

TRENDS, PERSPECTIVE & ANALYSIS • JANUARY 2020 • A FORMULA4 MEDIA PUBLICATION

OUTDOOR INSIGHT[®]

MOUNTAIN LIFE

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RETRO VIBES

OUTERWEAR
INNOVATION
HEATS UP

FOOTWEAR FAVES
FOR THE TRAIL
AND BEYOND

OUR 2020
SNOWSPORTS
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#THEBUZZ

Minnesota now has an **Outdoor Recreation Task Force (ORTF)** to study and identify economic and participation opportunities around the state's robust outdoor recreation resources. The effort, which was helped along by outdoor recreation industry leaders, including **Outdoor Recreation Roundtable, REI** and **Outdoor Industry Association**, was jointly pursued by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Explore Minnesota and was supported by many Minnesota outdoor recreation businesses — from boating and fishing to hunting and paddling. The task force will consist of 20 seats and be announced in January. Outdoor recreation already accounts for 2.7 percent of Minnesota's economy, supports 101,000 jobs across the state and contributes \$9.6 billion to Minnesota's economy.

With this announcement, Minnesota becomes the 17th state to create either a task force or recreation office dedicated to maximizing the social and economic benefits of time outdoors.

Oboz Footwear has hired **Rich Hohne** as its director of marketing. Hohne joins Oboz from Simms Fishing Products. Hohne spent over ten years at Simms, where he held various positions in the marketing department. He lives in Bozeman where when not in the office he's off chasing powder or trout and enjoying its vast trail network with his dog Finny.

Wigwam Mills Inc., the family-owned, made-in-the-USA sock maker has added **Dana Gibson** as director of sales. She will primarily oversee the East Coast and Midwest Sales Agencies and several key accounts. Gibson's hire bolsters the Wigwam sales and marketing teams as it launches SynchroKnit, a new patent pending fit technology and brand under Wigwam. Gibson comes to Wigwam with extensive leadership and sales experience in the hosiery, shoe and active apparel industry, most recently with Leg Apparel and Gildan. Before her sales career Gibson served as a Corporal in the US Marine Corps.

Black Diamond Equipment opened a new state of the art flagship store in **Salt Lake City** in December. Located in the historic Trolley Square shopping district of Salt Lake City, the store will feature Black Diamond's full assortment of equipment and technical apparel, while highlighting seasonal push products.

"The Trolley Square flagship store is another example of Black Diamond growing its roots in our hometown of Salt Lake," said Rob Ostler,

Pelican Grows with Confluence Acquisition



Pelican International Inc. has acquired Confluence Outdoor's assets, expanding Pelican's comprehensive assortment of paddle sports equipment, which ranges from premium brands to more accessible and reliable products.

"The combination of the two businesses will produce by far the largest and most comprehensive group in the paddle sports space," said Antoine Élie, cofounder of Pelican International. "**This paddle sports powerhouse will offer, under the best brands, a complete line-up of products spanning all paddle sports categories, catering to the needs of all types of consumers,**" said Antoine Élie, cofounder of Pelican International.

Confluence Outdoor's portfolio of watersport brands includes Wilderness Systems, Perception, Dagger, Mad River Canoe,

Harmony Gear and Boardworks.

"The acquisition aims to capitalize on the strengths and capabilities of two synergistic businesses and brands, from the products that make their success to the people that make them shine, in a consolidating and globalizing industry," stated Danick Lavoie, president and CEO, Pelican International. "With more than 800 employees in three manufacturing sites strategically located in North America, an improved distribution network and a strong commitment to innovation, the momentum behind both brands is stronger than ever. Starting today, our team members, retailers and paddle sports enthusiasts from all backgrounds will be put at the forefront of our strategy in order to unlock our full potential and to continue to execute our growth plan." ●

Thule Group Acquires Denver Outfitters

Thule Group started off the year by acquiring Denver Outfitters, a leading player in Roof Rack mounted Fly Fishing Rod Vaults. The acquisition broadens Thule's expanding portfolio of products focused on an active lifestyle.

"**The recreational fishing category is a large global category in the outdoor industry, with close to 50 million participants in North America alone,**" noted Magnus Welander, CEO and president of the Thule Group. "Although fly fishing is the smallest fishing

category, it is the fastest growing and anglers often travel and enjoy their fishing experience together. Therefore, being able to bring your fishing rods safely and easily is key for these consumers and the best way to do so is with Fishing Rod Vaults mounted on the roof racks on the car. The team at Denver Outfitters have developed market leading products and with the mutual philosophies on high quality, smart engineering and great design, as well as a shared passion for the outdoors, the products are a natural fit to our portfolio." ●



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#THEBUZZ

manager of the Black Diamond Trolley Square store. “The location provides a huge opportunity for Black Diamond to collaborate with and serve the growing climbing and skiing communities along the Wasatch Front with monthly events, athlete lectures, special presentations and our own product launches.”

Cash-strapped **Toms Shoes**, reportedly unable to pay a \$300 million loan due this year, is now owned by its creditors. The ownership transfer to **Jefferies Financial, Nexus Capital** and **Brookfield Asset Management** from **Bain Capital**, which acquired a 50 percent stake in Toms for \$313 million five years ago, happened in late December and enabled the Blake Mycoskie-founded firm to avoid a trip to bankruptcy court. The new owners, according to Reuters, will pump \$35 million into the business and improve Toms’ overall capital structure that will enable the brand to continue its “giving” charitable model at some unspecified level.

Patagonia raised \$10 million in donations to 1,043 grassroots environmental organizations in 17 days during the 2019 holiday season. And Patagonia committed to match individual donations made between November 29 and December 31, 2019, to a \$10 million limit. Donations were made through **Patagonia Action Works**, a platform that connects individuals with local grassroots organizations to take action on pressing issues. In addition to its \$10 million donation match, Patagonia will donate one percent of its 2019 sales to nearly 1,200 grantees.

Picture Organic Clothing has earned **B Corp certification**. The French brand makes recycled, organic and bio-sourced products for board sports. B Corporations (or B Corps) are certified by B Lab as having met rigorous social and environmental standards which represent its commitment to goals outside of shareholder profit. The B Corp Certification examines an organization’s entire structure, covering five key impact areas of Governance, Workers, Community, Environment and Customers.

Swedish apparel brand **Klättermusen** is launching in North America with **Essentic** as its NA agency. Klättermusen was founded by a tightly-knit band of local mountaineers in the north of Sweden in 1975. Operating out of Brooklyn, NY and Los Angeles, CA, Essentic is a multifaceted agency that develops strategies for both emerging and established brands within the outdoor and lifestyle industries.

Leadership Shuffles at Footwear Firms

Multiple firms started 2020 under new leadership after a slate of changes at the top announced in late 2019.

Decatur, TX-based footwear brand **Twisted X** has named **Scott Sessa** SVP of business development. Sessa served as president of **Minnetonka Moccasin**, where he was the first outside president in the family-run business’ history, for 13 years. Minnetonka announced that **Jori Miller Sherer**, most recently the brand’s VP of Business Development, would take over as president.

In his new role, Sessa is responsible for creating and maintaining growth across the Twisted X, Black Star, Tamarindo and CellSole brands. “I have known Scott for most of his adult life and have seen him progress from a management trainee at Wolverine Worldwide, to becoming president of Minnetonka. The timing was perfect. We were in need of a leader that could propel our international expansion as well as accelerate our domestic growth, and

Scott was ready for his next opportunity,” Twisted X CEO **Prasad Reddy** said.

“I look forward to this new chapter and am excited about the opportunity to strategically propel Twisted X Global Brands into the international market. My focus is on expansion and growth,” Sessa added.

Miller Sherer joined Minnetonka in 2019. As president, she will oversee global sales and marketing. She is the fourth generation of the Miller family to hold the president’s office for the 74-year-old firm.

Meanwhile, Franklin, TN-based **Mephisto Inc.** welcomed the return of **Rusty Hall** in early January. Hall, who served as president and CEO between 2010 and 2015, returns to that role.

“I am thrilled to be returning to Mephisto USA,” Hall added. “I am excited about the future of our business as we evaluate and align our strategies to benefit our retail partners and continue to present a world class brand to the marketplace.” — *Jennifer Ernst Beaudry*

Darn Tough Growth Continues into 2020



Sock maker Darn Tough Vermont, based in Northfield, VT, is adding a new 50,000-square-foot manufacturing facility to its production next year, and expects to have 100 people working at the new Waterbury, VT site in 2021. The leased space is part of

an ambitious five-year growth plan for Cabot Hosiery Mill, Darn Tough’s parent company. In an interview with the local press, CEO Ric Cabot said the company expects to sell 8 million pairs of socks in 2020.

Renovations will start in February to create an additional 17,000 square feet of office space in the facility with manufacturing starting in Waterbury later in 2020. The company’s headquarters and existing sock factory will stay in Northfield. Darn Tough recently spent \$2.5 million updating the 100-year-old Nantanna Building to increase the company’s space for manufacturing and internet fulfillment in Northfield.

“We’re doing this to fund our growth, but it’s also for the long term,” Cabot was quoted as saying. “It’s for the prosperity and job security of the people who have been with us all these years.”

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The Outdoor Accessory People

{SKIS

Trends to Watch: Versatility for all-mountain conditions; new and improved gender-specific designs.

Of Note: Rossignol's Black Ops line ski line is coming out of the shadows with an expanded quiver of options for skiers of any type; Nordica completely redesigned its women's Santa Ana collection with new shapes, constructions, and sizes to provide more performance, stability, and maneuverability; and Blizzard is introducing a brand new collection of its best-selling all-mountain freeride skis reengineered

to achieve an "ideal balance of stability, performance, and efficiency required to enjoy a full day in today's real world conditions."

"The all-mountain category is filled with a lot of noise and lacks clarity," says Jed Duke, Blizzard's director of product marketing "Skiers come into shops saying they want an all-mountain ski, but don't really know what that means. Our belief is what they want is a ski that can allow them to ski confidently through changing conditions they see on any given day."



Super-light design →

Dynafit / Blacklight Pro

Developed for professional ski-mountaineers, the super-light Blacklight Pro weighs in at 910 grams and is made for moving in the high mountains. It has a Paulownia Race Core optimized for weight and stiffness. The uni-directional carbon sheet is designed to create a ski that will hold an edge in the firmest of conditions. Using a ¼ skin and new Pin-Skin attachment system sheds weight while providing an improved attachment to from skin to ski. **MSRP \$799.95.**

Rossignol / Black Ops Sender Ti

For the 2020 season, Rossignol's Black Ops line ski line is expanding its quiver of options for skiers of any type. Designed for the hard-charging, big line skier, Rossignol's athlete-inspired Sender Ti combines a balanced wood core and a race-developed layup for an energized ride that aims to hold its course in all terrain and any speed.

Blizzard / Black Pearl 88

The all-new Black Pearl 88 is designed for intermediate to expert all-mountain skiers who want a stable ski that can handle variable conditions. Redesigned with input from the brand's Women to Women project and Blizzard's engineers, the new TrueBlend Wood Core specifically targets the flex throughout the ski, with a softer tip and tail, delivering power and drive when skiers want to charge. **MSRP \$780.**



← Has a softer tip and tail



← For hard charging skiers



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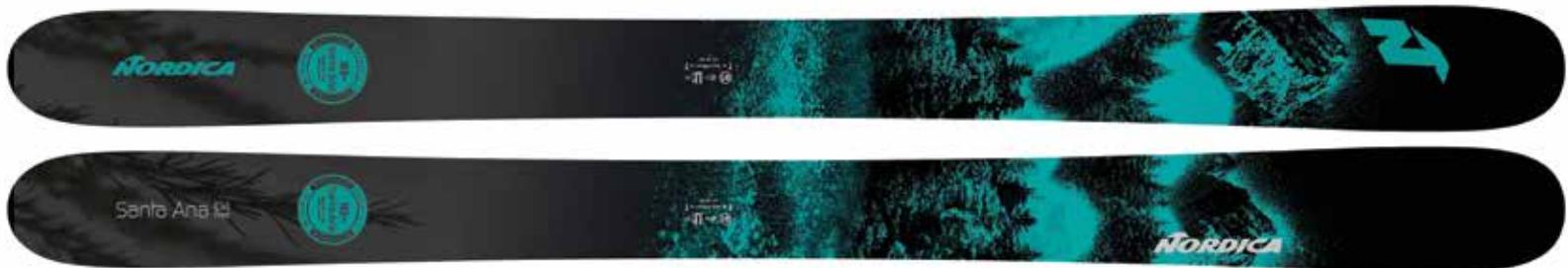


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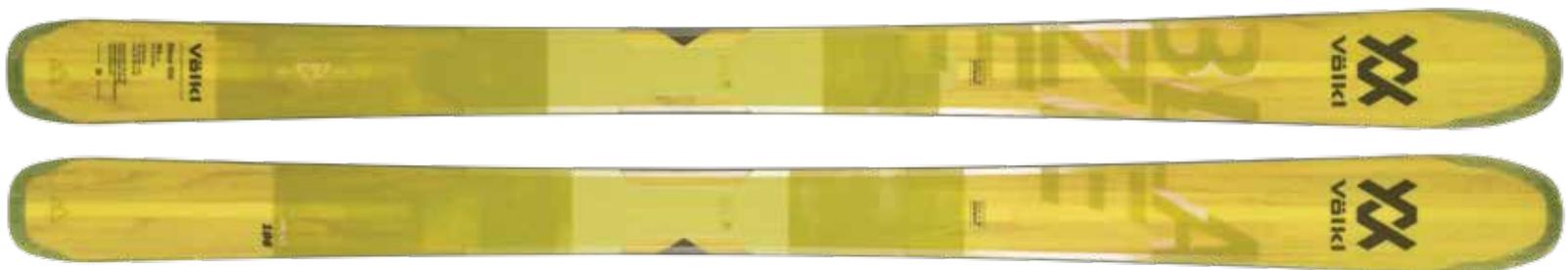
Nordica / Santa Ana 104 Free

Crafted for women who ski the entire mountain, the Santa Ana Free collection is built to deliver all mountain versatility and fun. The Santa Ana 104 Free provides a smooth surfy feel that's easy to steer and is at home in soft snow. Nordica's new True Tip Technology has a lightweight, vibration-damping wood core that makes the skis quieter and easier to maneuver. There is also a carbon-reinforced layer running the full length of the ski. **MSRP \$850.**

Völkl / Blaze 106

The flagship Blaze 106 is designed from the ground up, with a new shape that combines a wide, 106mm waist with Völkl's 3D Radius sidecut technology — a unique setup with longer radii at the tip and tail and a tighter shape in the midbody. A new hybrid wood core has been engineered for lighter weight, enhancing maneuverability. **MSRP \$775.**

Hybrid wood core



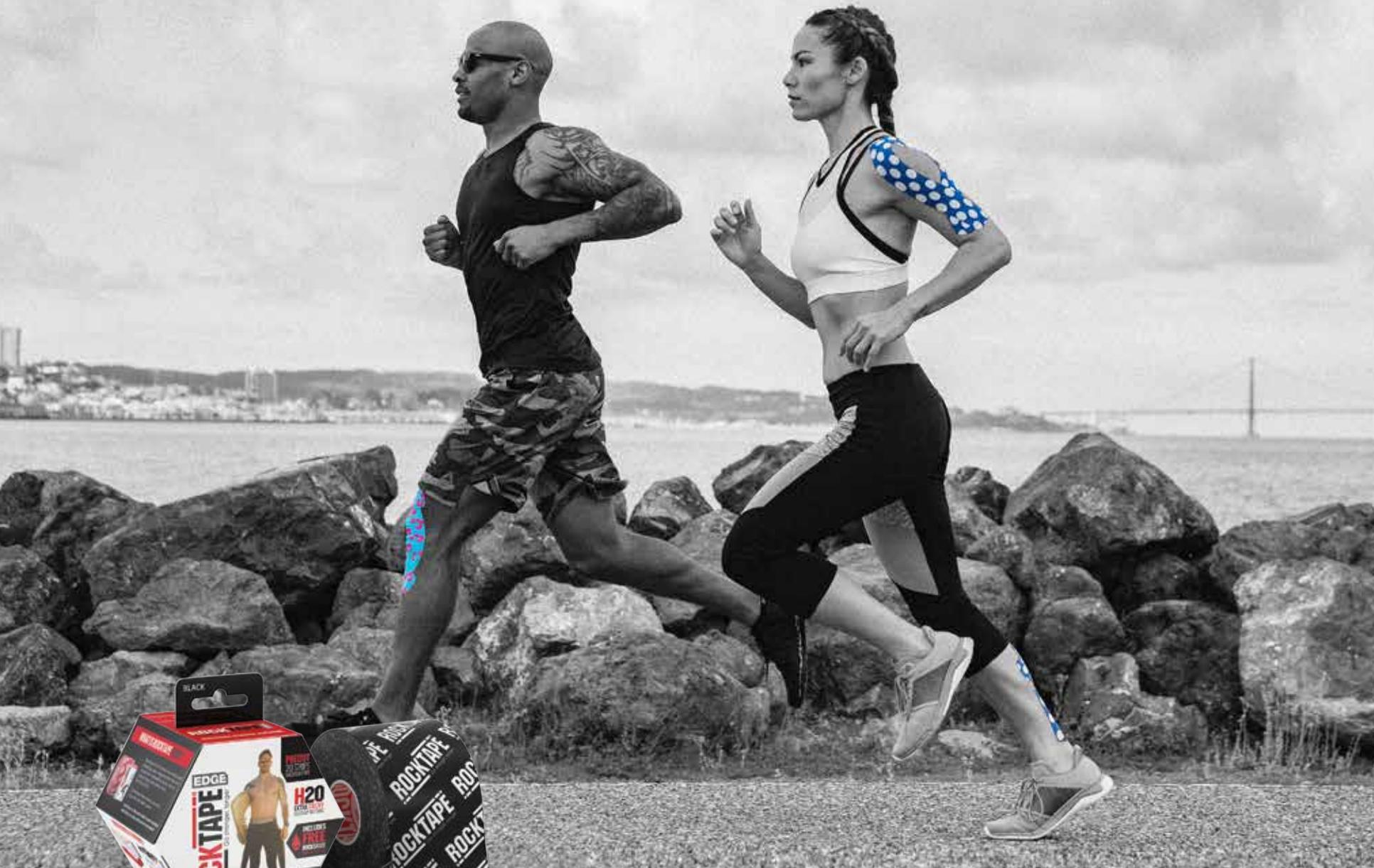
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{SKI BOOTS

Trends to Watch: A focus not just on fit but also on flex and how the boot transfers energy to the ski and the snow. And as always, consumers want boots that are easy to get in and out of, boots with a fit that helps them feel what their skis are doing, buckles that are easy to figure out and close easily, and warmth.

“Regardless of the demographics of the skier, whether they are a professional racer, expert skier, or a beginner, we focus on fit and performance. Every skier needs boots that help them ski better and helps them have more fun on the mountain,” says Ethan Korpi, Nordica USA product manager.



1 ← Lightweight comfort

1. Scarpa / F1 LT

The new F1 LT is Scarpa's lightest weight alpine touring boot, optimized for high-mileage missions and technical ski mountaineering descents. At 990 grams, the F1 LT offers lightweight comfort and has a Grid Frame Tech cuff that stiffens the shell and increases power transmission for an ideal backcountry experience. **MSRP \$799.**



2 ← Optimized ease of entry

2. Dalbello / DS Asolo 130

With a 98mm last, high quality PU Power Cage construction, and brand new liners with a dedicated construction for this category, these boots aim to deliver comfort to top-end recreational skiers' feet. A new toe box design and a new tongue design optimize ease of entry and exit.



3 ← All-mountain boot

3. Tecnica / Mach1 MV130

This mid-volume, all-mountain performance boot is specially engineered to improve consistency and efficiency so skiers can charge longer with less fatigue. A T-Drive carbon spine marries the cuff to the shell, reinforcing the boot's flex so skiers have more power and precision in all types of snow, temperatures, and terrain. **MSRP \$900.**



4 ← For lighter weight skiers

4. Dynafit / HOJI Free 110

This 110 flex boot is geared toward lighter weight skiers. It is a freeride boot that the brand believes backcountry skiers and passionate climbers will equally embrace. It builds off of the brand's popular HOJI Pro Tour and HOJI Free 130 boots. **MSRP 799.95.**

Nordica / HF Ski Boots

The new HF collection offers the performance and comfort of Nordica's Machine family with a new easy entry shell and closure system. The key to the design is its anatomical, one-piece customizable Primaloft 3D Cork Fit liner. The boot has an extremely large opening of 40-degrees to easily slip a foot in or out. **MSRP \$900 (HF Elite and HF Elite W); \$700 (HF 110 and HF 85 W).**



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{ SNOWSPORTS HELMETS

Trends to Watch: Safety + performance in lighter weight, lower profile packages; helmets with luxe design details; and innovative fit and ventilation systems.

Of Note: Marker is packing all of the same technology

available in its adult-sized helmets into its Bino styles for youngsters. Julbo is flexing its design bonafides in the snow-sports helmet category for 2020 and Sena's Latitude helmets have an integrated audio/communication system.



1. Marker / Bino XS

New for the 2020-21 season, Marker is bringing its most innovative helmet technology down to its smallest helmets with the Bino XS and the Bino XXS, designed for the youngest skiers. Features include Marker's adjustable RTS fit system, Air Jam ventilation, fixed earpads, Xdry performance liners and dual goggle clips.

2. Sweet Protection / Looper MIPS

This value-packed helmet is designed for recreational skiers. It has a variable elasticity shell construction and the brand's Impact Shield shock-absorbing tech. It integrates seamlessly with the brand's goggle line. **MSRP \$159.**

3. Bolle / Ryft

Incorporating a new ventilation system, the Bolle Ryft aims to deliver in both protection and comfort. The new Ryft includes Mips technology that protects against rotational motion to the brain caused by angled impacts. It also uses BOA's Fit System

for a fully customized comfort fit. Its ventilation system includes a large air intake from vertical space around the vent opening, delivering maximum air channeling.

4. Julbo / Hal

A leader in the protective eyewear category, Julbo is expanding its ski product offerings to helmets for 2020. The Julbo Hal Helmet 2020 is a 450-gram, low profile in-mold helmet that aims to deliver comfort and style. Its "peak" shaped brim promotes seamless integration with Julbo's goggles, ensuring ideal airflow. **MSRP \$100.**

5. Kask / Piuma-R Helmet

Constructed with a secure integrated frame, the helmet's shell is designed to accommodate an active ventilation system. Using a simple lever at the rear of the helmet, the amount of airflow can be adjusted. It has two visor options — panoramic and photo-chromatic. Design details include eco-leather and merino wool. **MSRP \$389 (goggle version); \$449 (visor version).**



Sena Helmet / Latitude SX / Latitude SR

The Latitude SX (freestyle) and SR (alpine) helmets are designed to combine the safety of snow helmets with Sena's integrated audio/communication system. The built-in communication system integrates a microphone and speakers placed in the ear pads. Wearers can connect to their phones via Bluetooth. The system controls include a simple, three button layout. **MSRP \$119.**

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- Dr. Barry N. Newton Ph. D.

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BOCO Gear / Digitally Printed Knit Beanie Instead of a knit design, this lightweight hat has the pattern printed into the beanie. A wool blend offers warmth and comfort. **MSRP \$29.99.**



↑
3D construction

Smartwool / Intraknit Merino 200 Pattern ¼ Zip and Bottom
Intraknit's 3D knit construction reduces seams, maps insulation and ventilation, and provides an articulated performance fit. Merino Sport yarn combines Merino with the durability of fast dry times and polyester. **MSRP \$115 (1/4 zip); \$120 (bottom).**



↑
Merino wool

Kari Traa / Smekker Baselayer
The Smekker baselayers are part of Kari Traa's 100 percent Merino Wool baselayer collection. The garments feature flatlock seams for chafe-free support and deliver both warmth and a soft hand-feel with next-to-skin comfort. **MSRP \$110 (crew neck L/S); \$110 (pant).**



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Michael Kadous, Adidas Outdoor

Three Stripes Future



By Bob McGee

Outdoor Insight recently connected with Michael Kadous, head of North American operations for the Adidas Outdoor business unit since March 2019, to discuss the current transition at the outdoor business unit as well as strategies for 2020 and beyond.

What can you tell us about transition of the Adidas Outdoor business from Agron in Los Angeles to it coming in-house in Portland?

“If you go back to 2011, the Adidas Outdoor footprint in the U.S. has been managed by Greg Thomsen and the team at Agron. They’ve served as the sole distributor of Adidas Outdoor product, including FiveTen and Terrex product. They’ve done this in a valiant way over the last nine years, establishing our brand in the U.S. and opening up doors when people said they couldn’t be opened. They put us in

a really strong situation and have given us the opportunity to really springboard into the future... There are parts that are transitioning as we speak, but ultimately, the transition will finalize from Agron back in-house to Adidas North America in Portland, OR at the end of 2020. At that point, Agron will cease to have any relationship with the Adidas Outdoor element of the brand and everything will be transitioned over to me and my team.”

How would you describe the challenges and opportunities for Adidas in the North American outdoor specialty market?

“The challenge is pretty clear. We’re an athletic brand first. We’re a brand that sits right in the middle of style and function. We have amazing street cred. We’re also borne out of sport, enabling athletes to do what it is they love on the field of play, or the court of battle, in the mountains and in the highlands. Any time you are an athletic brand or any sort of

style brand, trying to get a foothold within a very specific athletic endeavor and industry like trail, hike or climb, there is always skepticism. Also, with that is the skepticism that we’re just a large brand. That’s always a challenge. The legacy of bigger brands, athletic brands. That’s always a challenge.

The opportunity is when people get to meet us, wear our product and understand our mission, they realize we are actually polar opposite of what their expectations are from product, purpose and people. It’s a double-edged sword. We need to get doors open and we have to work really hard to get them open. But once they are open, they’ve been open quite wide for us. There is a lot of opportunity for us as a brand in this [outdoor] market and leveraging the power of the Adidas brand and rooting ourselves in what we do best, which is technical product that enables people to do great things.

On the footwear side, we have a real strong reputation for making truly credible and performance-focused footwear, giving you the ability to traverse a myriad of different terrains in a really comfortable way. Footwear is in a pretty good spot [in the outdoor market]. We also have a decent share, but there is an opportunity to grow that share dramatically. But we do resonate there.

On the apparel side, especially with technical apparel, we have a lot more opportunity there to unlock growth. [Some of the] apparel we had in the past wasn’t U.S.-centric enough. The creation engine is still driven out of Germany. A lot of product coming from us in the future, a lot will be U.S.-centric product from head-to-toe. I think that will begin to help us resonate not only with footwear, but also begin to build a relationship with the consumer and our technical outerwear.”

Can you give us some insight into how the outdoor business unit at Adidas operates?

“Within the outdoor business, there are basically three branded pillars — Adidas Terrex that focuses on trail run and hike head-to-toe,

Adidas Outdoor Terrex Free Hiker Parley



apparel and footwear. Then you have Adidas FiveTen, acquired in 2011. We're bringing these two brands together through technology, storyline and through design DNA. Within Adidas FiveTen, we focus on climb, we focus on mountain bike. We have a really strong share in both those sports. The third pillar is Badge of Sport outerwear. Badge of Sport being the Adidas logo — the mountain logo with 'Adidas' underneath it. That's how we brand the majority of our outerwear."

What about the product development process?

"Right now, everything we sell and distribute in the U.S. comes from the German Creation Center. In the future, it will be a multi-stage approach. This will pivot. The first stage will focus on collecting consumer insights from the U.S. athlete, the U.S. consumer and really driving those through the German Creation Center so that we're making products that resonate here. After that, we'll actually be building out a U.S.-specific creation element.

So, we're not only collecting insights, but also creating here on the ground for athletes and the end consumer. That's something that's definitely in the playbook as time moves forward."

Is part of the strategy for Adidas Outdoor to get current Adidas athletic consumers to alter their share of closet and purchase Adidas branded outdoor products rather than from another brand?

"Yes, absolutely. In the past, we always focused on selling Adidas to the outdoor consumer. We need to leverage the power of the brand and pivot and focus to sell Adidas, Adidas Terrex and FiveTen to the Adidas consumer. This brand has a ton of heat. We'd be fools not to leverage that. Turn over that closet to make it Adidas from the minute you walk in all the way to the back."

What other future plans for Adidas Outdoor can you share with us?

"In 2020, we're in the middle of this transition.

The newness is going to come from [items like our] 'Badge of Sport' jacket, and there's going to be a lot of interest and excitement around our Parley MyShelter. For the 2019 F/W cycle, we launched the MyShelter franchise, an urban-stylistic outerwear collection for rain that is designed and made for the urban environment. In spring, we'll transition a rain jacket that we made in 2019 and add Parley elements. In S/S 20, you'll have a rain jacket with amazing design details and functionality made from ocean plastics. It's pretty awesome, it's pretty exciting. As we go forward in S/S '21, that's when you'll start to see an amazing and colorful transformation when it comes to our footwear. We have an amazing assortment and arsenal of product, and we think it's going to resonate extremely well with the consumer. It's a tale of a couple of years here. I think apparel is the focus of change in 2020. And in 2021, you'll see footwear really, really disrupt the market in a new way." ●

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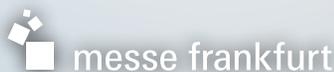
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Krimson Klover Peace Love and Ski Baselayers

90s

OUTDOOR BRANDS ARE ROCKING OUT WITH RETRO VIBES. BY SUZANNE BLECHER

Culturally, the 1990s are characterized by music — grunge, the rave scene and hip hop — and technology, including cable television and the World Wide Web. The Cold War was over and the dot-com bubble brought wealth. It was a diverse period, and fashion followed suit.

“The ’90s were extreme — classic, cool, chic and preppy — moving from all denim to grunge, and everything in-between,” says Margaret Doran, VP of sales for Pendleton Footwear. In an ode to the era, Pendleton is attempting to reach different generations of customers that remember and love that time with their heritage brand. For Fall 2020, footwear and slippers feature a vintage ’90s Americana vibe. Pendleton’s line of OutLeisure footwear features ultra-light, flexible styles combined with sleek waterproof leathers and water-resistant wool. The men’s La Brea Mid and women’s Park Slope contain an ultralight, high elastic EVA outsole with Vibram XS Trek, rubber pods for stability, traction, and durability.

Apparel is All That and a Bag of Chips

Krimson Klover is also channeling the past in its upcoming apparel collections. The Highlands and Lindsey puffy downs are cropped with boxy fits, while the Sugarloaf is color blocked with sporty chevron stripes. The Kora Bag is the brand’s modern take on the fanny pack and the Peace Love Ski baselayer set is a nod to the ’60s and ’70s, two eras that made a style resurgence in the ’90s. According to Ellen DeLisio in product development at Krimson Klover, “Brands are trying to hit both Generation X and Millennials at once. For Gen X, it’s timely and inspiring. It’s new and fresh to the younger Millennial generation, but they appreciate the vintage aesthetic which gives

it cache.” Let’s not forget that Gen X was also a little rebellious — think surfing, skateboarding and snowboarding becoming uber popular — and the Millennial audience may crave that counter culture status a bit.

As far back as the early ’90s, employees working at Patagonia were surfing at lunch and playing volleyball in a sandpit behind their offices. In the fall of 1994, Patagonia made the decision to make all of its cotton sportswear 100 percent organic by 1996. They succeeded. The Synchronia was launched in 1985, and remained popular through the next decade, even extending into today. Now, with FleeceLab, the brand is toying with new designs and materials to create limited edition fleece styles and a lighter footprint. For transitional weather, a Shelled Retro-X Pullover is crafted of quarter inch Sherpa pile fleece and shelled with recycled nylon Supplex with a DWR (durable water repellent) finish. A Snap Front Retro-X Fleece Jacket is made of 70 percent recycled polyester pile fleece and lined with a mechanical stretch recycled polyester ripstop to combat wind and moisture.

Another retro nod to fleece comes from Cotopaxi, whose Teca Fleece features bold color blocking that ties back to a less technical time for outerwear.

Fresh Gear & Accessories

“I think we are seeing the consumer respond to an overall more fun, laid back and less technical vibe with product today,” notes Evie Moe, VP of design at Cotopaxi. Coupled with an increased desire for versatility, retro vibes lead to a yearning for things like fanny packs that are just for fun. The Bataan fanny pack has a three-liter capacity and mesh

TRENDS

pockets for storing keys or a phone. It is part of the (Re)Purpose Collection from Cotopaxi which employs fabric left over from other company's larger production runs.

Smith Optics is pairing chronicled eyewear with environmentally-friendly materials in its new Archive Collection, which features exact replicas of popular styles from the late '80s through the '90s. Some styles are updated with a proprietary ChromaPop lens to amplify color and detail and Evolve eco-friendly bio-based frame material derived from renewable, non-genetically modified castor plants to reduce the use of petroleum in eyewear manufacturing. "The '90s were an era where fashion focused on comfort, purpose-built and carefree," comments Graham Sours, global

category director at Smith, who is seeing retro vibes not only in outdoor, but in the fashion world as a whole.

Socks are experiencing a throwback moment, as well.

"The retro trend appeals to Millennial and Gen X for its nostalgic connection, along with comfort and functionality, which is also very successful in bridging to Gen Z," Darn Tough Vermont designer Jenny Knapp explains, adding, "Gen Z has come through the athleisure trend, which has many links to comfort and functional '90s styling." Comfort was key in baggy jeans, thick sweatshirts and puffy jackets, with the athleisure market following suit, adding in sustainable materials and

tech features. Darn Tough is launching a new sock category called Athletic where the main objective is to deliver minimalist style with technical features for high performance activities like trail running and obstacle race day. The Element series in the Athletic category employs Merino wool and design features like retro sportif stripes. Zones of mesh are on the top of the foot to enhance breathability, comfort and flexibility. The footbed has segmented cushioning with elastic support to reduce fatigue.

With an emphasis on improving overall well-being in the marketplace and consumers seeking a connection to their products, retro items, like these socks, can "help reconnect to those feel-good memories about experiences they had or people that bought them joy," notes Knapp. ●



Krimson Clover Lindsey Vest



Darn Tough Element Crew Lightweight



Cotopaxi Bataan Del Dia



Cotopaxi Teca Fleece



Smith Rebel from 1998



Park Slope from Pendleton Footwear

Patagonia
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TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

Apparel brands are going all out in 2020. From sustainability stories to attempts at building the perfect breathable performance piece for the backcountry to designs ideated with travel and packability top-of-mind, outerwear pieces for Fall 2020 will blow your mind. Here are some of the top stories catching our eye.

Design Intention...

The tech story in **Royal Robbins' Fall 2020 Switchform outerwear collection** focuses on not just its materials, but also on its design intention. The line is designed to appeal to the active traveler with versatile, high quality garments. Most notably, each jacket in the line transitions into another item that offers storage for other winter accessories without sacrificing style and quality.

For example, the \$225 men's Switchform Waterproof Parka flips into itself to become a backpack with adjustable straps (that can hold a water bottle, scarf, gloves, etc). This waterproof, windproof, breathable, seam-taped jacket is made using C0 Ec0-DWR, an environmentally-friendly alternative that eliminates the dispersal of fluorocarbons in the environment. Additionally, Royal Robbins uses a non-silver based odor control treatment to lessen the harmful impact to beneficial bacteria in the ecosystem.

Construction is the story in **Mammut's Eigerjoch Pro IN Hooded Jacket**, which is an insulated garment built for performance. It has a double-chamber construction that adapts different zones of the jacket to specific requirements of the body. PrimaLoft is used for areas exposed to moisture as well as for the inside of the jacket, while the remaining zones feature down filling. The insulated jacket comes with an additional stow bag with two carabineer loops. It features lightweight Pertex Quantum Pro material with ultra-thin water-repellent coating and Diamond Fuse technology for increased weather protection and abrasion resistance.

Warmth and unique design is the key focus at **Marmot**. The brand describes its **WarmCube technology** as the most important launch in the company's history. It is the focus of Marmot's marketing efforts in 2020 and beyond. The eye-catching WarmCube insulation works two ways to keep wearers warm. 3D cubes keep insulation in place, preventing migration and eliminating cold

spots, according to the brand. Additionally, the channels between the cubes fill with warm air to build a second source of insulation.

Flylow's men's Kane jacket, \$460, is ultra-breathable while still maintaining a 20k waterproof rating. It is made for the backcountry, where lightweight, comfortable and streamlined outerwear is a must. Flylow decided to ditch the powder skirt and designed the pockets to work best with a backpack and integrate the soft-touch air-permeable Perm fabric, which has 0.02 cfm air permeability, allowing air to circulate through the jacket and let heat escape before it becomes sweat. It is Flylow's lightest shell yet at 540 grams.

Hybrid Life...

The North Face's Summit L5 Futurelight Ventrrix Jacket blends two of the brand's most popular technologies. There's a breathable mid layer courtesy of 25g of Ventrrix stretch synthetic insulation combined with the lightweight waterproof breathability of the Futurelight 3L shell for weather protection. The jacket is engineered to be both lightweight and versatile, and was developed to be critically taped, and not a fully taped shell. This was an intentional choice, with the goal of providing the storm protection needed, while not overbuilding the style to maintain the all-day comfortable feel of a mid layer.

The North Face design team's goal in creating what it terms as a do-it-all layer is that it can be worn all day, preventing the need to bring multiple shells and insulating pieces.

Patagonia's Stormstride Kit (jacket and pants) is a new hybridized backcountry touring kit that the brand says is designed for someone "as fit as a trail runner, smart and efficient as an alpine climber and as strong as a downhill skier." Each design feature in the kit was chosen for ski touring specifically. The material is a lightweight, 3-layer 100 percent waterproof stretch fabric. The

OUTERWEAR



Flylow Kane Jacket, MSRP \$460.



Mammut Eigerjoch IN Hooded Jacket, MSRP \$650.



Cotopaxi Aire Hybrid, MSRP \$220.



Fjällräven Expedition Pack Down Hoodie, MSRP \$275.



GoLite ReGreen RainDrop Jacket, MSRP \$220.



Royal Robbins Switchform Waterproof Parka, MSRP \$225.

pocketing is placed for integration with an avalanche transceiver and a ski harness. The three option cuffs can be opened for walk mode with boots or cinched down to accommodate crampons. This is the most focused backcountry touring kit Patagonia has ever made.

Cotopaxi's Aire Hybrid Jacket features PrimaLoft Active Insulation along with side panels with wicking, lightweight fleece. The shell and liner is 100 percent recycled polyester with a DWR finish.

Eco Minded...

Both technical performance and sustainability are key drivers behind the design of **Picture Organic Clothing's new Demain jacket** – a protective, 3-layer shell, featuring the new Xpore nano-porous membrane and Biosourced Polyester made with 58 percent sugarcane woven with 42 percent recycled polyester stretch.

Xpore is a new membrane developed by consumer electronics giant, BenQ. It introduces a new method to create the required nano-pores that make a membrane both waterproof and breathable, implementing mechanical stretching instead of the most common method achieved with chemicals. The result is a solvent-free, PFC-free membrane that the brand says is lighter than competing laminates on the market, making it sustainable and high-performing.

GoLite remains eco focused as well heading into 2020. Ninety-four percent of the brand's products are comprised of recycled fabrics. There is also a packaging sustainability focus: UPC stickers, poly bags, product packaging, hangtags, shipping boxes and mailers are recycled, recyclable or compostable. And the GoLite ReGreen Collection expands for Spring 2020 and Fall 2020 to include performance puffy, waterproof/breathable 3-layer and wind shell options – all made from recycled green bottle fabric.

The \$220 **GoLite ReGreen RainDrop Jacket** for Fall 2020 is made with a ReGreen 3-Layer and has a waterproof/breathability rating of 20K/10K. It has fully taped seams, waterproof zippers and Teflon Eco-DWR.

Fjällräven's Expedition Collection for 2020 builds on the collection's tradition of focusing on warmth with new lightweight and packable styles, suitable for layering under a shell during active pursuits or worn by themselves around town, offering versatile style and performance. The collection features ethically produced and traceable down fill with 100 percent recycled nylon shell materials. **Fjällräven's Expedition Pack Down Hoodie** is a down layering piece that can pull double duty as an outer layer, too. It's lightweight and can pack into its own pocket.

Rab Equipment is also committed to making more sustainable material choices and its new Microlight range using recycled materials is a prime example. The Fall 2020 **Microlight Alpine Jacket** is updated with recycled fabrics, recycled down, zoned micro and nano baffle stitch-through construction. This classic hooded down jacket is lightweight, packable and delivers on warmth when the temperature drops in the mountains. It is made with soft and packable Pertex Quantum ripstop nylon and has zoned lightweight micro and nano baffle stitch-through construction. The insulation is recycled 700 fill-power down with Nikwax hydrophobic (water-resistant) finish.

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Cortina, MSRP \$600.



The North Face Summit L5 Futurelight
Ventrrix Jacket, MSRP \$650.



Rab Microlight
Alpine Jacket, MSRP \$280.



Picture Organic Clothing
Demain Jacket, MSRP \$499.99.



Patagonia Stormstride Kit,
MSRP \$499 (jacket); \$429 (pant).

Material Matters

With outerwear brands striving higher, textile suppliers continue to explore new and improved ways to deliver lightweight, yet highly functional fabrications for cold weather wear. Here's some of what's coming next from some key textile firms:

W.L. Gore is releasing a new version of **Gore-Tex Pro**, the first update in seven years for its flagship waterproof/breathable. Previously a single fabric technology, the new Pro is differentiated into three products: one optimized for 20 percent stretch, another for breathability, and a third for durability, allowing apparel makers to tailor the tech for specific activities. The new Gore-Tex Pro features recycled content materials and solution-dyed backings to minimize environmental impact.

Toray is unveiling new technologies that provide upgrades regarding fiber production from PET plastic bottles. One technology produces a pure white fiber, providing greater end use applications, while another new tech offers a proprietary traceability system that can identify specific contaminants in the raw materials. Toray has created a new brand called "&+" to market the development.

Pertex is taking a strong sustainable stance with the launch of the superlight 10-denier Pertex Quantum made from 100 percent recycled nylon, and YFuse fabrics made from 100 percent recycled polyester and 100 percent recycled nylon. The company's eco targets for 2022 include that 80 percent of fabrics produced will contain a minimum of 50 percent recycled content and 100 percent of fabrics produced will use non-fluorinated DWR finishes.

Cordura will be highlighting award winning knits, new brand activations and a re-position for the consumer market. On display at the OR + Snow Show, will be the ISPO Textrend award winning Cordura 4Ever collection of softened strength knits and Performance Natural wovens that include 2 and 4-way stretch Cordura denims, and performance Cordura Combat Wool.

Schoeller has a new aerobrane e-spinning membrane technology, the PROEARTH collection of biodegradable textiles, and wool updates, including recycled wool and wool blends with performance tech. In development for four years the aerobrane membrane's unique structure consists of an ultra-fine, hydrophilic polyurethane fiber composite that differs from other film-based membranes and offers a softer feel and beautiful, fluid textile characteristics. Aerobrane features in Outlier's Experiment 200 "Ecstasy in the Rain" jacket launched in December.

Unifi will showcase its sustainable and technical developments at the OR + Snow Show, as well as an evolution in activewear knits and program initiatives. New is availability of Repreve cationic qualities in response to demand for performance heathers but with recycled polyester. The company is also spotlighting the Repreve Our Oceans, a global initiative that works to prevent bottles from entering the waterways via programs in coastal areas of development regions. ●

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ALL-AROUND PERFORMERS

BOOTS THAT DELIVER IN ANY ENVIRONMENT. **BY CARA GRIFFIN**

The line between performance and lifestyle continues to blur in the outdoors as stylish boots are packed with tech details and core performers flash a fashionable aesthetic. Versatility — in style and performance — is often the No. 1 trait consumers are seeking in outdoor boots. “We’re seeing incredibly strong success with hiking shoes that appeal to the consumer who’s immersing in the outdoors as a lifestyle,” says Becky Marcelliano, outdoor marketing manager at Salomon. “Maybe they’re climbing peaks, or riding their bike to the bar, or planning a raft trip, or chasing the sunrise. The trend is in shoes and boots that can offer an everyday aesthetic

with the fundamental technicality to allow them to adventure at the next rad opportunity.”

On the technical side, core performance boots are getting lighter, faster and more nimble, too. “More and more, people are continuing to trend towards lighter-weight, more athletic-feeling products for a range of outdoor activities,” notes Mark Mathews, VP of sales, Scarpa North America. “There is a lot of influence from running shoes and athletic footwear coming into the outdoor segment in shoes built for all-around trail use.” Whether they are being worn on the trail or the city sidewalk, these Fall 2020 boots are ready to rock. 

Oboz / Bozeman Mid: The men’s Bozeman Mid combines technical trail performance with mountain-town style. It has 3.5mm rubber lugs and a supportive TPU heel cup. Bozeman Collection styles also feature a new O-Fit Insole made with Bloom Algae Foam. MSRP \$135.

BOOTS



Scarpa / Rush Mid GTX

With trail-running inspired design and light, waterproof hiker tech, the Rush features Scarpa's Interactive Kinetic System (IKS), which means the sole has impact zones that compress and absorb energy as they contact the ground. MSRP \$179.



Merrell / Zion FST Mid Waterproof

Packing in trail run features like a shock absorbing air cushion into the heel of its 5mm lugs, the waterproof Zion FST Mid offers protection and stability on all kinds of terrain. MSRP \$130.



Salomon / Cross Hike Mid GTX

The completely new Cross Hike is ready for any conditions with multi-directional lugs, a seamless, closed mesh construction and a waterproof Gore-Tex membrane. The mid-height style has a 20mm stack height and 10mm drop. MSRP \$170.



Hi-Tec / V-Lite V-Lite Shift I +

The brand makes its entrance into the lightweight speed hiking market with a value-priced style. It has Hi-Tec's MD Traction Outsole and Comfort Insole and features i-Shield water and stain resistance. MSRP \$79.99.



Vasque / Alechemist XT UD

The Alechemist Extended-Terrain UltraDry is a modern hiker that delivers durability and protection with less bulk. It is designed to keep feet comfortable and ready for any adventure. MSRP \$140.



Twisted X / MHKW006

Designed to be the "perfect outdoor shoe," the MHKW006 hiker is waterproof and slip resistant. Its upper material is composed of full grain leather, hybridized with polyurethane for added durability.



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BOOTS



Mammut / Nordwand 6000 High GTX

This high-end, next-gen expedition boot means business with a 2-in-1 gaiter construction, removable inner boot, 4-layer insulation on the bottom and a Vibram Litebase sole. Gore-Tex Infinium Thermium keeps feet warm and dry. MSRP \$725.



Staheekum / Ankle Rain Shoe

Slip this style on for a sleek and chic look on rainy days or even in dry weather. This men's waterproof rain boot features a neoprene lining to keep feet warm. MSRP \$75.



Khombu / Swift

Inspired by the U.S. Ski Team, this key Khombu style for Fall 2020 combines fashion and function in a sneaker boot silhouette. It features the brand's K-Guard weather protection, a K-Grip bottom and a Comfort Flex Insole. MSRP \$69.99.



Danner / Logger 917

Performance and comfort combine in this boot with a style inspired by the brand's original caulked logging boots. The Logger 917 features a Gore-Tex waterproof liner with a Vibram SPE rubberized EVA midsole. MSRP \$230.



Thorogood / Infinity FD Series 9 Drakar

This waterproof, insulated outdoor boot features patent pending FLEX-DRIVE 51 percent welt construction for maximum flex in the toe and enhanced heel stability. An anti-fatigue energy return system absorbs shock. MSRP \$210.



Forsake / Sophia Lace

The Sophia boot for women blends all-weather protection with urban style. Premium full-grain leathers and a waterproof/breathable membrane offer performance; the internal wedge adds comfort and style. MSRP \$174.95.

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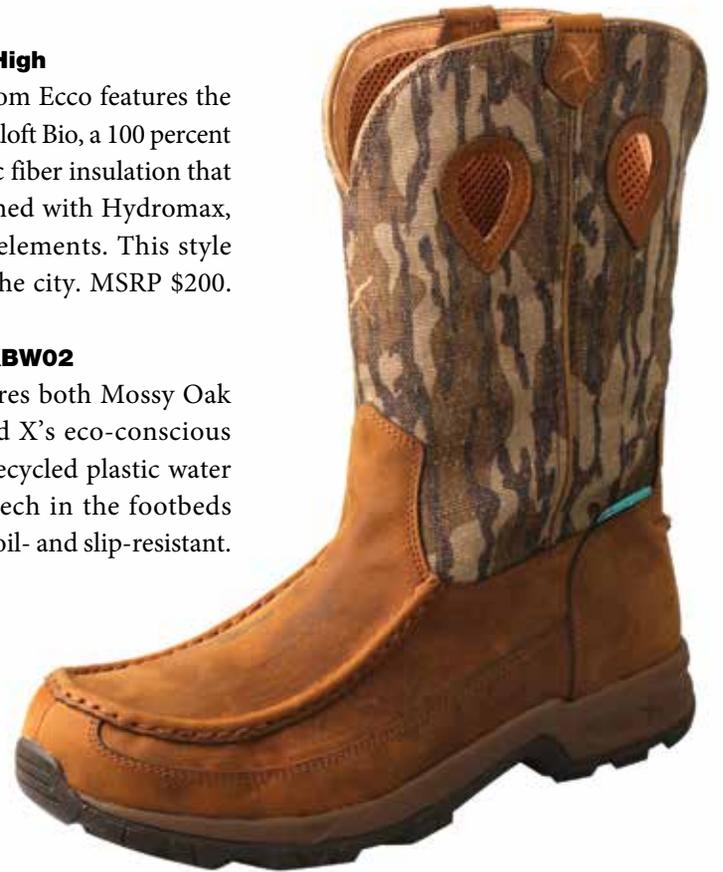


Ecco / Solice High

This stylish women's offering from Ecco features the first footwear application of Primaloft Bio, a 100 percent recycled, biodegradable synthetic fiber insulation that adds warmth, and when combined with Hydromax, guards against winter's tough elements. This style is at home on the slopes or in the city. MSRP \$200.

Twisted X / MHKBW02

This 11" waterproof boot features both Mossy Oak Bottomland Camo and Twisted X's eco-conscious ecoTWX material, made with recycled plastic water bottles. The brand's CellSole tech in the footbeds offers comfort and the outsole is oil- and slip-resistant.



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IT'S ALWAYS SOCK SEASON...



Hosiery from Heat Holders

Kicking It: Brands Discuss Seasonality in Outdoor Socks.

BY SUZANNE BLECHER

This is the season for hosiery that warms the hooves. Consumers are snapping up winter socks that regulate temperature, have soft fibers, boast adequate cushioning and protect a lot of leg. Summer socks are different in that moisture-wicking, anti-microbial properties and breathability are of utmost importance. For every season, there is a sock. Here, *Outdoor Insight* sorts out the best options for every drawer.

Winter Wearables

Based in the Midwest (cue cold weather) with 120 years in business under its belt, Fox River “takes pride in knowing how to create the warmest socks in the industry,” notes Scott Little, chief merchant at Fox River Mills. This winter, a new ski program from the brand features Merino wool with silk and Primaloft, alongside another high content Merino wool option. Wool is ideal for winter, thanks to its temperature regulating, moisture-wicking and antimicrobial properties.

Stance’s line of performance socks includes Merino wool styles in hike, snow and ski, which when coupled with Feel360 and Infiknit technology, “has a superior moisture management system to keep feet fresh and dry, plus durability that will last a lifetime,” according to Randy Sheckler, director of product education at Stance. Infiknit, a premium yarn construction targeting high friction areas to help socks last five times longer, is being launched by Stance in February.

Equally tech-driven, Wigwam’s SynchroKnit technology includes several Merino styles for snow, hike and winter running categories. SynchroKnit provides precise fit by eliminating stitches to reduce yarn and bulk above the ankle and in the arch/instep. “A SynchroKnit sock hugs the details of your foot, cradles your arch and provides just the right amount of room in toe and heel boxes,” for added support, comfort and better performance, explains Margaret Newhard, Wigwam Mills’ director of product management.

Darn Tough Vermont updated its snow collection for 2020, addressing all technical aspects of socks needed to participate in any outdoor sport. The collection offers the brand’s lightest weight yarn, a midweight yarn and also cushioned options to suit specific outdoor needs. An “improved technical foot offers flexibility, breathability and reinforcement engineered to optimize performance,” notes Darn Tough’s Lyn Feinson, VP of product design.

Creative Director Kushal Ruia and the team at Drew

Brady Co's Heat Holders brand will debut the Snow Sports sock, which, they note, is three times warmer than a regular cotton sock. "It fits right into ski boots and is perfect for winter sports such as skiing, snowboarding and snowshoeing," says Ruia. A three-stage development process includes employing a soft cashmere-like acrylic yarn, patented knitting process and proprietary brushing process. Ruia deems the result "a thermostat for your feet."

Lorpen's new T3 Ski Light sock features unique T3 construction with maximum sole and shin padding for protection and warmth. A Merino and PrimaLoft combo results in fast drying and wicking while still feeling soft against the skin.

For the après ski crowd, Farm To Feet's White Mountain Lounger is knit with 19.5 U.S. Merino wool on a 108-needle machine for large cushioning terry loops that run from the top of the sock to the toe for ultimate cushioning and comfort. The sock

from Drymax has targeted ePTFE (polytetrafluoroethylene) fibers in the forefoot and heel to reduce friction, plus, open vents surrounding arches and top of foot maximize drainage and breathability.

At Balega, UltraGlide is a "friction-free, left and right-specific construction sock with a unique metatarsal pad knitted into the sock for extra protection for runners battling with overheating and hotspots," notes Balega Marketing VP Tanya Pictor. Friction-free yarns reduce kinetic and static energy to keep feet cool and dry.

Getting the right fit is important in any season.

"Fit is just as important during the summer as it is in winter," explains Zach King, product line merchandising manager for men's socks at Smartwool. Hiking, running and cycling trend to a precise, performance-oriented fit, he adds. Launching in Spring 2020, the women's PhD Pro Endurance

Swiftwick Aspire as a line which features a lightweight olefin fiber for maximum moisture-wicking and firm compression to support feet. "A breathable upper and thin cushion keeps feet cool and minimizes bulk, perfect for technical footwear," she adds. New colors and designs of the style will launch for 2020 in Aspire, as well as in Maxus, Flite XT and Vision which are suitable for activities including running, cycling, fitness and golf. New releases of Pursuit and Pursuit Hike lines are on deck for August 2020.

Transitioning to Spring, Fall and Beyond

"The beauty of what Brown Dog offers is a casual dress sock that can cross all seasons," says Ashleigh Brown, marketing director for Wilson Brown. The socks use medium weight combed cotton fiber, offer arch support and a seamless toe for unlimited comfort. Point6



Balega UltraGlide



Brown Dog Socks



Socks from SofSole



Lorpen T3 Ski Light socks

is named for the New Hampshire mountain range, best known for Mt. Washington.

Summer Slip-Ons

In summer months, moisture is a challenge. OS1st's Thin Air socks are "designed for a perfect fit and have unique patent pending Skin Thin air channels to work in conjunction with all running shoes to create maximum air flow," keeping feet cool and dry, according to Josh Higgins, president of ING Source.

Heat, friction and moisture can lead to blisters, so consumers sometimes choose to run in the thinnest socks available. Drymax EVP Bob MacGillivray notes that "thin socks inherently provide little protection," and with that in mind, the new line of Extra Protection Hyper Thin Running socks

is suited for trail running. (New for Fall 2020 from Smartwool is the PhD Pro Ski Race sock designed with Mikaela Shiffrin — it has race-boot-specific shin cushioning and increased arch compression for enhanced ski feel.)

Icebreaker's Hike+ line been updated this season for a better fit and comfort outdoors. The Merino + Tencel Cool-Lite range also now extends into the brand's hiking socks.

For consumers who like socks to be unseen, Feetures! introduces the "first truly anatomical no-show sock with targeted compression" for 2020, says the brand's VP of marketing, Joe Gaither. The sock is designed to be totally hidden and has no tab, but it's guaranteed to stay up because of the custom-like fit.

Swiftwick CMO Joanna Mariani describes

offers options in all heights and cushions to help transition for summer to winter in a snap. For 2020, the entire line will include 37.5 technology, which marketing manager Elizabeth Diamond describes as a fiber which "contains active natural particles that increase the surface area of the fiber, allowing it to use body heat to evaporate moisture in vapor form, enhancing body temperature regulation and humidity next to skin." As a result, the nylon in a sock behaves like wool.

Thorlo Marketing Exec Tracy Harris is proud of the brand's new First Nation collection, which "celebrates the original outdoors people, Native Americans." The collection spans all seasons and a percentage of profits is donated to the American Indian College Fund. ●

HOSIERY



Wigwam Snow Junkie



Darn Tough Women's Edge



Smartwool PhD Pro Ski Race



OS1st Thin Air



Thorlo First Nation Sioux Buffalo



Swiftwick Pursuit



Fox River Primaloft Alpine



Point6 Trekking Heavy Crew



Drymax Extra Protection
Hyper Thin Running



Farm To Feet
White Mountain Lounger



Men's Snow Sports Sock
from Heat Holders



Icebreaker Hike Cool Lite



Features! No Show with Anatomical
Targeted Compression

Choosing the right sock - the difference that passion makes

When it comes to socks, customers have a lot of brands to choose from these days. Many of these brands are low quality and made without any technical expertise. Some top brands believe a funky pattern or logo is all that customers care about. They might look cool, but ultimately, they leave the wearer's feet damp, cold, and uncomfortable when put to the test.

If you're unfamiliar with high quality technical socks and how big a difference they make, we don't blame you. Socks aren't on the top of everyone's mind. That's why a brand like Lorpen makes it easy to understand the difference. All you have to do is put on a pair to know what you've been missing out on.

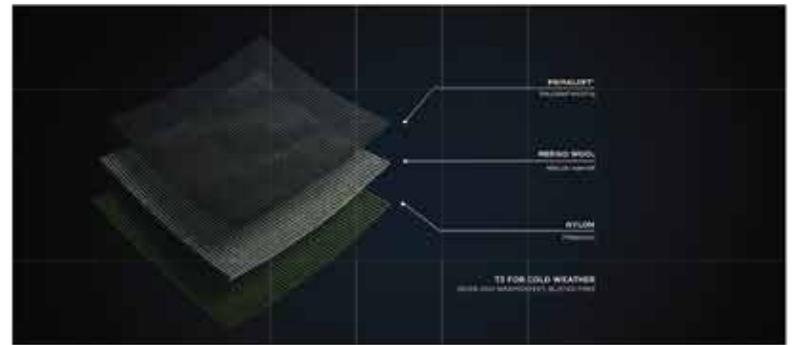


Lorpen is a brand nestled in the Spanish Pyrenees that, for the last 30 years, has manufactured just one single product – innovative technical socks. Lorpen only makes socks and they make them better than anyone else.

Today, they are still in that small village and continue to make the most advanced technical socks inspired by the beauty of the Pyrenees. Their passion and commitment to excellence is a direct result of living and working in a beautiful natural environment. From that small village, they have shared our engineering with athletes and outdoor enthusiasts from more than 60 countries worldwide.

Lorpen is committed to preserving the environment in every aspect of their business. This means that whenever possible they work with fibers that are created from sustainable and manageable resources. They develop manufacturing processes that are sensitive to the environment and reduce the amount of post-production waste at all levels.

Lorpen uses the most advanced sock manufacturing techniques in their design. They use feedback and the expertise of professional climbers, skiers, runners, and outdoorsmen to advance every generation of socks produced. It's with that feedback that they've created some of the most respected and well-made socks on the market. The innovate techniques they've created include, selective layering of fibers and targeted cushioning to name a few.



Selective Layering System

Lorpen products are designed for the most extreme weather conditions, and by the technical innovations of textile sciences. Their Selective Layering System (SLS) combines natural and synthetic fibers with different thermal properties to work together and bring about the utmost comfort, performance, and durability.

Targeted Cushioning

Rather than making a uniformly thick sock all-round, Lorpen employs targeted cushioning where key zones of the foot are cushioned to protect against abrasion while not adding bulk within the wearer's shoes or boots. This ensured impact protection with every step and maximum mobility of the foot.

Choosing the right sock can be a struggle if your customers don't know what to look for. So offer them a sock brand that has a long history of quality and performance. Choose a brand that is passionate about what they do and remains true to their roots. Choose a brand that cares about what they create. A brand that guarantees their socks for life.

It's the difference that passion makes.



Visit Lorpen at OR Booth #43077-UL

For more information, contact us at sales@lorpen-na.com



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The Mountaineer 2.0

The Next Frontier for Upstate New York's Outdoor Retail Specialist.

THE MOUNTAINEER, KEENE VALLEY, NY

By Bob McGee

When thousands of fervent outdoor recreationalists descended on the Adirondacks' hamlet of Keene Valley in mid-January for the 24th Annual Mountainfest, they surely saw many familiar people and landscapes. Including the staff of expert associates at The Mountaineer.

The Mountaineer's Mountainfest is an annual celebration of ice climbing and mountaineering featuring guest athletes, demo gear and more. This year, there was a new face at the event — the self-described, new steward of the 45-year old specialty shop and the outdoor region it serves in upstate New York.

Meet Charlie Wise. After a 25-year career in the software/green tech sector, following a childhood as the son of a career Navy man, Wise and his wife Nancy purchased The Mountaineer from the Vinny McClelland family in November 2018 (*Outdoor Insight* profiled the business as part of our annual "Great 8" outdoor retail series back in July 2018).

"I've taken more of the classic owner role—day-to-day and strategic vision," says Wise, who, like his wife, first became enamored with the Adirondack region while visiting as a child. Following years of residence in Maryland and outdoor recreation holidays in nearby Davis, West Virginia at the front range of the Alleghenies, the Wise Family decided to migrate north to

Vermont a dozen years ago, near the Bromley and Stratton ski areas, to be closer to family and the mountain range it loves.

"I've learned a ton stepping into retail, and I knew that would be the case," says Wise, adding he received welcomed assistance during his first ownership year from Vinny McClelland, who stayed on in as a consultant, and the banner's staff, all of who remained on board following the ownership shift.

While he's always embraced the outdoor life, particularly skiing, hiking, camping and fishing, Charlie Wise sounds intent on retaining The Mountaineers' involvement with the community and its membership in The Grassroots Outdoor Alliance while taking its utilization of technology to a higher level to improve overall operations.

"GOA is really doing the work of a large group of outdoor specialty retailers in conveying what

our hopes and expectations from our vendors are," says Wise. "And frankly, [they're] making sure everyone is playing fair. We have that collective buying power, but GOA is also spotting and speaking to trends in the industry. The membership benefits from a huge amount of knowledge transfer among its members. The GOA is something that we're big fans of because it really takes a lot of these big industry issues and puts them into an accessible place among peers who are doing the same thing out there."

After conferring with another GOA member for weeks, Wise decided to invest in a new point-of-sale system for The Mountaineer, one that will provide more data on who is shopping the store and what they are purchasing.

"It provides us with some additional, better inventory



The Mountaineer is based in the upstate New York area that's home to the Adirondack High Peaks.

Grassroots Perspectives
is an editorial series in
Outdoor Insight where we
share Grassroots Outdoor
Alliance retail members' stories,
challenges and inspirations.

data and some analytics on when the shop is busy, although I haven't yet begun to get my hands around it since it was just installed," notes Wise.

Already, however, Wise has gained keen insight on how the internet and online businesses impact both independent, specialty retailers and vendors alike. Also, he realizes The Mountaineer is isolated from some bearings due to its location and loyal customer base. Still, there are plans to better integrate The Mountaineer website with store inventory and make the shop more accessible to customers, including those not currently residing or recreating in the Adirondacks.

He says the "second wave of the ecommerce phenomenon" is putting a "tight squeeze" on vendors and suppliers in the space.

"It demands efficiencies from the brands we stock that may not have previously existed. And efficiencies are a nice way of putting it," suggests Wise, adding, "It really puts a squeeze on those businesses to drive down their costs and be hypersensitive to the point that some of them are not able to make it."

This emerging retail business climate is admittedly making The Mountaineer's pre-season buying and ability to spontaneously react to market demand for product "a little more challenging."

Independent retailers such as The Mountaineer are now, more than ever, being forced to take a "crystal ball" approach with all buying and stay on top of all anticipated trends for the coming season, ranging from size to color requirements and everything in between.

"That level of squeeze is moving deeper into the supply chain," says Wise, noting that "pre-season intelligence" for buying is more important than ever today.

"You've got to get smart by having buying trend data, inventory data and some sense of who your customers are. And that's a whole chapter for the shop that I am starting to lay out," admits Wise.

One of the main benefits the shop has, says Wise, is customer relationships "which has made The Mountaineer what it is — our customer engagement in a pre- social networking world. You can continue that relationship, even



Mountaineer owner Charlie Wise

expand it, if you understand who your customers are."

But Charlie confirms the shop's expanding relationship with its customers will not be about "peppering them with promotions to 'buy, buy, buy.'" Instead, it will focus more on content such as encouraging them to get their skis waxed up before the season or telling them details about an ice climb someone recently completed in the valley.

Going forward, Wise's involvement in the outdoors will include a role beyond that of shop owner or local recreator. He was recently recruited to become a member of New York State's Department of Conservation, a strategic working group that address hiker pressure in the Adirondacks.

"This national trend of more and more people going outside to be in nature, and people's definition of nature are very different," opines Wise.

"Some are out there with a stopwatch to see how fast they can get to the top of the mountain. And some are out there for a true wilderness experience.

"What I'm excited about through the shop and how we educate and outfit these users as a staff is us continuing to play an important role in terms of how this area can accommodate that kind of pressure intelligently."

Understanding the wide range of consumers who are in the outdoor market is a key to future retail success. "There are people that want to truly immerse themselves in an outside experience, and there are those that are there to be social," says Wise. "Also, there are those that are out there to be athletic, competitive and driven. There are a whole range of different types of (outdoor product) users and they do have varied needs, for sure," offers Wise on the sales and service work The Mountaineer will continue to strive for under his tutelage. ●

We surveyed 215 consumers. Here is what they told us.

Consumers Are Into Used Gear & Rentals As Long As Quality Is High

Outdoor consumers today are buying used gear and are open to the option of renting not only equipment, but also apparel. And they are happily rocking retro styles. As long as the product is high quality with technical benefits, of course. That's the feedback we got in our latest survey.

When we asked outdoor consumers what the most important factors are that influence their purchasing decisions when buying garments for outdoor sports, 76 percent of respondents listed "technical qualities" as the leading factor.

When it comes to heritage style, 77 percent of consumers reported that they at least sometimes wear performance gear with a retro or throwback style. And more than half of consumers surveyed said they shop at consignment stores, with 90 percent (!) saying they would consider buying winter gear or equipment that was pre-owned. As one consumer told us, "I think lots of people buy and then under-use their items. I have no problem getting a price break and reducing waste."

Also of note, 69 percent said they would consider renting a ski jacket.

Our takeaway? Consumers are embracing non-traditional purchasing and rental options. If the product quality is there, the consumer will be there, too. ■

The survey, conducted by MESH01, included 215 respondents, male and female.



SEIZE THE TREND!

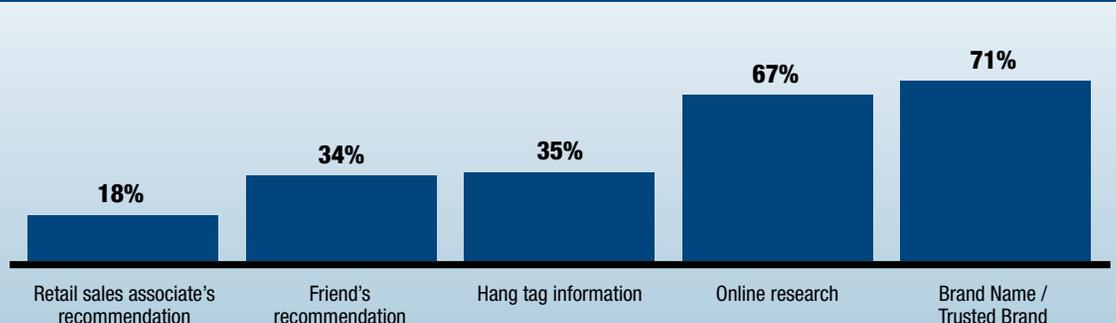
Visit trendinsightmag.com for our surveys in footwear, sports, outdoor and product design.

Trend Insight Consumer is a feature within Outdoor Insight that delivers research conducted on the MESH01 Platform. MESH01 collects data from a select panel of outdoor enthusiasts. For information on the Mesh1 Platform, contact Brian Bednarek at 603-766-0957 or brian.bednarek@mesh01.com. For more information on Trend Insight Consumer and how your company can participate, contact Jeff Nott at 516-305-4711 or jnott@formula4media.com.

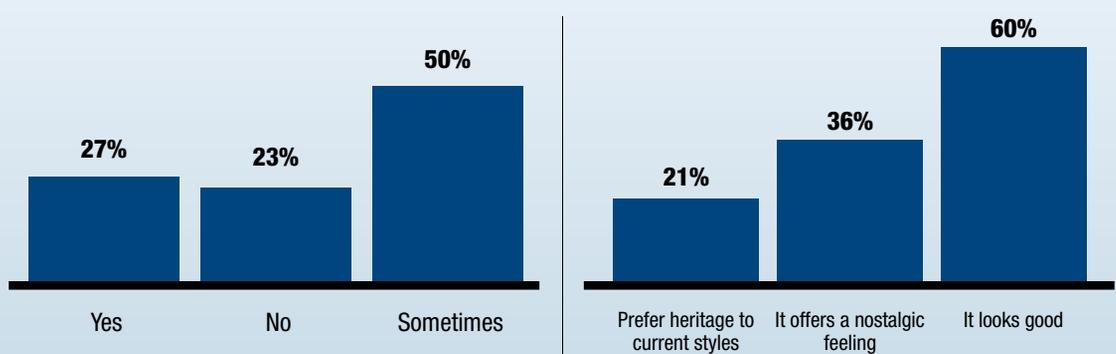
What is the most important factor that influences your purchasing decision when buying garments for outdoor sports?



When buying a winter jacket or footwear for its technical qualities, which factors help you make your choice or selection?



Do you wear performance gear with a retro or throwback style? → If yes, is it because...



Selected Comments

Some of my gear is actually from the '90s still and has come back around in fashion. Some of the '80s stuff is fun, but I still prefer classic black or other subtle colors/styles. Some of the old-style wool gear is practical and looks good too. **Male 39**

It entirely depends on performance. **Female 50**

I love throwback styles. I grew up in the late '80s-'90s and I love the nostalgic looks. **Female 35**

No. But I wouldn't rule it out. **Male 28**

1980s work out gear is coming back. Retro and throwback styles are in! Plus, it switches up the look every now and then. **Female 30**

I lived and love the '70s. **Female 52**

I love the '70s retro gear look with 3/4 sleeve tops and the older style athletic shoes. **Female 35**

Some of my gear is so old that it is unintentionally retro! See? Great quality! **Female 48**

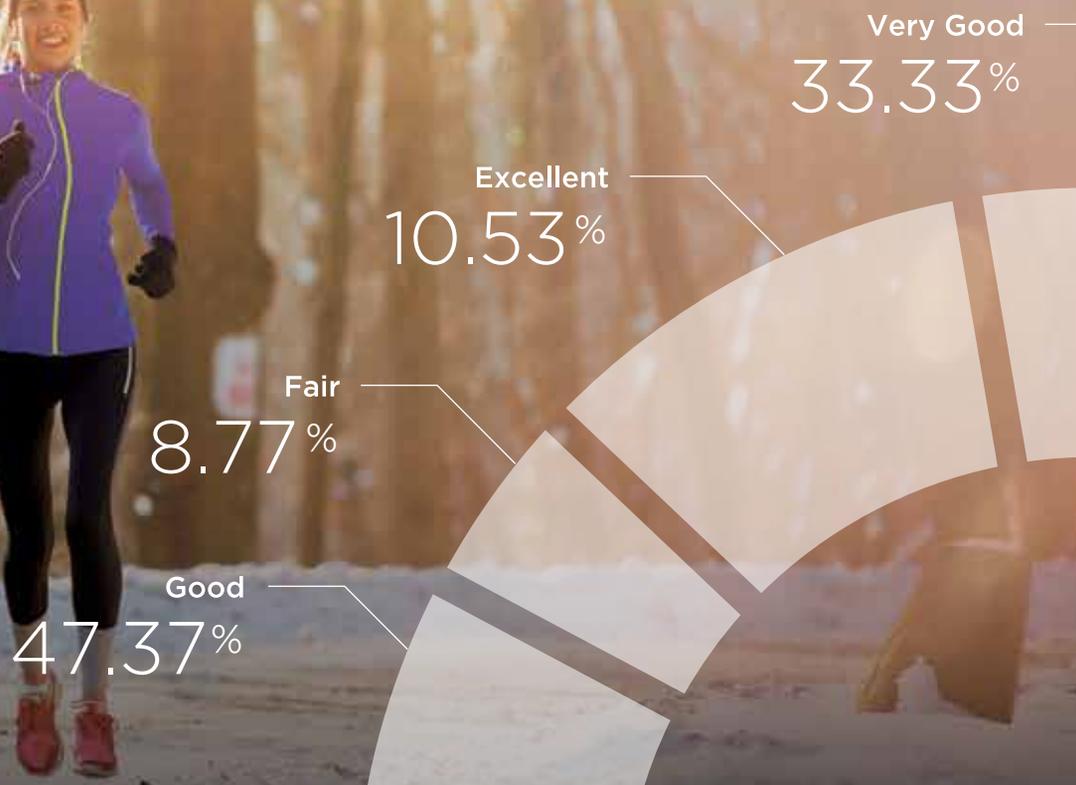
I have some retro styles and I love them but not all of my stuff has that throwback style because sometimes I do want a modern fit and feel. **Female 25**

Not intentionally — only when my well-cared for gear is so old it's become fashionable again as retro/throwback. **Male 46**

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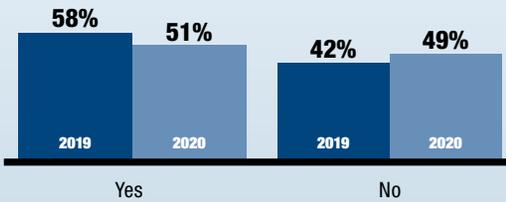
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Consumer Shopping Behavior: Year-over-year (continued from previous page)

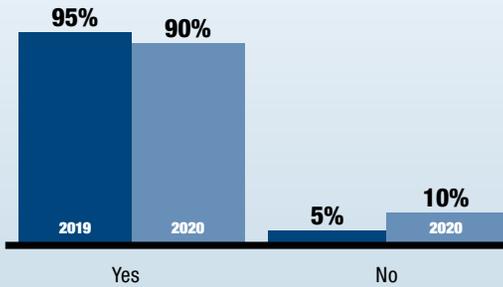
Do you shop at consignment stores for your winter apparel, gear or equipment?



Selected Comments

Yes only to find those retro styles, otherwise not. **Female 29**
 I thrift to see what I can score. I have found some very good quality items for a low price. **Female 30**
 Sometimes I'll duck in to check what kind of crazy rich person has parted with a perfectly good pair of rock skis. **Male 34**
 I do shop at REI garage sales. **Female 24**
 Not for me, but for my kids. **Male 42**
 I have shopped at consignment stores but only for good products from trustworthy brands. **Female 54**
 I haven't but it sounds like a great idea! **Female 25**

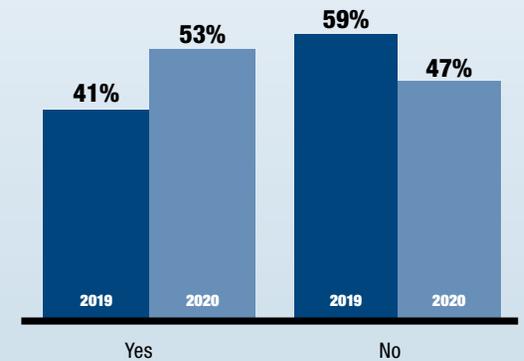
Would you consider buying winter equipment or gear that was pre-owned?



Selected Comments

Depends on what the gear is. Things like tents or crampons, maybe. But I would not want used sleeping bags or other personal items like that. **Male 39**
 I would *not* purchase things that are for safety (like helmets) but I would consider other items like sleds, poles, packs and tents. **Female 32**
 I think lots of people buy and then under-use their items. I have no problem getting a price break and reducing waste. **Male 53**
 Jacket, maybe. Snowshoes, yes. Golf clubs, yes. **Female 56**
 I bought some used gear before and it's great. Some things I will not buy pre-owned like ski boots. **Female 25**

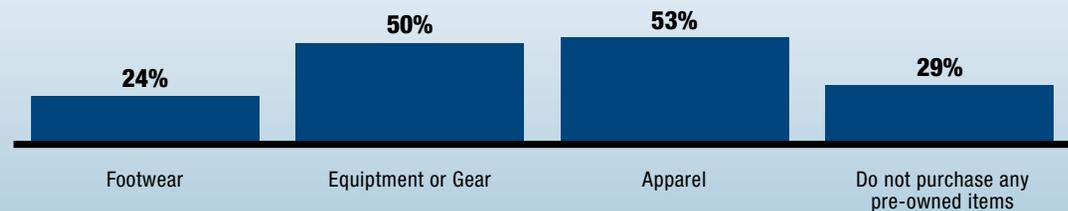
Would you consider buying footwear that was pre-owned?



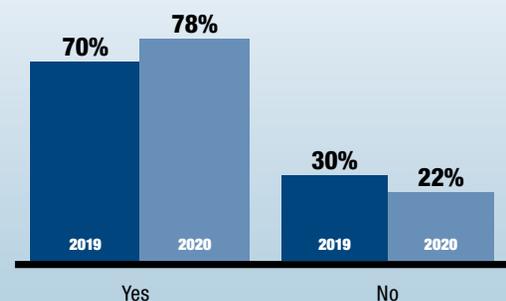
Selected Comments

This would have to be pre-owned footwear in nearly *perfect* condition. Clean and stench free, no damage to heel, toe, etc. **Female 40**
 Yes but I'd like to know the user, how they treated their gear, etc. I've bought used tele boots but not other types of footwear. **Male 51**
 The fit is too customized to risk fitting into footwear broken in by someone else. **Female 45**
 My favorite boots are pre-owned. **Male 24**
 It's a sanitary issue. Also, how has someone else's gait and stride broken down the shoe? Will it meet my needs? **Female 31**
 With the exception of hockey skates or lightly used ski boots, I think of buying pre-used footwear the same way I think about buying pre-worn swimwear. You just don't cut those corners. **Male 34**
 Footwear is one of those items that I have to buy new. If I loan anyone socks or shoes I allow them to keep them because I wouldn't wear them again. **Female 29**
 Sometimes pre-owned/thrifted items are better. Plus, it keeps clothes out of landfills. **Female 25**

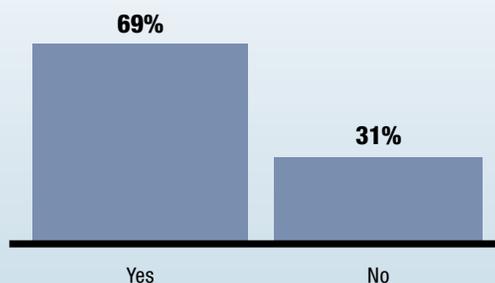
Have you in fact purchased any pre-owned items in the past year?



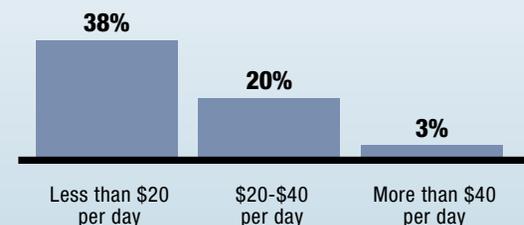
Would you consider buying a winter jacket that was pre-owned?



If you rent your skis, snowboard or boots on a vacation, would you consider renting a ski jacket?



If yes, how much would you be willing to pay to rent a brand name winter jacket?






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