

BOARDSPORT

#91 APRIL/MAY 2018 €5

# source.

EUROPEAN SURF/SKATE/SNOW BUSINESS

**BIG WIG:** DEREK O'NEILL, VISSLA

**RETAILER PROFILE:** NORTH & SOUTH EUROPE

**REGIONAL MARKET** INSIGHT

**BRAND PROFILES & TRADE** SHOW REVIEWS & PICS



**TREND REPORTS:** SURFBOARDS, LONGBOARDS, SUNGLASSES, SUP, UNDERWEAR, WAKEBOARDING VESTS



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## HELLO #91

It's with a heavy heart we say goodbye to an industry leader of ours, Boardriders CEO Pierre Agnes, who was declared lost at sea off the coast of his hometown Capbreton, France after not coming home from an early morning fishing trip. Agnes had been with Quiksilver for over 30 years and was pivotal in creating the Boardriders retail concept and driving the business forward over the last decade.

With the tragic passing of Agnes, Boardriders' newly appointed CEO, Dave Tanner was immediately tasked with steering the ship through uncharted waters as Boardriders looked to acquire long-time rivals, Billabong in a move that sparked huge interest as endemic and mainstream media clamoured to dissect the potential merger of surfing's two most high profile entities. Billabong's shareholders voted in favour of the acquisition at a price of \$1.05 per share and on April 9, 2018 Billabong officially stopped trading on the Australian Securities Exchange and its brands including Billabong, RVCA, Element, VonZipper and Xcel merged with Boardriders' Quiksilver, Roxy and DC Shoes.

For this issue's Big Wig interview, we feature Vissla's EMEA boss Derek O'Neill who, similarly to Agnes started out in the surf industry in the late 80s. Agnes with Quiksilver and O'Neill with Billabong, both served as CEOs of their respective companies and helped to shape the surf industry as we know it. In 2013 Derek left Billabong to start up Vissla, and even

with the planning and strategizing he and Vissla owner Paul Naude set in place, there was no way they could have predicted the impact Vissla would have on the market. Vissla set out with modest targets and a policy of slow and organic growth, not chasing huge gains, ensuring distribution channels were clean, stock monitored and huge discounts avoided. Set against a background of fast fashion and a race to the bottom in online and high street apparel retail they have injected a fantastic freshness into the surf industry.

Spring has well and truly sprung as an early summer heat wave batters Europe in mid-April, spelling an early slew of beach goers in search of fresh SS18 product. This issue's regional market insight articles make for interesting reading, as our men on the ground across Europe reflect on the best winter for snowfall in recent times. We touch base with surfboard manufacturers to see what they're tipping for success this summer and also check in with trends from longboarding, sunglasses and underwear through to SUP and wakeboarding vests.

We hope you enjoy flicking through the world's only printed b2b boardsports magazine, proven to help counter screen fatigue!

**Always Sideways**  
Harry Mitchell Thompson  
Editor

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**On the cover:** Tignes Spirit shop rider Gavin Leakey shredding a snowy Hossegor this winter. Photo @zenfilmworks

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## BOARDRIDERS CEO PIERRE AGNES DECLARED MISSING AT SEA

Pierre Agnes, the CEO of Boardriders Inc (Formerly Known As Quiksilver Inc) has been declared missing at sea after not returning from an early morning fishing trip on January 30, 2018. Agnes left his home town port, Capbreton harbour at around 7:30am, something the 54-year-old Frenchman did on a regular basis, but due to thick fog, Mr Agnes delayed his return to shore and sent a message to the local coastguard explaining so. His vessel washed up two miles north of Capbreton, in Hossegor later that morning without Agnes aboard.

Agnes served as CEO of Quiksilver since March 2015 (Quiksilver changed its company name to Boardriders Inc March, 2017) and previous to this served as President of Quiksilver Europe for nine years. Mr Agnes started working for Quiksilver 30 years ago in 1988 and in 1992 went on to found Omareef, which became the European licensee for Quiksilver wetsuits. The jewel in Agnes' crown are the Boardriders franchise stores (Quiksilver, Roxy & DC) that span the globe and have broken retail boundaries, providing a holistic branded experience with on-site café and intuitively merchandised products. The company hosted several paddle-out memorials across the world to celebrate Pierre's life and his many accomplishments. Our deepest sympathies are with his family.

## BILLABONG SHAREHOLDERS VOTE IN FAVOUR OF BOARDRIDERS TAKEOVER

85.87% of Billabong shareholders have voted in favour of the acquisition proposed by Boardriders Inc, home to Quiksilver, DC & Roxy. Boardriders upped their offer from \$1 per share to \$1.05 last minute before the vote was cast at the 'Scheme Meeting' held March 28 in Burleigh Heads, Australia acting as means to persuade those undecided voters. Boardriders are controlled by funds under the management of Oaktree Capital Management and Oaktree are also one of Billabong's two senior lenders. Previous to the transaction Oaktree held 19.3% of Billabong's shares. Boardriders acquired all shares not already owned by Oaktree Capital and as of Monday April 9 Billabong's shares are no longer traded on the Australian Securities Exchange.

## MELON OPTICS BRINGS ON PAT NEENAN AT AMPSPORT FOR UK SALES

Melon Optics have appointed sales agent Pat Neenan of Ampsport to handle their wholesale market in the UK. Pat has over 15 years experience in the industry and currently represents brands such as O'Neill wetsuits and Bern Helmets in the UK.

## GRAYSTONE MANCHESTER TO BUILD BRITAIN'S FIRST REDUCED RISK ACTION SPORTS ACADEMY

Slated for open in Autumn of this year, Graystone Action Sports Academy Manchester will be the first reduced risk action sports park in the UK and they've started a Crowdfunder to help their final push. With features including a skate plaza, trampolines, ramps, foam pits, sprung floor area, half pipe, parkour terrain, digital media studios, classroom, dance studio, climbing wall and a big air to foam pit, the complex is supported by GB Park and Pipe, Great Britain's freestyle ski and snowboard setup that produced two bronze medals at the recent Winter Olympic Games. With skateboarding and surfing introduced to the Olympics for 2020, the Graystone facility looks to nurture talent from grass roots to elite level as the flirtation between action sports and the mainstream continues to evolve.

## WORLD SURF LEAGUE LAUNCHES NEW INNOVATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS FOR 2018 TOUR

The World Surf League announced a number of new innovations, partnerships and distribution channels at the launch of the 2018 Championship Tour season. "Our team worked hard in the off-season with the common goal of continuing to build surfing's visibility," said Sophie Goldschmidt, WSL CEO. A partnership with Facebook will allow live broadcasting for top events and give fans enhanced access to the world of surfing and the WSL has also promised a slew of new partnership announcements, yet to be announced at the time of going to print.

## MAYOR OF LONDON ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTHBANK CENTRE

Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has awarded Long Live Southbank and Southbank Centre a community growth and development grant of £700k to develop the Queen Elizabeth Hall Undercroft as an extended skate space and inclusive new children and young people's creative education centre.

## MICK FANNING RETIRES AT RIP CURL BELL'S BEACH PRO 2018

Mick Fanning retired from the Championship Tour at the Rip Curl Bell's Beach Pro event. The 36-year-old is a three-time World Champ and draws a close to his 16 year competitive surfing career.

## REVOLWE WELCOMES TIM LATTE TO THE TEAM AS DIGITAL MARKETER, SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER & BRAND AMBASSADOR

Surf accessories brand Revolwe have added Swedish pro surfer Tim Latte to the team in a multi-faceted role as Digital Marketer, Social Media Manager & Brand Ambassador.

## WSL ANNOUNCES FIRST EVENT OPEN TO PUBLIC AT KELLY SLATER WAVE CO, CALIFORNIA

The specialty event will be the first public event at the world-famous Surf Ranch facility in Lemoore, California and will be held from May 5 - 6, 2018. A first for the world's best surfers, the continental co-ed team event will see a cross-section of the world's best surfers battling it out in front of the public at the world's most high-performance man-made wave. Surfers include: Mick Fanning, Steph Gimore, John John Florence, Kelly Slater, Matt Wilkinson, Jordy Smith, Jeremy Flores, Julian Wilson, Tyler Wright, Felipe Toldeo, Gabriel Medina and more.

## ANNUAL WSF GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO TAKE PLACE IN OSLO IN MAY

Oslo, Norway will play host to the annual World Snowboarding Federation (WSF) General Assembly in 2018 which will take place from 21-23 May. The General Assembly (GA) is the supreme body of the WSF. The WSF General Assembly elects the eight member of the Executive Board every two years that oversees activities between General Assemblies.

## FINISTERRE BECOME THE FIRST EUROPEAN SURF BRAND TO BE B-CORP CERTIFIED

Finisterre have become the first European surf brand to be B-Corp certified, thanks to their continuing efforts to maintain a sustainable

business. To become B-Corp certified the business must exhibit a moral and legal commitment to protecting the environment through all aspects of their operations.

## BRIGHT TRADE SHOW DIRECTORS MARCO ASLIM AND THOMAS MARTINI STEP DOWN AFTER 13 YEARS

Former CEO turned Director of BRIGHT, Thomas Martini, and fellow Director Marco Aslim have announced that they are stepping down from their roles at the trade show after 13 years. The most recent 26th edition of the tradeshow was the last to run at the current format with a new conceptual direction set for the event which seeks to maintain BRIGHT's essence but with changes to suit the current needs of the contemporary street and urban market.

## WSL DENIED PERMISSION TO HOST 2019 SEASON OPENER AT PIPELINE, HAWAII

The WSL has been denied permission to host its proposed 2019 season opener at Pipeline by the City and County of Honolulu Dept of Parks & Recreation. The WSL created a new-look tour schedule for 2018 with the addition of Keramas, Bali and the Surf Ranch, California to the schedule and for 2019 the plan was to kick off the season at Pipeline, just weeks after closing the 2018 season at the world famous Hawaiian break. However, the City & Council of Honolulu have not granted permission to host the 2019 season opener there because the WSL didn't submit their paperwork in time. Mayor Kirk Caldwell met with the WSL and admitted the need to change the way in which they assess permits and WSL CEO Sophie Goldschmidt said, "We are disappointed we will not be able to run the 2019 Billabong Pipe Masters. However, we are pleased that the Mayor recognizes that fundamental changes are required to the permit process that will benefit Hawaiian surfing, the surfers, the community and other stakeholders."

Scheduled events in Hawaii for the 18/19 season:

HIC PRO - Sunset Beach - Oct. 27 - Nov. 9, 2018

HAWAIIAN PRO - Haleiwa - Nov. 12-24, 2018

VANS WORLD CUP OF SURFING - Sunset - Nov. 25 - Dec. 6, 2018

BILLABONG PIPE MASTERS - Ehukai - Dec. 8-20, 2018

SUNSET OPEN - Sunset Beach - Jan. 18-28, 2019

VOLCOM PIPE PRO - Ehukai - Jan 29 - Feb. 10, 2019

## 7-NATION WELCOMES ANDREW STEEL TO THE TEAM AS INTERNATIONAL SALES DIRECTOR

UK-based, Andrew Steel has been appointed as the new International Sales Director at board sports company 7-Nation. 7-Nation is a company run by outdoor enthusiasts who use their passion, knowledge and experience to create innovative equipment for a range of water sports. 7-Nation operates Slingshot Sports, Ride Engine and Moonshine MFG and is headquartered in the adventure-sports mecca of Hood River, Oregon, however, Andrew Steel will continue to operate from his base in the UK. Andrew most recently served as International Sales and Brand Management with Bern Unlimited and Ultra Sports Europe

## OUTDOOR TRADE SHOW TO LEAVE FRIEDRICHSHAFEN VENUE FOR MUNICH IN 2019

The European Outdoor Group (EOG) have voted with a majority to hold

the OutDoor trade show in Munich as of 2019 marking a new chapter for the event after previously being held in Friedrichshafen. For over two decades, the OutDoor trade show has offered a comprehensive overview of the market, bringing together outdoor specialists from manufacturing, retail and the media from all over the globe.

## PRITAMO AHRENDT APPOINTED AS WSL HEAD JUDGE

Having been on the judging panel of the Championship Tour since 1999, Pritamo Ahrendt will now move into the role of WSL Head Judge with immediate effect. Ahrendt will take over the position that was previously held by Rich Porta who is moving into a new role in within the Commissioners' Office of the WSL.

## PATAGONIA OPENS NEW STORE IN CENTRAL MANCHESTER, ENGLAND

Patagonia have unveiled their new store in the central retail district of Manchester. Giving each physical store a unique aesthetic and customer experience, the new store in Manchester features map murals on the walls from local areas of interest and reclaimed wood and lighting features from old factories in and around the city.

## BOARDRIDERS ANNOUNCES CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP

Following the disappearance of Pierre Agnes, Boardriders has announced a reshuffle of their leadership team. Dave Tanner will assume the roles and responsibilities of Chief Executive Officer effective immediately. Tanner was previously serving as Chief Turnaround Officer and was scheduled to become CEO of Boardriders once the Billabong acquisition completes later on this year. Thomas Chambolle, current Global Chief Financial Officer, will assume the additional responsibilities of Interim President of EMEA effective immediately. Greg Healy remains Global President and President of APAC.

## MONS ROYAL OPEN NEW EUROPEAN HQ IN INNSBRUCK, AUSTRIA AND APPOINT NEW EUROPEAN SALES & MARKETING DIRECTOR

Mons Royale, behemoths in the Merino wool category have announced that they will be opening a new HQ in one of the hubs of snowboarding in Europe; Innsbruck, Austria. In a busy time for the brand, they have also announced that Holger Blomeier is to be appointed European Sales & Marketing Director.

## THE INTERNATIONAL SURFING ASSOCIATION AND WORLD SURF LEAGUE REACH OLYMPIC QUALIFICATION DECISION

The International Surfing Association (ISA) and the World Surf League (WSL) have reached a landmark agreed process to ensure participation of top WSL professional surfers in the upcoming 2020 Olympics in Japan. The final qualification process is still subject to approval by the International Olympic committee. The agreement will see up to 18 of the 40 places at the Games reserved for WSL Championship Tour (CT) surfers (10 men and eight women), with the remaining 22 places determined at the 2019 and 2020 ISA World Surfing Games, the 2019 Pan American Games in Lima, and a single slot (each for men and women) for the host nation (Japan).



**BULLET 9'6"**  
L: 9'6" / W: 33" / T: 5"  
Volume 235L

**ARI'I NUI**  
MAE - YOGA SESSION - HOSSEGOR



**ISPO, MUNICH, GERMANY JANUARY 28-31, 2018**

ISPO Munich 2018 saw 2,801 companies exhibiting to over 84,000 visitors from 120 countries, making ISPO officially the world's largest sporting goods trade show, proving once again why the show will always remain an attraction for boardsports companies and retailers from around the globe. It enhanced its international character once again with the largest visitor growth coming from Austria, Japan, Turkey, the Czech Republic, Great Britain and the United States.

Across the show, hall formats have been altered to enable central aisles to be built to create a focus in visitor traffic flows and the ski and snowboard halls had been replaced by snowsports halls that were moved to a more central location. The snowboard brands were no longer congregated all together in one block and were instead dissipated throughout B4 and A4 and with some crossover brands such as Holden venturing as far west as B2. Holden no longer define themselves as a purely snowboarding brand, but a premium brand for winter sports and company Founder, Mikey Leblanc was pleased with their decision to up sticks as they picked up lots of good, different footfall.

As for the snowboard brands in hall B4, everyone asked was pleased with the show, commenting on the higher levels of traffic, particularly on days one and two. The mix of ski and snowboard brands created good energy and atmosphere and the ISPO 'easy format' enabled smaller snowboard brands to show themselves. Rasmus Ostergaard ran the Welcome to Snowsports platform in the middle of B4, and it served as a hub for the ski and snowboard community, with many meetings and informal chats taking place across the four days. Rasmus pulled together key snowsports product highlights to illustrate current trends and used information from retailers Zero G, Burnside, Black Sheep and On The Mountain and resorts and events to highlight best practice.

The new hall concept was well received. Thomas Delago, the Managing Director of Nitro Snowboards, commented: "The new concept with the central aisle created a feeling of openness. We were able to reach retailers who are not so heavily involved in the snowboard business as a result. Products were not just simply displayed here. They were placed on

centre stage, and trends were showcased." Delago said his goal was to increasingly motivate and excite retailers.

The skate brands congregated in hall A5 and although the Longboard Embassy was smaller than in recent years, it was notable just how many motorized longboard brands are now on the market. Skate heavyweights Shiner, Stateside and HLC all setup shop in A5 next to the static pump wave, which was frequented by the rising number of surf style carving boards with pivoting front truck.

Other platforms at the show included the CSR Hub and Sustainability Kiosk in Hall A3 run by Greenroom Voice and Brands for Good and with sustainability now more than just a trend the subject was also part of the ISPO Awards as Brand New, the world's largest competition for sports start-ups, celebrated its 30th Anniversary.

Another focal point for the show was the increasing digitalization of the sporting goods industry that was explored in ISPO Digitize in Hall A4. Representatives of sports retailing and the sporting goods industry had an opportunity to learn about digital solutions in product development, manufacturing, marketing and sales. With the help of the Digital Readiness Check, they could see just how fit their own business is. ISPO Digitize is now to be launched as a stand alone event on June 28-29, 2018, at the ICM in Munich.

At the same time across Munich, ISPO launched Munich Sports Week 2018, its first consumer event. This consisted of a whole raft of activities involving consumer, athletes and retailers turning Munich's city centre into an adventure area. For 2019 ISPO will expand with two additional halls C5 and C6 bringing the total number of halls to 18. All in all there was a lot of positivity at this year's ISPO and we anticipate seeing a stronger snowboard turnout at ISPO 2019. The next ISPO Munich will be held from February 3-6, 2019

[www.ispo.com](http://www.ispo.com)

**SLIDE, TELFORD, UK, JANUARY 23-25, 2018**

With just shy of 100 exhibitors showing more than 200 different brands, Slide in Telford (England) played host to Europe's first showing of 18/19 product under one roof in a trade show environment. Slide is described by many exhibitors and retailers as a "productive trade show," with most sales agents/distributors in back-to-back meetings over the three days. This winter has instilled confidence in the public, who invested in new kit and apparel for the winter. As a result, stores had a good season and came to Slide ready to do business, confident in their buying decisions. Many brands have also been able to keep prices flat for next year's orders, much to delight of retailers. Most UK agents and distributors now use Slide as the opportunity to see as many retailers as possible and Slide's importance is on the rise. Though visitor numbers were stable, but could always be

higher, both specialist retailers and exhibitors at Slide maintain that the show is vital to the UK industry. Tuesday night saw beer and potato wedges consumed while watching Red Bull's "Same Difference" movie, while Slide Award winners were announced at the SIGB AGM on the Wednesday evening. Winners for 2018 were Salomon's S/Lab Shift Hybrid ski binding for hardware, Patagonia's Micro Puff Hoody for apparel and Bolle's Nevada Goggle for Accessories and the Fresh Brand Category went to Nikwax for its aptly named BaseFresh® product. The SIGB (Snowsport Industries of Great Britain) has committed to return to Telford for its annual tradeshow for the next three years, with the dates for 2019 being 22-24 January.

[www.slideuk.co.uk](http://www.slideuk.co.uk)



## BRIGHT, BERLIN, GERMANY, JANUARY 16-18, 2018

This January's edition of Bright was a step forward to a better skate/street focused show and felt like a return to what the show traditionally stands for. The middle of the hall was dominated by a skateable area, which saw a return of the action and vibe and many of the booths had skateboards on their walls, like they used too, as Bright attracted more skateboarding brands than in the past few years.

The standardised booth design of matte black with logos and simple graphics with racking brought a real back-to-the-roots feel. Rather than trying to become similar to SEEK the show has really differentiated itself. Hopefully this new approach will bring more skate and street brands back for the summer. In the urban segment the shift from fashion influenced streetwear towards skate influenced streetwear was pronounced, while the Outdoor Aesthetics segment continued to be a draw for retailers looking for a different angle. Skateism hosted Skate Border, an exhibition in which international skate artists displayed work on the subject of boundary breaking and diversity. On the Turbokolor stand Swanski could be found painting as well as hosting an exhibition of his work. Additionally, Cleptomanicx launched their new magazine during the show with a special exhibition. The introduction of a ceiling heating system using textile tubes ensured exhibitors and visitors alike kept warm whatever the conditions outside. Visitors moved seamlessly between Bright and SEEK via the exterior tunnels, with many hanging around the skateable area to watch the program of events such as Element's Wallride contest.

## SPORT-ACHAT WINTER, LYON, FRANCE, MARCH 12-14, 2018

Sport-Achat was held in Lyon at Euroexpo and is designed to work alongside Sport Air's other business-to-business events ASAP (the apparel specific event held in Annecy) and Snow Avant Premiere (the snowboard hardgoods on snow demo test). After attending these earlier events retailers went to Sport-Achat, the linchpin of the French winter sport trade calendar, to finalize their orders. This year 3300 visitors from 1425 stores from all over France, Switzerland, Andorra and Belgium attended the show where 571 brands, 149 of them new, exhibited across the 20,000 m2 space. The show is divided into four categories: Ski, Snow, Outdoor and Sportswear with the 'Crème Fraiche' and new this year, Made in France and International Awards specialist areas. The Crème Fraiche' space for new brands saw six companies exhibiting including Easy snowboards, Giga Glide with their revolutionary 100% ecological permanent wax and Binocle Eyewear, a brand of unbreakable and customisable sunglasses with polarised lenses. Whilst in the newly launched Made in France area brands such as Galuceb, with their 100% woollen Arles merino line for

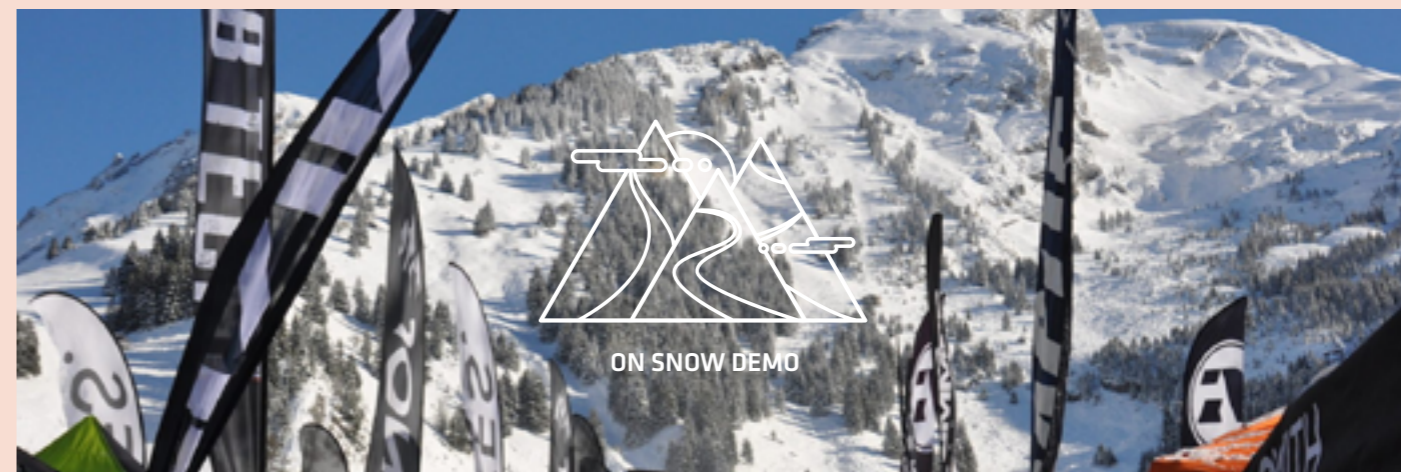
The Bright European Skate Awards moved to a new venue, Festsaal Kreuzberg, just around the corner from the show with new sponsor SkateDeluxe. As always the raucous audience were kept well entertained. This time by compere Gary Rogers, flown from the good old USA. Winners of The Bright European Skate Awards were Oski Rozenberg: Skateboarder of the Year, Sarah Meurle: female Skateboarder of the Year, Mike Arnold: Rookie of the Year, Palace: Brand of the Year, Arrow & Beast: Shop of the Year, Place: Media of the year, Danny Sommerfeld: Photographer of the Year, Jacob Harris: Videographer of the Year, Atlantic Drift: Video of the Year, KF3Hunna: Instagram of the Year, Oski Rozenberg with Elite Squad: Videopart of the Year and Copenhagen Skatepark for Lifetime Achievement.

Last but not least is the recent news that co-founders of the show, Thomas Martini, and Marco Aslim will be leaving after 13 years. We wish them every success in their next ventures. They developed the show from its small beginnings 13 years ago in the former Frankfurt police headquarters, then five years later moved to the former Stasi congress in Berlin and then onto its current location next to the SEEK Show, whose owners then bought Bright. Over this time Bright has established itself as the premier skate industry trade show in Europe and a key destination for streetwear buyers. For this summer edition we wait to hear the details but we have been told it will be business as usual. Next show is July 3-5th July.

[www.brighttradeshow.com](http://www.brighttradeshow.com)

men, Couleur Tong leather flip flops and the sock brand Berthe aux Grands Pieds all exhibited. The Espace Winter Award area at the entrance to the show saw 50 award winning products on display including Capita, Head, POC, Giro and Sweet Protection. Sportair's, Mathieu Kurtz, the show organiser commented: "The atmosphere was very conducive to business. A good snow season helped discussions. Business prospects have been good so far, and the season is not over." This year more urban exhibitors were attracted to the show with Kipling, Geox, Freeman T. Porter, Levi's and Redskins all present. During the show SPORTAIR held conference seminars on a number of subjects including employment in the sports sector, how to promote the development of outdoor sport while preserving the environment' and presentations on the Crème Fraiche brands and the Made in France brands. The dates for Sport-Achat summer are September 10-11.

[www.sport-achat.com](http://www.sport-achat.com)



## SNOW AVANT-PREMIÈRE, LA CLUSAZ, FRANCE, JANUARY 14-16, 2018

The European snowboard industry was given its first chance to see the 18/19 snowboard offering all in one place and on snow at the Snow Avant Premiere in La Clusaz, France from January 14-16, 2018. Fantastic early season conditions buoyed the industry and both retailers and brands alike were on good form. Both French and British retailers reported growth from last season, and in some cases mid-20% year-on-year so far.

The demo is divided into two parts, the outdoor popup village where the exhibiting brands have everything you want to test on snow, and the 450m2 showroom tent in which visitors found not only soft goods, boots and accessories brands but also an exhibition wall with the highlights from all the snowboard brands as well. This year saw a record number of tests with 3748 products tested, a 12% increase compared with 2017. The biggest test day ever conducted in 17 years was on Monday 15 January, with 1564 snowboard tests. 41 brands were present and 780 people visited from 308 stores. An attendance rate up 4% compared with last year. All good numbers, despite the bad weather on Tuesday, which slowed down the arrival of stores from surrounding resorts. In addition to French retailers from all over the country, the influx of English, Swiss and Belgian stores grew. For Mathieu Kurtz, in charge of Snow Avant Premiere, "this was a great edition with this snowy winter, business is more relaxed and minds are freer. The business atmosphere was nothing like the gloomy mood of the past two winters."

New for this season, Sportair launched a rental corner, where retailers were able to discover the different systems offered for rental, the idea being to highlight rental products which are often hidden in favour of top of the range products, even though they have a growing share of the market. For the first time Snow Avant Premiere welcomed two ingredient brands: the Boa lacing system and 37.5 technology. Other newcomers included Horsefeathers outerwear, Melon eyewear and Plum bindings. The Sportair Android and IOS app worked seamlessly with the simple data recording system based at the entrance to the outdoor tent park enabling all visitors to have a record of all their tests.

In the tent a bar was open all day and a hot lunch was available for free in the main tent for all the ravenous attendees. On the Sunday and Monday at the end of the test, the organisers offered an aperitif. On the Monday, this was done in partnership with Nitro, which screened its movie 28 winters narrated by Tommy Delago, the Co-founder of the brand.

Shops also took the opportunity to visit ASAP, Sportair's softgoods show with 48 outerwear brands, which was held in Annecy over the same time in brand stores and an ASAP specific showroom and was rounded off with an early evening fashion show and the launch of the Outdoor Retailer Awards at the Imperial Palace. Next year's dates are yet to be confirmed at time of going to press.

[www.sportair.fr](http://www.sportair.fr)

## SHOPS 1ST TRY, SKI JUWEL ALPBACHTAL-WILDSCHÖNAU AUSTRIA, 22-24 JANUARY 2018

This year's Shops 1st Try on-snow demo was blessed with a first day made of dreams, as seriously deep powder welcomed 89 brands and over 200 retailers to the Alpbach event. There wasn't a powder board left in the village on the first day as everyone got down to the serious job of testing the most ideal kit for the conditions. The first evening's exhibition dinner saw everybody recounting their awesome day against the backdrop of stands from all the brands at the test. The next day retailers were again out in force and had the opportunity to try other board types as the weather turned to rain for part of the day. The second dinner was as busy as the first with everyone appreciating the mellow business vibe. Day three and the sun appeared and added to the positivity emanating from the test village. All in all the best Shops 1st Try yet.

This year's edition really demonstrated how important this event is in the calendar with many industry people and distributors coming for meetings and to catch up with colleagues. The spacious test compound contained 64 brands offering products to test across Alpbachtal's wide and varied terrain and another additional 25 brands were only exhibiting inside, making a record 89 brands in total. In The Microbrand tent, a number of the newest brands in snowboarding each had a table providing a cost effective way of introducing them to the event. Brands in the tent included Melon, Buddy Buddy, Sandy Shapes, Woo, Plum and Borealis. And Reichmann snowboard service equipment was on site keeping boards freshly waxed and sharpened.

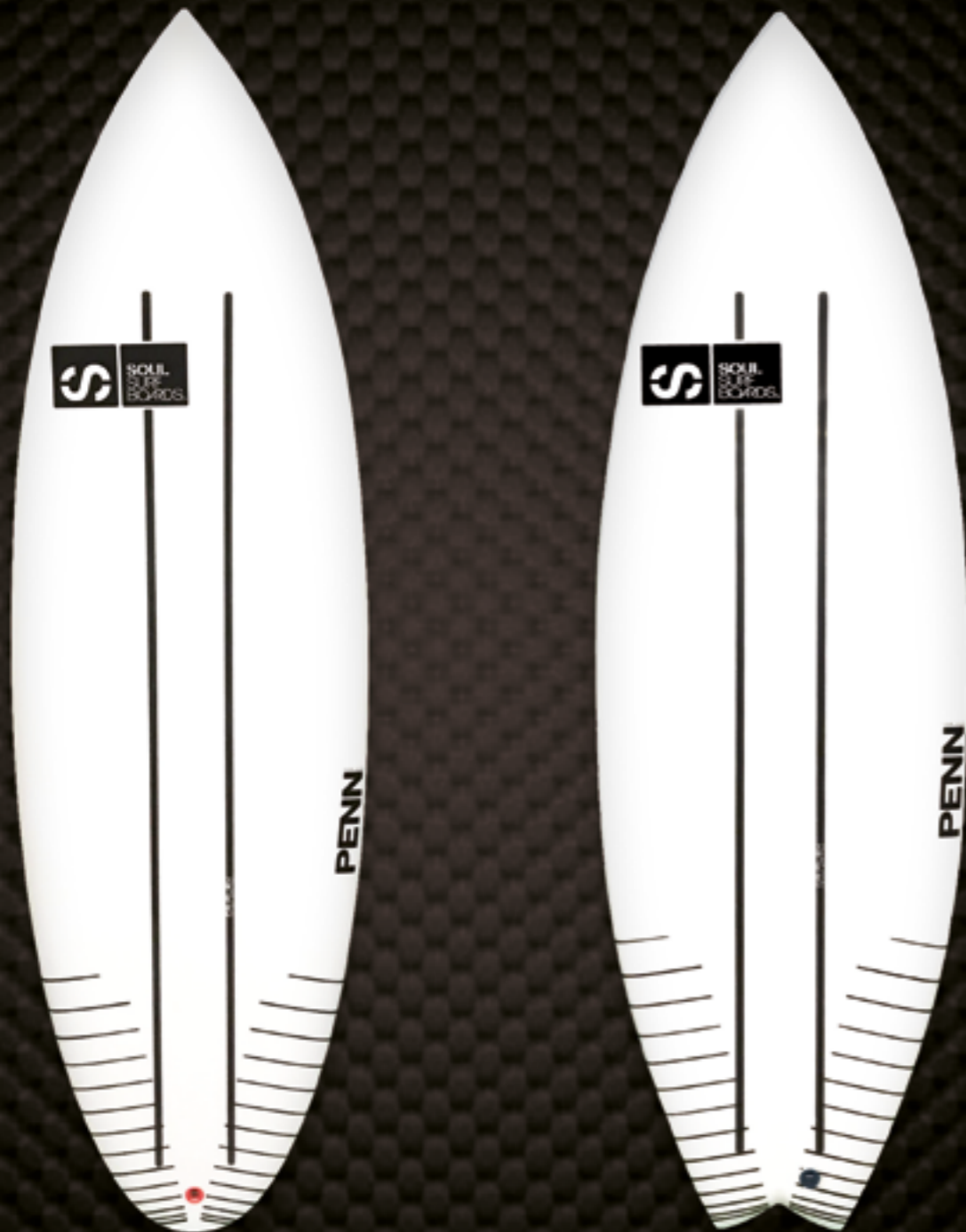
This year shop owners and buyers made up the majority of visitors with four times as many independent pro shops as independent multisport shops attending and Intersport, Sport 2000 and Blue Tomato were all their in force. Just over half the shops came from Germany with Austria, Poland, Switzerland and the UK all having good representation. And this year Adidas flew in key dealers from a number of countries. After the test area closed at 3.30 pm everyone headed off to The Highlight Exhibition Dinners which are a combination of eating, drinking and chatting against a backdrop of wall stands from every single brand at the event. Both dinners were very busy and brands made enormous efforts with their stands, with Burton for example having an artist on hand to paint different backdrops for each evening. This is the time at the event when the outerwear brands can make a real impact as retailers change their focus after a full day of testing hardgoods. During the dinner the winners of this year's Source design award was announced with Capita taking 1st prize followed by Nitro and Ride. After everyone has eaten and relaxed, those looking for entertainment headed off down to the Jakober Pub for some raucous DJ sessions into the early hours.

Next year's dates are January 20-22, 2019

[www.shops-1st-try.com](http://www.shops-1st-try.com)



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## SURFBOARD RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE 2018

TechNavio have published Global Surfboard Market 2018-2022, an in-depth analysis of the surfboard sector, which promises a growth rate of more than 12% per year. In order to take advantage of this prosperous market, here are a few tips picked up from a selection of manufacturers to help you understand the seasonal subtleties.

**By David Bianic.**

The good health of the surfboard market in particular and the technical sector in general can't hide the indescribable complexity of this product category for shop owners: "The client wants you to take back his old board in exchange for a discount on his new one, wants a gift – grip, accessories – and wants you to play banker by offering him a payment plan." These words are those of Xabi Anton from our Retailer Profile (p.16), owner of the Waimea Surf Shop in France. Yes, there are more and more surfers. Yes, more and more boards are being sold in Europe and around the world. No, selling boards is in absolutely no way just a formality.

Firstly, identifying "the" surfer as a unique entity has even less meaning today that it did in the past, due to the extent to which surfing has filled out the pyramid in terms of ages and sex. "Our target market/demographic is predominantly 20-45 years, but we have a loyal and strong customer base that covers groms to senior surfers, male and female", relates Alan Emery of Emery Surfboard all the way from the Portuguese factory Glassing Monkey (LSD, Aloha, Rip Curl Surfboards, Soul, Vampire). So, shop owners find themselves faced with a dilemma: stocking a very wide selection in terms of surface is a financial investment, or a very focused selection of a specific type of board. You'll find most (if not all) of the answers to your questions as we take a look at five very important trends in this Surfboard Buyers Guide 2018.

**1. Complete hybridisation**  
There was a time when the term "hybrid" was simply a synonym for "bastardisation", but in 2018, the surfboard market swears by it, to the same extent as in the automobile sector. The polyvalence and all-terrain potential makes it as much a choice of reason as it does one of passion: "The performance hybrid shortboard is by far our best selling style of board at the moment," affirms without hesitation Adam "Sparrow" Fletcher, manager of the shaping collective behind Superbrand. Their Magic Mix model follows the recipe and is a raging success, with a few subtle adjustments in volume placement for 2018 and renewed artist collaborations, which are one of the foundations of the brand. Even very high-performance oriented boards like Chilli "are getting wider with more volume under the chest", points out Olivier "Buffalo" Cuissot who imports the Australian boards in Europe via Santocha Distribution and adds that "50% of the Chilli range is for the everyday surfer." The models destined for that market segment are the Rarebird, Churro and Miami Spice.

In order to refresh the performance hybrid shortboard offering, which has already been a best seller for more than five years, the innovation comes in the area of surfboard bottom designs with "complex bottom contours continuing to expand", points out Mark Price the boss of Firewire and Slater Designs. This added value "under the hood" translates most notably into "wings and channels" specifies Clésio Correia from Chemistry Surfboards in Portugal. It's also being seen in



*"Retro doesn't mean a vulgar boat board... It is "on the contrary, very complicated to make boards with lots of volume, that are easy to surf according to the criteria of 2018." Thomas Cardinal, UWL Surfboards*



photo : Venon

a resurgence of swallow tails at Superbrand, and on the leading model at Venon, "the new EDV2 model by Édouard Delpero, a fun and well-performing modern shortboard with a swallow tail that is effective and polyvalent all at the same time," assures Marketing Manager Benoît Brecq. The proliferation of this kind of board from all the brands still makes it difficult to choose for shop owners, and even complicates things for the manufacturers: "Making sure that our best sellers are always in stock with a diversity of fin systems," specifies Darren Broadbridge the man in charge of the Euroglass factory (Bradley, Grace, Phipps, Anderson, Mark Richards, Quiksilver & Roxy). At Glassing Monkey, they have the same problem keeping supply up with short term demand, with Brand Manager Nuno guaranteeing 3-week delivery Europe-wide for custom orders.

## 2. Retro performance

While the swell picked up last year, the strong twin fin revival that is still present must not be mistaken for the wave of neo-retro boards, as Mark Price from Firewire explains: "unlike the truly retro movement of years past, it's more performance-based and factors like modern rockers and lighter weights that are important." Want proof? Check out the Go Fish designed by Rob Machado, one of their top three best sellers. The Frenchmen at UWL make room for guest shapers in their workshop, better known as "retros", with the clarification from Co-Director Thomas Cardinal who reminds us, "retro doesn't mean a vulgar boat board..." For Thomas, it is "on the contrary, very complicated to make boards with lots of volume, that are easy to surf according to the criteria of 2018."

Straight out of Byron Bay, "the home of the retro board", Emery Surfboards is well and truly positioned on the market segment with the introduction of a Retro Collection: "We have a board in our range that is a high performance version of a twin fin, this is the Wedge Tail." Luke Short from LSD says, "I think most surfers will own a

*The beginner board is no longer hidden at the back of the racks in 2018; moreover, it benefits from "the shorter and stubbier outlines (that come from hybrid shortboards)." Craig Butcher, Hurricane Surf.*

retro/hybrid board in the quiver but not for every day." As for Kevin Olsen from Plonka Surfboards in Les Landes, France, it's not a stretch to say that his new Mr Ripper model introduced only a year ago and already representing 15% of sales has been a surprising instant hit: "It's a swallow tail and twin fin setup identical to the Mark Richards twin fin, but with the original Plonka framework." Another reference to a surfing legend at Matta through a partnership signed with Martin Potter that has come to life via The Saint, a model inspired by the original twin fins ridden by Pottz, and the T20, another twin model helping to celebrate the 20-year shaping anniversary of Nuno Matta.

After a devastating fire in 2017, Olatu (Channel Islands, Lost, Pukas) is rising from the ashes and has taken note of the strong resurgence of "alternative shapes," confides Marketing Manager Jamie Azpiroz, while shapers already considered "retro" like Chris Christenson and Bob McTavish are also rising in notoriety within the company. Superbrand's Siamese Twin model, with its superb channels has helped the brand make up lost ground in the segment, as Adam Fletcher admits without hesitation that they "might have missed the boat with the trend".

## 3. The traditional bread and butter

If the major promotional efforts undertaken by the large surfboard labels are to be believed, the use of EPS blanks and epoxy resin combined with innovation construction techniques (Helium/Firewire,



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photo : Basque Country Surfboards

FlexBar/Channel Islands, Carbon Wrap/Lost) seems to have become the rule to the detriment of the traditional combination of PU blanks and polyester resin. True? "I don't believe in the imminent death of the PU surfboard, because there are major mechanical differences between EPS and PU. EPS floats better, but feels stiffer, which can be a problem in waves over 6 feet, while PU has more drive, absorbs vibrations better and offers a smoother, more progressive ride," explains Buffalo from Chillli. According to Nuno Matta it's not a coincidence that the world's best surfers on the WCT continue to trust polyurethane: "No technology can beat the flex of a PU/polyester board." Johnny Cabianca who shapes out of the Basque Country Surf Company factory that he shares with Mikel Agote in Zarautz comes to the same conclusion: "The pros are still using the cheaper PU/polyester boards, so from that perspective boards made with more modern/expensive/complex construction are not premium". Nonetheless, the shaping duo that has just launched its own blank company, still believes strongly in the potential that EPS presents.

Unsurprisingly, convinced that clients are ahead of the curve on the subject compared to many pro surfers, tech-lovers like Mark Price from Firewire have the following to say about traditional PU/polyester construction: "It's on life support". As a matter of fact, many of his team riders use boards from the Helium (Gamma and SKX models) construction series "proving the merits of that technology" the boss of Firewire affirms. The same opinion holds true at Surftech, a brand that "essentially created the whole technology revolution", says Richard Priestley who distributes the brand via Surf Commission.

#### 4. Seniors

The strong participation of "older" surfers (35-55-year olds), be they beginners or experienced practitioners thanks to their superior purchasing power, means they are bread and butter customers for

shops. Longboards and "funboards" (a horrible name!) are no longer the only options. Retro boards are now the go-to transition models for the "older surfer that wants a bigger board that still rides close to a shortboard," Adam from Superbrand tells us. Kevin from Plonka confirms that a certain age of longboarder is still coming back or to shortboards in large numbers or trying them for the first time. As proof, he cites his Big Boy model, boards between 6'2 and 6'8, for which the key to success is how volume is spread out over the surface of the board. "With the big hybrid shortboard trend, the longboard got pushed aside a bit," confirms Norden's Andy Wirtz". Therefore, it's not a surprise that in amongst the top three best sellers at Euroglass, widely recognized as a "high-performance" manufacturer, we find the Demibu by Phil Grace "the best entry level mini-mal available in the world," and the One Bad Egg by Mark Phipps. The beginner board is no longer hidden at the back of the racks in 2018; moreover, it benefits from "the shorter and stubbier outlines (that come from hybrid shortboards)" points out Craig Butcher from South African brand Hurricane Surf, which is widely available in France and Portugal. The aforementioned arguments are confirmed by Benoît from Venon whose top three best-sellers (6'4 Evo, 7'0 Gopher, 7'6 Egg) are designed for more mature surfers, for whom comfort and ease of paddling are essential. Last but not least, the "giant" in the beginner/intermediate categories NSP has profoundly revisited its offer in terms of aesthetics and shapes the current trends (hybrid, retro, sobriety) because "there is no reason these features can't be offered in great value boards", affirms Richard Priestley.

#### 5. A choice for the planet

It's up to you too, dear shop owners, to become more invested in the use of more environmentally friendly surfboards, for the health of the planet, as well as the health of the people who shape and glass. Among the brands to emulate, Firewire is as much a precursor as a



E

V



6'4 x 21" x 2 1/2"



venon surfboards

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Darren from Euroglass justifies these investments (30,000€ for a new ventilation system) as more than just a marketing initiative, but a sanitary measure: "We don't have the money available but our reputation and commitment to our employees leaves us no choice."



photo: Chilli

in France, which is open to future partnerships: "At the One-Kin factory we can trace the origin of each component... and we trust that low labour costs can be outperformed by effective, well-controlled industrialized processes", affirms Marketing Manager Sylvain Aurenche.

A few quick conclusions from this overview of the surfboard market in 2018: while premium stringerless EPS constructions are creating a buzz, the reality in the marketplace is that the classic PU surfboard still has a solid future in front of it, even if it must still deal with environmental issues related to the production process. From a design standpoint, the success of the functional hybrid shortboard has influenced the entire market segment, with shorter, rounder boards be they functional fish models for experienced surfers or 3.0 funboards for first-time surfers. The good news is that the majority of people looking for a surfboard prefer to open the door of an actual surf shop rather than opening a browser window on their computer to buy the board of their dreams.



photo: Plonka

**FOAMY FROTH**

The soft top movement isn't slowing down, as proved by the arrival of a host of new brands looking to ride the original wave created by Catch Surf and Softech. Hannah Craig from Surf Hardware International (FCS, Gorilla, Softech) confirms that, "the soft top market reaches far into the realms of fun boards for experienced surfers looking for something with a performance edge", notably thanks to FCS II fin plugs that accommodate the use of regular functional fins. The trend for 2018 is without a doubt to be found in those models that mix the best characteristics of micro soft tops with those of traditional glass shortboards. The 54 Special from Catch Surf and the Flash from Softech provide the perfect answer to the demand, and all the talk about "fun fun fun" is finally backed up by solid technical arguments. "The 54 Special is the love child of the Beater® Original 54 and the Odyssey® Stump", sums up the brand's European distributor Andreas "Maui" Maurmeir. Outline, rocker, bottom contour and rails are now all designed for linking real manoeuvres rather than just pulling into suicidal shorebreak closeouts. ☺

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Swallowtails & twin fins
- Classic PU construction
- High-performance soft tops
- Environmental efforts
- Easy-to-surf shortboards for adults

leader: "We are headed to zero landfill by 2020 or sooner and we have recently reduced our waste per board from 4.4 cubic meters to 0.02 – a 95% reduction", assures Mark Price. Already certified ISO 9000, the company is sure it will obtain the Fair Trade label within a year, "probably one of the few, if not the only surfboard factory in the world to achieve that standard."

At Matta Surfboards, emissions of greenhouse gases have been reduced by 50% by abandoning conventional resins and privileging the use of resins made from renewable resources. Independent shapers are also taking part in the movement like Kevin Olsen from Plonka who is using a new system to extract dust particles from the air, and the single usage of organically sourced Entropy resin, that is "so damn expensive, so we try to use every drop where it counts." Other commendable initiatives of note come from brands like Venon that is a partner of the Resurf project intended to recycle surfboards and polystyrene bodyboards via a "collection point within the company", says Benoît Brecq. Darren from Euroglass justifies these investments (30,000€ for a new ventilation system) as more than just a marketing initiative, but a sanitary measure: "We don't have the money available but our reputation and commitment to our employees leaves us no choice." Even a brand like NSP that has always been known for its attractive price points is making efforts in the area: "90% of our boards feature Sustainable Surf's Ecoboard logo" assures Richard Priestly. It's also a promise made by One-Kin, the company behind the SUP brand Lokahi that is inaugurating a surfboard production facility

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## 6 / 5 / 4, STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Empty waves are the Holy Grail, but with warmer water locations now oversubscribed, those in search of uncrowded lineups are heading to more frigid spots. 6/5/4 in Stockholm cater for their Swedish brethren with high quality service, products and brands and have now started 6/5/4 Expeditions to take those willing on adventures in search of empty waves in far flung places.

### Please give a brief history of your store.

The store was founded in spring 2009 by Johan Orrestedt and Niklas Malmqvist. I (Johan) came from the restaurant/coffee business and Niklas from a clothing brand. It was no easy start since the both of us had no retail background at all. But the will and passion for surfing made us go for it and we managed to put our minds together and run 6/5/4 successfully, combining the things we loved - surf, fashion and coffee. Niklas later decided to move on with his creative course and 654 has since 2014 been run by me with a handful of extremely dedicated employees. The key players are our store manager Victor Lindqvist and our in house photographer Adam Klingeteg and our women's buyer Towa Wretlund.

### What is 6/5/4 and what's your vision?

6/5/4 is all about celebrating Scandinavian surf culture. We are a lifestyle concept for adventurous people with the ambition of creating a meeting point for Stockholm surfers that offers custom made expeditions, fashion apparel, surf and outdoor equipment. Our vision is to inspire and forward our lifestyle by collecting adventurers under the same roof. We tell our stories and are always looking for the next adventure.

### Which brands do you work with?

We decided early in the process to work as much as possible with brands who stand in the forefront of development and quality. It's quite a mixture of brands from all over the world, since we're located in mid-town Stockholm and the fashion levels here are quite a bit different from the regular beach/surf shops.

Surfing gear-wise, we work closely with Patagonia. Mainly due to their high performance, wide selection and the environmental thinking. We also carry Vissla, Xcel and the new and upcoming sustainable brand Rewolve. Surfboards are hand picked from some of world's best shapers such as Christenson, Dyer Brand, Dead Kooks and our very own boards 6/5/4 Surfbrädror. When it comes to clothing, it's everything from Saturdays NYC and TCSS to Vans and Finisterre.

### What differences in requirements are there with a Scandinavian surfer compared to those elsewhere in Southern Europe?

You need to always be one step ahead, flexible and ready to get hit the road when the wind blows in the right direction. Surfing the Baltic Sea there is no ground swell so you need to have an eye for forecasts to follow where the wind swell takes you. The darkness during winter is a real aspect; we have to fight against the clock since with only a few hours of daylight per day. In summer it's the opposite, we get around four hours of dark and the rest of the time is light. It's just too bad the storms hit in winter! It all comes down to dedication, which is something we've seen evolving over the last few years. We've recently started up a side project due to the increase in cold water surfing, 6/5/4 Expeditions. Which is all about taking people to even colder and more remote places, in the search for waves.

### Are you doing anything innovative to give your consumers unique products/experiences?

We collaborated with a handful of Sweden's greatest surfers to create four different surfboard models, all shaped in Portugal and just recently made their appearance in the store. Created to suit Swedish conditions but also work very well all over the world; from peeling longboard waves in Sri Lanka to quick reefs in Indonesia. To create something this beautiful was a really pleasant and innovative way of working together with our good friends and to later let our customers be a part of.

### How important is your bricks and mortar store compared to online?

That's our cornerstone and the foundation of our whole company. Since the start in 2009 we've been establishing more and more communities surrounding the store: the café in the corner which attracts a lot of people, both to chat about their next board purchase and to simply have a good espresso. Or the garage located under the store, where people fix their motorbikes. The shaping bay, which is home to many of our greatest friends, always in the studio working on their next board prototype or fixing a ding. During the summer we open up a pop-up shop on the island of Gotland, which is one of the better places for surf in Sweden to stay as close as possible to our customers. The brick and mortar store(s) represent around 90% of our turnover. 📍

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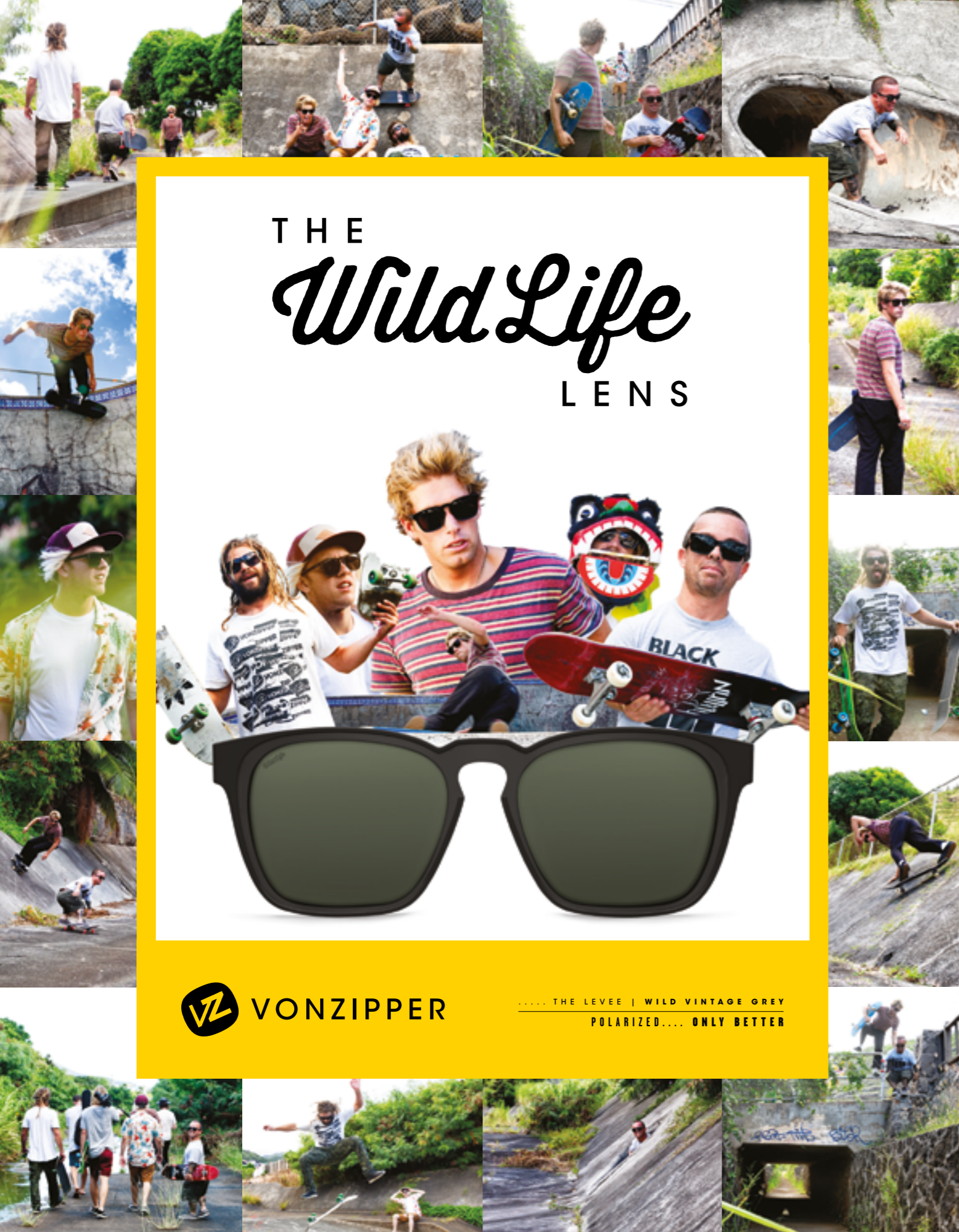


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**SUNGLASSES**  
**RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE 2018**

Precision lenses, California cool, wrap-around frames, cat eyes, gold tints:  
In next season's boardsports eyewear playbook, anything goes – as long as it's quality.  
2018 Sunglasses Retail Buyers Guide by SOURCE Skateboard Editor **Dirk Vogel**.

Ten years ago, boardsports sunnies centred around technical performance shades, injected with a healthy dose of lifestyle flavour by the likes of Oakley, Dragon, Arnette, Black Flies, SPY, Quiksilver, Electric, and VonZipper. Today it's an entirely different ball game. The stylistic diversity on store shelves is as broad as the brand selection and technical manufacturing know-how on the back end. And going into summer 2018, boardsports eyewear labels are adding their own distinct voices to the mix.

"We really feel that our market is evolving and prepared to take risks in terms of frames, where the combos and new features will make their way. But also in terms of lenses, with new technologies and colours," said Pedro Fernandes, European General Manager at VonZipper. Over the past few years, eyewear has evolved from functional accessory to fashion statement, so brands need to cover all bases. "We feel consumers have come to expect great style and fashion, but with performance features built into the sunglass so they can enjoy their favourite activities without having to sacrifice their personal style," said Eric Crane, Owner and Designer at Electric California.

This successful formula of blending fashion and performance has led to enormous growth in the segment. More than 50 brands now cater to the specific optical needs of boardsports consumers. Many are also reporting success beyond the core boardsports arena. "Of course glasses must function in tough conditions such as on snow, water and in the blazing summer sun – and we think our tech has that well covered. We also see a lot of crossover sport interest by boardsports customers these days, so if the sunglasses are suitable for biking, fishing, running and so on, then you are on to a winner," said Neil Slinger at Melon Optics. Damian Phillips, head of communication at POC is on the same page: "We have a range of sunglasses that can be used for cycling, but categorized by activity for instance road,

*"We really feel that our market is evolving and prepared to take risks in terms of frames, where the combos and new features will make their way. But also in terms of lenses, with new technologies and colours." Pedro Fernandes, European General Manager at VonZipper*

Mmountain bike and urban. Many of the frames can be used across activities but we have tuned our Clarity lenses to the precise needs of the activity."

**MARKET & PRICE POINTS**

Speaking of crossover interest, eyewear from brands with boardsports roots is currently trending hard into the mainstream. Next to style and boardsports cool, the main reason is simple: value! Compared to average price points at optical stores and eyewear boutiques, where sunglasses from of-the-moment brands run anywhere from €250 into the stratosphere, our brands offer attractive features that punch well above their weight in terms of price. "Our main price point for next season is \$149 – a price that can't be beat for the technology behind the quality, colour enhancement and clarity of our Ellume Polarized lenses," said Mike Lewis, Director of Brand Activation & Digital Strategy at Zeal Optics.

In the bigger picture, the main action in boardsports retail crystallizes around €85 for non-polarized models and €150 for polarized lenses. Naturally, each brand plays its own price position with a notable trend for upscale design and lens tech in the entry level. Brands such as Sinner, Melon, and Carve pack on polarized lenses and on-point stylistics below the €59.90 benchmark while actively supporting core

*"Take the doors off your eyewear displays! Open cases encourage engagement, engagement equals sales!"*  
**Rich Kaiser, Sun & RX Category Manager at SPY Optic.**

athletes. "Carve currently sponsor ranking competitors in surf and snow internationally and this will be a primary POS and marketing focus going forward," said Colin Foy, Product Development Manager at Carve, who currently have hydrophobic lenses in the works. But remembering the opening statement about the segment's evolution, state-of-the-art technology and on-trend styles also command price points all the way to €300. Asked about the kind of features baked into premium frames, brand manager Paul Bow at Epokhe, with a main price window from \$200-\$270, said: "hand-polished acetate, scratch-resistant lenses, 100% UVA UVB protection, handcrafted acetate produced from natural cellulose, five- and seven-barrel hinges." Dragon position their H2O Floatable models around \$180. D'Blanc eyewear, who collaborate with hip brands such as Amuse Society, set prices at "€119 to €229 for metal and Mazzucchelli acetate frames. All our sunglasses are handmade in Italy."

Regardless of price points, playing the category successfully from a retail perspective mainly boils down to brand selection and product presentation. Here's some advice going into the season: "Take the doors off your eyewear displays! Open cases encourage engagement, engagement equals sales!" said Rich Kaiser, Sun & RX Category Manager at SPY Optic.



photo : Carve

### THE 3 HOT EYEWEAR TRENDS TO WATCH IN 2018

Here's a snapshot overview of what retailers need to keep an eye on when buying from stock in summer 2018.

1. Classic California Cool. Watch out for classic round frame shapes in materializations such as sun-kissed tortoiseshell or matted black, fitted with polarized lenses in mellow shades such as brown and rose.
2. Oversized frames for women. Petite and form-fitting styles still have their place in next year's collections, but women like to make bold statements with generous takes on cat eyes and a new wave of female aviator styles.
3. Clear frames. Next season's eye-catching designs include a dramatic combination of bold, thick frames with clear, see-through materials. Keep your eyes peeled for clear frames in transparent blue or rose, paired with colour-coordinated lens tints for maximum effect.

### FRAME STYLES

Diving into 2018 styles in more detail, let's start with the HOTTEST frame style for men: "We see the key trend in [John] Lennon-style round sunglasses with modern materials and technologies," said Tomas Koudela, Marketing Manager at Horsefeathers. Sunglasses marked by round lenses and a keyhole nosebridge in classic materializations including tortoiseshell will rule collections in 2018, including brands such as Zeal (Windsor model), Bolle (Rooke model), CHPO (McFly model), D'Blanc x VISSLA (Baja23 model), Electric (Nashville model, in black), Horsefeathers (Nomad model), Oakley (Latch Key model), Proof (Wilder model), OTIS (Omar model), VonZipper (Hitsville), Smith (Crusader model), Quiksilver (Jericho model), and Roxy (Ladyshield women's model).

Speaking of women's models, the trending female style for 2018 is all about generously-sized plays on the classic cat eyes formula. The team at D'Blanc is stoked on the "Felicity frame, an upswept Cat Eye with gentle curves and distinct lines for everyday glamour, fitting most faces and retailing for €85." The cat eyes look made famous by style icon Liz Taylor is masterfully brought into the here-and-now by brands such as Roxy (Ragdoll model), Epokhe (generous Poka model), CHPO (Marais model), OTIS (Little Lies), Smith (Caper), Dirty Dog, and Proof (Elmore model).

Next year also marks a return of classic shapes – think aviators and panto styles – updated with technical touches and delicate accents. Sinner and Dirty Dog successfully transform the inherently masculine aviator look into a winning female style accessory via the addition of wire temples, gold coating, and lavish lens tints. On that note, Epokhe kills it with the hand-crafted Denz model; a lightweight aviator frame with hexagonal lenses connected by a snake-patterned nose bridge. "Denz stands for supreme comfort in a refined aesthetic," said Paul at Epokhe. Also get in on this trending combo: tortoiseshell top bars, temples and frame uppers interspersed with thin metal-rimmed lenses at the bottom, exemplified by Oakley (Latch Key model), Dirty Dog (Attic Salt model), Melon (Drifter model).

*"We see the key trend in [John] Lennon-style round sunglasses with modern materials and technologies," said Tomas Koudela, Marketing Manager at Horsefeathers.*

Naturally, boardsports eyewear needs to be anatomically fitted, styles that are built to shred. Dragon go deep with their H2O models striking a stylish balance between form and function: "From best-in-class performance polarized lenses and the proprietary, lightweight injection moulded frame to the rubber nose pads and temple tips, the H2O Floatable styles are the perfect blend of style and tech. There are currently over 30 different styles of H2O Floatable, so there's something for anyone who wants to enjoy the collection," says Shay Williams, Product Development Specialist. In a year that marks the end of three-time World Champion, Mick Fanning's competitive career, Dragon have added to their H2O Floatable collection, with the release of the Baile MF signature sunglass style, a product that shows how closely Dragon value and work with their athletes, artists and ambassadors throughout the whole development process, from conception to launch.

Oakley continue with their Cross Range Patch model, replete with Plutonite lens material and interchangeable Unobtainium Sport temples and nose pads that increase grip with perspiration to keep sunglasses in place. 2018 performance eyewear highlights include Electric, Cebe (Brecken model), Dirty Dog (Axle Riff model), Horsefeathers (Keaton model), Melon (Halfway model), Smith (Lowdown 2), SPY (Montana and Helm2 models), and Quiksilver (Rekiem model).

Finally, the sleeper trend to watch for 2018 is all about kid-sized sunglasses. As JP Bonnemason, global eyewear product manager at Quiksilver, explains is the "adults best seller with a smaller size to fit the small faces."

### FRAME COLOURS AND MATERIALS

As mentioned above, crystal-clear frames are all the rage next year. "Transparent with a coloured lens is also the way to go this season! The Marais and the Oslo models for example," said Johanna Åkerström, Marketing Coordinator at CHPO. While tortoiseshell materializations continue to trend hard across collections, updated with colour splashes and weatherized fades. With that said, black is still the new black in 2018 eyewear collections, with Zeal pointing out "Black Matte, Desert Rose, and Black Tortoise." This brings us straight into materials, which fall into two categories this year: "We see a combination of premium quality, wearable classic styles in acetate alongside active-lifestyle product in nylons and Grilamid," said Scott Lewis, Global Brand Manager at OTIS. SHRED's Italian made NoWeight



“  
 Live through Glass

OTIS

LUKE DAVIS | WINSTON FRAME

NEW YORK CITY. 40.78306 W | -73.971249 W

frames are especially light and aim to prove that performance need not come at the expense of style. "The exterior of our frames provides a clean, streamlined appearance while on the frame's interior sides, we've reduced the material used in areas subject to minimal stress and reinforced target areas for maximum durability."

Retailers need to educate their customers, said Eric Crane at Electric, because "most don't know about materials, and the different performance characteristics of each. While acetate looks nice and has nice finishes, it warps very easily in temperature changes, does not respond well to direct sun and heat, and doesn't retain its shape. Premium mould injected TR90 grilamid is the finest material available for action sport applications, retaining its shape and extremely strong." Most labels rely on injected grilamid while many market their own branded material brands, including Dragon (H2O Floatable), Oakley (O-Matter) and Smith (Evolve).

Primarily known for their wood frames, Proof eyewear has branched out. "We are trying to educate our consumer that we're not a wood sunglass company but a sustainable eyewear company with ranges in wood, cotton-based acetates and recycled aluminium," said Proof CEO Tanner Dame. Recycling and sustainable are key concepts in next year's collections: Smith is implementing proprietary Evolve eco-friendly material, Zeal relies on plant-based Z-Resin. "This material replaces traditional petroleum-based plastics in our manufacturing process and significantly reduces the amount of CO2 produced," said Mike Lewis at Zeal. OTIS is, "close to being the first 360-degree recyclable eyewear brand because we have already eliminated the use of petroleum based plastics (polycarbonate) in our lenses."

#### LENS TECH

Full UV protection and polarization have become the status quo in the mid-price segment and have even trickled down into entry-level collections (see Pricing). "Focusing on high protection and wearability. We produce all lenses with protection against UVA, UVB & UVC to ensure we meet all sun protection needs," said Tom Lazarus, Operations Manager at Dirty Dog. Maintaining their innovative edge, boardsports eyewear labels introduce updated lens technologies in 2018 collections.

For next season, VonZipper "will continue to boost and expand our new patented technology called Wild Life Lenses which will create an all new visual experience by selectively absorbing light in the area were the eye is more sensitive, creating an energy boost as well as a higher comfort in terms of comfort and clarity." SPY is building on the success of their "detail- and mood-boosting Happy Lens 6-base polycarbonate ARC® lenses providing 100% UV protection." Dragon will "utilize a number of different base curvatures for both form and function, from 4-base to 8-base and our Voodoo lens tech, which is a multi-base wrap." Horsefeathers glasses are equipped with high-quality TAC polarised lenses with 100% UV protection.

Smith is bullish on "ChromaPop polarized lenses that provide the highest level of enhanced colour and clarity," paired with Hydroleophobic lens coatings and glare-eliminating properties. Zeal is bringing eco-tech into lenses: "Elluminate Polarized is the world's first lens using a plant-based bonding agent, thus replacing the petroleum-based bonder." Meanwhile, OTIS will stick to their guns: "We have used naturally-sourced and recyclable mineral glass in every style we have ever made, since we began production in 2000. Mineral glass remains our focus as it is by far the most scratch-resistant lens material available." POC relies on ZEISS in their specifically designed Clarity lenses for precision optics and, "unique, highly tuned and specific base tints, which provide enhanced contrast and light." Quiksilver and Roxy also trust ZEISS for "100% UV protection and excellent scratch resistance without compromising clarity or resolution."

#### LENS TINTS

When it comes to tying it all together into a complete look, lens tint can be the make or break of a stylish pair of shades. Next season's hot trends include gold lens tints for men and rose for women. With that said, SPY Optics is working on a stunner: "Look for Happy Rose to hit the market in the fall of 2018." At CHPO, it's all about adding some warmth: "Bright colours are always right for the spring/summer season. We're going for pink, turquoise and gold tones but also a lot of transparent." Looking ahead, VonZipper will also implement colourful shades while pointing out another major seller: "For 2019 we expect



photo : OTIS

to bring some new colours, either in terms of Chromes, like the Blues and the Pinks, but also playing with gradients that are clearly a market trend." Buyers should watch out for gradient lenses across major collections, together with an uptick in greens and browns.

#### FUTURE TECH

Asked about the technologies shaping the future of the boardsports eyewear segment, brands reported mixed assessments. Basically, don't expect the kind of Internet-connectivity and Augmented Reality (AR) functionality currently finding its way into snow goggles making the leap into sunglasses any time soon. But also know that analysts expect augmented reality to become a major market, like, really soon: More than 100 million consumers will be conducting their shopping assisted by AR technology by the year 2020 (ComScore) and data glasses are already rumoured as potential smartphone killers – but that's speculation. What's for certain is that Smith is about to launch the Lowdown Focus sunglasses in Europe, "the first brain-sensing eyewear that gives the user real-time feedback on cognitive training for better focus and concentration." Whether or not they will make wearers shred harder and go boldly where no one has shredded before remains to be seen. But looking at this season's trends, the future in boardsports eyewear looks pretty bright. 📌

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Classic California cool
- Cat eye styles (women)
- Round keylock frames (men)
- Eco materials
- Clear frames
- Gold tints and accents
- Anti-glare lens coatings
- Performance RX models
- SLEEPER TREND: Kids frames





# ELECTRIC



## SUNGLASSES 2018 PICTORIAL



Bolle - Brecken



Bolle - Slate



Bolle - Rooke



Carve - Verve



Carve - Rival



Carve - Noosa



CEBE - Hipe



CEBE - L.A.M.



CEBE - Sunrise



CHPO - Copenhagen



CHPO - Liam



CHPO - Oslo



D'Blanc - AfterHours



D'Blanc - Dosed



D'Blanc - Felicity



Dirty Dog - Axle



Dirty Dog - Breaker



Dirty Dog - Ranger



Dragon - Baile



Dragon - Monarch



Dragon - The Jam



Electric - Danger Cat



Electric - Mix Tape



Electric - Zombie



Epokhe - Denz



Epokhe - Non



Epokhe - Poka



Gloryfy - Gi8



Gloryfy - Headliner



Gloryfy - St Pauli



Horsefeathers - Foster



Horsefeathers - Keaton



Horsefeathers - Nomad



Melon - Drifter



Melon - Echo





Melon - Halfway



Oakley - Latch



Oakley - Crossrange



Oakley - Flight Jacket



Otis - Casa Bay



Otis - Little Lies



Otis - Omar



POC - Aspire



POC - Require



POC - Will



Proof - Elmore



Proof - Tamarack



Proof - Wilder



Quiksilver - Jericho



Quiksilver - Rekiem



Quiksilver - Mullet



Roxy - Moanna



Roxy - Ragdoll



Roxy - Ladyshield



Shred - Belushki



Shred - Provocatore



Shred - Stomp



Sinner - Blue Water



Sinner - Prospects



Sinner - Skyloft



Smith - Caper



Smith - Crusader



Smith - Lowdown



Spy - Montana



Spy - Tron



Spy - Helm



VonZipper - Alt



VonZipper - Hitsville



VonZipper - Lomax



Zeal - Crowley



Zeal - Incline



Zeal - Windsor





Photo : Derek O'Neill (right) and legendary Australian shaper Wayne Lynch

## BIG WIG INTERVIEW DEREK O'NEILL

For this issue's Big Wig we feature a true surf industry veteran in Derek O'Neill. Derek has a rich work/surf history, which saw him start out 30 years ago as a sales rep for Piping Hot wetsuits in Torquay, Australia before opening Billabong's European office in 1991 and later went on to serve as CEO of the company. In late 2013 former Billabong colleague Paul Naude launched Vissla (and D'Blanc) and Derek took charge of the European business and since then the company has injected some much needed freshness into the surf business. Derek talks us through his biggest lessons learned over the years, biggest influences on his career and the man from Melbourne explains how, through past experience, they're keeping distribution clean, margins healthy and products sharp.

Interview by **Harry Mitchell Thompson**.

### **Please can you give us your background.**

Growing up in Melbourne, Australia, I had a period working with my father's plumbing business after finishing school, which soon allowed me to work out what I didn't want to do! A surfer since the age of 11, I was a competitor in the Australian Surfing Championships in 1986, which was sponsored by Billabong and it looked like the marketing guys were the ones having the most fun. The surf industry around Torquay, Australia was doing well at that time, and I used to spend a lot of time at a local surf shop where I would meet plenty of sales reps who all looked to be having fun, surfing a lot and making money. I became a sales agent for Piping Hot wetsuits in Torquay around 1987 when they were a big player in Australia, and when they were acquired, I came to Europe in 1989 with a backpack and a six-month ticket, which

ended up being 14 years short. Billabong then asked me to open their first company office in Hossegor in 1991, and I founded Billabong Europe that year. Fast growth followed and we went from zero to \$100 million in ten years and from four staff in the first week to over 300 employees. I was appointed CEO of Billabong in 2003 returning back to Australia, finally parting company with the group in 2012 when they decided they wanted a more corporate management team. Vissla started as a discussion late 2013, and I immediately said I wanted to go back to Europe.

### **Which person within the industry had the most influence on you and why?**

Over a long period one person would be a hard pick. But early industry

*A lot of the brands we compete with are losing money or struggling, and we can see that the terms and deals they give out are a big part of that, so we have to say no a lot.*

guys like Rod Brooks at Piping Hot, Chops Lascelles in England in the late 80s, Dougall Walker and Bob Hurley at Billabong in the 90s, Gary Pemberton the first Billabong Chairman, and more recently Paul Naude at both Billabong and Vissla have all played important roles in demonstrating what should be done, can be done, and also sometimes what should not be done.

### **What have been the best lessons you've learned in business?**

There are many. There is always a baseball bat out there somewhere ready to smack you on the head as soon as you think you know everything. Employ people much smarter than you every chance you can. Have fun. Delegate. You learn a lot more when things are going bad than when things are going well. Then the most important, get the cash in. Get paid as fast as you can. It's your money and you are going to need it.

### **Since the word go, Vissla hasn't been about being the biggest, it's been about being happy with the level of business you're doing. Does this mantra still apply?**

That still applies. We get retailers wanting to buy 50% more than the previous season but then want a big discount and longer time to pay. It's like, why would we want to do that? This time around it is us privately funding the business, and at the back we are carefully planning and growing our warehouses, shipping facilities, growing our production capacity, working with suppliers that can grow with us, etc, but we also have to make sure the market grows at the same time and sometimes we are asked to match unsustainable terms that some of our competitors give. A lot of the brands we compete with are losing money or struggling, and we can see that the terms and deals they give out are a big part of that, so we have to say no a lot. If that keeps us smaller than some others in the market, well we can live with that. A lot of stores want a smaller hard to find brand.

### **The retail landscape is evolving at such a rapid pace, where and how are you hedging your bets?**

We are just in our fourth year now. We are a surf brand, but feel a little different than some of the other brands in our sector. While we can see retailers under pressure, we want to work with them to sell our products at or close to full margin, by keeping our points of distribution as clean as we can, and not competing against them by doing mass online clearance sales on our site or Amazon or others. Most of our clients have strong sell-through results out of store.

### **How has it been different building up Vissla compared to building up the Billabong brand, given that they were founded in different decades?**

The basics on product, logos, athletes, events, company ethos etc have not changed much over time, but how you tell it to the surfer has changed drastically. Decades ago, the communication from the brand would have to go through the retailer, in how the product was presented in stores, or through the boardsport media in mostly monthly surf magazines, and it would take months to come out. Today the most important communication line is from the brand straight through to the end user, and it is immediate.

### **Do Vissla take a global approach, or are certain/all parts of the business regional?**

Most of it is global with a few small adjustments in marketing and product. But we figure that key products like boardshorts and wetsuits will work in most regions and do not need a lot of tinkering.

### **Where are you at with Vissla retail units in Europe and what does the future footprint look like?**

Retail is only a small part for us, and what we do have sits mostly around Hossegor where there are almost no multi-brand retailers, only company branded stores. We have three currently just out of town with one licenced store just opening in the centre of Hossegor for summer 2018.

### **Boardshorts and apparel were your key offerings initially, but it's safe to say Vissla wetsuits have made a huge impression on surf retail. Why do you think that is?**

Wetsuits have been really a lot of fun to develop. In Europe they are our main tech product that is worn all year round, whereas boardshorts are limited to 2-3 months and not wearable in the surf in all European countries either. We offered an alternative to the other guys, we had a good mid level priced suit range, the suits are really using great materials and are well built and we deliver on time! A lot of guys rip but maybe don't want to wear a big brand suit, and so we get a lot of really strong local surfers wearing our wetsuits.

### **Millennials and how to market to them: What have been the biggest lessons learned in marketing since the start of the brand, what have been the highlights and where are you placing marketing credence going forward?**

Years ago a typical surf brand would do maybe one big movie every two/three years, then do some smaller clips for showing in stores, so maybe 5-8 per year. At Vissla we release around 150 digital clips/movies per year, some 30 seconds, some up to 25 minutes, and we also give them to our retailers to use on their digital feeds. Brands have to tell stories. It's the same with photos; we have some amazing shots from our very creative surf team, and have been promoting shapers as well since the beginning. Recently we stepped this up big time with the Vissla Sydney Surf Pro at Manly and this featured a WSL 6000 surf contest for both the males and females, plus we had an amazing five days of some of Australia's best surfboard shapers doing their thing on the beach in public. We embrace innovation and creativity in surfboards, and we try to promote those shapers giving them a lot more diverse exposure than they normally get.

*We all need retailers to showcase creativity and authenticity in the market. I personally think the next five years will be great for the industry as a whole.*

### **What's the biggest challenge the surf industry currently faces and why?**

Since surfing product began, there have been quite a few industry cycles of the distribution being pushed too far and wide. What this can mean - and some brands have been through this cycle with mixed results and some are still going through it - is new brand owners are coming in from other industries that do not have that historic knowledge and some of them are going to learn the lessons of the past. Retailers will need to be open to everything; many retailers are only in place because of deals from brands, because for some brands it is becoming clear that the independent surf retailers may not be that important in the future. Surf retailers will increasingly need to concentrate on selling what their customer wants rather than offering the product they got on the best deal. That is going to lead to floor space opportunities and I think we are well placed to pick up some of that. We all need retailers to showcase creativity and authenticity in the market. I personally think the next five years will be great for the industry as a whole. 📍



photo : Jucker Hawaii

## LONGBOARDS

### RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE 2018

Are the good times long gone in the longboards business? Not according to our 2019 Longboards Retail Buyer's Guide by SOURCE Skateboard Editor **Dirk Vogel**.

Turn your pages to 2015 and the longboard business was in a gold rush. The former niche category had grown well beyond 100 brands. Specialized stores were selling longboards by the boatload. Outside brands were seeking desperately to join the ride, including Audi with their prototype e-car featuring an electric longboard. And how about those foldable longboards with a hinge in the middle? Today, the wave is officially over, the brand landscape has thinned, but there's still life in the category. "There is money to be made and longboards to be sold, but the sales don't come effortless like back in 2015," said Mike Jucker, Co-Founder and Brand Manager at Jucker Hawaii. Pablo Castro at Loaded Boards and Orangatang Wheels said: "Overall, we get the sense that longboarding is poised for a healthy recovery after the last couple of challenging years." Those challenging years have left a clean slate. "We feel that the market has finally touched its natural size again. That makes it easier to plan and to be more connected with the real shops and skaters that wave our flag," said Andreas "Maui" Maurmeir, Retail and Marketing at Sector 9, who are celebrating 25 years(!) in the longboard business this year. Right now, more customers are looking for the effortless flow offered by longboards. "Cruising, freestyle and dancing are growing up. The carving and surfing feelings are trendy again," said Joan, Product Manager at Spanish brand Long Island Longboards.

#### MARKET & PRICE POINTS

For big picture perspective, a current market report by analysts at Technavio expects the global skateboarding equipment market – including boards, shoes, and protective gear – to continue to grow and exceed \$5 billion by 2020. Skateboard hardware is the largest part of the market and headed for the most rapid growth, poised to exceed \$2 billion by 2020. The best indicator for market health lies in core retail, where assessments vary. As Adam Gay, Head of Sales at Lush Longboards

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*"There is money to be made and longboards to be sold, but the sales don't come effortless like back in 2015." Mike Jucker, Co-Founder and Brand Manager at Jucker Hawaii*

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said: "It seems only OG longboard shops run by core longboarders are keeping the faith. All the blow-ins have either blown out or are in the process of doing so." Shane Maloney, Brand Manager at Madrid Skateboards, sees the future in mixed models: "More retailers than ever understand it's important to cater to the entire skate market from short boards to longboards." Speaking of retail, the hot price window remains unchanged at around €149 for completes, which will buy a mid-level carving board, passable drop-through model, or legitimate "surf skate" with specialized front truck. Price ceilings in the premium range are now slightly below €300, with high-end models like Sector 9's Lucky Shoots Sidewinder Carving Model retailing at €280. Some companies have restructured their backend to offer lower prices. "Through our new distribution partnership with Absolute Board Co we've been able to reduce our retail pricing by 20-25%, while still offering the premium wood product Arbor is known for," said Nate Shute, Marketing Manager at Arbor.

#### THE 3 HOTTEST 2019 LONGBOARD TRENDS

##### 1. WOMEN'S LONGBOARDING

A new generation of female riders is exploring boardsports, and that includes skateboards both long and short. Companies such as Sector 9, Arbor, Globe, OB Five, Jucker Hawaii, Madrid, Flying Wheels, Goldcoast, and more are supporting this growth category with specific products. Sector 9 is expanding the pro model collection for World

Surf League competitor Tia Blanco with gems like the Lotus model. Arbor, who released the first women's-specific boards line, the Solstice Collection, now collaborate with Boarding For Breast Cancer.

## 2. BUILT-TO-ORDER CUSTOMIZATION

Completes still represent the lion's share of the market, but customers have been trained by the internet to customize every single purchase from pizzas to sneakers to sports cars. Retailers who can provide personalized set-ups are at a clear advantage here: After all, the same deck can be built-to-order into different configurations by switching truck and wheel styles, from carving to speed all the way to freestyle with "real" street trucks (see accessories). Companies including Loaded Boards also let customers configure usage-specific set-ups on their web stores.

## 3. BOARDS FOR THE AGES

At the height of the longboard hype, customers were all about building quivers of set-ups for every use. Nowadays, customers would rather buy one special board – even at premium price points – and enjoy it for a long time. It's also more sustainable, says Maui at Sector 9: "We rather like to produce long-lasting quality, so people do not need to change boards like panties. A Sector 9 is green because you keep it a lifetime and use it hopefully as stoked as we do." Key advice: Retailers need to let customers try boards and feel the difference between a €120 and a €300 to €500 ride from a quality-oriented brand. "Our focus has always been on creating innovative product that provides high performance and fills a void in what is currently offered. Creativity and innovation have always been stronger drivers for us than attempting to reduce costs strictly for the sake of increasing sales," said Pablo at Loaded Boards.

## SS19 LONGBOARD SHAPES

Summing up the situation in shapes, Shane at Madrid said: "Drop-thrus still hold a solid percent of the market. Overall, with the exception of the Dance segment, boards are getting a bit smaller." This trend towards shorter boards is confirmed across brands. Nate at Arbor said: "We've reduced the size of our Fish from 39 to 37 inches, and the Timeless, from 46 to 42 inches, we've also added a 37 inch Axis and Mission." Bucking the trend is dancing, where boards are trending above 44 inches in length.

Carving boards continue to gain shelf space, while Sector 9 is reissuing some greatest hits for the 25th anniversary, including "the Cosmic Rider, the Cloud 9, the Bert and the Sandblaster." Brands also report that "crazy shapes" – think ridges, bubble butt tails and angled edges – are building momentum. "Our surprise hit of Spring '18 was the Wreckangle, an almost completely rectangular, fully rockered board. The new shapes for our Dinghy line are growing in popularity," said Dave Price, International Sales at Landyachtz.

Landyachtz also recently introduced a killer multi-purpose, hybrid-style board with the Sidewalker model, featuring Hollow Tech construction. These kinds of trick-ready hybrids will continue to sell in 2019, next to the other big trend: Stubby cruisers. Santa Cruz Skateboards draw on their heritage with, "Cruzers based on 1980s boards with soft Slimeballs wheels as well as rails to fit in with the time period," said Andrew Cannon at Santa Cruz. Jucker Hawaii just dropped the PauHanaCruiser and Flying Wheels has the Belza model in their "Surfing Series, with Carving Trucks system, the perfect carving board, compact and stylish," said Benoit Brecq, Marketing Manager at Flying Wheels.

## MATERIALS & CONSTRUCTIONS

The status quo in materials now revolves around maple, birch, bamboo, and fiberglass for the ultimate in strength and light weight. Loaded Boards are, "transitioning to a new material layout on the standard Tesseract that uses basalt, a textile made from volcanic rock. It's strong, light, and provides the perfect balance of pop and flex." Landyachtz is expanding its Hollow Tech platform production in Canada, while Madrid's downhill team has been enjoying a new "Formica/Maple combo lamination, designed to maximize torsional strength and decrease road vibrations at high-speed." Globe struck gold with their Pearl Slick boards. "It's not just a look, it's a slick! In addition to the eye-catching appeal of these pearl based boards, they slide like ice on the stickiest of surfaces. Additionally, we've used pearlescent inlays and edge details like you might see on guitars and guitar picks across a series of high-end cruisers," said Dave Gitlin, Senior Skateboard Designer at Globe, adding: "We've got a new load of coconut construction boards coming out. They've really been the gateway to our eco-explorations." Speaking of "eco", sustainability is a major story in longboards next

season. The Arbor Collective has been replanting Koa trees endemic to Hawaii, through the Returning Roots giveback program. Landyachtz produces the Revival Series from reclaimed wood and is now in its third year of the "one-board, one tree" program with three non-profits around the world. Loaded is "expanding the use of bio-based epoxies" in manufacturing, and Joan at Long Island in Spain said: "Most of the processes we do in the factory are sustainable, by the way we recycle all the wastes."



photo: Loaded

## HARDWARE & ACCESSORIES

Keeping in mind the trend towards customized set-ups, accessories are increasingly specific to riding styles. Arbor offers the "Easyrider Series Wheels in a wide range of colours, allowing the customer to pick and choose in order to build the complete of their dreams, or upgrade their current ride." In terms of upgrades, watch out for Sector 9's Omega Slide Wheels in two different durometers, and Madrid's Venom Mach 1 Magnum race wheels. Orangatang Wheels are increasingly catering to long-distance skaters, while Flying Wheels pushes "quality SHR urethane with different shapes for different uses."

When it comes to trucks, brands like Carver, Paris, Atlas, Gullwing, and Bear have become category staples over the years. Jucker is jumping into the fray with the new Precision 1 truck, while Madrid's Rogue Cast Trucks are positioned for high performance at affordable prices. Benoit at Flying Wheels points out the expanded use of surf trucks in their selection, including the "Best Place" board line. HLC Distribution in Spain also increased their "surfy" YOW (Your Own Wave) Long Island Boards range. Allowing for further customization, most trucks these days come with six-hole baseplates to let riders choose their wheelbase. Plus, hardcore riders have been slapping on wide versions of regular street trucks, so for retailers looking to serve the longboard segment in 2019, it's all about being ready for everything. 🌀

## HIGHLIGHTS

- de-to-order set-ups
- Movement in women's segment
- Shorter longboards
- Crazier shapes
- Premium boards above €400
- Sustainable, lightweight materials
- Adjustable wheelbases
- "Real" street trucks



THE NEW  
EVO 36  
36 INCHES OF HISTORY

LANDYACHTZ

LANDYACHTZ.COM

PHOTO: PETER LONERGAN



## WAIMEA

The oldest surf shop in Europe. Quite the title. Xabi Anton from Waimea shop in Anglet SW France took some time to talk us through the shop's current setup, and backs up just why so many people refer to Waimea as the most legit surf shop in the region. As with many successful businesses in 2018, Waimea have chosen to do one thing and do it well; surf. In the past the store sold SUP, kite, snowboard, skate, women's and kids clothes, but now they focus purely on the surf category and are thriving. Anton's shop staff are key local opinion leaders and the shop works through exclusive partnerships with some of the industry's best respected brands.

### Please could you give us a brief history of Waimea.

Jacky Dupin founded the shop in 1976. It was the second surf shop in Europe, after the one by Jo Morais in Biarritz. Now, we're the oldest surf shop in Europe. I'll be turning 47 in 2018 and I've been working at the shop for 25 years: my life has been all about the shop. I started out as a salesman in the board section then I became part owner with 50% of the shares 14 years later, and I bought my partner's shares eight years ago. Today, Waimea covers 95m2 and does 700,000 Euros in sales, of which 20% are online. We have four full-time employees including myself, and one part-time employee seven months of the year.

### Could you explain your product category breakdown (% surfboards, wetsuits, apparel etc)?

15 to 20 years ago it was possible to have a large number of categories: surf, skate, snow, kite surf, women's textile, etc. But trying to do a little bit of everything was a recipe for disaster. Little by little we stopped skateboard, first kids' textile, then women's, SUP, kite surf, bodyboarding, and this winter snowboarding.

I'm much happier today, but when I decided on a drastic cutback, I also took about 200,000 Euros off my year-end sales figures, VAT included. I freed up space and cash flow, which I transferred into a more abundant offer of shortboards, which are products that I know how to sell.

### With which brands do you work the most and why?

Half of the inside of the store is devoted to textile, including a partnership with Hurley in a branded corner. We also stock Vissla, because I like the spirit of the brand, as well as Rusty. Waimea's policy is small, confidential brands not widely distributed.

In the other half of the store there are just surfboards: Firewire and Slater Designs, Channel Islands, ...Lost, Pyzel, Rusty, JS Industries, Hayden shapes, Chilli, and Stretch made in the US. We only sell high-

end shortboards between 600 and 900 Euros. As for wetsuits, we sell Hurley, O'Neill, Vissla, Billabong, Picture Organic, ION and Xcel. As far as accessories go, we sell everything on the market.

### How do you make sure you stay relevant with brand/product selection?

The shop is open everyday. I surf whenever there are waves. I'm fully immersed in the market. All of my sales people are opinion leaders, who know how to surf. They have a certain aura about them and the clients who come into the store listen to what they have to say. I don't follow new trends on the Internet at all. Our online sales don't come from us being good at social media. We're surfers, not Internet technicians. Hashtag this, hashtag that... Whatever!

### What do you predict for the future of surfboard retail?

There are more and more people in the water. The sport itself is just fine. It's the manufacturer – importer/distributor – store supply chain that doesn't work anymore. One of the links will end up being taken out, because there's no longer enough margin in it for everyone. Either the importer/distributors will start selling directly to the consumer or the shops will start buying directly from the manufacturers... Both of which are already happening, actually.

### In your opinion, what does the European surf industry a) do best, and b) need to do better?

The good thing is that there are still a few interlocutors who surf. One surfer can still talk to another. But ¾ of my interlocutors don't surf. They are people from mainstream distribution channels who don't really know the market. They don't care about the manner in which they grow: overproduction, overstocking stores, -50% sales everywhere, lots of private sales, Amazon and Co... They don't worry about it. The surf market is sick. You have to have faith to stick with it.

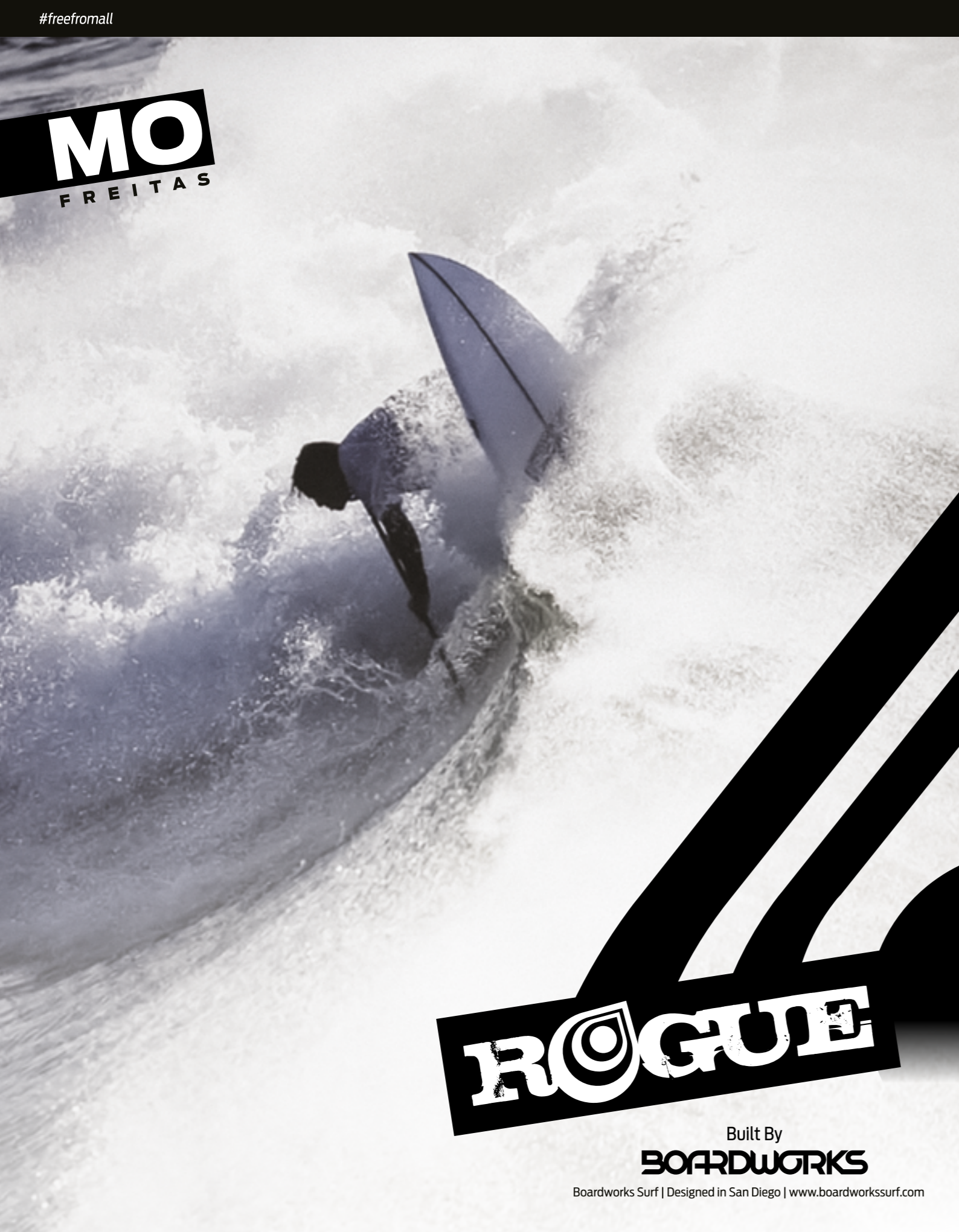
Here's to the next 42 years, Xabi! ☺

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LEGALE MARK SPANORST NORDS TET SURFSET

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Boardworks Surf | Designed in San Diego | www.boardworkssurf.com



photo : Red Paddle

## SUP RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE 2018

The crazy SUP boom is behind us now, but don't worry because a downturn is nowhere in sight. It's more like a levelling off in an upward track, which is helping everyone take a step back and relax in order to plan the next phase of market growth from a more realistic viewpoint. Find out how this vision is playing out in the inflatable and hardboard sectors in our 2018 SUP Retail Buyer's Guide. By **David Bianic**.

Over the course of five years, the inflatable board has played two roles simultaneously in the SUP industry. It has been its best friend, helping the number of SUP practitioners explode at a much greater rate than either of the more elitist race or surf categories. At the same time, and very quickly, the iSUP has also become the worst enemy of the original SUP manufacturers, because by opening up the sport to a wider audience than the traditional boardsport community, it has also attracted manufacturers from outside the boardsport industry and culture, which has clouded the waters and transformed Stand-Up Paddleboarding into a mass consumer product like any other. In 2018, endemic SUP brands are trying to reconcile inflatable and hard boards, all the while trying to communicate the message of an authentic culture to be preserved, since it means added value for everyone, stand-up paddlers and shop owners alike. "One of the keys to growth remains our capability to nurture the paddle community, to the point where when clients buy a board they discover that an actual community and lifestyle exists in which they can take part," hopes Anthony Scaturro, Global Brand Manager for SIC.

Anthony from SIC told us that as far as numbers are concerned, a study undertaken by the firm Kompass for SUPIA (Stand Up Paddle Industry Association) takes a look back at the year 2015 and notes an uptick of 5% in the amount of people who stand-up paddle board. The answer to this slight levelling off is perhaps due to the fact that "more and more people already own a SUP and the rate of renewal isn't as high as it was in the past," answers Benoît Brecq from Ari'i Nui,

before specifying "90% of the market is centred on flat water strolls and recreational outings."

For Gerd Weisner, the Founder of Lightboardcorp, the percentage of market share of inflatable vs. hard is about 95% to 5%: "I'd say you'll find that the market of elite racing boards is currently at 30%/70% between hard and inflatables, while the Touring and All-round categories are almost 100% inflatable, SUP surfboards are 100% hard, but very limited". At the heart of this market guided by a demand for recreational boards, what place is there in shops for the offering of core products?

### INFLATABLE SUP TRENDS

For authentic brands in the SUP sector, the apparent simplicity of the all-round models often hides a considerable amount of work: "The concept of a well-performing product is often poorly perceived in my opinion," insists John Hibbard, Creator of Red Paddle Co., because "we put as much effort into our all-round boards as we do into our elite race boards." As a matter of fact, these introductory boards must set themselves apart through the quality of the materials used to build them and by their longevity, while no-name boards sold on Amazon suffer from a lack of quality manufacturing that are unjustifiable, even with rock-bottom prices. The warranty return rate at Red Paddle Co. is just 0.02% reveals John, while at Jobe Sports inflatables all come with a 3-year warranty, which William Doornekamp affirms is a solid selling point.

*"We are going to develop even better hybrid systems thanks to our belt/stringer technology, because it lets us combine the two strengths of an inflatable construction, which are the lightness of a single layer board and the stiffness of a double layer model." Markus Perrevoort, Siren SUP*



photo : O'neill

This improvement in quality is the result of much attention paid to details like new glues or the way in which the PVC is layered in drop-stitch manufacturing, explains Sylvain Aurenche, the Marketing Manager at Lohahi. The same attention to the little things is making a big difference at Lightboardcorp with a new fin box launch this spring, Ispeedboxx, which is compatible with all US Box fins, but especially that doesn't surpass the level of the hull and "eliminates drag to go faster, and turns out to be sturdier than glued fin boxes", Gerd Weisner assures us. At Hala, a retractable fin (Hala Stompbox) has been included on river models to avoid hooking up on underwater obstacles in rapids.

The quality of accessories is also coming into play, since these iSUPs are most often sold in package form, explains Neal Elbaz, the Head of Product at Poolstar (ZRay, Skiffo, Wattsup, Coasto): "It is important to note that all of our boards are sold as a "bundle" with high quality accessories (wheeled backpacks, pump, paddle, leash, repair kit, strap)."

**ISUP CONSTRUCTIONS: MOSTLY MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO**  
Most manufacturers continue offering two types of construction for two different market positions: a Fusion-style drop-stitch for the high end (two layers assembled with a thermal bonding process using little or no glue) and a single layer (often reinforced by stringers or other strips of material to help strengthen construction) for entry-level and mid-range products: "We are going to develop even better hybrid systems thanks to our belt/stringer technology, because it lets us combine the two strengths of an inflatable construction, which are the lightness of a single layer board and the stiffness of a double

layer model," explains Markus Perrevoort from Siren SUP. In 2018, JP Australia is upping the ante in inflatable construction by offering triple layer models, which "make the boards super firm and solid while decreasing the weight in a spectacular fashion compared to certain competitors," affirms the UK Brand Manager Andy Chambers, while the lightest models weigh in at only 7.9 kilos.

*"Making a board hard is one thing, but a shape that offers optimum stability and gliding properties represents a real challenge." Jack Castle, US Hala Gear*

This race for stiffness in iSUP isn't the only developmental axis, as Jack Castle from the brand US Hala Gear reminds us: "Making a board hard is one thing, but a shape that offers optimum stability and gliding properties represents a real challenge." Hala offers innovative rails (Hala Peño model) that use lower volume drop-stitch tubes. The Germans at Triptix are betting on a completely new construction, VacuuAir technology, which is a multi-chamber board, filled with granules that once they are vacuum packed act as stringers, as rigid as a "bag of vacuum packed coffee", claims founder Stefan Klare. The goal is above all to be able to give a much more "realistic" shape to an inflatable SUP, with well-designed rails, a concave hull and a more balanced rocker. Very exciting on paper, the concept still has to be tested even though the first boards are already showing up in the marketplace after a fundraising campaign on Kickstarter.

# ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES

The all-inclusive SUP range is modern, skilled and addictive! Innovative design features makes this easy-to-transport package engaging for all levels of riding and with a host of constructions to choose from, flat water fun and small surf action has never been better.



BOARD RIDING SINCE 81

RIDERS ADAM LEWIS, KLAAS VOGET, LISA GERTENBACH  
PHOTO JOHN CARTER

f t Instagram YouTube vimeo

WWW.FANATIC.COM/SUP

# FANATIC

*“High-performance shortboards are disappearing little by little, in favour of long SUP and other more polyvalent boards.” Belar Diaz, F-One*



photo : JP Australia

Race remains a flagship category, a veritable showcase for manufacturers' savoir-faire, even if it only generates anecdotal sales figures in comparison with recreational boards. Hollow and triple layer carbon construction at Lightboardcorp, or a choice of three to four widths of the same model (SIC Rocket Ship), the race board is following a price curve inversely proportional to the entry-level iSUP as prices continue going up, up and up: the average price tag in shops varies between 2500€ and 3000€. Last but not least, Surftech offers a treat to SUPer girls, through a women-specific collection, in collaboration with the women outdoor apparel brand prAna. The three hardboards (and two iSUPs), as well as paddles & accessories, display “fabulous aesthetics, with sustainable features, such as the ‘Bloom’ algae based deck pads,” says Richard Priestley.

*“All of the boards are not represented in the stores. It would be physically impossible” Benoit Tréguilly, BIC*

**RENTALS & SCHOOLS**

Since lots of shops on the coast offer a seasonal surf school and rental material, the soft-top SUP is turning out to be an excellent alternative to inflatable boards, like three models by Norden (9'6" and 10'8" surf/all-round, 11' touring) with an EPS core, double wood stringers, reinforced areas under the feet and on the rails, as well as tail and nose blocks integrated into the construction. In the same manner, BIC Sport believes strongly in its Tough-Tec technology for the school/rental market: “By moulding a PE skin on an EPS core, we've managed to produce extremely resistant boards, that are relatively light and for a low cost, with everything produced in France,” points out Communication Manager Benoit Tréguilly. Marketing Director Caren Forbes confides that the rental market is also an opportunity for NSP whose SUPs featuring their E+ construction are highly sought after by rental outlets due to “a bullet-proof coating on the deck and hull,” which is very reassuring for the durability of the boards. Also noteworthy is that the E+ models come with a specially built hole in the nose for keeping rental boards under lock and key. Surftech also place emphasis on the “unbreakable” features of their rental models, the Utility Armour series, “a range of durable, heavily reinforced boards,” says Richard Priestley.

**AVAILABILITY: THE MAIN STRENGTH**

Above and beyond the interest of shops for one model or another – inflatable or hard together – the key to sales is often the availability of boards, due to the dangerous thickening of product catalogues over the last few years, which has multiplied the number of SKUs. “All of the boards are not represented in the stores. It would be physically impossible,” admits Benoit from BIC.

**HARD SUP TRENDS**

Even though SUP hardboards have been relegated to a niche in the global stand-up paddleboard market, they obviously have a place in surf shops and especially SUP surfing models. It started last season, and the trend of a return to longboard-style shapes is becoming clearer in 2018 confirms Belar Diaz, SUP Brand Manager at F-One: “High-performance shortboards are disappearing little by little, in favour of long SUP and other more polyvalent boards.” Easier to handle than more radical micro-SUPs, these SUP longboards are technical nonetheless: “They're designed with thin, low rails, tail fins, and classic noserider outlines,” details Gerd Weisner from Lightboardcorp. A return to “real” surfing also translated by more traditional constructions, confides Andy Wirtz from Norden, whose performance SUP surfboards are abandoning carbon composite materials and are instead coming back to normal surfboard construction: “The boards are less expensive, look better – like a surfboard – and perform better thanks to the way they flex”. Others are also betting on the rise of the hydrofoil in the waves, like Fanatic with its Stubby Foil Edition model equipped with the Foil S1 (sold separately). F-One is promoting its Papenoo Convertible, “the Swiss Army knife of SUP that lets you surf-foil and wind-foil with the same board,” Belar explains in detail. For Maurus Stroble from Indiana SUP, the foil could be a partial solution to the cohabitation problem with other wave riders, “by trying to ride waves that no one was surfing until now, because they're not big or hollow enough.” The brand will bring to market a 7'8" SUP foil next June developed by Gunnar Biniash and Andi Widmann.



photo : APRIL NUI



Log out  
Just paddle



**JP-AUSTRALIA**  
www.jp-australia.com





photo : SIC

*“We are aware that brick and mortar stores are always under pressure and we have created innovative new programs, including marketing strategies to which only our dealers have access” Andrew Mencinsky, Boardworks*

The brands are aware of this and do their best to deal with the constraints of the shops: “We can count on a quality distribution network internationally and we have a central warehouse in Europe with a sufficient amount of stock to supply all demands during the peak of summer,” explain Carin and Craig Gertenbach from Fanatic. It’s the same method of operation at Lightboardcorop, with the only difference being that their hardboards are made in Europe, meaning a delay of four to seven weeks for delivery of a custom order. The importance of a solid B2B-webshop is crucial, points out Maurus from Indiana: “The shops can see which products are available and the products ordered leave the warehouse the same day or the next”. Another solution, which is not incompatible with the first, is to reduce the product offering like at Norden, explains Andy Wirtz: “We try to reduce as much as possible our line and don’t change things every year,” as a results un-sold products don’t lose their value from one season to the next. Reducing the number of models, but also the different types of construction: one board, one construction, adds Andy who says that having “every board in three different constructions is neither necessary, nor functional.”

**PAMPERING YOUR STORE**

Partner is the one word on the lips of every brand, “it’s the only way to envisage things,” affirms Sylvain from Lokahi, before adding that “yes, we need feedback from the shops and yes, we need them to maintain a small stock, otherwise we can’t know which boards to have in stock at the warehouse”. That is why a certain transparency

is necessary where prices are concerned, adds Markus from Siren SUP, whereas “other brands include (future) discounts in their prices, an unfair practice.” Working hand in hand is also an obligation for Boardworks, whose range was entirely reworked for 2018: “We are aware that brick and mortar stores are always under pressure and we have created innovative new programs, including marketing strategies to which only our dealers have access,” states Brand Manager Andrew Mencinsky. The same idea holds true at Jobe Sports, whose online platform Jobe Academy makes it possible “to inform dealers about different products, especially which ones to recommend to which clients,” thanks to videos and questionnaires says William Doornekamp. In order to promote the most proactive dealers who do product tests on a regular basis, SIC offers partnerships using the label Five Star Glide Centre. Rewarding dealers is also the policy at JP Australia: in exchange for their pre-orders, store owners are guaranteed “to be able to satisfy their clients and to obtain the best margins possible,” assures Andy Chambers.

The message is clear: the (low) price battle has perhaps been lost to the fake brands on the web, but the war will be won in the medium term through an ever-tightening partnership between core players, using the best arms available to the SUP industry: quality, innovation and a culture spread via a network of dealers. This is our call to arms! 🗣️

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- Technical added value on iSUPs
- More elaborate iSUP shapes
- Soft-tops for schools/rentals
- Longboard SUPs (hard)
- Foil boards



**Into the blue**

INDIANA SUP & Surf Collection 2018: Hardboards, Inflatable Boards, Foilboards, Paddles, Accessoires. Check out our new boardfinder App and find your board!



# NEW PRODUCTS

## 01 - NORTHCORE SURF STRAPS

The Northcore Surf Straps are a unique board-carrying solution which makes it easy to transport a surfboard to your nearest surf break. The innovative design allows a surfboard to be simply carried on a surfer's back in a similar style to a backpack. Surf Straps are designed to fix a surfboard at an off-vertical angle, allowing free, unobstructed movement when walking, skating or cycling.

[www.northcore-europe.com](http://www.northcore-europe.com)



01

## 02 - THE O'NEILL SLASHER VEST

Defies convention and sets a new industry standard for performance driven technology. The Slasher Vest features O'Neill's exclusive Nylrolite Foam technology, which is 3x lighter, absorbs 15-20% less water and is 10% more buoyant than regular PVC foam. The lightest vest in the water just got lighter, stronger and dries faster than ever.

[www.oneillwetsuits.com](http://www.oneillwetsuits.com)

02



## 03 - TECHNINE SLUGGER BINDING

The Slugger is the brand new binding model from Technine. Featuring the Split Base Technology built around a Nylon frame resulting in a light, performing and affordable binding.

[www.technine.com](http://www.technine.com)

03



## 04 - ROLLERBONE SHABBY

### 1.0 CLASSIC BALANCE BOARD SET

RollerBone is expanding its line of Balance Board products with new designs. The RollerBone Shabby 1.0 in a trendy surf look, appeals mainly to water and board athletes and wants to inspire them specifically for training on the board. For this purpose, Rollerbone has realized the first project in collaboration with Hamburg artist Flemming Peter, whose label Shabby Surf Art has become a household name in the surfing scene in recent years. The classic role is made of soft PVC foam, which is also ideal for Fasziens training.

[www.rollerbone.com](http://www.rollerbone.com)

04



## 05 - NORTHCORE BEACH BASHA PRO

Every changing robe you'll ever need - 4 season, 2 layers, 1 essential bit of kit. The hard shell cleverly zips onto the inner toweling robe to produce a rugged changing robe. Not only can the Beach Basha Pro be worn as a complete set in Autumn/Winter, it's possible to use the inner layer only during the Spring/Summer. Also available in Red and Blue.

[www.northcore-europe.com](http://www.northcore-europe.com)

05



## 06 - DAKINE JJF SIGNATURE TAIL PAD

Dakine partnered with John John Florence, to bring you this custom designed traction pad. Triple cut posi-traction was designed for John John's specific dimensions and aggressive riding style, while the five-piece traction design allows for adjustability, whether being used on an everyday thruster or step-up board. The addition of perforated surface allows water to flow through the kick while eliminating drag. All John John Florence products are packaged using sustainable recycled cardboard products with zero plastic - keeping our oceans clean for tomorrow.

[www.dakine.com](http://www.dakine.com)

06



# SANTA FADE STAND UP PADDLE

10'6 X 33" X 5"



**O'NEILL**  
oneill@one-kin.com



photo : O'Neill

## WAKEBOARDING VESTS RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE 2018

The vest is one of the first items purchased by a wakeboarder. At a wake park, as the rider progresses they want to move away from the bulky hire vests and get something more flexible, comfy and stylish. For the boat owners, it is almost a compulsory purchase. **By Tim Woodhead.**

It's worth highlighting some legal and EU standards that effect the product design. Tom Copsey from O'Neill states: "All impact vests in Europe, by law, must be CE tested and certified for their protection against impact with water." In addition to this you have to comply with ISO 12402 for buoyancy, if you want to be legally classed as a buoyancy aid.

The market can be split in terms of rider ability. The beginner and weekend warrior market want the more buoyant and thicker vests and the better you get, the more flexible and comfy a vest you want. This is summed up by Jetpilot: "If you're an elite rider you want less foam, if you're a beginner you want more." O'Neill have noticed that there is a significant difference between boat and wake park riding styles: "We find that the cable riders wear the thinner vests with more flexibility and less protection but boat riders and coastal users often want a certified buoyancy aid design with more protection too." Certainly over the last decade the advanced riders wanted more flexible and lighter vests and the majority of brands still see this. But with all wake parks now looking like floating skate parks, recently some brands have seen demand for a thicker vest. Jobe said "At first we believed wake park consumers only wanted thin comp vests but this isn't entirely true, we see a shift here towards thicker vests," and Mystic say "we saw a big growth in our top end line last season, the feedback from the shops was that it was because we offered some of the thickest impact vests, riders are hitting bigger obstacles and crashing harder, so we need to offer the protection they need without compromising fit and flex."

Many brands have removed the pullover style vests from their lines. A decade ago this was a popular style, but demand is now moving to the front zip vests. CWB note "over the past few years we've gone away from the pullover style for an easy-to-access front zip vest" and Matt Campbell at Hyperlite stats that "front zips are the easiest to use and the most popular."

Look, textures, design and fashion are becoming more and more important, especially for the intermediate and above riders. Ronix

say, "we aim to design and develop jackets that people will actually want to wear, designing more towards a fashion piece, and outerwear look," and Sooruz get most of their style direction from the wake park market.

Liquid Force have different looks for the wake park and boat market: "As Liquid Force has enjoyed success in the cable market we are looking to this market for colour trends and features. The jackets for the boating and surfing markets demand different colour schemes suited to the boating attitude and environment." In general vests are taking plenty of style from the streets, with colour palettes getting darker, more urban design features, including unique textures, fabrics and logo effects.

When it comes down to the tech, everyone is trying to get the right balance of flexibility and comfort with buoyancy and protection. Mystic are using an NBR foam: "This is a stiffer foam we place down the back panels that spreads the load much more than regular foam on impact. So on the most vulnerable areas you have the most possible protection, without losing flex by having it all over the vest." Jetpilot have just developed E360™ neoprene, which is the first of its kind with 360-degree flexibility.

Eco is becoming more of a selling point for brands. Picture are as eco as possible: "We designed an eco-friendly crash jacket partly composed with Limestone (zero oil) for the foam and recycled polyester for the inside and outside fabric." ION offer PVC free foam inside of the vest which is more environmental friendly than PVC foam and Sooruz "always try to mix the best efficiency with eco-friendly development. We only use PVC free foams, we use recycled polyester and we have our the ORGANIC, which is a product that uses Naturalprene, PVC free foam, water-based prints and glue; all the last eco-friendly technologies."

In summary, it's good bye to pullover style, hello to urban look and experimental fabrics and make sure you know if your customers want flexibility, protection or buoyancy! 📞



JAMES WINDSOR - **KAESSEN SUYDERHOUD** - JULES CHARRAUD - QUINN SILVERNALE - WES GUMPEL - SYLVAIN ANTOINE - CLEMENT DE PREMONVILLE - LEO LABADENS



HELMETS



VESTS



WETSUITS



SURFWEAR

Over 19 years of experience, we progress every year to develop best innovative products with performance, quality and durability. We use our passion for watersports and the rider's vision to innovate and identify news and smarter solutions. From last news regarding fabrics, trends and technologies, we put our philosophy in our products development process to offer the best performance. Our R&D team tests the longevity and experiments products in the ocean in order to collect precious feedback to know what works and what should be modified. Thereby, we put on the market only tested and optimized products.

Informations on  
[surfwear.sooruz.com](http://surfwear.sooruz.com)  
INTERNATIONAL  
[export@sooruz.com](mailto:export@sooruz.com)  
Phone : +33(0) 5 46 34 67 54



## UNDERWEAR

### RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE 2019

Boardsports-specific underwear becomes a retail fixture in 2019 with premium materials, stylish graphics, and rider-approved innovations. By Boardsport SOURCE Skateboarding **Dirk Vogel**.

The underwear segment has gained solid traction in retail over the past 12 months and a dozen brands with genuine boardsports roots are pushing the market forward with style, innovation and the kind of functionality our athletes require.

"Underwear that solves a problem that male athletes have been dealing with for years is of the utmost importance," said Nora Shaughnessy, Director of Product at BN3TH (formerly MyPackage Apparel), one of several brands offering specifically tailored performance underwear. "Premium fit and quality continue to drive the purpose for existence in the market. Design and athlete collaboration definitely make the underwear specific to the boardsports context," said Nathan Hill at Stance Europe.

#### MARKET & PRICING

Formerly marketed around graphics and flair – similar to boardsports sunglasses ten years ago – underwear has matured. "We are embracing technology and recognizing that men are willing to pay a premium price for quality product," said Darren Wilcox, Brand Manager UK at SAXX, who help retailers with unique torso mannequins explaining their form-fitting BallPark Pouch. Prices in the premium segment can go up to €35.00 per pair for breathable tech and upscale fabrics from brands including Moskova, Mons Royale, SAXX, Ethika, Pally 'Hi, SuperNatural and Stance. Much of the action is focused between €19.95 and €24.95, as confirmed by the likes of Stance and True Boxers. Hamburg-based Lousy Livin' Underwear remain focused on democratic price points, with graphic boxers for €14.99 and chequered and plain styles at €12.99. UK-brand Bawbags segments into Cotton Originals (£12.50), technical Cool De Sacs (£15.00) and the premium VIB range (£20.00).

#### CUTS & CONSTRUCTIONS

Now, briefs with visible branding on the waistband are the hot construction in 2019, striking the perfect blend between close fit, anatomical support and range of motion. This season's boxer briefs run longer on the inseam, a noticeable trend across brands. "Our new VIB premium range is cut with a slightly longer leg, and a more generous 'baw pouch' for extra comfort," said Robbie Kerr-Dineen, designer at UK-based Bawbags. Inseam lengths have increased up to 6.5 inches in many collections, mostly for functional reasons. "The longer length holds the underwear in place and prevents it from riding up," said Oriol Latorre, International Market Director at Ethika. Moskova even goes up to nine inches. "Our best-selling boxer briefs have been re-worked with a longer leg, and are slim-fitting for smooth layering," said Juan Gonzalez-Vega, CEO and Co-Founder, Moskova Underwear. Boxer shorts also step up their game in 2019. This includes the one-piece construction at True Boxers, which "guarantees that everything stays in place," said Marcus Stadler at True Boxers. A handful of brands offer leggings, especially for snow athletes, and Supernatural is getting a great response with ¾ length. Retailers, also look for matching undershirts, socks, and lounge pants from several brands for a full package.

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*"Underwear that solves a problem that male athletes have been dealing with for years is of the utmost importance," said Nora Shaughnessy, Director of Product at **BN3TH***

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#### MATERIALS

Merino wool, with its natural antibacterial and moisture-wicking properties, still reigns supreme in the premium segment. "Merino has always been the choice from both a sustainable and technical garment perspective," said Hamish Acland, Founder and Director of Mons Royale, who source according to the ZQ Merino standard. Stance divides the line into Poly Blend, Combed Cotton and premium Butter Blend, "a milk based fabric that is nourishes the skin, is odour resistant & luxuriously soft."

As a major surprise for 2019, cotton is making a comeback in new-and-improved technical blends. Lousy Livin have switched to a carbonized fabric finish across the line and Horsefeathers includes viscose modal blended with elastane. BN3TH relies on, "antimicrobial performance modal [and] wicking and antimicrobial polyester, and a premium brushed performance polyester." SAXX developed a new cotton collection called Undercover with a super soft cotton-modal blend, while brands across the board combine cotton with stretchable fabrics.

#### STYLE & INNOVATION

"Consumers are starting to look at underwear as a fashion and function category, where in the past it was just about function," said Oriol at Ethika. Loud graphics are big on the agenda, including standouts such as: neon and stripes at Mons Royale, classic outdoors camo at SAXX, florals and tie-dye at Stance, photorealistic cosmos prints at BN3TH, checkers and funny graphics (including the "Boobs" model) at Horsefeathers, pop art tomato soup graphics at Bawbags, street artist collabs at Lousy Livin, tropical greens and proprietary silicon waistband logos at Moskova, as well as floral patterns at True Boxers.

Fashionable black is also trending next season – especially in premium collections like the new Moskova M2 line, which also adds compression-like fits and perforated ventilation panels. Speaking of tech, brands are also pushing flatlock stitching and ultra-stretch waistbands, while SAXX caters to water sports with the Kinetic line. Stance incorporates a core flex waistband and a Feather-seam panel construction that eliminates stitch irritation across the line, plus Wholester support pouches in select models. On that note, the biggest tech talking point remains with sewn-in, protective pouch compartments that support the "package" on those ballsy landings. True to this season's motto: Man's best friend is in good hands – with boardsports underwear. 🍆



photo - Sebas Romero



Safe Travels



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**eXomesh® slashguard**  
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Stainless steel reinforced straps.



**PopNLock security clip**  
Fast action detachable buckle, allows you to secure your bag to a fixed object easily and efficiently.



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RFID blocking material (10MHz – 3 GHz)

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## NOLLA

Nolla are producing drinking vessels to combat plastic waste and are delivering them with a clear message – protect the environment. Coming in a range of styles, the people at Nolla are from action sports backgrounds and are setting out to protect the outdoor environment we all love so much against the ever-increasing amount of plastic in circulation.

### **Please give an overview of how and why the company began?**

The idea to give the future generations a chance to enjoy nature in the same way we got to know our playground had been growing in our minds for many years. A healthy environment provides nutrients that flow up the food chain, from plants to animals, to us humans. The nutrients are then recycled to repeat the process. By preserving nature, the planet and all its inhabitants are guaranteed a constant supply of clean water and fresh air. Nolla wants to contribute to this necessity and give back, where nature needs us.

### **What is the company ethos and how is this carried into the products at Nolla?**

The Motivation:  
By 2050, there will be more plastic than fish in the world's oceans. An official report states that: "each year, at least 8 million tons of plastics leak into the ocean - which is equivalent to dumping the contents of one garbage truck into the ocean every minute. If no action is taken, this is expected to increase to two per minute by 2030 and four per minute by 2050." I don't like using over dramatic images, to scare people into anything, but as the results of such pollution are not visible immediately, this matter needs to be illustrated in a very clear way.

The Goal:  
Let's reduce plastic waste. There are many

ways to help reduce plastics in the oceans as well as in our landfills such as switching to reusable drinking bottles, cups and cloth shopping bags and many more. The main goal is not to sell our bottles, but to introduce solutions to people to choose whatever kind of reusable product over a disposable product.

The products:  
With our products we want to bring reusable options within reach for each and everyone, so that disposable products won't even be an alternative any more. To underline our commitment to change habits from disposable to reusable, we partnered with the organisation 1% For The Planet. 1% for the Planet membership is all about taking responsibility and giving back. Businesses that join the organisation commit to giving 1% of total sales each year to our approved non-profit partners.

### **What do you find important about the European market?**

I think in Europe there is still a big discrepancy between the different countries and their awareness of the need to react and to change habits from disposable to reusable options. Education, over all territories combined, is key on this matter, without being too pedantic. The awareness about a real problem exists all over Europe, which is a good thing. Also people are looking for easy-to-realize solutions that help them do their part, but there is still a lot to do, and hopefully with our products and our

communication we can do our part as well.

### **Why should retailers sell your innovations?**

In addition to all the above and more ethical reasons, we offer a well-priced product range, and a comfortable margin for retailers. Knowing that we give 1% of the total sales each year to 1% for the Planet, retailers also know, that they are dealing with products that support a better tomorrow. Basically we offer a competitive product range that also gives retailers a good conscious to preserve nature.

### **What do you see for the future of your company, any new products in the pipeline?**

We are about to receive the first delivery of products, so it's a bit early to talk about the next product range, but of course we are already working on future products. The goal is to extend the range from reusable bottles over to reusable food-containers and other accessories, to help people avoid as many disposable products as possible.

### **What do you see as the future of the industry?**

Bio, Green, Eco, Fairtrade, etc. these are all tendencies that we see more and more in all kinds of markets and the boardsports market included. This concerns not only all kinds of markets, but also all kinds of product segments. I think there is a big and fast growing trend towards this direction right now and we will see more and more eco-responsible products and concepts. 🌱



## SCRT

SCRT are a London-based streetwear label making a big noise among the more fashion conscious of the UK (and Europe's) skate scene. Specialising in artist collaborations and based in London's East End, SCRT are an indie brand with a great buzz. Creative Director Chris Narey chews the fat.

### Tell us about SCRT.

We're a London based independent streetwear / menswear label who've been around in some form since 2010. Started as small self funded project working with local artists to produce short runs of exclusive design, we have since grown into a full brand collaborating with creatives from around the world

### Who's behind SCRT and what experience do they bring to the brand?

We've always been a pretty small team. Adam and I founded the brand in 2010, we've had a few people come and go over the years but it's always been us two at the core.

We approached the project with next to no experience and have very much learnt as we've gone. Fortunately, we're surrounded by some fantastic people who have helped us hugely along the way. We are very much still learning day by day.

### What steps did you take to get the brand off the ground?

The first few years were pretty rocky. I don't think we accounted for was just how hard it was going to be to get our name out in what was, and still is an increasingly saturated market. Collaborations and strong social presence are what helped get us moving.

### What advice would you give to startup brands?

That we've got it covered. You need to make sure you're doing something better or something different. There is so much competition these days. People are getting bored of 'T-Shirt brands', but it's extremely tough to walk into cut and sew. Make sure you have a strong identity and avoid doing basic brand name logo tees. Call in all and any favours.

### What makes SCRT different from other skate brands in the industry?

Probably the number of collaborations we do, we'll always try and get at least 1 new collaborator on board with each drop. That used to mean a t-shirt design but we're able to do more interesting things now, be that a hat, a wallet, a pin etc.

### What three words describe SCRT the best and how are these carried into your products and marketing campaigns?

Creative – Through collaborations, cut and sew, and how we work. We're always trying to support and push creativity, we want new concepts and ideas introduced with each drop. With every collection we'll look at what worked and what we can improve on. It helps keep things fresh both behind the scenes and in what we put out.

Function – This is what we build our cut and sew around, we want our clothes to be as fit for

every day use with materials that will last. More and more we're looking at what we can do with materials to get the most out of a garment.

Independent – This is carried across pretty much everything we do, from who we're working with on a new design, to where we're stocked. Generally, independents support other independents and it helps cultivate creativity and community.

### Have you got any interesting collaborations lined up?

Always, we're working on a number of projects at the moment with other artists and brands, but as a rule we keep that quiet until it's ready.

### Who would you like to work with?

There are a few things we'd love to do but in order to do them right we'd want to work with a specialist. Shoes and boards especially, so collaborations in those areas are definitely something we'll be looking at.

### How do you support local artists and British skaters?

Supporting artists is at the core of what we do. Every drop will have a collab and we'll always credit who we work with. We've recently started doing artist features which go out in our mailshots and on the News section of the webstore. It's something we're always looking to build on. ☺



## FURBERG

Furberg Snowboards are a range of beautifully crafted freeride snowboards coming out of Norway and is the brainchild of former professional snowboarder Daniel Furberg. CEO Hampus Cederholm has given us an insight into what they stand for and what plans they have for the future.

### Please give an overview on how and why the company began?

Freeride skis were revolutionised during the 2000s, while the snowboard industry was passively watching. Long sidecut radius and camber under foot was combined with rocker and reverse sidecut towards the tip and tail of the skis. As a result, skis had better stability, floatation and were more effortless to ride. Simply put, freeride skiing became easier. It seemed obvious that these principles would work for snowboards as well. Thus, in 2009, Daniel Furberg founded Furberg Snowboards. The shape that revolutionised freeride skis turned out to work just as well for snowboards.

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

Daniel Furberg combined a Masters degree in mechatronic engineering with a professional snowboard career. He has been ranked among the top 10 freeride snowboarders in the world and has taken part in the Freeride World Tour. Since day one, Daniel's main focus has been product development. I have a background in the clothing and outdoor industry. I worked in production management and marketing and have been a part of Furberg Snowboards since 2012 and am now the company's CEO and head of Sales and Marketing. We also have a lot of help from our team riders, ambassadors, splitboard guides and friends. Furberg Snowboards has become a big family.

### What sets you apart from your competitors?

The quality of our boards and their unique shapes. No other snowboard brand - to our knowledge - offers boards with long sidecut

radii combined with rocker and reverse sidecut in nose and tail. This makes our boards stable and forgiving at high speed while remaining catch-free and manoeuvrable in any situation. There's a common misconception that our boards are made only for powder because of their outstanding performance in powder conditions. However, the best feature of our boards is their performance in less than ideal conditions. Quality has always been a top priority for us. Therefore, we use a thicker base than the industry standard and wood cores built from 100% poplar. To make an eco-friendly board you not only have to consider the environmental impact of production and shipping, but also the board's lifespan.

### What do you find important about the European market?

Innovation and quality are important factors when selling in Europe. Customers are getting more selective and do a lot of research before buying, but are willing to pay for quality. The fact that we have highly unique and qualitative products has been a big advantage for us and our retailers. We see more retailers asking for products with two-year life cycles in order to avoid discounting. Therefore, we have decided to meet their needs by not changing our designs every year.

### How do you support athletes and boardsports?

We support a wide range of riders, from Freeride World Tour athletes to local talents, photographers, etc. Our team riders and ambassadors are given support through free or heavily discounted materials. The level of support we provide them depends on their

contributions to the brand. One of our future goals is to create a budget that helps our athletes reach their personal goals.

### Where are you manufacturing your snowboards?

We have always used European raw materials. Therefore, we always wanted our boards to be produced in Europe. NBL in Poland had the best quality and flexibility in terms of prototyping among the factories we were considering, which made the choice of factory easy. Since Europe is our biggest market, the factory location allows us to keep shipping boards and raw materials to a minimal environmental impact.

### How are you distributed in Europe?

Besides our head office and warehouse in Sogndal, Norway, we also have an office and warehouse in Innsbruck, Austria. Innsbruck is a strategic location because it provides fast delivery to the entire EU and has great access to mountains. The location also brings us to the centre of the European market, making it easy for us to participate in test events and visit shops.

### What do you see for the future of the industry?

We've seen an increase in backcountry snowboarding and splitboarding the last few years. There have been major developments in splitboard binding design, but there is still room for improvement of the total performance. We're dedicating a lot of resources to improving the performance of our splitboards and we believe it's the key to further growth in this market. We are happy to see that more companies are also working hard on developing eco-friendly products. ☺



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The early snowfall brought winter sports and snowboarding back into consumers' minds in Germany, who took advantage of the conditions and toiled up. Shops and industry gratefully adjusted to the prevailing conditions and relieved themselves of old stock, thus providing a stable basis for the snowboard market that will benefit from the new carving and powder board trends.

Michael Press from MC agency (Salomon) says "not everything is super great yet, but there is a new tendency that makes more sense and works better. Railslide in Frankfurt am Main is a good example, who are back in business and gave snowboarding another chance last season. Yet those sports retailers that only sold snowboards when it was attractive are dropping out more and more. Those who only bought the standard range with entry-level models are on the decrease. Specialization is where it's leading to."

Andy Threimer from K2 explains: "The classic Intersport and Sport 2000 retailers are opting out of the snowboard business. But those who focus on snowboarding are seeing growth. This winter makes us very optimistic for good growth. I don't think many shops have too much old stock and imagine that most will be pretty well sold out by the end of the season, so they can make a healthy pre-order again. There's a new market space opening up for snowboard specialists who are keeping their eyes open and are well prepared online too. The kids segment in particular has a lot of potential and we still get a lot of requests from consumers looking for high-end equipment for their offspring and can't find anything on the market."

Simon Sander from S Brett in Mannheim, who is celebrating his shop's five year anniversary, reports good turnover of outerwear and boots at the beginning of the season. "We're really happy with that! The Burton Step On bindings gave great momentum as well. Compared to last season you really feel that we have more snow. Since we aren't in the mountains ourselves, conditions in the Black Forest are important for us, so people can go riding there - which is really noticeable this year. We don't have a lot of stock left. And if the season continues as it started, it's gonna be a great one!"

Simon's prognosis for 2018 stays on those positive lines: "We'll go forward and won't just bury our heads in the sand like many others but give snowboarding a real chance. Well positioned and with good employees, viewing yourself as a specialist in this segment, there's definitely room to grow." Still he's wishing for better support for smaller shops from brands to be able to stand his ground against big chains and online shops in future. The longboard business has become very quiet, but skateboarding grew between 20-30% in Mannheim in 2017, raising hopes for the following year.

Nils Gebbers from 24/7 distribution got the impression that retailers have successfully made the switch by now and coped with the decline in longboarding, after a couple of shops were caught with their pants down in previous years. "2017 has been a lot calmer and skateboard hardware is continuously developing positively. The European and German market had been flooded with longboards, as a lot of US manufacturers had used our continent to get rid of stock levels. This profoundly damaged our market, yet the overstock-situation seems to be dying down now, creating more demand again for certain longboard products. Skateboarding will continue to grow, there was a clear increase again in the second half of the year. Well-known completes show a positive tendency as well and it looks like more people are

taking up skateboarding again, looking for quality when it comes to hardware."

At the stylish Stay On in Koblenz, which has been in business for eight years and is in a new location since November, Felix Alterauge doesn't see room for improvement in the longboard segment anymore - the hype is over. "Our focus is on a couple of smaller brands as the bigger names are everywhere and I don't find it sensible to compete with shops like Snipes & Co. You have to find your niche! In the long run it's going to be difficult for stationary retailers to stay afloat in this industry. Shop rents and incidental expenses are rising and turnover in the skate segment is shrinking! The main part of the customer base, the young ones, shop online. Paying expensive rents with little revenue is difficult. To be honest, I'm pretty pessimistic for our industry. I just heard that the number of packages that our local mailman delivers has risen 100% compared to last year. This is increasing steadily while sales in our segment are decreasing. And I don't really think it's up to the industry to regulate this, but politics. Amazon isn't paying any taxes in Germany but is allocated employees from the job centre to ensure they improve their numbers by the end of the year. Looking at the bigger picture though, people work there for two months and are then are unemployed again. The whole system is broken and needs a complete overhaul. Of course you have to keep up with the times but it can't be that Amazon is making billions without paying a single Euro in this country!"

The development of skate parks in Germany on the other hand is looking pretty good though, as Andreas Schützenberger from IOU Ramps reports. "Projects are growing and are more accepted - developing really positively. The Olympics may give a bit of additional momentum but shouldn't be overestimated either. Bigger cities will surely be getting some indoor parks, Düsseldorf is already offering a little 'preview' and also park builders will benefit, as with raising acceptance in skateboarding more parks will be built." As advice for retailers he says: "Do and don't complain. Go out there, show initiative, appeal to the kids and get the next generation of skateboarders into your shops. Many of the so-called core shops are too cool and only grumble about scooters, which shows that something's going wrong in this business. But the shops are only one part, distributions and the industry play theirs as well. Shops don't necessarily have to invest money but should instead look after the local scene by staying in contact with their community and show the benefits that skateboarding has. Unfortunately we lost a generation to scooters, I'm not sure what the reason is for that but if you look at them, you see that they're definitely interested in skating. You simply have to take them by the hand!"

For the SUP market, Carsten Kurmis from CK-Surf Distribution (Starboard) sees continuing growth in 2018, as a lot of consumers who started with affordable entry models are upgrading their gear and are specialising in race or white water. With their new double chamber system, Starboard also promote safety for those who want to venture even further away from the shore - a topic that premium brands in general will benefit from. SUP has shown regional differences - the South had an advantage as rental stations were struggling with bad weather, but in general business was good everywhere. More smaller brands will provoke more fragmentation in sales, yet Carsten is still estimating growth in turnover for 2018.

Jochen Bauer

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So my goal is to get through this article without mentioning the B-Word (B-Rexit) but much will depend on the conversations with the stores. Let's see how we get on.

At the time of writing this (late March) the UK is just escaping the clutches of some record snowfalls and, in typical UK style, the country came to a halt after the first 20mm fell. The UK is not built for snow, and does not have the infrastructure to cope - yet the costs to the overall economy are put at more than £1b a day. Surely that's enough to invest in a decent snowplough or two!

One thing the weather did do is drive up sales of outerwear no doubt helping many retailers to make space on their shelves. ISPO and Slide have come and gone, the Ski Test has been and gone and brands are busy trying to pick up those last minute orders before the order books finally slam shut with a great big thud. Snow conditions around Europe have certainly helped the business and it is fair to say that there is generally a positive vibe amongst the industry. There is actually also a positive vibe in the UK (when it comes to spending money) - credit card debt increased again in January with an additional £1.4bn of consumer borrowing. Like it or hate it this is a clear indicator that money is being spent. Let's just hope that it's kept under control and that some of this spending finds it's way to your tills. The air of optimism spreads to our industry too. When I spoke to Ben at Big Dreams he was his usual buoyant self although did comment that the season had thrown up some surprises: "October started quiet, November was good, December turned out to be outstanding and January mirrored December so I am certainly not complaining." So what were the surprises? "Hardware has not been as good as I thought it would be - it's been steady and we're missing those customers who come in looking for a complete setup. People are much more careful with their money nowadays - whether or not it is Bre..." I stopped Ben in his tracks and moved the conversation on asking Ben if there had been any other surprises "Yeah. Girls. The female kit is just not selling and I cannot figure it. I've got enough stock to get me through so I've not ordered anything new. Something's not quite right but I am not sure what. Apart from that clothing has been really good - very happy with that and stuff is still selling." (This is late March remember).

Finally I had to ask Ben how ski was going for him. Those of you that read this article regularly may recall that Ben decided to go into ski a few years back. He didn't want to but felt he had to. So how was it? "We're out! It sold OK for a couple of years but we're no longer selling ski. We've got enough on with snowboarding. The shop's busy and the workshop is overloaded so I'm focussing on what I know best". Ben has just become the proud owner of a Campervan and during his extended summer break he may be heading your way - so look out for him. Closing his doors in May (apart from 'by appointment') and reopening in early September - sounds great.

Henry at Shore was also pretty buoyant: "We've had our best year ever which, after 36 years, is pretty good! Online and in store are both showing more than double digit growth. Christmas was a great end to 2017 and the surf conditions early in 2018 got us off to a flying start tracking well above last year." As upbeat as Henry was there were still some concerns. "Board sales are stable, they're not growing and I do have a concern that some of the higher end brands will perhaps end up going direct to try and protect their market share. Only time will tell but

it's obviously not what I want to see. What I want is for the business to be directed through sensible retailers like Shore"

He continued: "Currently the neoprene market is a classic example of a race to the bottom. Over supply leads to dumping and with the larger brands feeling threatened by 'direct-to-market' brands they simply push and push more numbers into the market driving prices down and bringing on new doors who are only interested in EDI integrations and not the actual product"

Concern was expressed about the SurfDome changes: "Not sure how they are going to play it but we hope that they will become a more stable, sensible business. At least the new owner is someone from within the industry whereas other recent large industry 'sell-outs' have been to people outside the industry who will be interested in one thing, and one thing only. That is simply going to lead to more downward price pressure which we have all seen before from the previous SurfDome model."

Simon at Sessions Surf & Skate has two shops - both in the West Country - and in the heart of the UK's surf business. So how has the winter been? "Hit and miss to be honest. Of course we always struggle with winters and so it's to be expected and we have to roll with it. The run-up to Christmas was pretty good and the holiday period itself delivered better than expected results - we ended the year just a little bit higher than last year which is not bad given that we had six weeks of rubbish weather during the main summer season. If it were not for that we'd be well up."

So what's good and what's not? "Wetsuits are slow. The mild weather at the back end of last year did not help at all and as neoprene is a big part of our business it's important to us. Skate has also done well in our Penzance store whereas here [Falmouth] it's always slow on skate at this time of year." Penzance is blessed with not one, but two skate parks hence the difference.

Looking forward Simon was pretty optimistic: "Despite the current weather [snow] which grinds almost everything to a halt I am optimistic. The year got off to a reasonable start and this has continued through February. March, of course, will be impacted by the weather but being a 'student town' we do get pretty good all year trade."

Finally I managed to catch up with the Paul from Zuma Jays - always a pleasure to talk to and always upbeat but straight talking. As is expected a traditional English conversation starts with the weather "Snow. Lots of it. Bodyboards as sledges - selling them all day long." Theirs is always an upside with Paul. "The surf at last is coming through although a bit too late to rescue winter wetsuit sales. We've had to go on sale - which is a shame - but got to be done and it is getting the sale done. Can't sit on them." And looking forward? "The early Easter means it is going to be a cold one but should get us off to a good start. Word is that accommodation bookings in the town [Bude] are good with local hotels, apparently "full to the gunnels" and the new Premier Inn was already fully booked out for August - before it was even completed."

Paul did actually mention the 'B-Word' but I ran out of space... sorry!

**Gordon Way**



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The economic recovery has well and truly arrived. Since the start of 2018, in France numerous studies have showed the effects: unemployment is going down with 8.6% of the working age population unemployed in the last quarter of 2017 (the lowest level since 2009), and growth at close to 2%. Predictions for the coming year are positive, job creation seems to continue its progression and growth, be it at a global level, at its highest in eight years, expected to be 3.7% in 2018 or a European level at 2.4%, which is once again good.

On top of that, the Banque de France raised its predictions for growth of Gross Domestic Product in 2018 to 1.9%. This positive change of its outlook for 2018 is due to previous strong momentum. Domestic demand should stay dynamic, with an acceleration of household spending linked to a stable job market and a turnaround in salaries, as well as fiscal measure meant to increase purchasing power to be put into place at the end of 2018. Has this very positive economic context for the start of 2018, accompanied by a high level of snowfall this season had a positive impact on traffic and sell through in shops?

One thing seems clear and unanimous, the level of snowfall and snow quality were very good this year. "And it was good for the morale", confessed Bertrand Betin from the Endless Winter shop in Courchevel. Tim Bourgeois from All Bro's in Toulouse added, "we had really good snow and weather this season, but the Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang may have also played a role this winter." For Tim the season was pretty good in terms of traffic and sales. "Even if we're far from the figures of a few years ago." At Endless Winter, Bertrand spoke of "rather stable traffic in February and March, but on the whole lower than years past." At Newrider in Antibes, Pierre Samray has also noted a decrease over the last four years. He told us: "In spite of beautiful weather this year, in the last 3 years without snow people have lost the habit of going to the shop. Moreover, competition from the Internet is getting stronger and Black Friday at the start of the season is truly detrimental." At Snow Problemo Saint Lary Soulan, Laurent Sarramea remarked that "in general, traffic was pretty good and sales were pretty stable. But the weather played a few tricks on us, with bad weather forecasts for the weekends which kept overall traffic down when in reality the weather was nice in the resort."

Overall, sales of hardgoods seems to have gone rather well. As for boards at Snow Problemo, the all-mountain segment came out on top for brands like CAPiTA and Burton. At Newrider in Antibes, "Lib-Tech blew up with a 100% sell-through rate this season. I also sold a lot of boards from a small French brand called Furlan, that sells a bit more every year." On the other hand he's noticed a slight slow down in sales of Burton: "I've still got some boards at the end of the season, which never used to happen in the past, most likely because the brand is available everywhere, most notably online." For Pierre, splitboarding is the segment he's trying to develop: "Even if it's still a niche market, more and more people are looking for the freedom you find off-piste, and with the rise in price of lift tickets and the amount of snow there was this year we saw an increase in sales and rentals of that kind of board this season." At All Bro's, Tim commented, "this year the shorter snowboards with a surfer outline and swallow tails sold pretty well." CAPiTA had the best sell through for them, as opposed to sales of Arbor, which were down in spite of their superb construction and wood veneer finish, perhaps caused by a slightly too elevated price point. In Courchevel, Bertrand suffered somewhat from the "ritzy" image that the press tends to give the resort. "15 years ago, there were eight snowboard shops. Today, we're the only one left, which

doesn't necessarily mean we sell more boards than before. In addition, the heavy snowfall didn't work in the favour of the large resorts, because the clientele spread out and went to lower altitude resorts. However, due to the snow quality there was an uptick in the number of snowboarders. Now that the first generation of snowboarders has children, they are attracted to the same sport as their parents." The brands that sold the best in Courchevel were Jones because its freeride image appeals to the 40-somethings and Lib-tech, which is popular with younger riders.

As far as other snowboard products, boots and bindings sold through well as Bertrand explained: "These are spontaneous purchases that require real advice in the store as opposed to boards where the competition from online sales is huge." As far as the most popular brands Union, Flow and Drake are the ones mentioned the most often by salespeople. Nonetheless, Tim from All Bro's notes that "more and more people who come into the store to try on boots are just there to get information then go look for the best price online." To avoid that, he said "since we can waste lots of time helping people try on our boots who actually have no intention of buying them in the shop, we're thinking of putting into place a fee for advice and to try on hard wear that is deducted from the price if the client makes a purchase, which is already commonplace in other countries."

Goggles are another product category that worked well this winter, with all salespeople reporting strong sell-through rates. "The weather conditions encouraged clients to buy new product. They need it, so they buy it", Bertrand said. Concerning brands, Smith, Oakley and Anon are mentioned most often.

As for textile, technical wear sold fairly well, especially pants and jackets. Once again this season Picture, 686 and Volcom were favourites while at All Bro's sell-through of technical wear from Burton decreased slightly.

On the coast the winter was rather calm and warm. "The weather on the Atlantic coast was windy and rather capricious", said Romain Petit from the Aulona shop in Auray. "Sales of neoprene started rather late this winter due to the weather," he noted, in spite of a good sell-through rate from O'Neill. As for hardgoods, even though it was winter he sold a decent amount of material destined for the general public, especially inflatable SUPs, and surfboards for beginners and intermediates. Farther south on the island of Oleron at the Billabong shop Fred Groot agreed that "sales were weak and in-store traffic was down because of the mediocre weather on the Atlantic coast this winter," adding that "in addition, the sales period started too early and lasted much too long this year. But, technical gear has started to sell again as we get closer to spring."

In general, weather conditions have been rather beneficial for winter-oriented shops, but competition from online retailers is getting tougher. Sales figures are far from what they were a few years ago, in spite of favourable snow conditions. Nonetheless, morale is still good, and the weather has had a lot to do with that. All the shops are using customer service to differentiate themselves and fight against online outlets: board tuning and repairs, rentals, test goods and sales advice are the keys that still allow them to make a difference in today's market.

**Benoit Brecq**





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Elections are over but no political party or coalition received enough votes to form a stable government with a solid majority. Now it depends which parties can collaborate to find a majority to be able to form a strong and stable government. The only reasonable outcome would be that the Five Star movement would go into a coalition with the Partito Democratico, the party of ex-Prime Minister Matteo Renzi. But this will only happen if Matteo Renzi steps down. The economy in the meantime is growing slowly and everyone hopes that the new government will make the right steps to lower taxes, limit immigration and bring back the good vibes that Italians need so much right now.

Boardsport business saw a decent 17/18 winter with lots of snow and cold weather, which was good for the overall business. "A winter how it should be" - the most heard sentence this year from store owners and industry folk. Stores who stuck to the core snowboard and freeski business benefitted from less stores carrying hardgoods and saw good sales throughout the season with the weather keeping people hungry to shred the Italian mountains. Marco Minoia (Minoia Board Co. Brescia) was happy and said that they were finally rewarded after winters without snow and bad sell-through.

Talking brands, having a good mix of traditional brands such as Burton and Nitro mixed with Lib-Tech, Gnu, Capita and some newcomer brands seems to be the best choice for a store right now. Outerwear is suffering from the competition from outdoor brands outside our core business with The North Face, Patagonia and others (just to name a few) seeing success in many core stores. These brands put a lot of marketing effort and hype into convincing buyers and consumers to buy into their more outdoor-based brands. Their numbers look very good this past winter. The skateshoe business is still struggling heavily with Vans, Nike and Adidas ruling the shoe market. The classic Vans Old School shoe

has become a fashion must have and is now available for purchase everywhere from core store to big box department stores. Skate labels from the US still do very well with logo driven graphics on tees and fleeces and their athletic inspired looks are high in demand right now. Vans organized a very cool tour stop in Milan earlier this year with some of their OG riders like Caballero, Hosoi and Alva destroying the iconic Bastard Bowl followed by a signing at the Vans store. A super cool event with many store owners and industry people grabbing the chance to meet one of their childhood heroes. Snowpark Seiser Alm in South Tyrol (Italy) once again hosted the FIS Ski & Snowboard Slopestyle World Cups in mid-March with a great snowpark built by Italian company F-tech.

Looking at sales and marketing, we can see that diversity is the new key to success. The smaller stores look to buy into brands that aren't yet on the radar of the bigger online competition and are in search for exclusive deals or programs that brands offer, not only on the product side, but also on the financial side. Gianclua Tognoli from Frisco shop says: "We can only invest and push brands that give us their full support in terms of exclusive product, stock and financial flexibility, otherwise it makes it impossible to stay strong in an industry with such huge competition."

Many retailers nowadays also see kids' lack of connection to just one store as a major problem. They now mostly buy online. A movement that Lukas Höller from Sub and Sublime stores in Bolzano sees every day. Kids come into his stores with their phone in hand asking for a certain product and leave if he doesn't stock it.

Franz Josef Holler

GERMANY

UK

FRANCE

ITALY

SPAIN

AUSTRIA

SWISS

As was the case in many countries in Europe, this winter was prolific in terms of precipitation and snowfall. When you know the importance of these factors for our business you understand that certain people were more serene than they may have been the last few seasons. In effect, it snowed regularly, in large quantities and even at low altitude from December until March without really letting up at all. The result was a visible crack of the whip for everything related to winter sports in all parts of the country; resorts, shops and suppliers all played a part and were well able to work. Unfortunately, not everything was so rosy. Of course, the snow conditions were good to excellent, but since we certainly can't have everything, as far as nice weather was concerned, there wasn't much of it to be seen. There were a minimal number of sunny weekends between December and March, which is especially noteworthy since the weather plays an extremely important role in encouraging a maximum amount of people to go to ski resorts. Because of that fact, what could have been a perfect and salutary winter still had a few downsides. As for resort visitor numbers, we can't forget the beneficial results of a few initiatives undertaken in Switzerland to offer season passes for multiple resorts, like "Magic Pass", which most certainly contributed greatly to the amount of skiers and snowboarders who came up from the plains to enjoy the mountains this winter. As a result, many professionals active in our sector are approaching the rest of 2018 with smiles on their faces.

The effects of these exceptional winter conditions are multiple, but here is some of what it means for the sales of snowboard gear in Switzerland. While we may have thought that shops would have a record season with extraordinary sales figures and have sold out in January, we realize that the reality of the situation is quite different. For many, sales figures are good, rentals have worked well and sales are decent, but there's no talk of drastic increases in overall sales

or of an exceptional season. The damage done by the last three bad seasons has left some serious scars and one single good season hasn't been sufficient to reassure everyone. In general, we have noticed that one result is much healthier stock levels and that stores have been able to get rid of lots of old stock, while approaching purchases for 18/19 in a much more relaxed manner. It's a nice breath of fresh air that is allowing shop owners to have a more positive attitude towards the future, due to the fact that they've been able to get their stock and finances, in general, to acceptable levels.

Not all are equal or as sensitive to these fluctuations due to good or bad seasons. We've observed that small shops and larger operations don't evolve in the same manner. Where the former suffer enormously from poor conditions, the latter have an easier time of things, but things change a bit when the winter is a good one. As such, large stores and major players in winter sports have been reporting decent sales figures, while smaller specialized shops have been talking about very good results. The situation is most likely due to the fact that larger operations are more diversified in their offering and benefit from regular in-store traffic no matter the weather forecast, which isn't necessarily the case of smaller outfits.

The good conditions also allowed prices to stabilize, increased sales numbers and demand, along with decreased stock equals greater price stability. Therefore, this season we've also noted a much smaller disparity between sales in Swiss shops and foreign Internet platforms. Obviously, that has been a boon for everyone, decreasing drops in prices, allowing shops to sell goods for their true value and helping increase margins and strengthening local businesses for the future.

Fabien Grisel



## MARKET INSIGHT

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As a Viennese, I am accustomed to the fact that people whinge at their fellow humans during winter. It is all the more surprising, then, that I don't get any complaints from the rest of Austria. The predicted "winter of the century" has come to the local mountains, and has brought many tourists and locals into the shops.

But first of all, a little economic talk: one might think what one wants regarding the new Austrian government - it has neither had a positive nor negative effect yet on the national economy as a whole. The leading indicator, which the WIFO (Austria's leading institute for applied empirical economic research) publishes every month, continues to be at a high level and thus points to a continued positive economic development. Although for the first time since the spring of 2016 it has dropped a bit, this fact is attributed to the two share price indices, which have weakened significantly as a result of recent international fluctuations in the financial market.

The positive economic situation is currently also affecting the boardsports industry, but this is probably more due to the excellent winter we had (and still have) this year. A few weeks before Christmas there was already a good snow base in the ski resorts and compared to the previous year, the snow stayed for the holidays. At the start of the semester break, Mother Nature shook her pillows again and brought us a load of fresh white gold. Now - at the beginning of March - a (hopefully last) cold spell ensures that the snow will stay until Easter. Not only did the local winter sports regions enjoy a record number of visitors in 17/18, but the shops also benefited from the weather.

Hannes from Conny's Boardshop in Brixlegg sums it up as follows: "Insanely snowy days, cold, stable, snow again and again - you can also feel that in the sales department." At the moment, Vans is a no-brainer with him: "No matter what, we sell everything from Vans as well as Stance socks, they are just a mega hype right now." Hannes

laughingly adds that these brands were probably in demand in other places earlier, but "in the countryside" this kind of thing always takes a little longer.

Chris from Tigas Base in St. Johann im Pongau is also delighted with the season. But: "For us, winter is not over until after Easter." He also experienced the "winter of the century", as he says, "due to the early onset of winter in December, customers naturally needed hardgoods and softgoods earlier - in addition to the Christmas business. In general, customers were very keen on split- and powder boards." Tigas Base has integrated a Jones Snowboards Test Center into the shop for a few weeks now, and since then "powder boards and especially splitboards and bindings like the Burton Hitchhiker are selling especially well."

And what comes after this long and snowy winter? "About 70% of the spring 2018 collections are already in the shop, but at -17 degrees Celsius, there is still little demand for spring stuff," Hannes says with satisfaction. Conny's Boardshop is counting on a couple of new brands this spring and summer, "like Roark's Jamie Thomas capsule is great, Diamond footwear's 'straight from California' and of course local, fresh, little brands like Hick that stand out from the other brands."

Chris is still in the middle of the winter, "but new hoodies and t-shirts from Billabong, Element and Volcom are working fine already." This spring he will focus more and more on skateboarding as there is a cool skatepark in St. Johann im Pongau. "The kids currently love decks by Sk8mafia and Primitive, trucks by Independent and Thunder and wheels by Bones and Spitfire. But above all, we rely on personal customer service which we can offer our customers as longtime active skate- and snowboarders!"

Barbara Mayer

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The Spanish economy has kept a firm hand on the rudder of growth during the last few years with a growth rate of over 3% in 2015, 2016 and 2017. 2018 has been slated the slowdown year according to all predictions. There are many factors, which say they can affect the Spanish economy, outside markets: the political conflict with Catalonia and the political instability of the government, immersed in corruption scandals and removed from its partners. It is also true that these messages of economic recovery sent by the government are not tangible among the population. With insufficient increases in pensions of just 0.25 against the CPI inflation of 1.2 has caused unprecedented social mobilisation.

Concerning consumerism, this has increased in general, but it hasn't reached the levels of before the crisis. Javi from in the city of Santiago de Compostela, from Core Surfing shop tells us: "Sales of technical materials have grown a bit and show slight positivity compared to clothing sales. We are selling more a more upmarket material, high quality and more durable products, while lower price products, such as Chinese surfboards or white labels, have very little demand." "There's a high demand for quality in wetsuits and surfboards. Clients already know cheap ends up being expensive in the end so they invest in good products. In the wetsuit market, O'Neill and Rip Curl are kings of the sector while in surfboards it's Firewire who represents 70% of our sales. The expert customer knows that a surfboard of these characteristics after one or two years is still nearly the same as the first day and it doesn't depreciate too much in the second hand market."

"Nowadays the customer isn't faithful, he looks at a product and he wants it in his home within 24 hours. If he doesn't find that product

in the closest surf shop, he can find it anywhere in the world through the Internet. He looks for the best price and gets it delivered for free. It is very difficult to fight against that, you'd better get on board or you are lost. We have customers between 20 and 45 who look for best surf brands and they get more and more informed about them. When they arrive at the shop, they already know exactly what they want, which product we have and if it is necessary our advice to choose the right size."

"More and more we do have a more expert customer who looks for a very specific product"

With the snow season nearly over, Ivan Blanco from Java Shop, who is passionate about fashion and sports since 1997, with shops in León and Ponferrada, tells us that sales have maintained the same as last year. They've had the best response from "products like sneakers, jackets, winter accessories such as caps and scarves, and snowboard gear has declined sharply. The market is more and more competent and unfaithful, especially since the online market has taken over. This has prompted us to start a new chapter with the opening of our online shop www.javashop.es. We cater for all types of people, as many of our clients who have a soft spot for surf, skate and snow cult brands feel affiliated with other brands even if they are not related to the sport."

Ivan left us with a very interesting thought: "Initially brands tend to trend downwards, but in relation to surf brands for example, they have a tendency to move towards street fashion but always with the same philosophy, but simply conform to other trends. Among these trends, music and art gain ground, so little exclusive brands have the opportunity to capitalise and make a name for themselves."

Jokin Arroyo

FRIEDRICHSHAFEN  
GERMANY

JUNE 17-20  
2018



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
**28** **RIP CURL PRO BELL'S BEACH**  
AUSTRALIA  
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM 

**10** **WORLD ROOKIE FINALS**  
KITZSTEINHORN  
ZELL AM SEE-KAPRUN - AUSTRIA  
WORLDROOKIETOUR.COM 


**11** **MARGARET RIVER PRO**  
AUSTRALIA  
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM 

**10** **PRO WINTER**  
BOLZANO - ITALY  
FIERABOLZANO.IT/PROWINTER 

**18** **PERFORMANCE DAYS**  
MUNICH - GERMANY  
PERFORMANCE DAYS.EU 

**29** **SPRING BREAK UK BOARD TEST**  
KAUNERTAL - AUSTRIA  
SNOWBOARDSPRINGBREAK.COM 

### MAY

**11** **RIO PRO**  
BRAZIL  
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM 

**31** **FAR'N HIGH**  
PARIS - FRANCE  
WCSK8.COM 

**01** **VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES QUALIFIER**  
SAO PAULO - BRAZIL  
VANSPARKSERIES.COM 

**12** **PITTI UOMO**  
FLORENCE - ITALY  
PITTIMAGINE.COM 

**17** **THE OUTDOOR SHOW**  
FRIEDRICHSHAFEN - GERMANY  
OUTDOOR-SHOW.COM 


**21** **GO SKATEBOARDING DAY** 


### JULY

**T** **ITALIAN SURF EXPO**  
SPIAGGIA DI SANTA SEVERA  
ITALIASURFEXPO.IT 

**T** **CPH OPEN**  
COPENHAGEN - DENMARK  
CPHOPEN.COM 

**02** **CORONA J-BAY OPEN**  
JEFFREYS BAY - SOUTH AFRICA  
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM 

**03** **SEEK**  
BERLIN  
SEEKEXHIBITIONS.COM 

**03** **BRIGHT**  
BERLIN  
BRIGHTTRADESHOW.COM 

**05** **NASS FESTIVAL**  
SOMERSET - UK  
NASSFESTIVAL.COM 

**13** **VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES QUALIFIER**  
VANCOUVER - CANADA  
VANSPARKSERIES.COM 


**19** **SUMMER X GAMES**  
MINNEAPOLIS - USA  
XGAMES.ESPN.COM 

**23** **OUTDOOR RETAILER**  
DENVER - CO - USA  
OUTDOORRETAILER.COM 

**25** **JACKET REQUIRED**  
LONDON - UK  
JACKET-REQUIRED.COM 


**28** **AGENDA - LONG BEACH**  
CALIFORNIA - USA  
AGENDASHOW.COM 


**T** **AGENDA - LAS VEGAS**  
LAS VEGAS - USA  
AGENDASHOW.COM 

**03** **VANS PRO SKATE PARK SERIES QUALIFIER**  
HUNTINGTON BEACH - USA  
VANSPARKSERIES.COM 

**08** **REVOLVER**  
COPENHAGEN  
REVOLVER.DK 

**08** **BOARDMASTERS**  
CORNWALL - UK  
BOARDMASTERS.COM  

**T** **AGENDA**  
LAS VEGAS - USA  
AGENDASHOW.COM 

**10** **TAHITI PRO**  
FRENCH POLYNESIA  
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM 

**05** **SURF RANCH OPEN**  
CALIFORNIA - USA  
WORLDSURFLEAGUE.COM 

**06** **SURF EXPO**  
ORLANDO - USA  
SURFEXPO.COM 

**10** **SPORT-ACHAT**  
LYON - FRANCE  
SPORTAIR.FR 

**28** **SILMO**  
PARIS - FRANCE  
SILMOPARIS.COM 

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**We are currently looking for sales agents / sales agencies for GBR.**

Founded in 2008, we are a Canadian company based in Quebec city. Our roots come from the surf, skate and snowboard industries. The whole idea about Plenty Humanwear is that we want to pay tribute to humans who did awesome things before us and to put forward people who will influence tomorrow. This cultural understanding lays the foundation for our design process. Our products are crafted to last and accompany you on your adventures to your daily thoughts from the cities to the mountains.

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For the European headquarters in Innsbruck we are currently looking for a

**Team Lead E-Commerce Customer Service (m/f)**

**The primary responsibilities for this position are:**

- Oversee day-to-day operations of our consumer service department for end consumers (Rider Service, E-Commerce Service)
- Responsible for leadership, training and coaching of the team to ensure consistent, premium brand experiences
- Responsible for coordination and communication with other departments and stakeholders
- Assign work, establish goals and review performances
- Create and maintain a high performing customer service function including service desk, endpoint technology support, call center and specific business processes
- Identify key trends in customer experience technologies and work with counterparts in our global HQ in Burlington/Vermont on implementing new technologies and services
- Ensure high levels of performance in all processes, accurate reporting and establish service improvement activities when required

**Essentials for this role are:**

- Bachelor's degree with minimum three years of customer service experience, preferred in a supervisory role
- Exceptional service orientation and familiarity with the latest contact center technologies and customer service methodologies
- Strong interpersonal and problem-solving skills
- Experience with developing benchmarks, analyzing trends and statistics
- Proficiency in the use of Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook, SAP experience is desirable
- Fluent in English and French or Italian, German or additional EU languages are a plus
- Affinity for snowboarding and the outdoor lifestyle

**Our offering:**

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**POC**

**In-House Public Relations Manager Europe**

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To build on the current success of the brand, we are looking for a self-motivated individual who shares an affinity with POC values and beliefs, as well as a passion for skiing, cycling and action sports/lifestyle communities.

Are you a dynamic, experienced PR professional ready for a new challenge based in Salzburg? You will be working closely with the whole Marketing Team to plan and implement international strategies on a European level. The Public Relations Manager will be primarily responsible for PR initiatives in the major markets France, Switzerland, Benelux and parts of Scandinavia.

**PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Planning, developing and implementing PR strategies
- Liaising with, and answering enquiries from media and other organizations, often via phone and email
- Writing and/or translating and distributing press releases to targeted media
- Monitoring publications and analyzing media coverage
- Coordinating photo shooting opportunities including sample distribution
- Organizing and devising press conferences, exhibitions, open days and press tours
- Fostering community relations through events and through involvement in community initiatives
- Managing the PR aspect of a potential crisis situation
- Maintaining and managing the reputation of POC
- Reporting to Marketing Manager CE and Head of Global PR

**POSITION REQUIREMENTS:**

- Experience in Public Relations or related field in ski, cycling or action sports industry
- Fluent in French and English, any additional language skills (German) are a welcome
- Excellent communicator (especially on the phone), confident, with a can-do attitude
- Ability to learn quickly
- Hands-on ability
- Willingness and ability to travel internationally

**OUR OFFERING:**

- Great position at a global player in the skiing, cycling and lifestyle industry
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- International environment, vivid atmosphere
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If interested, please send us your complete application documents (including CV, photo, certificates) via email.

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**ASSISTANT PRODUCT MANAGER – GIRLSWEAR (M / F)**  
Long Term Contract

**Company :** RIP CURL, recognized surf brand for its products and its philosophy, employs 170 people, all animated by the RIP CURL spirit and passion of boardsports. RIP CURL was created in AUSTRALIA in 1969, by two avid surfers of waves and willing to design the best products for the gliding sports practitioners. Our philosophy drives us to be innovative, to enable surfers and riders living the Search with technical and adequate products.

**Position :** Assistant Product Manager - Girlsweat

**Reports to :** Product Manager Girlsweat

**Position primary role :** Assist the product manager to manage and develop the girlsweat range to achieve a distinctive profile in the marketplace, in order that Rip Curl's brand values, action plan and financial targets are satisfied. Have cognizance of Rip Curl's vision, mission, purpose and values.

**Duties and Responsibilities :**

- RANGE DEVELOPMENT :**
- Conduct, collate and present market research and competitor analysis to gain an understanding of our customer and her needs each season.
  - Generate and analyse sell through reports (etc...) to determine RIP CURL market position & opportunities.

- ADMINISTRATION :**
- Generate support information/reports for WIP meetings, seasonal buys, line review, sales meetings etc.
  - Monitor Salesman sample progress, delivery & distribution.
  - Communicate with sales representatives, inventory control, update of Quest system (PDM).

- PRODUCT MARKETING :**
- Assist in photoshoot, preparation and distribution for seasonal catalogues.
  - Assist in the preparation & distribution of presentations : move old stock, range release info packs, showroom set up.

- SALES :**
- Assist in the distribution of salesman samples and selling kits, Go to market packages.
  - Generate relevant information to support management/reporting in relation to Sales targets and budgets / GP% / Excess inventory.

- RESOURCE MANAGEMENT :**
- Ensure all departmental work is completed in accordance with strict timelines, company standards & quality expectations.
  - Work with design and development to ensure all deadlines and line expectations are met.

- Profile :**
- Academic : University Degree, Bachelor or Master level in Business School.
  - Minimum 2 years in Product/Marketing/Sales or Retail.
  - Understanding and participant within the surf culture.
  - Strong understanding of apparel business and market trends.
  - Strong financial and analytical skills (for budget, ratios, GP calculations).
  - Organizational and analysis spirit. Creative and dynamic spirit.
  - Good communication and interpersonal skills, Team spirit.
  - **Fluent in English and French.**

**More information :**  
Job located in FRANCE / SOORTS-HOSSEGOR (40), from the 1st of April 2016.  
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**Contact :** Thank you to send CV and Motivation letter to : [recruitment@ripcurl-europe.com](mailto:recruitment@ripcurl-europe.com)

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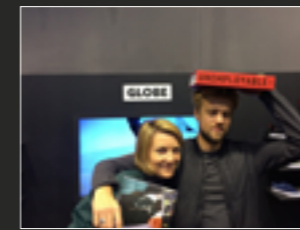
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**BRIGHT, BERLIN, GERMANY, JANUARY 2018**



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Globe's Jessica consoling Unemployable Josh



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Iriedaily founders Walter Molt and Daniel Luger with Denise Graff

**ISPO, MUNICH, GERMANY, JANUARY 2018**



Deeluxe's Florian Heim



HEAD's Max Thurner



Hectic's Hector & Myles with Dragon's JC Clenet



Nidecker boys - David, Henry and Thierry



Northwave's Davide



Pacsafe's MD Thomas Ryll & UK Agent Brad Hockridge



Patagonia's Jelle Mul & UK PR Agency's Lyndsey McLaren

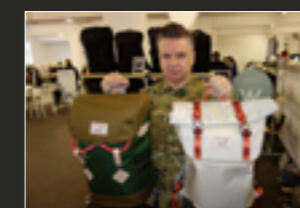


The North Face's Mark Maffe

**JAKCET REQUIRED, LONDON, UK, JANUARY, 2018**



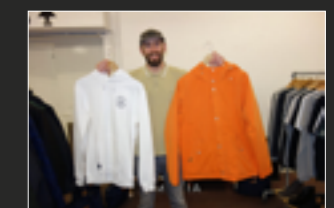
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Doughnut's Jarrod Clarke



RVCA's Etienne Pinon



The Rolling People's Stu Titmus

SHOPS 1ST TRY, ALPBACHTAL, AUSTRIA, JANUARY, 2018



Alex Zwingel, Pretty Great Sales and Katharina Baumann, Pretty Great Marketing



BoardSport Source Good design award winners



K2's Max Anselstetter, Marketing Manager Europe



Melon's Neil Slinger and James Pointer, with a mate on the left.



Mervin's Marian Kaeding and Hendrik Teutsch



Muck and Toby celebrating job well done

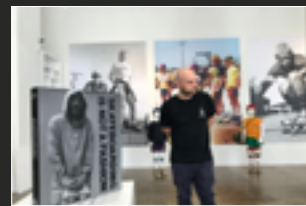


Rome crew



Vimana lead guitarist Tronna Husvaeg.

SKATEBOARDING IS NOT A FASION BOOK LAUNCH, CALIFORNIA, USA, JANUARY, 2018



Book photographer Cap Ten surveys the scene before the launch party



Christian Hosoi and Shepard "Giant" Fairey



Nick Street from Vans & Dirk Vogel.



Panel discussion talking heads: Dave from Vans, Dirk Vogel, Tony Alva, Jurgen Blumlein, Mackenzie Eisenhour and Christian Hosoi

SLIDE, TELFORD, UK, JANUARY, 2018



Arcade (Hectic)'s Hector



Cool By The Pool's Mark Blackman, Dragon's Craig Smith & Cool By The Pool's Chris Allso



Dragon & Prime's Sam Nelson & Revolutionz' Chris talking biz



K2's Rich Jonas



Mervin's UK distributor Lauren Lidford



Stance's Rich & Nathan



The Riders Lounge's Will Lenton, Will Radula-Scott & Chris from Finches Emporium



Volcom's Kris Wooten

SNOW AVANT PREMIERE, LA CLUSAZ, FRANCE, JANUARY, 2018



686's Stephane & Pacome



Amplid's Rich Ewbank and Peter Bauer



Bataleon's Rubby Kiebert



Burton's Dan Chrichton, Lizzie Holloway and new recruit, James.



Dragon's Eliza Zake, Craig Smith & French Agent, Yann Zaccaro



Dupraz's main man Serge



Horsefeathers Tomas, Michael and Patrick

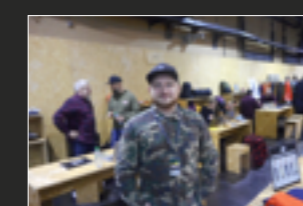


Nitro's Tommy Delago

SSEK, BERLIN, GERMANY, JANUARY 2018



DC's Ben Wang and Emmanuel Labadie



Dickies' Kevin



Homeboy founder Jurgen Wolf and son Julius



Iron and Resin's Niccolo and Christian



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*3x Wo 3x World Surfing Champion*