secure instant stock conversion, community secures the survival of the sport for seasons of business to come.

ROCIO ENRIQUEZ

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The economy is now predicted to see GDP growth of 0.4% for 2023, slightly better than a couple of months ago where a stagnation was predicted. If we can trust different expert sources then 2024 should see increased growth of 1.2%. Luckily inflation seems to get better month after month, especially because of lower energy costs. Petrol prices still remain at a high level, hitting nearly 2€ a litre, which for many consumers is hard to digest. Spending power for families is still not back at 2022 levels and this means

less turnover for many small companies operating in the retail trade and food and beverage.

Many skate shops and streetwear stores really are struggling as sales have not grown as planned and costs are still higher than usual, a situation which also makes it hard for local distributors and brands as payments come in later than expected and SS24 pre-order sales will not hit SS23 levels.

September and October once again saw temperatures hit 30 degrees from north to south which saw Fall sales start slowly as consumers were being more active outside, doing sports and hanging out rather than shopping in the city centres. This is something we need to get used to as temperatures will not drop any earlier in the upcoming years. For snow retailers it's too early to judge how the season will perform but at least most brands delivered on time and the shelves are full for the upcoming winter season.

On the store opening side we saw the first Blue Tomato stores in the northern part of Italy, with more stores coming in late 2023 and 2024. This is a situation which of course sees some smaller local store owners worried about being able to handle competition but on the other side it can also stimulate certain regions and communities. Competition stimulates the business, a wise man said.

MARKET INSIGHT

When talking to boardsport store owners on how they see their future they mostly agree that we find ourselves in a transition phase where product requests are slower than usual, and we will need to get our heads down in late 2023 and early 2024 and that we then will soon see things picking up. Stock levels need to come down, manufacturing needs to slow down as we have come from a wild post corona ride and now it's important to survive and be prepared for growth in the near future.

Stock levels are high not only for skateboard hardware but also for surf hardware which means very good discount deals for consumers with hardware offerings being the best in the market for many years, so no problem with inflation on the hardgoods side.

For snow retailers in the very north, freestyle skiing has become a true competitor to snowboarding and unfortunately the massive growth numbers for splitboards has slowed right down after crazy good corona numbers.

The 90's skateboarding trend grabbed our skateboarding community everywhere and baggy jeans & pants, XXL or oversize T-shirts and bulky shoes are common. As Lukas Höller from Sub shop out of Bolzano says, it all comes in waves and what was a trend many years ago will always come back sometime. This style has not only been a trend for skateboarders in Italy but has really become a trend as a whole for many teenagers. Unfortunately, traditional skate shoe brands cannot really benefit from this as the big sneaker brands still rule the shoe market as a whole.

Hopefully winter kicks in soon as we are getting into November and temperatures are still too high, good for skateboarding but bad for snow sales and snowboarding itself. This will be a season where stores for sure compete for every customer, as discounts are around everywhere and are bigger and earlier than usual.

FRANZ JOSEF HOLLER

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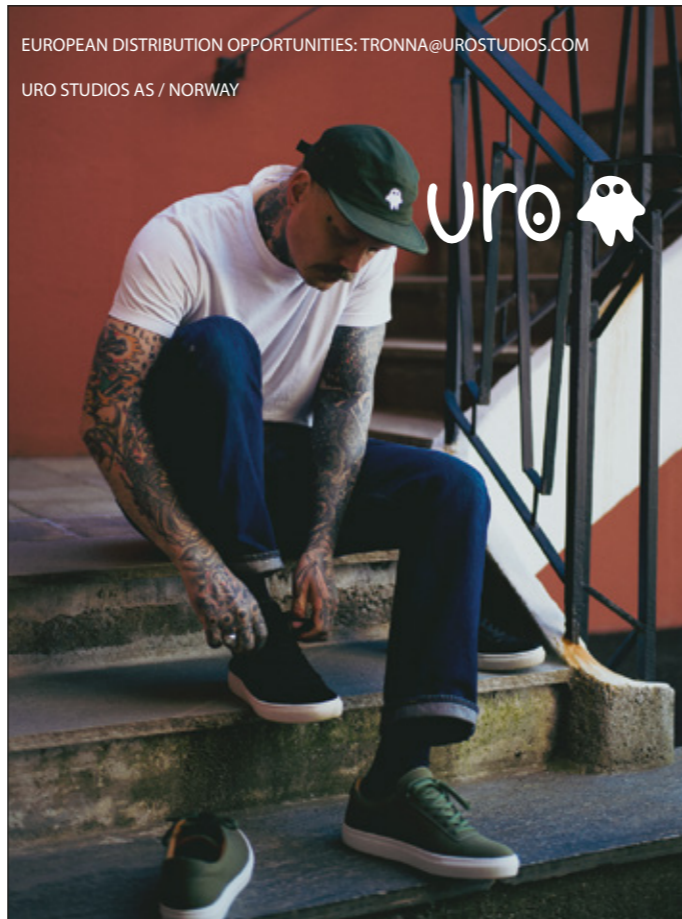
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- Bildschnitt und -formatierung für verschiedene Medienkanäle
- Unterstützung bei der Organisation von Events und Messen
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EVENTS #118

surf snow street/outdoor SUP/optics/kite

snow	THE SNOW SHOW	Birmingham, UK 14 - 15 October	nationalsnowweek.com
snow	THE LONDON SNOW SHOW	London, UK 21 - 22 October	nationalsnowweek.com
surf	TAGHAZOUT SURF EXPO	Taghazout, Morocco 26 - 29 October	taghazoutsurfexpo.com
snow	SKI PASS	Modena, Italy 27 - 29 October	skipass.it
trade	FUNCTIONAL FABRIC FAIR	Portland USA 1 - 2 November	performancedays.com
kite	GKA FREESTYLE	Taiba, Brazil 1 - 5 November	gkakiteworldtour.com
sup	GRAN CANARIA PRO-AM	Gran Canaria, Spain 11 - 18 November	appworldtour.com
outdoor	OUTDOOR RETAILER WINTER	Salt Lake City, USA 14 - 16 November	outdoorretailer.com
sup	WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS	Pattaya, Thailand 15 - 17 November	canoeicf.com
surf	NAZARE TOW SURFING CHALLENGE	Nazare, Portugal 15 Nov - 31 March	worldsurfleague.com
surf	JAWS CHAMPIONSHIP PE" AHI	Maui, USA 15 Nov - 31 March	worldsurfleague.com
snow	OUTDOOR RETAILER	Salt Lake City, USA 14 - 16 November	outdoorretailer.com
outdoor	KENDAL MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL	Kendal, UK 16 - 19 November	kendalmountainfestival.com
snow	ISPO	Munich, Germany 28 - 30 November	ispo.com
snow	INTERLUDE	Ogden, Utah 3 - 5 January	interludesnowshow.com
snow	WINTERPRO	La Rosiere, France 7 - 9 January	actsnowboarding.com
snow	SLIDE AND OTS	Telford, UK 9 - 11 January	slideotswinter.co.uk
street	PITTI IMMAGINE UOMO	Florence, Italy 9 - 12 January	uomo.pittimmagine
surf	SURF EXPO	Orlando, USA 10 - 12 January	surfexpo.com
snow	LAAX OPEN	Laax, Switzerland 16 - 21 January	open.laax.com
street	SEEK	Berlin, Germany 16 - 17 January	seek.fashion
snow	WHOS NEXT	Paris, France 20 - 22 January	whosnext.com
sup	DUSSELDORF BOAT SHOW	Düsseldorf, Germany 20 - 28 January	boot.com
snow	SHOPS 1ST TRY	Alpbach, Austria 21 - 23 January	shops-1st-try.com
snow	BASECAMP	Sestriere (TO) 22 - 23 January	thepillagency.com
snow	BAQUIERA BERET PRO	Baquierra Beret, Spain 27 January - 1 February	freerideworldtour.com
snow	BASECAMP	Folgaria (TN) 29 - 30th January	thepillagency.com
snow	SPORT ACHAT	Grenoble, France 29 - 31 January	sport-achat.com
surf	PIPELINE PRO	Hawaii, USA 29 Jan - 10 February	worldsurfleague.com
snow	ORDINO ARCALÍS PRO	Ordino Arcalís, Andorra 1 - 7 February	freerideworldtour.com
surf	HURLEY PRO SUNSET BEACH	Hawaii USA 12 - 23 February	worldsurfleague.com
snow	KICKING HORSE GOLDEN BC PRO	Kicking Horse, Canada 14 - 20 February	freerideworldtour.com
snow	GEORGIA PRO	Georgia 1 - 7 March	freerideworldtour.com
snow	FIEBERBRUNN PRO	Fieberbrunn, Austria 12 - 18 March	freerideworldtour.com
trade	PERFORMANCE DAYS	Munich Germany 20 - 21 March	performancedays.com
snow	BAQUIERA BERET PRO	Verbier, Switzerland 23 - 31 March	freerideworldtour.com
outdoor	OUTDOOR BY ISPO	MOC Munich, Germany 3 - 5 June	ispo.com/en/outdoor
outdoor	OUTDOOR RETAILER	Salt Lake City, USA 17 - 19 June	outdoorretailer.com
trade	FUNCTIONAL FABRIC FAIR	New York, USA 16 - 17 July	performancedays.com
trade	PERFORMANCE DAYS	Munich, Germany 23 - 24 October	performancedays.com

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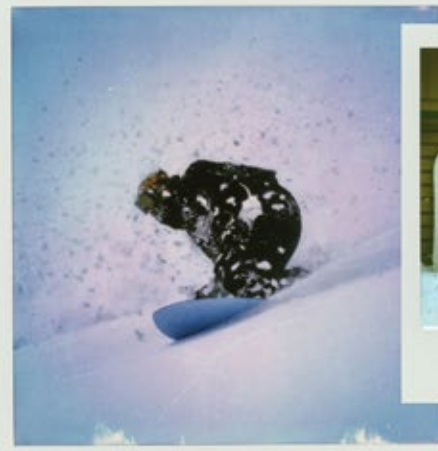




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