

BOARDSPORT
source.
EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

#119 JANUARY
2024



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDES 2024
SNOWBOARDS, OUTERWEAR, SNOW SAFETY,
WETSUITS, SKATE SHOES, SNOW HELMETS, SNOW
PROTECTION, BASELAYERS, MEN'S STREETWEAR

BIG WIG DAVID PITSCHI - YES
REGIONAL EURO MARKET INSIGHT

WE ARE...

#YES

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SFD



THE OLDER I GET
THE OLDER I
LIKE MY SNOW
SEND WHILE
YOU CAN



INSTRUMENTS OF STOKE



MORE FIT = MORE POW
GET HIGH STAY HIGH
RESPECT YOUR ELDERS
ART OF SHRALPINISM



ODE TO PROGRESSION



A CLOSED MIND
IS A BROKEN MIND

* FREEDOM TOOLS

IF IT'S NOT A SCREAMING YES IT'S A NO

TEST TWEAK REPEAT
SPEED IS YOUR FRIEND

EGO IS NOT
YOUR AMIGO



Committed to our planet

LIFE OF GLIDE



THE JOURNEY IS THE REWARD



PROTECT OUR
WINTERS

TWO MORE, SKIP THE LAST

* ADAPT OR DIE



Rooted in adventure

RIDE TO LIVE ANOTHER DAY

No BAD SNOW, JUST BAD ATTITUDES

LISTEN TO YOUR GUT



BE PRESENT



DEEPER FURTHER
HIGHER

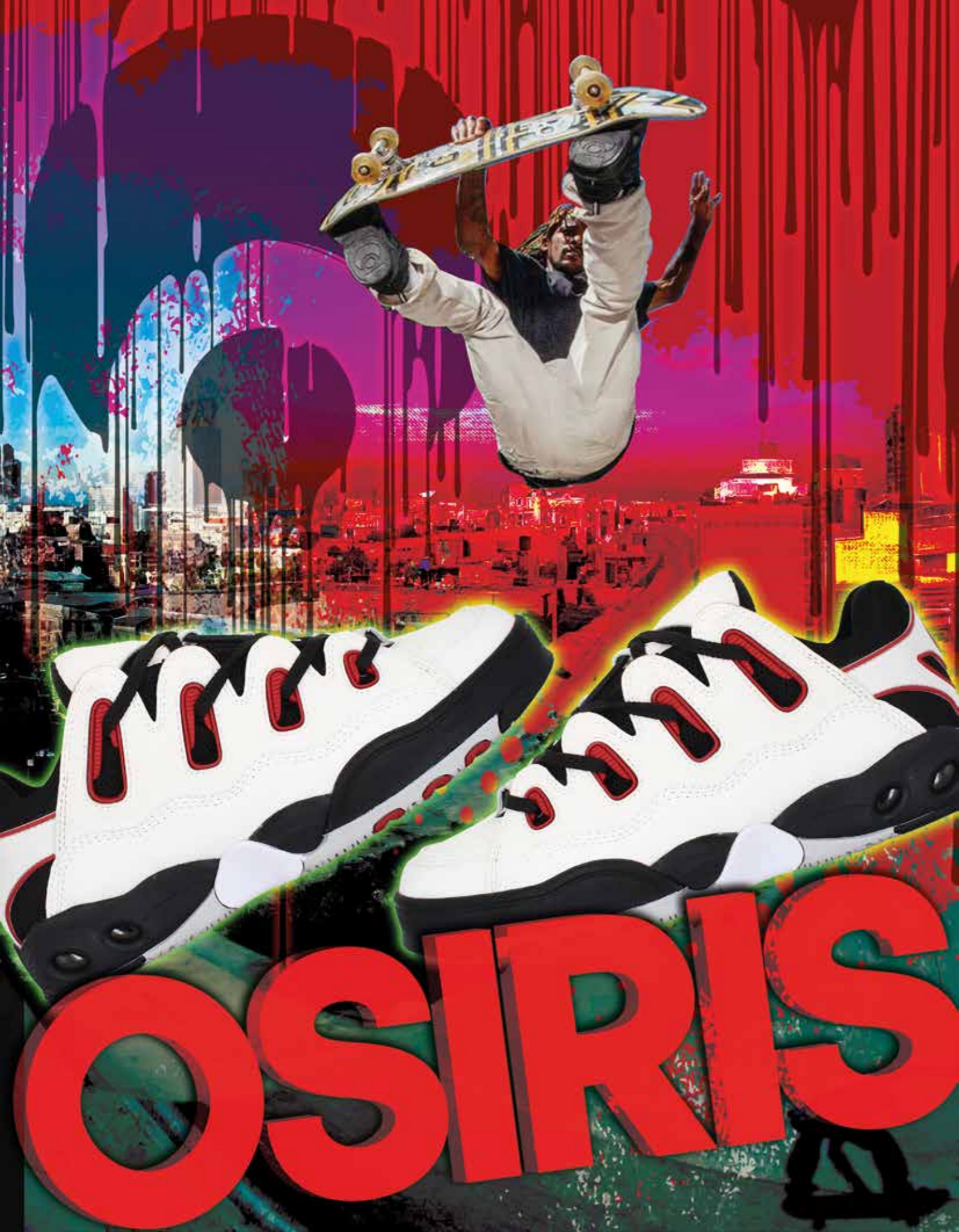


SUMMIT OR BUST



I ♥ HOVERCRAFTING

JONES SNOWBOARDING



HELLO SOURCE#119

I think we're in for a bumper winter season...

In early January there is great sentiment in the air with brands and retailers alike. The UK is a particularly bright spot at the start of winter with many retailers reporting solid starts. Record breaking actually. There is a growing fear that the cost-of-living crisis that's stung the UK for a number of months is finally catching up in Europe, with the dreaded 20% sale creeping in in December for many key European retailers. But this isn't anything new and we're all used to dealing with it by now.

Early season has seen solid snowfall in the Alps and events like DIYX and Rock A Rail are great November activations that give consumers stoke and introduce newbies to the culture and show just how fucking rad it is.

Boarding a flight to the Alps with all the packable down twats feels busier this January than it has since pre-covid and speaking with travel companies, ski holiday bookings are up with many customers booking earlier and earlier to take advantage of cheaper pricing.

It's cool to see more snowboarding brands actively targeting kids. We've been saying for years that we need to make snowboarding cooler for the kids, and not just something Mum & Dad do. There's a big void between 8-35-year-olds who need to see how fun and cool snowboarding is, and without them, it's just us old dudes buying snowboards. Despite Burton's Rightlet efforts, the kids snowboarding segment had always been more of an afterthought for brands. Thankfully they're seeing the light and are jumping on board.

This issue's Big Wig is David Pitschi. David grew up as a Swiss pro snowboarder and after working at Billabong and then Salomon Snowboards, David is now brand manager at YES Snowboards. Part of the

Nidecker Group, YES has merged with brand-mates Now Bindings & Lobster Snowboards. The collective will take the name YES and we speak with David about the details of the merger.

Looking out at the rest of the boardsport market, 2023's softness is expected to be repeated until late this year. Hardgoods markets such as kiteboards, SUP and wetsuits continue to see serious discounting as brands struggle with cashflow due to overstock. This means we'll not see as much innovation in technology in 24/25 and carry-over - rather than being an exception - will in many cases become the norm. For softgoods the outlook is rosier with demand expected to be similar to 2023 as we all wait to see what business model will be adopted for the Boardriders brands under their new owners.

Always Slideways

**Harry MT
Editor**

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On the cover. Rider: Ferdinand Christ, German rep for Mervin & ThirtyTwo.
Photo: Jake Terry

TRADE EVENTS

PREVIEWS

THE PILL BASECAMP SESTRIERE 22-23 JAN FOLGARIA 29-30 JAN 2024

This Pill Basecamp, the ski, freeride & snowboard testing event will hold two editions, one in Sestriere from 22-23 January, for retailers in the western Italian alps and a second in Folgaria, on 29-30 January, for retailers in the Eastern Italian Alps.

Unlike the other on-snow demos, this is a combined snowboard and ski test, catering for both core and cross over retailers. Last year only a single event was held in Sestriere, the popular winter resort 17km from the border with France and 105 km from Turin. During the two-day event 5,400 tests were made by the 78 brands by 520 buyers from 235 stores.

This year 208 shops and 304 buyers have registered in advance, to test 61 brands over two days in Sestriere. Snowboard brands confirmed include Amplid, Arbor, Bataleon, Bent Metal, Borealis, Comera, Drake, Funky, Gnu, Burton, Jones, K2 Korua, Lib-Tech, Nidecker, Nitro, Northwave, Plum, Ride, Rome, Rossignol, Salomon, Yes, Union, 32 and United Shapes.

New brands on show include ATK, Nordica, Ski Trab, La Sportiva, Scarpa and Majesty Skis. Most of the brands will be at both the Sestriere and Folgaria events. The Sestriere Indoor village is just one step away from the Outdoor village where clothing, backpacks, goggles, and accessories

SPORT ACHAT GRENOBLE, FRANCE JAN 29-31, 2024

The big news is that Sport Achat is moving from Lyon to Grenoble, following on from last year's successful relocation of Sportair's summer show Next Summer to the Alpeexpo exhibition centre.

Grenoble is a great location for a winter show as its right in the mountains with its mountain ambiance and allowing quick and easy access to the show by winter sports retailers. Last year more than 3320 retailers visited the 279 exhibitors presenting more than 500 brands.

For 2024 Sport-Achat has increased the number of brands and exhibitors registered at the show and now has the largest collection of winter sports brands of any show in Europe. With almost all the snowboard and ski brands you can find, but also all the goggle, helmet and gloves brands along with a large choice of outerwear, retailers will find all they need to make the best selection of brands for their shop.

Last year the show was brought forward to the end of January from its traditional date in late March. This successful move took place to ensure the show remained relevant with earlier pre-book deadlines. This is a trend amongst both trade shows and on-snow demos. With its new dates Sport Achat will still be the final opportunity in Europe to see 23/24 products as all the other on-snow demos and trade shows will have already taken place.

The earlier dates have made the show more attractive amongst both exhibitors and retailers. Mathieu Kurtz of Sportair comments: "Retailers come to the show to meet clothing, ski, snowboard and outdoor suppliers. These face-to-face meetings are the strength of the show. It's an essential show for French media, manufacturers, distributors, agents, retailers, online retail sites, leasing specialists, buying groups, specialised chains and procurement centres and the last opportunity to place those prebook orders for 24/25 products.

brands will be exhibiting. For Folgaria's first edition there will only be the outdoor village in operation.

The event opens at 8.30am on the Monday with testing starting at both the Outdoor and Indoor Villages, going on all day until the outdoor village closes at 16.00pm and the indoor village at 17:00pm. During The Base Camp there will be many activities including the screening of the new film "The Meaningless Pursuit of Snow" by Patagonia and the chance to test drive Tesla vehicles. On Monday evening at the I.Gloo from 8.30pm there will be The Pill Dinner music and party, allowing brands, agents, retailers and media to interact in a friendly and relaxed way.

For the Folgaria event the schedule is the same with the party being held at Calkera Folgaria. The Pill will also use the opportunity to test all the products for their next season's Winter Outdoor guide - a 400-page magazine stuffed full of reviews.

The Pill Base Camp is a great opportunity for the Italian snowboard community to come together to discuss the current market and the products they are testing and of course to party hard. So don't miss the opportunity to build new relationships or to strengthen existing ones. See you there!

THEPILLOUTDOOR.COM/BASECAMP

On the way into the show a giant moodboard will highlight the 3 main themes of the show. These are Biotech - the use of natural seeds or plants to produce new materials, the Meta Realm - for the use of new technologies on products such as augmented reality and Repurpose Heritage - a focus on both recycled products and material along with durable goods.

The Fresh Zone near the entrance is dedicated to start-ups and will feature companies that are less than 5 years old, giving the opportunity for these new players to present their products cheaply and get themselves known. Close by, Sportair with Mission Retail Design, will present a futuristic concept where visitors can see different kinds of shop furniture and layouts.

The conference and seminar program are busier than last years as Sportair have decided to make them more of a focus at the show, topics to be covered include ski market research, repairability of goods, eco responsibility to attract new customers, the newcomers from the Fresh Zone and how to recruit new seasonal workers. The Outdoor Sport Valley association will select the winner of the French Outdoor Award during Sport-Achat at the show. Buying groups such as Sport 2000, Skiset, Skimium, Netski, Intersport, Ski Republic, Precision Ski will organize meetings, talks and product presentations to their members during Sport-Achat.

Sport-Achat will organize an opening party on the Monday, to bring together retailers and exhibitors at the end of the first day of the fair. The following evening, brands will have the opportunity to invite visitors to their booths for an end of the day drink.

Airports in the region include Grenoble, Geneva and Lyon Saint-Exupéry. Grenoble is also well connected by motorway and TGV from both Paris and Marseilles. So, jump on a plane or get in the car and come and see next year's products. Get involved and feel that collective snowboard spirit at Europe's last major winter show of the season.

SPORTAIR.FR

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#RIDEYOURWAY



CRAZY SHOP

RETAILER PROFILE CRAZY SHOP, JACA

VANS
"OFF THE WALL"

Crazy Shop in Jaca, at the base of the Spanish Pyrenees is a haven for Spanish snowboarders and skaters. Celebrating their 25th anniversary, we caught up with legendary brothers & owners Santy & Luis to talk business.

Tell us about Crazy Shop's history.

Hello everyone, we are Santy Cabrero and Luis Cabrero, we are brothers and owners of Crazy Shop, a snowboard shop located in Spain in the town of Jaca in the Pyrenees. Both of us have been snowboarding since we were young. It will be 30 years next year since we got our first boards and over the years, we have both competed at national and international levels. We've been fortunate to travel the world, enjoying this passion that is our way of life.

Crazy Shop was founded in 1998. We have supported young riders from our area, helping them in competitions, collaborating with snowboard schools and instructors at our ski resorts. Along this journey, we have also organized and sponsored various exhibitions and competitions in our community. Our extensive experience allows us to offer a wide range of snowboard and skateboard products, which are tested and approved by our riders, so we can provide the most effective advice. We always stock the leading brands and try new ones from the international market, so to offer the latest snowboarding experiences and equipment technologies.

The store is 120 square metres and you can find a wide range of snowboarding and skateboarding gear, as well as a variety of streetwear clothing with the latest brands.

Congratulations on the anniversary! What are you doing to celebrate?

Thank you very much! We are very excited to be celebrating our shop's 25th year - who would have thought! Throughout the winter we have surprises for our friends and customers, we will hold several Instagram giveaways with products that will not disappoint (I won't reveal more, hahaha). In the middle of the winter season, we plan to organize a gathering of the most legendary Spanish snowboarders, as we have friends who are Olympians and multiple world champions, such as the great Iker Fernandez, Lucas Eguibar, and Ruben Verges.

One of the things that excites us the most is being able to offer a snowboard that we designed in collaboration with Slash, the snowboard brand of the great Gigi Ruf. For us, it's a dream come true since he was our favourite pro when we were young.

Oh, and one more surprise we'll reveal is that you can now check detailed weather conditions on snowforecast with our own password for everyone to enjoy (crazysshopsnowboard).

What brands and products have performed best for you so far this winter?

Every winter, we strive to offer more exclusive and selective products to our customers. That's why this year, one of the flagship products is Nidecker's Supermatic, a semi-automatic binding that, for us, will change the market for all bindings. Another novelty we introduced this season is the entire range of 686 Gore-Tex snowboarding clothing, and it's been a success. It's very special for us since we were the first in Spain to introduce this great snowboarding clothing brand 18 years ago.

How much of your sales come from your website?

We've had a website for 12 years now. But to be honest, it's not our main sales channel; quite the opposite. In recent years, we've seen significant online growth, which, in our opinion, doesn't benefit our sector due to the fact that many websites are engaged in a constant price war, and at the same time, we see that customer service is disappearing. Our most important sales come from personal interaction and the relationship we have built with our customers. Being able to explain products in person, talk to the customer about the equipment, and offer personalized service to each of them has made them regular visitors, they cease to be customers and become friends.

How do you split your product assortment with carry-over and newness?

Crazy Shop is open twice a year, in the winter and summer seasons, during the in-between times, we close and go surfing. So, at the end of each season, to avoid accumulating stock, we offer a 2-for-1 sale in the last two weeks of the season, except hardgoods since we hardly ever have any leftover (after many years of ordering, hahaha). Also, before the winter season starts, we hold a stock fair where all the local businesses come together to clear their warehouses, and people can take advantage of great discounts. ☺

CRAZYSHOP.ES



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24/25
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NICK LARSON P. THOM PAXTON

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE SNOWBOARDS FW24/25

We are in the heart of winter. Anticipation and excitement have reached their climax and snow is falling all over the Northern Hemisphere. And as the season unfolds, the industry faces both old and new challenges. These challenges are part of a complex system and are shaped by diverse variables, such as the economy, participation demographics, generation turnover, climate change, and lift ticket prices. Hell, you could likely earn a doctorate studying this landscape from an ethno-sociological perspective.

Despite all of these challenges, many people agree that snowboarding, as a whole, is relatively healthy. The ultimate snow toy has reached an adult age and truly earned a spot among the classic sideways activities – surfing and skateboarding. Simply put, snowboarding is now a mature industry. And this industry has reached the point in winter when the sales meetings are over and brands are pulling back the curtain on next year's goods. Fortunately, this leads us to the next milestone of the season . . . ladies and gents, welcome to the 24/25 Retail Buyer's Guide for Snowboards, brought to you by **Matthieu Perez**.



HEAD

MARKET STATEMENT

Let's dive in right away into a panel of visions and perceptions from manufacturers and brands. At GNU, Barrett Christy Cummins snowboard legend, marketing leader at Mervin, and mum to a tribe of rippers, says, "Over the past several seasons, snowboarding participation (as part of the greater outdoor sports culture) has experienced a nice lift". She continues, "The challenge our industry faces now will be to keep all these new riders coming back each season to shred. 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. As an industry leader we see this as a unique opportunity for us to introduce snowboarders to equipment that rides better, lasts longer, is environmentally nicer, and frankly, more fun!"

Matt Stillman from Rome adds, "The current state of the snowboard market seems to be eager and optimistic. We continue to listen closely to our valued retailer partners, reps and distributors to address whatever challenges they see emerging". Lib-Tech's VP of Marketing, Pete Saari says, "Snowboarding's seasonality keeps it fresh and exciting every year. Shops don't seem to be overburdened with inventory the way the surf industry has been post-covid. All we need is snow and the good times roll".

Yet some see it differently, like Andreas Kramer from Double Deck. He states, "The snowboard market is currently still in decline, but seems to be open to new products and innovations. With our new snowboard technology we have the feeling that the market will accept exactly that. We also have the feeling that with this product [Double Deck's proprietary design] we can potentially make the snowboard market grow again". On a mission.

On another note, Démir Julià, general manager at Verdad states, "Big Brands are trying to kill all the small brands. Luckily small brands have the nicest boards and designs so they can survive. [These smaller brands survive] Thanks to the core riders, without their support there would only be uniformity".

The boys at Korua note that business chases snow and that winter sports are facing political challenges in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Amplid's master of ceremony, Peter Bauer, emphasizes, "Winter tourism as being the scapegoat of all media is also something we have to deal with. But Amplid has been growing strongly during the past four years, it seems there is a place for a dedicated snowboard brand in the mid to high-end market, even in difficult times".



“The challenge our industry faces now will be to keep all these new riders coming back each season to shred. 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. As an industry leader we see this as a unique opportunity for us to introduce snowboarders to equipment that rides better, lasts longer, is environmentally nicer, and frankly, more fun!” Barrett Christy Cummins, Mervin

strategy of keeping the full line carry-over for 24/25. We started this season to shift all online channel direct sales to the closest retailer to the consumer and we are supporting local retailers even if they're not yet existing pre-order clients”.

Finally, for Joe Sexton at Public, the big picture looks a bit more positive: “I think the current state of the snowboard market is hopeful, it's cool to see brands putting a focus on the culture of snowboarding. Challenges would be logistics issues and supply chain issues. The brand really can't navigate them as most of the time they are out of our control, it's just doing the best we can”.

Last but not least, Goodboards' Founder Josef Holub nails it: “The most important thing is to motivate the customers to go back to the mountains and snowboard. That's why we organise over 50 test days”.

When asked about physical retail, everyone agrees that brick-and-mortar is a big strength for the industry and nothing will replace the service and engagement you find on a shop floor. This is nicely illustrated by Amplid's Peter Bauer: “The retailers still provide those ‘temples of stoke’, which we all need to keep the psych-level up. A cool store is an important brick in our culture”. Word.

STRATEGY

In order to succeed at all levels, brands are building and strengthening their own vision on how things should be run. At Drake, Davide Smania, product and marketing manager offers, “We just introduced two models which are a more affordable version of already existing ones, same shapes but with simplified construction in order to serve also those customers which don't have a big wallet. Being [value-oriented] is always well appreciated in this economic situation, not everyone can afford an expense of 500 euros or more for a snowboard”. Commitment to small budgets.

Capita stands behind its facility – the Mothership – and values sourcing raw materials close to it. Mark Dangler insists, “We have a unique position in that 98% of our materials for production are sourced within a five-hour drive of The Mothership. We continue to strive to find ways to strengthen our localized supply chain, which we have done so with certain wood core types this season. As far as pricing we have seen a continuation of customers gravitating towards higher-end premium products in the collection”.

For Never Summer, being a product-driven brand allows the company to connect with core customers and new ones through

Slash Snowboards founder & owner Gigi Rűf tells us they are carrying their 23/24 board line forward to 24/25 due to the amazing reception it received at retail. Last winter Gigi introduced TopART, decals that allow the user to DIY their board with select collaborators. Slash worked with Crazy Shop in Spain for a run of TopART decals to celebrate their 25th anniversary this winter. To accompany the TopART stickers, Gigi produced a blank version of their best-selling Happy Place board this winter. So that retailers have some newness next winter, Gigi's giving three Slash boards the TopART Edition treatment (clean, blank topsheets with subtle Slash branding) and will also be releasing a collab board and Union binding with hype illustrator (and former snowboard shop kid) Thumbs.

Mas, the 100% rider-owned and operated brand from Turkey, has a close connection to the end customer and the nearest ski resort is one hour away from its factory. This allows the founders to rigorously test and analyze each snowboard they produce. Cofounder Alp Demiralp explains, “Snowboard production needs new technologies and improvements more than ever due to climate change. This challenges us to evolve to our best. Last winter, the snow level was low in Turkey and we also experienced a big earthquake. We have a large network and we believe that we will overcome this with ‘the right price to the right customer’ policy. Hopefully, with the early snowfalls, this year will be better than the previous one”.

At Telos, European Sales Manager Kolja G. Keetmanassesses says: “We're strengthening relationships to our local retail partners and our consumers and we get a lot of positive feedback on the actual



Stale Fish 157
Cleaver FullWrap Binding
Photo: Jack Dawe



ALL WAYS DOWN



“The current state of the snowboard market seems to be eager and optimistic. We continue to listen closely to our valued retailer partners, reps and distributors to address whatever challenges they see emerging”

Matt Stillman, Rome

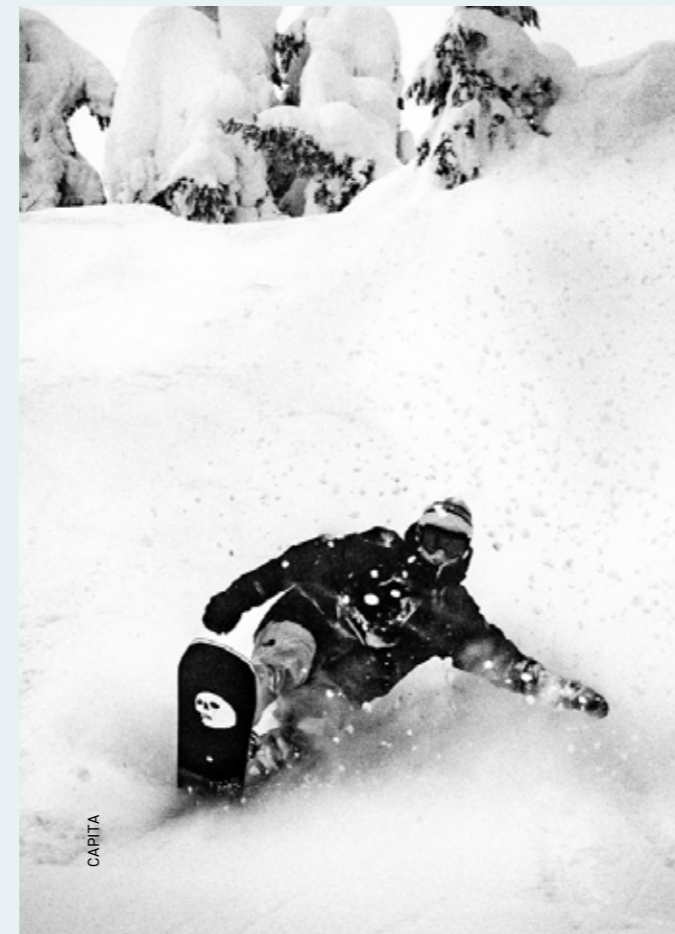
As you can see, many small labels are moving and shaking the industry with outstanding concepts and brilliant ideas. It's up to distros, reps, and retailers to give them a shot!

Other brands are working through their range and category to access the market and reach informed customers. Consequently, brands are covering all areas of snowboarding – and it's for the good of the retailers.

As an example, Elevated Surf Craft continues to develop the range of its quiver and aim its pricing to fit with the niche and specialty style market. Aaron Sababba, owner and shaper proposes, “Implementing techniques like payment plans and communicating the longer lifespan of our product seems to allow for slightly higher than normal pricing”.

For 24/25, Arbor has reduced its overall SKU count and has repositioned its offering to be easier for retailers & consumers to digest. Product Marketing Manager Eddie Wall emphasizes, “We will be focusing heavily on our athlete marketing strategies and the products that tie into these stories, which should drive sales into our top-selling SKUs and reduce excess inventory”.

Reflecting on an interesting direction at YES, Brand Manager David Pitschi explains, “In this year one of the merger we have made a strategic move to talk to the younger audience and the more freestyle part of the snowboarding offer. We have multiple twin and directional twin boards to fit all freestylers out there”.



an emphasis on quality. Tony Sasgen, international sales manager, emphasizes, “I believe the core snowboarder appreciates durability and craftsmanship over hype, probably more now than ever. When buying 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”.

Borealis' Ben Hall justifies the company's recent big developments. He notes, “We moved 100% of our production to GP87 last year as they produce the highest quality snowboards on the planet. This move increased our costs and the price of our gear quite significantly but we did this for super positive reasons: to shift towards ultra-premium quality and increased performance, which is why we now have a 4-year guarantee on all our gear”.

Many small labels are also showing interesting concepts and alternative offers. Matts Drougge, shaper and owner at Stranda says, “We can see a growing interest in boutique brands like us. Sales have been really strong so far this season. The more mature riders are looking for and are prepared to pay a premium for high-end snowboards”.

Tur is a relatively new, small brand looking for growth but without losing the brand's DNA, which is rooted in high quality and premium products. “At the moment we are selling our products with low margins to keep the end price to consumers down as much as possible [and] to be able to introduce our products to a wider audience”, explains Product Manager Jörgen Svedberg.

Silbaerg, the small German brand, is focusing more and more on the niche in the high-price segment and driving B2C sales via its own webshop. Founder Dr. Jörg Kaufmann, says, “Another mainstay are customized snowboards, i.e. we can adapt the complete shape, flex and design to the individual customer's wishes. However, this only works in the premium niche”.

Jure Sodja, co-owner at Moonchild, introduces the small brand: “We remain committed to our niche within the market, specializing in freeride and powder boards. 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”.

Kjetil Bjørge at Fjell puts it in three points, “Market and interest seem [to be] increasing. [The challenge of] rising prices at every level is demanding. [We are focused on] calculated production and detailed future planning”. Straight to the point.

An old dawg from the industry, Rad Air's Harry Gunz and his Tankers reminds us that “We focus on the longboarding market (a niche within the niche) and it's hard to convince dealers/shops to carry such an exclusive line. That's why the online market has become important to us. End users know what they want and are searching for the right product”.



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Preorders: info@borealis-snowboards.com

“At the moment we are selling our products with low margins to keep the end price to consumers down as much as possible [and] to be able to introduce our products to a wider audience”

Jörgen Svedberg, Tur

Davide Smania at Drake observes, “It seems that particular shapes and geometries gained their niche, but in general we noticed a certain interest in having versatile boards you can ride and have fun in different conditions. We are covering different shades of the all-mountain category”.

Nidecker sees the snowboard market growing in two distinct segments: all-mountain boards and freestyle-specific twin shapes. Antoine Floquet, product wizard, explains, “As the leading manufacturer of all mountain essentials, we naturally address the first segment right across the line, but we’ve also expanded our true twin collection to offer everything from easy-riding jib boards to the Sensor PRO – Mons Røisland’s weapon of choice”.

The market for Roxy is a diverse range of female participants. Barret Christy Cummins dissects this: “Fans of the brand [include] outdoor adventurers, cultural leaders, competitive pros, and casual enthusiasts, and our line addresses the needs of these consumers across the youth and adult market. Trends in women’s products are similar to that of the market as a whole, with an increased awareness of camber hybrids and consideration of environmentally friendly products”.

Katharina Acham, operative marketing manager at Head claims, “We are looking ahead to season 24/25 with confidence as the orders are high again and we will start the season with a great and strong product mix developed in close coordination with our business partners”. Finally Stephan Schauer at Ride concludes the topic with another straight and forward claim: “Keep on producing good stuff. We have great products. We’re gonna sell them”. On a mission.



BATALEON

WHAT'S INSIDE?

For the 24/25 line, Vimana has reinvented a lot of its bestsellers, offering new shapes with fine-tuned and tested sidecuts. Trond-Eirik Husvæg details, “We will also introduce our new seamless sidewalls, which are custom to every single shape and length. The biggest plus with this is flex control and boxing in the sandwich construction perfectly. All our products are dictated by our team of riders. Every single Vimana board has a specific purpose”.

There’s a lot of new stuff from Rome, as the 24/25 collection finds the brand with a new logo package, which is prominently displayed on boards’ bases. Matt Stillman, vibe merchant, adds, “To complement the new, refined logo, we also have new brand colors designed to evoke a clean, modern feel. A cool slate gray with hunter orange accent creates an approachable and timeless visual sensibility. We also set out this year to add more colour to the line; bright hues of purple, acid yellows and shades of bone accent the new brand colour palette”.

Moonchild has established the Moonchild Skunkworx division to build experimental boards and test new shapes. Three snowboards, which are truly unconventional and offer new sensations on snow, have been launched under the Skunkworx brand. One of those boards is a hybrid snowboard that can be ridden as a powsurf, splitboard, or traditional snowboard.

Amplid launched its “Hollow Project” last season – making a superlight powder board, with 80% of the surface area being translucent. Bauer adds, “Very likely we will launch a ltd. edition this season, depending on how quickly we reach the go-to-market stage with this new technology”.

Academy keeps it simple: Sintered bases are featured on every Academy Series. “We use only the best materials available. Why would you buy an expensive car with crappy extruded tires?” asks Jeff Baughn.

“Bataleon remains at the forefront of 3D snowboard shapes, propelling us continuously toward change and innovation, which remains our defining trait”, reminds Rubby Kiebert, Bataleon’s sales director. He continues, “Our recent endeavors include a comprehensive overhaul of our freeride line, alongside the reconfiguration of the popular plus series, now featuring the newly introduced women’s Push Up+”.

YES is coming up with many bangers this year. It is introducing a new main technology, its Y3D bases with the sidekick technology associated with it. Pitschi explains, “We’re benefiting from those technologies thanks to the merger with Lobster. Y3D is the YES three-dimensional base, it brings more playfulness in the park boards and more floatation in the powder boards. The sidekick technology helps the rider to have a smooth ride in chatter by flushing out the excess snow before the edge catches”.

Last year brought big developments at Lib-Tech, including Mike Olson’s new Techno Pop construction on the Apex Golden Orca and Mikes Magic BM. Techno Pop includes recycled PET foam from plastic bottles, Ultra high strength Magnesium fibre that reduces weight, and strategically placed structural carbon that adds pop and liveliness.



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IT'S WHAT HAPPENS BETWEEN LEFT AND RIGHT.

Nidecker and its riders have been shaping snowboarding since 1984. Designed in collaboration with Mons Røisland, the W25 Sensor Series is an expanded true twin collection that ushers in a new chapter of progression.

SENSOR SERIES





Pete Saari offers, "This year we are trickling some of that lightweight poppy tech into other models in the line including the large, long Dough Boy Shredder, the hard carving, side hit blasting, pow floating resort ripping Double Dip, the high performance freestyle TRS series, and our all new smooth-riding, high performance women's directional all mountain freeride Theda model".

Burton's focus in boards is freeride performance, that's where the brand puts the energy when it comes to new shapes and innovation.

Never Summer's biggest innovation over the last couple seasons has been the Triple Camber profile and edge tech that has gained momentum with its core customer base and beyond. Tony Sasgen states, "When you put the Triple Camber models on edge you will feel the additional contact points doing the work and digging into any snow or ice you put under it. It works, try it for yourself and see".

At Rossignol, innovation will come from manufacturing processes, organizational behavior, and renewable feedstocks as much as from board construction and shapes. The brand is focused on reducing its carbon footprint and controlling pricing.

Korua keeps the line steady as it carries the collection over for next season. Improvements in detail are kept under the radar. For bigger innovations, have a look at their concept boards where snowsurfers with shifting bindings are in focus.

At Arbor, the majority of the snowboards have Real Wood Powerply topsheets. The models that do not implement the Powerply use a bio-plastic topsheet. All Arbor snowboards have recycled steel edges, recycled ABS sidewalls when applicable, bio-resin, and sustainably sourced Poplar and Paulownia wood cores. They are factory-tuned, factory-waxed with Wend Natural Wax, and manufactured with 100% solar energy. Another full commitment to sustainable construction.

Talking about sustainability, Capita's story is consistent. The CAPITA Mothership is its production home in the Austrian Alps and the first true 100% clean energy snowboard manufacturing facility in the industry.

As for Borealis, Ben Hall explains, "Since it was launched in 13/14, we've been focusing on using sustainable materials wherever we can:

"In this year one of the merger we have made a strategic move to talk to the younger audience and the more freestyle part of the snowboarding offer. We have multiple twin and directional twin boards to fit all freestylers out there" David Pitschi, YES

organic bamboo topsheets, sustainable wood, zero-COV resin, flax pads, recycled steel edges, biodegradable wax, bioplastic topsheet, etc. But most importantly, we believe in building long-lasting and high performing snowboards – each of our boards is designed to have a long life and that is a core element of sustainability". On another note, DoubleDeck Snowboards has developed a special return policy for rental stations. At the end of the season, rental stations return their boards to the company, which then recycles the material and makes new boards out of it.

Following the 23/24 debut of Jones' groundbreaking Re-Up tech stringers that are made with materials recycled from dead snowboards, this next season the focus is on creating a snowboard recycling program that will help secure the supply of dead boards it needs to introduce Re-Up technology into more board models.

Lately, 100% of Nidecker's suppliers have signed the Nidecker Code of Conduct & Environmental Policy. Floquet insists, "It's a pretty exhaustive document that we hope will help to set the standard for our industry".

Silbaerg started with the first snowboards made of hemp fiber in 23/24, although the material costs are currently extremely high (even higher than for carbon fiber). In 24/25, the brand will further expand its range with natural fibers.

Nitro Founder Tommy Delago states, "On construction, sustainability is more important than the next new exotic high-tech fibre. Some claims are pretty wild, though, and we will need some ways for the consumer to gauge the promises made by suppliers against the reality". Two worlds.

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“On construction, sustainability is more important than the next new exotic high-tech fibre. Some claims are pretty wild, though, and we will need some ways for the consumer to gauge the promises made by suppliers against the reality” Tommy Delago, Nitro

Roxy’s range spans the full spectrum. Inspired by and focused on the mountain and wave lifestyle and the communities that surround them, Roxy proposes all mountain boards that encourage participation and accessibility to this lifestyle and community continues to be its focus.

The Niche line for 24/25 was graphically inspired by the realm of the fae, and features ethereal, mysterious graphics created using old-world illustrative techniques like charcoal and pen and ink. The lineup is focused yet offers something for each type of rider, whether it be splitboarding, freeride, freestyle.

Public’s Sexton notes, “Our focus is to market to snowboarders! Anyone who likes to slide sideways on snow is our ideal customer”.

Lib-Tech’s Pete Saari concludes, “We love snowboarding and snowboard building. We are all in every day, all year, and have been for four decades. We try to make every step and every component that goes into a snowboard a magical story from a happy craftsman, to an environmentally friendly process and materials, to an amazing artist, to an extremely happy shredder/dreamer board curator”. Passion at its finest.

Goodboards ends it with the motto: Think positively, be patient, go riding with customers and have fun! Full program.

The next steps in shaping the industry are up to you. Ask questions, talk, test, push, carve, pop, and lift all of the amazing tools brought by these brands and manufacturers. As happiness is sometimes hidden in the unknown, I invite you to surprise yourself with a new concept or simply something you didn’t know about previously. ‘Cause if you don’t try, you’ll never know. See you on the snow! ☺

—

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Eco focus, but no greenwashing please
- 2 Market in good shape
- 3 YES Merging with Lobster & NOW
- 4 Small brands being heard
- 5 How to keep the influx of newbies?



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Amplid Snowboards hangs ten on an ocean of awards spanning various categories. From shredding through powder to tackling alpine terrains on the Milligram or embracing the all-mountain vibe with the Singular.



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BIG WIG INTERVIEW DAVID PITSCHI, YES SNOWBOARDS

This issue's Big Wig needs little introduction to the European snowboard industry. After hanging up his boots as a pro rider, David Pitschi went on to work for Billabong & Salomon Snowboards before taking the position of Brand Manager at YES.

Big news for next winter is the merger of Nidecker Group brands YES, Now Bindings & Lobster Snowboards. All three brands, started by pro snowboarders, will now fall under the brand name YES. We spoke with David to hear all the details. We talk team, management, brand differentiation within the NDK Group, synergies and we also lean on David for some invaluable industry insight.

Please tell us about your background and your involvement with the Nidecker Group.

I grew up in Switzerland and had the privilege of starting snowboarding in the late 80s and lived the full explosion of snowboarding in the 90s. I've been working in the snowboard industry for over 30 years now, from being a rider to managing outerwear and hardgoods brands.

I have been involved with Nidecker for the past four years managing the YES brand. I oversee the YES brand that is now a part of the Nidecker group. The Nidecker group sees the potential in YES and have decided to invest in the brand. YES, has been organically growing for the past years and needed some extra resources to be able to accelerate the growth. Nidecker was also my first sponsor when I was 12.

NDK Group has just announced the merger of NOW and Lobster into the group's popular YES brand, what was the thinking behind the move?

It all stemmed from a Zoom call, we were looking at solutions to grow a stronger team and also integrate more YES collab bindings in the YES offering, when the Nidecker brothers had this idea of merging the three brands together. We then got JF Pelchat, the Helgassons and the YES founders together and realized that by associating these people together and then the product together we would have such a strong story to tell. Everyone is really excited by the merger.

Each brand has its distinctive marketing and brand identity, the idea is that if you are inclined to ride a snowboard this winter there is one within the three brands that fits your need perfectly.

The basis of the merger is "we are stronger together." Now has fantastic technology and product, YES has a strong distribution, product and history and Lobster has the reach and current credibility. The merger will allow YES to be more visible in the market and more freestyle & youth driven than in the past. It also allows YES to have a full snowboarding offering with multiple product lines and a catalogue of technologies to pick from. By using the strength of the three brands under one name is going to allow YES to have the reach, and the product to make a difference in the market segment we target.

How will the management structure operate within the new look setup?

The Nidecker board will oversee the whole of operations, there is a brand manager but also, we've been able to allocate resources to build a strong team on the staff side and also a strong team of young riders. YES, is and always was, a team driven brand so now with Lobster in the mix we will have an influx of young talented riders.

The merger will allow YES to be more visible in the market and more freestyle & youth driven than in the past. It also allows YES to have a full snowboarding offering with multiple product lines and a catalogue of technologies to pick from.

The new setup will also benefit from the whole Nidecker back-office resources and that's a great advantage for YES.

What are your hopes for YES after the new structure is in place?

We have a plan to become more visible to the young freestylers, we will become a brand that has an influence in the market we target. Combining the product offer, the strong team of riders with the distribution setup, I'm sure YES will be a brand to consider when shops determine their product offering. We are counting on the fact that having a binding offer under the same brand will open more doors and create more demand for the brand. Also, with the added resources we have in-house we are able to bring in extra creative people to do the marketing and the designs. Geiri Hoskuldsson has come from Lobster to become the YES marketing manager and he's in charge of building the team and creating the stories, we also have a whole team of engineers in Rolle that will be more focused on boards and bindings so we can translate the riders' needs into products they love. The structure of the brand has changed for the better and we have more people flying the YES flag.

With the centralization of brands, how does the group separate its product channels from a growth, sales and marketing perspective?

We have a clear mapping of how the brand within the group are positioned, we try to all be complimentary and have a healthy competition on the fringe of each brand's product offer. YES is taking a place within the group where we feel we have an opportunity to elevate the whole group. Each brand operates separately but not behind closed doors, so we do share information and align strategies, so we progress together. Each brand has its distinctive marketing and brand identity, the idea is that if you are inclined to ride a snowboard this winter there is one within the three brands that fits your need perfectly.

Every retailer will find a product that will fit the demand in his store. YES will target the more core freestyle segment in a premium offer, the other brands will complete the offer in the other segments snowboarding has.

Please explain YES and NDK Group's approach to retail for 23/24, 24/25 and moving forward.

We believe in a healthy mix of retailers; we provide each type of retailer with a solid solution that will ensure they get the right product for their customer. With the diversity of our offer, we can have stable partnerships with all types of retailers from the resort core shop to bigger multistore retailers. Nidecker is working hard to be able to provide a complete offer when it comes to snowboard products. Every retailer will find a product that will fit the demand in his store. YES will target the more core freestyle segment in a premium offer, the other brands will complete the offer in the other segments snowboarding has.

What will happen with NOW and Lobster brand ambassadors/team riders - will they be retained by the YES brand?

We are building the new YES team and are taking everyone in, it's pretty simple for NOW seen as 95% of the Now riders were on YES already. Regarding the Lobster team we are working with Halldor and Eiki to make a smooth transition and getting those Lobster riders stoked on the YES brand. The plan is to build a strong tight team that will travel and film together, building content and inspiring kids to go and ride together. YES, is rider driven and the team is the base of our

stories and our product development. Each product we develop has a rider at its inception. So, for us the team is as much of a marketing initiative as it is a product development think tank.

What do you see as the biggest opportunities for the snowboard industry currently?

The biggest opportunity to my eyes is the excitement around freestyle, but creative freestyle. We have seen the interest shift from



big perfect park kickers to backyard original jumps. I think the next couple years are going to be strong for the freestyle brands. The splitboard and backcountry boom we saw after the Covid crisis has reached its peak and now the more crew style of riding is coming back. People are getting together and going to ride spots as a crew. You see a lot more early season edits with kids hiking rails in a group. I think the creative impulse to snowboarding is going to be strong in the next years. Scott Stevens and Arthur Longo have paved the way and now we see it happening on the consumer level.

What lessons have you learnt during your 20+ years in the snowboard industry?

I've learned that nothing is ever set in stone. That the beauty of the industry is the people and the passion everyone has for snowboarding. The biggest learning would be that snowboarding is one of the rare industries where passion leads the way to innovation. And because people are inspired by passion, there will always be people drawn towards snowboarding, it will fluctuate but there will always be a kid picking up a snowboard and letting it change their life. The snowboard industry like other lifestyle sports goes through cycles and needs to constantly re-invent itself. When you think about all the tech has been invented, or all the trends that have been covered, some rider or brand comes with a new way of looking at snowboarding and changes the dynamics in place and that's the beauty of snowboarding - it has no rules set in stone.

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

SNOW HELMETS FW24/25

The use of the snow helmet is widespread. Increased awareness of head protection will keep it steady. Users welcome all advances in safety and comfort. By Rocio Enriquez.



The history of helmet use amongst snowboarders is one of steep increase over the last two decades. Recent research (S. Niemann, F. Bürgi, O. Brügger, "Helmet use in skiing and snowboarding in Switzerland during the past 20 years") shows that 92% of Swiss snowboarders use helmets, compared to 20% twenty years ago. A trip to any other European mountain will confirm this trend. This is driving helmet makers to develop the safest and most comfortable product possible. Safety is useless without comfort. No safety feature can protect a head that is not wearing the helmet due to discomfort. Impact protection technology is paired with lightweight constructions, fit adaptability, and good ventilation. Styles offering this combination have topped sales. Some examples are Salomon's Husk Prime MIPS helmet, Head's C-Series, Giro's Owen, or Smith's Vantage, Level and Mission. Other impact technology driven sales have been Rossignol's Alta Impacts Strato, Sweet's MIPS styles Trooper, Igniter and Switcher, and Anon's WaveCel collection. After safety and comfort, goggle integration, audio compatibility and a sleek design are desirable features.

FW24/25 HELMETS

Every known version of impact protection technology makes it to helmet construction. Nothing is benched. MIPS is a favourite. This technology reduces the rotational motion of the brain in the event of impact. Sweet integrates it in their new Adapter all-mountain helmet. It is paired with a three-piece shell in-mould construction that optimises strength, and a multi-density, shock-absorbing structure. Smith features MIPS in their new Accel helmet and their best-selling Nexus one, both with complete Koroyd coverage. Bollé's new additions, the X-Fusion and the Ypsos, are also available with MIPS. Dakine enters the helmet market with two ABS injection moulded hard-shell styles, the Day Tripper and the Charger. The latter features MIPS. Salomon offers an MIPS alternative to their Husk Prime and their Brigade, this last one with added EPS4D safety technology. Giro's Owen and new Tenet helmets feature their proprietary Spherical Technology powered by MIPS. "The new Tenet model is a Hybrid shell that offers durability with a hard-shell upper part and keeps the weight to its optimum with in-mould lower sidewalls", says Darius Heristchian. MIPS can

"The Calyx, which is certified for snow, bike and mountaineering, will be a key addition to the line-up" Damian Phillips, POC

also be found in Protec's Apex helmet and POC's new Calyx. "The Calyx, which is certified for snow, bike and mountaineering, will be a key addition to the line-up", says Damian Phillips. Prosurf is starting to implement MIPS too. Anon uses WaveCel. "Upon impact, it works in three ways. First it flexes to help divert impact force away from the head, then it crumples to help absorb impact energy and finally, the cells glide to distribute rotational force, redirecting energy away from your head", explains Benjamin Schwarz. Their WaveCel styles Merak, Logan and Oslo have a very lightweight in-mould construction. Oakley presents the new MODBC, loaded with technology specifically designed for the back country. Rossignol sticks to its IMPACTS technology. "Developed by taking into account the real conditions in which helmets are used, it offers improved protection against multiple impacts, without compromising comfort or aesthetics", says Margaux Joly.

Wearing comfort drives the design. Dakine's helmets feature an adjustable fit system dial, an open cell padded lining and removable ear pads. Rossignol's Fit impact complements their padded liners and ear pads with fixed vents for temperature management. Giro combines an Ionic+ Fleece lining with their Thermostat ControlTM. For fit adjustment, they work with their In FormTM 2 fit system. Salomon's Brigade offers a removable liner and integrated goggle retainer that seamlessly tucks away. Smith throws in the mix a sweat wicking IonicTM antimicrobial liner and offers the new BOA®360 fit system. This system is also present in Anon's models and in the new Bollé X-Fusion helmet, which is built with a merino/lyocell padding. Sweet works with their Occigrip fit system to dial the fit on the

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fly. Head uses their patented Sphere Fit system, featured in their new Rev Rethink and Cinema Pro styles. Their junior styles Mojo and Maja Paw offer 2D adjustability in size and fit, allowing the helmet to grow with the user. FidLock® magnetic buckles are found across many collections, with brands like Dakine, Smith, Anon, Head, Giro, Bollé, and Sweet using them. Ventilation is important. Oakley's MODBC and Salomon's Husk Prime focus their designs on it. Anon has loaded their Merak WaveCel with nineteen ventilation channels. The Oslo WaveCel offers two integrated vents to keep air circulating for fog-free goggles. Poc's Calyx, both in its standard or carbon version, feature deep ventilation channels and adjustable vent openings on the top.

Style trends favour sleek, minimalist designs. In this category we find Anon's Logan and Oslo, Salomon's Husk Prime and Brigade, Rekk's Elite helmet, Protec's Classic Snow, and the skate-inspired, new Rodeo helmet by Smith. There is some space for visor styles too. Head offers visor versions of their junior Mojo and Maja Paw styles, and the Cinema Pro for adults. "The CINEMA helmet with its outstanding free-floating visor construction offers an unrestricted field of vision for the wearer. Its ventilated visor can easily be exchanged with one click", explains Katharina Acham. Bollé's new X-Fusion has a fully cylindrical integrated photochromic visor. "The X-Fusion system allows for a flawless harmony between the helmet and the visor, including for people wearing ophthalmic glasses", says Françoise Sévenier. Salomon and Oakley offer spare replacement lenses for their visor models. Audio compatibility is an important selling point. Dakine and Anon make all their helmets audio compatible. Smith's helmets are designed to integrate the Aleck audio systems, both wired and wireless versions. Sweet offers audio solutions in cooperation with OutdoorTech. Protective pouches are welcome accessories. Head includes a helmet pouch in the box of their top-of-the-line helmets. Their Rachel and Radar helmets include a reusable fabric visor cover to protect or clean the lens. Prosurf also offers visor lens covers.

LOOKS

The seasonal palette is populated by neutral tones, with a sprinkle of bright colours for those who like to stand-out. We find more feminine colours, like variations of pink and lilac, to appeal to the female share of the market. Classics like black, grey, or dark blue keep a steady presence. Cross-merchandising of the helmets with other products is important, as expressed by Rossignol, Giro, and Salomon. Head keeps their Intermix design strategy that enables combination of any helmet with any goggle. Anon bears in mind the seasonal pallet of some top technical outerwear brands when choosing their colours. There are many collaborations. Smith continues to work with the North Face with a co-branded version of their Summit helmet. They have a new collaboration with She Jumps, a non-profit that promotes the participation of women and girls in outdoor activities. They also continue their partnership with the High Fives Foundation. Head continues their collaboration with Nickleodeon through their unique Paw Patrol helmets for juniors.

SUSTAINABILITY

There is an increase in the use of sustainable materials. Rossignol uses 100% recycled polycarbonate for the outer shells. Their foam is made of 20% recycled cork and 80% EPP, their padding and straps use 100% recycled polyester and their earpads are made of hemp. Salomon announces a big launch for February 2024. "We know that most helmets (if not all) are buried in landfills or incinerated. That's why we developed a new helmet that is fully recyclable" announces Benjamin Raffort. Head's new Rodeo helmet uses 68% recycled or upcycled materials. The new Rev Rethink and Radar Rethink feature recycled polycarbonate and fleece, and sustainable

"The Cinema helmet with its outstanding free-floating visor construction offers an unrestricted field of vision for the wearer. Its ventilated visor can easily be exchanged with one click"

Katharina Acham, Head

materials like cork and cotton. Bollé continues with their React for Good programme that implements over 20% of recycled or bio-based materials in their product design. Dakine's helmets are made of 30% recycled ABS injection moulded hard shell, 100% recycled EPS foam liner, and 100% recycled PET webbing. Most brands monitor their manufacturing processes. Sweet is committed to achieving net-zero greenhouse emissions across their entire chain by no later than 2050. They are transitioning to cleaner energy sources and evaluating raw materials to identify lower-impact options. Head's Rethink programme oversees waste reduction and the use of recycled or certified raw materials. Oakley's new MODBC will use a greener manufacturing process that uses half the power. Packaging is a great way to lower the carbon footprint of a product. Smith has removed plastic from their products. Their retail boxes are made of post-consumer

"The X-Fusion system allows for a flawless harmony between the helmet and the visor, including for people wearing ophthalmic glasses"

Françoise Sévenier, Bollé



recycled cardboard and designed to fold flat for storage or disposal. They have also re-engineered their helmet boxes with an insert that cradles the helmet for safe shipment. Oakley has also started replacing their existing packaging for more environmentally friendly boxes and inks. Head only uses certified cardboard boxes, avoids plastic bags and see-through windows, and uses only water-based inks for printing.

RETAILER SUPPORT

Technology and sustainability will be the themes of dedicated marketing stories. An important way to communicate them is through product training. Salomon will offer retailers a training book with detailed information. Head is developing a lot of videos for this purpose. Staff training is equally important for Smith, Sweet and Anon, who carry out clinics. In-store materials are important to carry the message on to the consumer. Dakine is developing a new POS programme. Smith has added significant resources to this division. Head offers a high-quality and sustainable metal branded helmet slat wall holder with mannequin heads. Their dedicated displays for their Paw Patrol collaboration can hold twenty to thirty helmets. Giro and Salomon develop POS assets that explain their technologies. Visual content is paramount. Most brands produce videos and pictures that retailers can use in their social media. A lot of this content is created by ambassadors and athletes. Some brands offer retailer incentivisation. Anon and Smith work with the ENDVR app. Dakine has developed a premium dealers' programme that allocates a special budget to each selected shop. The implementation of measures such as earlier ordering cycles and increase of carry over products has offered positive results. Most brands report healthy stock levels and good positioning to meet delivery timelines. Consumers are keen to snowboard and conscious about head protection. Let it snow. ☺

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 High demand for impact protection technology.
- 2 Wearing comfort key purchasing factor.
- 3 Minimalist designs with neutral colours.
- 4 Staff training and POS to educate about technologies.

New Taggart Helmet



Giro
Sport
Design

UNRIVALLED FLEXIBILITY

HYPERFREAK **FIRE**



O'NEILL 

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

WETSUITS FW24/25

If we were to select a single word to give an overview of the wetsuit market in FW24, it would be "reconsolidate". Still plagued with poor demand and slowly clearing stocks, the industry is doing groundswell work behind the scenes, until a brighter chain of events turns up. By **David Bianic**, Senior Surf Contributor.



PATAGONIA

Truth be told, our surfer cabinet consists of many expendable items. Things we don't need, but we do love, and are willing to pay for. Well, wetsuits definitely don't belong to that category. You can't live without them. And whatever the durability of the steamer, you will have to refresh your rubber quiver every 3 years, tops. The point here is that the overstock issues have a solution: time. Not the answer you were expecting, for sure. "Winter wetsuits are a necessity not a luxury so we'll see the product work through in time", says Phil Bridges, Designer for Dakine.

But if the shelves are slowly clearing, there is a price to pay... for the retailers. "The main issue that concerns our dealers is the amount of end-of-line stock that has been dumped on the market recently", points out Tom Copsey, Product Manager at O'Neill. We are talking deep discounts on the FW23 models, which brings us to the next seasonal challenge. The confidence level of the brands regarding FW24 preorders/orders isn't at its utmost high. "Retailers are a bit chilly on pre-orders because of the past year", notes Mathieu Desaphie, Founder and Designer of Sen No Sen, "but in the same time they welcome super good a brand like SNS who didn't do ridiculous discounts on wetsuits all year long". Be sanctioned or be rewarded, your commercial policy will tell. Rip Curl sees the big picture and

"Winter wetsuits are a necessity not a luxury so we'll see the product work through in time."

Phil Bridges, Dakine

emphasize on their commitment to price stability, avoiding discounts in flagship products.

Let's end this introductory assessment with a question, from Patrick Watin, Sales Manager for West Wetsuits: "The real question is how much cost a good wetsuit and are we able to sale wetsuits at this price?"

PRICEPOINTS AREN'T AN ISSUE

A winter wetsuit is the second most expensive piece of the surfer's kit after the board itself. The candid approach would be to consider that high price points hinder the sell out in an inflationary context. The reality is that core surfers do not want to compromise their surfing experience and are willing to hand serious dough in exchange of performance wetsuits. As summed up by Phil at Dakine, "a cheap



OCENA is a new foam crafted by Sheico using FSC-certified natural rubber, enriched with oyster shell powder and soybean oil.

offer", it's to say the Elite and Rise collections. Hooded wetsuits are a rare thing on the market for female surfers and it is worth shining a light on Soörüz GURU+ Hooded: "We tested it in Iceland with water temperatures around 5/6°C and an air temperature of -10°C, and our riders felt warm and extremely flexible in this 6/5/4 wetsuit." It is also worth mentioning Gotcha will enter the women market with their very first female suit, and paid particular attention to the fit, ensures Nuno Fonseca.

As per Hurley, the brand introduces a new model, the Max 5/3: "Whether surfing in colder waters or enjoying waves in warmer climates, the Max 5/3 offers a perfect balance between flexibility and thermal insulation, ensuring users feel comfortable in any condition."

But as per the rest of the bunch, you won't notice much difference on the wetsuit hangers in your local shop from FW23 to FW24. And yes, that is good news, in a way.

RUBBER COOKING

We do know FW24 will be a continuation of the current offer, but it does not mean we can spare ourselves a quick recap of the existing neoprene technologies out there. The traditional limestone neoprene isn't going anywhere and generates quite a cult following due to a second skin feeling which overrides its poor eco-credibility. The Australian-based brand Radiator only swears by Yamamoto, joined by a few others. In addition, Radiator claims their wetsuits are able to retain more heat and are less buoyant than thicker suits thanks to their Closed Cell Content.

The oyster-based limestone rubber has partially solved the environmental issue and spread out in the higher end models. Soörüz pioneered the technology and does its best to have an edge of the competition with the release of a new foam, the Organic Oysterprene. Using natural rubber, oyster powder and vegetal oil (68% bio-sourced), they already implemented the formula on the GURU range for SS24 and "are happy to extend it to our FIGHTER and DIVINE ranges for FW24 making the majority of our wetsuits chloroprene free".

More than ever, wetsuits are made of a mixed bag of materials, as featured in Roxy's Eco Stretch Flight and Eco Xtra stretch foams made

with recycled rubbers, recycled neoprene, oyster shell and limestone. Nelly Pargade, at Roxy teases about their process of "developing a new material that incorporates over 80% recycled wetsuit material".

Dakine's FriendlyPrene became a game changer since its introduction last year. Thanks to the Yamamoto #39 neoprene compound with added Eco One ingredient to increase biodegradability, you can now enjoy "the legendary Yamamoto performance with the addition of proven landfill degradation testing", says proudly Phil Bridges.

Fall/Winter 2024 will also be the 10th anniversary of Patagonia using Yulex® natural rubber, which will spread to 11 accessories "covering our booties, gloves and hood offerings", lists Gabe Davies, Oceans Marketing Manager EMEA. They paved the way and now a big name such as Rip Curl incorporates 30% Yulex® natural rubber in the Dawn Patrol range, "constituting 37% of our Fall 24 offering", adds Bastien Grandy, Wetsuit Product Manager Associate.

But the biggest news – and you read it first on boardsportsource.com – is undoubtedly Sheico's bio-based foam which will make future wetsuits 100% neoprene free. OCENA is a new foam crafted by Sheico using FSC-certified natural rubber, enriched with oyster shell powder and soybean oil. According to Sheico's Jeff Shiue, OCENA achieves (traditional) neoprene-level standards in elasticity and durability. No partnering brands have yet been unveiled but rest assured, this will make some noise in the industry.

BODY ARMOURS

Sometimes underrated in comparison to the mighty neoprene core, linings are the actual body armours of the wetsuit structure: the outside lining is the first barrier from the elements, whereas the inner linings maintain that warm layer of air that keeps you comfy and active. On the outer, most use nylon for its "superb stretch and memory" says John Westlake at Alder, as featured on their FX range. Nylon it is as well on West's Lotus model (4/3 & 5/3) with the latest Gen-4 Ultraspan lining, which claims to give a 350% elasticity to the wetsuit.

One key aspect of the outer lining is its hydrophobic property and Jack Knowles at GUL emphasizes the improvements made in this regard, "so less water means less cooling", aka the wind chill effect. The linings are laminated to the neoprene foam and in 2024 everybody has opted for the solvent free glues, a more sustainable process with no compromise on the durability. In the same vein, most now implement dope-dyed yarn into their linings as "this process of coloring yarn saves huge amounts of water while reducing energy consumption and water pollution", echo Vincent Cadene (COO) and Mathis Bourgnon (Sport Marketing Manager) at WIP Water Protection.

We often pay more attention to the inner lining as it is directly in contact with our skin, hence the success of plush jerseys, like the

Fall/Winter 2024 will also be the 10th anniversary of Patagonia using Yulex® natural rubber, which will spread to 11 accessories.

Fireline used on Alder's Torch FX Hooded Men 5/4, a nice addition for the cold-water warriors out there. Another lining expert is O'Neill, whose TB4 Duraskin Air Firewall not only traps your body heat but makes it recirculate in the suit. The lining also features one of the key developments of the past 5 years: the integration of graphene material within the jersey.

TO DUST YOU SHALL RETURN

The afterlife of the wetsuits isn't in the sole hands of the consumer anymore as most brands have embraced this new realm with a thorough approach. Since the launch of their Second Life Program in 2019, Soörüz claims they collected & shredded more than 40,000 wetsuits thanks to 132 collecting points in Europe, thus being able to "revalue 95% of the wetsuit" and develop new materials for sport floors, wall decorations or pillow stuffing.

Though Dakine offers a biodegradable wetsuit, they also take care of the "regular" suits, thanks to a partnership with Circular Flow, to collect and recycle old wetsuits into new products, namely a line of accessories. As per Oxbow, they turn your old wetties into leashes, thanks to their local partner Nomads Surfing, specializing in eco-design.



GUL shines a light on a not-so-known facility, Bodyline. Based in Newquay, Cornwall, Bodyline is considered Europe's leading wetsuit repair centre, with over 40 years of experience. Yep, you weren't even born, matey. The portfolio of key brands which call upon on them to service damaged wetsuits is most significant.

O'Neill is also a firm believer of "meaningful" recycling and counts on "many regional recycling initiatives from carbon black recycling to yoga mats to a remanufacturing facility where completely unusable old suits can find a new life in a new product", says Tom Copsey. A simple example: "Even though a wetsuit may have reached the end of its useful life a zip can sometimes be reused in the repair of another, even the small things matter." Through their Wetsuit Recycling Program (in collaboration with Terracycle, the global leader in "hard-to-recycle" materials), Rip Curl collects any branded wetsuit, which are "repurposed into raw materials, contributing to projects like soft-fall matting at children's playgrounds worldwide", mentions Bastien Grandy.

Clearly, FW24 won't be a firework parade of innovation but don't be fooled by the carry-overs: in the meanwhile, brands take advantage of the extra time to do some proper R&D and the future eco-neoprene could well open a grand chapter in the wetsuit industry. ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Carry-overs all the way
- 2 New women models
- 3 Bio-based neoprenes to come
- 4 Repair & recycle

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APPAREL
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32



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686



Airblaster



Airblaster



Brethren



Brethren



Burton



Burton



Colourwear

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE
WOMEN'S OUTERWEAR

Whether ripping the park or boosting big lines, the female rider knows exactly what she wants and isn't making any compromises. Not in function, nor in style. Find out more about the trends in Women's Outerwear for FW24/25 in our report by Anna Langer.

THEMES

No matter what you think about the current gender debate, the trend for unisex design in women's wear is unmistakable. 32 says "our female riders are often looking for a more unisex fit and look. We take that into account and offer our key outerwear pieces in sizing down to XS." Roxy give a modern update to their tomboy, 90's trend capsule and the result is a masculine retro sport look with feminine details, while L1 Premium Goods feature two genderless capsules with the Axial and Ventura. 686 "embrace modern femininity. The women's collection essentially has two sides – one for the female who wants to embrace a traditional feminine look through fit and colour and another side for the women who have been embracing more gender inclusive looks, styles and colours. We believe each woman should be empowered to embrace her femininity in her own way." Focusing on maximum inclusivity, Airblaster broaden their "Every Body collection, welcoming all body types". Horsefeathers also find that "upcoming trend of unisex and loose-fit apparel significantly influences our latest collection. This trend reflects a shift towards more versatile outerwear options, catering to a diverse range of body types and style preferences."

This new direction is clearly rider driven, says L1: "The main source of feedback for the redesign came from our female team riders and female reps. Half of the line has been redesigned to make sure women can get what they want vs what men think they want." Oxbow also value their team input: "Our outerwear range is fully dedicated to the riders, and developed in collaboration with our ambassadors," says Oxbow. Oakley dedicate them a capsule: the "TEAM COLLECTION, where we co-create products alongside them, drawing from their needs and creative inspiration to craft superior products. This season, our collaboration continues with remarkable athletes such as Jamie Anderson."

"The main source of feedback for the redesign came from our female team riders and female reps. Half of the line has been redesigned to make sure women can get what they want vs what men think they want." L1

Forward Outdoor Global Brand Director Tony McWilliam finds that: "What we need is pieces tailored and cut specifically for women who actually want something that is focused on them pushing the envelope in the backcountry. We'll always take inspiration from fashion, but we'll always do it in a way that combines performance and sustainability into a complete offering. And we build products that fit exceptionally well and are built to last." Burton have updated the cut lines for women's Gore for a more modern, technical look and function, Roxy pair innovative materials and advanced technical features to support the core freeriders needs, including touring specific outfits, Oakley cater to various disciplines with a special emphasis on backcountry adventures and DC's storm division "compiles all products with technical points ensuring comfort, warmth and everything which a rider need when riding." Norrona are launching a new lightweight freeride collection for durable touring, progressive features, and solutions with a subtle design expression. Jones Snowboards announce the new Women's Dark Start Hoodie and a fresh look to their Women's Shralpinist Stretch outerwear.

For Mammut the overall theme behind the FW24/25 outerwear range is resourceful performance and also Rojo emphasizes their continued focus on climate and the environment. "Creativity and sustainability is an important driver to stimulate and reignite imagination and optimism" which they do via "to use hand selected recycled fabrics and colours to delve into feelings of preservation for personal well-being and the planet," says Jo Buckle, Founder and Designer.

Last but not least, a "seamless on and off mountain experience" merits a mention as well. "We design versatile pieces that aim to offer both performance and style for complete versatility. Our design focus is on adaptability and customization for our wearers, so they have the flexibility to adjust based on conditions or personal preferences," says Oakley. Rojo highlight their new Slope Style Jacket next to softshell anoraks that are suitable for various activities, from downhill action to hiking, and everything in between.

FITS

With gender neutrality as one of the major trends it's not surprising that we'll be getting a lot more options for baggier, boxier, unisex fits next winter. Burton offer "true" gender neutral style in their Future Trust collection: "Our prior gender neutral

styles had been cut from the men's block but offered in a broader range of sizing, but this collection has been designed and fit across a variation of men and women to really make this a truly equal option. We plan to roll out this learning throughout even more of the line in the future." Airblaster expand their Every Body, which welcomes and celebrates all body types: "Bottoms are built to accommodate wider bodies, yet happily cinch in to fit slim bodies who desire a baggier fit. Tops are wider and slightly shorter to accommodate full hips without bunching or provide a slightly cropped look for slim/tall frames," explains Jesse Grandkoski, Co-Founder & Creative.

Also Horsefeathers embrace a more spacious, comfortable style with broader cuts across various pieces. "This shift caters to a growing demand for more relaxed fits, blending comfort and contemporary style. The wider cuts are designed to offer a more laid-back look while ensuring maximum mobility and comfort, which is particularly important in active wear," says Tomas Koudela, Head of Marketing. Roxy embody this trend with their co-designed capsule with Chloe Kim, pairing soft ornamental floral print to contrast against strong unisex silhouettes. In a similar way, L1 embrace the relaxed fit trend for their parkas and introduce two-new oversized and baggy fits

"What we need is pieces tailored and cut specifically for women who actually want something that is focused on them pushing the envelope in the backcountry. We'll always take inspiration from fashion, but we'll always do it in a way that combines performance and sustainability into a complete offering. And we build products that fit exceptionally well and are built to last." Tony McWilliam, Forward

as well as several jackets that have been updated to be shorter and boxier. Picture Organic Clothing highlight their Citrik jacket and Dicentra pants: "A new silhouette very important for us since Picture definitely came from the snowparks and the freestyle snowboarders. It showcases a very loose fit, vintage fabric, and gender free colourways." And Rojo find that their "Retro Jo Jacket and She Ripz Pants offer a full circle moment and a looser fit which can be sized up or down for a baggier silhouette."

Maybe a bit more surprising is that many brands also take sustainability into factor for their new silhouettes. "We're introducing the redesign of one of our most important all mountain snow sports shells, the Stoney. Made from the ground up to be as resourceful as possible whilst still delivering the performance and protection the Stoney is known for. This has been achieved through the optimized pattern to reduce fabric usage, and utilizing the most durable workmanships we can, alongside the high-performance recycled Polyester 3-layer monocomponent fabric" explain Mammut. Jones add the Dark Start Recycled Hoodie to the women's collection: "The Dark Start is a highly breathable, super-stretchy, synthetic mid-layer that's perfect for high output adventures and wet climates. It's made with 100% recycled face fabric and 100% recycled synthetic Air Flake insulation that retains its warmth even when wet and Rojo highlight their new Slope Style Jacket, that is crafted with recycled insulation and an eco-friendly shell. Rehall combine recycled Dermizax shell fabrics with recycled padding and lining materials and highlight "ergonomic fittings that are light weight, comfortable to wear and durable."

Last but not least, fits are also an important factor to performance. "Recognizing the unique requirements of women, we've designed silhouettes that cater to their specific needs. Our Slim fit is designed to be trim and close to the body, ensuring a snug yet flexible fit that facilitates freedom of movement," says Oakley Marketing Manager Carrie Brigs. For "splitboarding one day, cruising and freestyleing in the park the other", Oxbow count on their women jacket and bib together as their "ultimate silhouette. Forward also count on bibs: "Our Tour silhouette is incredibly lightweight and we've removed what you don't need - but kept everything you do - to create an outfit that moves with you to make the ascent as enjoyable as the descent." 686 have added a female version of their bestselling men's bib and state that "women's pants have gotten roomier through the hip, thigh and knee overall and waist and rises have been rebalanced. We continue to update our fits based on women riders, who tend to have stronger legs with more muscle," explains Brent Sandor. And Colorwear updated their Slash bib: "a high raised pant with oversized upper part made for female riders and with a par of big suspenders how fits well both under your jacket or over your hoody."

Picture Organic Clothing highlight their highly technical Gravita 3L jackets and Burton updated the cut lines for women's Gore for a more modern, technical look and function. Rojo mix classics and heritage inspired pieces with all new and functional pieces. Finally, L1 mention that the popularity of the skinny pant has dwindled but it still has a consumer that wants it and also Colorwear stick with their favourite silhouette of an "oversized look on jackets and sleeker silhouette on the pants for her, And we still see that look for AW24 importance."

MATERIALS & TECH INNOVATIONS

Sustainable materials and production processes are becoming the new normal, which is reason to celebrate. Roxy integrate sustainable practices into every design, focusing on recycled and natural yarn, water consumption, energy use and minimizing eco-toxicity, says Julia Hascoet, Global Product Manager. They introduce a new recycled fabric derived entirely from textile waste. "Notably, half of our outerwear collection



Forward



Forward



Horsefeathers



Jones



Jones



L1



L1



Norrna



Oakley



Oakley



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EUROPE DISTRIBUTION ENQUIRIES: JASSIE SALVESON | jassie@rojo.com.au
www.rojoouterwear.com | Instagram: @rojosnow

now incorporates this 100% recycled yarn, making a significant milestone on our journey toward a more sustainable future."

"Our main target is to deliver the most eco-friendly products possible" agree Oxbow, which they achieve by using recycled plastic bottles, recycled yarn from Italy (Newlife certified), fabric made and dyed in France, Sympatex membranes and recycled Primaloft padding made in Europe and producing in Portugal. Picture continue their chemical free XPORE membrane and Rojo use only Oeko Tex standard fabric and their recycled pieces incorporate traceable fibres sourced from the Global Recycled Standard (GRS). Burton update almost all Gore fabrics to their new ePE offering, with a goal of 100% by the end of W26 and Norrona implement ePE in dedicated styles in their tamok and lofoten collections. And Oakley expand their offerings with the FNDRY 30/20k for ultimate waterproofness and breathability as well as sustainable insulation and treatments while Forward focus on combining hand feel with performance and sustainability to create unique offerings across the entire range.



Oxbow



Picture



Rehall



Rehall



Rojo



Rojo



Roxy



Roxy



Templeton



Templeton

"We design versatile pieces that aim to offer both performance and style for complete versatility. Our design focus is on adaptability and customization for our wearers, so they have the flexibility to adjust based on conditions or personal preferences" Oakley

Mammut sport a fully recycled Polyester material in their Stoney HS and Stoney HS Thermo Styles and introduce the Mammut Loopinsulation: "a unique cluster fill and sheet padding insulation produced from mechanically recycled rope production off-cuts, creating something meaningful out of waste while performing on a high level, to keep its wearer warm and cozy even in humid conditions." And to sum it all up, Colorwear state that besides implementing more recyclable polyester fabrics and sustainable sourced cotton "we encourage to buy less and ride more."

COLOURS

The overall eco conscious trend is also reflected in earthy colour palettes. "Earth tones and shades become our canvas, mirroring the subtle beauty of the world outside," says Oakley. Oxbow feature cloud shades, 686 go for Sage and Cypress green next to Purple Impression, L1 have a lot of browns, greens, and stone in their line, Norrona introduce a more subtle colour palette with the launch of their møre collection, Forward highlight Dry Sulphur and Rojo are "inspired by how colour evolves through the elements, through time and weather, minerals and water." Mammut reflect "the beauty of nature and our brand's heritage. Our range features earthy green, purple and rose tones inspired by the great outdoors, with hues such as Dark Marsh, Marsh, Flux, and Quartz Dust" and also Jones continue solid colourways with fabric blocking and toned colours with less contrast. Yet they also have "more bright colours in our 3L styles than previous seasons, which are important for visibility in the backcountry" says Designer Heida Birgisdottir.

Also Roxy bring a burst of vibrancy into their collection: "We've introduced a sporty pop butterfly colour, infusing a refreshing energy throughout the range." Mammut feature pop colours like Neo Lime and Glacier Blue for a lively contrast to their earthy tones. "Airblaster has painted the Women's line in myriad purples - including Magic, Huckleberry and Shade - to create tonal monochrome magic huckleberry vibrations. Purple people unite!". Burton tie Shadow Pink with muted pastels, alongside Dusty Blue, Petrol Green and Summit Taupe, next to a little extra punch with Peach Echo and Imperial Purple. Horsefeathers find that "in the women's collections, colours and all-over prints are always crucial. The new FW24/25 line showcases a spectrum from subdued, earthy tones to more vibrant tints."

PRINTS

Graphics are likewise inspired by nature, as we can find at Mammut, Oxbow and Oakley, who state that "prints are visual narratives of the intricate patterns and textures found in nature."

Roxy find that "while prints remain a crucial element ingrained in our DNA, they assume a nuanced role, stepping back from dominance." They showcase abstract prints as well as "soft ornamental floral print, contrasting against strong unisex silhouettes." Horsefeathers "enhance their collection by two outstanding all-over prints, Abstract paint and Snowstorm, each adding a unique flair to the range."

Burton tie their prints directly into the colour blocks, so it's really easy for stores to display a combination of options. Airblaster mention a unique iridescent Leopard Shimmer print on special Japanese fabric that luminesces when in motion and Colorwear continue to tweak their signature leopard print: "For FW24/25 we have it in a tone of lilac and light blue that fits well with the bright colour pallet we have." ©

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Unisex designs
- 2 Recycled / Sustainable
- 3 Earthy or vibrant
- 4 Nature inspired prints

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

MEN'S OUTERWEAR

From recycled fabrics to earth tone colour palettes, Snowboard Outerwear is steadily moving towards the future. Anna Langer sums up the trends for Men in FW24/25.

Boys will be boys, they say, and Men's Outerwear continues to be reminiscent the good old days of the 90s. "The Baseline has always been inspired by the 90's era tracksuit style that we grew up with in Southern U.K. This year we have dived deeper into that theme, basing the collections colourways on iconic trainers from that period," says Brethren. Oxbow also show "products with retro style, with graphics coming straight from our records back in the 90s" and 32's collection is full of iconic colour. "Throwing it back, Flippin' it forward" is the theme for Colourwear, throwing the brand back to the DNA when it was established, and flipping it forward in design, fabrics, environment friendly technique and details. "We as a brand and crew behind the brand find our inspiration from the 90's snowboard scene, grunge music and fish-eye lenses."

Many brands also share a special focus on their team as Aurelien Silvestre, Oxbow Product Manager states: "Our outerwear range is fully dedicated to the riders, and developed in collaboration with our ambassadors. They are our inspiration. We want to deliver products that fit to their needs, that got the features they expect when exploring the mountains." Brent Sandor of 686 agrees: "Rider driven fits and colorations permeate the collection. We looked to the riders more than ever in this season. You will see simpler colours, bigger fits, updated gloves/mitts and a new beanie collection." Oakley tread a similar path: "Our distinct partnership with our athletes is a collective effort, involving the close collaboration in designing products alongside them. We tap into their needs and draw inspiration from their experiences to craft superior products. This season, our collaboration extends to exceptional athletes such as Colby Stevenson, Sage Kotsenburg, and Renne Rinnekangas."

Broadly mentioned across brands is also the topic of inclusiveness. "Our message goes beyond snowboarding. We are a brand that celebrates the individual and the world's diversity. So our message is about values. We are a brand for Y*U whether you ride or not," says Templeton. Brethren will be updating their brand next year, yet stay true to their core company values: "We aim to bring high quality gear at real people prices, recognising that Gore-Tex is not necessarily the best option for a one-week-a-year corduroy cruiser." Another way to approach this is versatility: "One of the trends we are seeing is the desire to transition seamlessly between the on and off mountain environments. Our designs focus is on adaptability, modularity and the ability for our consumers to tailor their outfits around their needs whether they are based on the conditions or personal preferences," says Oakley.

Yet function is of course a key factor that is not neglected either: "Our goal is to make our outerwear as functional, durable, responsibly made and timeless as possible. This design ethos applies to all aspects of our outerwear from materials to fit, features and colours," says Jones. DC quote weather defence as their main topic: "From the nastiest mid-winter powder days to the mellowest late season scrapes. DC outerwear is built for riding any terrain in any conditions." And Horsefeathers implement a strategic shift prompted by a growing demand for high-end jackets: "While we transition towards these more sophisticated items, our commitment to affordability remains unwavering. We understand the importance of balancing premium quality with cost-effectiveness, ensuring our customers don't have to compromise." Forward Outdoor, who are making

"Hot off the press Vans are also launching mens & womens outerwear for 24/25 watch this space for more details"

a comeback with Tony McWilliam as Global Brand Director, see a "massive gap in the market between style, sustainability and performance. You seem to have brands which are more fashion orientated, or just focused on sustainability or purely functional and I don't think anyone blends them together well. Forward has always had a great tech-influence but I think that the FW24/25 collection really raises the bar in terms of detailing, fit, performance and style."

Additional special themes include "Stay Wild" from Airblaster, delivering head-turning outerwear after the conservative atmosphere in the last couple years and "Circus Circus" by Burton, spanning bold, surprising and unimaginable to puzzling and perplexing, while Picture Organic Clothing quote a wide range of areas such as furniture, design, and the fashion market as sources for creative input. Last but not least, surf veterans Hurley are making their debut on the European snow market in the



32



686



686



Airblaster



Brethren



32



686



Airblaster



Brethren



Burton



Burton



Colourwear



Forward



Horsefeathers



Horsefeathers



Colourwear



Colourwear



Forward



Horsefeathers



Hurley

FW24/25 season, taking inspiration "from the idea of 'FREE': 'Feeling free to use our collection as you wish, when you want where you want,'" explains Fernando Rivero, Product Director. "If we know how to protect and perform in cold waters (wetsuits) we can protect and perform in the mountain. Wear an unexpected brand, fresh style and offer they can wear feeling free in the slopes."

FITS & SILHOUETTES

More baggy fits aren't entirely new, but enhanced through the ongoing 90s trend and the growing focus on inclusivity they spread even wider (pun intended). "Trends are rapidly moving towards wider / baggy fits, for both bottoms and tops. For FW24/25, Airblaster will launch 3 pants in a new Baggy Plus fit, to serve the growing demand for baggy bottoms. In addition to that tops are also trending wider, with slightly reduced length, allowing the wearer to cinch and blouse the jacket. For L1 making sure people can get the baggy pant they want that fits true to size has been a big focus: "People no longer need to get XXL pants with a small jacket to get the fit and look they want." Also 686 go for "loose, but not ridiculously oversized. There is an amount of just right that riders like Forest Bailey, Tommy Gesme and Gigi Ruff are looking for." Forward focus on bibs, highlighting an oversized style with plenty of room. Horsefeathers also embrace a more spacious, comfortable style with broader cuts across various pieces. "The wider cuts are designed to offer a more laid-back look while ensuring maximum mobility and comfort, which is particularly important in active wear," says Tomas Koudela, Head of Marketing. At the same time, he notices a decrease in the popularity of parka-style jackets, which they are slowly phasing out of their collection.

He adds that "The upcoming trend of unisex and loose-fit apparel significantly influences our latest collection. This trend reflects a shift towards more

"The upcoming trend of unisex and loose-fit apparel significantly influences our latest collection. This trend reflects a shift towards more versatile outerwear options, catering to a diverse range of body types and style preferences." Tomas Koudela, Horsefeathers

versatile outerwear options, catering to a diverse range of body types and style preferences." This has also been an influence for Burton, who introduce their new FutureTrust collection: "We're diving into something new to combine that cool, effortless, streetwear vibe with premium high-tech ingredients and clean design lines. It's a true gender neutral design, and was built to be a slightly oversized contemporary cut. This means the jackets have a shorter boxier fit, and the bibs and pants have a carrot/cocoon shape." Colourwear favour a similar look for their new oversized light padded Box Jacket and Box Pant: "You can either wear the pants as they are or tighten them up in the leg ending, like a cuff. This product has already been a one of the favourites from our athletes." Templeton also strive to make their collection "attractively neutral. We try to include aspects of current and progressive fashion aspects. For the new collection this means a range from relaxed baggy fits to more tailored cuts, in order to match everyone's preference. Rider or not."

Next to this, there is also a growing market for high performance. For their AK line, Burton have removed as many seams as possible and are rolling out a new technology called 'Kinetic garment construction': "The Patterns are designed so that the grain of the fabric wraps around your shoulders, knees, elbows, points of movement, so that the fabrics natural properties can move with you and not limit you." Along the same lines, Rehall work with ergonomic fittings, light weight, comfortable to wear and durable. Picture Organic Clothing describe their approach with 'Utility': "We designed this entire line of high-performance, Circular polyester, no-frills, sleek technical apparel with only the features that you absolutely need. This monochrome range for men and women pushes Picture's commitment to the steep lines (and to the environment of course) one step further."

Reflecting the current world climate, Mammut have cantered their whole FW24/25 collection around the topic of 'resourceful performance': "The range takes inspiration from the growing trend towards resourceful fashion and circular economy. This is a movement that prioritizes the use of more responsible materials, reduces waste, and aims for a closed-loop system where products are designed to be reused or recycled, rather than ending up as waste." This also brings us an update to their most important all mountain snowsports shells, the Stoney: "Made from the ground up to be as resourceful as possible whilst still delivering the performance and protection the Stoney is known for. This has been achieved through the optimized pattern to reduce fabric usage, and utilizing the most durable workmanships we can."

TECHNOLOGY & MATERIALS

"I think the industry is starting to understand that sustainability has to be a

“Our goal is to make our outerwear as functional, durable, responsibly made and timeless as possible. This design ethos applies to all aspects of our outerwear from materials to fit, features and colours” Jones

core tenet of your brand, but it can't be THE focus. It's just expected now," says Forward. "The brand has to be about something bigger – we've always focused on what the product empowers people to do and I think it's more relevant to talk about where we want to go as a species and what we want the outdoors to mean to people." They feature PFC-free DWR coatings, recycled fabrics and insulation technologies from Toray, PrimaLoft, Polartec and more.

Recycled materials is the number 1 ingredient for outerwear in FW24/25, as Rehall highlight in their 3-layer DXR collection with fully taped recycled Dermizax shell fabrics next to recycled padding and lining The Airblaster Beast 30K series outerwear features 100% recycled main outer fabrics and all their DWR is PFC free. Templeton highlight their Sympatex collection which is not just warm and waterproof but also completely made from recycled material and will be completely recycled after it is worn out, while Mammut announce the Loopinsulation, a unique insulation, made from mechanically recycled rope production scraps. And since longevity is an extremely crucial factor of sustainability as well, they also aiming to reduce bonding, wherever possible and changing from heat transfer logos, which often are not very durable to embroidered logos, that stand the test of time and in general moving to a durable and repairable workmanship.

32 introduce a new value-based 10K fabric in their Freedom series that is 100% recycled, "because boarders care about the natural environment, whether big budget ballin' or just boardin' on a budget" says Emmanuel Labadie. Proven true by Oxbow team rider Mathieu Crepel who challenged his signature brand to lower the impact of his silhouette on water at every step: "by using recycled polyester NewlifeTM yarn, Sympatex® membrane and a light colourway fabric, we reduced the water consumption by 65% compared to a standard garment production. By producing locally in Portugal, we avoided sea freight, contributing to reduce the ocean pollution. By using PFC free DWR and high standard quality fabric, we reduce land pollution during garment usage." For L1 their long term goal is for 100% of the line being from recycled materials.

Jones Snowboards redesigned the Men's Shralpinist Gore collection for FW24/25, including a restyled jacket and brand new bibs made with the new 3L C-Knit GORE-TEX ePE that is 100% PFAS free, as is their entire softgoods line. "All our main shell materials in the Jones outerwear line are also 100% recycled, and we are the only snowboard brand using 100% recycled 750+ fillpower down in our down insulation jackets," says Chris Westen. Norrona extend the ePE from the tamok to their Iofoten collection and Burton update most of their Gore fabrics to the ePE offering, with a goal of 100% by the end of FW26. "It's a great opportunity to align our fabrics with our people, planet, sport values" and Oakley expand their offering with their FNDRY 30/20k "for ultimate waterproofness and breathability as well as sustainable insulation and treatments." Picture Organic Clothing continue to work with the XPORE membrane, which they've been carrying for four seasons now. "It's the most performing membrane on the market after GORE TEX Pro, with no chemical (PFOA / PFOS) added," claims Product Manager Maxime Lemaître.

Other news in this area include a unique iridescent fabric that holds prints, that shift colour and appear to luminesce as the wearer moves that Airblaster has developed with their Japanese supplier and implement on their 10K, 15K, and 30K outerwear. Brethren tell us about their discovery of a new technique to bond the internal fleece layer to the external waterproofing layer: "This allows us to improve the quality of the fleece we use, making our outerwear more comfortable and warmer, both of which are elements we value within our product range." Another new development is announced by Horsefeathers: "We've developed our new Ultratech 3-layer fabric in collaboration with our partners in Taiwan. This fabric is designed to maximize performance while maintaining the durability and lightweight nature of the jacket."

COLOURS

What can we expect in the colour department for FW24/25? Not much that hasn't been seen before, which is a good thing if you see it from an eco point of view. Switching your whole wardrobe every year to match new trends couldn't be further from a sustainable approach - Colorwear even state that while they try to do their best to lower the impact of the environment, they encourage to buy less and ride more.

Yet of course there are some trends emerging stronger this year than they have been before, for example Purple as top shade for men: "Purple is coming in hot for men. Plus lime green, even hotter!" find Airblaster and you can also find Paisley Purple next to Wild Lime, Hyacinth and Pastel Colours at Picture Organic Clothing,



Hurley



Hurley



Jones



Jones



L1



L1



Norrona



Norrona



Oakley



Oakley

RIDER DRIVEN SNOWBOARDING



“boarders care about the natural environment, whether big budget ballin’ or just boardin’ on a budget ”

Emmanuel Labadie, DC

while Jones introduce Teal and Purple to their timeless Brown, Gray and Black pallet. “Some of the new colours to the line this year are Summit Taupe, Deep Emerald and Goldenrod. We’re developing our colour palette to run across all of our collections and have reduced our overall product line,” explains Burton. 32 opt for a “cleaner look with strong colour blocking”, Brethren have a varied range of classic block colours and prints, “with some new brighter and more vibrant options included for the more adventurous wearer” and Picture also stay true to their “iconic colour block design.” 686 continue to see interest from men and women in their Dusty Pinks and find that “Red is also trending with the athletes as it is classic, but pops in the backcountry.” Forward also mention Trash Pink next to Grey Denim, yet state that: “We’ve always focused on textures across the brand”, like a stretch ripstop which is fully technical but feels amazing.

Next to these more bold colour options, we can find a lot of natural inspiration in the FW24/25 collections. “Observing a trend towards earth tones again” Horsefeathers blend them with more vibrant, eye-catching colours and prints: “Key colourways include Desert Camo all-over print and a palette of Mojave, Blue Haze, Hydro, Mirage Gray, and Sulphur colours.” For Oxbow, “inspiration comes from Mathieu Crépel’s special relation with water, in all its states. The colours and shades are inspired by the ice, the rivers, the snow,” and Oakley agree that they too “draw not only from the latest colour trends but from the rich palette found in organic elements. Earth tones and shades become our canvas, mirroring the subtle beauty of the world outside.” Hurley work with Armoned Navy/Cargo, Lone Pine, Hickory Brown & Roadside, inspired by the natural colours of frozen water, earth, & rocks and 686 introduce Sage as a key colour. Mammut say: “The FW24/25 colour palette reflects the beauty of nature and our brand’s heritage. Our range features earthy tones inspired by the great outdoors, with hues such as Dark Marsh, Marsh, and Aura. Adding a vibrant twist to our collection, we’ve included pop colours like Neo Lime and Glacier Blue. These shades bring a lively contrast to our earthy tones, offering a fresh and dynamic look.”

For Templeton, it’s all about highlighting the individual. “Some like it muted, some don’t and we tried to find the line here. Our palette reaches subtle, faded hues like beige while also including vibrant pops of pink. It is all set to be combined with different kinds of add ons and additional colours, whether they come from us or out of the personal closets” and 32 trust fully in their team to choose their own style directions with their signature kits.

PRINTS

Pro Riders are also the main source for signature prints. “Every few years JP brings back an update to his original snow camo and we did a version of that for his TM Pant & Light Anorak. Scott Stevens has a custom ‘haze’ print pulling from an outer space theme, but brightened up with a rich red. For Zeb Powell he picked a custom version of a tree bark camo which features in his Sweeper XLT pant” says 32 and L1 also feature an in-house designed camo colour way. 686 have a unique print for Gigi Rűf designed by his friend Lukas Goeller and Airblaster advertise their signature Bode Space print: “Bode Merrill proves that both Purple and space are fair game for the true snowboard gentleman” next to a “gangster ass black and white CHAINZ print hand drawn by Nick Dirks in his trademark prison tat style and the iridescent FLAMES print on special Japanese fabric that shimmers in the light.” Horsefeathers are thrilled to introduce new prints on their Chuck coach jacket in collaboration with their riders Halldór Helgason and Daniel Hanka and local artists. and also Jones continue their all-over print by painter RP Roberts in Teal and Black.

Burton’s prints range from tonal and subdued to more expressive and high-visibility, so there’s really an option for everyone. For those who like it more natural, there are again a lot of earth-inspired options. “Our prints are visual narratives of the intricate patterns and textures found in nature. Our designs reflect the organic and harmonious aesthetics of the natural world and altered nature, whether it’s the swirls in rocks, the intricate lines on bark or leaves, or how the light plays on the water,” says Oakley. Mammut have a seasonal black and white GRAIN print, which is inspired by spraying powder and Colorwear introduce a dark map printing and a water camo print. ©

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Baggy & Boxy Fits
- 2 Sustainability in all areas
- 3 Purple
- 4 Nature inspired patterns & colours

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Oxbow



Oxbow



Oxbow



Picture



Picture



Picture



Rehall



Rehall



Templeton



Templeton



Horsefeathers

TEAM APPROVED
Terra 3L jacket



Terra jacket features our new 20.000mm UltraTech Recycled 3-Layer fabric. It is engineered to achieve the lowest possible weight while maintaining the essential durability for action sports. The development of this jacket was a collaborative effort, incorporating insights from our production team and input from our powder hunters Steve Gruber, Tyler Chorlton, David Vicente, Clemens Bergmann, Maxi Preissinger, and Dušan Kříž.

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

BACKCOUNTRY SNOW SAFETY FW24/25

The rise of touring is directing backcountry riders' attention to safety products. Brands are delivering technology and education to convert it into sales. By Rocio Enriquez.



The pandemic boost of backcountry riding left a fair number of freeriders who enjoy riding off the beaten path. This is pushing the development of efficient safety systems. Special attention goes to avalanche backpacks, the category that anticipates the biggest growth. Weight and user-friendliness are key selling points, as they influence the user's decision to use the kit or not. Backpacks also need to be ergonomic and with well-thought storage design. Attention to airbags with electric triggering systems is rising. BCA reports good sales of their Float E2 system launched last season. Ortovox expects good results with their new Avabag LiTric. Other safety products, such as communication devices, are sought out too.

AVALANCHE PACKS

The avalanche safety backpack is a priority not only for the airbag. It carries other devices that increase survival chances, like shovels, communication devices, or assisted breathing systems. Backpacks must offer plenty of storage with easy access, while keeping the weight down. Dakine and Evoc make carefully crafted packs compatible with the Mammut RAS 3.0 system. Dakine's Poacher packs feature carry systems for boards and snow tools. They have a snow-shedding moulded back panel and are compatible with their DK Impact spine protector. Evoc highlights their Line RAS Protector. "With the Mammut RAS system and our LiteShield Plus back protector, it combines the best technologies", says Jan Sallawitz. ABS Vario backpack redesigns their classic Vario, adding EasyTech cartridge system. They step into the electric airbag segment with the Voltage, featuring the Alpride E2 system. Both backpacks feature the ZipOn system that allows users to adjust the volume according to their needs. BCA highlights their Float E2 Airbag. "With 45L of volume, it is our largest electrical airbag to date", says Simon Allwein. Made with robust Dyneema material, it features a roll-top opening. Ortovox

"With the Mammut RAS system and our LiteShield Plus back protector, it combines the best technologies" Jan Sallawitz, Evoc

developed their LiTric electronic airbag system in cooperation with Arc'teryx. At 1.1 kg, it weighs only 100g more than the lightest cartridge system and allows multiple inflations. The zip technology enables users to exchange the zip packs to fit their needs for the day. Pieps offers the Jetforce pack. Its automatic deflation extends the window of survival from ten minutes up to two hours. Other avalanche safety backpacks do not have an airbag, but the new Safeback SBX breathing aid. The Db SnowPro Vest offers 8L of storage for the Safeback SBX's control unit (more later), plus additional safety kit.

The Safeback outlet hoses are internally routed and mounted in the shoulder straps. Bergans' Y MountainLine Daypack 40L can be configured to the needs of the user, by removing or adding parts. The SBX system is integrated into the pack's top lid.

OTHER SAFETY PRODUCTS

Recco reflectors have proven helpful, and the Recco SAR network keeps adding countries and locations. They have developed helmet and backpack reflectors and the Recco belt, and they are testing their first drone prototypes. Ortovox has a Recco reflector integrated in their Direct Voice beacon. The easy-to-use interface offers reliable signals and voice navigation. Safeback entered the avalanche safety market with their SBX system. This active air supply device keeps the user breathing during burial, without requiring a mouthpiece. On a full charge, it can supply air continuously for ninety minutes at temperatures as low as -30°C. BCA speaks proudly of their shovels. They are low-profile but robust. Their blades have stompable edges, and they come with different handles and extra features, like the hoe-mode, for moving softer snow. Upgraded for this season is their Tracker S transceiver. It now comes in a smaller pocket-size and has improved battery life. Simple to operate, it's ideal for back country novices. Their BC Link Mini is a one-piece radio that can be clipped to the backpack. Pieps' transceiver Pro IPS features Interference Protection System and Dual Antenna Signal Processing. They also offer the 300 Plus XT inclinometer, which can be attached to the ski pole.

RETAILER SUPPORT

Education gets a good share of marketing budgets. Such a highly technical product category requires thorough understanding. Recco has developed an online tool. "Our e-learning course 'Recco Academy' is a short and simple fifteen-minute course to educate retailers on how to include safety into the conversation with the customer", says Julia Granhed. BCA organises in-store clinics for retail staff with the brand's mountain guides. Safeback and Evoc have developed lots of educational content. ABS also offers comprehensive product training for retailers. Digital content is important to showcase products in retailers' eComms and social media. All brands report a normalisation of stock and supply. The increased interest in touring paints a promising picture for retailers selling snow safety products. ☺

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Increased interest in back country riding.
- 2 Electric triggered airbag systems.
- 3 Lightweight and user-friendly pack designs.
- 4 Retailer education paramount.

BASE LAYERS FW24/25

As above, so below. Gearing up doesn't stop with your shell or even the mid layer - it's what's beneath, that really counts. Anna Langer on baselayer trends for FW24/25.



Whether you think about health, comfort or performance - what touches your skin, the biggest organ of your body, is rather crucial. Even more so when it's covering all your limbs and you'll probably sweat in it.

So it does make sense to go natural. "Mons Royale's base layer strategy for 2024/25 centers around the resurgence of natural materials. We've always stood behind merino wool as the world's best material for mountain sports," says Jana Linicus, Marketing Manager Europe. Woolf underline their "unwavering commitment to sustainably sourced Merino wool. It's a testament to our dedication to the environment and aligns with the demand for sustainable options while enhancing the overall performance of our base layers." And sustainability, as well as a know, is a factor that almost every consumer is paying attention to in 2024.

Yet Rojo find that they are as cost-conscious nowadays and answer that with "products that are versatile enough to be worn in various conditions while still excelling in their primary setting, the snowy mountains" explains Jassie Salvesson, Marketing and Sales at Rojo Outerwear. Eivy also focus on multi functionality: "Our overall strategy is to have an offering that lets women travel as light as possible and have as much fun as possible with as few garments as possible!" says Anna Vister, Creative Director.

Smartwool state: "We're continuing to perfect our layering system to complete our Merino wool kit offering. Most importantly, we're continuing to ensure anyone who wants to get outside can get outside with expanded fit options and diverse design. We're launching the Thermal Merino Baselayer in Plus Size for Women this FW24/25.

Airblaster focus on "crafting pieces that not only keep you comfortable and cozy but also stand the test of time" while Picture Organic Clothing find that their consumers follow the design trends more than the functional.

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGY

Next to Woolf, Smartwool and Mons Royale, who bet solely on Merino Wool, Eivy have added their first wool collection: "In 24/25 we added two new Responsible Wool Standard® qualities: One core spun 4-way stretch version and one 2x2 rib 4-way stretch version." This includes a printed wool base layer in their signature Eivy fit with integrated neckwarmer. Responsible Wool Standard fabric which is mulling-free is also the standard at Ben3th: "Sustainability matters. Our waistbands are now GRS-certified and OKEO-TEX guarantees that our end products are tested and proven free from harmful toxic chemicals."

With their whole brand ethos centered on environmentally friendly production, Picture Organic Clothing also put a lot of thought into their materials, their sourcing and processing: "Our knit is made from 93% Recycled Polyester and two treatments to improve moisture wicking and anti bacterial properties,"

"Mons Royale's base layer strategy for 2024/25 centers around the resurgence of natural materials. We've always stood behind merino wool as the world's best material for mountain sports" Jana Linicus, Mons Royale

explains Product Manager Maxime Lemaitre. Airblaster showcase a new material for their Ninja Suit Pro: "Dry Tech stretch woven, and Air Tech stretch knit, which are 92% and 94% recycled, respectively. Both have dual-density brushed micro fleece on the skin side for soft touch and amazing wicking and warming capabilities," says Jesse Grandkoski, Co-founder & Creative.

The printed mid-weight bottoms by Saxx are also made of 85% recycled Polyester and have a texture on the back of the fabric which enhances breathability with less cling, improving the air flow to the body. Ben3th focus on their ISPO award winning original 3D pouch technology that features in all their merino wool base layer bottoms.

COLOURS & PATTERNS

When it comes to design, you have all the options. From solid blacks, which Woolf count on, to crazy patterns, which Airblaster are known for, and everything in between.

Eivy add a dark brown called Faded Chocolate to their solids and Picture Organic pair Chicory Coffee and Cacao Brown with Vanilla, Paisley Purple, and Wild Lime. Rojo mix Earthly Rusts, Neutrals and Greens with Faded Apricot and Tangerine. Mons Royale take inspiration from the natural elements of the mountain landscape, featuring bright and bold hues. For Saxx the outdoor inspiration brings "Bluecast Grays and rich Teal as key colours." And even Woolf introduce more subtle and appealing earth tones across various pieces.

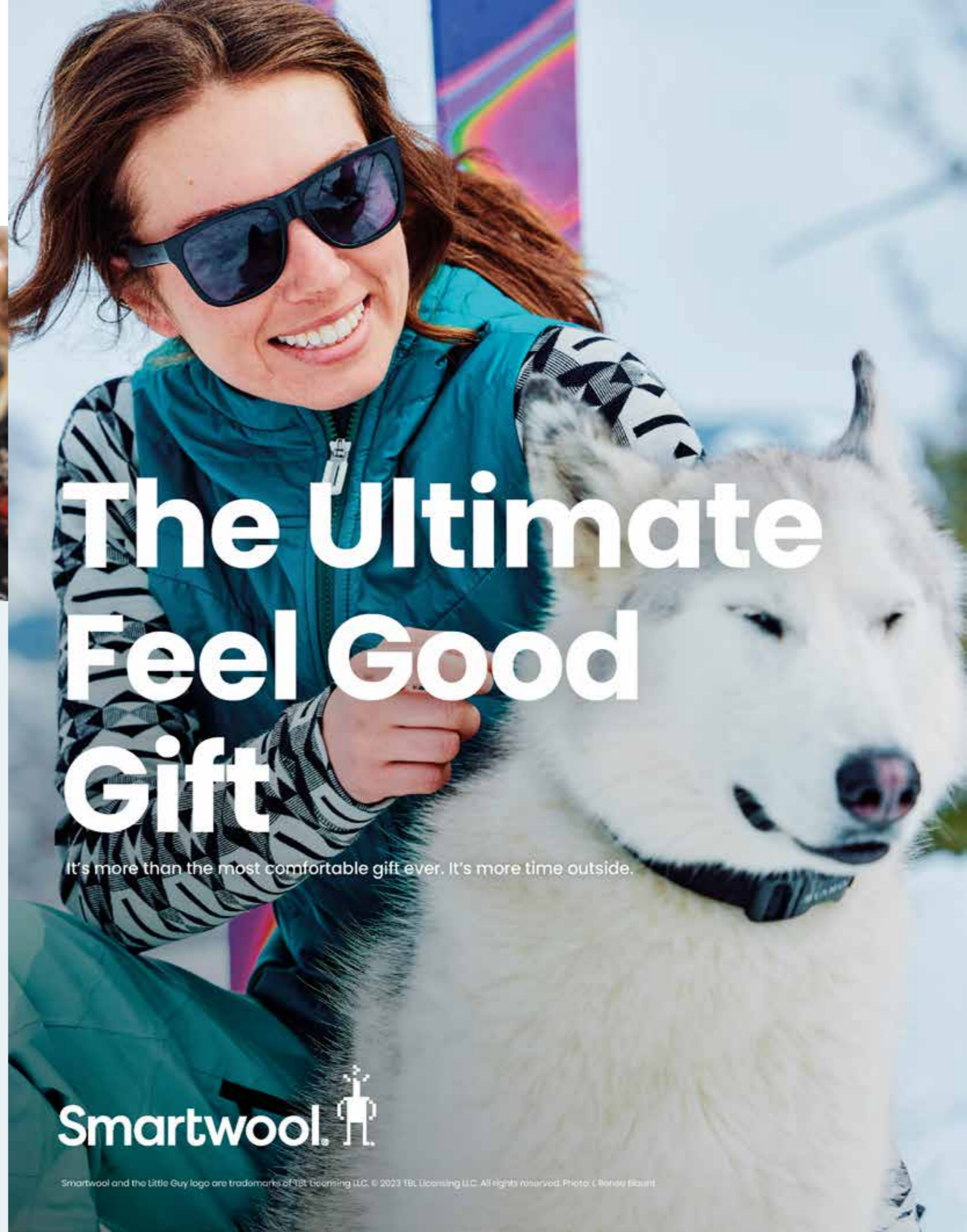
Patterns include colourblocks and inspirations from mountains and snowflakes by Smartwool, Alpine Floral prints from Mons Royale, Real Tree APX, Bode Space and Chainz (Nick Dirks) signature prints at Airblaster to camouflage, classical from Saxx and with a feminine take from Eivy, who also continue their Big Flower design. ©

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Multifunctionality
- 2 Integrated Neckwarmers
- 3 Merino Wool
- 4 Brown as new trend colour



The Ultimate Feel Good Gift

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

SKATE SHOES FW24/25

In the ever-changing world of skateboarding, it looks like we're currently hitting a quiet patch, notably across Europe. Brands are still struggling to keep shoes affordable whilst maintaining quality, and considering the economic impact of ongoing wars, it's looking to be a rocky year ahead.



HOW IS THE SKATE FOOTWEAR MARKET?

Globally the market is tough right now, however with all things considered it's still pushing on, determined to bring the best skate footwear to the table for next season. Hurdles there are a-plenty, but brands are striving to do all they can to stay on course. When considering the current economic climate of Europe, people are being much more selective with their spending on non-essential purchases. Lukas Steide - Sales Manager at 'Hours Is Yours' said: "Market demand is constantly changing due to the uncertain economic environment whereas the footwear segment is driven by a very loyal customer profile at the same time. This is exactly where the opportunity sits for new brands with a clear USP and brand direction." Skater-owned brands are getting an upper hand here, as although there are fewer around these days "there is an appetite on the market for a clean and casual product developed and designed from skaters for skaters" as Lukas continued.

Alessandro Urso -Sales Director at C1RCA mentioned that: "Most of the brands were finding trouble collecting shoe orders due to significant stock quantities in stores." DC's EMEA Marketing Lead- Emmanuel Labadie said for them however that: "specifically for DC, we can feel a recovery and traction of the brand and this must be coming from a combination of a strong program with good stories, good vibes coming from riders and a good range of products."

PRICE POINTS

As mentioned above, the current economic climate isn't looking great, which is making footwear brands struggle to keep their price points within reach of many consumers. It looks like most are increasing their price points slightly. Alessandro from C1RCA is aware they have to consider the spending power of their audience, saying "C1RCA keeps price points flat. Our policy is not crossing the border of RRP €99,00,

"Most of the brands were finding trouble collecting shoe orders due to significant stock quantities in stores." Alessandro Urso, C1RCA

while our average RRP price is €88,00. Lukas from Hours Is Yours was proud of the fact their shoes aren't rising in price, saying "Establishing a coherent and competitive price structure has been one of our key premises."

COLLECTIONS

SoleTech's three siblings Etnies, America & éS have some exciting projects coming next season. Michael Morey, Footwear Designer and Merchandiser at America said: "Braden Hoban, the rookie pro who has been on fire for a couple of years gets his first signature shoe this season, as well as a new hi-top style from the magical mind of team OG Kevin "Spanky" Long." Etnies are introducing a technical version of their successful Barge LS model, called the Barge Plus. Rick Marmolijo - Design Director of Footwear at Etnies explained: "It features a double wrapped foxing tape for stability, the STI Performance Level 2 insole and a new GeoHex tread pattern designed with a beefier tread in the forefoot and heel for durability." éS are continuing their ode to the 90's, with a new silhouette based on a retro style called the Two Nine 8.

DC will be celebrating their 30th anniversary this year, with some powerful collaborations on the cards, including a Lucien Clarke exclusive shoe that's sure to be a show stopper. The mighty Chris Cole will be

bringing a brand-new design for Fallen - 'The Prowler', "a culmination of Cole's footwear legacy, blending the best elements from his past shoes into an instant classic" as Ronnie Mazzei, CEO of Fallen announced. After what seemed to be truly Tom Knox's year with several outstanding parts and a pro shoe, he's passing the torch to Franki Villani, who's got a new shoe coming out next season. Nick Pappas - Senior Product Manager at New Balance Numeric said: "We will be launching Franky Villani's 417 in a low top cut. It will feature the same vulcanised tooling as his original mid top, but the upper has been redesigned as a low top and has more of a relaxed fit than its previous iteration."

COLLABS

Hot off the back of their first video, Skater-owned Hours Is Yours are working on another Thrasher Magazine project, and a collaboration with Jon Dillo's new board sponsor Jacuzzi Unlimited. New Balance Numeric will be continuing on with their powerful year, producing various colourways with their non-signature riders that put a special twist on some of their team models.

Nick from NB Numeric also said: "We also have some really good skate shop collabs dropping on our 440 and 480 models."

Emerica are going the opposite way regarding collaborations after several seasons of heavy hitting brand crossovers, as Michael from Emerica said: "These projects are always exciting, but we've noticed a saturation of collaborative products in the market. This season we are taking a step back to refocus on team-based projects." Fallen Footwear will be bringing back the 'Pawn' - "a fan favourite Billy Marks shoe in a special collaboration with the band- Manchester Orchestra" as Ronnie at Fallen said.

DESIGN & TRENDS

The main trend for next season continues to explore and celebrate the 90s/2000s big shoe resurgence. Brian Barber - General Manager at Osiris said: "Again, the chunky silhouette and increased tech appear to be on the rise. Seems like consumers want footwear with a less generic appearance." Alessandro from C1RCA agreed, saying "Chunky retro styles from the late 90s are performing great. Colourway-wise, white uppers will rule the game." Sticking to this theme, Fallen will be bringing back older models as Ronnie their CEO explained: "As we continue to produce new models, we want to revisit some of our best sellers in the past, so we are doing our first ever limited guest shoe with former rider Garrett Hill and his pro shoe the Corsair."

New Balance on a different note, are not necessarily just going big for the sake of big. They're also communicating with their skate team to produce what they want to skate. Nick from NB Numeric said: "You'll see a lot of dark coloured soles on our S224 offering as it was something that came up in requests from the team fairly regularly."

NEW TECHNOLOGY

Advances in technology mean new materials and higher performing skate footwear. Whilst some traditionalists long for the simple, low vulc silhouette, there is most definitely room for more tech-heavy shoes

"There is an appetite on the market for a clean and casual product developed and designed from skaters for skaters" **Lukas Steide, Hours is Yours**

again. Combine that with the aforementioned 90s resurgence and you can add more tech features to a bigger shoe. C1rca this year introduced "significant upgrades of the insoles for several pro models- namely a premium breathable PU sockliner for 50 PRO EV; Gel Infuse™ Cushion insole for cold cement series (CX201R - TAVE TT - 805), to name a few" as Alessandro explained. Emerica will be using their new 'Enduraseam technology' on the Hoban, with "a rolled edge toe cap with triple stitching, protecting the shoe from abrasion and extending the shoe's life" Michael said proudly. Etnies aren't bringing any more new tech to the table, however they are seriously pushing their new Michelin sole - first introduced with the Aurelien Michelin cupsole design in Spring 24. eS similarly aren't introducing anything new, however as Michael said: "There's plenty of mainstay tech features across the line to love, including 'Energy Foam' insoles and midsoles, 'Thermothane' welded panels and underlays, and even the return of the 'System O2 airbag' on the Creager.

SUSTAINABILITY

An added bonus of the advances in technology also makes an impact on

"By building shoes that last longer, our consumers are sending skated shoes off to the landfill less often which also contributes to sustainability, from an end of life standpoint."

Nick Pappas, New Balance Numeric



the sustainability of shoe production, and this is an ever more pressing matter. Minimal waste is a key factor, and Lukas from Hours Is Yours is aware of this, saying: "We like to be cognisant of who we work with for production to ensure there is little waste throughout the process." Brian from Osiris said "sustainability is always a concern and we do our best to use sustainable materials when possible."

Etnies have always had a passion for trying to stay conscious with production and they will continue their current ECO line that uses non-leather materials. "Even our packaging uses natural cardboard, less ink and no glue," Rick from Etnies announced proudly. New Balance Numeric are also constantly striving to apply new sustainable tech to their shoes, however they also want to build shoes that will last. Nick from NB Numeric said simply: "By building shoes that last longer, our consumers are sending skated shoes off to the landfill less often which also contributes to sustainability, from an end-of-life standpoint."

SUMMARY

It's shaping up to be an interesting season, with perhaps some stormy waters to navigate. Hopefully having already survived the issues brought on by COVID19, your favourite skate footwear brands can stay afloat through this fluctuation in the market. We'll wrap up this FW24 Retail buyers Guide with some things to watch out for next season in the highlights below.☺

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

BOARDSPORTSOURCE.COM

Team Knows Better



Introducing the 440v2.



HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Price points are creeping upwards
- 2 Surplus stock still affecting orders
- 3 Chunky styles are back with a vengeance
- 4 Sustainable efforts are growing
- 5 Bigger shoes = More tech

FLEXIBLE
IMPACT PROTECTION

DESIGNED BY STUNT & ACTIONSPORTS PRO'S
BEST FIT
D30[®]
MADE IN EUROPE



WE KNOW ABOUT PROTECTION

XIONPG.COM

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE
SNOW PROTECTION FW24/25

Awareness of impact protection has spread beyond the head to other body parts. Brands are striving to deliver safety in comfortable pieces that will be no nuisance to wear. By Rocio Enriquez.



Consumers are more aware than ever of the potential for injury. Helmets have cemented their place in the list of riding must-haves. Protection beyond the head is also perceived as important but faces different challenges. The most important one is interference with riding performance. Body protection must be, above all, non-restrictive and breathable. Riders only use protective gear that they can forget they are wearing. This means soft, light, and flexible. Most bestsellers in the market fit this description. Some examples are Xion PG's Nosleeve Vest Freeride, Evoc's Protector Vest, Clover's Backprotector, and Forcefield's Pro Air Body Armour. Versatility is a bonus. The ability to use the same padding for snowboarding, skateboarding or mountain biking adds value to their purchase.

FW24/25 PRODUCT HIGHLIGHTS

Brands rely on their proven designs, focusing development efforts on materials and sustainability. Climate control fabrics are paramount to offer a product that prevents heat build-up. Amplifi uses Miharo, a natural fibre with outstanding management of temperature and odour. Their new 3D honeycomb mesh in the hip area of their MKX Top and Reactor Waistcoat improve climate control. The MKX Top has a brand-new shape and improved fit. The Reactor Waistcoat features a discreet hip belt that ensures fit whatever the body shape or riding position. Flaxta relies on their AVA protection system, which combines absorption, ventilation, and flexibility. We can find it integrated in their Behold Back Protector. Evoc has developed an odour control fabric made of coffee grounds. It is integrated in their Protector Vest and its Lite and Pro versions. For impact protection materials,

"RZ Labs technology handles heavy impacts, offering a flexible shield that stiffens upon impact"

Joeri van de Vliet, Clover

Clover has paired with RZ Labs. "RZ Labs technology handles heavy impacts, offering a flexible shield that stiffens upon impact", says Joeri van de Vliet. It can be found in their Crashpants, as well. Amplifi features their Exoflex back protector with a viscoelastic foam that quickly returns to its original form after impact. It has an adapted and spontaneous damping behaviour that ensures it adapts to the type of impact exposed to. They have added new rib pads to their Reactor Waistcoat for additional protection. Evoc works with their own Liteshield Protection Technology. Xion PG and Prosurf work with D30. Xion PG highlights their Power Evo Italian fabric. "It has been updated to

provide better stretch and enhanced abrasion resistance", says Björn Clausen. We can find it in their bestselling NoSleeve Vest, and their Shorts Freeride Evo designed to protect coccyx and hips. Forcefield has revised their Pro Air range, combining their CE2 level armour with a seamless base layer mesh. Prosurf chooses very light lycra to ensure minimum weight. Triple8 uses neoprene. They highlight their Covert Knee and Elbow pads, the Undercover Snow Knee and Wrist Guards, and their Bumsaver Padded Shorts.

Many new materials aim for sustainability. Amplifi's Miharo fibres are fast growing and renewable. Evoc fuses repurposed coffee grounds with recycled PET for their outer fabrics. Forcefield uses recycled fabrics in their GTEch range. The highly ventilated jacket of Clover's Backprotector is also made with recycled fabrics. There are noticeable efforts to implement sustainability beyond the use of eco-friendly materials. Amplifi implemented a Zero Waste process in the injection of the MKX parts. Every offcut is carefully collected and upcycled into new products. All their packing materials are recycled. Xion PG has centralised 90% of the raw materials sourcing and 100% of labour within the EU, reducing transportation related emissions and supporting local economies. Evoc works with leading partners for chemical and mechanical recycling. "We fully commit to the development of a cradle-to-cradle recycling", says Jan Sallawitz. They take back all their protection wear at the end of their product life and recycle it.

RETAILER SUPPORT

Education is the focus of marketing efforts in this category. Retailers get training about how the products work and how to communicate it to the consumer. Consumers get educated through in-store POS and digital content. Xion PG provides mannequins to display their protection gear. Evoc has a modular, individually customisable display system complemented with a large selection of graphics, pictures and product information. Amplifi and Triple8 also offer POS to help with in-store branding. Another popular form of support is to ease the purchasing process. Evoc and Clover are proud of their B2B ordering system that enables an accessible and effortless purchasing. Evoc also offers a 24/7 access download centre where all digital media assets are available. All brands report timely deliveries and a full stock to keep an uninterrupted supply. Retailers can look forward to welcoming protection seeking customers. 

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

BOARDSPORTSOURCE.COM

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Flexibility and breathability are key.
- 2 Increased use of sustainable materials.
- 3 Marketing focus on education.

NEW PRODUCTS

01 / HEAD POWERHOUSE LYT SNOWBOARD

The Powerhouse LYT is a classic-shaped all-mountain cruiser with a medium flex and has proven itself in the highest level of competitive freeriding. Its hybrid camber construction is highly reliable in any conditions and terrains and the sintered base ensures you are the first down in the valley. The lightweight wood core and Hexagonal Core in the board's tip and tail make it agile and ensure a smooth ride even through choppy terrain.

HEAD.COM



02

02 / DEELUXE KEVIN BACKSTROM AERIS SIGNATURE BOOT

For a truly custom fit that maximizes performance and comfort, it showcases Deeluxe's Stage 3 liner and Freestyle Tongue. The boot's Sidekick Pro technology uses a high-frequency welding process to fuse lateral and medial reinforcing elements to the boot's shell. This provides faster edge-to-edge transitions and better pop when ollieing. The Double Back offers additional protection from binding abrasions and boosts control and precision. For exceptional board feel, the Aeris features the all-new Quantum sole. This sole provides an especially direct and responsive ride while also offering strategic cushioning to dampen vibrations and absorb impact energy. This enables you to stomp the largest features with ease.

DEELUXE.COM



03

03 / NIDECKER SUPERMATIC CARBON BINDING

The revolution continues. The Supermatic has already changed the game. In under two years, it's revolutionized the way people ride and quickly established itself as the world's best-selling premium binding. Now Nidecker are upping the ante with cutting edge lightweight materials and a bold new hiback for lightning response. And the same fully-automatic Drop IN™ technology.

NIDECKER.COM

04 / PLUM FARIO SNOWBOARD

The Fario is a board for the modern times, but above all a board adapted to its natural playground, the mountain. Built with a poplar wood core to get a perfect snow touch, equipped with a long radius to provide the best uphill performance and a strong edge grip when riding. The Fario is a true All Mountain board, efficient and performant in all kinds of situations. But the particularity of this species is definitely the « fishtail » which adds a balance and speed control in the powder, a shape that we can define as firmly freeride oriented and playful which allows a greater manageability at low and high speed.

FIXATION-PLUM.COM



05

05 / POW STEALTH GTX® GLOVE

The Stealth GTX is one of POW's tried and tested legacy gloves and a favorite among our Team Riders. After more than a decade, we have given it a facelift with cleaner lines and modern styling. The all new Stealth GTX® Glove features Grade A water repellent goatskin leather, GORE-TEX® waterproof, wind-proof and breathable insert, Primaloft® Gold insulation, pillow soft fleece lining and an Ultra Magic® no snag Velcro closure. Wrap your paws in these leather pillows and you'll thank us later.

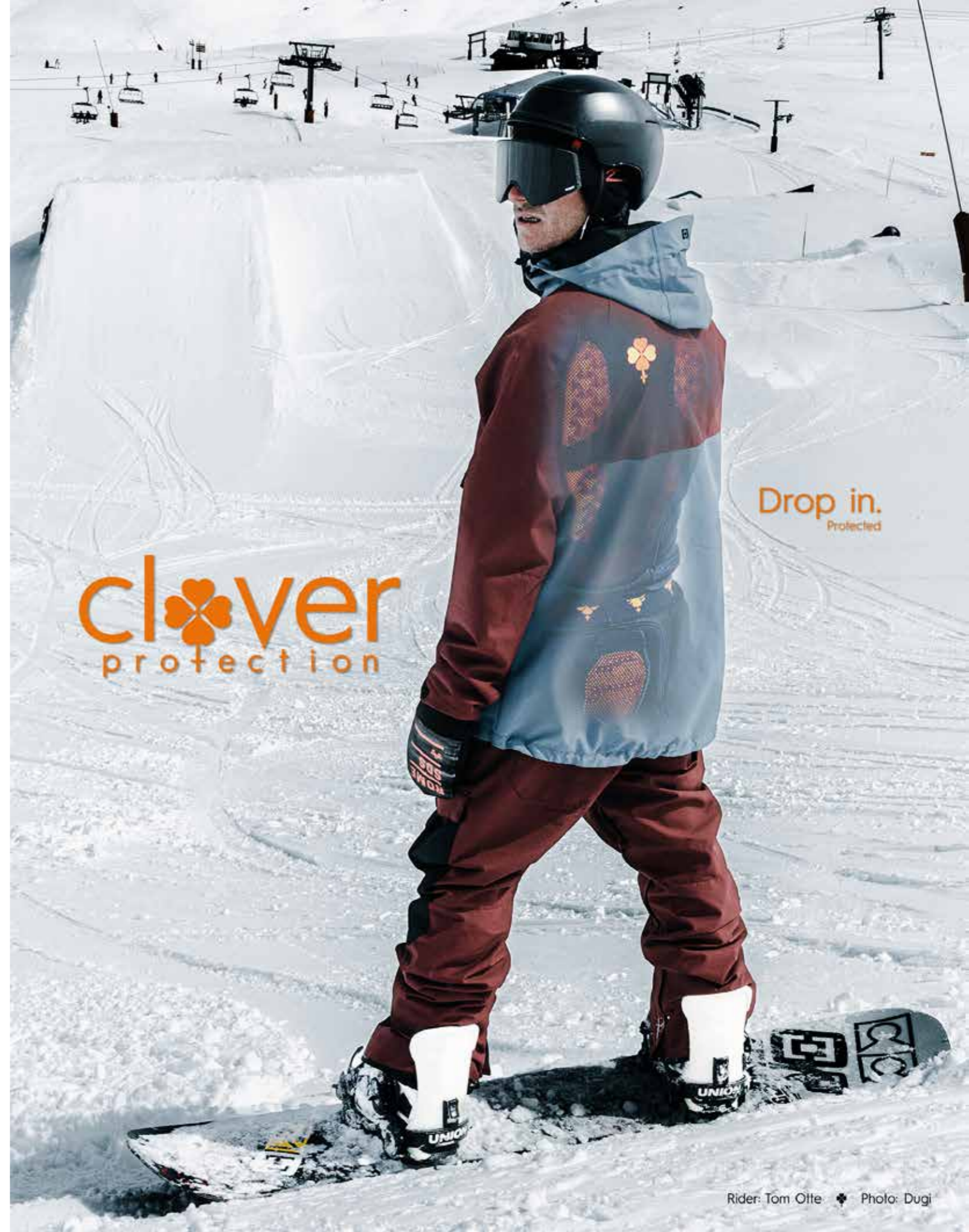
POWGLOVES.COM



01



04



Drop in.
Protected

clover
protection

NEW PRODUCTS

06 / YES SELECT ARTIST

MARK KOWALCHUK BINDING

The Select Artist series by Mark Kowalchuk is a beauty and a mix of style and function. Kowalchuk, renowned for his work with top skate brands and #YES snowboards, brings his creative genius to the binding. Featuring proven technologies like Skate-Tech and Flushcup, alongside a Nylon Hanger 2.0, Canted footpillow, and a Freestyle highback, this binding guarantees an unparalleled ride.

YESNOWBOARD.COM



07 / ANON MFI® HELLBROOK

BALACLAVA FACE MASK

Adapt your face coverage as mountain conditions change with the Anon MFI® Hellbrook Balaclava Face Mask. Compatible with all MFI® goggles and made to wear under a helmet, the lightweight face mask is hinged for easy conversion when you need full face coverage.

BURTON.COM



08 / NORTHWAVE FREEDOM BOOT

If you're looking for something affordable and with basic but reliable technology, the Freedom is a great choice. Don't be shocked by the price point! Although it is an entry level boot, it has many features that will make your riding progress. SpeedLace with Dual Zone closure. If you're looking for something to start with, this boot is a really good choice. Its built in a very easy way so that you don't have to sweat when putting it on.

NORTHWAVE.COM/EN/SNOW

09 / DRAKE RADAR BINDING

This binding has been designed for powder hounds and park junkies alike who want a binding that punches back but without compromising any tweakability. The new Grand Royal ankle strap is a real gem, it takes out all the contact points while still assuring maximum power transmission. It's a high performing binding so expect it to be so when strapping in.

NORTHWAVE.COM/EN/SNOW



10 / TRANSFORM KO

MITT X EIVY LEOPARD

The KO Mitt is one of Transforms most popular mitts each year and it keeps on getting better. With Primaloft Gold Insulation and Hipora 10k waterproof inserts that keeps you warm and dry when you need it most.

TRANSFORMGLOVES.COM



11 / BRETHERN'S ROBBIN

HOOD BALACLAVA

Our Robbin Hood Balaclava's have been a store favourite for years now, and are back again with all new colourways and improvements. The neck length has been extended for further warmth retention as well as comfort; constructed using fine knit, super soft acrylic fabric and finished with our simple classic logo. Match them up with one of our Beanie's in the same colourways, or highlights from the Outerwear Collections.'

BRETHERN-APPAREL.COM

12 / PACSAFE® ECO 12L ANTI-THEFT

SLING BACKPACK

Get off the beaten track with this spacious sling pack - Sufficient room to pack the essentials, including two water bottle pockets and a space for a water bladder. For extra comfort, choose which side you want the shoulder strap with our ambidextrous design. The Pacsafe ECO collection is their most sustainable collection yet by using almost 100% recycled materials and components.

PACSAFE.EU



13 / ROME KATANA PRO BINDING

New for the 24/25 season, Rome are excited to add the Katana Pro to their growing Pro Collection. The Katana Pro is built with carbon infused highbacks and baseplates for a hyper-responsive riding. The Katana Pro also features a futuristic PivotMount system, DuraCush SubBase pads, AsymWrap platform and UltraFlex Pro ankle straps for maximum comfort and adjustability.

ROMESNOWBOARDS.COM

14 / GIRO THE COMP GOGGLE

Click It & Rip It. The New COMP goggle from Giro is a large face flange goggle that features Giro's EXV+ (expansion View Plus Technology) to optimize your field of view as well as Giro proprietary contrast enhancing Lens Tech - Vivid by Zeiss and is delivered with either an S2 or S3 Vivid Lens for sunny days and a Vivid infrared Bonus lens for bad weather. You will change these lenses easily thanks to its magnetic interchange lens System. Damp day or heavy duty rides, no worries, The Evak Vent Technology is your best friend when it comes to moisture management.

GIRO.COM



15 / TRANSFORM THE TEAM MITT,

GLITTER STUDIO LAVENDER

The Team is built for the worst weather conditions out there, with Primaloft Gold Insulation and Hipora 10K Waterproof Inserts allowing you to take repeated faceshots as you hunt for pow. The Cuff is designed to be either be pulled tight over your jacket or be worn underneath and is just one of many features that makes The Throwback our professional team riders' mitten of choice.

TRANSFORMGLOVES.COM



C-MONSTA

Forged in cold Scottish waters by a surfer short on time, c-monsta's unique, ventilated designed hangers enable surfers to hang all their gear in one place, allowing wetsuits and boots to dry faster, so sessions are not ruined by smelly, damp and rotten gear. We caught up with founder Mark Yeadon to talk about his drive to create the product and how the hangers help extend the life of neoprene which can only be a good thing for the planet.

Please give us a brief recap of the brands history.

Our daughter had arrived, and it was a nightmare getting out the house to do what I love – to surf. Some of my limited time would be spent trying to find a boot or glove or fishing stinking neoprene out of a builder's tub in the back of my van.

I tried to design a solution. Initially I made my designs out of plywood and gave them to friends for Christmas presents and it all took off from there.

Tell us more about your background.

I have always loved boardsports, from skating through my younger years, to snowboarding when that kicked off then surfing. I was late to the game with surfing, but I have spent the last 20 years dedicating myself to waves.

I want to make products that contribute to a simpler life with minimal impact on the environment. I like simple solutions, which often take the most time and creativity to discover.

Please take us through your key product, the c-monsta Wetsuit Hanger V2.

Really simple product. It hangs your wetsuit, boots and gloves together in a position that allows them to dry efficiently.



When you want to go for a surf, all your kit is dry and together. It saves time, it saves money and I like to think it has a net environmental benefit. It is quite a logical product.

Do you have any other products in the pipeline?

We have a bag and mat that are just being released. The three products work together in harmony like a little transporting, changing, drying, storing eco-system. I have been testing the products for over a year now and they are fully legit. New essentials. The bag is split into a wet half and dry half so you can carry everything together and the mat is padded so it is a total luxury to use.

What sets c-monsta apart from its competitors?

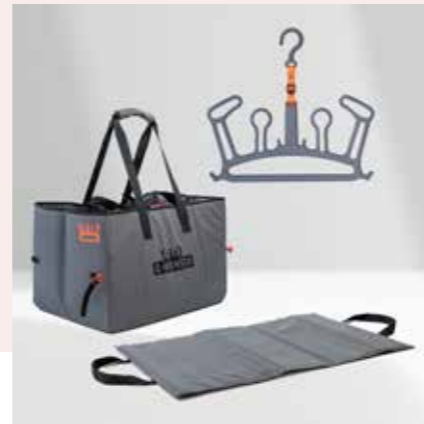
I try not to look too hard at what other people are doing because I just want to make products which make sense for me and my customers. I want to make people feel good with fun branding and simple but innovative products.

Which are the key sports markets for c-monsta and why?

I love surfing. The brand will always be anchored in surf but without sailing, SUP, open water swimming, triathlon, diving etc. the brand would not exist so it is important to take all those niches into account when making strategic decisions. For this reason, I have partnered up with a diving distributor in Europe but absolutely hope to build the brand's presence in European surf shops and become a part of that community.

Does c-monsta do anything to benefit the environment?

We manufacture goods from recycled materials wherever possible, but our green credibility comes from helping to look after things and make them last. Historically I would only get 1 season out of my wetsuit, probably because it spent a good portion



of that time lying in a bucket stinking of pee and rotting. I now get 2 or 3 seasons out of a suit and enjoy the process of looking after it. Imagine doubling the lifespan of all neoprene.

How is the brand performing in the UK, its launch market?

The first year during covid was crackers. We were boxing up hangers in the living room and I was filling shopping trolleys and overloading the post office which was in a local store. It was really fun and exciting!

Post covid was tricky but we have stabilized the supply chain, improved warehousing, launched two new products, established a relationship with a European distributor and set up warehousing in the US.

How is the brand distributed across Europe?

I tried taking care of customers in Europe from the UK but, because of Brexit, it was a nightmare. I really want people to have a positive experience with c-monsta and I felt like I was failing to do that for the shops. I went to ISPO last year and met a really nice guy called Frans and we are working together now. As I have said, he is into diving, but he puts customer service before anything else, which is what I am and c-monsta is all about. ☺



ARC'TERYX

Arc'teryx have gone from niche high-end technical climbing brand to wardrobe staple for hipsters and the Gorp Core alike. Made with functionality in mind, many patents behind their brand and a focus on education through information, Arc'teryx are also making a notable push into the snowboard world with some key athlete signings. We catch up with Stéphane Tenailleau, Senior Director, EMEA Brand Marketing to find out more.

Give us a brief outline of the origins of Arc'teryx.

The story of Arc'teryx began manufacturing climbing harnesses in 1989 in North Vancouver, in the Canadian Coast Mountains. Our founders were athletes, inventors and creatives who spent significant time themselves in nature and were obsessed with developing product tailored to embrace the wild mountain terrain. Their goal was clear: design the lightest, best performing, and highest quality products available for the outdoor community.

With our HQ based in the heart of the mountains, our products have always been inspired by and tested in the environment there were thought for. To this day, we remain focused on solving problems and sharing knowledge that allows more people to get outdoors and to experience the transformative power of being outside.

Tell us about your product range.

Our range covers all core mountain activities from climb to trail to snow. We design products with a goal in mind – to create the most technical product available, which is not only thoughtfully designed but durable.

In 1998, we believed we could make the best waterproof, durable jacket on the market. So, we set out to do just this and there we have the birth of the industry changing and Alpine favourite Alpha SV Jacket. This not only saw the start of our collaboration to creating gear with GORE-TEX, but also led to a series of unique product developments like Watertight™ zippers, micro seam technology,



the Stormhood™ and many other patents to our name.

Our ski and snowboard gear epitomizes our commitment to cutting-edge design and technical excellence backed back our riders' experiences in the harshest terrains. Regardless of the activity our mountain athletes, our outerwear best performs in the most extreme environments providing comfort and functionality.

How do you distribute Arc'teryx products across Europe?

Our products are distributed worldwide through our own brand stores, Arc'teryx.com, and a selection of outdoor specialty accounts.

What makes your products unique in the industry?

We distinguish ourselves by keeping innovation as a key pillar of our strategy. With the notion that there's always a better way, we are constantly rethinking our practices and product, focusing on potential improvements that will take our gear to the next level. Once we design a piece, we subject it to extensive testing to the harshest conditions to make sure not only that it will perform in the wild, but that it will also last for a long time. None of this happens from one day to another, the evolution of our product has been the work of years of research, testing, creating our own material, fabrics and machinery and adapting. The devil is in the details and our meticulous work and craftsmanship makes us stand out and keep us as the preferred option of the outdoor community.

Can you explain what ReBIRDTM is and how sustainability features in the production and distribution of your products?

Arc'teryx recognizes climate change as our most urgent environmental concern. As signatories to the UN Fashion Charter, we are making the necessary adjustments to our operations to ensure we stay on track to meet net-zero emissions by 2050.

Circularity is at the heart of Arc'teryx's sustainability ambition. This means changing the way we all consume, and looking after what we have, rather than always buying more. This is the driving sentiment behind ReBIRDTM, Arc'teryx's platform for circularity, which covers three pillars:

- ReCARE™, care and repair at dedicated ReBIRDTM Service Centers, available at selected Brand Stores, including in our new London's Covent Garden Store to open Feb 21st.



- ReGEARTM, a re-commerce platform (currently US and Canada only and excess raw materials.)
- ReCUTTM, an initiative for upcycling end-of-life and excess raw materials. With ReBIRDTM, Arc'teryx is hoping to bring back that lost "culture of care" for our clothes, creating possibility in place of landfill.

You run a range of community events and programmes including the Arc'teryx Academies, tell us more about these and how they help the brand.

Since 2012, Arc'teryx has hosted best-in-class athletes and guide-led Academies across the globe to advance everyone's mountain skills from beginners to expert, in all ranges of disciplines through on terrain clinics and community moments. Annually, Arc'teryx runs 3 Academies in Europe: The Alpine Academy in Chamonix in July focused on everything mountaineering and climbing activities, the Freeride Academy in Sankt Anton in Austria in February focused on ski and snowboard and a smaller Climb Academy in the Lakes District in UK in May. All Academies, along with many other community events we run, aim at enabling, inspiring and connecting thousands of outdoor enthusiasts every year. Last year our Academy in Chamonix gathered 500 clinics participants, through 43 different clinics, and hosted 10,400 visitors attending its mountain culture festival. We're looking forward to 2024 with the pursuit of our global inclusive campaign No Wasted Days™, deeper community experiences at Academies and snowboard-progressing Natural Selection sponsorship. ☺

Fallen
20 YEARS
FF

FALLEN

Fallen is celebrating its 20th, so Source decided it was time to have a chat with Chad Foreman co-founder and co-owner and see how the brand is progressing as it enters its third decade.

Happy 20th, How is the anniversary being celebrated?

Thank you! We are very thankful to even talk about a 20th year anniversary, and that almost didn't happen, but with the passion for the brand, our team, our fans and customers, and love for everything we do and work for every day, we're here now, and very excited to discuss!

We just released a limited capsule with our 20-year branding that includes apparel as well as a premium leather Patriot model with our signature white contrast stitching and a 3D bevelled logo. Each pair purchased comes with a free pair of our 20-year anniversary socks inside the box. A special release for our lifelong fans.

Can you give us a brief history of Fallen's first 20 years.

Fallen was created in 2003 for skateboarders and by skateboarders, the brand represents everything that's right about our industry, the brand is who we all are, and why we wake up and do what we do. I trademarked this brand 20 years ago, I've cried over the brand, I've fought for the brand, I look at my feet and I see a friend. Fallen Footwear brand was created for the underdogs, the unruly youth, the ones that stand up when they say you can't do it, the Fallen ones, with hearts bigger than foundations and platforms!

What have been the key successes in building the brand?

The word success doesn't feel like it captures who we are as a brand. We are so scrappy, we focus on trying to be our



best, focus on being real people doing real things, give a shit about everyone that gives a shit about us. The key to our success lies in staying true to what we represent, and that's the real ones. You all know who you are, you can read this, and you'll know, you are our people!

What was the most iconic product the brand has released and why?

All our shoes are icons for us, regardless of how many have sold, but the Patriot has always been a staple for us and stands as one of our flagship models.

Can we have some current stats on the brand in its 20th year?

We will continue to wake up every day and try our best to be our best, and to also create the best footwear for skateboarding as a whole, while staying true to why we started Fallen in the first place!

Tell us about any brand anniversary collabs or special lines.

Our 20th-anniversary capsule is out now, and we have a lot of great collabs and new lines that will be launching soon. You'll be just as excited as we are, but you will just have to wait and see!



Where do you see the most opportunities for growth for the brand over the coming years?

By staying true to our past and the original voice for the brand, our success will naturally follow, at an organic rate, and for all the right reasons. We're here for the long run, we're here for the real ones! We will continue to work our hardest to not only speak to our customers, but also to contribute to skateboarding on every level for years to come! ☺

clover
protection

CLOVER

Utilising RZ Labs' unique cutting-edge molecular technology, Clover Protection has set about designing a no-nonsense yet high quality range of protection gear to keep riders safe on the snow. We grabbed Joeri Van de Vliet to chat about what sets them apart from other safety gear, top-selling markets for the brand and their latest product lines.

Please tell us how Clover Protection got started.

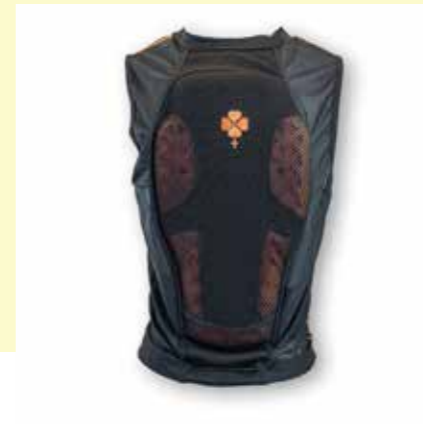
Deeply engaged in the sales and distribution of brands, we observed a common frustration among our customers regarding protection products. Existing brands often introduced unnecessary complexity, hindering effective strategies and profitability for our clients. This inspired the creation of Clover, a meticulously crafted, no-nonsense product designed for simplicity, ensuring a mutually beneficial outcome for all stakeholders. The remarkable price point adds another layer of delight for end customers, fostering satisfaction and joy among sports enthusiasts and subsequently boosting sales for our clients.

Who are the people involved and what are their backgrounds?

We are a trio of founders intimately connected with our customers and community. As we age and witness our kids growing up in the world of action sports, the need for enhanced protection became apparent. This led to the evolution of our brand, a testament to growing older and wiser. Pieter Simons oversees our European sales network, Rainier De Potter manages sales in the Benelux region, and I handle marketing and product development.

What sets Clover aside from other protection brands in the boardsports space?

Exemplary design, cutting-edge technology, streamlined business practices, and an



attractive price point define our core values.

Which is your top selling European market and why?

Our focus has primarily been on the Benelux region since our inception last year. However, we're excited to announce our expansion into the rest of Europe this year.

How is your distribution organized in Europe?

We collaborate with agents and distributors across Europe, aligning with individuals and companies driven by passion and commitment for the long term. We seek partners who bring both enthusiasm and professionalism to the table - put your money where your mouth is.

Why should retailers stock Clover?

We offer precisely what customers are searching for, and not only that, but at a compelling price point with favourable margins for our retailers. Our approach revolves around maintaining simplicity throughout our partnership. This involves a robust B2B system, ensuring items are never out of stock, and implementing a carry-over policy for a significant portion of our collection. By doing so, we aim to minimize the administrative burden on our retailers, allowing them to focus more on informing and selling the right products to their customers.

The impact of clarity, simplicity, and professionalism on the efficiency of everyone involved in building a brand is truly remarkable. The tangible and perceptible benefits contribute to a smoother and more effective process, enhancing the overall experience for all stakeholders.

Please take us through your 24/25 line

Introducing a new addition for the 24/25 season - a selection of board bags. We've meticulously considered the essential features desired by customers, delivering



them in top-notch materials and adhering to a straightforward colour scheme in the distinctive Clover orange/black palette. The collection's assembly remains uncomplicated and is tailored to meet the needs of the majority of end users. This deliberate simplicity extends benefits to retailers as well, with fewer sizes and variations promoting a transparent and efficient purchasing strategy. Rest assured, we still offer the diverse products that end users are seeking. Additionally, we continue to feature our existing protection collection in all its glory. While these products undergo minor modifications to stay current, they predominantly remain as carry-over models, ensuring a seamless continuation of popular items.

Any future products in the pipeline?

In response to numerous customer requests, we are exploring the option of incorporating knee protection into our existing protection collection. It is our commitment to uphold the same high standards and values that define all other products in our collection. Additionally, we recognize that any expansion of our offerings is contingent upon the valuable feedback we receive from our partners. Your insights play a crucial role in shaping the growth and evolution of our collection. ☺



ALLIANCE OF EUROPEAN FLAX-LINEN & HEMP

BoardSport Source talks to Julie Pariset, Innovation & CSR Director for the Alliance for European Flax-Linen & Hemp about the adoption of flax fibre composites in manufacturing performance boards and skis.

Tell us about the Alliance for European Flax-Linen & Hemp?

The Alliance for European Flax-Linen & Hemp is the new name launched in 2022 for the organization previously known as CELC (European Confederation for Flax and Hemp). The Alliance highlights a European industry which brings together the entire flax and hemp value chain around a common goal: to make European Flax-Linen and Hemp the preferred, sustainable, premium fibres for fashion, technical textiles, and natural fibre composites. We support our members and their customers with the best scientific and economic decision-making tools to enable this growth. Our leading brand - European Flax® - represents the premium flax fibres grown in Western Europe and is both a certificate of origin and a guarantee of traceability and quality. These fibres are well established in composites and match the industry's requirements in terms of performance and technical expertise.

Flax can be a highly technical fibre as well as green?

Absolutely. Bio-sourced or recycled materials must ensure they enhance the overall performance of the end product, and this is where flax is so strong. Low in weight with a high specific stiffness, flax fibres are able to resist impact and deliver exceptional vibration damping in natural fibre composites. It's this blend of properties – as a pure flax laminate or in combination with more traditional glass, carbon or basalt – that engineers can use to optimize performance, soften the ride and improve comfort for the skier or rider. This is exactly how the Alliance helps users. Earlier this year, we published "Vibration Damping in Flax & Hemp Fibre Composites", a new report that highlights how the damping properties of flax and hemp fibre composites can be positioned alongside a range of materials and how influential factors such as the matrix selected, porosity content and



moisture absorption can impact the damping performance.

The benefits are clear - which brands are using flax?

We have seen a fantastic range of smaller manufacturers and much larger mainstream brands adopt flax fibre reinforced composites. Some recent examples we have seen include products by Rome, Kang, and Salomon, showing just how creative the industry has been in applying flax.

Rome Snowboards used flax fibres from our member, EcoTechnilin, commenting that it was the performance characteristics as well as the eco credentials that led them to include them. Rome now also includes flax textile reinforcements into the impact plates and side walls of a number of their boards noting that the low-density fibres improve durability, rigidity and stability without impacting the "feel" of the board.

Swedish pole brand Kang is focused on environmentally smart materials that offer performance combined with long term sustainability. The latest version of their Telescopic Freeride poles uses Bcomp natural flax offering users another bio-based option to sit alongside their bamboo and recycled aluminium poles.

Big names are also showcasing flax constructions in their latest winter sports range with Salomon adding a hybrid flax/carbon layer to the laminate of its QST Lumen 98 women's freeride ski. This reinforcement was developed using Terre de Lin's TDL Technique flax products and combines the strength and stability of the lightweight carbon plies with the superior cushioning properties of flax, for a powerful, balanced ride.

How does the Alliance support the industry in increasing the adoption of natural flax fibres?

It's great to see winter sports brands (and all sports generally - water sports, racquets, paddles and protective equipment are also huge opportunities for flax) bringing flax fibre composites to the mainstream market. One of our key roles now is to develop the life



cycle analysis (LCA) work started for European Flax® scutched long fibre (we were the first agro-industrial body to use the new European Union recognized Product Environmental Footprint (PEF) method for LCA studies) as we start to look further down the materials supply chain. This downstream data looks at processes including spinning yarns and weaving reinforcements is vital in providing a complete picture to manufacturers and their suppliers looking for a complete environmental update on their raw materials. Finally, the Alliance is also a great place to come for advice. Our website offers LCA and scientific reports freely available as well as our online materials supplier database.

Customers seem to have more flax and hemp fibre composite options to choose from in the marketplace...

Customers want manufacturers to reduce the environmental impact of their products. They simply won't buy if manufacturers are not able to make a difference, and flax is one way to do that. So, we see manufacturers continuing to add more flax fibres where they make the most sense, either in pure flax thermoplastic or thermoset composites or as hybrids with other fibres, in applications where reduced vibration, improved comfort and an enhanced quality of ride are required. Using flax in this way, manufacturers are delivering enhanced performance and sustainability, propelling an exciting future for eco-friendly innovations on the slopes. ☺



ALECK

Award winning adventure technology company Aleck has been an outlier in today's challenging market, going from strength to strength with their ever-expanding range of immersive action sports comms products. We caught up with Stephen Catterson to discuss distribution, manufacturing and how their technology has evolved since it first rocked the market back in 2018.

How has Aleck performed since our last interview?

2023 has been a banner year for Aleck and we've seen growth of 250% to top-line revenue. We're very happy with this achievement especially given the challenging market conditions, where retailers and distributors are overstocked with hard goods. Despite these hurdles, our team has excelled, propelling our business to decent growth and we expect to continue this as we look ahead to 2024.

Can you give us an overview of the latest product range and any new arrivals?

Our current range includes 'Nunchucks' for snow helmet audio and comms, 'Punks' for bike helmet audio and comms, and the 'Tocsen' crash sensor. Excitingly, we're introducing a new product for 2024, the 'OG', which is our first foray into the highly requested "off-grid" space meaning users will no longer need cell service to communicate with family and friends. It offers a communication range of over 35 miles, allows connectivity with an unlimited number of users, and integrates seamlessly with our existing products, the Nunchucks, Punks, and Tocsen crash sensor. This addition is set to revolutionize our ecosystem of audio, communications and safety products for both on-grid and off-grid applications.

Explain the difference between your Nunchucks and 006 snow helmet audio and comms.

The Nunchucks have undergone a comprehensive redesign, incorporating valuable feedback from our users. We've introduced a USB-C port, a long-awaited



update! The device now has more ergonomic curves for a better fit in helmets. The button pads have been enlarged and separated into two distinct buttons for easier use. We've also significantly improved the EQ, making it the best-sounding product we've ever created for snow. Practical improvements include relocating the charging port to the back for easier access and an LED indicator on the backside for quick charging status checks. A major enhancement is the doubled battery life, now offering over 18 hours of continuous playback, translating to about a week's use on the mountain without recharging.

What are the current best sellers in your product line-up?

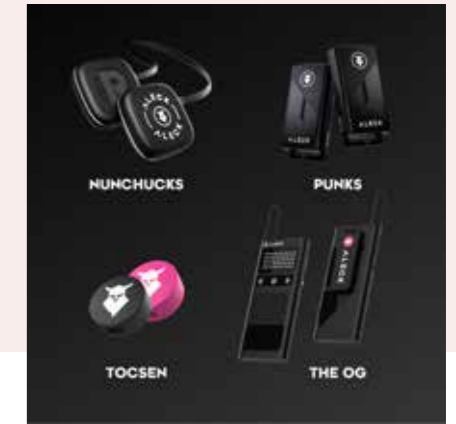
At present, the Nunchucks are our top-selling product, aligning with the ongoing snow season. However, our bike product the 'Punks' saw a surge in demand following its Kickstarter launch in the spring of 2023. As we approach the bike season in 2024, we anticipate that the sales of 'Punks' will likely surpass that of our snow products.

How do you currently distribute the brand across Europe, and what's the best-selling market for you right now?

In Europe, Aleck utilizes a mix of distributors and Amazon marketplaces for distribution. Germany is currently our most successful market, a direct benefit from the acquisition of Tocsen last year. Tocsen had an established presence in the German, Swiss, and Austrian markets, which significantly bolstered our position in these regions.

Why should retailers stock Aleck products?

Retailers should consider stocking Aleck products because we offer a comprehensive suite for audio communications and safety, catering to a wide range of outdoor activities like skiing, cycling, mountain biking, and with the entry of the 'OG', extended into more outdoor sports like hiking, kayaking, and climbing. Our products are designed for both on-grid and off-grid adventures, making them a versatile and essential offering for any outdoor sports retailer.



Where are Aleck products manufactured, and where are materials sourced from?

Aleck's manufacturing base is in Asia, taking advantage of the well-established electronic supply chain there. We also source our materials from the region. While we are committed to finding more sustainable production methods and materials, we are conscious of the environmental impact of extensive shipping. For instance, sourcing recycled plastics from the U.S. (which is one of the only places I'm aware of that have recycled plastics with enough quality to meet production standards) and shipping them to Asia for manufacturing, then back to the U.S. for distribution, would counteract our sustainability goals. We are continually evaluating our processes to improve our environmental footprint.

How do you see the market for your technology developing over the next few years?

Looking ahead, we expect an increasing trend of technology being integrated directly into helmets off the production line, particularly for audio and communication systems. While this is an emerging market trend, at Aleck, we recognize that our customers have strong brand loyalty to their helmets, especially regarding fit and comfort. Therefore, we are focused on providing them with a range of high-quality, flexible audio and communication system options to enhance their experience without compromising on their preferred helmet brands. ☺

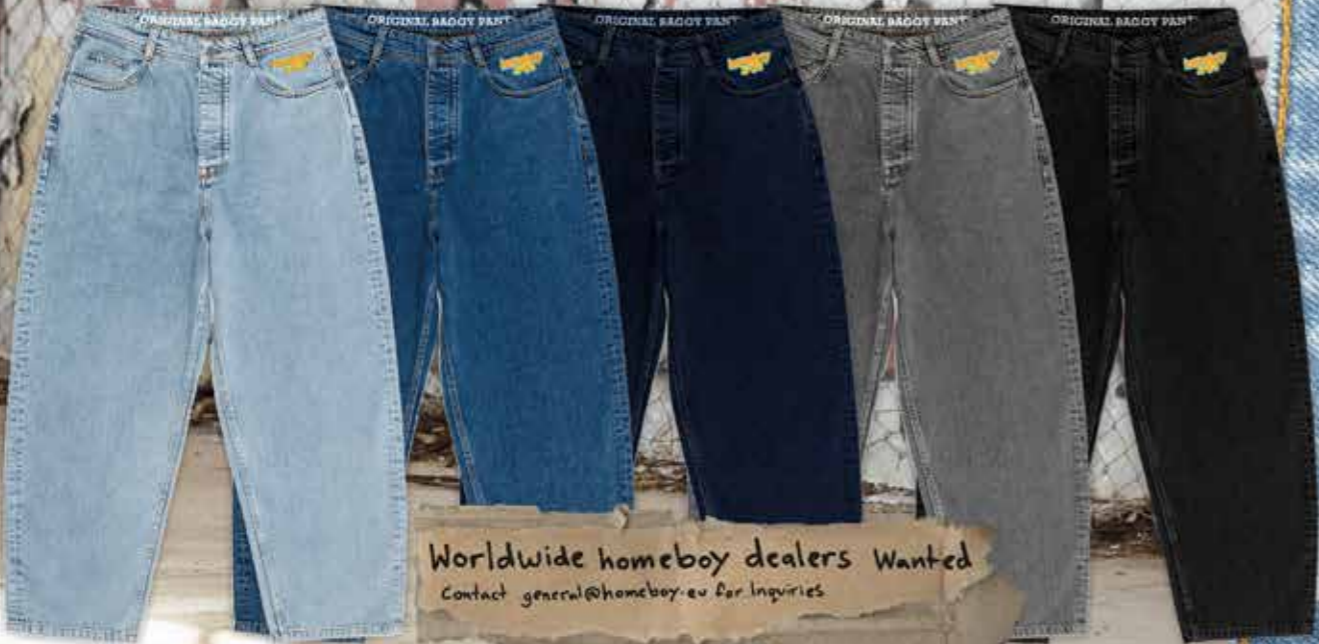


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ORIGINAL BAGGY PANTS

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE MENS STREETWEAR FW24/25

With the changing of the seasons and the layers ready and waiting to be released from the wardrobe, we look eagerly to see what will be going on in FW24. To find out what to watch out for and how to be ahead of the trends ready for next season, here's the Boardsport Source Retail Buyers Guide for Mens Streetwear FW24.



The market is in a very uncertain place right now, however somehow the streetwear market specifically is continuing to provide new and improved styles for consumers who do have a little disposable income to spare. Skate stores across Europe are feeling the economic strains, but they're pushing on through and thankfully being supported by their brands. Jordi Quinto- Head of Marketing at Hydroponic said: "It's a hard time in the market right now due to inflation and political uncertainties all over the world." On an up-note though, Julian Duval - President at AndFeelings said "Streetwear is definitely not dead as some high stake blogs have said, it has just transcended itself as the urban fashion market." The streetwear world is seemingly divided into two worlds right now, according to Homeboy's Brand Manager - Julian Wolf. He said "One is the fast trend world, in which young brands that stand for nothing sprout up, serve a hype and disappear again. The other world is lifestyle and skill-based and cultivates a mix of old values and progressive developments."

COLLECTIONS
Aside from the doom & gloom mentioned above, there are some things to celebrate next season. IrieDaily - Berlin's OG streetwear brand will be celebrating 30 years strong! Denise Graff - Marketing Manager at IrieDaily said "In preparation for our 30th anniversary, we dug deep into our textile and digital archives, reminisced and realised that many collections from IrieDaily's beginner era could fit 1:1 into the current street scene and the Y2K trend." Brixton- the vintage inspired lifestyle brand from

"Streetwear is definitely not dead as some high stake blogs have said, it has just transcended itself as the urban fashion market." **Julian Duval, AndFeelings**

Oceanside, California will also be celebrating their 20 year anniversary by releasing their first ever hooligan and brood caps and staple bowery flannel in the first ever colourway.

Homeboy - the brand known predominantly for their baggy jeans will be releasing a new line of jackets as Julian said: "We went all out with our jackets -In my opinion, jackets are the perfect counterpart to our baggy trousers, as the silhouette is clearly in the foreground here too." Alongside the Y2K trend, Denise from IrieDaily mentioned that: "The

IrieDaily Fall/Winter 2024 collection has its finger on the pulse and is influenced by the current trends of Gorpcore and Workwear." Julian from AndFeelings also noted that "The baggy and 90s vibes will be holding strong for 2024 and beyond."

COLLABS
Barcelona brand Hydroponic have some exciting news for next season. Jordi from Hydroponic said: "Hydroponic is releasing a new Official Collaboration with NARUTO starting on Spring Summer 24 and following with Fall Winter 24, with many new products in clothing and skateboarding."

MATERIALS AND COLOUR THEMES
The palettes for FW24 will be primarily consisting of blacks and whites, with occasional louder seasonal tones. Julian from Homeboy said ". A walk in the woods was the consensus. The colours you experience there as dusk falls are the colours of our collection." Regarding materials- thicker, more practical fabrics are returning. Hydroponic will be introducing fleeces, amongst other warmer threads ready for the colder seasons too.

SUSTAINABILITY
Practical and long-lasting garments are ideal in the current climate, with buyers wanting more for their money whilst also considering the environmental impact of their purchase. IrieDaily have always been driven by a sustainable goal. Denise from IrieDaily proudly said "We focus on the protection of animal welfare and are proud that our products are vegan." Julian from Homeboy added that they "don't take up the cause of sustainability because we believe it should be the status quo for every brand."

Wrapping things up, streetwear for FW24 looks to be promising with more trend revivals and practical styles for the colder months. We're all hoping for the market to stabilise, and a calmer end to what's been a rocky start to the year. ☺

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- HIGHLIGHTS**
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 - 2 Vintage styles with modern tech
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MARKET INSIGHT

GERMANY

Hello everyone!

ITALY
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SPAIN
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FRANCE

As always, I'll start this market insight with news on the inflation rate and the current situation in Germany. Consumer prices rose by 3.7% in December 2023 compared to the same month last year. This means that the inflation rate has climbed slightly again compared to the previous month, after several months of decline and this could cause energy prices to rise. Added to this is the increase in VAT for restaurants

from 7% to 19%. All of this could push the inflation rate towards 4% in January. Meanwhile farmers are on strike and showing their dissatisfaction with the decisions of the German government.

Let's move on to the situation in the retail sector: As hoped, the winter got off to an extremely good start across Germany and provided plenty of snow throughout the country. Ski resorts were able to open as early as 10 December, in many places. As a result, hardware sales went up and boosted Christmas business significantly. Thankfully for retailers, most of the Black Friday discounts were also removed and it was possible to sell at full margin.

Unfortunately, this was followed by heavy rain throughout Germany and extremely warm temperatures, which led to the closure of the ski resorts in the low mountain ranges. Almost nobody would have thought it possible that all the snow would disappear, but the valleys turned green again. In contrast to the previous year, however, many lifts were open between Christmas and New Year.

I spoke to Sport Kessler in Kleinwalsertal. Max Kessler confirmed that they were very nervous about Christmas. Fortunately, in the end, all the lifts were running and even the Crystal Ground Park opened with some rails. "It felt like the 'normal' years. We honestly couldn't keep up with the ski rental, everything was very positive here. We gave out a lot of snowboards. You can tell that people are keen. On the sales side, it was mainly soft goods such as socks, gloves, etc. that were bought, but we are also very happy with the snowboard sales. And to be honest, the season is only just starting for us."

The warm weather and wind also brought good waves to the board sports family. The winter swells all over Europe were really good, so surfers packed their board bags and flew to the waves. This was noticeable in the surf shops, Secret Spot in Kiel which has changed hands and moved to a new location, had a small sale and sold quite a few surfboards.

The surf hype can also be felt in Munich: Surftown Munich started selling tickets shortly after ISPO. The demand for tickets was massive ... Munich is ready for the wave. We're excited too. And we heard from Ricardo from Santoloco in Munich that he's going to open a new shop in Sagres, which seems like a crazy decision at the current time. But Santoloco who has focussed strongly on surfing, is seeing this is beginning to pay off: "With the

shop in Sagres, we are taking a new path that we have wanted to take for a long time. But now everything has come together, the location is right next to one of the best spots, it's big enough for a café, a rental area and a shop. This will certainly attract many Germans, and we will also be working with a small hotel run by our landlord. We start in March."

Its just before the Shops 1st Try and both the brands and the shops are looking forward to testing new products in Alpbachtal, the event registration figures look great. I've had a lot of different feedback from the shops I've spoken to over the last few days. On the one hand, the season feels good because of the early snow, but on the other hand, everything is getting more expensive and the farmers are on strike, blocking some of the access to retailers. Many small and medium-sized businesses are worried about the future.

I spoke to Alex from Sport Schumacher and he confirmed exactly that. This winter, he had a drop of around 30%, mainly on the sales of new goods. "This was simply slow. Another problem is of course the online price war and even if you don't want to take part, you're almost forced to. That's a shame, because as soon as one starts, the next one follows suit, and so on."

Max from Rome Snowboards and Low Pressure agrees. The price war had started far too early and his options are limited. Fortunately, there was new snow at the beginning of January and it has become cold again. When asked how the pre-order season was going, Max replied: "It's getting more and more difficult outerwear, shops are reducing space for outerwear and most core retailers are focussing on snowboard hardware." He notices this particularly in the boot sector, which is doing very well.

Back to Alex from Sport Schumacher; I wanted to know from him what he was doing for the pre-book season. He answered he would reduce the number of brands and also reduce preorders from the ones he keeps. "I have to think economically here, which means that I will of course order from brands with which we have a good partnership, which offer me a margin and where I also have drop shipping options. We are also thinking we want to position ourselves more broadly.

In any case, the season remains exciting. In my opinion, retailers and industry need to get even closer together in order to continue to do good business. Unfortunately, it will take even more effort in the coming years, because nobody can predict what nature will do. The situation is similar with politics. Here, too, we will have to accept the decisions and can only hope that politicians will once again provide more support for SMEs.

With this in mind, I wish all brands a good pre-book season and good sales. Good luck to the shops and, of course, we wish for snow, good waves and dry skate spots.

See you at Shops1st try

Ride on

TOBY HAMMER

MARKET INSIGHT

UK

FRANCE
GERMANY
ITALY
SWISS
PORTUGAL
SPAIN

Happy New Year, hopefully.

As I write this [early January], I suspect the well-earned Christmas break away from the coal-face will soon become a distant memory. By the time you read this, it will surely be forgotten. Slide/OTS is banging on the door, and all thoughts of R&R are long gone for us.

So, what does 2024 have in store for boardsports? More of the same? Something a little different

perhaps? Depending on which side of the boardsports fence you sit, you will be hoping and praying for something very different (water), or perhaps more of the same (winter).

2024 looks like it will be a busy year, but will it be a positive year? Elections in the UK seem fairly certain. Presidential elections in the US will bring... OMG, what will they bring? Comfort and joy? Somehow, I doubt it, and neither are likely to resolve the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Ukraine (Fk Putin).

That said, for the UK, there are some distinct positives. Downward inflation and reducing interest rates are two major economic positives. The Olympics will hopefully add a positive spin and a certain feel-good factor. Perhaps the UK outlook will not be so bad after all, and it would be fair, at this stage, to anticipate a better year than 2023. Please.

Currently, winter sales are holding up well, and retailers are still calling in stock. Optimism is high (very high), and finally, the snow in Europe appears to be playing the game – albeit a little late and a little nerve-racking. Snowboarders are finding their way to the white stuff. One bonus of the later season does appear to have calmed nerves a little, and (dare I say this) the panic in-season sales from key UK retailers currently look like they may become a thing of the past. (Is that tempting fate? See later)

I checked in with Jeremy from TSA: “Quite good” – I had to try and get more as ‘quite good’ did not sound very enthusiastic. “No, no – it’s really good, really good, and the potential is even better if this level of business continues. Bricks and Mortar is holding up really well and following some amazing online business. Snow is brilliant in Austria and is now looking better in France, so we’re starting to fly now.”

Any problems? “I can see us coming under a little price pressure from Europe as I don’t think things are going according to plan there. They’re now suffering the cost-of-living pressure that we have seen for some time, so that’s something to watch - but at this point is nothing too drastic.”

So, you’re happy enough? “More than happy enough. December looks like it could have been the best since 2008 – the heyday – and if that continues for the rest of the season, we’ll have nothing to complain about.”

It would be fair to describe TSA (and Jeremy) as something of a giant in the UK snowboard industry, and it is well and truly ‘driven’ by Jez, who has snowboarding running through his veins. I know this only too well as we worked together with Sims back in the 80s – yes, we are both that old - although I have a few years on him!

I hope that I will not offend Ben Smith from Big Dreams if I describe his business perhaps as being at the other end of the scale in terms of size. He is a single-door, bricks-and-mortar snowboard store. His

enthusiasm for the sport is, alongside Jeremy’s, without question. His ability to “talk snowboarding” is also famous, as is his frank approach to things.

“Bloody hell” what’s coming next? “December was unbelievable. It’s not always the strongest of months because we’re a selfish shop” Wait? What? Explain? “We’re not the kind of shop you visit to buy Christmas presents. We’re the kind of shop you visit to buy yourself some kit. The kind of shop you come to when you are being selfish and indulging your own desires.”

OK got it! “So December is not normally such a great month but, bloody hell, it was a record. Hardware flying out the door and good, expensive kit as well. People are not skimping, but they are going to make the kit last. They’re not necessarily buying a full setup, but they’re being selective, enhancing their current setup and buying really good stuff. It’s been nuts”.

Anything not going so well? “Clothing is a little bit slower but still good. Seasonnaires business is down – mainly because it’s now so hard to work in Europe. One thing that’s really good is we are seeing lots of girls getting kitted up, and the local dryslope is rammed – lessons fully booked up – even in the crap weather we’re having, the lessons are storming.”

While writing this article (under great pressure from Clive to make the deadline), Matt from Absolute Snow called. He was looking for some comfort “What’s going on with Europe?” Ahh, now this was interesting. “What’s happening?” As an online store, Absolute feels the pricing pressure from Europe ahead of a lot of others. “The snow is good, the season has not even started but the dumping is starting, and it’s hitting us. Consumers can get 20% - 25% off delivered duty paid. It’s mad. Completely bonkers”. I agree. After some discussion, we, like Jeremy, did come to the firm conclusion that there’s a cost-of-living impact that is slowing down Euroland sales and that is having a direct impact on pricing which, in turn, finds its’ way to Euro online stores available in the UK.

Apart from this, Matt confirmed that things are going well: “It’s not all doom and gloom, and we started off really well. August, September, and October were so good – amazing. I think it set my expectations really high and it’s just such a shame that we are up against this now.”

It was comforting to hear that the UK market does have its act together. “We’re seeing a little pressure with some brands and specific products where sticky lines are starting to be discounted, but there’s no blanket discounting, and it seems that the UK is really holding up well. I think we are going to have a great season, but the bumper expectations that I had may be dashed a little. C’est la vie”.

So now the winter boardsports industry heads full pelt to the sell-in season, the trade shows, the retailer visits, the on-snow tests. In a few short weeks, we will know where it’s heading and how the pre-orders are.

Optimism is high, retailers are still selling, snowboarders are still heading for the slopes, the snow is falling in Europe (rain in the UK), and tills are still ringing. Could this really be the second season running that we have a good one? That is if our Euro brethren do not dump too much in our back yard.

Hopefully – Happy New Year.

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DRAGON

MARKET INSIGHT

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The French economy narrowly avoided the bleak scenario of a recession at the end of 2023. After a negative third quarter, the growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to slightly increase by +0.1% for the fourth quarter. The Bank of France has revised its growth forecasts downward for the last quarter, initially expected to be between 0.1% and 0.2%, but it should remain very slightly positive, just avoiding a recession. Overall the Bank of France forecasts a growth of 0.9% for both 2023 and 2024, compared to the government's anticipated 1% and 1.4%.

Activity was maintained in the fourth quarter, notably thanks to the services sector. According to 8,500 business leaders surveyed at the end of 2023, activity increased in services in November and continued to grow in December. Management consulting for businesses, information services, and automobile repair, more in demand after the storms, all performed well, unlike advertising and temporary employment services. The floods and storms that hit France in November had a limited impact on economic activity. Businesses are still particularly counting on the holiday season, especially in the restaurant sector.

Industrial activity contracted in December after stagnating in November. The dynamism of the aerospace and pharmaceutical sectors was offset by declines in the automotive and information technology products sectors. A worrisome sign for future activity is that companies generally foresee a continued deterioration in their order books. However, regarding prices, the trend is towards "normalization," with more companies reducing their production prices than those increasing them.

If we specifically examine our industry, what is the assessment at the end of 2023? What is the sentiment and situation among retailers?

The year-end period is generally crucial for store revenue, but this year, it seems that customers were not very present. Ocean Gate, an iconic Surf Shop in Saint Pierre de Quiberon, Lionel Collin, the store's manager, confides, "At the end of 2023, we are generally down compared to 2022." He explains, "The calendar may not have been favourable with holiday dates, and the early November storm also did not help sales." Lionel says, "There were fewer transactions, leading to a general decrease of about 15% compared to 2022." If the situation is not very positive in Brittany, it is not much better in the Mediterranean. At Welcome Surf Shop in Hyères, a store established since 1988 with 6 year-round employees, Ingrid Granger, the store manager, notes, "While Black Friday has little influence in-store, it was less effective than last year online." She adds, "It seems that things are picking up a bit more in December; it should accelerate, as usual, in the last days before Christmas." Her outlook for the year is more measured: "We are quite satisfied; revenue continues to grow. We support our customers as much as possible, providing advice

before, during, and after the sale. We build customer loyalty, regardless of purchasing power; we always have solutions to get riders in the water." At Someride in Hossegor, Benjamin Blanchard observes, "We are fortunate to be in an attractive tourist area, so we are not doing too badly." He adds, "There is increasing disparity in our sector, with some looking for better prices, others looking for even lower prices, and the more affluent customers who does not look at prices at all." Benjamin notes, "However, we are seeing a significant increase in in-store theft despite security systems, perhaps due to consumers' increasingly tight purchasing power." At Pickle Skate shop, Teddy Blondeau, the store manager, confesses, "The end of the year is not great compared to last year. However, annual revenue is slightly up." Still in Hossegor, Sylvain GINER, manager of Hossegor Conspiracy Skateshop and Burton Outlet stores, reveals, "For this period, our sales are rather stable compared to last year, even without applying any particular discounts for Black Friday." He adds, "At Burton Outlet, we see a slight increase in November and a decrease in December. Whereas at Hossegor Conspiracy, there has been a continuous and increasing decline in the sale of Hardgoods for the past 2 years. We also observe a decrease in foot traffic, even though the sale of clothing is not doing too badly."

Regarding stock levels and market trends, the assessment is as follows. Ingrid from Welcome says, "Everything is fluid; one day there is too much stock, and the next day not enough. You have to adapt to the market quickly. Today, for example, there is too many neoprene suits on the market." At Ocean Gate, Lionel notes, "Our stock is still quite high, so we don't plan to replenish for now." A sentiment shared by Sylvain from Hossegor Conspiracy, "We have been overstocked in hardgoods for two years. We hardly order any equipment anymore." Teddy from Pickle Skateshop seems to agree, "The sale of equipment is really slow; we don't restock." A unanimous observation since Lionel from Ocean Step confirms, "Textiles are overtaking neoprene and equipment in 2023 and 2024 will likely see this trend continue." He adds, "Sales of equipment like surfboards are declining, and the season in Brittany with gloomy weather has not helped (rain, storms, few good surfing conditions)." Benjamin from Someride seems to confirm, "It is much easier for the consumer to find products compared to the last 2 years; we notice a slowdown in equipment sales, with our best sellers being textiles such as T-shirts, shoes, or waterproof jackets." Sylvain from Hossegor Conspiracy also tells us, "We hardly order any equipment. We have even reduced the hardgoods section in favour of textiles."

So, the end of 2023 seems mixed for equipment, with stocks slowly stabilizing. Textiles, which have suffered in recent years, seem to have turned the tide, allowing stores to have a rather decent 2023 despite a generally uncertain economic situation. Snow is starting to cover the Alps, and as we write these lines, the winter season is about to begin. The holiday season is often a time for a break and relaxation before the start of a 2024 that will undoubtedly bring new twists and turns.

BENOIT BRECCQ

PORTUGAL

SPAIN
UK
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SWISS

Portugal was shaken by a political earthquake in November when the prime minister resigned after he and people in his close circle were the target of a criminal investigation over suspicions of corruption in projects relating to the country's energy transition. The government's fall has put Portugal on stand-by mode with lots of projects and decisions waiting until new elections in March 2024, leaving the economy in a difficult situation. Even so, the state budget was approved. The OECD has reviewed downwards forecasts for the Portuguese economy indicating growth of 2.2% for this year, 1.2% for 2024 and 2% for 2025. Low business and household confidence, modest global growth and high uncertainty are holding back economic activity. The inflation rate has been falling over the last few months and now stands at 1.6% according to Statistics Portugal.

Overall retailers are complaining about poor sales mainly in hardgoods and shoes due to the crisis and a loss of purchasing power for consumers. Stores that have a good location for tourists are happier and more prepared to face the difficulties and are making some reorders. But even foreigners have a second thought and are more careful to buy only what they really need. Bigger stores are full of stock and some customers go there, check the product but then go online to find promotions. Smaller stores that have less stock play the cat and mouse game making reorders when needed. Hardgoods and shoes segments are giving headaches to almost everyone while apparel is doing better. A few brands are running promotions on their own websites and social media and retailers are angry with them cancelling or sending back orders in retaliation.

The Surfers Lab stores are geographically in different parts of the country (Peniche, Costa de Caparica and Sagres) but all have seen a drop in hardgoods sales. However, they also see positive signs. "Apparel and

SPAIN

UK
FRANCE
GERMANY
ITALY
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PORTUGAL

The global economic outlook is not a cheerful one as the year draws to a close. Growth has slowed down worldwide, with Europe getting the worst of it. Spain has averted recession and remains one of the driving forces of the Euro Zone economy. Yet, it is not immune to the deceleration trend. Spain's overall GDP growth for 2023 has been revised down from 2.1% to 1.6%. Inflation and the impact of rising interest rates keep household spending down. Boardsports shops have noticed this. "People's salaries are already quite stretched to pay for essential things, and I don't sell anything that is non-essential", explains Miki Parets from Shine Skate shop in Palma de Mallorca. The aftermath of the post-pandemic stock bubble does not help. "Every surf fan is properly kitted up already. They are only attracted to heavily discounted products", says Josina Zuazola, from FrusSurf Shop in Barakaldo. The snow scene is a bit different. In Spain, snowsports fans tend to have a high spending power. When they go to a resort, they are aware of the costs involved and are ready to spend. Boardsports remain popular, though. The pandemic-induced influx of newcomers has resulted in some retention. Maybe not the 10-20% experienced in other surges, but then this one was so colossal that any percentage of remainers is a high enough figure. Surf is steady business and SUP and skateboarding keep growing. Skateboarding, traditionally perceived as an urban activity, is now legitimised as an Olympic sport. In snowboarding, there was an expectation that backcountry disciplines would pick up. "There was a boost of backcountry riding during the pandemic that was very positive to create a mountain culture, similar to the one in other European mountains, but it hasn't

MARKET INSIGHT

accessories went slightly better than November 2022 and we ended the month as expected. In the Sagres store in particular there was a constant flow of tourists and since the waves were good this also created a positive impact on sales, pointed out retail manager, Maria João Amado. The business positioning and brand selection is key to having differentiation from the competition. "Surfers Lab's positioning has been that we prefer to have higher quality and less mass brands. Vissla, Salty Crew, Outerknown and Lost are doing very well in our stores. Technical product sales have fallen considerably compared to last year which is a direct consequence of the reduction in surfboards demand. "Apparel sales are in line with 2022 and results are positive. However, in wetsuits things are different. There is a huge stock at all brands across Europe and as consequence aggressive discounts are constant," she cautions.

Pipeline Surf Shop is one of the main core stores in the Algarve region. "We've changed the store location to a more central area in the city which attracts more tourists. The weather has been very good for business, the sea water registered high temperatures and we were all surfing with 3.2mm wetsuits until the end of October on the Algarve coast, but this was obviously bad for wetsuit sales", said the store owner, Bruno Pinto. About trends, they have noticed a comeback. "People are returning to wear baggy clothes again and I think that over-size is a trend that will continue in the near future. Bigger and clean apparel clothing with less branding have been popular with customers", he reveals.

Sales-wise the new Fall/Winter 24 collection was slow to take off and once again the weather had a direct impact since it was very hot until the end of October. "For this reason, also, it was one of the best years when it comes to selling t-shirts in our store. Black Friday shifted a lot of stock. Regarding technical material there was a colossal drop in sales but we are now starting to register a small improvement in surfboard sales.

NUNO PRINCIPE

really stayed", says Suso Rada from Frost Rice shop in Sierra Nevada. Traditionally, Spanish snowboarding has been quite focused on freestyle, so this was a welcome expansion. There are other observable trends, though, such as an increased interest in boarder ross and a comeback of carving. Sales haven't been as good in 2023 as in previous years, but steady enough to throw a positive overall result. Good management of stock and purchase planning have contributed to this. Online platforms are a tough competitor for brick-and-mortar stores, but specialised shops remain important to skaters, surfers and snowboarders. "There is still a lot of people seeking the experience, not only the product", says Suso. Miki shares the same view: "For hardware, consumers prefer a store where they can get the full service. We have become a social club". However, the climate of extreme online discounts is visibly influencing the industry. A seasonal sport like snowboarding is forced to clear stock over the summer, instead of waiting to sell it next season at a reasonably discounted price. Shops now attend outlet fairs in which they drop prices way below what is healthy for their business. It does not make much sense as a business model, but the driving philosophy is that what they don't clear, a big online platform will. There is a consensus about good margins being the best form of support a brand can offer. They give the shop oxygen to invest in local activities that promote the product and the sport. To achieve this, brands must refrain from competing with their retailers with heavily discounted products on their D2C platforms. They must also regulate prices on other big online platforms, so specialised stores are not out competed. As Josina from FrusSurf sums up: "We all win when a specialised store sells a brand".

ROCIO ENRIQUEZ

ITALY

SWISS
PORTUGAL
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The economic situation is seeing some improvements as inflation is lower than in previous months and interest rates seemingly will not rise, but rather take a very small downturn, as some bank institutions seem to anticipate what the ECB will communicate sooner rather than later.

Christmas shopping is in full swing and a study from Italy's Confindustria reveals some interesting stats. The percentage of Italians who give gifts rose from 72.7% to 73.2% which means more gifts are going to be purchased nationwide. Also interestingly the most gifted products are food and wine followed by toys, beauty products, clothing / shoes and books. Gift cards and subscriptions for streaming platforms are the most purchased gifts online. The average Italian spends €186 for Christmas gifts, in 2022 it was €157, this shows how important Christmas is.

The cold weather for sure helped the boardsport business to generate turnover but reduced spending power is still a problem and many have little spare money to spend to their beloved hobby as costs for renting, gas, electricity etc. have increased a lot over the last years. But luckily the Christmas period is always guaranteed to produce decent turnover, which gives some welcome relief for store owners. Ski resorts are seeing a good start even if ticket prices have risen, which is a very good sign.

Something you do notice is that it's easy to save money on hardgoods and outerwear this year as many sale offerings have begun much earlier as stores and brands really need to clear inventory. People may have less money but the sale offerings are bigger than ever. This concerns not only the winter boardsport business but also the skate and surf business where stock levels are still very high and where most industry experts

MARKET INSIGHT

agree stock levels will still be a problem in the first two quarters of 2024, especially for skate and surf hardware (including wetsuits). The good numbers of the Corona pandemic times are far away and distributors need to buy less to lower their inventory levels.

Pre-order season for SS25 is already in full swing but when talking to small store owners they wish back the old pre-order windows, as pre-ordering so early and before the sales season officially starts makes it hard to buy, as they have less data available and need to take more risk to get the right goods in store.

Trends which I can report is for sure a return of bulky shoes paired with baggy jeans and box fit tees. Outerwear-wise it's less bright colours and also more comfortable fits. Outdoor brands are still in high demand as are smaller brands and a clear identity from the brands is an imperative for the new generation of customers.

Small store owners are trying to avoid over-distributed brands and offer smaller brands in order to differentiate themselves from the chain stores and create their own niche. The trend of limited coloured sneakers is still a big thing for Gen Z, with Adidas having made a good comeback starting from Q2 this year whilst Nike / Jordan are still in very high demand. New Balance is also still very strong but with a slightly older target group. Overall, skate shoe brands are still in a difficult business environment with Vans still ruling the category.

2023 stands for more downs than ups, with a difficult market situation not only for stores but also for brands and manufacturers. The positive sign is that most business insiders agree that by the latest Q3/24 we will see a very positive upshift towards a better economic outlook and a growth in turnover overall.

FRANZ JOSEF HOLLER

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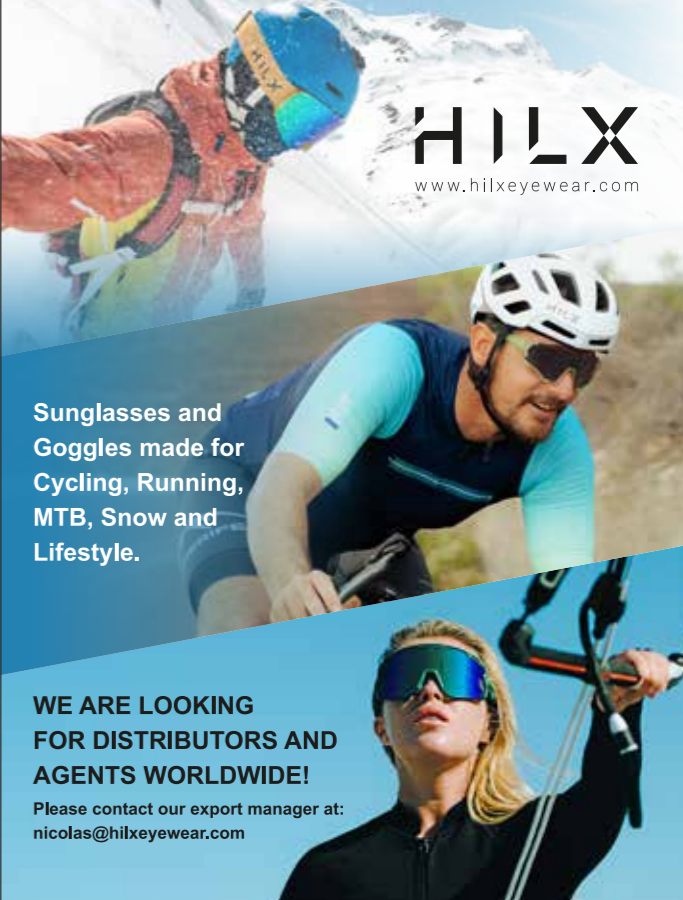
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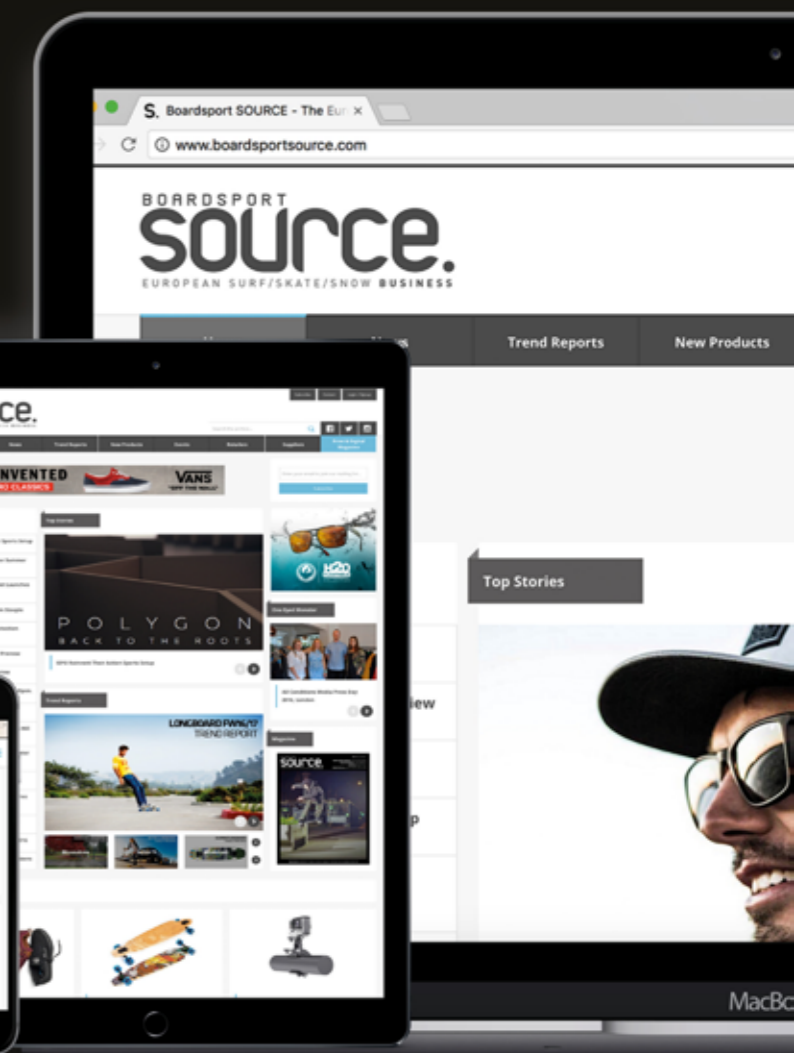
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EVENTS #119

surf/kite snow street/outdoor SUP

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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	WHO'S NEXT	Paris, France 20 - 22 January	whosnext.com
paddle	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	Baquiera Beret, Spain 27 January - 1 February	freerideworldtour.com
snow	BASECAMP	Folgaria (TN) 29 - 30 January	thepillagency.com
snow	SPORT ACHAT	Grenoble, France 29 - 31 January	sport-achat.com
surf	LEXUS PIPE PRO	Hawaii, USA 29 January - 10 February	worldsurfleague.com
snow	ORDINO ARCALÍS PRO	Ordino Arcalís, Andorra 1 - 7 February	freerideworldtour.com
snow	MAMMOTH	Mammoth USA 2 - 3 February	fis-ski.com/en/snowboard
snow	CALGARY	Calgary Canada 10 - 11 February	fis-ski.com/en/snowboard
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
surf	MEO PRO PORTUGAL	Peniche, Portugal 6 - 12 March	worldsurfleague.com
snow	FIEBERBRUNN PRO	Fieberbrunn, Austria 12 - 18 March	freerideworldtour.com
mats	PERFORMANCE DAYS	Munich Germany 20 - 21 March	performancedays.com
snow	SILVAPLANA	Silvaplana Switzerland 3 March	fis-ski.com/en/snowboard
snow	VERBIER XTREME	Verbier, Switzerland 23 - 31 March	freerideworldtour.com
surf	RIP CURL PRO BELLS BEACH	Bells Beach Australia 29 March - 5 April	worldsurfleague.com
surf	MARGARET RIVER PRO	Margaret River Australia 11 - 21 April	worldsurfleague.com
surf	GOLD COAST PRO	Gold Coast Australia 27 April - 4 May	worldsurfleague.com
surf	GWM SYDNEY SURF PRO	Sydney Australia 9 - 16 May	worldsurfleague.com
surf	SHISEIDO TAHITI PRO	Tahiti 22 - 31 May	worldsurfleague.com
outdoor	OUTDOOR BY ISPO	MOC Munich, Germany 3 - 5 June	ispo.com/en/outdoor
surf	SURF CITY EL SALVADOR PRO	Punta Roca El Salvador 6 - 15 June	worldsurfleague.com
street	PITTI IMMAGINE UOMO	Florence, Italy 11 - 14 June	uomo.pittimmagine
outdoor	OUTDOOR RETAILER	Salt Lake City, USA 17 - 19 June	outdoorretailer.com
outdoor	OTS	Liverpool UK 18 - 20 June	outdoortradeshows.com
surf	VIVO RIO PRO	Rio de Janeiro Brazil 22 - 30 June	worldsurfleague.com
surf	BALLITO PRO	Ballito South Africa 1 - 8 July	worldsurfleague.com
mats	FUNCTIONAL FABRIC FAIR	New York, USA 16 - 17 July	performancedays.com
outdoor	NEXT SUMMER	Grenoble, France 9 - 10 Sept	sportair.fr



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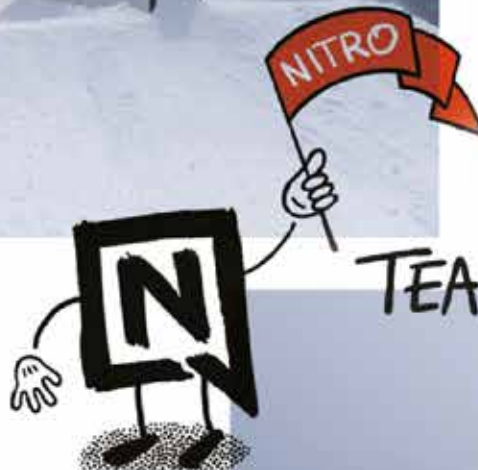
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