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18

Photo courtesy
Nathan

MAKING NEWS

- 4 Gotham Gets in Gear
- 6 States Push Recreational Based Tourism
- 7 Keen Opens Fourth Store
- 8 Adidas Unveils Springblade Running Shoe
- 24 Calendar

GIVING BACK

- 10 Fila Steps Up for Armed Services YMCA Twentynine Palms

FEATURES

- 12 Training Catches Some Buzz
- 18 Hydration for a New Generation

ON THE COVER: Vapur Explorer Series MicroFilter
Photo courtesy Vapur

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GOTHAM GETS IN GEAR

At the fifth annual Gotham Gets in Gear event held by Rendezvous Event Management on June 19 in New York City, 20 brands from the outdoor, fitness, travel and lifestyle industries came to Manhattan to highlight their "Best of 2013/2014"

Featuring gifts, gear, fashion and locations for ski, bike, golf, run, hike, travel and healthy lifestyle, the brand lineup included Adidas, Ahnu, Airbac, Alpinestars, Arc'teryx, Avex Water Bottles, Bushnell Outdoor, Cascade Designs, Chrome, Eagle Creek, Helly Hansen, Jackson Hole Mountain Resort, Schoeller Technology, Smith Optics, Specialized Bikes and Teva.

Here are a few of the highlights:

Adidas Golf showcased the Adizero Sport, MSRP \$100, the lightest of the women's Adizero models. Built on the Supernova running last for cushioning and a sneaker-like feel, the upper plays up a superlight, breathable mesh and microfiber leather construction.



Adidas Adizero Sport

Avex showed off its leak-proof and spill-proof Autoseal technology. To drink, simply push a button on the backside of the lid and it opens a seal for drinking. When the button is released, the lid seals back up and is once again leak-proof. They're 100 percent BPA-free and FDA-approved. The Brazo water bottle comes in 25 oz., MSRP \$15, and 32 oz., MSRP \$16, sizes. A double wall insulated stainless steel 24 oz. Brazo, MSRP \$30, keeps cold drinks cold up to 20 hours.



Avex The Brazo

For athletes looking for the ease of interchangeability but not desiring a shield design, **Smith Optics** has developed the new PivLock Overdrive, MSRP \$239. Constructed of Smith's TR90 material, the frame gently rotates 45 degrees at the temples to release the lenses for quick interchangeability. Includes three Carbonic TLT performance lenses for visual clarity and impact resistance. Megol on the temples and adjustable nose pads adheres to the skin when reacting with perspiration and moisture to reduce the chance of the glasses slipping off the face.



Smith Optics PivLock Overdrive

Eagle Creek is expanding its popular Pack-It Specter line with the Pack-It Specter Compression Cube Set, MSRP \$38, ultra lightweight cubes that either compress or expand to keep clothing and accessories organized. Comes in sets of two.



Eagle Creek Pack-It Specter Compression Cube Set

From **Logitech**, the UE (Ultimate Ears) Boom, MSRP \$200, is a 360-degree wireless speaker that blasts sound in all directions with a 15-hour rechargeable battery. What's unique is its acoustic skin from Schoeller Fabrics that's water and stain resistant. It connects to music devices through Bluetooth and users can connect two UE BOOMS together through the free UE BOOM app for iOS or Android, providing stereo-to-stereo sound or traditional left/right stereo sound.



Logitech UE

At **Ahnu**, the Karma, MSRP \$90, is part of its yoga lifestyle inspired collection, Escape. Low profile and lightweight with a formed EVA footbed with neutral positioning, the Karma allows for all day comfort and support,



Ahnu Karma

Bushnell Outdoors was displaying its Power-Sync solar line for outdoor enthusiasts looking for a recharge. The SolarBook features durable, flexible solar panels that fold up into a compact and easy-to-pack protective case. Available in two configurations (850: MSRP \$360; 600: MSRP \$300), with the 850 cutting solar charge time by 2.5 hours compared to the 600. Provides high solar collectivity even in less than full sun conditions.



Bushnell Outdoors
The SolarBook

Arc'teryx showed the Macai for men, MSRP \$850, which combines fully waterproof and windproof/breathable Gore-Tex fabric with down and synthetic insulations. Down Composite Mapping ensures user comfort and a prolonged jacket life through the use of Coreloft Compact synthetic material along the hem, collar, sleeves and underarms. 850 fill European Goose down in the core provides maximum loft protection against wind, stationary moments and on-area conditions that rob the body of warmth.

Teva highlighted its new all-mountain universally compatible clipless bike shoe, The Pivot, MSRP \$150. The shoe features



Teva The Pivot

Spider365 Rubber sole for grip on varied terrain, and PedalLink clipless outsole for all mountain riding. It also features an optional cleat attachment from top to protect hardware as well as a cleat attachment compatible with all major 2-bolt cleat systems.

busting ride quality, this budget-friendly bicycle is ideal for social rides or weekly workouts.

Specialized showed off its Dolce Compact, MSRP \$830, women's specific bike. With its comfortable and fatigue-



Specialized Dolce Compact

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STATES PUSH RECREATIONAL BASED TOURISM

In order to boost the state's tourist economy and continue to support business partners such as bicycle and specialty outdoor retailers, rafting outfitters, lodging, local businesses and food and beverage purveyors, the Idaho Department of Commerce, Tourism Division is upping its outdoor-recreation spending in a push for the 2013-2014 seasons.

A five-year high consumer confidence level and an increase in real spending on travel and tourism are also fueling the push. Real spending on travel and tourism accelerated in the first quarter of 2013, increasing at an annual rate of 6.8 percent after increasing 2.1 percent (revised) in the fourth quarter of 2012, according to the Bureau of Economic Analysis at the U.S. Department of Commerce.

According to the Outdoor Industry Association, Americans spend \$646 billion annually on outdoor recreation. In Idaho alone, outdoor rec spending by consumers generates \$6.3 billion, with an additional \$1.8 billion in wages and salaries, 77,000 direct jobs and \$461 million in local and state tax revenue. By comparison, neighboring Oregon generates twice those numbers, so it makes sense for the state to tap into and grow that potential.

And while the City of Boise, (the third largest population base in the Northwest), considers itself in large part a "drive to" destination, there's

an increased focus on the town's convenient airport. Sometimes called a "freakishly friendly" city, it's no wonder the recreation Mecca is hopeful to expand its tourism base. For example, they've worked with a local trail conservation group Ridge to Rivers to develop more than 150 miles of mountain biking trails in the foothills in recent years, working hand in hand with local landowners, BLM, city and military in a rare show of multi-jurisdictional cooperation.

The state even brought in outdoor industry public relations firm, The Walton Works, to help spread the word to outdoor recreation-focused national media. "Any time we're able to host a familiarization trip with journalists representing national publications, it's an incredible opportunity. The main goal for the Tourism Division was to show that Idaho can be an appealing recreational destination for families as well as hard core adventurers," said Idaho Tourism Marketing Specialist Mitch Knothe.

Additionally, in the last two years they've been to both Portland and Seattle bike shows to promote Idaho bicycle tourism directly to consumers. They are competing with other drive/fly markets like Denver and Portland for bicycle and recreation-based tourism dollars, all of which is helping fuel retail and online sales nationwide, promoting a

healthier national lifestyle, and driving dollars to develop valuable urban resources such as public bike parking, rec paths, bike lanes and urban river corridor improvements.

Much like whitewater parks began to do 10 years ago, (Boise has one of those, too), urban river-way development is a relatively inexpensive way for cities and towns to improve their existing river corridors for boaters, floaters and fishermen, as well as other non-consumptive users who use the rivers to cool off during hot summer months.

Even the state of Iowa is on board and recently hired RiverRestoration to build a whitewater park on the Turkey River in Elkader, IA. "We have recognized an abundant demand for new recreational opportunities in Elkader," said Roger Thomas of Elkader's Economic Development Corporation. "This project will satisfy that demand in a way that beautifies the city and strengthens its economy." Similar river projects in Reno, NV, Ogden, UT, and Glenwood Springs, CO, have been successful in catalyzing sustainable economic growth thanks to the recreational opportunities and tourism dollars they attract.

Idaho Tourism even adopted "Adventures in Living" as its brand, stepped up its visual messaging, and now has more resources into outdoor activities and supporting outfitters, specialty retailers and non-profits. And like other states such as Colorado's rafting industry, there's a push toward non-extreme users such as families - broadening the recreational economic pie.

Said Knothe, "About 10 to 15 percent of our advertising is focused on pure recreation publications and sites. However, almost 100 percent of the advertising budget has a creative message/hero photography that supports our recreation message."

"Recreation is a key component in people's decisions about where they want to vacation so we focus our advertising and promotional efforts on showcasing the recreational opportunities available in Idaho," said Karen Ballard, chief tourism officer, Idaho Department of Commerce.



Photo courtesy Keen

KEEN OPENS FOURTH STORE

Keen recently celebrated the grand opening of its fourth Keen Garage in downtown Palo Alto, CA, not far from Alameda where the company was founded in 2003.

Located at 278 University Avenue, the 2,800-square-foot retail space houses more than 300 styles of Keen footwear, bags and socks. Many of the repurposed-for-a-purpose design features were crafted from locally harvested materials that were destined for scrap or the landfill. Harvested materials include:

- The Douglas Fir flooring was harvested from residences in Palo Alto, Menlo Park and Los Altos, CA;
- The timbers used in the cash wrap and fixtures came from docks in Alameda, CA;
- The fixture over the cash register is made from the hoods of eight Volkswagen Bugs from a collector in Watsonville, CA;
- The lights over the cash register area are from a munitions plant in Anaheim, CA;
- Employees at a Woolworth's store once used the lockers;
- The chandelier was designed using wire spool tops from the Monterey Bay area and telegraph insulators;
- The black outsoles behind the Keen sign near the store's entrance are from Portland Factory rejects.

"Designing this store with these materials has been like putting together a living, breathing Keen jigsaw puzzle," said Christa DePoe, VP of global online & retail.

The Garage also offers an inviting, inclusive retail space where friends and families can gather to get outfitted and inspired for their next adventure. Nearby, Keen employees benefit from interacting directly with consumers on a daily basis to receive product feedback, test retail designs and refine marketing programs. Keen Garages are also located in Portland, Tokyo and Toronto.

"We consider these stores detached garages," said Keen's Director of Marketing Linda Balfour. "They are an extension of our office and our brand. We're glad that the Palo Alto Garage is parked near where the brand was born 10 years ago."

ADIDAS UNVEILS SPRINGBLADE RUNNING SHOE



Hoping to build on the successful launch of its Boost cushioning technology, Adidas last week introduced Springblade, featuring individually tuned blades engineered to propel runners forward.

Unlike standard EVA midsoles that deliver energy return in a vertical direction, Springblade features 16 forward angled blades made of a high-tech polymer. The highly elastic blades instantaneously react to any environment, compressing and releasing energy to create an efficient push-off.

In an interview at Adidas' flagship store in Manhattan, Steve Vincent, head of Adidas Innovation Team (aIT), said the shoe had been in development for six years. The initial concept was to create "the feeling of levitating a little bit." Diving boards, pole-vaulting, motorcycle suspensions and other things that store and release energy were used for inspiration.

Vincent admitted that his team experienced "a lot of early failures" when testing hundreds of geometries and materials before finding one that produced maximum energy efficiency across every tuned spring and also withstood any force with each stride.

Each blade is precisely tuned in geometry, thickness and position for every phase of a runner's stride to give support and full range of motion. A Techfit upper hugs the top of the foot to lock it in to harness energy.

"It's designed and developed to help propel you forward so when you load the shoe vertically and then unload it, it releases energy both vertically and also forward for a propulsion effect," said Vincent.

Vincent said Springblade shares more similarities than differences with Boost, which he said continues to enjoy "fantastic" sell-through since its launch in late February with order filling remaining a challenge. Both the Springblade and Boost support Adidas' new Energy Running platform and speak to energy return. While an EVA midsole may get hard when it's cold outside or "smushy" when it's hot, the Springblade stays "very close to the same stiffness" and has tested to be seven times more temperature resistant than Adidas' standard EVA cushioning. The Springblade also holds a "high durability" similar to Boost to last for many runs.

The experience for the runner is somewhat different, said Vincent. The Boost is built around "endless energy" to feed a long, comfortable run while the Springblade lends itself for "more explosive energy. It just loads and unloads quickly. It's a very lively feel when you run in the shoe."

Vincent said while the shoe also provides a unique feel for mid-foot and forefoot, a heel striker will likely get the richest experience from the Springblade because they're engaging all the blades.

A more notable difference is the overall look with not only the blades protruding from the bottom of the sole but also an "energetic" color palette. The more aggressive colors are designed to attract the customers' eyes to the shoe before they even recognize the unique blades on the sole.

Robbie Fuller, design director for Advance Concepts, said Springblade and Boost sit at opposite ends of the brand's energy run category.

"If you're looking for a new sensation that is somewhat familiar, you go to Boost," said Fuller. "But if you're a runner that's always looking for the next great thing and want to have people look at your feet, then you go with the Springblade. Even wearing them on a plane or at a mall, you're going to have conversations with people asking you about it."

The unique look may offer Springblade more of a lifestyle opportunity than the Boost, with Fuller saying Adidas found high school kids showing "a lot of interest with the look and walk of the shoe."

Adidas plans a big marketing push including a partnership with the action movie "The Wolverine," which is due in theaters this summer.

"We know we have something special with Boost cushioning introduced earlier this year and we're confident Springblade will set us apart from the competition once again," said Mikal Peveto, director of running at Adidas America.

Springblade will be available August 1 for \$180 at retailers nationwide including The Finish Line, Foot Locker, Dick's Sporting Goods, Eastbay and select running specialty stores.



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FILA STEPS UP FOR ARMED SERVICES YMCA TWENTYNINE PALMS

Fila, the official apparel and footwear sponsor of the BNP Paribas Open, donated about \$48,000 in apparel and footwear to the Armed Services YMCA Twentynine Palms, a non-profit beneficiary of The Champions Volunteer Foundation based in Virginia.

The Champions Volunteer Foundation, the primary beneficiary of the BNP Paribas Open – played in March at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indian Wells, CA, raises funds for charitable purposes, including, youth recreational, educational and well-care programs. The BNP Paribas Open is the largest ATP World Tour and WTA combined two-week event in the world, offering more than \$12 million in prize money.

The donated products range from women's fitness capri pants, tank tops, pants, jackets, short sleeve tops; men's fitness jackets and pants, warm-ups, sweaters and tee shirts; and training and lifestyle shoes for men, women and children.

Fila selected Armed Services YMCA from many of The Champions Volunteer Foundation's non-profit beneficiaries based on a variety of factors including frequency and type of physical training exercises.

"Marines must train daily," said Anita Neu-Fultz, executive director, Armed Services YMCA Twentynine Palms. "This generous donation from Fila will allow them to train wearing clothes that offer the highest level of comfort and performance. Thank you so much to Fila, The Champions Volunteer Foundation and the BNP Paribas Open for giving our Marines this wonderful and important gift."

"We are thrilled to donate Fila apparel and footwear to active duty servicemen and women and their families through this deserving organization," said Jennifer Estabrook, Fila EVP of business operations. "The programming and support that the Armed Services

YMCA provides to military families is outstanding and not only makes a difference in their lives, but makes military life easier."

Since the Civil War, the Armed Services YMCA has consistently provided educational, recreational, social, and spiritual programs to military members and their families. The Armed Services YMCA Twentynine Palms' focus is on junior enlisted, E-5 (Sergeant) and below.



The following are quotes taken from thank you letters to Fila:

- "Fila, thank you so much for the sports attire it means a lot to us military members as well as our family members. We do what we do every day for America not as a job but as a devoted duty and this simple little token of appreciation means a lot to us. Thank you for this opportunity." – R/S, SSgt. Glynn (Headquarters Battalion)
- "To the 'Y' and Fila for providing us the opportunity to wear some great sports gear. As a U.S. Marine, we need great gear during our workouts on a daily basis. It is highly appreciated!" – Sgt. Perez
- "Thank you all for what you do for military families. They always talk about what we do for our country but never about how you all support us in the same way. Thank you." – Sgt. Thompson
- "Thank you for everything you've done for us. Your support is greatly appreciated. When I found out about it I knew that I would be able to get the things I really needed for my physical training. Thank you so much." - Robert

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TRAINING CATCHES SOME BUZZ

By Thomas J. Ryan

Suddenly, the training footwear category has gotten crowded. Puma earlier this year signed two NFL stars as part of a bigger push into training. Asics ran TV ads during the recent NBA playoffs to highlight a more expansive training initiative. With the benefits of natural movement speaking to intense training regimens, New Balance, Merrell and Vibram FiveFingers have all found room in gyms. Even The North Face is coming out with a training shoe and gym wear for Spring 2014.

But the training opportunity has evolved since Nike's "Bo Knows" commercials in the mid- 90s launching the cross-training category. Today, it is more representative of the success both Inov-8 and Reebok are finding making shoes around the CrossFit phenomenon.

NEW BALANCE
Minimus 20v3
Photo courtesy New Balance



“CrossFit boxes are popping up everywhere, with hundreds of members joining each,” said Lizzie Baker, U.S. trade marketing manager at Inov-8. “Crossfit’s popularity has inspired additional growth in the functional fitness and training category overall with larger gyms incorporating functional fitness areas - ropes, box jumps, etc. With this trend, crossfitters and gym goers are pushing themselves to new extremes, and they are looking for the gear that will take their performance to the next level.”

Beyond CrossFit, the trend is evident in the continued popularity of boot camps as well as Zumba, MMA-inspired fitness classes, and a host of other emerging high-endurance and ultra-aggressive aerobic classes at gyms. Obstacle races, such as Tough Mudder, Muddy Buddy, Spartan Races, are also said to be closely linked to this trend.

To some, the growing popularity of these more extreme workout experiences and activities are a counter reaction to the tedium of running.

“The dynamic movement, group environment, and goal-based training is striking a cord with consumers globally,” said Shaun Bohnsack, category business director, Outside Athletic, Merrell.

“It’s connecting with the average person who sees fitness as very boring,” added Chris Froio, VP of fitness and training at Reebok. “Running on a treadmill for 45 minutes with headphones on and staring at a TV can seem like a chore. These programs are mixing it up. Everyday is a different workout. And it’s doing it more in a social environment that I think is sparking a renewed interest in getting into the gym and working out. It’s more fun compared to the solitude of running or lifting weights.”

One opportunity continues to be the younger team athlete aspiring to improve his or her game with the popularity of the more varied and intense workouts. At the same time, the slightly older recreational runner appreciates the variety, comradery, competitiveness, and the workout efficiency of these more functional activities.

“High school and college-age athletes as well as group fitness-oriented professionals are allowing the opportunity for a more diverse and specific training footwear assortment,” said Colin Ingram, product manager for New Balance. “Less and less of these athletes are getting a running silhouette to cover their needs. The chance to purchase a shoe that has more specificity and helps them better execute their workouts is a huge advantage. The gyms and trainers they work with are getting better at suggesting the proper footwear.”

With gym rats seeing value in having more than one shoe in their bag for different workouts, some stores, in particular run specialty dealers, are seeing an opportunity for an incremental sale.

“They may carry eight running brands so bringing in a ninth or tenth running brand isn’t a big deal for them,” said Froio. “But CrossFit is different and they see crossfitters as very technical people who want the best gear and love the service of a run specialty account.”

For Reebok, its recent focus on fitness represents a return to its roots in the eighties when the introduction of the Freestyle helped spawn the aerobic exercise fitness craze. Although less than at that time, the current fitness push is also skewing toward women, who are said to be especially drawn to its social aspects.

Reebok’s push back into fitness was signified by its move two and a half years ago to become title sponsor of the CrossFit Games. The arrangement also included the launch Reebok CrossFit “Boxes” around the world, and the introduction of a range of footwear and apparel designed specifically for CrossFit training and competition.

“Our relationship with CrossFit has been amazing,” said Froio. “We’ll be in our third year as title sponsor of the Games. But more important has been the relationships we’re building with the gyms themselves, the clients in those gyms, as well as CrossFit Game athletes. It’s helping us build the best product for our training business.”

For the CrossFit games this July in Carson, CA, Reebok will debut the Nano 3.0, which is built on a wider last that allows the foot to splay out more for added stability required for Olympic weight-lifting movements. At the same time, flexibility and lightness assists in other gymnastic movements. Finally, a PU-casted upper prevents the shoes from getting scuffed up by ropes and walls. “It’s basically indestructible,” said Froio.

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Reebok
CrossFit
Nano 3.0



The prevalence of bolder colors hold greater appeal for CrossFit-type shoes to stand out on shoe walls, and the overall styling also opens up opportunities in performance and lifestyle apparel. Said Froio, “It’s all inspired by these cool Southern California surf and skate environment looks that embodies what the CrossFit community is all about.”

In May, Asics introduced a new line of footwear, apparel and accessories created specifically for the athletic training market, backed by a “Next” national advertising campaign. The shoe side covers six models, including ones aimed at the dance enthusiast, those looking for a barefoot training experience, as well as CrossFit shoes with enough heel to support weightlifting.

Matt Donnelly, footwear product manager, Asics America, said beyond cushioning and flexibility, shoes for sport training athletes need to offer a “lateral outrigger” or a technical support element to control lateral movement, much like what is offered on tennis shoes. He further said durability is the number one complaint from crossfitters and something very few manufacturers have looked at.

Asics addressed this issue with the GEL-Fortius TR, which includes a sticky outsole and reinforced toe bumper to prevent wear and tear during short, intense interval workouts.

“The tech that has been embraced up until now has mostly been in the profile (drop/pitch) and flexibility of the sole,” added Donnelly. “Today we are seeing what could be the beginning of a return to a vis-tech in the sole, with emphasis on upper materialization as the major story. Lightweight, seamless and minimal are words that describe the consumers’ needs/desires especially for the uppers of the shoe.”

Around aesthetics, the bolder the better, agreed Donnelly. “For women’s fitness it’s all about styling and training,” he said. “Fitness shoes seem to be doing well in large part due to the styling, as compared to running shoes which always seem a little higher profile and bulky compared to the sleek foot-formed look of the women’s fitness/lightweight training shoes. For men, it’s still about clean looks with hints of tech or supportive design features that add value.”

At Inov-8, new additions include the F-Lite 232 that brings the heel down to zero-drop while also offering a wider forefoot to deliver better fit for those who splay their toes while working out or for those with wide feet. The F-Lite 249 is a women’s-specific version of the popular F-Lite 262, also built on a wider last for extra toe box room. For Fall/Winter 2013, Inov-8 will also launch its first weightlifting shoe.

“Our product has changed very little over the past few seasons because the DNA is what makes them so popular,” admitted Graham Jordison, Inov-8’s product design manager. “However, we are still looking to implement new technologies using material welds and prints to aid the construction, together with features such as our rope-tec for performance. Getting the balance between minimalism and durability is key.”

Asics
GEL-Fortius TR



Asics
GEL-Fortius TR



Inov-8
F-Lite 249



With only a relatively small number of SKU's for the category, color can make or break the product, added Jordison. He said, "We look closely at the market trends which continue to be the use of intense clashing brights and neons in an unapologetic fashion. Of course we also pay close attention to the needs of the more conservative end user with the use of tone-on-tone darks."

At New Balance, the Minimus 20v3 Training Shoe has been doing well for the brand with a mid-cut version to debut spring 2014. Ingram said while the running category certainly launched and fostered the return to minimally shod feet, the approach is finding its place in the training world.

"Building a stronger foot as a base for every other movement is essential for the complete athlete," said Ingram. "The elite trainers we work with such as Eric Cressey and BJ Gaddour embrace and champion our Minimus footwear as it allows for



New Balance Minimus 20v3

mobility and lightweight, stable ground contact for a solid base. We still work with folks who aren't sold on the idea of minimus in the gym environment, but the more they wear them, the more they see the benefit."

Even more so than running, bright, bold color have been the impetus for drawing the attention of consumers when on-the-shelf and also as a personal statement in the gym or on-the-town. "However," added Ingram, "consumers are beginning to appreciate and understand subtlety and depth in colors, patterns and materials. I expect to see a movement toward sophistication in consumer footwear choice going forward."

Merrell noticed that many CrossFit and boot camp classes are becoming "technique" based with bodyweight-only exercises. This conversation around technique or form played directly into the conversations around shoes that allow the body to move more naturally. The aligned well with Merrell's M Connect range, with minimal platforms that allow the athlete to feel the ground and naturally stabilize.



Merrell
Crush Glove

Focused on building shoes to stand up to the rigor of going off road, Merrell found its M Connect models more capable of handling the protection and durability needs in an intense training environment than many of the pure athletic/run brands.

"As we develop shoes we don't necessarily say, 'this is a running shoe' and 'this is a cross training shoe,'" said Bohnsack. "Instead we look at the consumer need for natural form or technique and apply that to a range of shoes that are built for outside fitness and running."

Bohnsack said Merrell's team is seeing a lot of seamless design aesthetics influencing training, running footwear and apparel. No-sew technology, heat welding and an overall look of sleek, clean and molded prevail.

"Overall, athletes are looking for products that are considered wearable - both in the gym and outside - and capable for their extreme uses," said Bohnsack. "This new need for versatility of products in training is a change,

and speaks to the evolving athletes' needs and the way they are approaching fitness in general. The indoor athlete is a thing of the past; people are stepping out of the gym, into nature, to get their fitness more now than in the past."

Vibram FiveFingers found its KMD Sport has been popular with CrossFit participants since the model can handle the wear and tear on the upper caused by activities like rope climbing and rowing while also handling more aggressive lateral activity, said PJ Antonik, media relations and communications associate for Vibram FiveFingers. Mud racers are also leaning toward the aggressive lug outsole like the Spyridon to provide proper traction in the mud and on obstacles like ropes. At the gym the new EL-X for men and the Entrada for women support weight training with their ultra thin soles.

Overall, Antonik said participants in CrossFit and the "rugged races" are looking for a functional shoe that gives them a lot of ground feedback and versatility. "In many of these new regimens, proper balance and form are encouraged and taught, so the more you can provide those sensations, the better."



Vibram Fivefingers EL-X

The North Face will also introduce its first training shoe, the Ultra Kilowatt, for Spring 2014. The inspiration came after the brand noticed that its athletes, whether skiers, climbers or runners, were looking for gear to handle their extensive off-season workouts, including many functional circuit-training type activities. The shoe is part of a larger mountain athletic push that will include apparel designed for workouts, whether in gyms or outdoors.

"Our athletes spend months and months training for that one moment and we realized we're not making product for that training," said Mark Magruder, product line coordinator for The North Face. "When



The North Face
Ultra Kilowatt

Puma signed in April Cordarrelle Patterson, the star wide receiver from the University of Tennessee.

you come down to it, the joy and bliss that you get in that one moment is a payoff for all the work you put in for so long. We wanted to pay homage to that preparation time.”

While the brand typically sets its major marketing pushes for the back half of the year, a major marketing spend is planned for spring 2014 for the Mountain Athletic collection as well as an expansive Ultra Protection footwear series, which includes a hiker, light hiker, trail shoe, and hybrid road/trail shoe.

Magruder describes the Ultra Kilowatt as “basically like a track spike on steroids with enough EVA underfoot.” Features include a rubber toe-cap and some padding on its suede tongue to offset abrasion from rope climbs and drags. To handle lateral movements, rubber is wrapped along the side of the upper for more durability. While The North Face has used Pebax Foam in its shoes in the past, the Ultra Kilowatt will be the first time it uses Pebax Plates, which are commonly found in track spikes and soccer boots to provide “great energy return,” said Magruder.

Compared to others aiming at the training category, Magruder said its approach is more “goal oriented” and focused around achieving specific objectives to excel in events.

“It will totally work for CrossFit and it has some crossover,” said Magruder. “But it’s definitely intended more for our athletes who are using it in different environments and getting ready for an event rather than for someone looking to get ripped or lose a couple of pounds.”



Puma, just before the 2013 NFL Draft, added Cordarrelle Patterson, the star wide receiver from the University of Tennessee who was picked by the Minnesota Vikings to its training roster. The other training team roster athletes will span across sports, but they all share the common thread of versatility, uniqueness and speed. Said Tara McRae, VP of strategic planning and brand management for Puma North America, “each of them is fast, and each needs to train hard in their own way to keep up their speed.”

Cordarrelle Patterson will be featured in the brand’s Nature of Performance marketing campaign, will attend Puma events, offer training tips via the brand’s website and social media channels, and lead special programs with retail partners including a program launching later this year involving training with high school students. He will train in Puma’s BioWeb Elite, which combines a detailed and colorful outsole with a flexible and lightweight midsole.

“The overall design plays with negative space, carving into the outsole tread and minimizing materials to reduce weight, but it also features a unique element called the ‘Webcage,’” said McRae of BioWeb Elite. “This is an engineered piece of technology that wraps around the foot to for support during intense workouts. Bio-Web Elite has been received very well by consumers and will continue to be a focus for us for the back half of the year, and will be expanding in 2014.”

Patterson will also support Puma’s new ACTV and RCVR compression apparel lines, featuring athletic taping built into the garments for muscle support and recovery. McRae added that while some brands have focused greatly on the CrossFit trend in attacking the training category, Puma will look at all the training activities that help athletes and everyday consumers be active.

“[Training] is a category that is continuing to grow and doesn’t show any signs of slowing down,” observed McRae. “Being active is not a trend, it is part of life for our consumers.” ■





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A hiker in an orange shirt and blue shorts is sitting on a rocky ledge, drinking from a blue water bottle. The hiker is wearing a blue backpack and a grey cap. The background shows a vast, deep canyon with a river winding through it. The canyon walls are layered with different shades of brown and red rock. The sky is blue with some white clouds.

HYDRATION FOR A NEW GENERATION

While the old plastic waterbottles we loved and used for decades have been slowly going away, a new generation of ever-improving hydration systems have been making a big splash.

By Aaron H. Bible

In human beings, more than 65 percent of our bodies are comprised of water. Without it, we can't live. And unlike food-energy, it's impossible for our bodies to store it. Almost as soon as we take it in, we push it out through sweating, crying, urinating and even breathing.

And since we don't have camel-like adaptations to survive such droughts in our water sources, we've had the ingenuity to create products to carry our re-hydrating fluids with us. Whether it's a bladder to stick in your pack or a water bottle that clips onto your hand or belt, hydration technology has come a long way from the days of bulky and BPA-laden water bottles.

So whether you prefer to carry your fluids on your back, hip or in hand, these companies have it dialed in to your needs.

POC

POC - recognized leader in snow and bike outerwear and protection - has created a new dual-purpose mountain bike hydration pack. The VPD 2.0 Spine Pack contains both an integrated hydration system and a shock absorbent spine protector - tested according to

the highest level of the 1621-2 motorcycle standard (all POC products are certified for motor cross). The 25 Liter, MSRP \$200, and 16 Liter, MSRP \$175, packs feature a bi-directional water tube exit, heavy duty elastic waist band, an easy-access pocket for phone or camera, a helmet pouch which fits a full face helmet, height-adjustable sternum strap and ergonomically cut shoulder straps. The heat molded back



POC VPD 2.0 Spine Pack

and front of the pack feature mud-shedding top fabric and inside you'll find separate compartments for the removable back protector and hydration pouch.

DEUTER

Since before the turn of the 20th century, Deuter has been manufacturing premium outdoor packs and they were one of the first on the hydration system bandwagon. To amp up their already popular classic all-round backpack, Deuter added an elastic spring steel frame and an Aircomfort FlexLite System to

create their new Compact Air EXP. Airflow is superb not only through the new ventilated back system, but also with features such as mesh



Deuter VPD 2.0 Spine Pack

shoulder straps and mesh hip fins with two zipped mesh pockets. For water storage, the Compact Air contains a separate compartment for a hydration system of up to three liters, secured by an autolocking zipper, a velcro-sealed tube opening and tube line. The pack has a reinforced back panel to avoid pressure points, an internal organizer and mesh pockets, 3M reflectors on

the hip wings, a zipped front pocket, side compression straps that are also equipped to store protective pads, and a stow-away helmet flap and rain cover. The Race EXP Air, MSRP \$129, features the AirComfort FlexLite System, a flexible frame and three-liter reservoir compatibility.



Deuter Hydro lite 3.0

Mesh hip fins help make for a secure fitting, and users can expand the pack's volume when needed. This lightweight pack has three-sided ventilation, an adjustable chest strap, foldaway helmet flap, front pocket and zipped valuables pocket, a wet compartment and side pockets, 3M reflectors and a rain cover. The Hydro lite 3.0, MSRP \$79, is a thermal-lined, lightweight pack that includes the three-liter BPA-free bladder. Mesh shoulder straps and the Airstripes back system create a comprehensive ventilation system.

The zip tabs, secured by press studs, allow the bladder tube to exit directly from the main compartment for easy access. The pack also features a safety blink loop, 3M reflectors all around, a zip front pocket and a waist strap.

CASCADE DESIGNS-PLATYPUS

In an effort to fulfill Platypus' plan to meet the increasingly specialized needs of today's riders, the company's 2014 collection will feature three new packs, all including magnetic hose retention and reservoir attachment.

Two are designed specifically for women. In 2012, Platypus hired a pack designer who specialized in women's fit and began testing with a team of in-house female riders.

The Siouxon combines a full set of all-mountain features with a suspension designed for women with a 2.0L Big Zip LP reservoir,

ventilated suspension, carry system for full-face helmet and pads, pump sleeve and tool pocket, magnetic hose retention and reservoir hang hooks. The Duthie comes with all the features of an all-mountain pack in a streamlined design. It can carry a full-face helmet and pads on the uphill and offers quick access to the bars and hydration. It features a 3.0L Big Zip LP Reservoir, a pump sleeve and tool pockets, an eyewear pocket, ventilated suspension, magnetic hose retention and reservoir hang hooks.

The B-Line is built for female cross-country riders combining a ventilated female-tailored suspension with cross-country features like gel pockets, pump sleeve and tool pockets, external stuff pocket, magnetic hose retention and reservoir hang hooks. The B-Line includes a 2 Liter Big Zip LP Reservoir.

DAKINE

From snowboard and luggage leader DaKine comes a new hydration system in the Amp and Drafter Series. "Dakine has been making hydration packs for well over a decade," said Dakine Men's Sales Manager Tim Weisser. "We primarily serve the bike and winter markets, but some people have also been using our Heli Pro and Amp models for day hikes and other adventures."

Continued Weisser, "Dakine got involved in hydration through feedback from our athletes. They needed hydration solutions for the sports they were doing, like freeride mountain biking, backcountry skiing, and snowboarding, and they also needed rugged packs with features specific to their sports. Over the years we have worked closely with top athletes to make sure the packs live up to their expectations. With Dakine hydration and hydration compatible packs you can rely on a functioning system with the quality, durability and fit that all of our packs are known for."

New for Spring/Summer, 2014, the Amp 24L, MSRP \$125, and Amp 18L, MSRP \$135, are made from 630D and 70D nylon and come with a deployable helmet carry and rain cover. The 20x12x9 inch and 19x10.5x8 inch packs feature mesh side pocket, internal organizer pockets and fleece-lined sunglasses and phone pockets, plus integrated rescue whistles on the sternum straps. Air mesh suspended back panels sit off the back to maximize comfort and ventilation. The Amp 24L does not include a reservoir, while the Amp 18L comes with a three-liter Shape-Loc bladder.

The Drafter 12-liter pack features a three-liter shape-Loc hydration reservoir, Air Mesh suspended back panel, full-face or cross-country helmet carry, armor carry straps, fleece-lined and padded phone and sunglasses pockets and internal organizer pockets. The rugged 18x7.5x5 inch Drafter also has the integrated rescue whistle and sternum strap.



Dakine Amp 24L

HIGH SIERRA

Founded in 1978, High Sierra is known worldwide for creating reliable, affordable adventure gear. Acquired by Samsonite International SA in 2012, High Sierra's growing collection of value-driven designs range from trail friendly hydration packs to multi-day backpacks. The packs in High Sierra's new Tech Series are no exception. Lightweight, feature rich and functional, these new hydration systems have a wide opening, BPA-free antimicrobial reservoirs with insulated hose covers, and Airflow back panels.

The Piranha 10, MSRP \$100, comes with a BPA-free, antimicrobial, two-liter bladder with a wide-opening reservoir. The insulated hose cover prevents water from freezing. It has a front-load main compartment for larger items, organizer pockets for keys, bicycle tools and accessories, a mesh front pocket for external storage and a tuck-away mesh sport flap that holds a helmet. Side compression straps stabilize loads and the reflective loop holds an LED blinker. A removable waist belt and Add-A-Bag attachment loops allow users to attach the Piranha10 to a luggage bag. High Sierra's mid-sized pack, the Marlin 18, MSRP \$140, also includes bladder and insulated hose with elastic loops. It has a front load main compartment, organizer pockets, mesh front pocket and a tuck-away mesh sport flap. Airflow back panel channels

keep moisture away from the body. The Riptide 25, MSRP \$80, is a full-featured pack featuring a sport flap on the front in addition to the main, front-load compartment. There's a front-pocket organizer, a zippered accessory pocket and a padded waist belt with dial zippered pockets. Riptide allows the wearer to stabilize the load with side compression straps with webbing keepers. An insulated hose cover prevents water from freezing in the tube, and elastic loops position the hose for convenient access.



High Sierra Piranha 10



High Sierra Marlin 18



High Sierra Riptide 25

OSPREY

Osprey's new Rev Series will carry essentials for the efficient traveler who prefers not to stop, and is especially suited for trail runners and endurance racers. Combined with the new Hydraulics LT reservoir with built-in baffles to reduce barreling and sloshing, these packs



Photo courtesy Nathan

keep the load balanced without bouncing, rubbing or chafing. Osprey's new Biostretch body wrap harness and belt are designed to move with the athlete and the Reverse Spacer Mesh Backpanel helps cool.

The Rev Series consists of five packs and one belt, the Rev Solo, MSRP \$40. All packs share these common features: hydration pocket with Hydraulics LT Reservoir, reflective graphics, stabilization wings, stash pocket, removable stretch mesh pocket, a front panel bungee, and a weather-protective, drop-down DigiFlip media pocket for quick access to touch screen devices.

The Rev 24, MSRP \$130, and Rev 18, MSRP \$120, also contain stretch mesh side pockets - one of them zippered - dual stretch mesh harness pockets and zippered stretch mesh bodybelt pockets. The Biostretch Body Belt Harness is made with mesh-covered, perforated foam and uses a modified straight ErgoPull hipbelt closure.

The Rev 12, MSRP \$110, and Rev 6, MSRP \$100, feature dual stretch mesh harness pockets, stretch mesh side pockets and shoulder harness pockets with a zippered expansion water bottle sleeve. The Rev 12 also has the Biostretch Body Belt Harness. Rev 1.5, MSRP \$70, has side pockets and dual power mesh harness pockets.

ULTIMATE DIRECTION

Following on the heels of the game-changing Scott Jurek-designed hydration line and SJ Ultra Vest, the UD Jenny Ultra Vesta, MSRP \$124, is a next-generation hydration solution designed by Scott's wife Jenny Jurek and a collective of notable female ultra-runners. Twin 10-ounce water bottles are strategically placed up front for comfort and convenience while a four-liter main compartment provides room for clothing, food, water and other trail essentials. Front pockets keep gels



Ultimate Direction
Jenny Ultra Vesta

and small items accessible on the fly. For long runs, the Jenny's wide, breathable shoulder straps eliminate hot spots and dries quickly. It disperses weight efficiently for no-bounce performance. Weighs 11 ounces with bottles.

"The Jurek Collection is what people are looking for – high tech design and materials in a product that looks great and performs seamlessly," said Scott. "The bright colors are intended to match the current trend in shoe color. This is something that people really appreciate."

NATHAN

"The overarching trend we're seeing is that fitness enthusiasts and competitive athletes alike are increasingly looking for personalized performance offerings, especially in the hydration category," said Jim Frazier, VP of Product for Nathan. "Options for carrying, ease of use, price point and color combinations that can reflect a consumer's personality are all drivers for athletes when seeking out individualized hydration products."

Specific trends driving the company's Spring 2014 line include: products shaped and designed for the way the body moves, engineered materials, visual aesthetics/color and insulation. "We are seeing an increase of insulation, specifically in performance hydration," continued Frazier. "We are launching the first-to-market

insulated Flask this coming Fall (2013), featuring our unique 'Fire & Ice' technology. Nathan's 'Fire & Ice' technology signifies that the bottle is both double-wall insulated and 360-degree reflective – both great for hydration and visibility."

New in Hydration Handhelds is the SpeedDraw Plus Insulated, MSRP \$35, with Ergological shaped SpeedDraw Flask with Fire & Ice technology allowing for a natural grip and easy-squeeze access to fluids. This 18 oz., 535ml double-wall insulated and hi-viz reflective SpeedDraw Flask with Race Cap offers quick bursts of fluid and keeps liquids cooler longer. Includes a fully adjustable hand strap with thumb-hole for grip-free running. Large expandable zippered pocket carries phone, keys, ID and other running essentials.

New in Hydration Belts is the Mercury 2, 20oz., 600ml, MSRP \$40, and Mercury 3, 30 oz., 900 ml, MSRP \$45. The bounce-free 2-bottle Mercury is an ideal road running companion. Ergological neoprene and monofilament belt design offers soft, multi-directional stretch; perforated neoprene in center offers breathability, comfort and includes two 10oz., 300ml flasks with push-pull caps. Includes iPhone compatible stretch mesh zip pocket.

In Waist Packs is the new, lightweight Horizon, MSRP \$45, that carries the SpeedDraw Flask in the horizontal, insulated, patented XTS Cradle. The Peak, MSRP \$40, has similar features including extended side panels that hug the body, and zippered stretch pocket and external shock cord system for extra storage. In Race Vests, look for the feature-rich VaporShadow and Zeal (both 2L for women), and the VaporCloud and Zealot (both 2L).

POLAR BOTTLE

After months of product development, Product Architects, Inc. - the company behind the popular Polar Bottle insulated water bottle - launched its first line of hydration packs and recyclable hydration system on the market: The Cenote.



Polar Bottle The Cenote

This high-quality, low-cost alternative to the traditional hydration pack is sold as an entire system that includes a two-liter or three-liter reservoir as well as hosing and a bite valve. Replacement components are sold separately on the Cenote Hydration website. The Cenote reservoir is designed to be simple to recycle as the system's original box can be folded into a returnable package that includes free shipping back to the Cenote office where it will be recycled. Product Architects

wanted to create a system with a reservoir that could be washed and reused but was also recyclable and easy to replace. The Cenote Hydration System includes a two- or three-liter reservoir, hosing and bite valve.

"We kept hearing from customers that they were throwing away their non-recyclable reservoirs after only a few uses because they

would get so dirty and were hard to clean," said Polar Bottle President Judy Amabile. "It made sense that someone should introduce a more eco-friendly alternative that gave consumers the freedom to easily replace their bladder without feeling guilty about wasting money or hurting the environment."

VAPUR

California-based Vapur, Inc. is on a mission to make hydration incomparably portable with their Anti-Bottles: reusable, handheld, collapsible hydration products. Vapur has taken their mission further with the new Explorer Series MicroFilter, MSRP \$70.

Weighing 2.7-ounces, the filter and bottle set allows users to filter water in a one-liter Anti-Bottle directly from the stream or lake. The filter is a chemical-free, hollow fibre membrane system with an absolute pore size of 0.2 microns, said to safely remove 99.9999 percent of waterborne bacteria and 99.9 percent of protozoa. The system meets U.S. EPA standards and exceeds CDC recommendations for water purity. Each MicroFilter is capable of purifying hundreds of liters of water from lakes, rivers, streams and tap water over its lifespan. It includes a stop feature so users know it has maxed out its usage when water completely stops flowing through the spout. The Anti-Bottle is manufactured in the USA, is BPA-free, freezable and dishwasher safe.

GEIGERRIG

Hydration innovator Geigerrig continues to expand its offerings and at Outdoor Retailer Summer Market will introduce two new products. From the company that brought pressurization, in-line filtration, and reversible-dishwasher safe reservoirs to the market now comes Nano Technology. Nano technology changes the way water is transferred from a hydration pack to the mouth with an elasta-tube that stretches and has about the same diameter as head phone cords. Due to the Geigerrig pressurized system, water can be delivered through a tiny drink tube that can be easily routed through clothing and equipment and clipped where it's most convenient and remain out of the way.



Also being introduced this summer is the Geigerrig plug-n-play virus filter for on-the-go filtration of water found virtually anywhere. Geigerrig's pressurized hydration reservoir pushes water through a virus filter snapped in-line with the drink tube. The construction of the filter enables the water to flow out of the reservoir, through the filter to the mouth for on-the-go use of water found in rivers, streams, lakes and ponds. ■

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- 9-10 TAG Summer Show
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- 10-12 BCA International Billiard & Home
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Friedrichshafen, Germany
- 11-14 European Outdoor Trade Fair
Friedrichshafen, Germany
- 12-14 A.D.A. Spring Show
Milwaukee, WI
- 16-18 ASI Chicago
Chicago, IL
- 17-19 NBS Specialty Outdoor Market
Fort Worth, TX
- 18-19 NBS Summer
Athletic Specialty Market
Fort Worth, TX
- 31 Outdoor Retailer Open Air Demo
Salt Lake City, UT

AUGUST

- 1-4 Outdoor Retailer Summer Market
Salt Lake City, UT
- 1-4 SGB Active Lifestyle Investors
Conference
Salt Lake City, UT
- 8-10 Sports Inc. Outdoor Show
Denver, CO
- 17-19 Atlanta Shoe Market
Atlanta, GA

SEPTEMBER

- 8-10 NBS Fall Semi-Annual Market
Fort Worth, TX
- 18-20 Interbike International Trade Expo
Las Vegas, NV
- 25-26 Sports & Fitness Industry Assoc.
Industry Leaders Summit
Baltimore, MD
- 30-2 OIA Rendezvous
San Diego, CA

OCTOBER

- 7-8 The Retailing Summit
Dallas, TX
- 15-17 SGB Sports & Technology
Convergence
Palo Alto, CA

NOVEMBER

- 1-3 NBS Fall Athletic Market
Austin, TX
- 5-7 TAG Fall/Winter Show
St. Louis, MO
- 15-17 A.D.A. Fall Show
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