

# SCB

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# WEEKLY

THE WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE ACTIVE LIFESTYLE MARKET





# RUN WITH CONFIDENCE THIS WINTER

*Eric Larsen*  
*Polar Adventurer - Boulder, CO*



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# SGB WEEKLY

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THE WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE ACTIVE LIFESTYLE MARKET



Photo courtesy Aqua Sphere

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Photo courtesy Buff



## BUFF HEATS UP WITH MERINO WARMERS, HOODIES AND MORE

Buff, original creators of versatile performance headwear for runners, hikers, fishermen and skiers, has planned a winter lineup designed so that nothing stops you from getting outdoors during cold weather.

First for the coming winter months, Buff offers a Merino Buff, which is soft, warm, and wind-resistant yet lightweight, equipped with all the natural moisture management and odor control properties outdoor specialists expect from merino. With classic Buff style, wearers get a winterized version of the original, which can still be worn up to 13 different ways, available in plain or patterned.

One percent of proceeds from the Wool Buff will be donated to environmental nonprofits. In 2012 and 2013, Buff ran environmental conservation projects in France's Eternal Valley, the Catalan Pyrenees and with England's Yorkshire Sales Mountain Trust.

Next in the winter lineup is Buff's new Polar Neckwarmers featuring the warming power of Polartec. The love child of Polartec Classic 100 fleece and microfiber, the Buff Polar gets all the power of thermal protection with the ability to wick and quickly dry. Nine inches longer than the original Buff, the Polar lends itself to more versatility and coverage, however there are only ten different ways to wear it, as opposed to 13. Don this water resistant, ultra-warm layer on long days skiing and snowboarding.

Hoodies also support the Buff winter collection as a stylish and comfortable sweater without the bod. Whether you sport it on or off the slopes, Buff Hoodies are designed to fit on your head or over a helmet. The color assortment includes classic white, black and gray with accompanying neck patterns, as well as tie-dye twists in green and psychedelic blue/orange.



The Buff winter roundup would not be complete without the Buff Balaclava, offered both in classic Buff fiber and wool. A long standing staple for snowsports enthusiasts, the Buff Balaclava is new for the brand and offers face, neck and head protection. Both fiber versions are high-stretch and seamless at the neck, with a flat-lock seam on the crown of the head. ■



Polar Neckwarmer



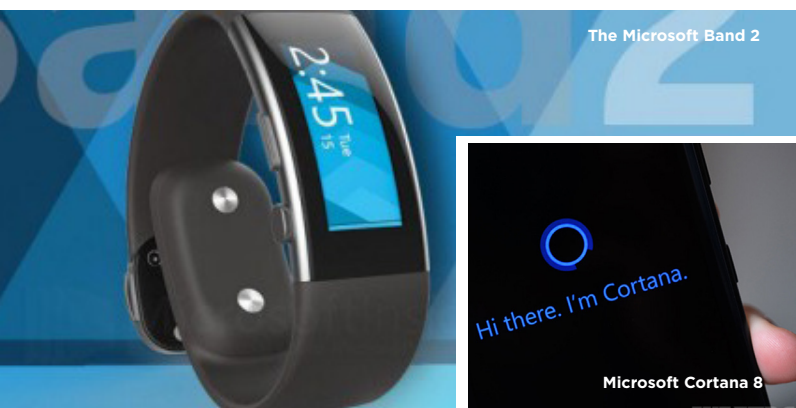
Buff Hoodie



Merino Buff



Buff Balaclava



## MICROSOFT BAND 2 WEARABLE HIGH PRICE FOR HIGH TECH

Microsoft announced the next iteration of its original fitness wearable – the Band – with a redesigned Band 2 set to hit retail shelves October 30. The Band 2 tracks heart rate, exercise, calorie burn and sleep quality, while providing notifications for emails, texts and calendar alerts.

The Microsoft Band 2, starting at \$2495, also features a curved display that shapes better to the contours of the wearer's wrist. Microsoft's Cortana 8

boosts the wearable with phone functionality, enabling the user to reply to texts or set reminders with the touch of a button.

Alongside a continuous optical heart rate monitor and onboard GPS, the smart band tracks calories burned, deep exercise, sleep quality, and allows record floors climbed. These features should contribute to overall healthier living – the top goal by the company in the creation of its new device.

Advanced sensors track data specific to running, biking and golfing, and technology from Microsoft Health, which is available as a universal Windows app, or for iOS and Android devices and via a Web Dashboard. Microsoft Health was designed to give fitness buffs an integrated platform to set wellness goals and receive actionable insights. Together, Band 2 and Microsoft Health let users share activity data with their favorite fitness apps.

Guided workouts and custom tracking position this wearable among the ranks of current market offerings as multi-functionality leads the way for trending fitness trackers. The Band 2 maintains up to two days of battery life.

The Band 2 screen uses color AMOLED display that is both bright and easy to read. This display is protected with Corning Gorilla Glass 3 in the event that the wearable drops or is hit. The Band 2 was made available for preorder in select markets October 6 and will open up for purchase in the U.S. at the end of October. ■





## AQUA SPHERE UNVEILS DRAMATIC ON-TREND 2016 SWIMWEAR

In a melding of fashion and glamour with sporty swimwear, Aqua Sphere, the Italian-born company famous for breaking the seal on the swim mask market, has moved away from technical goggles and into the swim apparel space.

With a kaleidoscope of high-saturation shades blending the hottest on-trend metallic and iridescent-rainbow fabrics, it would appear the transition would be a hit with everyone from lap devotees, pro swimmers and water exercise enthusiasts. High fashion detailing includes colored zips and contrast piping and binding, ensuring swimmers need not compromise style.

The new core collection is manufactured with Vita fabric, a smooth, fine and super soft to touch recycled material, which also packs outstanding strength to provide muscle control and body-hugging stretch and shape retention. The fabric boasts long-lasting high chlorine resistance and UV protection. Its resistance to sun screen creams and oils will also be key draws for outdoor swimmers.

The close fitting nature of the Vita fabric ensures a flattering silhouette for all items in the line. But the standout 2016 style is the paneled Siskin women's suit. With a double-lined construction, this swimsuit has integrated bust support and a supportive racer back. The Siskin style will also feature new thermo bonded shoulder straps for superior comfort. Incorporating a simple strap adjustment system and new bra fastening were vital in its innovation.

After experiencing success with its non-absorbent fast drying Aqua Light fabric, launched two years ago to give fitness swimmers a line that was easier to transport when wet, Aqua Sphere enhanced its new line with style to match function. Fresh detailing and a vivid new color palette was the logical evolution in the brand's expansion to swimwear. Aqua Sphere has also extended its size range for next year, and many styles for women will be made available from sizes 30 to 42. ■



## SIXSIXONE LAUNCHES RECON KNEE PAD

SixSixOne, So-Cal manufacturers of mountain bike and motocross equipment, have teamed with XRD Impact Protection - an innovator in flexible repeated-impact protection tech - to develop a hardcore Recon Knee Pad for the new breed of mountain biker.

Launched at Eurobike among a number of competitors in the soft-protection space, SixSixOne's Recon Knee Pad was designed for endurance riders offering protection in key impact zones with full range of motion. Pedal, descend and ride all day in comfort, the company says. To test its Recon Knee Pad, SixSixOne turned to their top rider from the Lapierre Gravity Enduro team and 10-time downhill World Champion, Nicolas Vouilloz during the Enduro World Series.



Set to hit shops this fall, the knee pad uses impact foam, where the reactive molecules of XRD Technology allow the material to be soft to the touch yet instantly firm on impact. Other features include an open mesh backing to promote airflow and a back-of-knee cutout to reduce chafing. Internal silicon printing on the top and bottom elastic, an elastic strap over the calf and SixSixOne's Padlock connection system ensure the pads stay in place.

"XRD Impact Protection provides us the unique opportunity to not only incorporate lightweight, comfortable and flexible impact protection into our products, but also take advantage of the XRD Impact Institute's research, design, prototyping and testing capabilities," said Shaun Ryan, director of product at SixSixOne. "This partnership opens the door for us to utilize the most advanced technology in the protection space and ensures we bring to market the best protection equipment possible." ■



## NEW CARDIO AND STRENGTH PRODUCTS FROM **BOWFLEX AND SCHWINN**

Nautilus, Inc., known for innovative home fitness equipment, recently unveiled new strength and cardio products that span the workout spectrum from calorie-burning walking regimens to smart weight training and a fitness bike.

New additions to the popular Bowflex and Schwinn brands include the Bowflex SelectTech 560 Dumbbells, Bowflex TreadClimber TC100 and TC200 models, and Schwinn Airdyne AD Pro Total Fitness Bike.

Nautilus Inc. COO Bill McMahon said of the expansion, "We constantly look for new ways to motivate and encourage our customers in their pursuit of a healthier lifestyle. The new products we're introducing offer a more interactive and tailored workout experience than ever before. Paired with new design and innovative technology to track workouts, we're providing our customers with the tools they need to be stronger and healthier."

The Bowflex SelectTech 560 Dumbbells are a departure from old iron. These "smart" dumbbells offer a fully interactive experience, promoting not only harder workouts but smarter ones. An integrated and proprietary 3DTrainer offers a counter that records reps, weight lifted and rep speed, as users experience audible cues after completing proper reps. The 3DTrainer app features a library of video exercises and wirelessly transfers data from their workouts via Bluetooth Smart technology and automatically syncs data to iOS and Android devices. The Dumbbells will be available this winter for \$450.



The popular Bowflex TreadClimber has gotten a major boost with a redesign and enhanced technology. This walking machine now combines the motions of a treadmill, stepper and elliptical to burn up to 2.5 times the calories of a treadmill. The TC200, \$3299, tracks and stores up to four users' data and allows them to set, monitor and track their personal fitness goals with the free TreadClimber App. The app automatically shares data with popular dashboards, including MyFitnessPal, Apple Health Kit, Google Fit and Bowflex Connect.

The Schwinn Airdyne AD Pro Total Fitness Bike, \$999, leverages Schwinn Airdyne Technology and takes it to the next level. From the performance engineered, perimeter-weighted flywheel for smooth startup and cycling, to the strength of the splined solid steel cranks that deliver more power, the AD Pro is designed to withstand the rigors of high intensity training by the most intense athlete. Its commercial-grade components are also built to support multi-user, high workload environments - ranging from the local CrossFit affiliated gyms to rehabilitation facilities. The gem feature of the AD Pro is that it mechanically tailors to meet the users intensity - the more effort given, the more resistance it delivers. ■





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## LIFT23 SOCKS PAIR PERFORMANCE WITH A PURPOSE

An Indiegogo-funded ski sock company goes one-for-one, serving both outdoor consumers and thousands of homeless youth in NYC.

By Jahla Seppanen

"I knew that solely trying to make money from socks was not enough," said Edward del Guercio, founder of Lift 23 performance ski/snow socks. Prior to the company's founding in September 2014, Guercio already had an outstanding performance sock product, tested by skiers and snowboarders and redesigned through several iterations. "The testers loved the final product, but I didn't pursue it," he said.

Guercio reiterated, the purpose wasn't there. "I began soul searching," he said, "I made lists of things that were important to me and what I thought I excelled at." What resulted was a reoccurring index, which always pointed back to one idea: making others happy. "But there was one small problem," Guercio said, "How do you make a living trying to spread happiness?"

He began to pair purpose with product, selling the great socks he had developed with a giving back business model. Lift 23 committed to outfitting homeless New York City children with their own pairs of sock – a pair given for every one sold.

"The 23 in Lift 23 represents the 23,000 homeless kids living in NYC homeless shelters."

- Edward del Guercio, Founder, Lift 23 Socks (pictured top left)

If this giving back model sounds familiar, it's because Guercio structured Lift 23's goal-driven social mission after Toms Shoes, well known for their "one-to-one" promise of donating a pair of shoes for every pair purchased. "While contemplating starting the company, I read several books to help me make my decisions. It was Tom's Shoes owner Blake MyCoskie's book 'Start Something That Matters' that really got things rolling. I thought, here's a guy who went into business to help others, and he's making a living out of it."

"Once I had the idea of pairing the socks with helping people in need, I began doing more research. I learned that socks are one of the most requested items at homeless shelters, but one of the least donated," Guercio said. As most donated clothing is second-hand, people do not think to give socks that have been used. What was perhaps more shocking was the number of children affected by homelessness in NYC. "When I began Lift 23, the NYC Department of Homeless Services reported that there were 23,000 children living in the New York City shelter systems, not including the kids living on the street."

This statistic inspired Guercio's business, which would become so engulfed in the issue it would lend its name to represent the problem. "The 23 in Lift 23 represents the 23,000 homeless kids living in NYC homeless shelters." Guercio lived in NYC for many years prior to founding Lift 23, and had seen the problem of homelessness first hand. During his time in the city, he befriended homeless men and women in the neighborhood where he lived, often bringing them food or coats in the winter.



Now that the purpose was clear, the next big challenge was picking a platform to launch the company. Guercio decided crowdfunding would be the best approach, taking to Indiegogo to publicize the cause and raise money. This direct-to-consumer avenue has become widely popular for up and coming outdoor brands with a compelling story including Sunski sunglasses, Oru Kayak and Bosavi headlamps.

"Indiegogo can take pipe dreams and makes them a reality, but can also squash half-baked ideas. It requires a lot of time and effort to get a successful campaign up and running, forcing you to focus on the things that are most important," said Guercio. "It was Lift 23's first big hurdle and we had a successful campaign. It validated the idea and it gave me a sense of accomplishment and pride."

Contributors who helped Lift 23 skyrocket on Indiegogo (raising more than \$15,090) were compelled by the performance attributes of the socks as well. "The best natural wicking fiber is Merino Wool, so that was our starting point," said Guercio. "But Merino Wool on its own has some drawbacks, like pilling, slipping, or overall comfort, so we engaged in a thorough trial and error period to address those drawbacks."

The final product is a melding of soft Lycra and Coolmax, with added compression zones to hold the sock as close to the foot as possible. Guercio laughed, "Before I give away all of our secrets, let's just say we have maxed out a performance sock."

One consumer swore, "If I were only allowed one pair of ski socks to bring on a trip, I would hands-down bring my Lift 23's."

Without giving away secrets, Lift 23 socks feature a reinforced Lycra rib knit cuff and form-fitting instep that prevents slippage and bunching, while the mesh-knit design is optimal



"Once I had the idea of pairing the socks with helping people in need, I began doing more research. I learned that socks are one of the most requested items at homeless shelters, but one of the least donated."

- Edward del Guercio

for ventilation and wicking. The reinforced Y-Heel provides shock absorption while a seamless hand-stitched toe is a godsend.

Now a year after its Indiegogo success, Lift 23 is focused on athletic socks for activities outside the wintersports category like hiking, golf and running. "This past summer, Lift 23 was fortunate to work with the First Tee of Metropolitan NY, a national organization that introduces kids to the game of golf to help instill values such as honesty, integrity, sportsmanship and work ethic," Guercio said. Collaborating with First Tee, Lift 23 held golf clinics for kids in NYC homeless shelters and handed out Lift golf socks. These kids were the first, and so far the only, to try Lift's new golf socks, which Guercio hopes to bring to market soon.

Currently around 1,500 pairs of socks have been donated to NYC homeless children through Lift's giving back model, with another 6,000 pairs sold to consumers and scheduled for a one-to-one matching donation this 2015 holiday season. "It's important to note though, we have expanded the mission to serve children in 15 other states," said Guercio. "Not all of the 6,000 pairs will be going to NYC homeless kids."

The big finish line of outfitting 23,000 homeless children with socks is just over the horizon, one pair at a time. The company projects hitting that goal by 2017. ■



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# VOORMI BRANCHES OUT INTO CONCEALMENT

With a focus on domestic manufacturing and wool fabric innovations, Voormi is taking its backcountry game to the hunting world.

By Aaron H. Bible



Photos courtesy Voormi

**Don't blink or you'll miss it.** This expression is true both of Voormi's new line of "camouflage," as it moves through the forest and off the company's shelves, and as the brand continues to break boundaries both in product design and come-to-market strategies.

Voormi is a tiny brand really, but the changes it is introducing through its sales approach, sourcing and production are huge, to say nothing of the actual products themselves, including Core Construction introduced in January that promises to be "an evolution" in how we view and discuss waterproof breathable, said company founders.

And like other outdoor brands addressing the rejuvenated hunt-fish and performance-hunt markets, Voormi this fall took

a step toward meeting the needs of not just skiers and climbers, but woodsmen, hunters and bird watchers, creating a completely unique and effective concealment pattern from its existing fabric technologies.

Voormi's new hunting apparel line has been a passion project, particularly for Co-founder and CEO Dan "Butch" English, who started Voormi after a stint as Executive VP of Sales, Marketing and Licensing at Mossy Oak, lending him a credibility as difficult to replicate as Voormi's concealment pattern itself.

English is not only a lifelong hunter, backcountry horseman and fly fisherman, but is a competitive rifle and clay shooter and was a member of the USA Shooting Team (Running Target) from 1980-1983. At that time there was a push to help place Olympic athletes in long-term careers, and English found himself at another small startup called Microsoft, where he spent most of his career and managed several large divisions before taking on the EVP role at Mossy Oak.





Dan "Butch" English,  
Co-founder and CEO, Voormi

The Voormi concealment project is not only bringing new camouflage technology to the table by precision blending various earth toned yarns, but is helping bridge the gap between traditionally defined outdoor and hunt demographics.

"It's something that's near and dear to my heart personally, and I believe it's going to change the industry, because no one else is doing what we're doing," English said. Voormi is transcending what camouflage has been in the past, consisting of a heat/dye transfer process that has a very flat and shiny look. "We've taken the same earth tone colors that you see in nature and created a very unique coloring process at the yarn level; and through our construction techniques we've created an interesting tonal technique, but it's very effective in the woods. The other reason it's effective is we're doing this with our wool based product."

Continued English, "Most hunting clothes are made with synthetic fibers, which stand out in the early morning and evening light. Ours absorb and change with the light. Our fabric is going to look lighter during the day, and will get darker as the sun goes down. It blends in like you would not believe, and because it's wool, you get all of the properties of wool... natural stench control is built in. And then you throw in all of our unique construction techniques, Core Construction, Surface Hardened – it's a game changer."

"We're not trying to be a hunting company or a camouflage company," English explained further. "We want to provide an alternative that works across a wide range of uses, for those who want to get close to an animal for whatever reason. And for our customers, those mountain professionals,

most of them spend a lot of time in the woods in the fall, waiting for the snow to start falling. They're used to a performance product, and this is a unique approach that looks incredible and is very effective."

On top of the field-tested effectiveness of the new camouflage pattern, Voormi's small batch manufacturing allows it to be extremely nimble in responding to consumer and dealer demand. Its new headquarters and facility in Pagosa Springs, CO, is not only expanding its North American cut and sew commitment, but is bucking the traditional philosophy that as a brand grows it must move away from its small town roots. Voormi is committed to 100-percent North American raw-to-finished fiber production with Rocky Mountain wool, as well as North American textile and finished goods production.

This passion play was born out of English's desire to "challenge the long held paradigms of mature industries through disruptive technologies and business models," according to the company. And that's exactly what Voormi has accomplished since coming to market in 2011.

"We've taken a completely different approach. We're focused on a back-country experience," said English. "If you follow the typical mountain lifestyle, when you move into fall everybody is in the woods. Our intent was, we can actually do some really cool things with our technology." And as the brand grows, it will continue to add Colorado- and U.S.-based production-helping smaller sew shops and everyone who touches the product a chance to be a part of something special. ■





## MOUNTAIN HARDWEAR AND COLE HAAN LLC BLEND TECHNICAL WITH FASHION IN FORWARD LOOKING LEAP

By Aaron H. Bible

Mountain Hardwear hinted at things to come at ORSM, but no one thought their push into fashion would go this far. The San Francisco-based creator of performance apparel and equipment is lending its name, as well as its technical and performance expertise, to fashion brand Cole Haan in the launch of its ZeroGrand outerwear line.

Cole Haan LLC, with its Global Headquarters in Greenland, NH, and Creative Center in New York City, is an iconic American lifestyle accessories brand and retailer of premium men's, women's and children's footwear, handbags, leather accessories, outerwear and eyewear.

"We envision this collection becoming every-day staples for men and women. They offer the best of both worlds: style and function. It is almost impossible for the modern consumer to battle the elements on their daily commute and look stylish while doing it, but now we have a solution. It's a breakthrough with outerwear for the urban explorer as it does not compromise style for functionality," explained CMO and GM of Business Development at Cole Haan, David Maddocks.

"Cole Haan and Mountain Hardwear are both innovators and true independents who stand out in their respected industries. At Cole Haan, we were looking to create a unique outerwear collection that didn't sacrifice style or functionality, and Mountain Hardwear was the perfect partner to accomplish this. The collaboration is built on common understanding of style and innovation. Cole Haan makes the most technical dress footwear in the world and we wanted to partner with the most technical, high-performance outerwear maker in the world." Said Maddocks.

The ZeroGrand collection combines technical materials and outerwear expertise with the "classic style meets modern innovation" ethos of the Cole Haan brand.

"This is a great opportunity to show the world more than just our technical expertise. We're championing the idea that you can combine great performance with great style," said Chris Harges, director of global marketing at Mountain Hardwear. Harges said the co-branded products, "were designed to meet a need for Cole Haan, who wanted a line of outerwear





as lightweight and technically advanced as their ZeroGrand footwear. They're an application of mountain fabrics, materials and technologies to meet the needs of the urban adventurer."

"As part of its investment in the ZeroGrand platform, Cole Haan wanted to create a companion outerwear line as beautiful and technical as its footwear. Their brand leaders identified Mountain Hardwear as the leader in technical outerwear and reached out to us to explore opportunities for collaboration. We thought it was a great match," Harges said. "The ZeroGrand customer approaches life with the same boldness, independence and know-how as the Hardwear customer. And they understand the value of performance apparel and footwear. In house, we have a team of great apparel designers who leaped at the opportunity to apply the fabrics and technologies of outdoor to the performance and style needs of the urban consumer. We developed the line on a special schedule beginning with some conversations with Cole

Haan last fall. It was great for our designers not only to be able to design for the needs of a different consumer but also to work outside the constraints of our normal seasonal calendar."

This blend of extreme weather protection and designer style is built on a foundation of Mountain Hardwear technologies including:

- *Dry.Q Stretch Ozonic shell fabric recognized for its lightweight, durable and 100-percent waterproof, yet breathable elements;*
- *800-fill Q.Shield water-resistant down that is infused with permanent water repellency to resist moisture absorption; and*
- *Thermal.Q Elite, a proprietary synthetic insulation and the warmest synthetic insulation available.*

"Our designers usually solve problems to save lives and maximize experience for outdoor athletes. With Cole Haan, we were presented with a different problem: how do you keep a hard-driving, fast-moving urban explorer warm, dry and protected without slowing them down or asking them to compromise style," said Robert Fry, global director of product merchandising and design at Mountain Hardwear.

The ZeroGrand Outerwear collection became available October 6 on ColeHaan.com and in Cole Haan stores, as well as limited availability through Mountain Hardwear direct-to-consumer channels in the U.S.

While the move may draw criticism from some hardcore outdoor industry devotees, the collaboration shouldn't shock most. Many outdoor brands from Royal Robbins to Carhartt to Marmot to FlyLow have been embracing lifestyle and fashion as a way to endear them to an increasingly younger, urban consumer. Much in the same way the fashion industry has embraced brands like Adidas, The North Face, Lululemon and Teva and has been incorporating active lifestyle elements into fashion for several seasons. Cross exposure to new markets and a need to stay on the cutting edge is driving active lifestyle products from all angles, as design concepts such as "trail to table" are starting to reach maturity.

Mountain Hardwear is a leader in innovative, premium outdoor apparel and equipment and was one of the first to design toward a more casual consumer, despite its technical background. Founded in 1993, the brand "celebrates bold ideas, the drive to challenge the edges of our potential, and the joy, friendships and personal growth that come from that endeavor." Based in Richmond, CA, Mountain Hardwear is a wholly owned subsidiary of Columbia Sportswear Company and distributes its products through specialty outdoor, running and sporting goods retailers in the U.S. and 58 countries worldwide. ■



ZeroGrand Funnel Parka



## YAKIMA PRODUCTS INC. SLASHES SKUS WITH SPRING 2016 INNOVATIONS

By Aaron H. Bible

In an industry-only announcement made this summer at a dealer event at its headquarters in Portland, OR, Yakima Products Inc. said it would launch the largest number of new products next year than it had in 20 years with more than 35 products and a base rack system that would reduce its number of clip SKUs by 50 percent.

Along with a renewed dealer engagement and a detailed evaluation of its consumer base, resulting in a revamped website and deeper understanding of how to grow its business, Yakima is rolling out a new aerodynamic roof rack system and upgraded cargo boxes next year. Yakima's cargo boxes are made in the U.S.A. in Riverside, CA.

Due to the complexity of the category, the new products have been under development for more than three years. The company is keeping the release under embargo to consumer

media until February 2016. While the SKU reduction will be fantastic news to dealers trying to stock a comprehensive assortment of Yakima base racks, the company wants to give them a chance to sell through this year's inventory.

"The StreamLine System is the culmination of 35 years of Yakima innovation," said Yakima Top of Car Category Director Garrett Barnum. "Like its predecessors, it has revolutionized the base rack space. StreamLine offers a complete solution for a wide variety of budgets, vehicles and uses. It is the epitome of Yakima's commitment to making their products easy, from purchasing to installation to use."

Yakima's dealer event did replace its presence at ORSM, but Yakima was back in swing at Interbike, with an interesting spin, hosting the North By Northwest conglomerated booth space showcasing innovative brands from the Pacific Northwest region. This summer, its rep and dealer force were invited to a massive industrial warehouse and parking lot converted into a real life product showroom and upscale presentation space-complete with a wind



Photos courtesy Yakima



tunnel, stage, movie screen and food trucks. It was here that reps, dealers, media, and even the outdoor community at large, were courted in the brand's hometown.

Citing the lodging challenges of Salt Lake City, along with timing and the continuing or growing importance of regional buying shows, as well as the importance of the Grassroots Outdoor Alliance buying shows, Yakima Global Senior Sales Director Jason McGibbon said the company simply "wanted to start the dialogue earlier." McGibbon said Yakima is not ruling out future Outdoor Retailer shows, including Winter Market 2016.

"Ryan [Martin, CEO] gave us a hall pass to do something different," said Yakima Category Director Joel Grabenstein. "And I know from experience, when I get a hall pass, I take it."

The company spent the last year tracking what it calls the "consumer journey experience," and for Spring 2016 is focused on increasing its consumer base through new markets and continuing to focus on ease of use, approachability and customer experience. Or as the company said, focusing on its three core values of empowerment, making good and shared experiences. They also honed their customer categories down into five "persons" – core outdoor, cyclist, hook & bullet, baby boomer and travelers/family – including a "reset" on all new visual brand elements and photography.

Yakima said it would continue to produce products under its Whipbar and Prorack brands, reaching the high and low ends, respectively, of the rack market. The company is privately owned, employs 85 people in Portland and also has offices in Australia and Holland. It celebrated its official 35th anniversary in 2014.

### New Product Break Down

This next evolution of Yakima's base racks is being called the StreamLine System – featuring both a streamlined look and installation experience developed as an integrated collection to create a cohesive look. Four bar styles are now completely interchangeable. Four new StreamLine towers should prove the most versatile and adaptable to date, featuring new BarBed design, which allows for pitch adjustment of the bar angle to achieve the most level front and rear crossbars, even on rounded roof lines. The StreamLine System also carries over the Yakima LandingPad, the "most seamless system on the market" for custom base racks.

### Crossbars

At the center of the StreamLine system are four styles of crossbars – the CoreBar, JetStream Silver, JetStream Black and RoundBar. Each integrates with StreamLine System towers to maximize vehicle styling and cargo capacity.

The CoreBar is the first steel aerodynamic crossbar on the market, combining the strength and utility of steel with a JetFlow teardrop shape that minimizes wind noise and maximizes fuel efficiency. Roll formed steel construction is strong and reliable, galvanized and vinyl wrapped for durability and corrosion resistance. It's available in four sizes – up to 20 inches longer than other aero bars on the market. Max load: 220 lbs. per pair of bars; Sizes: 50", 60", 70", 80"; Finish: black vinyl coating; \$119/pair.



The JetStream is a premium alloy crossbar available in two color options, engineered with a T-slot attachment and a wind tunnel designed JetFlow aerodynamic bar shape for noise reduction. Its SmartFill technology makes switching out accessories easy. JetStream is available in three sizes - up to 10 inches longer than other aero bars on the market. Max load: 165 lbs. per pair of bars; Sizes: 50", 60", 70"; Finishes: Clear anodized alloy finish; black powder coating; \$195/pair.

The iconic steel RoundBar remains vinyl-wrapped and available in five lengths, to fit any vehicle. The RoundBar was launched in 1982 and is far from obsolete. Max load: 165 lbs. per pair of bars; Sizes: 48", 58", 66", 78", 86"; \$89/pair; 86" \$159/pair.

### Towers and Clips

The BaseLine is Yakima's new, completely adjustable clamp tower system for bare roof types, adapting to fit the ever-changing shape of automobiles. This innovation is really the key to the SKU reduction. Its tower architecture uses a new bi-axial DropHook clip adjustment motion to accommodate a range of roof shapes. Its design ensures that the rack is safe and secure every time. The tower's adaptable BarBed material conforms to work with RoundBar, CoreBar and JetStream Bars. In an industry first, it allows for pitch adjustment of the bar angle so that front and rear crossbars are as level as possible on vehicles with rounded roof lines. Crossbar fits: JetStream, CoreBar, RoundBar (with adapter); Tower material: Stainless steel, glass reinforced plastic, elastomer padding; Lockable to vehicle (SKS locks sold separately); Maximum load rating to 220 lbs., depending on vehicle and bar rating; Risk-free torque set installation. Tool included. \$199 (4 towers).

Yakima's new family of custom shaped clips and pads are designed to work with BaseLine Towers to fit vehicles with bare roofs. Powder-coated stainless steel provides maximum strength and durability. Sold in pairs with vehicle-specific pads. Most racks require 2 sets. \$48 (pair).

The RidgeLine Tower creates a base rack system for vehicles with factory flush side rails. Featuring an adaptive inner and outer clip design for secure, accurate rail contact, while the BarBed allows for pitch adjustment to level front and rear crossbars. Crossbar fits: JetStream, CoreBar, RoundBar (with adapter); Tower material: Stainless steel, glass reinforced plastic, elastomer padding; Lockable to vehicle (SKS locks sold separately); Maximum load rating to 220 lbs., depending on vehicle and bar rating; Risk-free torque set installation. Tool included; \$199 (4 towers).

The new family of custom shaped clips and pads work with RidgeLine Towers to fit the unique inner and outer wall profiles of factory flush rails. Powder-coated stainless steel provides maximum strength and durability; Sold in sets of 4; one kit required to completely set up the system; \$96 (set of 4).

The SkyLine Tower is for fixed points, custom installations and tracks. Built to be rugged and dependable, it is touted as being easy to use and combines with the Yakima LandingPad to create a variety of custom base rack applications. Fits all styles of LandingPad, both removable and permanent; Maximum load rating of 220 lb., depending on vehicle and bar rating; Lockable to vehicle (SKS locks sold separately); Tower material: Die-cast aluminum, stainless steel, glass-reinforced plastic, elastomer padding; Compatible bars: JetStream, CoreBar, RoundBar (with adapter); Risk-free torque set installation. Tool included; \$199.



Proven to be one of the most seamless platforms on the market, the LandingPad secures SkyLine Towers to the vehicle. They feature dedicated vehicle fits for key outdoor-centric models such as the Honda Element and Subaru Outback, while also allowing custom applications to fit to any vehicle, including those with camper shells or truck caps. Materials: Glass-reinforced plastic, elastomer padding; \$48 (2-pack), \$96 (4-pack); Available Now.

This versatile TimberLine Tower creates a base rack system for vehicles with factory raised side rails. The over-molded stainless steel strap accommodates a variety of raised rail profiles and sizes, providing excellent roof clearance for a full range of gear mounts. Crossbar fits: JetStream, CoreBar, RoundBar (with adapter); Lockable to vehicle (SKS locks sold separately); Maximum load rating to 220 lbs., depending on vehicle and bar rating; Risk-free torque set installation. Tool included; \$199 (4 towers).



## Cargo Boxes

Yakima is expanding its line of cargo boxes with a new, premium ShowCase line. Available in two sizes, 15 and 20, ShowCase offers a balance of aerodynamics, modern styling and super handy features. Yakima drew on its experience and success of the SkyBox series when designing key traits. All interaction points – from the new oversized push button latch to installation hardware that's easier and more ergonomic than ever – were created to ensure a seamless, high-end experience when installing, loading and unloading the ShowCase. New features were designed to propel the company's goal of being more accessible, and to be recognized as a brand, not just a product.

Dual-sided opening and lid stiffeners remain a key part of the Yakima cargo story. Premium features include a unique new color and die-cut automotive quality badging. Futuristic form was designed to maximize both hatch and roof clearance. As a finishing touch, the ShowCase features two new colors: Anthracite and Quicksilver.

“Designed for modern adventurers and urbaneers, it beautifully compliments vehicles while maximizing carrying capacity,” said Cargo Category Manager Evan Hampton. “It's got the proven bones of our popular SkyBox series, with savvy premium upgrades and features, such as unbeatable hatch clearance. And it's a thing of beauty, with a flowing design influenced by the curvy, contoured lines of a luxury sports car.”

Shared Features: High gloss automotive quality finish; Automotive style badge; Internal lid stiffeners; Quick-release mounting hardware fits round, aero, square and factory cross bars; Excellent roof clearance featuring metal clamp with molded soft finish; Dual-sided opening; Forward-facing hardware and tapered tail end for the ultimate in hatch clearance; Easy to use push button security; Installation time: 5 minutes; Same Key System (SKS) locks included.

**ShowCase 15:** Cargo volume: 15 cubic feet; Ideal fit for smaller vehicles, Wagons and CUVs; Max ski length: 180 cm; Exterior dimensions: 80" x 36" x 14.5"; Weight: 46 lbs.; Two colors available: Anthracite, QuickSilver; \$679.

**ShowCase 20:** Cargo volume: 20 cubic feet; Ideal fit for larger vehicles, wagons and SUVs; Max ski length: 210 cm; Exterior dimensions: 91" x 37" x 17"; Weight: 60 lbs.; Two colors available: Anthracite, QuickSilver; \$779. ■

## RAMTECT WOOL BATTING READY FOR RETAILERS

By Aaron H. Bible



At the top of the escalators across from the Salt Palace business center at ORSM, many attendees may not have noticed the unassuming Ramtect booth, one of the unsung innovations entering the apparel market this fall.

The company, which has been in the incubator stage for a couple of years now, launched a “Wool Demonstration Development”

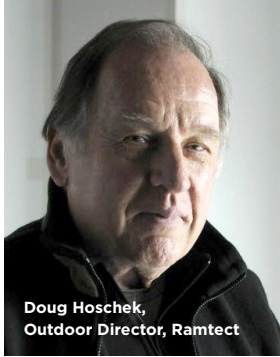
project at ORSM, along with a limited line of garments produced by Canada's Spirit West, whose Owner Steve Bommer was on hand from Calgary, Alberta, to speak with international retailers. Ramtect USA has attended previous OR markets with its ecological-minded wool insulation product, but this was the first time craft jackets, vests and pants were ready for immediate order.

Doug Hoschek is Ramtect's outdoor director and one of the original co-inventors of Polarfleece in 1981. “Whatever the customer wants, the retailer will soon be told and asked to find it,” he said of the company's come-to-market philosophy. Its development program focused on “average human beings” from three generations wear-testing the first line of “Essential” styles, primarily in high elevation forests and deserts surrounding Bend, OR.

Both Polarfleece and Spirit West wool insulated garments stem from being ecologically minded. Their creeds are also concerned with the relation of living organisms to one another and, in turn, to their physical surroundings. Bommer and Hoschek both believe that the “locavore outdoorist” movement is increasingly important in the outdoor industry, and more specifically with Millennial consumers. This movement acts under the principle that the byproduct of wool is “as close to a food as possible,” and should, “be raised on a sheep that is allowed to live a very long animal life, properly cared for by human beings (ranchers),” said Bommer and Hoschek.

Hoschek said back in 1981 he developed Polarfleece with the same “locavore outdoorist” spirit only today Polarfleece is made with a physically more ecologically favorable material. He explained the process to SGB in an exclusive interview





Doug Hoschek,  
Outdoor Director, Ramtect



Photos courtesy Ramtect

saying, “In 1966, I began developing polyester fiber for outdoor insulation as marketing director of Celanese (the largest producer of polyester fibers globally, at the time), thus creating a non-woven batting that became known in outdoor garments and sleeping bags as fiberfill, including the branded Polarguard patented insulations.”

He continued to explain that batting soon expanded into his developing and marketing nylon fabrics for outdoor insulated products including down-proof fabric technologies for garments and sleeping bags. “The focus was on cloth for warmth with no development of polyester fibers managing moisture during that time. The technology of Polarfleece moved into a three-layer system, Polartec 100, 200, 300, with the development of using recycled bottles in the knit in the mid-1990s. This was branded as Polartec,” Hoschek said.

Approaching his 50th year in the industry, Hoschek said his experience with polyester synthetics has given him key insights working with some of the best product makers in the country, who are now following suit and turning exclusively to natural fibers, specifically for the moisture managing wicking technology associated with polyester fibers.

“A common benefit of wool fiber is absorbing moisture, up to 35 percent of its weight, and then desorbing it through natural evaporation within the wool fiber itself. The process naturally happens in a wool fiber to keep the sheep warm and cool during both cold and warm climate changes. Shearing the wool preserves its ability to work naturally in a machine made insulation,” Hoschek said. He continued by expressing great excitement with the trajectory of today’s wool insulation. “A new natural moisture management is being created without oil-based synthetics and chemicals that use extensive amounts of energy and water now matter how green the chemicals.”

The end product - Ramtect - is a thin, compressed, bonded batting of merino wool, made exclusively from U.S.-milled fabrics, designed and manufactured in Calgary, the inventors say. As part of their “locavore” inspiration, Bommer explained that his Spirit West brand could deliver booking orders in four weeks and fill-in orders within two. And furthermore, that the product is landing home for buyers. “Consumers rave about the increased temperature range and overall comfort this natural insulation provides,” said Bommer. “Sustainable economics allow for shorter order windows, year-round fill-ins and good margins with unique product that is sure to drive sales in the already-proven wool marketplace.”

Comparing his company to the craft brewing movement, Hoschek said, “The major difference between craft and factory is simply the purpose of craft is to build at the pace of the workers assembling it, not the speed of the factory machine production line. This allows for a truly healthy environment for workers to not get stressed and become highly skilled and work for decades, instead of burning out trying to keep up with the factory-driven assembly line that asks more than any human can endure.”

However, Hoschek does not foresee craft altogether replacing the faster machine-paced assembly line production. “Although,” he said, “it will allow more creative designs with smaller production runs and faster turns in retailer inventory, giving designs more freedom and retailers fresh new garments several times a year for decades to come.”

Sitting down with Hoschek at ORSM, he said, “Retailers are the pipeline to the consumers, and as a supply partner we respect the brands being the focus of the finished product. Many of the major brands and the most exciting retailers were impressed to see the wool insulation in actual garments along with wool insulation swatches and sample yards for testing.”

But Ramtect is not finished yet. Hoschek shared that consumer wear-testing has helped, but they will continue testing until the end of 2015, to report more of the consumer comments at the next OR show in January. We’re staying tuned and so should you.

Visit [hobbsbondedfibers.com/ramtect](http://hobbsbondedfibers.com/ramtect) for more information.







Photo courtesy Voormi

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- 5-7 OIA Rendezvous  
Seattle, WA
- 5-7 Shop.org Digital Summit 2015  
Philadelphia, PA
- 8-9 The Retailing Summit  
Dallas, TX
- 15-17 Imprinted Sportswear Show  
Ft. Worth, TX
- 27-30 NASGW Annual Meeting & Expo  
Reno, NV
- 29-31 ADA Fall Buying Show  
Baltimore, MD

### NOVEMBER

- 4-6 NBS Athletic Show  
Ft. Worth, TX
- 22-24 Sports, Inc. Athletic Show  
Las Vegas, NV

### DECEMBER

- 1-4 The Running Event  
Austin, TX
- 1-3 MRA December Lansing Market  
Lansing, MI
- 2-4 FFANY  
New York, NY
- 8-9 MRA December Cincinnati Market  
Cincinnati, OH

### JANUARY 2016

- 4-6 ASI Orlando  
Orlando, FL
- 5-7 Archery Trade Association Show  
Louisville, KY
- 6 Outdoor Retailer Winter Market Demo Day  
Salt Lake City, UT
- 6-9 CES Show  
Las Vegas, NV
- 7-10 Outdoor Retailer Winter Market  
Salt Lake City, UT
- 11-13 MRA January Novi Market  
Novi, MI
- 12-15 NBS Winter Show  
Ft. Worth, TX
- 14-16 Surf Expo  
Orlando, FL
- 17-20 NRF Retail Big Show  
New York, NY
- 19-22 SHOT Show  
Las Vegas, NV
- 22-24 Imprinted Sportswear  
Long Beach, CA
- 24-26 Sports Licensing & Tailgate Show  
Las Vegas, NV
- 27-29 PGA Merchandise Show  
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- 28-31 The SIA Snow Show  
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