



RETAIL BUYERS GUIDES:

BOARDSHORTS, THE GREAT OUTDOORS,
SKATE HELMETS AND PROTECTION , MEN'S
STREETWEAR, FOILING, WINGS, WOMEN'S
SWIMWEAR ,LIFESTYLE BACKPACKS, MENS
SURF APPAREL

BIG WIG: STEVE DOUGLAS SIDEWALK
SKATEBOARD DISTRIBUTION

BRAND UPDATES ARMSTRONG FOILS,
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COFFEE, ES, EMERICA, ETNIES






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Front Wings	Span	Chord	Profile	Area	Volume	AR
Marlin XL	1020 mm	170 mm	17.5 mm	1390 cm ²	1420 cm ³	7.5
Marlin L	925 mm	155 mm	16 mm	1140 cm ²	1065 cm ³	7.5
Marlin M	860 mm	145 mm	15mm	990 cm ²	855 cm ³	7.5
Marlin S	795 mm	135 mm	14 mm	840 cm ²	675 cm ³	7.5
Marlin XS	720 mm	125 mm	13 mm	690 cm ²	495 cm ³	7.5

Front Wings	Span	Chord	Profile	Area	Volume	AR
Barracuda XL	1320 mm	172 mm	17.2 mm	1600 cm ²	1055 cm ³	10.6
Barracuda L	1050 mm	142 mm	14.2 mm	1050 cm ²	860 cm ³	10.6
Barracuda M	950 mm	127 mm	12.7 mm	850 cm ²	620 cm ³	10.6
Barracuda S	750 mm	101 mm	10.1 mm	535 cm ²	320 cm ³	9.9
Condor M	1260 mm	176 mm	22.4 mm	1737 cm ²	2291 cm ³	9.14
Condor S	1100 mm	169 mm	19.7 mm	1362 cm ²	1500 cm ³	8.9

Bilder: Vince Duerbeck | Photos: Florian Schwaner | Location: Fichtelwäldchen



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Laure Mayer,
New South Wales,
by John Wolfson



OXBOW

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The Regularity of the Irregularity

When I wrote in my last editorial that the weather was becoming a multi-seasonal problem, I had little idea of the cold wet spring that was to come, so I had not expected it to become such a hot topic in such a short period of time. No pun intended. We have all got used to winter's irregularities and winter brands have adapted their business models to suit. But the lack of any kind of sustained sunny spell this spring, has meant that across most of Europe, consumers were not even thinking of the great outdoors, let alone actually going out and visiting outdoor sports shops. So it's not just the summer hardgoods brands, still struggling to work through last year's overstocking, who have been caught out, but any brand with a summer product

will have found this season extremely tough. Just read our 'national market insights' to get an idea of the general levels of turbulence. To put it in perspective: this is not just a Boardsports problem but one that is currently affecting all outdoor sports activities.

However, as I write this, the sun has finally come out to play.

Here's to hoping crowded summer resorts in August will provide just the injection the market needed; the good weather lasts for longer than usual and brands and shops can recover some of their sales slack. Fingers crossed as ever.

Our bigwig interview in this issue features Steve Douglas. He has seen it all and done it all, after a career of over 25 years from rider through to charity promoter, brand founder and event organiser, there's not much he has not turned his hand to.

As always at this time of the year, Source is full to bursting with next spring summer retail

buyers guides and we hope the new products create an reinvigorating boost. Meanwhile things don't stand still in Boardsports with brands continuing to come to market with exciting ideas and products, just look at our diverse brand profiles.

So to finish with some positive news. A welcome addition to the events calendar is The European Foil and Windsports Expo from the 9-11th October in Lagos in Portugal, launched by Foiling magazine. Great this boardsport of the moment has its own show.. Meanwhile Globe industries in their latest financial accounts reported that the skate hardgoods market is now working its way though its excess stock and order levels are rising. So some light at the end of the tunnel.

Sideways but bumpy.
Clive
Publisher

CONTENTS

P.10 Trade Event previews

P.11 Skate Footwear SS25

P.17 Retailer Profile:
Freedom Skateshop, Austria

P.19 Boardshorts SS25

P.24 Wings SS25

P.27 Foiling SS25

P.32 Big Wig: Steve Douglas Sidewalk
Skateboard Distribution

P.35 Men's Streetwear SS25

P.39 Wetsuits SS25

P.42 Skate Helmets 2024

P.45 The Great Outdoors SS25

P.50 Women's Swimwear SS25

P.53 Lifestyle Backpacks SS25

P.56 Men's Surf Apparel SS25

P.59 Brand Profile: Armstrong Foils

P.60 Media Profile: Wavelength Magazine

P.61 Brand Profile: WIP

P.62 Brand Update: Wave Hawaii

P.63 Brand Update Es/Emerica/Etnies

P.64 Brand Update: Reef 40th Anniversary

P.65 Brand Profile: Dryrobe

P.66 Brand Profile: Wili Wili Tree

P.68 New Products

P. 69 European Regional Market Insights

P.73 Opportunities

P.78 Events

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TRADE EVENTS

PREVIEWS

SPORT ACHAT ETÉ, ALP EXPO GRENOBLE, FRANCE SEP 9-10, 2024

moved to a slightly later date compared to last year's show. Grenoble is a great location in the heart of the Alps with its mountain ambiance but allows quick and easy access to the show by mountain sports retailers.

Over 200 brands have already registered across the cycling, climbing/ mountaineering, trail running, hiking/camping and lifestyle segments. With 8000m² of exhibition space and 1500 professionals registered to visit the show, it promises to be the go to destination for the summer outdoor industry in Europe. Last year 575 retailers attended.

New to the show is the Sport Group Denmark with the Athlécia, SOS, Endurance, and Whistler brands. Additionally a number of cycling brands offering accessories, clothing and equipment are returning to the show. Trail running with hiking and camping sectors will be the most represented in terms of brands whilst most of the major climbing and mountaineering players will also be present. Retailers will find all they need to be able to make the best selection of brands for their shop.

Mathieu Kurtz of Sportair commented, "Face-to-face meetings are the strength of this show. It's an essential event for French media, manufacturers, distributors, agents, retailers, online retail sites, leasing specialists, buying groups, specialised chains and procurement centres to all meet and discover what's hot."

The show in collaboration with partner Mission Retail will have a hundred new footwear products on display in the Exoshoe zone. Following on from

PADDLE SPORTS SHOW STRASBOURG, FRANCE SEP 24-26, 2024

After two editions organised in 2021 and 2022 in Lyon, The Paddle Sports Show, moved to Strasbourg for the 2023 edition, which will again host the show for 2024. This international show attracts buyers from specialist shops, rental centres, holiday centres and central purchasing agencies from across Europe and all over the world. The Paddle Sports Show (P2S) has around 150 exhibitors of kayaks, canoes, stand up paddles, foil & wing foils, inflatable beach structures and associated equipment. Expect the usual big players alongside smaller and super innovative companies with the whole industry to be gathered under one roof for three days to share in shaping our future and to demonstrate the collective strength of the Paddle Sports industry.

New for this year is the Paddle Sport Film Festival which will take place on 23rd September at 7pm the evening prior to the show. The Festival is open to kayak, foil, sup and canoe films, so join us in bringing the entire paddle sports community under one roof for an amazing evening of Paddle Sports cinematography. The film program includes presentations from directors and athletes, with time for Q&A. It is also a competition, with €2000 cash prize for the winner, decided by a jury with the winners being announced during the industry gala dinner two days later. The Paddle Sports Show Film Festival is open to everyone and will be held at the Palais des Congrès Strasbourg Pl. de Bordeaux, across from the exhibition centre. Films must feature or be related to a paddle sport, be under 30 mins and in English, if not then English subtitles and voice-over in English is a requirement. The final selection of films for the night will be announced on 2nd September. There will also be a world premiere of a big water expedition movie shot in Gabon, Africa this spring.

Opening hours for the first day of the show are 10am - 10pm, on the 2nd day from 9am - 7pm and 9am - 3pm on the third and final day. On the first evening from 7pm - 10pm exhibitors will host informal drinks parties and invite their

their successful launch at the winter show, Moodboards from show partner Paris Phoenix, will interpret the three themed trends of lightness, durability, and versatility to help retailers make sense of the current market.

The Fresh Zone near the entrance is dedicated to start-ups and will feature six start up companies that are less than five years old, giving the opportunity for these new players to present their products cheaply and get themselves known and to enable retailers to see the latest entrants to the market. The Innovation Zone will host presentations by the Inosports Group prize winners.

The conference and seminar program includes five conferences over the two days with topics including summer outdoor sports, micro-adventures and sports tourism. To keep show attendees fed and watered, the show features a food truck village with a wide choice to satisfy all tastes and avoid long waiting times. Monday evening will be open for networking for exhibitors and retailers, brands will have the opportunity to invite visitors to their booths for an end of the day drink.

The show offers many benefits to retailers and is a cost effective way for keeping up to date and doing business. Jérémy Cateau of Sport Pulsion comments, "For brands it's about seeing as many clients as possible, but also about presenting the brands and products in a qualitative way which allows us to reach new clients that we don't know yet."

Airports in the region include Grenoble, Geneva and Lyon Saint-Exupéry. Grenoble is also well connected by motorway and TGV from both Paris and Marseilles. The show is open from 9h00 - 19h00 on Monday and 9h00-18h00 Tuesday. So, jump on a plane or get in the car and come and see next summer season's products and hang with the industry community.

[SPORT-ACHAT-ETE.COM](https://www.sport-achat-ete.com)

customers to look around their stands. On the second evening the industry party and awards ceremony takes place, featuring the Paddlesports Product of the Year awards and the annual Hall of Fame ceremony will be held with food and drinks from 7pm till 12am.

The 14 categories in the Paddlesport Product of the Year Awards, presented by Kayak Session Publishing, are chosen by a panel of independent judges. The awards highlight products that are making a difference through innovation, performance, design, and utility and the lucky winners are announced during the industry dinner.

For this year's conferences and talks, Free River Funds and Dam Removal Europe will be joining expedition master Freya Hoffmeister, surf-ski legend Oscar Chalupsky and white-water park promoter Scott Shipley on the program. With more speakers to be announced closer to show time.

Strasbourg is an easy location to access with its international airport, connections to the motorway network and the TGV train system. With all the local tram stops once you reach Strasbourg there is no need to use a car. There are quite a few hotels in walking distance to the show and the heart of the city of Strasbourg, is only a few trams stops (less than 10 min.) away and 5 mins drive by taxi.

Acton sports retailers and distributors should take the time to visit the show and look at this market whether it be for hardboards or inflatables. The Paddle Sports Show is a 'one-stop-shop' window for all there is to buy in the paddle business. The show format is under one roof, in a single hall, simplifying the selection and buying process for retailers which is a significant advantage for all visiting shops. See you in Strasbourg.

[THEPADDLESPORTSHOW.COM](https://www.thepaddlesportshow.com)

EUROSIMA SURF SUMMIT SEIGNOSSE, FRANCE SEP 26-27, 2024

2-day conference which this year returns to the Belambra Club in Estagnots Seignosse.

The confirmed program at time of going to press was as follows: The summit will start at 9.30am with an opening speech from Jean-Louis Rodrigues, President of Eurosima. The first talk of the day will commence at 10am with Christophe Chenu, former CEO of Elite Model, L'Equipe group, Paris Saint Germain and Lacoste, presenting on the topic of leadership & management. This will be followed at 11.30am with a presentation covering career perspectives. After lunch there will be a discussion on digital and environmental impacts. This is followed at 3pm by Frederick Tain, Directeur de Sport-Guide.Com taking us through sales, data and distribution statistics from the European market. The first round table of the summit starts at 4.15pm with a debate on the sociology of Surf and Marketing. This will be led by Christophe Guibert Maitre, HDR lecturer in Sociology and Anne Sophie, Sayeux Lecturer and Anthropologist at the Paris Institute of Sports-Health Sciences. Joining them from the surf industry will be Danielle MacKenzie - Roxy Marketing Director, Jean Seb Estienne - Rip Curl Marketing Director and Guillaume Dartenuc - Volcom Marketing Director and Laura Grenon, Oxbow Marketing Director.

The annual surf summit party will be held during the early evening from 7pm and will celebrate the winners of the Eurosima call for innovation projects 2024 at the 70 Hectares and Ocean hotel in Seignosse.

On Friday at 8.30am there is an option to go surfing with Surf Session or attend

EUROPEAN FOIL & WINDSPORTS EXPO LAGOS, PORTUGAL OCT 9-11, 2024

Aside from the chance to check out the latest gear from the main foil and windsport brands, the expo also has three nights of entertainment laid on and - this being Portugal in October - also promises plenty of sunshine!

Based out of the marina in the historic Portuguese city of Lagos, the EFWE is held over two sites either side of the sand dunes of Lagos' stunning Meia Praia beach. The purpose built expo site will host the brand booths, a presentation stage and a dedicated meeting area for brands to talk business. Event MC, Lewis Crathern, will host the stage with interviews with riders and give brands the opportunity to present their 2025 line ups to the event attendees.

On the other side of the sand dune, the Beach Site provides an ideal environment for retailers and schools to test the latest gear, and will host presentations and 'on the water' demos from brands who will broadcast their demos live to the beach via BbTalkin headsets. This is the place to see the latest gear in action!

The event will also host an eFoil race, open to all attendees who can test eFoils from brands such as Lift and Fliteboard before laying down a time on the slalom course. The quickest riders will be entered into the final shootout on the last day with prizes to be won. For more proficient riders there will also be a pump foil competition, and for the less experienced rider there will also be the opportunity to give pump foiling a try on specialised gear with

a workshop on how to deal with anxiety with Mathilde Depauli, Psychologist and Psychotherapist in Cognitive Behavioural & Emotional Therapies. The second day's program starts at 10am with Cyril de Sousa Cardoso, CEO at Polaria, presenting on the democratising of AI technologies and the impact on innovation, processes and creativity by Artificial Intelligence. This is followed at 11am by the second round table of the summit on the latest developments around the CSRD Europe Regulations. This will be led by Stéphane Popescu, Co-Founder and Managing Director of Cose361 / Sustainable Fashion Catalyst and Aude Penouty.

Next up at 2pm will be: Bertand Barre, CEO of Groupe Zebra innovation factory and expert on design and innovation examining the impact of AI on brand strategies and marketing. The final presentation of the two day summit will be on branding & marketing strategy presented by Ludovic Pouilly, a global marketing expert with 20 plus years of experience in branding in Sports, Lifestyle, Entertainment and Fashion with companies such as Nike, The Coca-Cola Company and Heineken. To finish and refresh there's the Carlsberg closing party.

During the Surf Summit, Eurosima will be presenting the 7th edition of the Surfing Lounge exhibition, which showcases the most innovative products and services in action sports. Summit guests get to examine at first hand the products and are able to talk to many of their creators.

So if you need to visit SW France for business or pleasure, add the Surf Summit to your calendar and participate in Europe's number one networking event for the surf industry. See you soon.

[EUROSIMA.COM](https://www.eurosima.com)

some tips from the pros.

The final day sees the EFWE hit the road to one of the local beaches where we'll find the best waves on the day, with the leading foil and assist brands hitting the water for live demos in truly rippable surf conditions. Attendees will get to watch the top riders in the best conditions and check what they're riding and how they set their gear up.

EFWE has three nights of entertainment planned out all included in the ticket price. Night one sees us head to the local wake park for the opening night party. We'll have pro kites and wakeboarders hitting the cable and the skate ramp, select brands showcasing their gear and food, and a DJ playing mellow tunes while you can meet up with the rest of the EFWE attendees.

Night two sees us on the side of Lagos Marina for our Outdoor Cinema night including the Generic Foiling Podcast Panel Show. Grab a beer and watch top foilers get quizzed by podcast hosts Liam and Freddie, then settle down for an evening of short films on the big screen, introduced or commented by their featured pro riders.

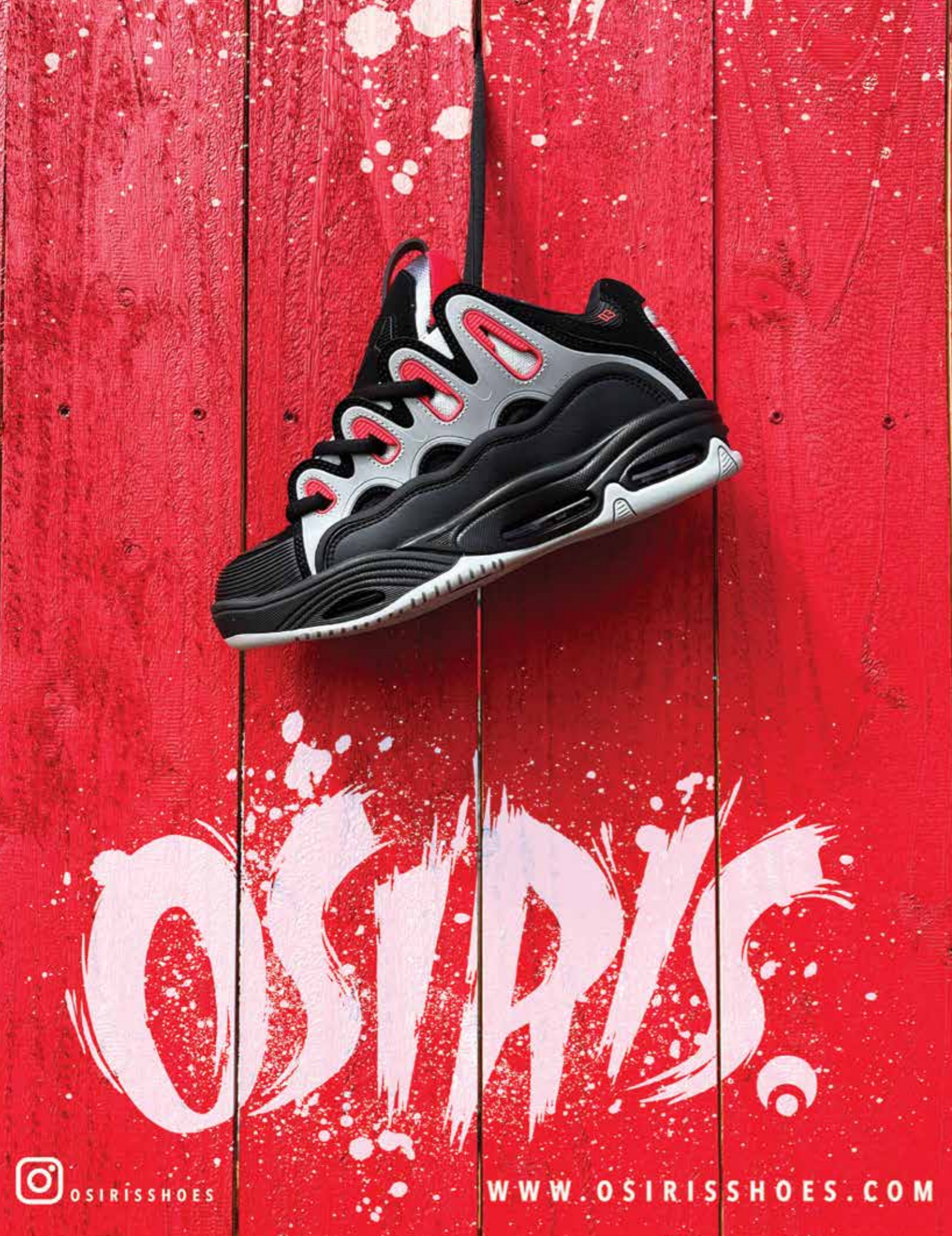
The final night sees the FLITELab* Beach Party at Lagos' iconic Duna Beach Club. One of the premier venues in Lagos, the venue will be taken over for the night by EFWE with the help of FLITELab*. With live DJs, giveaways and plenty to eat and drink, this will be the perfect way to wind up the main Expo event!

Ready for some business, sunshine and fun in Portugal this October? Sign up at:

[EFWEXPO.ORG](https://www.efwexpo.org)

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE SKATE FOOTWEAR SS25

It sounds like it's been a tough year indeed for retail in general, especially within the skate footwear industry. This is due to various factors - the two ongoing wars are having a major impact, causing mistrust in both retailers and consumers. The situation with hard goods over-stocking is still creating difficulties for brands and stores alike. Retailers cannot shift older stock, which is causing cash flow and order budget issues.



EMERICA

MARKET

With the aforementioned issues, the market is generally a little rocky, to say the least. Lukas Steidle, Sales Manager Europe at Hours Is Yours said "Accounts have become less keen to experiment with their available budgets which has resulted in a more condensed buying pattern in terms of brands but also throughout their SKU selection." Certain brands however have seen some real progress in sales and profits even through these challenging times, due to strong marketing moves and great teams of riders. New Balance Numeric has been firing on all cylinders this year, as Andrés Araya, Commercial Manager EMEA said "The momentum of our brand soared to unprecedented heights, surpassing all previous records." Several independent brands have also started to emerge onto the footwear scene, which is great to see. One such brand, 'Fishing Lines' - the brainchild of German/French technical wizard Michael Mackrodt is a refreshing change to the big brand market.

PRICE POINTS

The constant struggle to keep skate shoes affordable without dipping on quality is a very real one, especially within the current economic climate. Brands are striving to offer models that don't surpass the €100 bracket which is proving to be a challenge. Andrés from New Balance Numeric said, "It appears that a new barrier has emerged, with a significant emphasis on products priced under €100, serving as the primary volume drivers in the market." Alessandro Urso, Sales Director at C1RCA said they're maintaining last season's price points: "We're making a lot of efforts to keep RRP's fair, but it's not easy

"It appears that a new barrier has emerged, with a significant emphasis on products priced under €100, serving as the primary volume drivers in the market." Andrés Araya, New Balance

due to the increase of materials and shipping costs." Newcomers to the market Opus Footwear Inc. pride themselves on having all their shoes under the €80 price mark, so rest assured it's still possible to get a pair of shoes that won't break the bank.

MARKETING STORIES & COLLECTION THEMES

Regardless of the market hardships brands are facing, SS25 is looking to be a ripper for new footwear collections. C1RCA will be releasing a collaboration with "QUIQUIRIQUI MEZCAL", a Mexican artisanal Mezcal liquor brand, as Allesandro proudly said: "The collab includes custom AL50 and 205 Vulc as well as an apparel capsule. QORQ will even produce a special edition Mezcal bottle to celebrate the partnership." Andrés from New Balance Numeric spoke of a new shoe for the Boss himself: "The new Andrew Reynolds pro model stands as the highlight of 2025 for us. We've dedicated significant time and effort to this project, and we're confident that it will be a game-changer for NB#."



EMERICA will be reintroducing 'The Mute' - one of their first-ever styles. Michael Morey, Footwear Designer & Merchandiser at Emerica said: "We see nostalgia and 90's-inspired designs continue to resonate with our base as well as the demand for a great skate shoe at a great price. The Mute checks both of these boxes." éS will also be celebrating their heritage as Michael Morey commented: "The main story we're pushing all year long is the 30th anniversary of éS and to celebrate this milestone we're kicking off the season with the Accel FIT. The Accel has been a mainstay for decades and has a legacy as deep as the brand itself." Sole tech sibling Etnies will also be reminiscing of the 90's, as Rick Marmolijo, Design Director said: "The theme for SS25 is re-issues. With the 90's skate fashion making a strong comeback, Etnies is in a great position to look back at the old catalogues and reintroduce historic skate silhouettes." Osiris footwear will also be

"I market my brand mainly through Instagram, as I feel that shops and websites don't have much interest in pushing smaller shoe brands." Michael Mackrodt, Fishing Lines

reminiscing on the 90's era, as Brian Barber, General Manager at Osiris said: "We're proudly upholding our legacy as the original tech footwear brand." Fallen footwear will be re-releasing the iconic shoe - The Rambler, in tribute to James Hardy who sadly passed away earlier this year. The proceeds of which will be donated to a nonprofit chosen by his family.

MARKETING APPROACH

Marketing approaches have changed over the years, with social media reigning supreme. Brands like Fishing Lines are choosing purely Instagram, as Michael explained: "I market my brand mainly through Instagram, as I feel that shops and websites don't have much interest in pushing smaller shoe brands." Similar to Fishing Lines, new arrivals on the scene Opus Footwear are taking a more intimate approach, as Mirko Mangum founder of Opus explained: "Because Opus is new, we're doing lots of skate park and shop visits so customers can see and try on shoes in person and ask questions about the brand and the shoes." Rick from Etnies said, "We understand how important core shops are to us, so for the first time we are offering a Skate Shop Day shoe - a Sal23 x SSD colourway as this was Sal Barber's first sponsor when he first arrived in California." Brian from Osiris said: "We prioritize our online strategy and distributor partners. While we

"There's an ever-present and growing demand for vegan skate footwear. We make sure there's a vegan offering every season in a way that doesn't come across as an afterthought or inauthentic."

Michael Morey, Emerica

do engage in some print opportunities, we ensure they align with our brand's DNA, emphasising skate imagery alongside captivating shoe imagery!"

DESIGN TRENDS

Although the 'big puff' style shoes are back in style, Rick from Etnies has noticed that "We are currently seeing a trend in the 'mid puff' category as this silhouette is a lot more wearable and skateable." Michael from Fishing Lines said however: "Trends tend to go towards 'more is more', which I don't like and why I stick to what I love and would buy myself; something more classy, in my opinion. Simple yet graceful." Of course, personal preference comes strongest on this rule, as some customers are not simply following trends, but sticking to what they feel most comfortable wearing to skate. Fallen's CEO Ronnie Mazzio spoke of their new release - 'The Melrose' saying "This shoe is a unique take on a loafer combined with a classic slip-on that is the perfect chiller, but is always ready to skate."

NEW TECH

The various new technologies that skate footwear brands are using to push their products to the next level regarding performance are wild. Especially considering the 90's/00's resurgence - an era where shoes were so tech-heavy, it looked like they'd never break through. These reissue shoes and odes to familiar greats have been redesigned with modern, and sometimes eco-conscious alternative materials, whilst still painting the durability they're known for. Brian from Osiris said "What is old is new! And now refreshed! Our original technology of front and rear airbags has been a staple of our brand since 2000." Michael from éS said on the subject of their Accel FIT shoe: "The FIT System is a 3-part harmony that is a game changer for upping board control while maintaining the comfort and support skaters have come to expect from the Accel." Lucas from Hours Is Yours, said whilst trying to cut down on excessive material usage, "We're introducing a new cup sole with extra tread and Supreme Grip Tech."

Sustainability

Hopefully, it's in every brand's ethos to try to be sustainable in some way or another. Some go further than others, but as technology advances, new ways to have more conscious production are available. Lukas from Hours Is Yours said, "We work with our factories to cut down on the use of extra packaging and material waste." Allesandro from C1RCA proudly stated that: "50% of our range is made with Vegan fabrics & materials. We'll continue with the C1RCA sustainable project Summer drop: two versions of AL50 featuring recycled polyester upper by Repreve®." Osiris also prides itself on using vegan materials, as Brian explained: "Witnessing the impact of our material choices on animals and the environment made our path evident. The durability of synthetics, arguably superior, further solidified our decision." Emerica also strives to offer vegan alternatives, as Michael said: "There's an ever-present and growing demand for vegan skate footwear. We make sure there's a vegan offering every season in a way that doesn't come across as an afterthought or inauthentic."

WRAP UP

The skate footwear market looks to be having a rather tumultuous, yet exciting time at the moment, and next season looks to be no different. With some solid new shoes being released for SS25, it's shaping up to be a great year for footwear, as long as brands can accommodate the issues already mentioned. ☺

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

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 90's styles still popping off
- 2 Louder colour ways
- 3 A wider range of vegan /synthetic models
- 4 Cash Flow problems are still an issue
- 5 Skate footwear under €100



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BARBER



Quite Franky



FRANKY



Updated Fit, New Lowered Version.
Franky Villani 417.



FREEDOM SKATESHOP

RETAILER PROFILE

FREEDOM SKATESHOP, AUSTRIA

Freedom Skateshop opened its doors in 2006 in the Austrian capital Vienna and continues to be skater owned and operated. With a finger of the pulse of the local skate scene, we catch up with store founder, Markus Ostermann to talk shop.

When and why did you open Freedom Skate Shop?

I started Freedom Skateshop in 2006. That was a time when I felt that all shops in the city had begun to drift away from skateboarding and into the mainstream, owners of shops had gotten too detached from skateboarding or had never even skated in the first place. Plus the mainstream chains were starting to come up. I felt giving the community a skater owned and run shop that focused 100% on skateboarding was a necessity. I have been skateboarding since 1989 and started working in the skate-industry in 1997 so it seemed like a logical step.

What are five products you couldn't live without right now?

Being a core skateshop I would have to say Decks, Wheels, Trucks, Bearings and Shoes. On a more product specific level - Jorts, especially Polar Big Boys, Baker Boys Decks, Spitfire Wheels and Adidas Shoes.

And what brands are performing the best right now?

We've seen major shifts in a very short time with some of the legacy brands doing very well during covid but dropped hard after. Many of the 'hype brands' have lost traction in the last year or so. With board brands, there is not a clear leader at the moment but Baker, Hockey, Polar, Alien Workshop, Magenta, Zero and GX1000 are always doing well for us. Wheel brands are mainly Spitfire for anyone looking for a good wheel and willing to pay the price. Trucks are Indys, Thunder and Ace in that order. Shoe brands doing the business are Adidas, New Balance, Vans and Last Resort.

What trends have you seen over the last 18 months in Austrian Skateboarding?

I'm pretty sure 20 years from now we will call it the big pants, big wheels era. Apart from that it seemed like everybody was looking to take advantage of the massive volume of discounted product floating around the internet which is luckily becoming less of an issue. Obviously the baggy pants and jeans shorts will stay with us for a little longer, skate shoes are becoming puffer again, but quite a lot of people still prefer slimmer vulc silhouettes. Boards are getting wider, our deck business pretty much starts at 8.25 now, where it was 8.0 not too long ago.

How has 2024 been so far for the shop? Where do you sell the most products, in store or online?

2024 has been the year of recovery so far with business going back

to normal and we're growing again. While we love giving local visitors from all over the world the best in-store experience we can, the way things have been going there are countless people living areas where they don't have access to a legit local shop, so our online business has outgrown the shops sales by far and we wouldn't be able survive without them.

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

Apart from the fun we're having with all the rad humans stopping by the store there are countless benefits of advising customers face to face on what to buy. Plus getting the most direct feedback from the scene on a daily basis helps keep our hands on the pulse of what's going on, it beats doing A/B tests on a web store. Being local helps us focus on supporting our community and not just check our statistics to find out in what area we want to do our next 'marketing activation'.

How do you support your local skate scene?

We do have a team of 20 people that we try to support the best we can. Be it product hook ups, trying to get them sponsors, mentoring them etc. We've always supported contests, thrown countless video premiers and events, plus we're putting on our annual Freedom Summer fest.

What are your hopes for the board sports scene in Austria over the coming years?

The skate scene itself is healthier than ever, we're hoping to see more up and coming young rippers coming out of Austria, sick events like the annual Vienna Gnarathon to continue and help get Vienna on the map a little more. From a business perspective, we're hoping that major brands get back to acting more like partners and less as competition through heavy discounts on their own direct to consumer channels. Ideally the massive discounting will get less so all of us can focus more on selling what's hot and new, instead of trying to get rid of ageing product and try to compete with the large online retailers. For Freedom we will focus on expanding our line of Freedom branded goods and turn it into full premium hard and softgoods lines for which we are working with our amazing team and international as well as local artists.🤝

FREEDOMSKATESHOP.AT

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE BOARDSHORTS SS25

Not a swimwear, not a clothing item, the boardshort is a pure extension of the surfer's identity, as much as their surfboard or wetsuit. It conveys a message of performance over form, though style is ever present. If anything, Spring Summer 2025 will only reinforce this message. By David Bianic



Both technical gear and apparel item, the surfing boardshort ticks all the boxes for a sell through hit, attracting the core and non-core audience. Yet it is not immune to the ficklest enemy of the retailer during the spring-summer season. You know it: shitty weather. While we keep seeing record temperatures on a year basis, spring tends to be quite bleak, stalling those early sales. "The first half of 2024 was difficult due to poor weather and excess levels of inventory in the market still", reports Freddie Sipowicz and Jonathan Gilbert (President and CEO Europe) at Lost, but "once the clear skies in summer kicked in, we saw a dramatic rise in business".

Before we even asked for comment, brands spontaneously pointed out as one voice, the main reason driving good sell through: "Sustainability is still a major trend, focusing on eco-friendly materials and production processes. Performance and versatility are also critical, with innovations in quick-drying fabrics, stretchability and ergonomic designs being highlighted", says Paulina Benitez, Brand Manager Apparel, Goggles & Helmets at Oakley. This really reflects an ongoing trend – not exclusive to boardshorts – where sustainability meets technical performance. As we will see later, there is more to come in this area, highlighting an optimistic future for the category.

OFFERING & STRATEGY

The once defensive strategy of carryovers has turned into a staple move. What was used as a response to uncertain COVID times is viewed nowadays as a more sustainable way of doing business. It's sustainable for the planet and sustainable for the retailer, who is not compelled to

"Sustainability is still a major trend, focusing on eco-friendly materials and production processes."

Paulina Benitez, Oakley

deploy aggressive discounts on the past year's inventory to accommodate the fresh collection. "For SS25, we strategically balanced our collection with 40% fresh pieces and 60% carryover styles. This approach allows us to introduce innovative designs and new styles that reflect current trends and consumer demands while retaining popular, proven items from previous designs that our customers love", explains Sandra Gonçalves, Business Director for Lightning Bolt Europe. Others meet halfway, with carryovers updated with refreshed colorways, as shown at Lost. It's a similar move for Oakley as only 50% of the collection is either entirely new or has been updated "with modifications to enhance quality, add important features, and incorporate more attractive prints that speak to the Oakley consumer", details Paulina.

Price wise, figures are going up, confesses Nick Crook, CEO of Boardies, "If anything shy people are prepared to pay a premium for quality and authenticity". As reminded by Oakley, there must be a compelling reason to justify higher prices. While surfers prioritise performance and durability, opting for premium boardshorts with advanced features,

"the market is saturated with high-quality options at fair prices that offer comfort and functionality, making it challenging to justify significant price increases".

SS25 BOARDSHORTS TRENDS: INSEAMS

Size matters, or more precisely length matters. From the ever-shrinking silhouettes (down to 12" inseams) of the mid 2000's, designs slowly backpedalled to the baggier fits of the 90's, with more over-the-knee designs. What about 2025? In a non-binary environment, it is no surprise we would see the best of both worlds within most ranges. "Alongside regular (40") and performance-focused options (46"), we introduce the super short (12") as a homage to our 70s roots", comments Sandra from Lightning Bolt. As a testimony to its debut, Hurley brings back the 21 inch offer, "bringing a retro look to our collection".

The above-the-knee options are becoming increasingly popular among younger surfers. History repeats itself as younger generations tend to be fond of styles they never knew, arriving into the world post 90's and 2000's.

SS25 BOARDSHORTS TRENDS: MATERIALS & CONSTRUCTIONS

"Eco-conception is the biggest trend", insists Aurélien Silvestre, Product Manager at Oxbow, which uses post-consumer recycled polyester – Repreve – on all their boardshorts, some styles being produced in Portugal and France to minimise impact. Their Stoked boardshort uses upcycled fabrics, "46% less fabric offcuts during production, entirely made in France: the result is -93% CO2 emissions compared to a conventional boardshort". Afends goes weedy on their Surf Related and Webhead boardshorts, made of an eco-friendly hemp, recycled polyester and cotton blend.

Whether it is a proprietary fabric as Repreve or other forms of recycled polyester, the 4-way stretch is the second most sought out criteria in this category. For example, the new Oakley Tidal 19" boardshort is crafted from a recycled nylon and spandex blend. It also features a UPF 30 sun protection, a spec that has made its way in the boardshort offering these past seasons. Hurley gets in line with the consumer demand, now offering the Phantom-eco Block Party, "made with our renowned 4-way stretch phantom fabric now using recycled ocean bound plastics". These true technical fabrics are so light on the skin, you forget you're wearing them. A statement made all the more true when you add a PFC-free durable water repellent finish, like Protest's SS25 collection.

Boardshorts take a battering due to the constant friction with the board/wax and the intensive damp/dry off cycle in summer. The heavy-duty program is at the heart of the new OTG (Out There Gear) range of Katin's trunks. The welded zipped pockets, durable micro ripstop tech stretch fabric and a performance fly closure with silicone dipped drawcords will endure almost any abuse. In a similar spirit, Rip Curl has added more stretch Cordura in its Mirage range, a fabric known for its unmatched protection against tears, scuffs and abrasion. So does Roark on the Boatman model, offering a lifetime warranty for good measure.

Among the innovative tech features seen in the SS25 collection, we should mention the Menakoz boardshort at Oxbow, easily packable in its back pocket as well as their Wipeout design featuring a 360-degree lace at the waistband providing a custom fit for optimal comfort. Similar details feature on Oakley's Tidal 19", with matte bonded eyelets with branded tips, bonded back pocket with waterproof zip and elastic loop inside the pocket.

SS25 BOARDSHORTS TRENDS: COLOURS & PRINTS

"For SS25, we strategically balanced our collection with 40% fresh pieces and 60% carryovers."

Sandra Gonçalves, Lightning Bolt

The trend is... there is no trend. Diversity is the vibe, says Aurélien Silvestre at Oxbow. They even considered the collection with seasonal transitions in mind: "We will start the season with some earth colours to have a smooth transition from winter to spring" and then "the second part of the collection will have many bright and fresh colours for the summer season". Lightning Bolt caters for both sides of the colour divide with "Bold, eye-catching colours such as electric blue, sunset orange, and deep sea green, alongside classic hues like navy and black for a versatile appeal". At Rhythm, the Aussie-born label stays true to its image with a distinctive blend of neo-retro/low-key/classy colours and prints. Amongst the new colorways for SS25, you will find some sage and Merlot. Cheers to that!

"We are proud to introduce the Stoked boardshort! Upcycled fabrics, 46% less fabric offcuts during production, entirely made in France: the result is -93% CO2 emissions compared to a conventional boardshort."

Aurélien Silvestre, Oxbow



'If it ain't broke, don't fix it!' The golden rule applies to prints and patterns in the boardshort category as you will find the timeless combo of floral/leaves/tropical/polka dots. Interestingly to note, the changing silhouettes also affect the graphics, comments the Lost managing duo, as "with larger garment patterns, there is a bigger canvas which forces the approach for all over prints to change". This may be the reason behind Protest incorporating large-scale graphics with inspiration from the beautiful patterns of Portuguese tiles. Don't worry, if you are more into organic patterns, Protest still offers the good ol' leaves/beach/wave prints! The ever so colourful Boardies has opted for a toned-down approach, as the "Print on men's is going more understated so we are giving our 80's graphics a rest for a bit", says Nick Crook. Pierre from Katin confirms there is a trend towards "Vintage-inspired prints and subtle, minimalist designs for those who prefer a more understated look".

SS25 ORDER FORMS

Now that you have the big picture, we can reasonably say there is very little chance of barking up the wrong tree when it comes to your SS25 purchase. With roughly 50% of carryovers planned for next season, this means you already know which SKU's went well. The fresh pieces in the rest of the collection lean on tried and tested designs for most part, with updated colours/prints. This mirrors the consumer's purchase pattern: choose wisely and put your money in a durable product that will outlast the wear and tear as well as the short-lived fashions. Long gone are the days of the one-summer boardshort. Sure, you've known better days saleswise, but what is for the greater good? ☺

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Sustainable tech #1 criteria
- 2 Longer/baggier cuts for the youngsters
- 3 Durable fabrics (Cordura, Ripstop)
- 4 Understated looks

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE WINGS SS25

Performance of wings has been stepped up with the development of new premium materials. The next step is to play with fabric combinations and new constructions that will push the boundaries even more. Exciting times for brands, retailers, and consumers. By Rocio Enriquez.



Wing foiling is maintaining the good health of the water sports industry with its accessibility for newcomers, and the performance possibilities for seasoned riders. Those at the higher end of the ability spectrum are happy to spend on innovation, and wing brands are responding with ongoing R&D. After a few seasons welcoming new materials, the focus is now on the different combinations and wing constructions to make the most out of them. The goal is the perfect balance between weight and rigidity, but always keeping an eye of affordability. We want tighter canopies and stiffer struts that are light and do not cost us an arm and a leg. The use of premium fabrics such as Hookipa and Aluula is commonplace, sometimes mixed with standard fabrics to enhance performance. There is a conversation about the need to innovate existing wing shapes, panelling is the most obvious response. Developers are changing panel layouts and playing with seams to explore new options. The debate over hard versus soft handles is still very much alive. However, the trend is to explore the use of both to cater to different riding styles. There is a steady demand from entry level riders, a segment with growth potential. Nonetheless, the main demographic for wing sales is composed of water sports enthusiasts that transition into the sport. These are intermediate to advanced riders that prioritise performance and innovation. Bestsellers charts are topped by all-round wings that cater to all levels of riding and can perform in various conditions. Smaller sizes tend to go to kids and strong wind riders, while larger sizes are sold to heavier users.

"Its performance in single digit breezes is truly awesome and really unlocks another level of riding." Kjell van Sice, Armstrong

2025 WINGS
Premium materials are becoming more prevalent, but they are not replacing standard ones. They come at a much higher price, and brands are trying to balance their offering with more affordable options to keep newcomers coming into the sport. Dacron is going nowhere for now, and we start finding it mixed with Aluula, Hookipa, or Penta TX in certain models. Mistral keeps using Dacron on their bestsellers, while combining it with Hookipa for the leading edge and fuselage strut on their Skywave range. Naish has developed a premium version of their versatile ADX Wing Surfer. The ADX NVision boasts a cutting-edge Helium frame construction made with Aluula, making it very lightweight and stiff. Vayu is testing a lot of materials as well as different combinations. The Aura X leads their offer, mixing Aluula on leading edge and struts with Tenjin canopy. Neilpryde is continuously improving their products that feature Aluula. At the same time, they are also developing more cost-effective high-tech



“The Firefly combines the NP high lift concept with a significantly reduced wingspan and a simplified airframe with a stiffer feel, making it a strong contender for 2025.” Hendrik Holzhauser, Neilpryde

riding, updating their SurfWing with soft handles. Naish has given their Matador LT 2.0 a handle conversion system. It comes with hard handles mounted, and with an extra set of soft handles that can be easily interchanged. Hard handles for a more direct, rigid feel, or soft handles for riding freedom; you can adapt the wing to your personal riding style.

SUSTAINABILITY

Sustainability efforts are focused on packaging and product lifespan. You will find very few wings packed with single use plastic with Mistral, Naish, and Vayu manifesting their commitment to this. NSP is reusing cut-off materials from production for their wrapping and packing. Seaflight packs their wings in paper or cardboard and builds their wing bags from recycled materials. Vayu is testing how to reuse leftover cut-offs in their production next year. They are working with a few options that have a high percentage of re-worked materials. Durability is a powerful ally to sustainability. A longer lifespan reduces production demands and material sourcing. Neilpryde makes this their top priority in their commitment to sustainability. Not only do they choose the most stable and durable materials, but they offer guidance about how to repair minor damages to their Aluula struts. Seaflight also designs their wings to last longer than one season, using the best materials for that purpose. Finding sustainable factories for production plays an important role, but it's not always easy as it depends largely on the country where the factory is located, and whether it has any regulations in place which are lower in Asia. Concentrating production in one location is the way Naish limits their footprint. Their centre of operations is powered by solar energy. So is the production facility that builds Vayu's wings.

RETAILER SUPPORT

There are several ways in which brands are supporting their retailer's sell-through, an important barrier to overcome is the possibility to test their wings. Vayu, Seaflight and Neilpryde offer demo wings that retailers can directly offer their clients for testing or use in demo events. Naish relies on a big team of experts and sales reps in every country to offer on-site support to their dealers. Mistral has also increased their staff for this purpose, they add to that an online portal that streamlines the ordering process. With such a technical and innovative product, retailer education is important. Armstrong focuses a lot of their marketing budget in building educational resources around wing design, product selection, and overall sport education. These initiatives are add-ons to tried and tested methods such as social media presence, endorsement from team riders, and in-store and online imagery assets. Delivery models are also adapted to best support retailers with Naish offering a fast delivery system in most of the EU in twenty-four to forty-eight hours. Vayu allows orders from stock, with pickup at their facility or even collection at events. Seaflight streamlines their range of products available from stock that can be ordered in small quantities or drop shipped to retailers' customers. Armstrong keeps a healthy stock, so they can fulfil orders as they come. Neilpryde offers two ordering systems. Retailers can place orders directly through their B2B shop for products stocked at their warehouse in Germany. For larger orders, they can place ex-works orders directly from their factory. This allows the retailers to manage their logistics according to their specific needs. With users keen to spend on innovation and brands delivering it, retailers can look forward to a quick sell-through of wings. ☺

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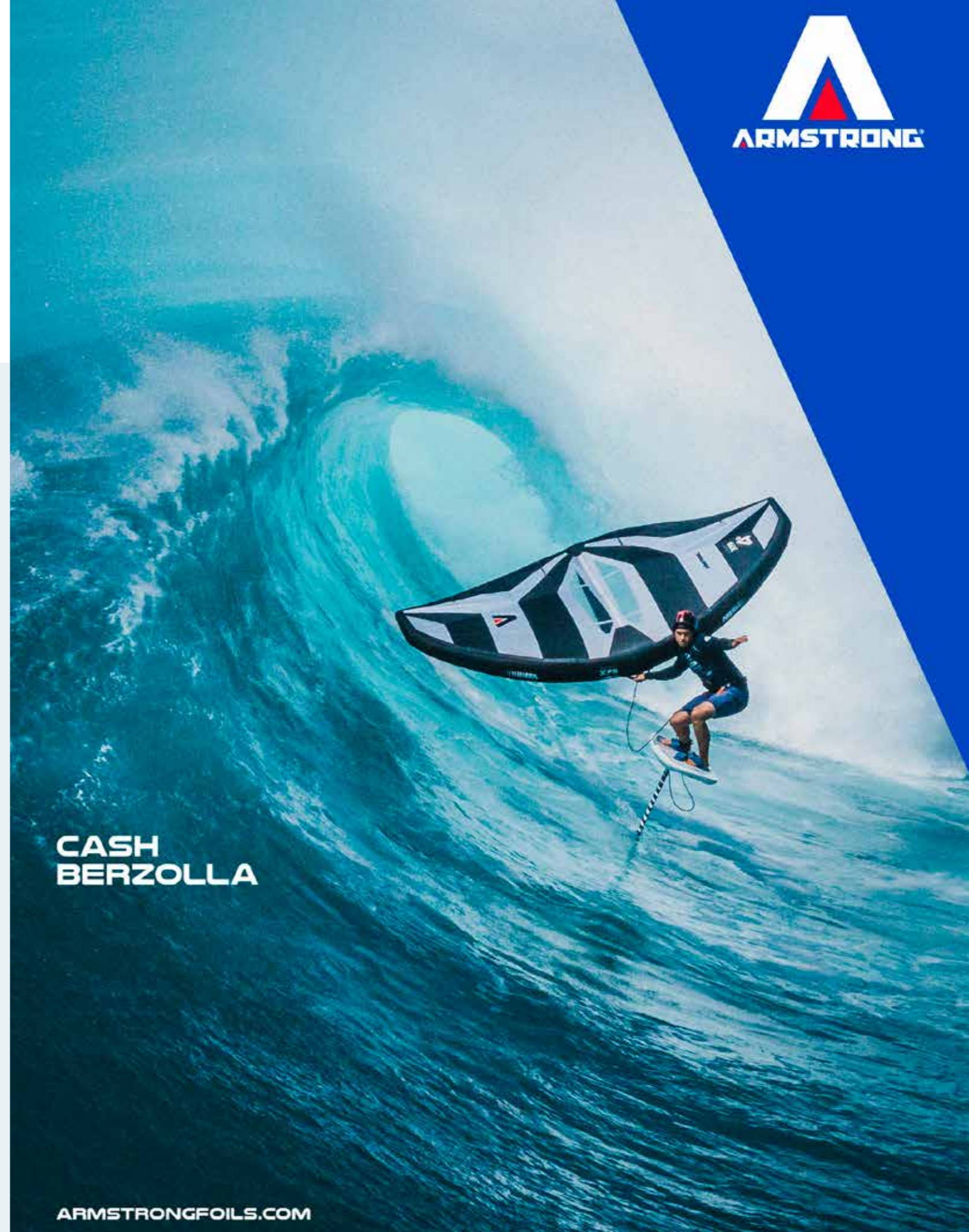
HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Combination of different fabrics in one design
- 2 Experimentation with panelling lay out and seams
- 3 All-round designs best sellers
- 4 Different handle options for different needs

materials that can offer a similar performance at a more affordable price. Seaflight focuses on durability and affordability. They offer DK50 double ripstop nylon canopies and KPE175 Dacron struts. Armstrong's A-Wings are made from the latest generation Dacron and Ultra PE reinforcements, focusing on construction techniques to improve performance with their XPS Lightwind wing featuring the patent-pending Power Batten. This is a premium carbon bar located at the rear of the canopy and perpendicular to the strut. It dramatically improves airflow and canopy stiffness in larger sizes, making it an easy to fly design for such a large area. "Its performance in single digit breezes is truly awesome and really unlocks another level of riding", says Kjell van Sice from Armstrong. Seaflight announces a transition to lighter design for their bigger sizes, with slightly different

“Developers are exploring radical new shapes, with innovative canopy panelling methods and optimised support for the strut, as well as the leading and trail edges, resulting in enhanced aerodynamics and control.” Jarra, NSP

features. Many brands are experimenting with design tweaks to improve performance, the two areas of construction that are getting more attention from product developers are panelling and handles. NSP sticks to Dacron and focuses on innovative panelling methods to reduce weight and maintain responsiveness. "Developers are exploring radical new shapes, with innovative canopy panelling methods and optimised support for the strut, as well as the leading and trail edges, resulting in enhanced aerodynamics and control", says Jarra, in charge of design at NSP. Handles are a hot topic with no clear winner between soft and hard options, as they each cater to different performance demands. Brands are quite experimental in this area to cater for different user groups. Neilpryde has introduced the new NP Mono handle that functions like a boom while adding the drop grip feature. This provides their new Firefly wing for freestyle and surf with improved rotational manoeuvres. "The Firefly combines the NP high lift concept with a significantly reduced wingspan and a simplified airframe with a stiffer feel, making it a strong contender for 2025", announces Hendrik Holzhauser. Seaflight also looks at wave



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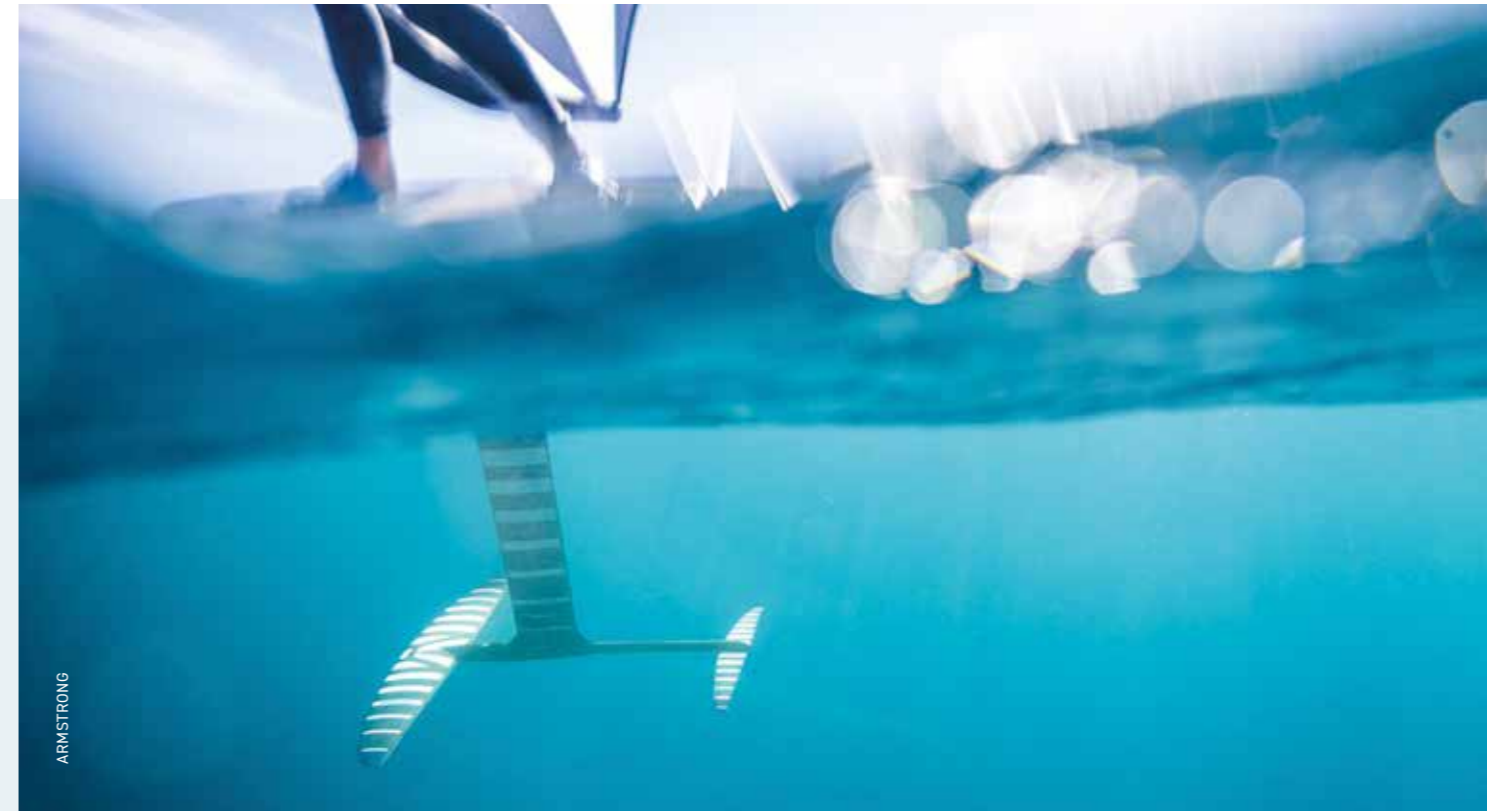
RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

FOILING SS25

Wingfoiling and downwind SUP foiling are driving growth of the foils business, making water sports accessible to many more. By Rocio Enriquez.



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The increased riding availability that foils have opened up in the water sports scene have changed the market. It has widened the demographic, and most importantly, promoted a fluidity in consumers behaviour. There are less 'windsurfers', 'kitters' or 'stand up paddlers', and more 'watermen' and 'waterwomen', ready to shift from one sport to another according to the conditions of the day. Not all sports have the same popularity though. Although there is interest in wind foiling, surf foiling and kite foiling, they seem to be more niche. The two sports driving foil sales are wing foiling and downwind foiling. It is hardly surprising that wing foiling has convinced so many, it is very easy to learn, and the compact material is very portable, making the sport very accessible to any age, gender and skill level. The possibility to ride in any water and wind conditions seals the deal. Downwind foiling has benefitted from innovation that makes the gear more advanced and user friendly. It also offers great value, as downwind boards can double up as light wind wing foiling boards.

FOILS

High aspect foils top the bestsellers charts. The latest generations are easier to ride than their predecessors thanks to innovative designs. "Many more riders can experience a high aspect foil than before", says Kjell van Sice from Armstrong. It becomes a versatile option for many skill levels, as users can advance their riding by simply expanding with a bigger front or back wing. Naish, Levitaz, and Armstrong report their best sales in their high aspect range. Other high aspect best sellers are Indiana's Kondor XL and 1396P, Neilpryde's Glide Swift Carbon, NSP's Riblets, and SPG's Glide-R range. This does not mean that medium and low aspect foils are

"Our design focus is a stable and predictable lift profile that complements the rider as they develop." Nathan Dodds, Liquid Force

discarded. The stability and ease of lift that these shapes provide are still relevant. Surfers like the fast take-off regardless of surf conditions, and the smooth transition from straight riding to turning. Neilpryde's Glide Surf HP and Sic Maui's Flite have sold well for this reason. Entry level riders also seek the ease of lift and the possibility to progress in their riding with the same foil. Mistral has done very well in the extreme sizes of their medium aspect Sultan, the 2100 and the 880. Liquid Force names their Launch Foil 120 kit as their bestseller. "Our design focus is a stable and predictable lift profile that complements the rider as they develop", says Nathan Dodd.

We observe two main trends in foil construction, one in materials and one in design. The use of high modulus carbon is becoming widespread. "With carbon it is easy to reduce the thickness of the stabs, especially on the front wings", explains Stephane Mocher from Select. The strength-to-weight ratio of this material results in more responsive and durable foils. Aluminium is not going anywhere though. Masts and fuselages made with this material offer some advantages, like the ability to withstand extreme loads in pump foils, or their more appealing entry-price. Designs are prioritising speed and manoeuvrability, with optimised hydrodynamic constructions that reduce drag and increase lift. These designs are also proving



LEVITAZ

versatile, offering a broader range of use. The goal is that the user can achieve with one foil what they previously needed two foils for. This is the mindset behind the trending modular systems that allow riders to swap masts, fuselages, and front or back wings to adapt to different environments and skill levels. A rising trend is the evolution of downwind boards that are driving the development of super wide foils built for long glides.

There are many stand-out products that reflect these trends on offer for 2025. Indiana presents two new foils with the Monobloc system. "The Monobloc System integrates the front wing with the front part of the fuselage", says Gunnar Biniash. The Barracuda has a 10.6 high aspect ratio that appeals to riders looking for ultimate speed and glide. At 7.5 aspect ratio, the Marlin is fast, agile, and very easy to handle, making it a perfect all-rounder foil. They also present two new masts made with high modulus carbon, the Drive and the Lightning. Neilpryde highlights two models. The Glide Swift Carbon is an all-round foil for wing foiling. It features an innovative rounded delta middle section and high aspect wings that provide early lift, easy control, and exceptional glide performance. The Glide Swift Alu combines an aluminium mast and fuselage with carbon front and back wings. "The Glide Swift Alu delivers a harmonious balance between performance and affordability", says Hendrik Holzhauser. Armstrong make all their front foils and stabilisers from carbon, but they have introduced aluminium alloy for the first time with the new Alloy System mast and fuselage. NSP adds a new member to the Airwave Riblet wing series. The new FW825 wing is engineered for added manoeuvrability and high-speed control. Select continues to push their Goliath range made entirely of high modulus carbon. Sic Maui expands their Slash series. "We added a smaller Slash 600 front wing, specifically designed for speed and slalom", announces Casi Rynkowski. It complements the recently released 750 and 900 designs which, although dedicated

"With carbon it is easy to reduce the thickness of the stabs and especially on the front wings."

Stephane Mocher, Select Hydrofoils

primarily to speed in wing foiling, are also suitable for surf foiling. The 600 and the 750 are also adaptable for kite foiling. This is how Sic Maui shows their commitment to versatility. They are also very excited to introduce a Slash HM mast in 110 and 900, made with high modulus

"We added a smaller Slash 600 front wing, specifically designed for speed and slalom." Casi Rynkowski, Sic Maui

carbon. Inside the sleek 13mm thickness profile is a carbon beam that enhances stiffness without compromising weight. It significantly reduces drag and improves control during sharp turns. The 900 size is perfect for downwind sailing with a 900 high aspect front wing, and for wing foiling with a 600-front wing. Levitaz introduces the R6 Race Series, optimised for competitive racing with less drag and more lift. Horue has introduced prepreg ultra-high modulus carbon in the mast and front wing to improve efficiency, glide, and stiffness. Naish highlights the Glider HA, this is a newly designed pump foil that specialises in dock starts and low-effort, light wind downwinding. The large wingspan and high aspect ratio provide high lift and low stall speed, enabling effortless pump and long-distance gliding. They have designed a new 'Hammer Head' fuselage front wing connection to accommodate this larger wingspan. Combined with expansion foam core constructions with UD and 3K carbon layup, it provides great stiffness at a low weight. Liquid Force has redesigned their Stratus and Horizon foils to add the Fuselock system. The Stratus Fuselock foil offers minimal connection points and hardware, making it very easy to use. The Horizon Fuselock foil keeps the DNA of the original version, adding adjustments to make the foil more stable, controllable and with even more glide. SPG announces some exciting plans for their 2025 foil lineup, with some additions targeted to the race scene, and some progressive new all-rounder designs. A lot of their focus is on a rigid and durable, yet super-efficient, mast.

BOARDS

The idea of a one board quiver is an appealing one. Versatile boards have led the sales in the foiling scene. Carbon constructions have convinced many with their optimal balance of strength and weight. Longer downwind foiling shapes have been on high demand, partly because they can double up as a light wind wing foiling board. Affordability secures the flow of newcomers into the sport. Foil board production echoes these trends. Boards are getting narrower and longer. With new materials and constructions, you don't need to have that much width to create stability. Many riders seem more interested in long glides than in pulling off radical moves, and a narrower board moves through the water faster with less input. The demand for stronger and lighter boards is driving the use of carbon. Nonetheless, the standard wood sandwich construction remains available for the

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foils division

sake of affordability. Sustainability is an important factor. Consumers reward eco-friendly materials and production methods.

The foil board offer for 2025 meets the current demands with existing and new models. Duotone introduces the Skybrid SLS, a hybrid between a downwinder and a classic wing foiling shape. This new mid-length board features a longer and narrower outline, while maintaining a wider nose and tail. The longer carbon foil tracks keep it light and increase adjustability, enabling early flight in light winds and easy take-off with smaller foils. JP pushes their bestselling X-Winger and the recently introduced R-Winger for light wind. The X-Winger is an all-rounder wing board suitable for freeride, freestyle, wave riding and easy cruising. "The R-Winger represents a significant evolution for light wind or small foil wing foiling enthusiasts", says Hendrik Holzhauser. Sic Maui presents the Kūnalū, a downwind specialist, the flat section bottom with a tail wedge enhances initial stability whether in flat water or swell. Increased volume toward the tail ensures stability, while the thinned-out nose minimises the swing rate for agile manoeuvres. It provides the sensation of a short board's manoeuvrability and control. The Kūnalū has a custom carbon PVC construction. Another addition to the narrow foil board family is the Ka'a mid-length. It is designed to minimise drag and maximise hull speed, especially in light winds. Naish pushes two models, one for downwind and another one for wing foiling. The Hover Downwind has a maximised waterline and bevelled rails that optimise the momentum with each paddle stroke. This enables directional stability and lift-off with maximum ease. The Hover Ascend Carbon Ultra for wing foiling has a thinner parallel outline and increased waterline that makes it possible to get on the foil with minimal effort. The smaller sizes have a flat tail rocker, while the larger ones feature a tail kick that allows them to double up as SUP foil boards. Horue has released two new ranges, the Tamaris and the Marara, both in full carbon construction. Tamaris is prone surfing and wing foil oriented, with foot strap plugs. It offers a very early take-off and no drag. Marara is their downwind offer. It has a full carbon sandwich construction with thin pads that makes it very stiff and light. Appletree's flagship board is the V3 Slice, but they are also hoping to see some good results with their specialised Skipper Downwind and Skipper DW Prone. "All Appletree boards are produced in our own facilities in Portugal using a vacuum-infused technology developed in-house", says co-founder Wiegner Buurma. A hydrophobic foam is covered by layers of pure carbon fibre and infused with just the right amount of epoxy, achieving a stiff and responsive construction. Norden's range of foil boards is called Futurama, and splits in three segments. The short models are for surf, the mid-length ones are for wing foiling, and the larger models are for light wind wing foiling and downwind SUP. For beginners, they have the Futurama starter. NSP continues to expand their downwind category with the soon to be released BlueFin by Alain Teurquetil. "Heavily inspired by our downwind Sonic race boards, the BlueFin carries a lightweight full

"The R-Winger represents a significant evolution for light wind or small foil wing foiling enthusiasts."

Hendrik Holzhauser, JP Australia



APPLETREE

require. Sustainability is a hot topic for foiling consumers and brands do not miss a chance to implement it in any area possible especially in production methods. Observing waste management, using renewable energy, and choosing locations that are closer to their markets, offer great results. The use of plastic in packaging is minimised, replaced by recycled materials or no packaging at all. Quality of the product is important too, as a truly sustainable product is a durable one.

RETAILER SUPPORT

Retailers can expect support from brands in many forms. Apart from marketing assets to use in-store and online, brands will be making noise in social media through their action content and team rider endorsements. Retailers will find a network of sales reps and distributors ready to offer local support in their areas. Ordering systems are made easier with B2B platforms that enable immediate information about stock. There are also many educational resources to train staff about the product they are selling. Demo events will allow final customers to test the gear before they buy. Most brands offer two order and delivery options. Larger orders can be placed pre-season to secure inventory and a higher margin. It is also possible to order smaller quantities in-season through readily available stock that can be delivered fast, and in some cases drop-shipped to final customers. These options allow retailers to choose how to manage their stock levels while securing availability of stock anytime of the year. This will allow them to focus on what they love most, the sale to the final customer. ©

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Riders cross over from different foil sports
- 2 Wingfoiling and downwind foiling driving popularity
- 3 Easier to use high aspect foils
- 4 Longer and narrower boards

"The Monobloc System integrates the front wing with the front part of the fuselage."

Gunnar Biniash, Indiana Paddle and Surf Co

carbon fibre shell", says Jarra Mate. Levitaz highlights their Boom Race Series designed for competitive racing and high-speed cruising. The lightweight yet robust build with carbon fibre enhances agility and speed. SPG is testing a new downwind design, the Pegasus Pro, that they plan to release next season. They are also working on a new wing foiling range of boards that targets early lift and progressive riding. Indiana pushes their new super light Magic 83 and 95 pump foil boards. Mistral offers smaller models to suit grommets that want to advance on to higher winds, and longer, narrower boards for the light wind and prone downwind riders. Liquid Force has two highlights, their popular Nebula has received a facelift to make this all-round wakeboard even better. The new X Foil Board has an increased volume and base profile to pop you straight back on after big airs.

SUSTAINABILITY

Wherever possible, brands are choosing eco-friendly materials to build their boards, respecting the quality standards that they

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BIG WIG INTERVIEW STEVE DOUGLAS, SIDEWALK SKATEBOARD DISTRO

A heavyweight in the world of skateboarding, Steve Douglas has been involved with some of the industries most iconic media and hardgoods brands throughout a career now into its fourth decade.

Currently involved with 3 different companies, Steve is the VP of Business Development at Sidewalk Skateboard Distribution, and Managing Director at Rolling Thunder Supply Co & Nineteen76 distribution. We hear about Steve's career, his opinion on the industry, the non profit Make Life Skate Life and the London Calling skate event.

You started skating in 1976. Please tell us about your background and what led to your current positions.

I started entering contests in 1981, moved to America in 1985 with the ambition to become a professional skater. I turned pro in 1987 for Schmitt Stix, Indy, Vans and Quiksilver.

In 1990, I co-founded the New Deal, Element, Mad Circle, Golden state wheel co, 411 Video magazine, On video and Destructo trucks all under the Giant skateboard distribution umbrella where I was President. When we sold Element to Billabong in 2001, I stepped back in 2002 to be with my young family.

In 2004, I joined Dwindle with my long term friend Bod Boyle where I was in charge of Business development and ran the EMEA region and the global complete category as well as many other things!

After leaving Dwindle in 2016, I started Rolling Thunder Supply Co in 2018 which focused on the skateboard completes category and price point product.

In the same year, I also started Nineteen76, a UK based distributor selling many brands. Today we license Meow, Zoo York, Blueprint Speed demons and Ocean Pacific, we manufacture in China and ship globally. Last year we started Sidewalk Skateboard Distribution based in California with my old friends from Dwindle Distribution - Bod Boyle, Louie Barleta, Bill Weiss, Ernie Diaz, and Eric Wollam. We have a small but amazing, dedicated and hard working crew.

How is the Skate hardgoods market currently?

Tough, but we knew that when we started Sidewalk and we planned for that, our focus is to build the company during this time so we can have everything in place for when it comes back...and it will come back.

Are you still feeling the impact of Covid?

Yes. There is still way too much cheap stock in all global markets. But it is

There are a few green shoots of growth but it will take another year at least to be out of the woods, and maybe some categories even longer in other regions of the world.

definitely getting less and before you know, it will be all gone.

What are the major current trends?

There are a few green shoots of growth but it will take another year at least to be out of the woods, and maybe some categories even longer in other regions of the world.

In the skate deck category, 8.5+ seems to be the current standard width, we're also seeing some small but optimistic growth - minis, mid, micros and soft top completes. Also 8.25 and above completes are doing well. Wider trucks are having a moment with our Slappy Trucks Curb Killer and any trucks 9' or wider have been killing it, we can't keep them in stock, it's insane!

You launched Sidewalk Skateboard Distribution in 2023 please take us through the business.

It's a small company filled with industry veterans. The Opera brand is made up of the team who left Madness and the team at Jacuzzi came from the ashes of Enjoi. Slappy Trucks are building so much traction now, and we just launched Push focusing on complete setups. We've also just launched Bro style, a grip tape collaboration with Jessup, and soon a heritage category which will be a lot of work but heaps of fun that Steve Rocco is involved with.

Wow that a lot, tell us more about Push?

Push is our give back brand, its purely focused on completes as for most companies completes are simply an afterthought. We will focus all of our energy into completes for Sidewalk. We have pro and artist guest models

Tough, but we knew that when we started Sidewalk and we planned for that, our focus is to build the company during this time so we can have everything in place for when it comes back...and it will come back.

whose proceeds go to their skate charity of their choice. We will always have a line for Make Life Skate Life a non profit that is incredible. We will use proceeds to have a mental health professional on a retainer for our riders and employees at Sidewalk, we hope that all brands have this resource in the future.

Talking of Make Life Skate Life, you are actively involved in raising money for them to build skate parks in underserved communities around the world. How has this initiative progressed?

Good! We have been able to get funding for the new park in Siargao Skatepark in the Philippines that's opening in a few months. A special thanks to Nike and especially Sky Brown. We are also working on a facility in Baghdad. The MLSL guys and girls do amazing work, our goal is to build 30 new skate communities in the next 15 years in underserved communities around the world. Find out more at www.makelifeskatelife.org

Last year you Launched London calling and the 2nd edition of the event was held in July. What are you trying to achieve with London calling?

We believe the UK is the best and most influential skate scene in the world outside of California. We want to showcase that to a wider audience, and give credit to the people who make the scene what it is. Over every decade the UK has produced some of the highest level pro's, UK based companies and magazines with photographers contributing to US magazines. It is home to some great skateparks, video edits with a backdrop of an amazing music scene.

It always upset me that the 70's UK skaters and companies were overlooked when it comes to the Skateboarding Hall Of Fame. At London Calling last year, we wanted to raise the profiles of the 70's pioneers, and it paid off. Earlier this year in May, 3 UK based skaters got inducted into SHoF from the 70's - Mark Baker, Jeremy Henderson, and Marc Sinclair. It was great to see Tom Penny (1990's) and Geoff Rowley (2000's) get added too. It was an amazing evening, not only for the British scene but for global skateboarding.

Push is our give back brand, its purely focused on completes as for most companies completes are simply an afterthought

It's my hope that every country does their version so we can celebrate and show respect to the guys that laid the foundation for all the amazing global scenes while these pioneers are alive.

This year we focused on the Read and Destroy book. A 272 page retrospective of the life and times of RAD magazine and its creators with a deep dive into the formative years of skateboarding in the UK from 1979 to 1995. The book is a must have, order it from <https://www.read-and-destroy-archive.com/radshop/rad-book>

Next year we will be combining London Calling and the Skateboarding Hall of Fame by bringing them both to the Torrance Art Museum in LA. These events are a lot of work, we need outside funding as there are only so many favors you can ask for! I believe these events are critical to keeping our scenes healthy, so we will keep trying to pull these off even if they are smaller!

Recently Leigh Nardellim, one of the EMEA industries major faces and a close friend to you, died in a tragic car accident, and you have started a go fund campaign for his children. How might we all get involved?

It was devastating and still does not feel real. I was lucky enough to know Leigh for over 30 years, he recently started work for Sidewalk, Rolling Thunder and oversaw nineteen76. He was integral to all 3 companies. On top of that he ran OEM production at Dwindle's Chop Chop Woodshop for Europe.

Leigh leaves behind Eddie (17yo) and Axel (4yo), please support the boys. The family thanks you. Leigh will be missed and never forgotten <https://gofund.me/b08161c6>

What are the biggest lessons you have learnt in business since you started?

Really it's just common sense. Work really hard, give everything or don't bother. Take care of your people, value and respect them as well as your customers and suppliers. Lastly, bad news should travel quicker than good news.



RAD book with Bod Boyle and Steve Douglas

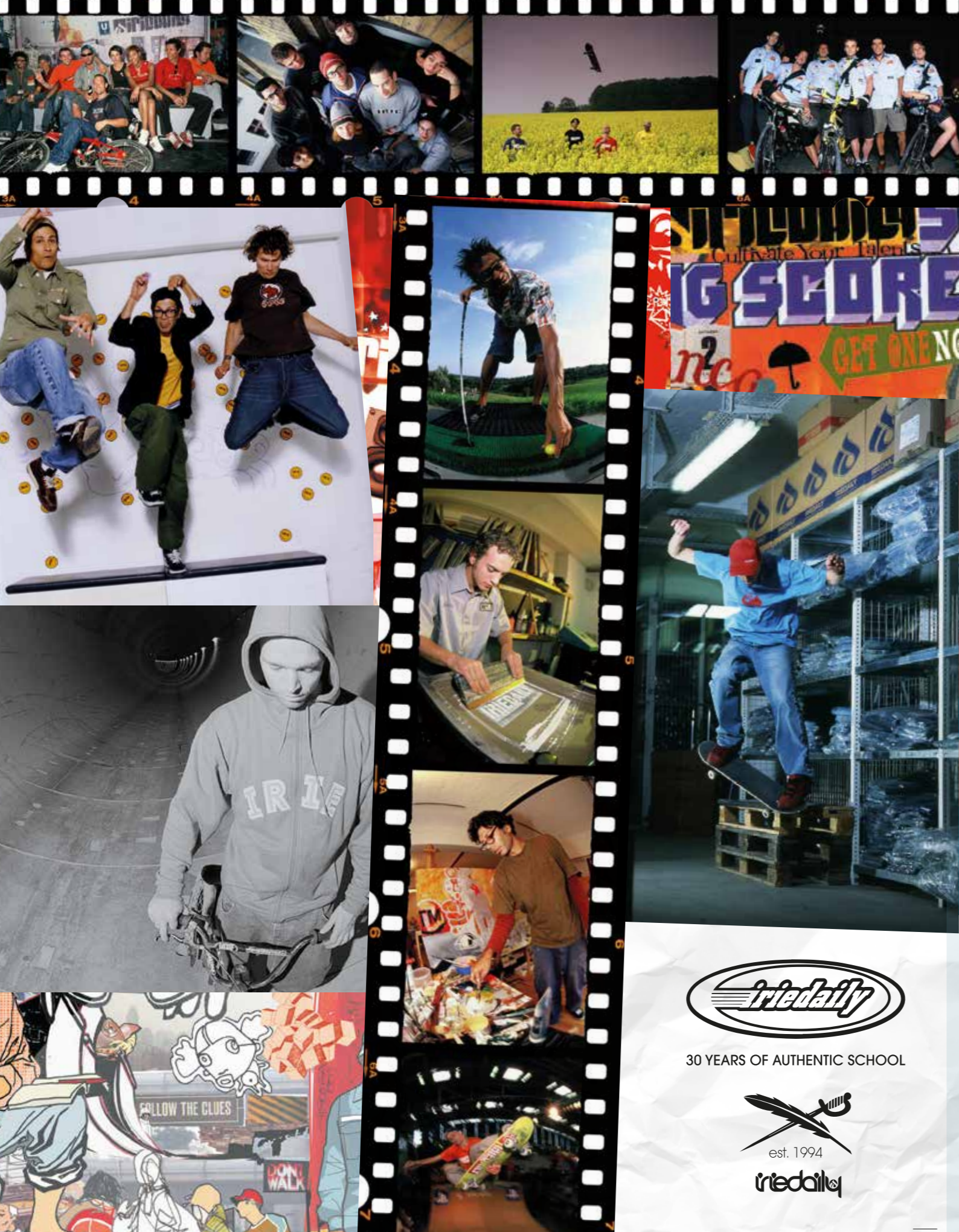
What achievement are you most proud of since you started skating and why?

Starting 411 Video magazine. I think it changed skateboarding for the better and really looking back it was ahead of its time. It was put together with a variety of small video sections which is the format you see today. The key thing was that after 411, you didn't have to live in California to get noticed, you could be anywhere as long as you could supply footage. Our motto was if it's good, it goes in! Look out for some exciting news on 411VM and a 6 month exhibit in a famous NYC museum opening in September. If I can choose a second one, it's what we did at London Calling last year, this was purely out of respect, it needed to happen!

How do you see the future for the skate hardgoods industry?

It can only get better from here. There are deals out there that will soon come to an end, if you have the ability, my advice is to stock up on these deals, soon all the new product available will be expensive. I think everyone that is still standing once we get through this, will use the last 4 years as a huge learning experience, even ones that have been doing this for 40+ years!

Regardless of what's going on in the industry, the act of skateboarding is as exciting as ever, there's young kids starting every day, older generations still not only ripping but progressing and a more diverse crew at every park I visit. It's a beautiful thing we are involved in, we are lucky!



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

MENS STREETWEAR SS25

Nostalgia is playing a big part in next season's streetwear drops, with brands reaching into their back catalogue to give new life to old styles. For better or worse, Gen-Z styles are back... we'll leave that decision up to the customers. Streetwear is a key driver in the broader fashion market, with influences visible all across the board. We take a closer look at what brands are bringing to the table with the Boardsport SOURCE Retail Buyers Guider for Mens Streetwear SS25.



MARKET CHANGES

High-street stores are currently suffering the effects of an unsteady market, however, streetwear is continuing to provide inspiration and drive to the broader fashion world, as Julain Duval - President of AndFeelings said: "Look at who is now the creative director at brands like Fila, Kenzo and Louis Vuitton. Skateboard, music or streetwear pioneers." According to Dickies EMEA Merchandising Manager, Valentina Natale, "SS25 is all about continuing to witness the shift from a sportswear perspective into a workwear lens from a design and communication perspective. Consumers are looking for durable functional items that can be trans-seasonal and drive versatility."

PRICE POINTS

Prices are rising, albeit somewhat subtly for most, due to brands wanting to keep items attainable for their customers. Denise Graff - Brand Marketing Manager for Berlin-based IrieDaily explained that "We already had big price jumps in 2022 due to cotton shortages caused by crop failures, and the general global situation due to the pandemic among other things." In a bid to maintain loyal to its customer base, Brixton for example, will be introducing a higher quality range alongside its classic lines as Tyrone Smit - European Marketing Manager at Brixton said, "We are committed to maintaining the pricing of our foundational pieces through strategic partnerships with our factories and vendors. Simultaneously, we will introduce premium, "better," and "best" tiered styles at higher price points to elevate our product offerings." Valentina from Dickies also spoke about how they plan to deal with the increases: "Pricing pressure is across the market, and consequently pricing is increasing for every brand. We're still

"The problem is that everyone talks about 100% sustainability but, at least in our customer group, no one is willing to pay the price for it." Julian Wolf, Homeboy

addressing the need to be competitive in a crowded environment, so the updates are not drastic."

STORIES/COLLECTION THEMES

Functional and practical clothing is leading the way next season, with a focus on less is more. Brands look to try to reduce your wardrobe with items that can have multiple uses. Tyrone from Brixton said, "Versatile styles transition seamlessly from the beach to the trail, all the way to the BBQ, embodying the spirit of purposeful living." Denim also seems to be happening again, with the OG baggy jeans brand HOMEBOY bringing some exciting things, as Homeboy's Brand Manager Julian Wolf said, "For SS25 we are playing with the theme of the Ranch lifestyle. With our new style, the DESPERADO Denim, we are paying tribute to the real OGs of Denim... The Cowboys." Dickies will be focusing on 2 types of workers as Valentine explained: "Indoor and outdoor workers will be our seasonal theme for SS25. These Mechanic/Service stories combined with a more Western story will reflect those types of workers through a fashion lifestyle lens." AndFeelings will be continuing from the success of their first pants release



30 YEARS OF AUTHENTIC SCHOOL





"We are committed to maintaining the pricing of our foundational pieces through strategic partnerships with our factories and vendors. Simultaneously, we will introduce premium, "better," and "best" tiered styles at higher price points to elevate our product offerings."

Tyrone Smit, Brixton

for Spring/Summer 2025. To achieve an authentic streetwear feel, heavier cotton materials are a must for T-shirts and sweatshirts!" Homeboy's Julian Wolf agreed, saying, "Baggy Pants and Shorts have claimed the throne completely and now it's time to stay innovative and play with the Baggy silhouette. Wider leg openings, funky washes and tops that look a little like they have been washed too hot haha, but we don't participate in that last trend. We stay Baggy."

SUSTAINABILITY

In a world quite literally on fire right now, the attempts made by clothing brands to reduce their impact on the environment are vital. Brands are substituting fabrics, and through advances in technology, producing garments in ways that last longer and perform better, leading to less fast fashion. As Tyrone Smit at Brixton said "The streetwear market this season is seeing a rise in sustainability and eco-friendly practices, with a focus on gender-neutral clothing and innovative, functional fabrics." Hydroponic's Jordi Quinto said "All our plastics are recycled, and most accessories are made from rPET, or recycled plastic bottles, so no new plastic bottles are being produced. Homeboy's Julian Wolf spoke proudly of how their clothes are all produced in Europe, using almost no chemicals and very little water. However, as Julian said, "The problem is that everyone talks about 100% sustainability but, at least in our customer group, no one is willing to pay the price for it." The same goes for smaller companies starting out, as Julian from Andfeelings said: "As a new label working with A-level production sources, it can be challenging to reach MOQ and not have to bear up-charges. We commit to producing with sustainable materials when it makes sense to."

WRAP UP

Boxy styles remain strong for SS25, alongside cropped t-shirts, dad caps and baggy Jorts (jean shorts). The latter is most definitely seeing a rise if current seasons are anything to go by, and it doesn't look to be stopping any time soon. Brands like Homeboy and Hydroponic are producing new styles of their popular shorts with wider cuts now to accommodate this re-emerging lust for boxier fits. It's looking to be an exciting SS25 from what we've seen already announced, with more to surely come in the next few months. ☺

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last year as Julian said, "Based on the success of the Maker, our first Pants and Shorts style, we are introducing 2 complementary fits, a straight tapered fit and a balloon fit."

COLLABS

Alongside brands' usual solid offerings, we hear about some exciting collaborators brands will be working with next season. Julian Wolf from Homeboy said, "We are talking to EASTPAK right now, which would be a nostalgic collaboration since our founder, Jürgen Wolf, was an EASTPAK Distributor in the early 90s." It's always special when a brand can go full circle like this with someone. Jordi Quinto, Hydroponic's Marketing Manager said "We're excited to be releasing a collection of Sponge-bob Squarepants clothing, accessories and skateboards with a focus on edgy SB illustrations." Surely teaming up with Nickelodeon Giants will bring their brand into a new light! Brixton's Tyrone Smit spoke of their incoming partnership with fishing tackle craftsman 'Bass Brains': "Born in San Diego, California, Bass Brains crafts handmade, resin-poured, custom swim baits for the hardcore bass fisherman. This ongoing collaboration will introduce new art pieces centred around outdoor fishing culture, enhancing Brixton's authenticity in this space." Denise from Iriedaily spoke of new artist collaborations for their ever-growing graphic t-shirt collections: "No streetwear collection is complete without graphic T-shirts! In addition to our trusted illustrators GoodMood and Huffo, we have also brought on board Sydney's Aley Wild and Jiro Bevis from London to introduce some vibrancy with their eclectic style."

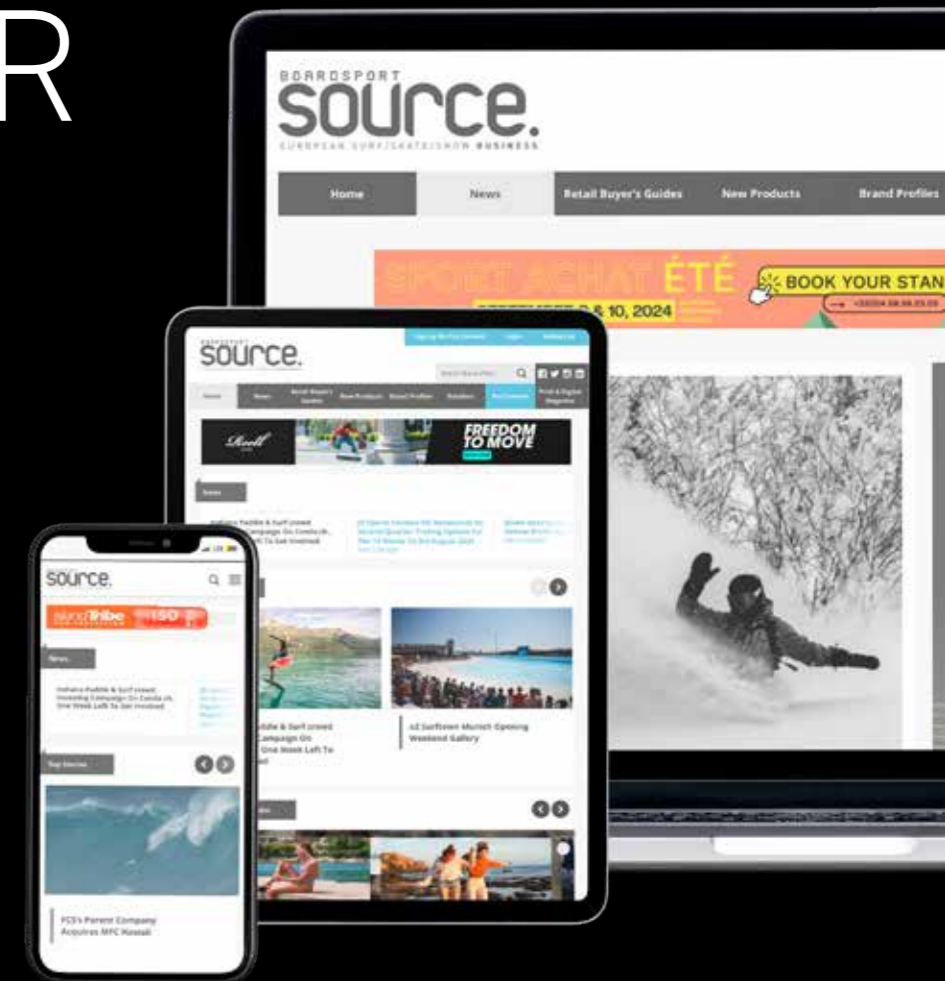
TRENDS

With the 90's/2000's style revival still in full effect, it's only right that brands are taking note and pushing baggier, more relaxed-fit clothing for next season. I, for one, am pretty pleased with this - let's leave the skinnies in the closet for the foreseeable. Denise from Irie Daily said, "The current "Relaxed Fit" trend remains the dominant silhouette of the modern streetwear look

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Gender-neutral clothing
- 2 Baggy silhouettes continue to grow
- 3 Denim renaissance
- 4 Less water used in production
- 5 Workwear still inspires brands

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

WETSUITS SS25

The sustainable revolution of the wetsuit industry was put on hold during a couple seasons of overstock, but the stormy skies have cleared for spring/summer 2025, welcoming plenty of business opportunities for retailers and brands alike. Report by David Bianic



You read it first here, in your cherished piece of printed magazine: "We'll see the product work through in time", said Phil Bridges, Designer for Dakine, in issue 119 this past winter, speaking of the overstock issue in the wetsuit category and indeed, time heals all wounds. "While some 2023 SKU's are still on display, order levels have been robust overall", reports Hendrik Holzauer, Junior Marketing Manager for Neilpryde & JP Australia, adding that "moving forward, we aim to better balance supply and demand, ensuring retailers have the right mix of products to meet customer needs." Things are levelling out, as noted at Rip Curl, which has seen the market remain steady in 2024, and while the steamers faced challenges as retailers worked to effectively manage overstock, the springsuits segment performed well, says Bastien Grandy, Rip Curl Wetsuit Product Manager Associate Europe. The market indicators are confirming positive growth at O'Neill too, with a cautious approach however as retailers are still quite cautious on pre-order level, whilst the re-order business has been above standards. This could be explained by the rather bleak early season, says Alex Cretier at Prolimit: "The summer market is just starting to take off because of the cold spring and Prolimit presence in stores is high."

But let's not get too greedy and spiral down in the same detrimental cycle of highs and lows. Brands such as Soörüz spoke to us in an activist-like tone, claiming "We need to get out of overproduction, because overconsumption is over, after years of dramatic damage to the environment", says Marin Mauriac, Product Development. Marin would like to see the entire industry revise its overall sales capacity downwards. "Buy less, buy better", echoes Aurélien Silvestre, Product Manager at Oxbow. The French brand has chosen to offer only a high-end range (made of Yulex natural rubber) and to carry-over the collection for longer, 'offering timeless colorways and styles', and encouraging their

"While some 2023 SKU's are still on display, order levels have been robust overall."

Hendrik Holzauer, Neilpryde

clients to take care of their gear via a repair service. On that note, John Westlake, 'rubber man' at Alder in the UK, wishes this is a service that retailers would be able to provide 'at good rates to the public.'

Patagonia was an early advocate of the 'repair your gear' ethos via their Worn Wear program and they are now going the extra mile with a new end-of-life solution for wetsuits as the retired Yulex products can now be used as component to make new ones, 'a groundbreaking circular solution', as Yulex® (from any brand using the material) can now "Be broken down at the molecular level by Bolder Industries to be used as carbon black in the dyeing process of future Patagonia wetsuits." Says Gabe Davies at Patagonia. Carbon black is used to dye the wetsuits' recycled nylon lining and accounts for about 20% of Patagonia wetsuits' rubber foam. In addition, this BolderBlack® uses 90%+ less water and emits 90%+ fewer greenhouse gases than traditional carbon black.

Still on the green side, Soörüz is taking a further step in their commitment to get rid of the petroleum-based wetsuits, now producing the entirety of their range – including entry-level and school models – in their exclusive Organic Oysterprene foam, the evolution of the original oyster-shell based neoprene, now used by a dozen brands or so. Last



but not least, if we want a durable wetsuit, we'd better get rid of these stinky odours that make us think our wetsuit is good for the bin. Nikwax proposes a powerful cleaner and conditioner for wetsuits and neoprene items. It will help you clean away salt, chlorine, and organic residue, leaving it soft and supple: "Wetsuit Refresh does not include any biocides, enzymes or biological agents which means it is kinder to your skin and the environment, so you can be confident that you are not harming aquatic life." Do your laundry guys!

SS25 KEY PIECES: 3/2 STEAMERS

While the range of silhouettes is particularly wide for spring/summer wetsuits – sleeves/no sleeves, short/long legs, short john, jackets, etc.. The 'piece de resistance' remains the 3/2 fullsuit. This staple design is a flagship for the brands and each of them have some unique selling propositions. Rip Curl's 'hero product' is the Flashbomb Fusion, with its

"Yulex® (from any brand using the material) can now be broken down at the molecular level by Bolder Industries to be used as carbon black in the dyeing process of future Patagonia wetsuits." Gabe Davies, Patagonia

exclusive Dry Seam Technologies, 'It solves the age-old issue of wetsuits leaking at the seams, without resorting to using stiff liquid tape.' And no stitching means it also holds the full integrity of the neoprene to avoid water getting in. O'Neill are combining style and new school tech, pushing their heritage O'iginal silhouettes in the forefront. These are 'super cool retro pieces using updated modern materials and fabrics in RG8 and regular limestone neo.' The RG8 styles feature 90% or more recycled fibres within the liner fabrics paired with an FSC-certified natural rubber foam core. If you were a big fan of the TB3 and TB3X neoprene for its amazing warm to flex ratio, don't worry, you'll still find them on the Hyperfreak.

Some customers fear the more eco-friendly materials don't stand the performance test. While it has been true in a not-so-distant past, sustainable technology has upped the game: "The biggest development is the performance of these suits has been maintained using natural rubber and recycled linings, something that until now, had proved elusive", ensures John Longman, Senior Designer for C-Skins, speaking of their NuWave Solace and Session 3:2 fullsuits.

SS25 KEY PIECES: "SHORT-LIMBS" FOR MEN

While the ultimate outfit of every surfer would be a pair of trunks with a rashguard, those chilly summer mornings or blown-out afternoon sessions

"We have designed a shorty that keeps you warm: It is made with the same technologies as a 3.2mm full-length, we simply cut the legs." Manera

are best enjoyed with a bit of rubber armour. The short-leg/arm springsuit is a favourite among the holiday warriors. It is the go-to model for beginners and seasonal participants, both for its ease of use and soft price point. In that segment, Neilpryde has got you covered with the Nexus 2/2 Shorty FL BZ: "It features very soft neoprene throughout the body, and high thermal insulation is ensured by the mesh panel in the chest and back areas. All standard Neilpryde features, such as the E3 system, leg straps, and perfect fit are also included." Rip Curl also introduces a new Dawn Patrol shorty crafted in natural rubber foam, updating a timeless classic.

For the wind and kite enthusiasts, WIP offers a different springsuit design, the Steamy, is meant to be worn without being fully closed to allow more breathability and ventilation during high-temperature sessions, thanks to a front-zip. "Our range is designed for wind/wing/kite/foil practice, and the design must incorporate friction and shock absorption reinforcements. This is key to avoiding destroying your wetsuit in one season. If you use a surf wetsuit for "Wind driven board sport," the damage is immediate, and the wetsuit won't last the season" explains Vincent Cadene, COO at WIP.

From there, the short-sleeved fullsuit and long-sleeved springsuit are two different options, depending on style preference and your local climate (chilly water and no wind or warmer temps but windier). Revamped in Spring 2024, the Regulator collection from Patagonia will be carried-over for SS25 and still feature the Yulex® Regulator® Lite Front-Zip Short-Sleeved Full Wetsuit, a model which ticks all the eco boxes: built from 85% Yulex® natural rubber combined with 15% synthetic rubber by polymer content. The natural rubber is from sources that are Forest Stewardship Council® certified by Preferred by Nature™ and made in a Fair Trade Certified™ factory. If you prefer the long-sleeve alternative made with Yulex, Oxbow offers the Wulex LS.

Eventually, jackets have gained momentum beyond the vintage log community and are now associated with the performance pieces, such as the new Plus Jacket 1/1 Short Sleeve and Max Jacket 1/1.5 Long Sleeve at Hurley.

SS25 KEY PIECES: ALL FOR THE GIRLS

While women can choose among all the gender-neutral silhouettes mentioned above, they have a multitude of styles to dip into. The very short leg options on springsuits now exceeds the demand of the regular above-the-knee cut. Hurley joins the party with "new springsuits for women with new lengths in the leg to make them more comfortable when surfing". One of the standouts of Manera's Women range is the Seafarer 3/2 Hybrid: "It is very frustrating to be cold in summer. For this reason, we have designed a shorty that keeps you warm: It is made with the same technologies as a 3.2mm full-length, we simply cut the legs." The boxer-like short has been adopted by many with great success. Another striking model is the G-Bomb Long Sleeve springsuit in the Rip Curl X Victoria Vergara collection. Inspired by the early 2000's, it features denim texture prints, highlighted with bold colour accents, crafted from natural rubber-based foam featuring E5 neoprene. Prints are also to be found in O'Neill's Bahia printed collection, which not only looks great, but fits great: 'You will find a spring suit in every length depending on your preference'. Even more "Old-school is the new school", the long Jane is very popular, says Jack Knowles at GUL. Patagonia offers one in the revamped Regulator collection in the same responsible compound: 85% Yulex® natural rubber with 15% synthetic rubber by polymer content which is Fair Trade Certified™. Let's finish with an awkward yet crucial accessory exclusive to the Women's category, the Design Award-winning WIPEE standing pee system from WIP. Us guys will keep on doing our things the gross way...

Slow but steady, the takeover of natural rubber is a work in progress and will help bring further down the cost of its production. And as the premium performance of the eco-conscious wetsuits isn't an issue anymore, this opens a new era for retailers who will no longer have to choose between their values and business.🌱

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Sell-out gets moving again
- 2 Full-on sustainable ranges
- 3 Retro styles on cuts/graphics
- 4 Gendered silhouettes for Women



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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

HELMETS & PROTECTION 2024

Protective gear and helmets are coming for a ride with the Olympics hosting skateboarding again and propelling the category into the public viewpoint. As every competitor under 18 is obliged to wear a helmet, it's further pushing the idea that wearing a helmet can be both safe and cool. We look at what brands have to offer and what to watch out for in the Source Retail Buyers Guide for Skateboard Helmet & Protection 2024.



Unlike the skate footwear segment, it seems that the hard goods overstock fiasco is easing off for some protection brands. Nadja Herger, Head of Communication at TSG said "The storage situation is slowly relaxing. We are seeing demand in all our areas, from helmets to protectors."

"The storage situation is slowly relaxing. We are seeing demand in all our areas, from helmets to protectors." Nadja Herger, TSG

With the skateboarding scene continuing to diversify with increasing participation from female riders and a notable rise in LGBTQIA+ riders, skate schools and groups are forming and creating safer spaces to learn in, with these groups/clubs/schools often promoting safety gear. With progression and falling going hand in hand, it's only right that protective gear is vital to progress. Andy King - General Manager at REKD said, "The more protected they are, the less time they will need to spend recovering from injuries, allowing them to progress faster and enjoy the sport more fully." Nadja Herger, Head of Communication at TSG also noticed that the not-so-recent pump track fad popping up everywhere, is influencing helmet use. Nadia said "Everything that rolls meets on the pump track, from skateboarders to BMX and scooter kids. Skateparks (indoor and outdoor) are family hangouts at the weekend. Skateboarding dads and mums put their kids on the boards. They all need helmets and pads."

MARKETING STORIES

Whether padded base layers or full-cut skate helmets, the protection market is still pushing new & retro styles, and the coming season looks

no different. Andy from REKD said, "For 2024, key advancements in protective technologies include slim-fit protection, impact shock foam (REKD Energy foam), and innovative helmet designs." It's not just park and vert skateboarding that requires protective gear. As Nadja explained, TSG will improve their hit downhill helmet with the Pass Pro 2.0, "Super safe ABS construction with reinforced chin bar and comfortable fit and new Anti-Fog Air Duct System, which prevents the visor from fogging up."

TRENDS

The protection market is spanning further than just the run-of-the-mill knee & elbow pads these days. Xion PG CEO Björn Clausen said "We see skate customers prioritising their safety more, looking at more than just head, knees and elbows. We see a trend of buying back protectors and shorts that cover the coccyx." Whilst some brands cater to the general extreme sports category, Triple Eight distribution

(187 killer pads, triple 8 & Pro-tec) has been helping customers get more out of their products, instead of reinventing the wheel with new models. Noah Todaro, Marketing Manager at Triple Eight explained, "Not necessarily your traditional helmets and pads, but tertiary/accessory items that help refine the fit and extend the life of existing products."

PRICE POINTS

The longevity of a product in today's market speaks no bounds, with the 'buy cheap, buy twice' methodology coming into play here. Andy from REKD said it perfectly, "In today's economic environment, consumers are becoming more discerning in their purchasing decisions. They are increasingly seeking products that offer long-term quality and durability, ensuring their investment provides substantial value over time." Brands like those under Triple Eight Dist. will be maintaining relatively similar price points to previous seasons, however, as Noah said, "One thing to note is that we do plan to introduce a few premium helmets in the second half of the year that'll sit at a slightly higher price point than our current line". Pads and base layer protection mark up is slightly higher than helmet costs it seems, with Nadia from TSG saying, "2-3 piece protector sets start at €44.95 to €69.95. Knee pads from €59.95 up to €129.95 for high-performance vert pads." Xion PG's back protectors and shorts on the other hand start at €139.

SAFETY COMMUNICATION

Protective gear and especially helmets are of course known to protect the wearer, but just how is the effectiveness of these products communicated with customers? "Certified helmets are THE only way"- Nadja from TSG explained. ALK13 owner Vincent Isaac added "Certification is a must-have - We have noticed this in each product. It's the law." S1 Co-Founder Dan McCashin communicated the issue perfectly saying, "The idea that we are still talking about non-certified helmets being available on the market is disappointing and speaks to the larger issue of cooperate greed where certain companies prioritise sales over the safety and overall well-being of the human race." It's no surprise that every brand listed here has their products certified, and clearly stated both online and on their product packaging/branding. There are still uncertified products out there though on sites like Temu.

CROSS OVER

Protective gear can be used across a variety of activities, however, certain styles cater to certain sports. As Björn from Xion PG said: "Our protection gear is very versatile and can be used in all different situations, be it snowsports, biking or skating." Andy from REKD said similarly, "We pride ourselves on being a multi-sport brand, with many of our protection products and designs being applicable across various sports." This however isn't always the case. Nadja from TSG said: "Each product has its area of application and has been developed for a specific sport. Are there any overlaps? Definitely. Some skateboarders like to wear pads under their clothing. The other way round is rather rare." Vincent from ALK13 spoke of the concerns of using purpose-designed protection for the wrong sport, however: "Sometimes riders don't take into account certifications, for example, using water helmets for skating."

"Not necessarily your traditional helmets and pads, but tertiary/accessory items that help refine the fit and extend the life of existing products."

Noah Todaro, Triple Eight

TRENDING DESIGNS

It looks like customers want slimmer, less bulky protection. Triple 8 Distribution's Noah said, "We have worked hard to develop slimmer models of pads for 2024 that feel lighter and comfier, but will protect the same way as our thickest pads." Andy from REKD said similarly, "Trending styles in pads include low-profile designs that fit easily under clothing and stay close to the body." Dan from S1 spoke of the brimmed helmet trend he noticed this year, "Our new Lifer Brim Helmet keeps the sun out of your eyes!"

COLOURS/GRAPHICS AND COLLABORATIONS

Collaborations seem few and far between for the year, although trending styles and colours of helmets seem to be loud and bright.

"Certification is a must-have - we have noticed this in each product. It's the law." Vincent Isaac ALK13



Nadja from TSG said, "We are bold and loud with the tie-dye all-over print on the Meta helmet. All-over logo prints remain popular." Protec's helmets also pack a rather jazzy punch, as Noah explained, "Our Glitter helmets (in Black, Silver and Gold) are hard to keep in stock due to all the demand!"

TECHNOLOGY

Advances in protective technology mean lighter and safer gear. ALK13 are using "Kevlar and neoprene in their kneepads for example" as Vincent noted. Comfort is key, and brands are pushing the boundaries with how certified helmets fit. Noah from Triple 8 said, "Never before have we or anyone else figured out a way to get a Certified helmet to fit just above the eyebrows, the same as a non-certified helmet would." Dan from S1 spoke of their tech input saying, "Fusion Foam comes in all our Lifer models which is our propriety blend of EPS foam that is soft enough to pass multi-impact testing and hard enough to pass high-impact certifications."

It looks to be an exciting year for helmets and protection alike, with loud colours and lightweight pads bringing a bit of variation to the field of play. Un-certified helmets are being phased out and better safety technology is becoming more readily available. This further validates the need for safety in these rapidly progressing sports.👁️

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Loud bright colours
- 2 Slimmer, lighter & less bulky pads
- 3 Better fitting, moulded helmets
- 4 Base layer protection for skateboarding
- 5 Pro model helmets

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RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

THE GREAT OUTDOORS SS25

The outdoor industry in 2024 continues to thrive, driven by a surge in consumer interest in outdoor activities and the ongoing global shift towards sustainability. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated this growth, as more people seek solace and adventure in nature. This guide explores the latest trends, innovations, and market shifts in outdoor products, focusing on apparel and camping gear. With sustainability at the forefront, the market is adapting to meet the needs of environmentally conscious consumers who demand functionality, durability, and style. Ladies and gentlemen, let's dive into S/S25 Great Outdoor Retail Buyer's Guide by **Mathieu Perez**.



APPAREL STATUS

Afends has positioned itself as a leader in sustainable fashion, with its entire range crafted from 100% sustainable fibres. The brand focuses on two main materials - Recycled Polyester and Hemp - to maximise durability, comfort, and performance while minimising environmental impact. "This commitment to low-impact production aligns with the growing consumer demand for eco-friendly apparel, making Afends a standout brand in the outdoor clothing market," claims Damo, Afends Sales & Ecommerce Manager Europe.

As sustainability continues to drive consumer choices, Cotopaxi has embraced eco-friendly materials and multifunctional designs. The brand anticipates a rise in demand for garments that offer multiple functionalities, such as jackets that are both waterproof and windproof, and pants that can convert into shorts. Technological innovations are also playing a significant role, with smart clothing and wearable technology becoming more integrated into outdoor apparel. Features like temperature regulation, moisture management, and GPS tracking are increasingly sought after by consumers. Additionally, the urban outdoor style, characterised by bright colours and eye-catching patterns, is expected to gain traction in 2025, as consumers seek versatile clothing that suits both outdoor activities and city life. "These trends reflect the changing needs and preferences of consumers who are looking for both functionality and style in their outdoor clothing", comments Jürgen Henssen, Sales manager at Cotopaxi. This presents us the four pillars of important trends expected in the outdoor clothing segment for S/S25.

Despite the overall growth in the outdoor apparel market, Duer faced challenges in 2024, with slower-than-expected spring sales. While rain jackets performed well due to wet weather conditions, pants and shorts struggled to meet expectations. This highlights the importance of weather patterns in influencing sales trends and the need for brands to adapt quickly to changing conditions. We hear tentative optimism for a stronger Fall, typically a better pant selling season for Duer in general, hopes Pascal Wehr, Director of Sales.

"This commitment to low-impact production aligns with the growing consumer demand for eco-friendly apparel, making Afends a standout brand in the outdoor clothing market." Damo, Afends

Rab's new collection is designed for adventurers who seek experiences beyond the ordinary. The brand's focus is on creating apparel that enables consumers to explore uncharted territories, pushing the boundaries of traditional outdoor activities. This positioning resonates with a growing demographic of outdoor enthusiasts looking for gear that supports their adventurous spirit.

WHAT'S FRESH?

The denim collection remains a cornerstone of Afends' offerings, with a focus on loose, straight, and baggy fits. This season, the brand is reworking denim staples with worn washes and utilitarian details. The dress category is also gaining traction, with styles like the Asta Maxi seersucker dress, known for its unique soft hand feel. These developments reflect Afends' commitment to creating durable, stylish, and comfortable outdoor apparel.

In response to consumer demand, Duer is focusing on lighter fabrics and a stronger embrace of natural fibres for hot weather wear. The brand recognizes the need for versatility, with customers seeking apparel that is stylish and suitable for everyday wear, rather than being limited to specific outdoor activities.

Sun protection has become a key consideration for outdoor enthusiasts, leading to increased demand for sun shirts with UV protection, moisture-wicking, and anti-microbial properties. Kavu has responded by introducing sun shirts with unique prints, such as mushroom designs, to stand out in a crowded market. This blend of functionality and style is expected to

BLANKETS | CHANGEWEAR | HAMMOCKS | FOOTWEAR
MADE WITH REPREVE FROM 100% RECYCLED PLASTIC BOTTLES



COVER MORE ADVENTURES
WITH VOITED

resonate with consumers looking for distinctive outdoor apparel. "Mens shirting has grown as a category so we've introduced plenty of new options", Callum McDonnell, Kavus European Brand Manager.

Roark has undertaken a refit of its product line, focusing on competitive pricing and eco-friendly production. The brand's commitment to sustainability is evident in its use of hemp blend 4-way stretch materials across 40% of its range, offering both comfort and environmental benefits.

SUSTAIN

Duer emphasises the importance of designing timeless pieces that seamlessly transition between work and adventure. By creating versatile and durable apparel, the brand encourages consumers to invest in fewer, better-made items, aligning with the broader trend towards sustainable consumption.

For Roark, eco-production and the use of stretch materials are non-negotiable. The brand's incorporation of hemp blend 4-way stretch materials into 40% of its range reflects its commitment to sustainability and innovation in outdoor apparel, according to Arnaud Gaillard, CEO of Roark European Distribution.

Rab's approach to sustainability includes a strong stance on eliminating PFAS (Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) from its products. The brand believes that labelling a product as 'PFAS-Free' should apply to the entire product, not just its durable water repellent (DWR) coating, demonstrating a holistic approach to environmental responsibility.

RETAIL SUPPORT

At Duer, Pascal Wehr states, "Our customers immediately understand the exceptional fit and comfort we provide when they step into a pair of Duer." To strengthen its presence in Europe and the UK, Duer has established Duer Europe Ltd, partnering with Hectic, a leading retail partner with offices across the region. This strategic move enables Duer to implement its omnichannel strategy more effectively, building brand awareness and reaching new markets with a unified approach.

Kavu has developed an extensive array of digital assets to support its retail partners. This includes videos for every item in its range, detailing all features and showcasing products on models. These resources are invaluable for retailers, providing them with the knowledge needed to educate consumers and drive sales. "Much better than just an image on a page", claims Callum McDonnell.

Cotopaxi's marketing strategy emphasises the concept of adventure as a personal and unique experience. The brand seeks to inspire consumers to explore the outdoors, whether for challenges, community building, or self-discovery. This narrative-driven approach aligns with the emotional and experiential aspects of outdoor activities, resonating deeply with consumers. "As a brand, our goal is to empower our consumers to embrace curiosity, we aim to celebrate and support each person's individual aspirations and experiences. We inspire consumers to achieve that next level", elaborates Jürgen Henssen, Cotopaxi sales manager.

CAMPING GEAR TRENDS

According to Philippe Greinacher, CEO & Co-Founder at No Normal Coffee, the trend towards shorter, more accessible outdoor adventures is growing. Consumers are increasingly looking for ways to enjoy nature without committing to long treks or remote locations. This shift is supported by advancements in comfort and wearability, allowing people to venture further with less fatigue and quicker recovery times. In terms of outdoor nutrition, there is a strong push towards natural, non-artificial products fortified with vitamins and minerals. Additionally, a burgeoning community of outdoor enthusiasts is exploring the art of cooking in the wild, experimenting with ingredients and techniques that elevate the outdoor culinary experience.

The rise of the casual camper is a notable trend, with more families opting for weekend getaways to escape the urban hustle. This shift has made camping more affordable and accessible, broadening its appeal across different social strata. As camping becomes a more mainstream activity, brands are adapting to cater to this growing market with products that balance convenience, comfort, and affordability. "Neither war nor the slowing economy have seriously dented this growth, and we expect this trend to continue for the foreseeable future", adds Lukas Liedtke, Heat It Founder and CEO.

"As a brand, our goal is to empower our consumers to embrace curiosity, we aim to celebrate and support each person's individual aspirations and experiences. We inspire consumers to achieve that next level." Jürgen Henssen, Cotopaxi

"All our products are made of 90% certified recycled stainless steel. Our powder coating kleancoat™ does not contain any harmful toxic in the coating on the bottle nor in the whole production process."

Henry Hoogenveen, Klean Kanteen

At Voited, the increase in outdoor participation, particularly among new enthusiasts, has created a demand for entry-level gear that offers durability and functionality without the high price tag. While these new participants may not initially invest in top-tier products, there is optimism they will recognise the benefits of higher-quality gear as they become more experienced.

Nemo Equipment has seen strong sales in 2024, driven by the early launch of its new ultralight sleeping pads and tents. Products like the Tensor Trail ultralight sleeping pad and the Hornet Osmo tent have been particularly successful, combining performance with sustainability. These innovations reflect a broader trend towards lightweight, high-performance camping gear that meets the demands of eco-conscious consumers. For Helinox, the focus has shifted from elite performance to values such as community, mental health, and connection with nature. This reflects a broader trend in the outdoor industry, where brands are increasingly emphasising the holistic benefits of outdoor activities, including their positive impact on well-being.

The growing popularity of outdoor activities has provided Nikwax with an opportunity to educate consumers about the benefits of its camping products, such as Tent & Gear SolarWash and SolarProof. These products not only enhance the longevity of camping gear by adding UV protection and waterproofing but also contribute to sustainability by reducing the need for frequent replacements, thereby keeping more tents and materials out of landfills.



WHAT'S NEW?

Heimplanet's new overlanding tent, Cloudbreak, represents a significant advancement in camping gear. Designed for groups and families, Cloudbreak offers a high level of functional performance with features like two large entrances, a separate sleeping cabin, and large waterproof windows with mosquito mesh. The tent's inflatable diamond grid technology allows for quick and easy setup, making it ideal for overland camping where mobility and ease of use are essential.

Hannah Craig, Voited Marketing and Project manager proudly introduces, "We have just launched our hammock range as we believe there is still demand for a truly high-quality and durable product in this space. Our market research illustrated that many of the offers were bulky, badly made and lacking all the parts needed to hang them."

Helinox is set to revolutionise the outdoor market with its new category of premium, packable outdoor games. The Play collection includes four games - Yutnori, StringTrees, HeliDrop, and HeliDisc - each designed with the same principles of portability and durability that have made Helinox's camping chairs a success. This innovative approach to outdoor entertainment



"Brands need to become laser focused on their proposition and who their customer is."

Joe White, Helinox

highlights the brand's ability to think beyond traditional camping gear and offer products that enhance the overall outdoor experience.

Klean Kanteen has introduced a new sport cap for its classic non-insulated bottle. The redesigned cap offers improved drinking flow, is leakproof, and features a stainless steel straw for added comfort. These enhancements reflect Klean Kanteen's commitment to continuous product improvement, ensuring that its products remain relevant and user-friendly in a competitive market.

SUSTAINABILITY

Heat it® is a sustainable alternative to disposable insect-bite relief solutions. The product's longevity - powered by a single phone charge - outperforms traditional numbing gels while eliminating plastic waste and harmful propellant gases. This aligns with the growing consumer demand for eco-friendly products that reduce environmental impact while offering effective solutions.

Heimplanet is taking significant steps towards sustainability by eliminating flame retardant chemicals from its tents and tarps, in line with California's latest regulations. This move reflects the brand's commitment to reducing its environmental footprint while maintaining high safety standards for its camping gear. "While committed to these sustainable practices, we will also ensure not to compromise any of the outstanding functional performance of Heimplanet products", explains Co-Founder, Stefan Claus.

At Klean Kanteen, Henry Hoogenveen, International Brand Manager states, "All our products are made of 90% certified recycled stainless steel. Our powder coating Kleancoat™ does not contain any harmful toxic in the coating on the bottle nor in the whole production process".

Zoe Hewitt, Head of Marketing at Nikwax reassures, "We have always had sustainability at the heart of our ethos but we can always do more. We have a sustainability strategy which we are in the process of implementing which includes a climate action plan, clean chemistry, circularity and conservation plan".

Within the wash and clean products out there, Storm's major theme is around its unique wash and proof in one wash cycle solution for outdoor apparel and gear. Saving time, water and electricity. Trudy-Alice Wilson,

Storm's director adds, "Patagonia, for whom we are the global aftercare partner, will be holding wash parties throughout the United States to educate consumers and the features and benefits of looking after your outdoor apparel".

Last but not least, Philippe Greinacher from No Normal Coffee observes, "We start by using only ingredients which we can trace and have some sort of certification. On top of that, we are using recyclable materials for post consumer disposal. Our goal is to be using post consumer recycled materials in all our products by the end of 2025."

MOVING FORWARD

Sean Manley, Nemo's UK distributor guarantees, "With a solid product line for 2025 and increasing momentum behind the brand, we have no doubt that 2025 will prove to be a great year for Nemo here in the UK." The brand's focus on combining performance with sustainability, as seen in its ultralight sleeping pads and tents, will likely continue to drive strong sales and reinforce its reputation in the outdoor gear market.

Nina Hofer-Kollaritsch, head of marketing and communications at Cocoon enhances, "the brand offers everything you need for a good night's sleep while traveling. Furthermore, we provide many items to keep you comfortable, organized and protected on your trips and at home". Time to get out and relax!

Last word to Joe White, Helinox Head of Marketing and Ecommerce, "Overall participation in outdoor recreation is up, but the frequency of participation is down. For brands, this means less focus on elite performance and more focus on values such as community, mental health and nature connection. Brands need to become laser focused on their proposition and who their customer is."

As the outdoor industry evolves, the focus on sustainability, multifunctionality, and technological innovation will continue to shape the market. Brands that prioritise these elements are likely to thrive in 2025 and beyond, as consumers increasingly demand products that not only enhance their outdoor experiences, but also align with their values. From apparel to camping gear, the trends highlighted in this guide underscore the importance of meeting the changing needs and preferences of today's outdoor enthusiasts.📍

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

- 1 Innovation
- 2 Sustainability
- 3 Versatility
- 4 Urban outdoor

Sitting is Believing



 Helinox

RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

WOMENS SWIMWEAR SS25

Women's swimwear has become a sensory experience. Bright colours, vivid prints and textured fabrics bring to life shapes designed for all body shapes. All delivered in sustainable materials. By Rocio Enriquez.



The women's swimwear market is crowded yet it keeps growing year after year. It seems that there is always room for more, providing 'more' comes with innovation. Well-thought out designs and interesting fabrics are delivering it. The one-piece silhouette continues to be the biggest trend for its beach to everyday wear versatility. Go surfing or swimming, then pair it with a skirt or shorts for a fashionable look. There are great growth expectations for this shape. The vintage look trend is very much alive through low waist cut bottoms and boardshorts, and bandeaus and underwired tops. These silhouettes are developed in textured fabrics with richness of details. Women expect conscious designs that will use sustainable materials and be inclusive, catering to all body types. All-time sliding triangle tops join these trends in the top sellers' charts.

SS2025 COLLECTION

The main goal of silhouettes this summer is to combine a feminine look with the support and comfort needed to practise your favourite ocean sport. One-piece shapes accomplish this very successfully, which can explain the strong demand they are experiencing. Rip Curl highlights their one-size RC x SC. This is a collaboration with the surfing guide Surf Cities that uses a specific construction technique of circular knit fabrics, engineered to fit any body shape. It can be worn as swimwear and as a bodysuit. Lightning Bolt applies their innovative seaming technique that enhances support and comfort to their Tropical Sunset one-piece, featuring an adjustable halter neckline and flattering ruched detailing for a feminine look. Barts presents two swimsuits.

"The shaping and sculpting pieces are the most popular, they are comfortable to wear and very stylish." Haiqiao Hu, Barts

The Norri Halter Shaping one-piece focuses the shaping on the waist for a comfortable fit. The Isla Sculpting one-piece creates a very comfortable and feminine style. "The shaping and sculpting pieces are the most popular, they are comfortable to wear and very stylish", says Haiqiao Hu, Barts' Head of Product and Design. Protest presents the PRTLace, a one-shoulder swimsuit that combines an asymmetrical neckline with supportive features. Oxbow adds a trikini to their collection next summer, blending the one-piece trend with the vintage flair. Bralettes are in vogue, too with Oxbow responding to this trend with five different renditions. "We have five different bralette bikini tops, going from the cheekiest bandeau to the full support bralette for practice", says Product Manager, Thomas Chastol. They keep in mind a sense of style, as seen in one of their full support bralettes developed in a nice jacquard relief in terry towel fabric. Lightning Bolt presents their retro-inspired Sunkissed set with bralette top. This glamour design provides flattering coverage while accentuating your curves with a touch of elegance and romance. Rhythm's new soft strap balconette is one of the key shapes of their collection. Triangle tops

remain present with Protest offering the PRTChip triangle bikini with medium coverage top and regular-waist bottoms. They keep their successful Mix & Match programme that allows customers to combine any top style with any bottom shape. Rip Curl's bestselling shapes are the tri tops. They highlight two styles in their 2025 collection: the bestselling Cala Vadella cross back, and the Shell Cove sliding tri. Hurley has focused on an elegant offer of nice silhouettes with nice prints, presented in both one-piece designs and bikini tops and bottoms.

We observe two main trends in swimwear fabrics: sustainability and textures. The use of recycled nylon is widespread, whether in polyester or polyamide. Luckily, these materials also allow for the development of different textures, which are all the rage at the moment. Rip Curl has had great results with their flat rib fabric from their Premium Surf perennial programme. To this, they are adding new shiny ribs, lurex, crochet, and jacquard. Barts curates a carefully selected mix of shiny, matt, and structured fabrics. Roxy is meeting this growing demand too. "The tubular fabric, jacquard, and terry fabrics are the new trend, and we are seeing a direct growth on it", says EMEA Swim Product Manager, Nelly Pargade. Rhythm has developed new custom stripes in rib fabrics and jacquards in custom, in-house drawn prints. Comfort, durability and function are observed in the material selection too. Rip Curl is proud of their new capsule collection made in collaboration with Victoria Vergara, which features premium quality Italian fabrics with high technicity.

Brands have taken inspiration from celebrated coastal spots to develop sea and sand tones, tropical florals, and playful patterns. Rip Curl takes us to the Spanish Balearic Islands, Barts to Australia. Roxy pays tribute to the Mediterranean coast, and Oxbow travels to Madagascar and Brazil. Amongst solid colours, neutral tones are leading the palette. Oxbow, Rhythm, and Roxy offer earthy, warm colours. Roxy focuses on 'strong neutrals such as taupe and olive, played on rich and shiny fabrics.' Barts add to their 'terra' colour, darker tones such as navy and cedar. There are some bright colours too with Protest accessorising their neutral tones with hints of green, vibrant blues, refreshing pinks and subtle sour greens. Barts offers sportive brights such as coral red, mandarin, and mint green. Oxbow also offers some pop and brighter colours in their second summer release. Print stories feature either tropical florals or geometrical and vintage patterns. Rhythm highlights their check print, incorporated into swimwear after a great performance in apparel. Roxy offers a bonus artist collaboration that celebrates legendary surf spots such as Tahiti, Fiji, Byron Bay, or Biarritz. "Our unique partnership with Australian designer Adrienne Dimitrakakis, founder of Atlas Atlas, combines the vibrant world of surfing with captivating artistry", says Allison Robard. Hurley curates nice prints to carry their new silhouettes.

SUSTAINABILITY

Brands are adopting a holistic, sustainable approach to their products. The use of sustainable materials is only one aspect of it, albeit a very

"We have five different bralette bikini tops, going from the cheekiest bandeau to the full support bralette for practice" Thomas Chastol, Oxbow

important one. Oxbow develops all their swimwear with sustainable fabrics. Roxy has a self-set standard of a minimum 51% of recycled content across their entire range. A big part of Protest's swimwear collection is made of recycled polyester. Barts tries to use as much recycled polyamide as possible. Rhythm uses only eco-friendly materials in their Classics swimwear collection. Beyond fabrics, production practices are also important. An added positive impact of using recycled polyester is that it requires less energy to produce than making it directly from the raw material. Lightning Bolt partners with certified sustainable manufacturers that use water-saving production techniques. Oxbow produces 25% of their collection in Tunisia, with a French upcycled fabric. "We went to our fabric supplier to pick up fabric leftovers and designed a wonderful colour block with different textures", explains Thomas Chastol. They have become a B-Corp certified company, and so has Rip Curl. With this step they seal their commitment to environmental and social responsibility. Packaging and hangtags are moving away from harmful plastics, incorporating eco-friendly materials that contribute to a reduction of the product's



LIGHTNING BOLT

RETAILER SUPPORT

The main theme across marketing stories is the celebration of the surfing lifestyle and the places it takes us to. Rip Curl embodies it very well in their brand campaign 'Live the Search', communicated through accounts of sacrifices made, injuries suffered, and lengths gone to for the perfect wave. Lightning Bolt profiles a very similar woman in their communication: fearless, unapologetic, and adventure-loving. In a similar tone, Protest captures the spirit of the summer and the joy of exploration in their story 'Coastal Souvenirs'. Barts pays tribute to their Australian origin with two stories - 'Wildflower' celebrates nature, while 'Sunburned Country' is inspired by the desert and the Aboriginal culture. Oxbow travels to Africa and South America with their first story featuring the Zebu Surf Collective of Madagascar and their bold printed artworks. In the second one, their ambassador Laure Mayer takes us to Brazil, playing with the contrast between the lush vegetation, the colour blocked favelas, and the artwork that decorates the urban beach promenades.

Brands have rolled out support strategies to communicate these stories to the final customer through their retailers. These include high quality imagery, social media ready content, and in-store displays. Protest also offers customised marketing activities to retailers that request so. Other support strategies aimed to help retailers with their sell-through are carried out behind the scenes. Barts keeps the popular styles of 2024 in their range, with refreshed designs. "Our collection is designed with retailers in mind, combining their input with the latest trends", says Haiqiao Hu. They also offer the chance to place in-season re-orders, so they can adjust their buying according to the reality of sales. Lightning Bolt provides training to educate staff on product features and sustainability initiatives. Fortunately for retailers, the demand is out there, and brands are delivering the right products to meet it.

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 The one-piece is the most popular shape.
- 2 Strong demand for textured fabrics
- 3 Good balance of femininity and sport performance.
- 4 Body inclusivity and eco-friendly materials.



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

BACKPACKS SS25

If I asked you which item in our consumer-driven daily lives is most important, what would you say? Is it your phone, your wallet, or something more tangible that you use every day? The answer: your backpack. A lifestyle backpack is not just a vessel for carrying belongings - it's a daily companion that reflects personal style, accommodates various activities, and increasingly, aligns with values like sustainability. Ladies and gentlemen, let's dive into SS25 Lifestyle Backpack Retail Buyer's Guide by Matthieu Perez.

retail buyer's guide



In 2025, according to Manon Solviche, European Marketing Manager at Topo Designs, "The lifestyle backpack market is defined by three core principles: durability, versatility, and sustainability". There's a noticeable influence from the outdoor industry, where ruggedness and functionality are paramount, blending seamlessly into the daily needs of urban dwellers.

"The lifestyle backpack market is defined by three core principles: durability, versatility, and sustainability"
 Manon Solviche, Topo Designs

MARKET TRENDS
 Dakine highlights the current trend in the lifestyle backpack market is heavily focused on commuting. The modern consumer demands a bag that simplifies daily life, effortlessly transitioning from home to work and then to personal activities. Whether riding a bike, a motorbike, or taking public transportation, these backpacks must be versatile enough to adapt to various modes of transport, offering convenience and reliability. Lasse Andersen Hodne, Senior Marketing Manager at Db identifies two key trends in terms of products. The first is the rise of the slouchy casual backpack - a bag that can do it all, every day. It's perfect for consumers who need a single, versatile bag for multiple purposes. The second trend is the tech outdoor backpack, a functional product filled with technical features and durable fabrics, catering to those who require a more specialised bag for outdoor activities.

Finally, Philip Haendeler, Head of Sales Germany at Nitro observes, "Backpacks are becoming more popular among women, highlighting the need for more women-specific designs". This shift highlights the growing importance of gender-specific design in the lifestyle backpack market.

STYLE IS EVERYTHING
 Dakine has introduced several new products in their range, focusing on feminine and classy designs. The Renovations series, featuring a tote bag, crossbody bag, and small pouch, is tailored for day-to-day use, combining style and practicality. The Happy People Canvas series is another recent addition, offering a more casual approach with a variety of bags designed for different occasions. This series also includes a special collaboration with Californian artist Loindaflow, known for surf-inspired illustrations that add a playful and unique touch to the products.

Gotbag takes a slightly different view, suggesting that the trend in backpacks is, paradoxically, the absence of a single, dominant trend, adds Dominique Legatzki, Head of Sales & Expansion Europe. This reflects a diverse market where consumers are looking for backpacks that can fulfil multiple needs, hinting at the growing demand for versatility and multi-functionality. Gotbag anticipates significant growth in their bag section, emphasising the importance of adaptability in design.

Gotbag's Dominique Legatzki emphasises the need for one versatile backpack that can be used for all occasions. Customers are looking for practicality, with features such as washable materials, lightweight construction, and secure closures becoming increasingly important. The

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PACSAFE

“We want to allow everyone to buy a recycled backpack and be part of our mission, regardless of their income”

Penny Schröder-Smith, Gotbag

features of our school bags, including an updated back panel, ample organisational space, and a separate laptop pocket”. The Future Hero will be available in eight colorways, appealing to a wide range of students and young professionals.

Pacsafe continues to lead the market with their patented anti-theft features, including locking systems and cut-resistant materials. These innovations are particularly appealing to urban commuters and travellers who prioritise security.

SUSTAINABILITY IN FOCUS

Sustainability is not just a trend but a fundamental shift in the lifestyle backpack market. Brands are increasingly adopting eco-friendly practices and materials, responding to consumer demand for products that are both functional and kind to the planet.

Jens Hartmann at Amplifi explains they have incorporated a water and dirt repellent finish based on DWR (Durable Water Repellency) that is environmentally safe. Moreover, all hardware used in their bags is BlueSign certified, ensuring that the products meet the highest standards of environmental safety and responsibility.

Lasse Andersen Hodne explained that Db is committed to inspiring adventure while promoting sustainability. Its environmental mission includes ambitious goals, such as reducing overall carbon emissions towards net-zero by 2050, with an interim target of a 50% reduction by 2030. They also aim to convert at least 50% of their tier-1 suppliers to renewable energy by 2025 and reduce water usage by 20% by 2030. Furthermore, Db is working towards implementing circular business models, with a goal of these models representing 10% of their revenues by 2027.

Fjällräven continues to focus on creating daypacks that are not only functional but also environmentally friendly. Pacsafe has seen significant growth in their sustainable products, which include backpacks, crossbodies, carry-ons, and bags. Since 2024, all Pacsafe inline bags have been made from recycled main and lining fabrics and are 100% PFC-free. “Our aim is to eliminate virgin plastic in the supply chain by 2025”, comments Maria Schmieler, Marketing Coordinator at Pacsafe. Topo Designs is on a mission to create products that are either organic or recycled, free from ‘forever chemicals’. Manon Solviche says “We use recycled nylon. Tags and labels are recycled polyester, eliminating virgin fibres. We’re on the path to be climate positive, aiming for net zero emissions by 2030.”

FORWARD MOMENTUM

To grow brand awareness and strengthen their market position, companies are increasingly focusing on innovative marketing and retail strategies. Topo Designs is expanding their presence through a combination of digital marketing, in-store activations, and the creation of branded corners or shop-in-shop experiences. By the end of the year, Topo Designs aims to offer a comprehensive assortment of POP displays and other retail materials to their partners, ensuring a strong brand presence in key markets.

This forward-thinking approach is reflective of a broader trend in the lifestyle backpack market, where brands are not just selling products but also engaging with consumers through experiences, storytelling, and a strong emphasis on sustainability. By aligning their marketing efforts with the values and lifestyles of their customers, these brands are positioning themselves for continued growth and success in a competitive and ever-evolving market.

As we move through 2025, the lifestyle backpack market continues to evolve, driven by trends in commuting, versatility, and sustainability. Consumers are looking for bags that can do it all - whether it’s a casual day out, a rugged outdoor adventure, or a daily commute. Brands that succeed will be those that can combine style, functionality, and eco-friendly practices into products that resonate with the modern consumer. Whether it’s through innovative designs, new technologies, or a commitment to sustainability, the future of lifestyle backpacks is bright, with plenty of opportunities for growth and innovation. Let’s get out there! ☺

HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Outdoor specific /urban ready
- 2 Durability
- 3 Gender specific design
- 4 Sustainability

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trend is also shifting towards more storage space and compartments for better organisation, reflecting the busy lives of modern consumers.

Db continues to focus on their iconic Hugger and Ramverk families, which have been popular in previous seasons. The Snow Roller and Snow Pack 32L have been standout performers, particularly in the snow category. As Db expands globally, these families are expected to drive growth. Additionally, Db is introducing a new capsule collection called Weigh Lighter, which represents their take on minimalistic mountaineering bags, blending lightweight materials with functional design.

Nitro’s Philip Haendeler comments, “We are offering the ‘waxed lizard’ colorway, a light brown shade with a waxed finish, which we expect to sell well not only during the winter season but also throughout SS25 for biking, hiking, and other summer activities”. Roark offers products combining style with robust protection for tech items, starting from €110 to €230. Their designs include easy access to laptop compartments and magnet roll-top closures, ensuring both convenience and security.

“Backpacks are becoming more popular among women, highlighting the need for more women-specific designs.”

Philip Haendeler, Nitro

NEW TECH AND FEATURES

Amplifi focuses on functional design that supports daily commutes and travels as emphasised by Jens Hartmann, CEO at Amplifi Coalition. Their backpacks feature clear pocket segmentation, ensuring that everything is within reach at all times. Additionally, cushioned shoulder straps are designed to prevent fatigue, even when the backpack is worn throughout the day.

For 2025, Fjällräven introduces Bergshell, a proprietary waterproof and highly durable material made from 100% post-production polyamide. This material uses a newly developed flat ripstop technique, ensuring that their backpacks can withstand the toughest conditions while remaining lightweight and practical.

Gotbag continues to innovate with high-functionality backpacks made from their own recycled plastic. Penny Schröder-Smith, Global Communications Manager states, “We have also relaunched the Rolltop Easy. This starts at €99 and is an entry-level version of our Hero product. We want to allow everyone to buy a recycled backpack and be part of our mission, regardless of their income.”

At Nitro, Philip Haendeler announces the launch of a new model in the school segment called Future Hero. “This backpack combines the best



RETAIL BUYER'S GUIDE

MENS SURF APPAREL SS25

Old school mixed with some contemporary technologies is the new bread and butter for the apparel category in the surf industry. Take a walk down memory lane with some explicit nostalgia and fast forward to the latest dressmaking fabrics for a winning duo. By David Bianic



Times have changed. There used to be an era when asked about their assessment of the past year, surf brands would answer with figures. Good or bad, sales and percentages were the only criteria on which success or failure were measured. In 2024, we hear a different speech, more profound, which echoes the concerns of the whole world. "2024 is a time of reflection for us. How can we be better, smarter and more efficient in our own business? Focus on us and the rest will fall into place. Building a more compelling product supported by great imagery and brand storytelling is how we are looking at 2024 and beyond", comments Seth McKinney, co-founder of IPD Surf. We believe this is no corporate verbiage, he means it. Lightning Bolt are on the same page. "In 2024, Lightning Bolt embraced ethical marketing practices as both a choice and a necessity. We truly believe we built a stronger connection with our customers and positioned ourselves as a brand that cares about more than just profit." Did we miss the Dalai Lama workshop?

The connection with consumers and a solid brand marketing story are the two main goals for the brands. While bridges were made with the streetwear and outdoor styles a few years ago, this all led to a blurry identity for the surf apparel. Brands backpedaled and called upon so-called 'heritage': "This return to roots involves reintroducing classic designs, traditional prints, and a focus on the core values of surfing—freedom, adventure, and a connection to nature", sums up Pierre Saint-Mieux, Europe Manager for Katin, a brand whose origin ties in with the mid 1950's. Another example is Oxbow, which has dug extensively into their library of catalogues to bring back iconic designs twisted with the contemporary cuts and fabrics.

For younger brands, heritage isn't necessarily their roots. Let's take Rhythm, launched in 2003, who seems to distance itself from the "made by surfers for surfers" mantra and "want to address trends and lifestyles

"This return to roots involves reintroducing classic designs, traditional prints, and a focus on the core values of surfing—freedom, adventure, and a connection to nature." Pierre Saint-Mieux, Katin

outside of surfing", says the Men's Design Team. While Rusty (founded in 1985) notes there is "a notable shift back to heritage surf roots in the industry", they would rather embrace a "hybrid approach" and continue to produce authentic surf apparel while also blending elements from streetwear and outdoor influences. Hurley takes several directions: among others a workwear style with its fresh Built Collection, "designed for the craftsman, the shaper and the skater. Our built collection focuses on both form and function. Lasting durability, comfy as hell, made for work, made to last." The retro surf will be addressed with the Naturals theme, whereas a couple others stories explore the 90's, its music, tattoo inspiration and street vibe. Plenty to choose from.

STRATEGY & COLLECTION BREAKDOWN

In line with the back to the roots strategy, carrying over iconic designs has proven durable, as summarised by Sandra Goncalves, Business Director at Lightning Bolt: "Our strategy's cornerstone is leveraging the success of proven staple products, or diamond pieces, the #never out of stock# that goes from the classic pieces full of history, to the ones that are the brand's identity." A lot of the fresh products aren't totally new, but rather existing items revamped with new prints and colours, "especially on our graphics tees", reports Pierre at Katin.

Let's focus on what we don't know: the fresh designs. While reconducting its iconic The Search campaign, Rip Curl offers a capsule collection named Raw Energy, "a grunge vibe with mauve/blue colours for the first delivery window and very summery, washed-out colours for the second delivery window", details Pierre-Alexandre Merlet, Men Division Product Manager. In the same spirit, Gotcha submits a Cosmic Vision, "A more urban and radical story, inspired by rock, with prints and a street vibe in black and white, accentuated by flashy pink, offering a surrealistic vision". Note that 2025 will be the official start of the relaunch of the brand, so that should be exciting.

Oxbow has been proposing a very consistent marketing approach in recent years, blending ambassadors' ventures and collections in the same story. SS25 will be no exception. The Zebu Surf Collective narrates the history around the trip to Madagascar of their team rider Kepa Acero in a give back to the community spirit, with graphics inspired by the native art of this region. Their second story, Pacific Sanctuary, is built around Tahitian surfers Gilbert Teave and Tahurai Henri, and the graphic inspiration will focus on 'what's happening under water, all the corals and underwater life'.

Collaborations come from beyond just athlete input. Afends teases strong artist collaborations from their Create Not Destroy program, such as Nirvana Selwood, designing unique motifs with inspiration taken from the natural world around us; expressed in the use of popping vibrant colour, abstract elements, and fun prints. Cobranding is another way of conveying a message, like Roark's collaboration with fellow Australian First Nation's label, House of Darwin, whose purpose is reinvesting profits into social programs in remote indigenous communities. The embodiment of the brand ethos is key, whether it is a human being, natural elements or culture/art endorsement.

FABRICS & SUSTAINABILITY

To further distance themselves from the fast fashion bad practices, surf brands have embraced responsible materials. Gotcha claims that over 80% of their collection consists of sustainable materials, such as organic cotton and recycled polyester. Simon Whittington, Head of Marketing for Brakeburn expects the use of recycled polyester to double by 2030 whereas the cost for organic cotton is increasing.

Alternative innovative eco-friendly materials like Tencel and hemp bring a fresh approach, at Lightning Bolt "These fabrics align with our commitment to sustainability and offer high performance while minimising environmental impact", adds Sandra Goncalves. She emphasised the decline of the traditional use of more than 2 mixed fibres, "which makes the recycling process very hard, almost impossible, and expensive". Among the other options, linen and viscose can be found in Lost's offering. Oxbow says they have replaced all the viscose fabric by ECOVERO, an eco-responsible viscose fibre: "Derived from sustainable wood and certified with EU Ecolabel, its production reduces CO2 emissions & water use by up to 50%", reports Manon Jouanine, Men's Product Manager.

SS25 KEY PIECES: TEES/SHIRTS/SHORTS

What else would you need? Spend your summer days in a pair of shorts, ditch the t-shirt by the evening in favour of a shirt when happy hour rolls around! The plain white t-shirt with chest logo has gone through a slight

"Designed for the craftsman, the shaper and the skater, our built collection focuses on both form and function. Lasting durability, comfy as hell, made for work, made to last." Hurley Marketing

change for a couple seasons. A simple twist, but which really translates the 'post-modern vintage': an off-white colour. See Katin's Mirage Tee: "This graphic t-shirt is one of Katin's best-sellers. The colour they call 'vintage white' makes for a light-coloured t-shirt with the design standing out very harmoniously." Many colorways embrace this faded, washed-out nuance, like Rip Curl's salmon-pink tee in the Raw Energy Capsule, very reminiscent of the early 80's, as well as Brakeburn's faded pink and yellow.

The long-sleeved t-shirt also made a strong comeback, again for a vintage look, as shown on Rusty's Cascade with the iconic R Dot print/pattern of the sleeves.

The Aloha shirt with v-neck style will remain a staple of the spring-summer ranges, but the original rayon fabric has been replaced by more performance material, like the Vintage Floral Surf Shirt of Lightning Bolt, crafted from lightweight, quick-drying fabric, it provides UV protection and breathability. To add some vintage hand feel, Oxbow opted for a reverse print, for a faded colour effect on the Tropics Shirt with floral all-over print. Two trends stick out when it comes to shorts. First, hybrid styles mixing walkshorts and beachshorts are still a thing, for their ability to "seamlessly

"Our strategy's cornerstone is leveraging the success of proven staple products, or diamond pieces, the #never out of stock# that goes from the classic pieces full of history to the ones that are the brand's identity." Sandra Goncalves, Lightning Bolt



transition from beach to after-sun beer sessions", explains Sandra from Lightning Bolt. Lost also reports hybrid shorts category continues to grow, and Oxbow joins the party with their Weekend Shorts, designed to be worn in or out of the water: versatile, comfortable and quick drying. Still in the hybrid style, Hurley's boardshorts technologies have trickled down into their walkshorts, with a wide range of pieces for each and every use: Phantom Flow volley (ultimate breathability), Phantom Flow (functional Style), Phantom slub (comfort + performance), H2-O Dri coastal ("a classic walkshort done better"), H2O-Dri Slub Drive (technical style on and off the course), H2O Dri Trek (made to move).

The second ongoing trend in the shorts category is what we would call the "cord short", an elastic waist walkshort plus cord, made in natural fibre. Comfier than the fixed walkshort with a belt, they took over the category. The Cord Local Short from Katin or the Classic Cord Jam from Rhythm, both in cotton corduroy, are two summer hits.

RETAILER SUPPORT

While retailers are keen on working with brands to refresh their shelves, they need some signs of confidence waved in their direction. Some like IPD Surf stress their belief in a limited distribution strategy, as they believe this "Makes your brand and product more desirable as it's not sold everywhere", points out Seth McKinney. The support can also be more direct, such as the "risk-free pre-orders" or free shipping with no minimum purchase offered by Lightning Bolt. In addition to the POS and POP programs, Rhythm and Rusty highlight sell-out incentives through gift with purchase. There is no love, only love marks, said the French poet. ☺

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HIGHLIGHTS

- 1 Sustainability, sustainability, sustainability
- 2 Heritage carry-overs
- 3 Faded colours, off-white (hot)
- 4 Eco-tech fabrics

no
normal
coffee

NO NORMAL COFFEE

Frustrated with overcomplicated or bad tasting coffee when ski touring, No Normal Coffee's CEO and Co Founder, Philippe Greinacher set about to solve this problem with a product that's easy to prepare and tastes as good as a fresh brew.

Please tell us how the idea for No Normal Coffee came about?

We were simply tired of compromising good coffee and convenience when we would go on ski tours and other adventures. Most options to prepare coffee outdoors are either complicated to bring/prepare, or not very tasty. We wanted to change this, to create something that is as easy to prepare as instant coffee, but as delicious as freshly brewed coffee. We set out with this idea of creating a much better tasting experience this way, not only did we manage to do this, but we also created a new kind of coffee, one that you can eat! That is what many people are so interested in now. With No Normal Coffee, you don't need any water to enjoy it, direct from the tube, or as a snack with a biscuit or energy bar is all you need.

Who are the people behind the brand?

The two co-founders Alexander Häberlin and Philippe Greinacher are responsible for creating the product and building the company, but there are many people in our network such as the talented photographer Mathyas Kurmann, and other outdoor enthusiasts on social media that have helped us launch No Normal Coffee in style.

What was the thinking behind the catchy brand name?

We were originally looking for more of a product name, something that could combine the coffee and the utility of the tube, but we simply always ended up with existing or trademarked names. The one



name we kept coming back to was 'no normal', as this was the name given to the target audience we were looking to cater to. The name was coined by a famous marketing 'guru' and we simply thought, why not? Instead of naming the product, why don't we name the customer? And so No Normal Coffee was born.

What is the product's USP?

It's the world's first coffee paste, in a tube. The paste allows you to mix it with hot water for a cup of coffee, or as a spread or condiment with foods, as it is also edible. The aluminum tube helps keep the product safe for at least six months and is highly recyclable. So many firsts in one product, and we can't wait for people to tell us in what other ways they tried and consumed no normal coffee.

How has the brand been received by shops and consumers?

Very well so far. To test the idea initially we did an online pre-sale which was successful and gave us confidence that this product has a place in the market. Now that we are officially selling, the B2B customers we have (currently only in Switzerland) are reporting strong sales, and our online shop receives dozens of orders daily, many from the US and the UK. Consumers are giving us great feedback, and so far overwhelmingly positive about how and where they are using the product, and many of them also take to social media to create content drinking no normal coffee outdoors.

Why should retailers stock No Normal Coffee?

Our research has shown that outdoor/camping/adventure retailers usually have a very small but powerful food section but coffee is very often not part of it. We believe retailers now have a great

product that was created specifically for the outdoor target audience that they can confidently promote to their customers. We are going to add more flavors and sizes as we grow, so naturally a shop that is selling us already will benefit greatly once the new products enter the market and can be found in stores.

We also won the retail choice award at this year's ISPO Outdoor in Munich. It is an award given by a jury of 3 people, who are retail buyers by trade from some of Europe's largest outdoor & camping stores. We were extremely happy that they chose us over some very big names and are now following up with a lot of enquiries about No Normal Coffee from buyers of many countries.

What next in the brand's development?

Having just launched, a lot of our focus is on putting the right infrastructure in place so we can sell to shops across Europe and professionally manage those relationships. At the same time, we are going to amplify our marketing and brand promotion activities in Europe and the UK. Lastly, we have begun exploring ideas for new flavors which could be launched as early as next year in our home market Switzerland, but also abroad. ☺



ARMSTRONG

Armie Armstrong and his small but skilled band of passionate watermen have a united goal to develop a top of the line foil set up through better engineering, perfect material selection, and attention to detail that could easily be used for all the foil sports they love.

What sets Armstrong apart in the young industry of foiling?

Foiling is evolving rapidly with Armstrong at the bleeding edge of design and innovation in the sport. The brand is powered by passionate designers who are full time foilers too, an energy which translates into the foils, boards, and wings. Each product type's performance range caters to beginner through expert riders with the goal of letting everyone, regardless of experience, get the Armstrong feeling. Modularity and quality are of utmost priority in the Armstrong design process, allowing for a unique combination of gear tuning and amazing fit, feel, and real-world durability.

How does this "powered by passion" ethos define your products?

Our founder, Armie Armstrong, lives and breathes foiling and foilsports design. Our core development team and team rider roster share this love of the sport and drive to continuously improve. Knowing that the next innovation can change a rider's experience of the sport is incredibly energising, being fueled by this passion to work on every last detail makes things as good as they can be. Innovation never sleeps. The foiling community is a massively fun group that we're stoked to



be a part of – so why not devote all our energy to making it as good as we can through better gear?

What is the current product lineup?

We offer foils, boards, and wings. Our range of front foils includes the MA (Mid Aspect), HA (High Aspect), S1 (Step 1), APF (Armstrong Pump Foil), and DWP (Downwind Performance) families. These foil designs cover every rider skill level from beginner to expert, as well as every foiling discipline including winging, prone and tow surfing, SUP downwinding, wake foiling, pump foiling, and kite foiling from 8 to 140L in volume. We offer Performance Carbon, Carbon, and Alloy masts, along with TC (Titanium Carbon) and Alloy fuselages. For boards, our range includes the Wing FG, Midlength, Downwind, Downwind Performance, and WKT (Wake Kite Tow) boards. Our wing offerings are the A-Wing XPS and the A-Wing XPS Lightwind. The XPS ranges from 2.2 to 6.1m², and the XPS Lightwind comes in 7.0 and 8.0m². These wings bring together a unique combination of performance in all conditions, refined handling qualities, and durability.

What is the A+ System?

The A+ System is the core of Armstrong's foil setup. It's the proprietary design where the mast, fuselage, front foil, and stabiliser connect. In addition to being future proofed and backwards compatible, the A+ System design is modular, strong, durable, and gives Armstrong foils their signature solid, smooth feel underfoot when riding. The A+ System is based around a hexagonal front portion of the fuselage where the front foil slides on. On our Carbon setups, this hexagonal portion of the fuselage continues through the base of the mast



for a very strong and stiff connection. On our Alloy setups, the fuselage and mast connect slightly differently via an adapter. The stabiliser attaches elegantly and is trimmable via our proprietary shims. Lastly, premium 316L Stainless Steel and Titanium hardware minimises corrosion throughout.

Where are things headed?

We're always striving to innovate the performance of our products while improving accessibility in the sport. There is incredible potential for top level riders across the foiling disciplines, whether it's winging, surf foiling, downwinding, and beyond. Designs that cater to those pushing the envelope keep things fresh and invigorate the rest of the sport. It's also equally critical to make foiling more accessible in every way, which is why we've developed products like the Step 1 foils and the Alloy System to make both the rider skill requirements and economics of foiling more approachable. The next few years will be truly very exciting in foiling, and we look forward to innovating wherever we can. ☺



WAVELENGTH

WAVELENGTH

Following the sale of the title earlier this year Source met up with the New Managing Director of Wavelength Surf Magazine to hear his vision for the future of the title and his plans for his other title Longboarder magazine.

Please tell us about your background

My name is Chris Thomson. I started surfing in 1990 at age 9 on the Isle of Wight and moved to Newquay when I was 16. I lifeguarded at Watergate Bay, where I founded and later sold Errant Surf Holidays in 2011, then moved to Canada for a few years, where I founded Marwick Marketing. We moved back to Newquay in 2019, opening an office for Marwick here and launching Longboarder Magazine as a side project.

Why did you buy Wavelength?

I was a typical grom back in the 90's, pre-social media, when surf magazines were the epicentre for fresh photography, surf news, and surfer profiles. I had surf posters covering every inch of my bedroom. Wavelength, which was established in 1981 in Newquay, was one that I subscribed to.

So when I was approached by the previous owners in early 2024 to take over the media platform, I couldn't say no. Wavelength sits well with our other media platform, Longboarder. Wavelength is a high-quality surf magazine with a rich heritage, published in winter and summer. Longboarder is published every spring.

What are your plans for Wavelength?

I believe the previous owners did a great job improving the quality of the actual product. Wavelength now looks a lot different from issues 1-150. My vision for Wavelength is to ensure the platform's voice is diverse and not just Newquay or Cornwall-focused. I'd like to see it celebrate surfing in the UK and Ireland as a priority, returning to its roots while giving a voice to surfers around the UK and Ireland.

We're investing in the website in the coming months and creating a team of regional representatives from every coastline in the UK and Ireland. The website currently gets three times the organic traffic compared to its competitors, and we aim to double this in the next 12 months. We're also committed



Chris Thomson & Bella Bunce

to creating more native, rich content for the surfing audience in the UK and Ireland, including films, podcasts, videos, and grassroots events.

As for print, we will have a rotating guest editor to give each issue a different perspective and flavour, supported by a permanent team to assist them. Next issue we have surf photographer Bella Bunce taking the guest editor role, the first time in 42 years Wavelength has had a female editor.

Tell us about Marwick Marketing. What does Marwick mean?

Marwick takes its name from a remote, but perfect, surf spot on a secluded Scottish island. To reach perfection, you have to escape the crowds and push beyond the ordinary. This journey is as true for effective marketing as it is for surfing!

Marwick Marketing is an agency that specialises in search (SEO and Google Ads) and paid social media advertising in the outdoor/surf industry, resorts and destinations, food and beverage, and e-commerce. We're a team of 23 marketing professionals with offices in the mountains of Squamish, BC, Canada, and the surf town of Newquay, UK.

Why did you launch Longboarder Magazine?

I longboarded professionally in my twenties, and after a period of living in the mountains, I returned to surfing with our move home. I saw how popular surfing had become and how diverse longboarding was. Despite the global growth of longboarding, there was still only one publication - Pacific Longboarder - which is an excellent platform, but I wanted to create something different that resonated with longboarders around the world.

I enlisted my good friend Sam Bleakley in the early days, and we set about filming a number of short films with Mike Lay, Ben Skinner, Sam Crookshanks, and Izzy Henshall. These were well received, but it was the coffee table-style print magazine that became a big success.

How has Longboarder been received by the industry and consumers?

Longboarder has been very successful. We



stock a number of surf shops globally and ship directly to consumers. I believe its success is due to the quality of the publication and the diverse stories we tell within its covers.

How is Longboarder Magazine funded?

Longboarder has very limited ad space within its pages, and many of the brands that support us have returned volume after volume, including Finisterre, DryRobe, and Mermaid Gin. Volume Three, out next spring, has two double-page spreads left. For the most part, we fund Longboarder through 10 Over Surf Shop.

10 Over Surf Shop was created at the same time as Longboarder to help support the cost of getting a print publication off the ground. 10 Over Surf Shop has four distinctive core values: Nurture, Showcase, Community, and Earth - so supporting Longboarder made total sense.

What is the attraction of print media to surf consumers?

People appreciate long-form stories. They enjoy being able to pick up the magazine and sit in the sun. It's the total opposite of doom-scrolling on Instagram or TikTok. They can collect the magazines, and they look great on a shelf or coffee table.

Any other surf projects on the horizon?

Nothing new, more developing what we have. Longboarder and Wavelength are two very special media platforms that we will continue to nurture in 2025 and beyond. The next step for them both is to create strong partnerships with other brands, building long-term relationships. ☺

WIP

WATER PROTECTION

WIP

Having started out as a partner to the New Zealand America's Cup team, WIP now specializes in protective gear for all water sports. To find out more about the innovation led brand that produces products of the highest quality, Source reached out to the management

Please could we have a short history of WIP since it was founded?

Forward WIP is a Swiss-based company, born in 2015, specialising in innovative protective gear designed for riders/sailors who go fast on the water. WIP's history began in sailing, which used foils well before other disciplines to fly above the water and go faster. WIP's fruitful collaboration with team New Zealand crew of the America's Cup made it possible to develop race winning impact vests and helmets, and to maintain this technological lead by being close to sailors and riders. Today, we are the safety partner of many SailGP teams, which represents the Formula 1 of sailing. Many sailing legends such as Glenn Ashby, Billy Besson, Loick Peyron have chosen WIP, as well as Olympic champions and World champions. At WIP, we are all passionate riders, windsurfers, kitesurfers, wingfoilers and surfers. Innovation is our DNA, we want to provide the best personal equipment available for flying catamarans, fast dinghies, and all riders & foilers to be protected when going fast on the water to help them reach their next level of performance.

What are the key product categories for the brand today and could we have a brief rundown of the current lines?

WIP offers a diverse range of products tailored for high-performance water sports:

1. Impact Vests: Designed to provide maximum protection and flexibility for high-speed water sports.
2. Helmets: Lightweight yet robust, offering superior protection without compromising on comfort.



3. Harnesses: Ergonomically designed for comfort and performance, catering to both beginners and professionals.
4. Wetsuits and Drysuits: Crafted with advanced materials to ensure warmth, flexibility, and durability in various water conditions.
5. Rider 4 Rider: Smart products to make sessions better for foiling enthusiasts. Each product line undergoes rigorous testing to meet the demands of professional athletes and enthusiasts alike.

What makes WIP different from other brands in these markets?

WIP stands out due to its commitment to innovation and quality. Our products speak for themselves and are the result of extensive R&D and collaboration with top athletes. We focus on combining cutting-edge technology with practical design to enhance safety and performance in watersports. Moreover, our team's active involvement in watersports ensures that we are constantly pushing the boundaries to improve and innovate.

How is the brand distributed around Europe?

WIP products are distributed across Europe through a network of specialised retailers, clubs, schools and online platforms. We have established partnerships with key watersport shops and distributors in major markets to ensure our products are readily available to enthusiasts and professionals alike. Our distribution is powered by a strong sports marketing program which makes the brand visible and approved by the sports top athletes.

Where is your best performing European market and why?

Our best-performing European market is France. This success is largely due to the country's strong sailing and watersports culture, supported by numerous clubs, events, and a large community of enthusiasts. France has been a key hub for innovation in foiling and high-speed sailing, aligning perfectly with our product offerings and brand ethos.



What has been the highlight of the past 12 months?

Our collaboration with top-tier athletes and teams has been a highlight, contributing to many World Championship titles and their preparation for the Olympics. Athletes like Max Maeder, Mathis Ghio, Lauriane Nolot, Luuc Van Opzeeland and others have achieved great success using WIP gear. These partnerships have not only elevated our brand's visibility, but also provided invaluable feedback for continuous product improvement. In SailGP 2024, we were the safety supplier and partner to two of three teams on the podium with Spain (1st) and New Zealand (3rd).

What's up next in the product development program?

We are excited to introduce a new range of eco-friendly products, incorporating sustainable materials without compromising on performance or protection. Additionally, we are working on advanced impact protection technology that promises to set new standards in the industry. Stay tuned for innovative updates designed to enhance safety and performance in watersports. We are incorporating our ECO CORK into all our helmets and continue to improve existing products. ☺



WAVE HAWAII

Inspired by the lush tropical islands of the Aloha state, CEO of Wave Hawaii, Carten Raphael, shines a light on their growing business with surf poncho's and wooden sunglasses as the brand's core offering and their expansion into new product categories for 2025.

How has business been since spoke to Wave Hawaii last year?

We were able to further expand our position in the surf poncho sector and exceeded the 60,000 units/year mark. We were also pleased to intensify production in our European production facilities. This applies to the ponchos, but above all our AirLite and crew socks, which are a great addition to our product range and a lot of fun. We are still on the right track and have a lot of creative ideas in the drawer. But we don't want to rush things and want to grow continuously and independently without external investors.

How has your sunglasses range been received by the market?

We are definitely on the right track with our wooden glasses as sustainability is often not the focus for this category. However, it is for us - just as it is for our other product groups. We are stronger in this area in stationary retail than online. Our selection and quality seem to convince many and sunglasses are currently our second strongest product group.

Which national market has been best for you this year?

Germany is the strongest, which is probably due to the fact that we are most active in the market here. Switzerland, France, Greece and Benelux in particular are currently becoming increasingly strong.



How will you be promoting the brand across Europe?

We work with great dealers and sales staff in various countries. For some countries such as Italy, Spain, Portugal and the USA, we still need assistance in the form of independent distributors. Another hot topic is our influencers and ambassadors. We are already working with a lot of great people in this area, but we will continue to step up our activities here too in order to sustainably increase our awareness benefiting each retailer and building good brand relationships.

What are you as a company doing to be more eco-friendly?

We focus on a clear commitment to sustainable products, produced in Europe wherever possible, send our parcels using climate-neutral suppliers, use only natural or recycled packaging, green electricity and mostly come to the office each day by mountain bike.

What have been your best selling products this summer season and why?

Our AirLite ponchos are our bestsellers. The material is unbeatable in terms of climate regulation, robustness and hand feel. The material is lightweight, has very high water absorption, dries quickly and is odour-resistant. Our polarised wooden sunglasses are the second strongest product group. However, our AirLite socks are currently going through the roof and - if things continue like this - will soon replace sunglasses in second place.

What's in the pipeline for you in terms of new products for s/s 2025?

We are looking forward to our AirLite underwear for women and men, which is super soft, multifunctional and quick-drying and will be available in many crazy designs. It's perfect for everyday wear, but best suited for most sporting activities including water sports under



a wetsuit or as swimwear. In addition, there is a bamboo boxer collection for men, which is silky soft, antibacterial and odour-inhibiting. For our outdoor enthusiasts, we are also launching super fluffy multifunctional blankets with great designs that can be used as a cuddly blanket, cape or sleeping bag. We will continue to work on new poncho and eyewear models.

Why should retailers stock Wave Hawaii?

We have the feeling that many people out there are waiting for a cool brand that complements the 'old' brands in a meaningful way. Here we are! We set trends and are a pro-active brand with a clear commitment to sustainability and multifunctionality. We offer great displays for efficient sales support with POS, top retailer conditions and short delivery times. We also have no minimum order quantities for retailers making it as easy as possible for new customers to get started with us to build an authentic working relationship. The retailers who are already on board are continuously selling more and more and enjoy working with us. Our retailer fluctuation is extremely low, which of course makes us very happy and confirms that we are on the right track. ☺



ETNIES, ES, EMERICA

It's been 2 months since the takeover of the Sole Technology brands by the Nidecker Group so Source sat down with Bas Janssen, Head Of EMEA & APAC Sales of the new Nidecker footwear division to hear all about the new set up.

Please take us through the structure for the new Nidecker footwear division. Who is on the management team for footwear and what are their roles?

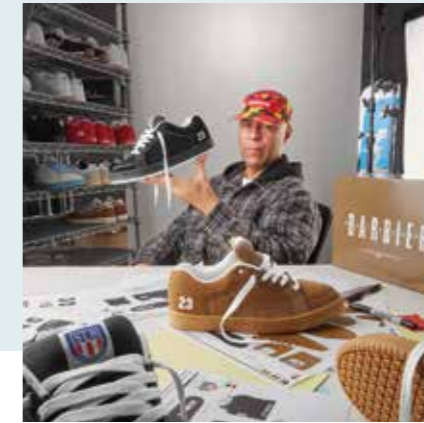
Bas: So on the European side not much is changing on the management side, Wouter Alsema, our Managing Director stays on as MD and myself as Head of sales. Next to that we have our marketing manager, Kevin Parrott spearheading skateboard marketing for the 3 footwear brands and Darren Wrenn managing the customer service side of the business. So generally, there are still a lot of familiar faces going forward for distributors, agents and retailers.

Similarly in the US most people have stayed the same when it comes to product, sales and marketing with some new additions to strengthen the team going forward.

The only larger change that has been made internally as of now is the fact that the APAC region will be managed under the European banner VS the US banner going forward to streamline processes within the NDK Group.

We hear you're about to move across town to new offices, what's the thinking?

Bas: Yes that's right, office wise we are moving into the Low Pressure Studios office with the Footwear division crew and shared office space in Amsterdam Noord. Actually I can't wait to move in, as the area is way more suitable for our brands being next to Skatepark Noord and



generally in a nicer and more creative area in Amsterdam. Besides the fun reasons there are also professional reasons for the move, we will be able to work closely with the Low Pressure studios crew who have experience in a similar acquisition, the back end systems we are using and the snowboard industry generally, so I think we can share a lot of knowhow between the teams!

Any changes to the Skate athlete program?

Kevin: We've been making changes for quite some time to expand and support what we feel best represents the kinds of skateboarding we back for each of the brands individually. I think with etnies, the plan has been visible for a while now, so you probably need to take a step further back to see where we've been building and focussing our energy. However, some of the difficult challenges we faced are now made easier as we have a larger family to realise our goals as opposed to just keeping them on our wish list.

Any changes to the skate marketing?

Kevin: Yes. It is early days in terms of what you can see externally, but hopefully you've noticed the etnies brand push we've made, tying us into Paris over the Olympics with our crew in the streets and that has performed really well whilst the rest of our gang were inside the stadium getting us onto TV screens in the contest itself. This is something Nidecker Group really backed. They really are about the laser focus on projects so we've been supported without distraction to execute. Then moving forward, this focus will also be seen, not just on the brand marketing, but the product marketing too. Amongst other things, we've got the Emerica Braden Hoban pro shoe coming up fast and I think you'll see a nice step up for us there in terms of how we roll it all out, that will be a big story for us as the shoe has sold into retailers so well.



Currently what are the main trends in the skate footwear market?

Bas: Obviously we see a lot of 90's and early 2000's styles becoming popular in the market which is right up our alley, we are bringing back some of these styles in either 100% retro styles or cool updates. But as you say these are trends, they come and go, so we are also working on some cool new projects at the moment but we can't say more than that!

What major new product releases do you have in the pipeline?

Bas: To back up the holiday season trends mentioned, we are releasing the SAL23 with etnies completely original colours, specs even the box is the same. Going into SP25 we are bringing some more retro styles back from the Scam to the LoCut but also we have an amazing collab with etnies and Sour! With Emerica, we are introducing a brand new pro model with Braden Hoban this Fall which is going to be big and our best vulc shoe in the line. ES has not been sitting still either, going into SP25, we are bringing an interesting new style elevating the Accel when it comes to fit and function as well as bringing back the Accel OG in its truest form as it was in 1995. ☺



REEF

In the 40th year of one of the staple brands in beach inspired footwear, we sat down with Reef's Head of International, Steve Holt, to give us the lowdown of how they plan to celebrate this milestone and what the future holds.

Please give us some background from when it all began to the present day:

REEF was born in 1984 from the visionary minds of entrepreneur brothers Fernando and Santiago Aguerre in South America. The brand has evolved into a global footwear and apparel brand that embodies the spirit of the beach and beyond. With 40 years of experience, we are committed to crafting high-quality products that seamlessly blend style, comfort, and versatility. Today, REEF has seen remarkable growth, nearly doubling its annual global sales. For decades, REEF has held the top spot as the #1 casual sandal brand in the US and has significantly increased market share worldwide. Our international presence spans 70 countries, supported by 35 Distributor partners.

What is Reef's USP?

Industry-leading comfort sets REEF apart from competitors and drives consumer loyalty. How the sandal conforms to the foot and gives lasting support from morning till night.

How is the 40th anniversary being celebrated?

This summer we'll be chronicling the evolution of REEF and how it's influenced surfing culture and the people within it. Through our media partnership with INHERENT BUMMER, we will style and frame pivotal moments, illustrating how REEF continues to fuel the culture of tomorrow through four different approaches to the brand - Importance of Being Fun, Celebrating Beauty, Spirit of Surfing & Everlasting Bonds. At the same time, we'll have celebrations and parties, beginning at the US Open of Surfing in California; then heading to regions that have a special connection with the brand, such as Argentina and Spain; concluding in the North Shore of Hawaii in November.



Over the last 40 years which Reef product are you most proud of and why?

For Men, the Fanning stands out. This sandal embodies the REEF brand with its bold design and industry impact. The Fanning features a patented bottle opener on the outsole and an airbag under the heel for added comfort and value. Its continued popularity highlights its iconic status and strong connection with our loyal customers. Next year marks its 20th anniversary.

Cushion Phantom 2.0 set a new standard with its soft PU cushioning, offering unparalleled comfort. The Oasis Double Up features water-friendly Sugarcane-based EVA and a molded TPU strap for a soft, water-friendly feel. The Ojai combines style and comfort with sustainably sourced leathers and suedes, a soft leather lining with no stitches or seams, and our signature REEF cushion footbed.

For women, the Vista High transformed our business by proving that style and comfort can coexist. The Smoothy/Sandy has been an iconic sandal for nearly 20 years, with millions of pairs sold. This staple product established REEF as a leader in the sandal market, known for making the best-fitting, most comfortable and most supportive sandals.

The Water Vista is perfect for beachside adventures with its water-friendly straps, espadrille-inspired texture, dual-density footbed and velcro backstrap for a perfect fit. The Bondi sandal is ideal for summer escapades, featuring water-friendly materials, cushioning support and 100% rPET recycled webbing detail for eco-conscious consumers.

What are the current hot trends in flip flops, slides and sandals?

REEF continuously fuels our iconic and core franchises, extending use cases for our loyal customers and moving beyond traditional 3-point sandals to create more stylish executions. Current trends in sandals

include vibrant colors for self-expression and various slide silhouettes, such as two-bar constructions and single-strap slides with multiple adjustment points. Slides are experiencing a resurgence in popularity.

How is the brand making itself more sustainable?

We always stay true to our values, giving back to the ocean and its beaches. The brand makes a ton of efforts to be sustainable. Our webbing is made from post-consumer recycled plastic bottles. We use Sugarcane based EVA's reducing our carbon footprint and reliance on petroleum. We will only use leather sourced from silver or gold-rated tanneries. We've introduced mushroom based leathers as a natural vegan leather alternative. A good portion of our rubber has recycled content in it. Our metal hardware is recycled. We use sustainable materials in our boxes and ensure our factories are environmentally compliant in making REEF sandals.

Why should retailers carry Reef?

REEF is increasingly relevant beyond our sandal roots, becoming a meaningful part of consumers' year-round wardrobes. We have elevated our approach to showing men and women how our products fit into their lives, both on and off the beach. This offers retailers the opportunity to scale up their business with the REEF brand. ☺

dryrobe®

DRYROBE

The brand's ubiquitous hooded changing robe is a common sight at most surf spots in the UK. Users happily enjoy its benefits as they go from dry to wet and back again with minimal fuss and discomfort. Find out what lies in store for the brand and its new product range.

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

The original 'dryrobe' was designed by British surfer Gideon Bright. The prototype was based on an idea his mum had when he was a teenager, this changing robe was a huge cape/poncho made from waterproof material, a towel lining and a hood. This soon became essential whenever he and his friends went surfing all year round on the cold Atlantic coast. In 2010, Gideon decided to reinvent his mother's initial design using state-of-the-art garment technology. The first time he wore it for a surf, two people asked him where they could buy one and Dryrobe was born!

Who is on the management team?

We have a small board of Directors, including Gideon himself, and a line manager for each department. Whilst the business is growing quickly we remain a relatively small team of people who are passionate about getting outdoors along the stunning North Devon coastline, where our office is based.

How has the Surf Robe market in general performed?

Demand for our changing robes, in particular the long sleeve Dryrobe Advance, has continued to grow and grow. In a world where there are now hundreds of imitators out there, it's a testament to the quality of our product that customers continue to choose the original. We've seen the Dryrobe Advance spread from surfers to triathletes to open-water swimmers to paddleboarders and practically any sport that involves being outside in the cold. Its versatility means that people who buy it for one thing (surfing or swimming, for example) typically end up using it for a multitude of other activities, like



camping trips or even walking their dogs!

How is the brand being positioned in the Surf Robe market going forward?

Our focus is on authenticity, sustainability and performance. We're the makers of the original weatherproof changing robe and we're proud of our products and the people we work with. Our team of incredible Ambassadors from across the globe includes Andrew Cotton, Izzi Gomez, Ben & Lukas Skinner and Bárbara Hernández Huerta. We also partner with some world's leading brands and inspiring organisations including USA Surfing, Red Bull, Save The Waves and the German Surf Federation (DWW), as well as supplying Team GB with bespoke changing robes for this year's Olympic Games.

How have you made the brand more sustainable?

Sustainability has been at the core of everything we do since the very beginning. The Dryrobe Advance is made with high-performance recycled materials that are built to be durable enough to last for years. We've had customers who've been using theirs for over a decade! We are incredibly proud that, as a B-Corp, our business practices are recognised for promoting positive environmental and social change. This certification means we meet the high standards of verified performance, accountability, and transparency on factors from employee benefits and charitable giving to supply chain practices and input materials. Through our Dryrobe Warmth Project, we're proud to support charities and non-profit organisations that share our values of promoting well-being through outdoor activity and protecting the environment.

What are your most popular pieces and why?

The long sleeve Dryrobe Advance changing robe continues to be our top-selling product. The unique specification of the garment makes it an essential piece of kit for anyone getting in and out of the water, or simply looking for protection from elements. Its inner lining has been scientifically designed to get you dry and warm you up



quickly after getting out of the water. The unique composition of the fleece enables it to perfectly balance insulation with the ability to wick water away from the skin. Our Organic Towel Dryrobe also continues to prove popular. It is an absorbent, super-soft-to-touch towel poncho that is designed to give you enough room to change inside and get dry quickly, whilst protecting you from the elements. All our towel robes are made from 100% GOTS-certified organic cotton.

How is Dryrobe distributed across Europe?

Our European distribution network is currently represented in the following locations: Denmark, Germany, France, Norway, Netherlands, Sweden and Finland with further expansion planned. We are visible in over 60 stores across Europe, with more planned for 2024.

What's new for 2024/25?

We are excited to be introducing new Dryrobe Advance colours for summer, with coordinating accessories that will expand our existing range. Our recently launched Dryrobe Waterproof Poncho has been incredibly popular since it launched in March. It's a lightweight, packable poncho, designed for warmer wet days. The ability to pack it down into its stash bag makes it perfect for outdoor activities such as hiking, cycling, camping, or travelling, as well as spectating at outdoor events. ☺



WILI WILI TREE

Founded by a couple of Swiss outdoor enthusiasts, Wili Wili Tree, is now expanding across Europe with their distinctive eye-catching designs that stand out on retailers shelves. Source sat down with the founders to hear the brand story so far.

How did the brand come about?

The founders behind Wili Wili Tree are a Swiss couple who are also passionate outdoor enthusiasts. Our hearts beat in rhythm with nature - whether it's diving into the cool waters of our beloved Swiss lakes and rivers, the mediterranean sea, or the ocean. We also love climbing breathtaking mountain peaks, riding single trails or going on van adventures on four wheels. We cherish water, like rivers, lakes, or oceans, as well as our beloved mountains.

Our journey began in beautiful Bern, where we were born and raised. The Aare River, which originates from a glacier, has been a part of our lives for as long as we can remember. We swam in it as children. Inspired by the legendary Aare swimming experience, the idea of creating our own dry bags only emerged in 2019. We wanted to have the right gear for our water adventures and travels, but found little that was both functional and aesthetically pleasing - most outdoor gear was practical but not very well-designed.

This motivated us to start Wili Wili. What began with a simple dry bag, quickly evolved into a versatile collection centred around outdoor and lifestyle themes, now surfing under the exotic name Wili Wili Tree - inspired from the Hawaiian Lifestyle.

What's the brand's USP?

Our unique selling proposition is our diverse product range, featuring beautiful colours, exceptional designs, and highly durable materials. We are also committed to using sustainable materials, which is not



just a goal but a fundamental requirement for us.

With sustainability a key focus of the brand, what have you done to make your brand more environmentally friendly? We are continually seeking the latest technologies and modern standards to enhance our supply chain. This includes using high-quality, proven products and raw materials that are both sustainable and durable. Our commitment extends to our transportation methods, where we prioritise efficient and eco-friendly practices to reduce our carbon footprint. We are also dedicated to ensuring high standards in our working environment and implementing stringent quality control measures. By integrating these advancements, we strive to maintain excellence across all aspects of our operations.

Which has been the most successful product over the last season and why?

The most successful product over the last season has been our Dry Bags, due to their vibrant colours and eye-catching designs. These features have made them particularly popular among our customers, who appreciate the combination of style and functionality.

However, our backpacks have also seen significant success. Their popularity can be attributed not only to their appealing colours and designs but also to their exceptional comfort and quality. The thoughtful design and durable construction of our backpacks have resonated well with users, making them a standout choice for those seeking both style and practicality.

Any new categories you are working on for next season?

For the upcoming season, we are excited to introduce several new developments.

We are redesigning our current dry bags, incorporating fresh colours and innovative designs to enhance their appeal and functionality. Additionally, our backpacks and travel gear will undergo a complete transformation, featuring updated shapes and improved features. These changes reflect our commitment to continually evolving our product offerings and meeting the needs of our customers with both style and practicality.

How do you distribute Wili Wili Tree in Europe?

Starting in 2025, we will distribute Wili Wili Tree products through a select network of retailers across Europe. In addition to our retail partnerships, our products will be available through our webshop, which will play a key role in establishing and strengthening our brand presence. This combined approach will help us reach a broad audience and ensure that our customers have access to our high-quality gear throughout Europe.

Why should retailers stock your brand?

Retailers should stock Wili Wili Tree for our vibrant, distinctive designs and high-quality gear. Our colourful dry bags, backpacks, and travel gear stand out, attracting customers seeking fresh, stylish outdoor products. Wili Wili Tree is an independent family business. ©



SHOPS 1ST TRY

Hochfügen / Zillertal (AUT)



NEW PRODUCTS

01 / FOAMLIFE - SEALES EARTH MEN'S FLIP FLOPS - SLATE GREY

Introducing the 'SEALES EARTH', Bio Leather Flip Flops – the epitome of style and sustainability. Crafted with care, these flip flops feature a branded gum rubber outsole with husks from real grain and a luxurious bio leather upper strap that feels as good as it looks. Made with eco-friendly materials, ensuring a minimal impact on the environment.

THEFOAMLIFE.COM



02 / NIKWAX WETSUIT REFRESH

Banish nasty odours and keep your wetsuit in top condition with Nikwax Wetsuit Refresh. A powerful non-biological cleaner and conditioner for wetsuits, and neoprene items. Wetsuit Refresh deodorises and extends the life of your wetsuit by cleaning away salt, chlorine and organic residue and leaving it soft and supple. Wetsuit Refresh does not include any biocides, enzymes or biological agents which means it is kinder to your skin and the environment, so you can be confident that you are not harming aquatic life.

NIKWAX.CO.UK



03 / INDOBOARD ORIGINAL SEA TURTLE

The Indo Board Balance Trainer is the most versatile balance board product available in the market today. Since 1998, the product's simplicity has enabled it to become a truly multifunctional fitness tool for beginners as well as world athletes in virtually every sport. The Indo Original model is the easiest model to learn on designed for fun while exercising the core balance muscles. Each "Sea Turtle" design gives 4% of net sales to turtle conservation.

INDOBOARD.EU



04 / INDIANA PUMP FOIL CONDOR XL COMPLETE

The Indiana Condor XL Alu Complete Foil with a span of 1696 mm will allow you to pump longer and farther than ever before. Indiana Ambassador Nicolas Iten broke the World Record by pumping over 4 hours with the Condor XL in Switzerland. The Condor XL Complete comes with the Condor XS Flat Mount Stab, the Charger Alu Mast 75 cm and the 610 HD V2 Fuselage.

INDIANA-PADDLESURF.COM



05 / RIP CURL SEARCH GPS 3 WATCH

Introducing the SearchGPS 3 watch! Precision and performance unite in this 100m Water Resistant marvel, featuring GPS, a vivid display, and seamless Bluetooth. Boasting 11 hours of GPS battery life and an incredible 30+ days of overall endurance, it's your go-to for every adventure. Step & Paddle Counter, Moon Phase, Sunrise/Sunset Times keep you in sync with nature. Plus, it's your built-in Logbook, all packed in a sleek 43mm case. Join the world's largest surfing community!

RIPCURL.COM



UK

FRANCE
ITALY
SWISS
SPAIN
PORTUGAL
GERMANY

We lost a friend and a key member of the UK boardsports community. Farrel O'Shea was known to just about everyone in the watersports industry. He was a fantastic all-around waterman and founder of O'Shea International, supplying kit to many retailers over decades. Not only a highly accomplished windsurfer and enthusiastic speed sailor, but he was also an all-around great guy. Life with Farrel was always "rock n roll." He will be missed. RIP Farrel.

A sobering start to this month's column. Make every day count.

So how is business? The memory of a good winter has faded fast and feels like a long, long time ago. Here we are faced with the summer – what summer?! – and one of the worst watersports summers in living memory.

We can look for any number of explanations – lack of decent weather, distraction of Euro24, General Election, Olympics – whatever explanation we opt for, it simply does not escape the fact that this summer on the water is simply not happening. (Dare I say...YET) It's not happening in a big way. Is there a positive? Yes...as one customer said to me, "It cannot get any worse?" That's about the best we can say "But we said that last year!"

Discretionary spending pressures are impacting almost all aspects of our consumers' lives. The long-awaited recovery seems to be getting further away. Earlier in the year, overseas travel was buoyant, and the hope was that this would translate to money finding its way to our tills. It did not, and the latest numbers from Ryanair are way off target with forecasts for continuing declines.

Will our new Labour Government make a difference? Who knows? Is there a 'feel-good' feeling from a change in the seats of power? Maybe Keir and his troops got some feel-good, but for the rest of us, it was very short-lived!

"Tough," this is Henry from Shore Watersports. "I had two reps in the shop this week – they both came in with long trousers on." This may seem like a strange observation to make, but to me, it was clear. What on earth was someone in our industry, in the height of summer (sic), doing wearing long trousers? Where were their shorts? "It was so bloody cold." [Early July – it has since warmed up at end of July]

So apart from the attire of your reps, how is it? "Tough [again]. But what can we do? There's no point in discounting because that's not going to drive the sale. We must keep our heads down; we have to try and stoke demand somehow, and we have to add value to the sale in order to capture market share. But not by discounting – that simple blunt tool is not going to work." Times are tough, and there are plenty of people trying to find something to fill their days. "The customers are just not here. It was ok until May, but since then, it's fallen off a cliff. Summer has simply not started. Brands looking for pre-orders are going to be very disappointed – those days have gone – at least for the time being."

Have you got any good news for me? "Yeah. The good news is that stock mountains with brands and suppliers are slowly

MARKET INSIGHT

reducing. Stock at retail has certainly come down - so hopefully the end is in sight." I wonder how good his vision is... Long-sighted perhaps? "One bright light is that new(er) brands such as Passenger are going well in-store."

So is it "new" that is creating a bright spot? I called Chris at Poole Harbour Watersports, which is one of the longest-established watersports stores in the UK. Tracing their roots back to 1978 (sadly, I am old enough to say that I did business with them back then as well), the current owner (Chris) purchased the store in 1993, so he has a long history and has seen it all before – but has he?

I asked Chris to tell me some good news! "I need to go back in time a few years to tell you some good news." I could feel it coming. "It's so bizarre. Never known a time like this before – our suppliers are all offering deals, and whilst this can help make the entry to a sport a bit easier, the deals are not stimulating the market as I would hope. It's not like petrol – it's not a 'must have'. Our customers are focused on their mortgage and rent payments. A reduction in interest rates may help, but I'm not convinced; it's going to take time." Is there anything going well? "No – nothing really. Wetsuits are a disaster, and we have so much winter stock left over it will see us through. Perhaps winging is a bright spot – but only just. Winging is easier for people to get into than windsurfing, but all it's doing is robbing from one market to another. It's not really building the business."

Where to go to find some good news? The next call did it, and I found some positivity! But this key member of the team from a small chain of skate stores, who have been around for decades, wanted to remain anonymous. Shy in this industry?

"Skate has turned a corner. Of course, it is weather-dependent, and the summer thus far has not helped much, but as soon as we get a small chunk of good weather, the consumers are out buying. Decks are doing well. Completes have fallen back a bit since the pandemic." Any problems? "There are loads of good deals, so consumers are happy. My slight concern is when we come to the end of these deals, it may be that the customer will be more than a little surprised at the updated pricing – only time will tell – there's still plenty to go at right now." Are you optimistic for the rest of the summer? "Yes, I really am. We cannot do much about the weather, but school holidays are about to start. We have a sharp focus on marketing. There are the Olympics – so yeah – I would say I am fairly optimistic. Time will tell."

Nice to talk to someone with some positivity, even if they are shy! Is it out there? Do we have to go and hunt it down? When will the stockpile finally run out? When will the sun shine, the wind blow, the waves work? When indeed? Crystal balls required – if you'll pardon the phrase.

Whatever. Currently, it's not much fun out there! For me, the loss of Farrel puts things sharply into perspective. Focus on today.

"Put the kettle on. Let's have a cup of tea." (If you know, you know).

Farrel O'Shea. 3rd August 1963 > 2nd June 2024. RIP

GORDON WAY

MARKET INSIGHT

FRANCE

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Purchasing power is at half-mast, gloomy weather, an uncertain political climate and the Olympic Games in France, what a combination. Unfortunately, the start of the tourist season is not exactly what the industry had hoped for; the first factor was the weather. A lot of rain in June and July in France, and below-average temperatures, have dampened the spirits of visitors. Inflation and its impact on purchasing power is also having an impact, pushing tourists back to less popular and less expensive areas. Added to this is the election campaign following Emmanuel Macron's dissolution of the National Assembly.

Election years are always a bit complicated on the tourism front, it's like the stock market. It does well when you have confidence in the economy. In tourism, it's a kind of the same thing: election years create uncertainty, and household morale is low. Uncertainty has therefore soared this summer. The announcement of the dissolution and then the results of the early parliamentary elections had an immediate effect on the mood of businesses and the French. Since the announcement of the dissolution on the evening of June 9, everything has contributed to fuelling this feeling: the population's wait-and-see attitude, the postponement of certain investments, the freeze on recruitment due to a lack of visibility on the evolution of wage costs. Indeed, employers' associations are warning that business leaders are cautious, as they wait for a clearer picture. Unsurprisingly, the main factor cited is the electoral context.

"The dissolution has created uncertainty. And uncertainty is never good for the economy", insists Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire. In the second quarter, GDP growth will be limited to 0.1%, according to the central bank. Prior to the dissolution, the monetary institution was forecasting 0.8% growth in France this year. The INSEE forecasts, which were also made before the parliamentary elections, were for 1.1%. But the reconfiguration of the political landscape will not be without effect on growth. Will the French economy finally take a dive in 2024? Nothing is less certain. After a month of political storms, marked by the thunderous announcement of the dissolution of the National Assembly and the tormented legislative elections, companies and households are concerned by the electric political context.

Far from providing the clarification announced by Emmanuel Macron, the results of the legislative elections ultimately failed to produce a clear majority in the National Assembly. The electric shock of the first round, which saw the RN (far-right) in the lead, ultimately saw the Nouveau Front Populaire (left-wing alliance) win the most seats in the evening of the second round through the Republican barrage. The Head of State suspended the resignation of the Attal government, and the forces of the Left are currently in the midst of negotiations to find the ideal candidate for Matignon. Despite this thick fog, INSEE is not forecasting a collapse in the economy. At least for the time being.

In this climate of uncertainty, how is the French surf retail market faring at the start of the 2024 season? At Cocoa Gliss & Co, a surf shop set up on the island of Oléron in 2002, CEO Frédéric GROOT tells us: "We've had a fairly complicated start to the season since March. The months of April and May were relatively spared by low general consumption, but June and the start of July are well below our targets, and much lower than in 2023". He adds: "The figure was down 15% in June compared with last year, and at the start of July we're closer to -20%."

In the South of France, Karukera Surf Shop in Saint Aygulf, VAR, co-managers Cédric & Brice tell us: "Visitor numbers were low in the spring, and the start of summer is more difficult than last year. They

add: "We're seeing a sharp drop in sales. We explain this largely by the poor weather, which is rather unusual on the Mediterranean coast at this time of year, even if the political climate and the elections are creating a climate of uncertainty which must also have an impact."

Frédéric from Cocoa Gliss & Co also explains: "The drop is contained for clothing, but much more significant for technical equipment such as surfing and skateboarding. Snowboarders are very price-conscious about technical products, and are often no longer in a position to renew their equipment. He adds: "Purchasing power on non-essential goods has dropped significantly, and the political context is too anxiety-provoking. To put the finishing touches to the desire to buy, the weather has been miserable since the beginning of April."

Cédric gives us an update on stock levels, supplier deliveries and restocking: "We have carried out some restocking in clothing, which is selling well, but we still have overstock on technical goods in general." He notes: "There's too much stock on all brands. Too many websites and stores are doing anything and everything, with special offers every day, all year round, and it's pretty complicated to fight to keep margins." He adds: "There have been too many price rises over the last few years among all the brands, especially on neoprene, to end up with crazy promotions. Today's customers are looking for and waiting for the big discounts!"

At Cocoa Gliss & Co, Frédéric confides: "The brands have been delivering on the clothing side, but we're way behind on the high-end surfboards. But our stock levels are well above the average of other years for surf equipment in general."

Frederic & Brice of Karukera Surf Shop agree on the change in consumer behaviour: "There are more and more customers who come to get information and then go buy at the low price, the customer is no longer willing to pay the recommended price." A feeling confirmed by Frédéric at Cocoa Gliss & Co: "Customers are increasingly using their smartphones to check if prices are in line, or even if they can find a cheaper price on the net. As soon as the product exceeds a certain amount, we notice that the sale is much more considered. We've even seen consumers buy a product on special offer when it wasn't their first choice".

At Colors of Surfing, a store with a unique and experimental concept set up 2 years ago in Biarritz, where Antonin Villiers, co-manager, tells us: "Summer has started off quite well for us. We've had a lot of footfall, the 3 main activities of our concept store are doing very well: clothing, board rental/testing and the café section. We had a good pre-season, with an excellent month of May. A slight drop in activity in June, which was to be expected, and a good start to July. At this time of year, a large proportion of our clientele are foreigners. He adds: "The store has grown steadily since we opened in 2020. With an increase of 25% so far in 2024. This can be explained by several factors, notably by the store's growing reputation, an increase in opening hours, but also a growing interest for this type of different retail concept." Antonin qualifies: "However, we have noticed a slight drop in sales of new surfboards, probably linked to purchasing power. Finally, our business obviously fluctuates according to the weather. Surfboard testing is undoubtedly linked to surfing conditions. As for the weather, it plays a part in the store's activity, often more crowded on grey, rainy days (no beach, more going out on the town)."

While for most stores, at the time of writing, the summer season doesn't seem to have really begun. A few isolated stores, with a different concept and clientele, seem to be doing well. Uncertainty and the weather are two factors that explain the late start. Let's hope that the Paris Olympics and the month of August save this season, which is struggling to get off the ground...

BENOIT BRECQ

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Let's start again with some hard figures. Overall, inflation has stabilized slightly in recent months, but remains an issue due to price increases in certain sectors, with the inflation rate in Germany in July 2024 at 2.3%. Prices for services rose particularly sharply, while the price trend for goods remained below average. The price increases for services such as insurance and catering are particularly striking. These developments are of course particularly noticeable in the retail sector. Sentences such as "There's less money for leisure" or "Oh come on, the old one will still do" are being heard more and more often.

The lack of summer at the beginning of the year also had a negative impact on the mood. A very rainy June and the first half of July left board shorts and bikinis hanging on the shelves for longer. However, business picked up again in the second half of the German summer, which noticeably improved the mood among retailers.

From a pre-order perspective, however, a certain degree of caution is evident overall. The number of orders have been reduced and their value is also decreasing. There are certainly exceptions, but overall retailers are ordering more cautiously as stocks are still available.

The Olympic Games were very positive for extreme sports. In addition to the surfing competition, which was held on the legendary Teahupo'o wave, skating in particular caused a stir. High viewing figures were achieved at prime time, which was noticed by smaller skate stores. Interest in the sport of skateboarding is growing again for the first time since the peak times during the COVID-19 pandemic. Sales of complete skateboards and protective equipment are particularly on the rise.

Armin from A-Man Boardingstore has a similar view of the situation. He has been actively involved in the skate scene for years and celebrated the 25th anniversary of his skate park tour this year under the motto "STILL ALIVE". When I asked him how he assesses the current situation in skateboarding, he replied: "Skating is obviously a lot of passion and heart and soul, but it gets kids involved in sport and you simply have to encourage that." How are sales going in the store? "Skate hardware is actually quite stable, even growing slightly at the moment, but the prices on the internet are of course also pretty crazy! We're noticing that. However, the sale of streetwear is positive. Baggy pants have really picked up."

This brings me straight to the next topic: streetwear fashion. We board sports enthusiasts have always been pioneers when it comes to trends. In this context, I spoke to Philipp Lange from the retail agency of the same name. He is the new representative of Home Boy in southern Germany and is very happy with this decision. "Home Boy is working very well at the moment, we've actually been sold out in the key styles for weeks. The prebook order is going really well. It's simply fun to have a category that is currently being well received."

Another highlight in the board sports industry was the opening

MARKET INSIGHT

of o2 Surf town Munich Wave park. I was able to be part of this event and it was simply incredible. With almost 15,000 spectators, surfers and lots of pros from the German surf scene. The waves created by the Endless Surf technology are incredibly diverse and good. Everyone really gets their money's worth here - whether you're a beginner surfer in white water or a pro with two air sections.

I had a chat with Michi Mohr and it was clear that the opening and the vibe exceeded all expectations. When asked how he felt, Michi replied: "It's still a bit surreal, But this beats everything. From the first moment I saw the first wave, to the problems with the overheated construction site. this day makes you forget everything. Everyone has a smile on their face. We have international surf pros get in touch wanting to surf the wave."

I had exactly the same feeling: just good vibes. Surf town will make the sport of surfing even better known in Germany. The well thought-out store system and its partners also offer the opportunity to test and then buy high-end surfboards. Different fins can be tried out and also purchased, something that is not normally possible. "The retail concept has already been very well received in the first few weeks and we will continue to improve it," says Michi.

We shouldn't forget the Outdoor ISPO, which has also taken place in Munich since my last Market Inside. It has to be said quite clearly that outdoor was the focus. Although the small surf area was always well attended, some brands that were there in winter were now missing. It was interesting and impressive how many camping, outdoor and water bottle products were presented. Large stands took up almost half the hall, consisting of backpacks and water bottles. It seems like these are categories that are growing.

I now come to one category: sneakers and skate shoes. Of course, a lot has happened here too. Nidecker has taken over the core skate shoe brands Etnies, Emerica and ES with the purchase of the Soletech Group. The brothers are totally happy with this and want to continue investing in skateboarding. I spoke to Franck Goulard, German Sales Rep South, and wanted to know what he thought of the changeover: "For me, it's a great thing, we're getting more support again, especially when it comes to marketing." The processes have been simplified. How are things going otherwise? "Quite stable, and Etnies is even showing a slight increase." That's some good news.

I read recently 88% of sales take place in-store! This statement surprised me at first, but after a few conversations with retailers, it's true. In-store sales are growing again and are more important than ever for retailers. That's my feeling too. Service, experience and expertise cannot be replicated online. This enables retailers to grow sales again.

We will be reporting on the first winter business in the next issue. The brands are in the starting blocks and deliveries of winter products have already begun. Let's hope for a good start with early snow and sales.

Ride on,

TOBI HAMMER

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The economic environment is still the same, GDP growth is expected to be 1% in 2024 and 1.1% in 2025, with no big increases as expected but still showing a moderate acceleration compared to 2023. Private consumption continues to be supported by the strengthening labour market and real wage increases. This dynamic will lead to +0.4% growth in household consumption in 2024 and +1% in 2025. A sign of positivity which is much needed for many business owners nationwide.

Nevertheless the forecast remains characterised by the persistence of high uncertainty in the international outlook, determined by the evolution of geopolitical tensions which do not seem to be slowing down during 2024. This data comes from ISTAT, the official national statistics provider, and shows growth but the overall reality in the boardsport business is experiencing a pretty tough time. The 2024 season started slow with heavy rainfalls in April, May and June affecting the sell-through meaning most stores not reaching their turnovers and we're still seeing many stores closing as the overall profitability does not allow for many retailers to go on and remain in business. Sadly the list of closed skate, snow, surf and streetwear dealers gets longer and longer during this first half of 2024.

Store owners try to stay positive but the overall outlook is that it will take another 1 or 2 seasons to get into a more healthier market situation again. Stock levels on skate, snow and surf hardgoods are simply still too high and demand is not high enough to lower it within a short period of time. The problem that goods

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Spain is amongst the top world economies in purchasing power recovery. Dropping inflation, increasing salaries, and job creation have helped. Indicators throw a forecast GDP growth of 3.3%, surpassing expectations. Spain and its southern neighbours are leading the eurozone's growth, fuelled by tourism, policy reforms, and good use of the European recovery funds. Tourism has been positively influenced by a post-pandemic shift in spending behaviour patterns. Europeans invest less in assets and more in experiences. Investment in renewable energies has resulted in a much cheaper

energy bill than Russian-gas-dependent northern countries. This has invited relocation of many European factories, who also appreciate the immediate availability of workers. As a result, savings rates have also hiked. However, most of these savings belong to people over fifty years old, who tend to spend less. How does all this impact the board sports industry, one that benefits from higher purchasing power but with a young target consumer?

The post-pandemic boom of board sports has left a lot of people well-equipped, and growth of these sports seems to have stalled. Retailers report cautious spending generally. "Consumers only buy what they strictly need, comparing prices and looking for what best suits their budget", says Artur Pedrell from Nautilus Sports in Cambrils. "I focus on basic needs, such as leashes, pads or wetsuits, and stock very little hardware", says Hector Perez from Northwind Watersports Company in Somo. This is more true for surf, skate, snowboard and SUP than for kiteboarding or wing foiling. Kiteboarders and wing foilers seem more ready to spend on innovation, with wing consumers refreshing their quiver every year. For multi-sports retailers, wing foiling is maintaining the industry's health. This sport has attracted fans from other sports. Windsurfers get a similar thrill with much less equipment procrastination and less wind. Surfers use the foil to reach further and less populated breaks. Kiteboarders find

MARKET INSIGHT

only move on sale is eating margins offline and especially online which makes it even harder. It is not all bad and there is some light with certain brands doing well but the overall trend is reducing costs, ordering less and trying to make it through these very uncertain times.

When talking to retailers, distributors and agents you quickly realise that a new era has started and that numbers we did past or pre-covid are not possible to reach within the next couple of seasons for many businesses. The customer has changed and many B2C only brands are making their way into the market with their direct to consumer communications and lifestyle.

Boardsports are alive more than ever, but this does not mean that it naturally translates into good sell-through numbers for core retailers as they compete against more mainstream players with wider brand and trend selections. A simple example is baggy jeans which are heavily trending but you can find them everywhere which mean less sales for our traditional boardsport channels.

July brings us good weather, good vibes and many events are back on the calendar such as local skate contests and store based events. The SS25 pre-book season is foreshadowed by a slow-down modus operandi from many retailers to make 2025 successful again. Many companies have to re-organise themselves and reduce costs to make it through this very difficult 2024, but as it is not only business, but also passion it will make them survive.

Peace and Enjoy Summer.

FRANZ JOSEF HOLLER

it less physical and safer. Retailers who sell wing foiling equipment have experienced much better winter sales than those who don't. Although sales have picked up in summer, they have been lower than expected. July did not offer the best weather, especially in the north. Better weather in August could change the trend.

Retailers have been forced to set up their own e-commerce sites. However, they remain mere showrooms for their brick-and-mortar stores, which handle most of the business. It is not the case of activity schools. Those retailers who have a school see most of their turnover through it. Some retailers complain about the impact of "pirate" distributors and schools. They use beach ambassadors to clear old stock at very low prices or offer unregulated lessons. Newcomers to the sports that fall for them have a lasting bad induction experience that damages the sport in the long term. This is a unwelcome addition to the general unpredictability of sales due to changing weather and economic conditions. Without sales analytics to base a forecast on, it is very difficult to comply with the early buying deadlines that brands require. However, there is one voice when it comes to satisfaction in board sports retail business. "Interacting with the client" is the literal answer of both Artur and Hector. Guiding the consumer through the purchase and seeing them in the water year after year feeds their passion. This gives the retailer an important role in the growth of the sport. There are things brands can do to support them in their quest. Keeping the newcomers in mind when they develop product lines is important. "Gear must be tested with schools, not only pro riders. Schools know how people learn and progress and what they need from their kit to keep practising", says Hector. Once the gear makes it to the market, it is important to keep a good brand image. "Treat the brands with the respect that consumers deserve, avoiding massive discounts that reduce their value", says Artur. Many years of dedication to the sport and daily interaction with consumers back these words.

ROCIO ENRIQUEZ

PORTUGAL

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Portugal is hoping to find a much-desired political stability that will allow the government to work smoothly, but the task hasn't been easy. Despite progress in solving problems and making important decisions such as the country's new airport location, the stress test of the new executive elected 100 days ago, will come in October with the approval (or non-approval) of the State Budget for 2025. At that point, we will either have a period of greater stability or we will once again have a political crisis with the possibility of early elections on the horizon again.

According to the European Commission, the Portuguese economy is expected to grow by 1.7% this year, which is an upward revision compared to the 1.2% published on the Winter Forecast. By 2025, Brussels predicts that Portugal's GDP will grow by 1.9%, driven by private consumption and investment. After rising in May, the year-on-year inflation rate fell again in June to 2.8%.

Overall, the boardsport industry is struggling due to a tourism slowdown related to action sports and weather instability. Although Portugal's overall number of tourists continues to break records, the surfing/skate target has been shrinking or opting for other destinations so retailers have felt this hit in sales.

For Manelsport, which has stores in Santa Cruz and Torres Vedras in Portugal's West region, "The positive aspect continues to be a good trend in surf and skate lifestyle with Portugal receiving more and more surfers throughout the year, especially at surf camps", commented store owner, Carlos Dias. "The negative side has been the weather and the wetsuit and surf, skate market saturation."

In his words the new Spring/Summer collections reception has been good. Supporting surf and skate events has also helped the store along with their team of 20 riders. "The brands that stand out are Carhartt, Dickies, Volcom, Cariuma and New Balance. These are alternative brands that have developed good products and exclusivity. In terms of skateboarding

MARKET INSIGHT

hardgoods, we have Jart that supports the best Portuguese skater, Gustavo Ribeiro". Regarding the impact on sales, Carlos commented, "We are at the same point as last year despite the difficulties with the weather and the slowdown in tourism. We have a big problem with the crisis throughout Europe. Also, the big textile brands start their promotions in May and fortunately the surf shops only start in July. But the strongest sales months are precisely in July and August, when the market is already sold out. It would be very important for the stores to unite and only have sales campaigns in August. I think from now on it will get better, people have hardly been to the beach this year".

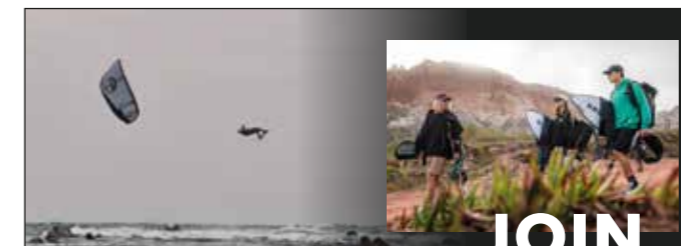
For Wavegliders, a core brand and surf shop in Ericeira, the year hasn't started as well as they'd hoped. "The industry is going through a difficult time", said the store owner and shaper, Nico. "This year has been worse in terms of sales by around 15% to 20% compared to 2023 and we didn't reach our goals. But despite the difficulties and the slowdown in tourism, the business continues to move forward. With the Roark and Rhythm collections, we achieved the desired sellout, but Carhartt fell short. The boards that are having the most success in terms of sales are midlengths and longboards", he mentions.

To face the situation, adaptation is the key word. "We always have to do sales campaigns, although this isn't a common practice in our store due to the type of tourist customers in Ericeira who have purchasing power and are here for a week on vacation. But there are other types of customers who are looking for discounts. That's why we ran a sporadic campaign to sell off old boards and replace them with new ones". The upcoming times will be very important. "In general, there's a slowdown in consumption and we still have overstock that goes back to the Covid-19 days. The economic crisis, the Euro 2024 and now the Olympic Games have led many people to travel or stay at home to watch it. Let's see if people return to the beach to save our summer sales, but I have serious doubts... Let's wait and see. But if we can't recover by the end of this season, next Fall/Winter is likely to be even worse", he predicts.

Fingers crossed that the remaining summer season will bring good news and nice deals for everyone.

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EVENTS #121

surf/kite skate/bike snow street/outdoor SUP/wake

surf	OLYMPIC GAMES SURFING	Teahupo'o, Tahiti 27 Jul - 5 Aug	olympics.com
skate	OLYMPIC GAMES SKATING	Paris, France 27 - 28 Jul / 6 - 7 Aug	olympics.com
surf	LEXUS US OPEN OF SURFING	HuntingTon Beach, USA 6 - 11 Aug	worldsurfleague.com
surf	BOARDMASTERS LONGBOARD PRO	Fistral Beach, UK 7 - 11 Aug	worldsurfleague.com
kite	KITE SURF BIG AIR	Sylt in Westerland, Germany 20 - 25 Aug	gkakiteworldtour.com
surf	CORONA FIJI PRO	Cloudbreak, Fiji 20 - 29 Aug	worldsurfleague.com
kite	FREE STYLE WORLD CUP	Dunkerque, France 28 Aug - 1 Sept	gkakiteworldtour.com
surf	SURF EXPO	Orlando, USA 5 - 7 Sept	surfexpo.com
kite	AWSI BOARDSPORT EXPO	Hood River, USA 3 - 6 Sept	windkitesup.org
surf	WSL FINALS LOWER TRESTLES	San Clemente, California 6 - 14 Sept	worldsurfleague.com
outdoor	SPORT ACHAT	Grenoble, France 9 - 10 Sept	sportair.fr
outdoor	ACTION SPORT FORUM	Manchester, UK 9-10 Sept	piertopierconsult.com
outdoor	EOG OUTDOOR SUMMIT	Cambridge, UK 18 - 19 Sept	europeanoutdoorsummit.com
optics	SILMO	Paris, France 20 - 23 Sept	silmoparis.com/en
sup	PADDLE SPORTS SHOW	Strasbourg, France 24 - 26 Sept	thepaddlesportshow.com
surf	EUROSIMA SURF SUMMIT	Hossegor, France 26 - 27 Sept	eurosima.com
surf	EDP ERICEIRA PRO	Ericeira, Portugal 29 Sep - 06 Oct	worldsurfleague.com
surf	SURF PARK SUMMIT	San Diego, USA 30 Sept - 2 Oct	surfparkcentral.com
snow	LONDON SNOW SHOW	London, UK 09 - 10 Oct	nationalsnowweek.com
foil	EUROPEAN FOIL & WINDSPORTS EXPO	Lagos, Portugal 9 - 11 Oct	efwexpo.org
surf	BOARDROOM	Del Mar, USA 12 - 13 Oct	boardroomshow.com
surf	CORONA SAQUAREMA PRO	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil 12 - 20 Oct	worldsurfleague.com
textiles	PERFORMANCE DAYS	Munich, Germany 23 - 24 Oct	performancedays.com
surf	TAGHAZOUT SURF EXPO	Taghazout, Morocco 24-27 Oct	taghazoutsurfexpo.com
snow	SNOWBOARD DIYX	Stockholm, Sweden 25 - 26 Oct	@diyx_strt_jam
outdoor	OUTDOOR RETAIL WINTER	Salt Lake City, USA 6 - 8 Nov	outdoorretailer.com
kite	GKA KITE WORLD CUP BRAZIL	Pecem, Brazil 19 - 22 Nov	gkakiteworldtour.com
sup	GRAN CANARIA PRO-AM	Gran Canaria, Spain 2 - 7 Nov	appworldtour.com
outdoor	KENDAL MOUNTAIN FESTIVAL	Kendal, UK 21 - 24 Nov	kendalmountainfestival.com
outdoor	THE PILL BASECAMP EXPOWINTER	Milan, Italy 24 - 25 Nov	thepilloutdoor.com
outdoor	ISPO	Munich, Germany 3 - 5 Dec	ispo.com
kite	QATAR GKA FREESTYLE KITE WORLD CUP	Qatar, UAE 10 - 14 Dec	gkakiteworldtour.com
snow	SLIDE AND OTS	Telford, UK 7 - 9 Jan	slideotswinter.co.uk
surf	SURF EXPO	Orlando, USA 8 - 10 Jan	surfexpo.com
snow	WINTERPRO	La Rosiere, France 12 - 14 Jan	actsnowboarding.com
snow	LAAX OPEN	Laax, Switzerland 14 - 18 Jan	open.laax.com
snow	SHOPS 1ST TRY	Hochfügen, Austria 19 - 21 Jan	shops-1st-try.com
snow	THE PILL BASE CAMP TEST	Pila, Italy 20 - 21 Jan	thepilloutdoor.com
snow	THE PILL BASE CAMP TEST	Folgaria, Italy 27 - 28 Jan	thepilloutdoor.com
snow	SPORT ACHAT HIVER	Grenoble, France 27 - 19 Jan	sportair.fr
snow	SLIDE ON SNOW	La Cluzas, France 27 - 31 Jan	sigb.org.uk/slide-on-snow

SURF EXPO

SEPTEMBER 5-7, 2024
ORANGE COUNTY CONVENTION CENTER
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ORLANDO, FL

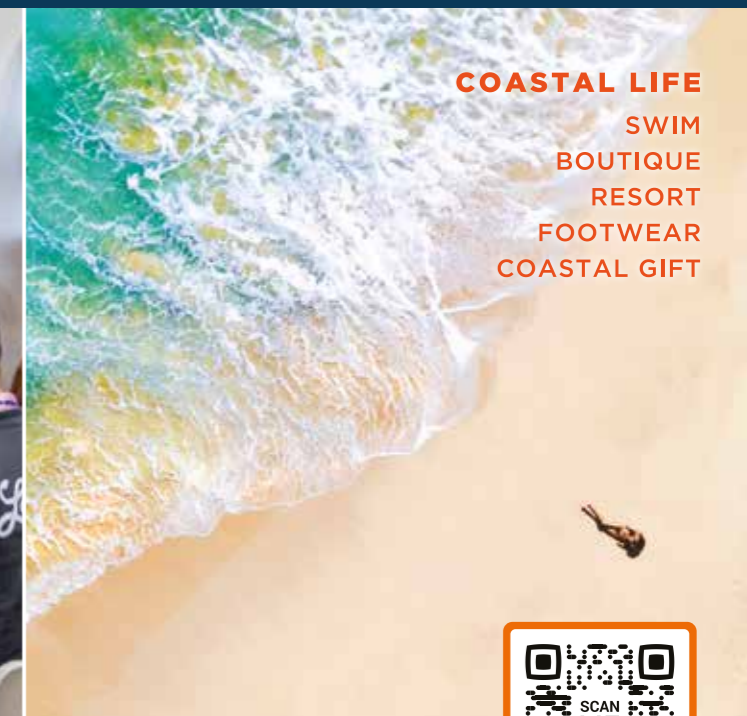
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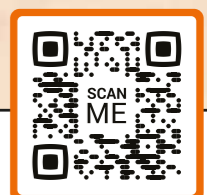
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