

SGB

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WEEKLY

THE WEEKLY DIGITAL MAGAZINE FOR THE SPORTING GOODS INDUSTRY





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ON THE COVER: Photo Courtesy Sorel

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Dorel Industries announced the departure of **Robert P. Baird**, group president and CEO of the company's Recreational/Leisure segment, which owns Cannondale, Schwinn, GT, Mongoose, Caloi, IronHorse and Sugoi. Peter Woods, the segment's CFO, has been named interim president.

'**47 Brand** hired **Julie Czerepak** as its first-ever retail-marketing manager. She had been a senior retail marketing specialist at Sperry Top-Sider.

Sandy Schwarzenbach, formerly VP sales, teen and sporting good chains for North America for Quiksilver and DC at Quiksilver, Inc., has joined **Vans** as director of apparel, national accounts, a new position.

Outdoor Research promoted **Dave Mahoney**, its director of commercial sales for the past five years, to VP of sales.

Industrial Revolution promoted **Graeme Esarey**, former director of marketing and product development, to the position of president.

Brazil's **Rider Sandals** said its marketing manager **Ricardo Mohr** would now spend half his time working from Rider's U.S. offices in Orlando, FL.

Johnson Outdoors Gear, the camping equipment company that controls the Eureka!, Silva, and Jetboil brands, appointed **Christopher Martens** as business director - camping.

SKLZ, the maker of athletic training devices, named Aaron Azevedo as VP of product, and **David Schultz** as VP of sales.

Devereux, the maker of men's golf wear based in Los Angeles, named industry veteran **Brian Lohman** a partner and director of sales.

NIKE

PROFIT RISES AND ADVANCE ORDERS JUMP

Nike, Inc. reported earnings from continuing operations improved 3.1 percent in its second quarter ended November 30, to \$537 million, or 59 cents a share, besting Wall Street's consensus estimate by a penny. Revenues grew 8.0 percent to \$6.43 billion, and gained 9 percent on a currency-neutral (C-N) basis. Nike Brand futures were ahead 13 percent on a C-N basis.

Nike said earnings per share for the quarter were up 4 percent due to higher revenues as a result of strong demand for Nike, Inc. brands, gross margin expansion, and a lower tax rate partially offset by the impact of higher SG&A investments in Nike, Inc. brands and business capabilities.

Revenues for the Nike Brand were \$6.1 billion, up 9 percent on a C-N basis, with growth in every product type, geography and key category.

Revenues for Converse were \$360 million, up 11 percent on a C-N basis, driven by strong performance in its largest owned markets: North America, the United Kingdom, and China.

Gross margin expanded 140 basis points to 43.9 percent. Gross margin benefitted from a shift in the mix of the company's revenues to higher margin products and businesses, higher average prices, easing raw materials product input costs and continued strength in the higher margin direct-to-consumer business. These benefits were partially offset by unfavorable changes in foreign exchange rates and higher labor product input costs.

SG&A expense grew 14 percent to \$2.1 billion. Demand creation expense was \$691 million, up 13 percent versus relatively low levels in the prior year, driven by marketing support for key product launches, consumer running events and upcoming global sporting events, including the World Cup and Winter Olympics. Operating overhead expense increased 14 percent to \$1.4 billion due to investments in digital innovation and other growth businesses, as well as higher direct to consumer costs driven by growth and new store openings.

As of the end of the quarter, worldwide futures orders for Nike Brand athletic footwear and apparel scheduled for delivery from December 2013 through April 2014 totaled \$10.4 billion, 12 percent higher than orders reported for the same period last year, and 13 percent higher on a C-N basis.

FINISH LINE

RAISES FULL YEAR GUIDANCE ON Q3 REBOUND

The Finish Line, Inc. earned \$2.3 million, or 5 cents a share, in its third quarter ended November 30, rebounding from a loss of \$103,000, or less than one cents a share, a year ago. Results were 5 cents ahead of Wall Street's consensus estimate. Comps increased 7.1 percent and the company raised its full-year outlook.

"We are very pleased with the top and bottom line performance we delivered in the third quarter," said Glenn Lyon, chairman and CEO. "Our commitment to developing a premier omni-channel platform is strengthening both our customer relationships and our brand partnerships while also reinforcing our market leadership position. We are continually adapting and refining our strategies in this rapidly evolving retail landscape to ensure we meet the needs of today's empowered consumer. Finish Line is on the right strategic course and is well-positioned to deliver on our near and longer term goals."

For the fiscal year ending March 1, 2014, Finish Line now expects comparable store sales to increase approximately three to four percent compared to its previous expectation for a low-single-digit increase. The company now expects Non-GAAP earnings per share to increase nine to 12 percent to \$1.60 to \$1.65 from fiscal year 2013 Non-GAAP diluted earnings per share of \$1.47. This compares to its previous expectation for a mid-single-digit increase.



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Spalding Point Forward

SPALDING RETURNS TO BASKETBALL FOOTWEAR

Russell Brands, LLC plans to bring Spalding back to the basketball footwear category. The footwear entry will make Spalding, the world's largest basketball equipment supplier, "a total solution for the basketball category" spanning equipment (backboards, inflatables, accessories), footwear and apparel.

Spalding's 2014 basketball shoe lineup will feature a new proprietary D30 Pulse Technology, which cushions and responds to a player's every move. This new technology absorbs shock and also gives impact energy back to the user on takeoff. Extensive product and performance testing have led to the development of Point Forward, Spalding's high-end performance shoe, which will retail for approximately \$120. The footwear will incorporate a new design element called "double wings" which was

inspired by footwear designs from Spalding's archives. A full lineup of Spalding's team shoes will retail between \$80 and \$120 and is expected in stores fall of 2014.

Spalding will announce their endorsement and marketing strategy for the footwear lineup next year. Professional basketball player Mario Chalmers will be among the pros to endorse the lineup.

Russell noted that according to SportsOneSource, the basketball footwear category saw a 25 percent sales growth during the 12 months ended March 31, 2013.

"Spalding has been an industry leader in innovation introducing such products as "Infusion", "Neverflat" and "Spalding Rookie Gear" basketballs," said David Zumbach, VP, Spalding Footwear. "We will now bring that same innovative spirit to on-court performance basketball footwear."



David Zumbach, VP, Spalding Footwear

Zumbach, with three decades of experience in the footwear industry, joined Spalding in 2010 as the VP of Spalding International. He was the president of Johnston and Murphy, Dockers Footwear and also held leadership positions at Nautica footwear, Reebok, Rockport and Nike. Another seasoned executive,

Steve Sunderland, will serve as Spalding's VP of marketing for footwear.

Sunderland held previous positions as VP of sales and marketing for Ellesse, Kangaroos, Cross Creek Apparel, and Reebok. He was also a VP of sports marketing at Converse.

Spalding also engaged Sterling-Rice Group, a brand strategy firm, to conduct market research and assist Spalding in developing the footwear market positioning.

37.5

FABRIC TECHNOLOGY LEADER COCONA HAS A NEW NAME



Cocona, Inc. has changed the name of its fabric technology, previously marketed under the Cocona brand name, to 37.5.

The new name highlights the technology's ability to influence the body's management of temperature and humidity next to the skin to maintain an ideal "37.5 zone" of 37.5 percent relative humidity and 37.5 degrees Celsius core body temperature.

The technology captures and releases moisture vapor to help the body maintain optimal relative humidity and temperature. By both facilitating efficient heat dissipation and enhancing drying rates, a training shirt made with 37.5 technology can provide exponentially more cooling than leading competitive shirts, which allows the wearer to preserve more energy for performance. In addition, the technology doesn't retain odors, a significant problem in many synthetic fabrics used for performance apparel

"The new 37.5 name clearly expresses the benefits of our technology to

the brand partners we work with, and to consumers who are seeking the best in performance activewear and other products," said CEO Jeff Bowman, who initiated the rebranding effort along with a change in business model when he started with the company in May of this year. "Beginning as early as Spring 2014, products manufactured with 37.5 technology will come with point-of-sale materials explaining the exceptional performance characteristics of the technology – allowing retailers and consumers to understand why our partners' products not only feel better, but work better."

Bowman added, "37.5 technology is designed to boost the performance of products – and the people who wear them. If our bodies expend less energy staying comfortable, that means more energy can be directed into the activities we love."

Cocona's partners include Adidas, The North Face, Pearl Izumi, Asics, RAB, Rip Curl, Eddie Bauer, Salomon, Under Armour, Cutter & Buck and Redington. Earlier this month, Bauer Performance Sports, Ltd. announced their exclusive agreement to use 37.5 technology in Bauer Hockey's base layer, training apparel and protective equipment.

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THE WALKING SHOE ADVANCED



Black Diamond Men's Hot Forge Hoody



Sherpa Adventure Gear Women's Vayu Zip Tee

PRIMALOFT CELEBRATES 25 YEARS BY LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

Technology and consumer awareness will commingle in re-branding efforts

By Aaron H. Bible

The year 2013 marked the 25th anniversary for synthetic insulation leader PrimaLoft - who shipped its first commercial product to L.L. Bean in August 1989 for the Mountain Lite Parka - and the company is celebrating by completing reinventing itself.

In 1988, the U.S. Army had commissioned the development of a synthetic insulation that would mimic the performance of down, and Albany International Corp's R&D team developed a process for extruding micro-fibers that today most closely captures the structure of goose down.

At Outdoor Retailer Winter Market 2014, PrimaLoft will no longer just be mimicking down structure, they'll be incorporating it - introducing the innovative PrimaLoft Performance Insulation Down Blends, a technology the company said will allow for greater freedom when it comes to staying warm in various climates and weather conditions.

"Our 25th anniversary is an occasion for us to look back at our rich heritage and appreciate how we've played a central role in transforming the insulation category," said Michael Joyce, PrimaLoft CEO, who, with the help of Prudential Capital Group, purchased the supplier brand in 2012 from Albany, where he was president of the PrimaLoft subsidiary since 2009. "Brand partners and consumers will see an entirely new PrimaLoft in 2014, from disruptive technologies and comfort solutions to a new logo, positioning and tagline. It's about delivering feel-good products that enable consumers to focus on their experience, not the forecast."

"We enjoy a high level of brand awareness in the industry coupled with the perception that PrimaLoft is a highly technical, advanced insulation solution. However, we don't have the same level of connection with the consumer. Our

goal is to increase consumer awareness while at the same time maintaining our technical and innovation heritage," said Joyce. In addition to introducing the new down-synthetic blend insulation technology, PrimaLoft is re-creating the way it talks about its products in order



Michael Joyce,
PrimaLoft CEO

to better communicate the product's value to consumers. And according to both Joyce and his premium brand partners, the strategy has already been very well received.

"Our re-branding and renaming efforts will hopefully allow us to form a better emotional connection with consumers who will better identify with our new logo, our new messaging focused on comfort, our new consumer-focused marketing communications strategy, and our new product naming hierarchy, which is much more intuitive than before. By creating a good, better, best structure (Black, Silver, Gold) consumers will be able to better understand the performance and warmth features in a garment," Joyce said.

The new branding will be as follows:

- » PrimaLoft Gold Insulation – Highest performing, industry leading series of products with revolutionary-enabling technologies.
- » PrimaLoft Silver Insulation – High-performing series of products. Activity-based or specialized-enabling technologies.
- » PrimaLoft Black Insulation – Entry-level, value-based products.

They will also be introducing a PrimaLoft Performance Fabric and PrimaLoft Performance Fleece.

"Having the new branding/nomenclature makes it easier for customers to differentiate between the performance-product offerings," said Russ Angrignon, PrimaLoft western regional sales manager. "With PrimaLoft's new category and product expansion plans, this new nomenclature and product categorization will help the customer better understand the PrimaLoft product line-up."

According to brand partner Black Diamond – who jumped into the outdoor-apparel game with both feet this Fall – the primary benefit of this technology is that it maintains about 95 percent of its warmth when wet, a potential life saver for serious users. The new insulation will dry four times faster and absorb nine times less water than down. Black Diamond said it's been in development for more than ten years and now with down prices skyrocketing, they've got a more durable and more versatile product with nearly permanent water resistance to offer customers.

Far from a simple marketing ploy, Black Diamond believes the new technology is best for the consumer and for the brand's growing

apparel line. "We treat apparel as gear - and at Black Diamond every piece of gear gets tested. We build gear and clothing like our life depends on it, because in so many instances it does," said Tim Bantle, Director of Apparel for Black Diamond Equipment. "We've chosen to build all of our down outerwear with PrimaLoft Gold Insulation Down Blend as it fuses the benefits of natural and synthetic insulation for active use in variable conditions, an insulation proven in the lab to be warm when wet and extremely durable both in construction and weather resistance."



Photo courtesy PrimaLoft

Utilizing PrimaLoft Gold Insulation Down Blend, Black Diamond will introduce a men's and women's Hot Forge Hoody, a warm, packable mid-layer for uncertain conditions and emergency insurance against sudden temperature drops.

Adidas Outdoor is another important brand partner for PrimaLoft in the apparel category. According to Greg Thomsen, managing director, Adidas Outdoor USA, PrimaLoft is his brand's biggest commitment to insulation overall. "We had quite a few meetings with them, more on product performance. And we've been promoting the product quite a bit ourselves, so it's nice to work directly with them on it, with their new energy," explained Thomsen.

Like Black Diamond, Thomsen said Adidas Outdoor has been testing the new PrimaLoft Down Blend extensively on athletes, specifically in the Himalaya. "It's the best of both worlds," he said. "It dries twice as fast and maintains its warmth when it's wet, especially wetness coming from perspiration. PrimaLoft absorbs no moisture and the treated down absorbs about half as much as regular down." Other highly committed brand partners include Sherpa, Sunice and Under Armour, to name just a few.

"So far, retailers are impressed and very receptive to PrimaLoft's technical story and to the breadth of our collection," said Tsedo Sherpa, senior vice president, Sherpa Adventure Gear. "PrimaLoft's new yarn hit the mark with athletes who tested Vayu PriMerino prototypes for two months straight on Denali. The yarn's durability and dry time were impressive. And, PrimaLoft's support gives us an extra boost to launch the program to the outdoor specialty market ahead of time so that retailers will have a chance to understand and feel the difference of this unique yarn."

"Our rebranding came about when the management team was asked 'who are we?' and 'what is our product?'" said PrimaLoft Global Marketing Manager David Newey. "After much discussion, we realized that our product is comfort. Historically, we have delivered this comfort through textile fiber technology. But textile fiber wasn't our purpose - our purpose was to deliver ultimate comfort solutions. That discovery sent us down the road of re-evaluating our vision, mission and brand messaging as a new company. Our philosophy is to maintain our heritage of innovation, while improving our communication to our brand partners and ultimately consumers. It sounds easy on paper but there has been much effort to get us where we are now."

"We consider ourselves a compliment brand," said Joyce. "We want to be a partner of choice for our customers, offering first-class service at every level that creates differentiation the consumers value. We've created a new brand manual as an important marketing tool, which not only provides guidance for consistent and successful PrimaLoft communication, but also supports our partners with clear and understandable marketing and sales tools. A new product structure, defined in the three series, will provide easy orientation and usage of PrimaLoft products." ■

A man wearing an orange jacket, a white and black cap, and a backpack is hiking on a mountain trail. The background features snow-capped mountains under a clear blue sky.

INSOLES FOR WINTER'S WARRIORS

The extra level of stability and warmth provided by insoles is proving to be a balm to wearers of ski, snowboard, hunting and winter boots.

By Thomas J. Ryan

Runners appear to get all the attention when it comes to footcare. But skiers, snowboarders, hunters and hikers are also increasingly recognizing how effective form-fitting insoles can be in improving foot alignment in winter boots.

While typically not seeing the repetitive and pavement-pounding injuries that come with running, treks up or downhill often lead to similar pains around the ankles, knees and back. Uneven terrain calls for the shock absorption and stability insoles provide to avoid stone bruises, twisted ankles and bone spurs. The inadvertent steps that come with the mountains and woods can also lead to rollovers of the foot or excess strain on the ankle.

In the case of ski boots, an insole can keep feet from collapsing and provide a stable platform to maintain that edge angle on skis. But beyond support, an added insole can also add another level of warmth across the winter boot category in the colder months.

"Running and walking is the category with the most growth," said Ellen Harwick, communications manager, Superfeet. "But honestly, 80 percent of the population could benefit from some sort of orthotic support."

Originally the sports medicine division of Northwest Podiatric Laboratory, Superfeet was established in 1977 to make the first affordable, professional-grade, over-the-counter orthotics and initially focused on snow.

"Each product has been a natural progression," said Harwick. "We started with ski, but fans wanted something off the slopes and it just exploded from there."

GREEN, which was first introduced in 1977, continues to be Superfeet's best seller at \$40 and supports a wide range of activities, including ski/snowboard boots, running and trail running shoes, hiking boots, work boots and walking shoes.

"GREEN is a high-profile insole with shape that offers the widest and deepest heel cup with maximum support," said Harwick. "It is great for hiking boots year round."

GREEN's biomechanical shape helps stabilize and support the foot, which can reduce stress on feet, ankles and knees. Its antimicrobial coating inhibits bacteria growth.

REDhot for men and HOTpink for women at \$50 each are category-specific and made for skiing and snowboarding. Both feature a deep and narrow heel cup for maximum support. A notable difference from other insoles is their responsive temperature control top cover treated with Outlast, a thermal layer, and a foil forefoot, which deflects cold.

“Of course, Superfeet has its roots in the ski industry and we still have custom products made in ski shops all over the world,” added Harwick. “REDhot and HOTpink are the full length, ‘over the counter’ version.”

MerinoGREY at \$45 retail is the same shape as GREEN, but has a merino wool top cover.

“Hunter and hikers swear by them,” said Harwick. “The felted merino adds something special in that it regulates temperature and wicks moisture.



Superfeet MerinoGREY

All of Superfeet’s insoles are built based on its ADD/APT System that adjusts footwear’s flat, two-dimensional midsole to a three-dimensional foot.

Sof Sole addresses winter activities such as skiing, snowboarding and hunting with its FIT Insole series that provides stability specifically engineered for each arch type.



Sof Sole FIT High Arch, FIT Low Arch and FIT Neutral Arch

“The insoles themselves are lightweight and do not require a break-in period, allowing users to continue their favorite activities without being slowed down,” said Kurt Wineman, SVP of sales at Sof Sole. “FIT insoles align the foot to promote the proper range of motion, creating an ideal environment in heavy boots with little support.”

For high arch types, the FIT High Arch features 55 Durometer foam in heel/arch and 40 Durometer foam in forefoot for a 3.3cm arch height. The FIT Low Arch features 65 Durometer foam in heel/arch and 40 Durometer foam in forefoot for a 2.8cm arch height. Between the two, the FIT Neutral Arch offers 60 Durometer foam in heel/arch and 40 Durometer foam in forefoot for a 3.0cm arch height. All models carry a retail price of \$40 and include an anatomical nylon plate.

Since fit in many winter boots is tight and space is at a premium, another option may be Sof Sole’s recently-introduced Thin Fit Insole at \$20. Representing the thinnest and lightest insole from Sof Sole to date, the Thin Fit weighs just 1.3 oz with a lightweight, flexible foam that conforms to the foot and promotes a natural stride. Increased cushioning in the heel and forefoot allows for enhanced shock absorption on impact. The Coolmax fabric top cover wicks moisture and the Microban treatment helps prevent growth of odor-causing bacteria.

Said Wineman, “The lightweight and flexible Thin Fit provides compact cushioning without adding bulk to the boot, allowing for the user to still wear thick socks and be comfortable.”



Sof Sole Thin Fit Insole

Masterfit, founded and led by long-time ski industry entrepreneur and former *Ski magazine* editor Steve Cohen and legendary bootfitter and

insole inventor Jeff Rich, is probably best known for operating Masterfit University, the world’s only bootfit training program with programs conducted in the U.S., Europe and Australia. It also operates America’s Best Bootfitters, a co-op marketing organization for premier ski and snowboard shops that specialize in bootfitting.

Not surprisingly, Masterfit’s insoles offer plenty for skiers. With its patented Wear-N-Form technology, the EZ Fit Snow, \$40, is a cut-to-fit insole that personalizes shape to fit the individual user’s heel and arch shape. A radiant barrier in the forefoot provides extra warmth and a full-length Support Cradle enhances balance and provides crisp turn initiation. An EZ FIT Terra Model, \$40, features a more flexible forefoot for use in all athletic shoes.



Masterfit EZ Fit Snow

Based on the EZ Fit design, Zapz, \$60, is billed as the world’s only do-it-yourself microwavable custom insole. Said Cohen, “You can make Zapz at home using just a household microwave oven. It takes just minutes to make and as we like to say, ‘If you can trace, trim and make popcorn, you can make Zapz.’”

Zapz also has patented InstaForm Gel in the arch to provide the fit and function of doctor-style custom insoles.

Introduced at its Masterfit University sessions this fall, QuikBeds, \$39, for the first time offer shops and medical facilities a way to make high-definition, posted insoles without gluing or grinding. There are three versions: snowsports specific; low volume for tighter fitting snowsports boots and bike shoes; and X-Sport for all athletic and comfort shoes.

QuikBeds’ blanks are ergonomically designed layers of Capture, a low-temperature thermoplastic. With integrated polyester fibers, Capture microcontours to every nuance of the foot’s shape while maintaining a blend of rebound, torsional rigidity and longitudinal strength after being fabricated with an Instaprint BioGel Molding System. The shoes also benefit from Masterfit’s signature Heel Stabilizer design, a unique egg-shaped cutout creating a broad, stable self-posting area under the heel.

From Sole, the Signature Chris Davenport Thin Sport is the brand’s thinnest custom moldable footbed with 3M Thinsulate for increased warmth, and a Polygiene anti-odor coating, said Karen Henry, retail

brand manager. Ideal for ski boots and other low volume, the CD thin is part of Sole’s signature series in which \$1 of every pair sold goes to Protect Our Winters, a charity chosen by Davenport, the legendary ski mountaineer.

For medium to tightly fitting footwear, the Insulated Softec Response, \$55, is suited for snowboard boots, low temperature running and day-to-day cold weather wear. Designed to provide shock absorption in footwear with reduced volume, the custom moldable



Sole Signature Chris Davenport Thin Sport

footbed comes with 1.6mm of Sole’s proprietary Softec cushioning material along with 3M Thinsulate and Polygiene.

Offering Sole’s most cushioned footbed, the Insulated Softec Ultra, \$55, is ideal



Sole Insulated Softec Ultra

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for workboots, winter hiking boots and hunting boots. The custom moldable footbed features 3.2 mm of Softec cushioning, 3M Thinsulate and Polygiene.

Sole also offers après ski shoe with the Men's Exhale and Women's Sigh, \$85. Henry said both models offer "moldable custom support letting your feet recover after a long day of skiing, hiking or hunting."

Sidas focuses its attention on winter with its ski boot heaters, boot fitting tools as well as custom insoles for skiing. Jay Taylor, president and CEO at The Soze Group, the North American distributors for the French-based brand, said Sidas recognized that skiers needed an insole that worked with their foot when heading downhill.

"As you press on the insole to turn your ski – the insole moves with your foot to moderate pressure to the ski," said Taylor. "As you release pressure the insole moves back with your foot staying in constant contact – engaging all of the sensory receptors in your foot."

Recently, Sidas introduced more of a value play to the U.S. market with its 3Feet series



Sidas Winter 3Feet HIGH and Winter 3Feet LOW

after seeing a void in personalization in the first price point insoles in winter footwear. The series includes the Winter 3Feet HIGH designed for high-arched feet, Winter 3Feet MID insoles for medium-arched feet, and the Winter 3Feet LOW for low-arches.

"This allows the person to pick a product that is correct for their foot shape at a \$50 price point," said Taylor. "It is different than a standard insole as it is adapted for use in colder weather. Aluminum forefoot inserts reflect the cold out and keep the warmth in against your foot."

At Spenco, one winter option is the Total Support Max, \$40, which includes all the features of the brand's Total Support Original but with more stiff, rigid arch support and Spenco Core Layer forefoot pad. Said Jeff Antonioli, VP global sales and marketing, Spenco Medical Corporation, "A rigid insole featuring The Shape That Feels Great offering extreme support while offering superior comfort, which is excellent for ski and snowboard boots."

For hunting and hiking, the Total Support Original, \$40, offers a semi-rigid cradle with



Spenco Total Support Max



Spenco Total Support Original

advanced arch support, deep heel cupping and comfort through the stride. Both the Original and Max features Spenco's 3-POD System to promote healthy biomechanics, absorb shock and provide cushioning through multi-density impact zones.

Spenco' Cross Trainer, \$20, features plenty of heel strike cushioning for maximum shock absorption and adequate forefoot cushioning to make every step as comfortable as possible. Said Antonioli, "Performs great in winter boors providing superior, long lasting cushioning." ■



Photo courtesy of Kahtoola

GETTING A GRIP

Microcrampon Vendors Hope To Gain Traction In Higher Price Points With New Technology And More Niche Products In 2014.

By Charlie Lunan

Yaktrax and Kahtoola will showcase new technologies at Outdoor Retailer Winter Market next month to drive growth in the slip-on traction category next fall.

Yaktrax will introduce a new coil technology that will greatly enhance grip, said Steve Couder, vice president at Implus Corp., who oversees sales of Yaktrax, Little Hotties, ICEtrekkers and Granger's products.

"The new coil is almost triangular in shape, so as it spins an edge protrudes and creates more bite," explained Couder, who has managed sales for the brand since 2003. "We've been testing it and will launch it in the Yaktrax Pro, \$30, at OR and then you will see it trickle down into other models."

Kahtoola Inc., a Flagstaff, AZ maker of snowshoes and crampons, plans to launch NANOSpikes, a new product using a traction system designed specifically for road runners. Founder and CEO Danny Giovale said he could not release many product details until the company receives its European patent in mid-December.

He did divulge it would weigh in at a just 7.6 ounces a pair, well below the 12.2-to-15.6-ounce range for the company's highly successful MICROspikes, \$65. "NANOSpikes introduces a completely different traction system than MICROspikes," Giovale said. "There is not a product on the market like this and they should be the lightest on the market."



Hillsound Trail Crampon Ultra

The Yaktrax and Kahtoola innovations should help invigorate the microcrampon category, which marries the convenience of slip-on form factor popularized by Yaktrax with the more aggressive spikes used in traditional mountaineering crampons. The microcrampon got a big boost in 2006 with Kahtoola's launch of MICROspikes, a slip-on that uses a stainless steel chain to connect six independent spike studded plates underneath the foot from heel to toe. MICROspikes were an instant hit with hikers and runners and in 2012, as Yaktrax launched the Yaktrax Run, \$40, and Hillsound Equipment, Inc. shipped the FreeSteps6, \$40, to cater specifically to trail runners. ■



Yaktrax Pro

TO EXPAND ITS FOOHOLD IN RUNNING, YAKTRAX ADDS SPIKES TO COILS

While coils are a core feature of the Yaktrax brand, the company is not above incorporating other traction technologies when it comes to enhancing performance.

By Charlie Lunan

"As we've gotten into extreme activities, we've realized the limitations of coils and began to explore other approaches," said Steve Couder, vice president of sales for the division of Implus Corp. that owns the Yaktrax and ICEtrekkers traction brands products.

The best example of that is the Yaktrax Run, which the company launched in 2012 after asking ultra-runners who were training in the all-coil Yaktrax Pro, \$30, what they'd like to see improved. They said they loved the Yaktrax Pro because its coil traction system was comfortable underfoot and worked well in snow and slush, but that they needed better traction in front so they could also run on ice.

Yaktrax's head of design, who had run competitively while a student at Syracuse University, embraced the challenge. He ended up devising a traction system that combined coils under the heel with a traction plate embedded with six removable carbide spikes under the forefoot.

"What's amazing about coils is their versatility in black ice, slush and snow," said Couder. "Coils are also very comfortable because they are under the entire foot. So with run we tried to get the best of both worlds. Coils on heel for snow and slush and spikes in front for ice."

Yaktrax took the further step of designing separate harnesses for the left and the right foot, which results in more optimal tread. As a result, the Yaktrax Run, \$40, sold out in its first season. Yaktrax upgraded the product for 2013-2014 by adding a strap in the toe area and a new harness mold to enhance fit, and it remains the company's fastest growing product. ■



BOOTS EMBRACE VERSATILITY

The more unpredictable weather calls for winter boots that can sell for a longer timeframe.

By Thomas J. Ryan

Whether through color pops, athletic influences and leather twists or through enhanced performance features such as shock absorption or grip, boot designers have a lot of solutions in creating differentiation on shoe walls. But one hurdle they're far from solving is the weather.

Two straight years when the cold and snow didn't arrive at the right time left retailers with large inventories of insulated product and have made them skittish around buying winter product and getting stuck again. With 2013 marking more unseasonably warm weather through all of August and September before the weather broke, buyers are looking for more versatile winter options.

"We're seeing winter assortments shrink across the country as buyers take a more conservative position with their winter specific styles," said Chris Dunn, Salomon product category manager, footwear. "They fear bad inventory positions in the event of a poor winter and are looking for products with a longer selling season; something comfortable and warm enough to pair with jeans that you can wear from the beginning of October through the end of March. We're going to see styles that can be worn all day with moisture protection, less insulation, and slimmer more stylish silhouettes than the traditional boot."

"The unpredictable winters over the past few years have driven a need for a transitional winter performance product," agreed Mark Pavsek, category business manager at Merrell. "Brands are delivering on this need with rugged outsoles on top of sleek, waterproof leathers to deliver a style-driven, performance informed footwear solution. We offer solutions from simple waterproof mid cuts that can be worn in urban

settings to look on deep snow performance capable products."

Peter Sachs, General Manager for Lowa Boots, LLC., said the only real winter trend is will there or won't there be winter. And presuming there is winter, when will it come.

"It's OK if before Christmas and too late if not until after," said Sachs. "If we run an optimistic business (which we try to do) then bringing our brand values forward in this category is what we will do. We will have waterproof boots to keep your feet dry, therefore warmer. Lowa's are insulated but not overly so because the Lowa wearer will be winter hiking, snowshoeing or otherwise be active, they don't want to overheat. In our outsoles, we will have non-slip treads because the terrain is usually slippery."

Hi-Tec is introducing a new Cool Season line of lightweight footwear focused on year-round wearability.

"Hi-Tec understands that retailer needs and consumer shopping habits are changing. They are looking for more products with year-round wearability," said Ed van Wezel, Hi-Tec's global CEO. "We identified this trend 18 months ago and focused our Fall 2014 product line on having maximum seasonal appeal. It's not only about the snow-relevant products that sell for five weeks. We now want to give retailers versatile, multi-month

products that meet the consumers' needs for an active lifestyle in a wide range of weather conditions."

Highlights include the men's Valkerie Lite 200 i WP, retailing for \$200, which features a built-to-last Vibram outsole with kick-off heel notch, and a wrap-around rubber bumper and waterproof, breathable fabric upper. The OrthoLite insole delivers odor control and breathability while a Thinsulate lining provides warmth.

Named in honor of Thomas Blanquette, the man credited with inventing the blanket, the women's Thomas Boot 200 i at



Hi-Tec men's Valkerie Lite 200 i WP

Hi-Tec women's Thomas Boot 200 i

\$80 retail, features 200gm Thinsulate insulation, along with a durable, cleated high abrasion EVA outsole, i-shield hydrophobic technology, a moisture wicking micro-fleece lining and an OrthoLite sockliner.

The men's The Trooper Mid 200 i WP for \$75 is aimed at the traveler, commuter and hiker who demands performance and embraces style. Features 200gm Thinsulate insulation, a durable textile upper, cleated high abrasion EVA outsole and Ghillie and D-Ring lacing system.

Simon Bonham, CEO of Hi-Tec USA, said consumers continue to be looking for the lightweight properties of an athletic shoe with the outdoor performance criteria. On the aesthetics front, lightweight materials and smart use of 'pop' colors - oranges, yellows and blues for men; blush and warm charcoal for women.

"Product needs to last five months, not five weeks," added Bonham. "Versatility is the key. Subtle variations of materials and colors can still distinguish seasonality but without the absolute and finite definition."

Patagonia continues to see a desire for more versatile winter footwear, which is lighter in weight and can be used for a broad range of activities.

"It needs to perform in the snow, yet travel easily and not be over bulky for indoor use," said Mark Pikaart, product marketing manager for Patagonia Footwear. "Winter footwear has to have some built-in utility for use in the cold weather to keep you warm and dry, and also be a practical choice for our various activities throughout the day. Fabrics and uppers are getting lighter weight and more functional with less bulk."

Examples include the Activist Puff High Waterproof at \$175), a low profile lightweight boot built with an easy to remove insulated quilted standalone liner for versatile and seasonal use. The Activist Mid Waterproof for \$125 is a lightweight and easily packable mid-cut boot featuring a waterproof ballistic nylon outer with an abrasion-resistant synthetic suede rand for durability.

"Both of these new styles have a very comfortable fit and feel, and generally don't have that heaviness which a lot of people associate with winter boots," said Pikaart. "In the Activist Puff High Waterproof, the insulated liner can be removed for easy care or for use as a standalone slipper. First and foremost they will keep you warm and dry, but beyond that having a more modular set up gives you options based on the weather and end-use - you have the added benefit of a 'winter' style which can take you through the shoulder seasons as well."

At Skechers, a highlight includes the On Site - Torre Relaxed Fit men's work boot, \$100, which features a leather upper with a padded collar, steel toe, slip resistant sole and Goodyear welt construction. Relaxed Fit design provides a roomier toe box and comfort fit.



Skechers Classix Belfort - Montoya

ic glass particles in the rubber to offer maximal friction on ice. With an additional insulation layer for colder temperatures and a removable thermo-footbed, the boot offers a seasonal versatility.

Hanwag's Lhasa at \$325, features a robust and hydrophobic Tibetan yak leather upper and a soft, chrome-free tanned leather lining. The lightweight boot features a Vibram AW Integral sole unit that is flexible for fatigue-free trekking. A deep pull-tab and lacing from toe to collar provide a secure fit. The Lhasa also features the Air Pulse System, providing increased breathability throughout the footbed.

At Muck Boot, a highlight is the Peak Hardcore hiker for men, \$200, comprised of full grain crazy horse leather with an insulating 6mm neoprene base as well as an aggressive outsole. Rated at minus 40 degrees, the Peak Hardcore is also lightweight and durable with a Spandura exterior that promises to last many seasons.



Patagonia Activist Puff High Waterproof



Patagonia Activist Mid Waterproof

Also from Skechers, the Classix Belfort - Montoya, \$85, is a low top moc toe boot with a distressed oiled leather upper, padded collar and flexible lug rubber outsole.

Hanwag, the German footwear manufacturer, is bringing out the Xerro Plus Winter GTX, \$250, an athletic mid-calf, waterproof all-season outdoor boot with Hanwag IceGrip Sole, which embeds microscop-



Hanwag Xerro Plus Winter GTX



Hanwag Lhasa

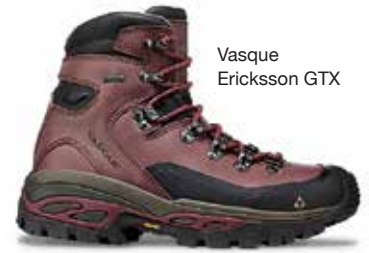
Muck Boot
Arctic
Adventure
Suede Zip



For women, Muck Boot's Arctic Adventure Suede Zip, \$170, is a soft, supple and slimming all-purpose winter boot featuring a waterproof suede upper and full zipper. Rated to minus 20, the boot uses a true women's last for fit as well as a multi-purpose outsole that grips well but sheds debris to avoid tracking dirt inside the home or office.

"The Peak Hardcore features classic Muck Boot technology but with crazy horse leather, providing style and performance," said Muck Boot's Director of Retail Footwear, Sean O'Brien. "For women, tall boots continue to be on trend, so we've stayed true to our tall Arctic Adventure boot but added a zipper up the back and waterproof suede

upper that's comfortable and warm. Earth tones are also trending now, so this boot comes in four earth tone colorways."



Vasque
Ericksson GTX

"We are focused on increasing user comfort without compromising the technical performance a backpacker demands," said Brian Hall, Vasque's product manager. "It involves small refinements in midsole materials, outsole geometry and upper materials that come in contact with the foot and support it. For color, we are using stoic colors, staples of the category with muted primary pop color, mostly in linings and laces. We are offering customers a choice as well with two lace options, one with more color, and one more muted for the traditional customer."

Vasque is also finding good success and sell through of its lightly insulated products over the past two winter seasons. Said Hall, "Our focus being purely technical product, we are also seeing a lot of success with launching more traditional, un-insulated leather styles in Fall/Winter."

At Ahnu, one highlight is the Twain Harte Boot, \$170, a waterproof and insulated cold weather hiker with a Vibram outsole for carrying

Sperry
Top-Sider
Women's
Winter Cove
Boot



At Sperry Top-Sider, the Women's Winter Cove Boot for \$130 at retail is a lightweight and waterproof boot that infuses SON-R Technology for enhanced stability, traction and protection. The boot also features Sperry WaterBlock, a breathable waterproof membrane that keeps feet dry and comfortable along with SON-R and Adaptive Wave-Siping technologies that provide strong traction and heightened sensory awareness.



New Balance
89 Outdoor

New Balance is introducing the 89 Outdoor for \$110, which is part of its Multi Run collection. The 89 Outdoor is a mid-cut shoe/boot that has a running based platform that comes from its trail running experience but with outdoor specific details such as a gusseted tongue, additional ankle support, scratch rubber in key areas and an outdoor-specific Vibram outsole.

Blundstone, still 100 percent family owned and based in Hobart, Tasmania, is bringing out its classic 500 in a lightweight canvas upper with the Blundstone 1420, at \$120 retail. The style continues to come with its elastic sides for easy on/off capability.

Vasque is introducing a new pinnacle backpacking boot, the Ericksson GTX at \$220, named for the legendary explorer Leif Eriksson. A mix of traditional materials and silhouette with modern design and material refinements, the full grain leather boot is

designed to perform over demanding terrain while carrying heavy loads.



Blundstone
1420



Ahnu Twain
Harte Boot

Ahnu Sugar
Bowl Boot

packs on all terrains. It also features 200 gms of Thinsulate and an easy on/off lock lace design.

For a winter hike or to just to keep you warm, Ahnu's Sugar Bowl Boot at \$165 is a waterproof and insulated mid-calf hiking boot able to handle a variety of conditions and terrain. The medial zipper makes for easy on/off wear, while 200 gms of Thinsulate keep feet warm. A dual density EVA provides extra shock absorption, as well as increased heel and arch support.

From Lowa, the best-selling Renegade Mid GTX, \$285, is being offered for the first time in an "Ice" version combining Lowa's ATC outsole with slip-resistant G+ gripping fibers



Photo courtesy Hi-Tec

embedded throughout the sole's rubber for traction on snow and ice. The Nubuck leather upper has a Gore-Tex Partalana wool/polyester blend waterproof fleece lining. Lowa's proprietary Monowrap frame midsole construction wraps around the lower part of the upper for stability and support. A PU midsole ensures shock absorption, rebound sensitivity and environmental sustainability.



Lowa Riga Style GTX Hi

On the fashionable side, Lowa's Riga Style GTX Hi, \$210, features a women's-lasted upper made from denim and leather with a knitted patterned panel around the ankle and lower leg area. Includes Gore-Tex lining for waterproofing and a Partalana wool/polyester blend fleece for insulation. This boot also features a low profile Monowrap frame and the lightweight, low AL-S II sole construction that is slip resistant and supportive, protects the foot in snow and slush and will not

hold snow and ice. Available in both mid-cut and high versions.

"We are making sure that our product lines are clear, without model or price point duplication," said Lowa's Sachs. "We want to fill booking orders but compared to our normal outdoor business have little reorder capacity so dealers can sell-thru at higher prices without closeout pressure."

Greg Thomsen, managing director at Adidas Outdoor, said the increased use of iconic component brands, e.g. Gore-Tex, PrimaLoft and Continental Rubber, continues to be critical selling points for performance seekers. On the aesthetic side, Adidas Outdoor is seeing more color, more textures and an athletic look - styles that can be worn apres ski but also down 5th Avenue.

"The consumer wants to be warm, stylish, look fabulous and not have to worry about the elements," said Thomsen. "More importantly, the consumer is looking for a great price along



Adidas Outdoor Felt Boot

Adidas Outdoor Terrex Swift R Mid GTX



upper and a jewel-inspired Traxion outsole provides grip.

In general, Thomsen said women are looking for "a ton more style" combined with performance in boots, but men are also opening up to more color options.

"Styles are faster, youthful and more technical," added Thomsen. "Authenticity is still key."

At Scarpa, a highlight is the Mont Blanc Pro GTX, \$499, featuring Sock-Fit technology, which reduces bulk, allows the shoe to adapt to a user's foot, and improves responsiveness and precision. Designed for technical alpinism, mixed routes and all around alpine use, the Mont Blanc Pro is a high-level, do-it-all mountain boot.

Kamik will be showcasing its new Elements neoprene line for men and children. The Coldcreek for men, \$180, is a 100-percent waterproof, all-season boot with a 9mm, four-way stretch neoprene upper. A lightweight synthetic rubber shell and four-season rubber outsole offer traction and support. It also features all-weather snow cuffs, fold over orange safety collars, and anti-bacterial insoles.

For children, the Stormin, \$80, is 23 percent lighter than other neoprene boots on the market. It also includes all-weather handles (with no holes to keep the elements out)

with value. Having said that, consumers are willing to pay more for component brands - especially if they add durability to the boot."

The Felt Boot for men, \$130, is a lace-up water-resistant Italian felt boot featuring a grippy Traxion outsole, rubber toe, heel caps with mudguard protection. Also features PrimaLoft insulation for warmth in wet conditions, water resistant felt for insulation, a rubber toe and heel cap plus a TPU mudguard.

Adidas Outdoor is also introducing the Terrex Swift R Mid GTX for men at \$160, a fast, low to the ground mountain sports shoe with mid-cut support and protection, speed lacing, breathable Gore-Tex membrane and a Traxion outsole for grip.

For women, the Libria Pearl CP PrimaLoft, \$120, is a sleek and sporty winter boot featuring PrimaLoft insulation and a ClimaProof membrane. Durable ripstop material on the



Scarpa Mont Blanc Pro GTX



Kamik Coldcreek



Kamik Stormin

for easy on/off, weather collars that lock in heat, and Kamik's Easy Grab Lace Lock that make it easy to adjust the boot with/without mittens.

"Now more than ever, consumers want more for their money," said Catherine Cook, Kamik's VP of marketing. "They are looking for stylish, well-made boots that offer them protection beyond winter; a multi-functional boot that gets them through fall, winter and spring."

The 'Made in the USA' collection also arrives as domestic manufacturing is resonating with both consumers and retailers. But Cook said both the price and features have to be able to compete alongside the foreign-made product. Added Cook, "Our new Elements collection is not only competitively priced, it also has added value that the competition does not: it's lighter and has three-season features that keep feet warm and dry.

At Asolo, a highlight is the Alta Via GV, \$425, specifically designed for traditional mountaineering, ice, and high altitude climbs. The upper is made of Perwanger 2.2-2.4 mm water-repellent leather and combined with Gore-Tex Duratherm to ensure thermal insulation, waterproofing and breathability. Also features flex points at the ankle and instep for flexibility, and a heel locking technology and lateral shell that decreases fatigue and provides advanced support and protection when standing and kicking on front points.



Asolo Alta Via GV

For backpacking mountain trekking, Asolo's Shiraz GV, \$295, features a K-Tech Schoeller Micro-tech water-repellent upper combined with waterproof suede to ensure durability, while Gore-Tex provides thermal insulation, water repellency, breathability and comfort. The sole, developed in collaboration with Vibram, has a dual density microporus midsole for comfort and an anti-shock polyurethane insert at the heel for increased shock absorption.



Asolo Shiraz GV

Bogs, known for its durable, waterproof footwear that was originally made for farmers in the rainy Pacific Northwest, will debut a casual leather lifestyle collection for men and women featuring sleek silhouettes and half-sizing, a first for the brand.

"Color is the key," said Kelly Wallrich, VP of product for Bogs Footwear. "Even though most consumers will want basic brown and black, having seasonal trend colors on boots gives an added flavor to a range, which we think is key. Men do like a bit of color, but again keeping it basic and simplistic and not over-coloring the product is important. We also see season after season, no matter what the trends are, consumers want product that is functional and stylish, without sacrificing comfort."

One highlight from Bogs is the women's Pearl Lace Boot, \$130, a mid-length lace up bootie. Featuring supple waterproof leather in rich colors like cinnamon and tan, the Pearl provides comfort with Bogs Rebound technology and DuraFresh anti-odor protection.

Built from waterproof leather, the men's Eugene Chukka, \$130, features

Bogs' signature Neo-Tech insulation for warmth, Rebound comfort technology and a slip-resistant outsole. DuraFresh natural antimicrobial protection fights odor.

Also from Bogs, the Tumalo waterproof winter hiker (for men and women)



Bogs Pearl Lace Boot

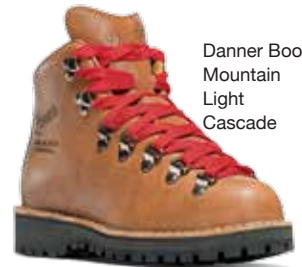
features Bogs' signature EverDry technology to keep feet dry and comfortable, DuraFresh odor protection and BioGrip non-slip outsole.



Bogs Eugene Chukka

Danner Boots will introduce a major update to its Pronghorn hunt series, built on a new last that reduces bulk and fits similar to the original Pronghorn, is 10 percent lighter than previous styles, and features a sleeker, more refined design. Built on Danner's lightweight yet stable Terra Force platform, the Pronghorn features a full-grain Camo Hide leather with 1000 Denier nylon upper, a new versatile outsole, Gore-Tex lining and varying levels of Thinsulate Ultra insulation.

"On the performance side, we see a trend in lighter weight platforms that offer support in key areas of the boot with less bulk," said Ryan Cade, product line manager for Danner Hunt. "We achieve this in our own footwear by using less leather and giving the platforms a more athletic aesthetic by using sharper, more angular lines."



Danner Boots Mountain Light Cascade

In lifestyle, Danner continues to see the shift towards the merging of urban and outdoor aesthetics.

"Customers continue to lean towards versatile product - something they can wear throughout the day and into night, in various settings," said Colleen Fennerty, product line manager for Danner Lifestyle. "In our fall 2014 lineup, the Forest Heights II was designed to provide the customer with a product that fits casual use on the weekend, or more formal wear during the workweek. Rich, rugged leather colors (earthy grey; cavalier black) were chosen to fit the more natural color direction of the season."

Women's Mountain Light Cascade, \$330, maintains Danner's heritage Mountain Light hiking boot silhouette, Gore-Tex lining and rugged Vibram Kletterlift outsole, but features a new Sienna Cache full grain leather upper and throw-back thick red laces.

Ecco is introducing the Ultrera Mid GTX, \$210, a versatile, rugged and lightweight hiking boot featuring strong, yet supple yak Nubuck leather for toughness with flexibility and a supportive lace system for a snug athletic fit. Also features Gore-Tex waterproof construction, a direct-injected PU midsole foam and roomy last, Receptor Technology for stability and dynamic support, and a durable rubber outsole for grip.



Ecco Ultrerra
Mid GTX

Erik Walcott, general manager of performance for Ecco, said the most recent spark in the boot category has been more womens' specific products with different lasts and styling. Bright colors and materials have provided another differential.

"The hiking boot category is taking some cues from other footwear categories and you're seeing lower platforms, slimmer lasts, lighter uppers, an overall more minimalist approach to make the shoes less bulky while keeping the innovative technologies," said Walcott. "You are seeing new materials, with unique leathers like yak, but also unique looking synthetics and textiles. There are more colors that complement the brighter colors you are seeing now in outerwear."

For Fall 2014, The North Face is expanding its Ultra Protection Series with the addition of the Ultra Extreme, a fully waterproof upper constructed with Gore-Tex Duratherm insulation for warmth and breathability without bulk, and the Mylar footbed lining that minimizes heat loss underfoot. The Cradle Guide midsole and Pebax Cradle and plate are tuned for cushioning, stability and protection on variable terrain, while a Vibram Ictrek outsole provides sure-footed traction.



The North
Face Ultra
Extreme

Another highlight is Verbera Utility, a waterproof, cold-weather, leather utility boot rated to -40°F that

offers PrimaLoft Silver Insulation Eco recycled insulation and a The North Face Winter Grip outsole for protection and comfort in the coldest conditions.

Carey Platto, director of outdoor footwear for The North Face, said that for women, the trend toward "tomboy chic" firmly cemented itself in the outdoor lifestyle category of footwear.

"Women are taking inspiration from what's in their boyfriend's closet," observed Platto. "Authentic, well-crafted outerwear and footwear that pays homage to our outdoor heritage has been a leading trend on the men's side for a number of years; it was only a matter of time before women took notice."

The more masculine looks are being seen in outerwear as well with the rise of waxed canvas field jackets and leather jackets and the return of the denim jacket. The resurgence of Doc Martens and military/combat inspired boots also underscores the trend. Said Platto, "Now we will begin to see authentic outdoor brands play in this space, taking inspiration from their heritage, with a feminine twist."

Jeff Dill, Keen's outdoor business unit director, sees a pendulum swing back to more traditional leather boots and hiking performance, away from the ultra minimal and low profile solutions that were being sought last year. He still sees some of the residual positive effects of the merging of

athletic and outdoor, but in more practical applications like upper constructions and midsole foams.

Keen, for example, is launching the Durand, a direct-attach Polyurethane midsole boot with a new compound that is soft and resilient, and can maintain its protection, cushion and stability for much longer than standard EVA or other materials. Coming in both a mid-cut, \$180, and low-cut, \$160, the Durand features waterproof Nubuck leather and breathable mesh upper with leather overlays and is being made in Keen's Portland factory.



Photo courtesy Keen



Keen Durand
mid-cut

"A lot of the people we work with are even willing to give up a few ounces for the sake of a better fit and performance over the long haul," added Dill. "It's a more reasonable approach for 99.999 percent of people who aren't professional adventure racers, thru hikers or ultra marathon champions. The Durand was designed with this mentality,

to fit right out of the box, and stay comfortable a million steps later, and be a trusted companion for your most anticipated trips."

Dill also agreed on the increased demand for more three-season product. He added, "Pure winter boots are still important in the cold winter areas, but for many people a good versatile leather WP boot can provide the comfort, protection and performance needed for the vast majority of the year."

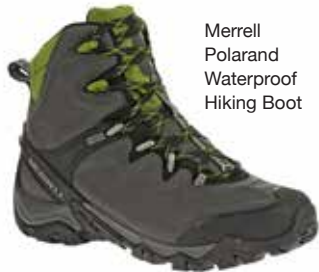
Merrell is seeing an influence from both urban style and athletic continuing to inform performance-hiking product.

"Light and fast boots and shoes that can take the knocks of rugged terrain without the bulk," said Merrell's Pavsek. "On performance casual for winter we are finding solutions that are performance informed and style driven. New materials such as PU coated leather replacing a traditional TPU shell cut back on bulk and provide a beautifully performing boot for men and women. We feel that by tactfully blending different upper materials we can find the ideal mix to accomplish cold weather performance in a sleeker and faster winter footwear solution."

A highlight from Merrell includes the Polarand Waterproof Hiking Boot, \$175, which uses motion mapping to target more insulation and padding in high-exposure areas. In addition, a specialized M Select Ice Grip outsole uses lugs of two different densities - one hard and one soft - to grip varied winter ground conditions and slippery indoor surfaces.

Infusing its hiking technologies with style, the Annex Mid Gore-Tex, \$170, features trail-worthy lugs and a protective toe bumper for off-road traction and protection.

At Pajar Canada, the men's Clairmont, \$400, will withstand treacherous winter weather conditions. With a removable insole and full sheepskin lining, it's guaranteed for warmth down to -40C. Built-in, retractable ice grippers provide traction in ice and snow.



Merrell Polarand Waterproof Hiking Boot



Merrell Annex Mid Gore-Tex



Pajar Canada Clairmont



Pajar Canada Riga Lace-up Nylon Boot

For women, the Riga Lace-up Nylon Boot, \$225, is 100-percent waterproof, wool-lined, and guaranteed for warmth down to -20C. The removable insole is made of memory foam and an exclusive Pajar-Tex material offers for comfort. The rubber outsole features built-in, retractable ice grippers for traction in ice and snow.

Also from Pajar Canada, the men's combination nylon and leather boot Tuscan, \$180, features fur trimmings at the collar for warmth and style. Its anti-slip outsole features a motif of Pajar's red ivy leaf logo. It's also 100-percent waterproof with a removable insole and guaranteed for warmth down to -20C.

Jordan Gottke, brand manager for Georgia Boot, a division of Rocky Brands, still sees a price-sensitive consumer, especially around work boots.

"Manufacturing boots isn't getting any cheaper and as we do more research, we are finding that most consumers purchase work boots that cost anywhere

from \$125 to \$150," said Gottke. "There are certainly consumers who are willing to spend more to get the latest and greatest technologies, but most just want a dependable work boot that keeps them safe and not cost an arm and a leg. So while innovating is always going to be front of mind for us, we also need to be mindful of the market."

Gottke also said influence of hiker looks is being seen on jobsites as more young adults enter the workforce.

"Most of these consumers do not want what dad or grandpa wore,"

said Gottke. "They grew up wearing lightweight athletic shoes with color pops and shoes that have personality. Which is something that you do not have with a lot of work boots. The need is definitely out there for faster, lightweight patterns that have safety features, but also look good that they can be worn off the job."



Georgia Boot Stone Mountain Hiking Boot

Gottke also agreed that weather has affected how Rocky Brands build its lines. In the past, having heavily insulated packages were a given but that has changed with warmer weather and very little precipitation leaving retailers with excess insulated inventory. For this coming fall, Georgia Boot will have only two SKUs total with any insulation and the amount was 200g.

Given the fluctuations in weather, Wolverine has built its Fall 2014 collection to be ready for anything.

"This line has weather-ready, simplified products that are highly functional and purposefully built, and includes the launch of Wolverine's high performance breathable, waterproof membrane, PC Dry," said Yahn Lebo, Wolverine's product line manager. "The changing needs of the consumer are important to consider. Consumers are still buying multiple products in varied categories, but they have pushed multifunction to new heights. Consumers are redefining what value and versatility is."

Wolverine's hunting line, for instance, provides non-insulated options to 1000 grams of insulation to provide options to the consumer.

The Wolverine Ridge Hunting Boot, \$180, features Wolverine ICS+, an all-new integrated support system with multi-density layers that work together to provide firm support when carrying a pack, protection from impact and bruises on rocky terrain, and a solid foundation for stability. Paired with a small, lightweight nitrogen-filled disc in the heel, the technology allows the wearer to choose his ideal comfort setting, selecting from cushioned, firm, inner or outer support.



Wolverine Ridge Hunting Boot



Wolverine Jason Hunting Boot

The Jason Hunting Boot, \$180, combines a durable exterior with Wolverine EXP technology, which starts with a dense base that distributes weight evenly across a sturdy foundation. The honeycomb heel pattern expands to absorb impact, and a ribbed spine in the fore-foot flexes through each step to maintain cushioning.

On the hiking side, Wolverine's Alert Waterproof Hiker, \$150, features a waterproof leather upper equipped with ArmorTek heel and toe bumpers for durability and protection from rocks and brush. Wolverine PC Dry Silver waterproof membrane keeps water out, and wave mesh lining wicks away excess moisture inside the shoe. It also features a removable open cell polyurethane footbed, an EVA midsole, a nylon shank for flexible support, and a Vibram Run Lite Rubber Outsole.

Salomon's Dunn is seeing resurgence towards more traditional styling and versatile everyday footwear in hiking and multisport that packs enough to tackle weekend trail ambitions.

"Brands are filling the minimalist void in the multisport category with light, versatile styles that can double as their everyday lifestyle shoe," said Dunn. "Prices have gone up, but consumers will buy if they can connect the value to the price. Sales in the multisport \$120 plus price range have grown over 50 percent this year."

Salomon's XA PRO Mid GTX, \$170, gets an improved collar design for more comfort, and updated outsole for grip on any surface. The mid-height and fully waterproof boot features a non-marking Contagrip outsole with 3D Advanced Chassis, a Gore-Tex membrane and Waterproof bootie lining construction.

For women, the Hime High, \$160, incorporates a soft textile and faux fur to give the lace-up a feminine look, while the natural motion midsole and Contagrip sole keep the wearer moving confidently in winter. Also available in mid-height.

Also from Salomon, the Kaipo Mid CS WP, \$140, combines Climashield waterproof protection and insulation for temperatures to -18°C. Also available in a low-cut.

In response to the demand for more all-weather styles from consumers and retail partners, Sorel's Fall/Winter collections will showcase its ability to extend beyond the mountain and into the city.

Highlights include the Slimshortie in Madder Brown, \$130, which features a waterproof full-grain leather upper with back panel available in oiled suede, blanket and felt. The outsole is handcrafted vulcanized rubber with herringbone design with a leather wrapped heel for maximum protection.

The Tivoli II, \$120, offers style, protection and warmth in a versatile silhouette. Available in waterproof suede leather upper, nylon upper and blanket upper, the Tivoli II features waterproof breathable membrane construction, a fleece lining, removable molded EVA footbed, and molded rubber outsole.

"Our evolved Tivoli II and Slimboot are more transitional than their predecessors: the classic Tivoli and Slimpack," said Kimberly Barta, senior global brand director for Sorel. "Sorel's 2014 Fall and Winter Collections feature more ultra-wearable and all-weather versatile styles. Our extended selection of Fall styles are lightweight, easy, leather boots, with sleek outsoles.

Look for warm hues with a variety of textured patterns in an array of materials, from premium leathers and suede, to wool blanket, felt and knits."



Salomon XA PRO Mid GTX



Salomon Hime High



Sorel Slimshortie



Sorel Tivoli II

Overall, Barta said shorter boots continue to be strong, with easy on/off, soft, slouchy silhouettes and fun color pops. Sorel's winter collections also take inspiration from the current trend of military inspired women's wear: varying boot heights, geometric patterns, chunky knits and western influences.

"Our collections continue to offer premium leathers, eye catching color combinations, plush fleece linings, and an increased traction outsole," said Barta. "Trends in color we are seeing and incorporating? For women, major influences are warm colors inspired by western wear, knits and metallic tones. We've also seen a recent trend of incorporating cognac in all hues, reflected in Sorel's Slimshortie and Slimpack Riding boots."

Gregg Duffy, senior director of performance footwear, Timberland, said the minimalist barefoot movement has affected footwear construction across the performance space. And while Timberland has evolved its footwear to represent a sleeker, more refined look from a style sense, Duffy believes Timberland is now benefiting by staying "true to our core products," with a focus on rugged and refined cold weather classics.

"This season we're bringing a fresh selection of classic styles with modern twists - and with combinations consumers haven't seen from us," said Duffy. "That's really the story of the season - the best of old and new. Designs that feel connected to the past with our authentic craftsmanship, but also feel new and trend-right."

With consumer insights showing that Timberland is a brand that can "transition seamlessly across wearing occasions," whether in the city or on the trail, Duffy said Timberland is putting a greater focus on delivering boots that can work in multiple functions.

"For fall, we're focused on the versatility that you need every day to be 'ready for anything' - wherever you are, whatever you're doing, no matter the weather," said Duffy. "You'll see we've taken more traditional winter boot silhouettes and merged them with trail capable outsoles. For example, the Earthkeepers Schazzberg Mid features a Vibram EcoStep outsole that provides extra traction and grip, on any surface."

The Timberland Earthkeepers Schazzberg Mid Waterproof Insulated, \$160, also features 200 grams of PrimaLoft insulation for added warmth, Climapath technology that vents moisture up and out of the boot to help feet stay drier and more comfortable all day.

For women, the Timberland Earthkeepers Chillberg Over The Chill Waterproof Insulated, \$150, features a waterproof fabric upper and membrane, while 200 grams of PrimaLoft insulation and fleece lining provide added warmth. An



Timberland Earthkeepers Schazzberg Mid Waterproof Insulated

anti-fatigue footbed gives all-day comfort and support, and durable Green Rubber (42 percent recycled rubber) outsole adds extra traction.



Timberland Earthkeepers Chillberg Over The Chill Waterproof Insulated

On the casual side, the men's Earthkeepers Chestnut Ridge 8" Waterproof Boot, \$180, features a leather upper with a durable Green Rubber (42 percent recycled rubber) outsole for added traction. A TPR welt stitched to the upper and insole gives a premium look. Extra-soft recycled PET lining keeps feet comfortable

and anti-fatigue technology provides all-day support. An EVA midsole provides extra cushioning and shock-absorption.

The men's Earthkeepers Heritage Rugged LTD Half-Lined Bomber, \$200, is the classic Timberland six inch reimagined for a colder weather look. A fleece-lined collar and shearling lining made from 30 percent recycled PET adds warmth and comfort. Premium leather uppers from a silver-rated tannery and a waterproof membrane support the durability Timberland is known for.

In footwear, Columbia Sportswear's focus for Fall 2014 will also be on versatility.

"We definitely recognize that we can't assume it's going to be cold and it's going to snow between Thanksgiving and Christmas and that's going to spike sales," said Blaine Perrin, Columbia's director of product marketing. "We also recognize that many customers are looking for something they can just wear and be comfortable in. It doesn't always have to be meet the demands of 12 below zero because we don't see that need in a lot of key markets we're selling into."

The brand's Minx line of tall boots is being expanded with new designs, silhouettes, different heights and three new styles. The Minx Shorty Omni Heat Print, \$90, is waterproof and lined with Omni-Heat Reflective and has 200 grams of insulation. Said Perrin, "We've had a few rough winters that hurt the winter boot business so we wanted to make the popular collection more wearable throughout the year."



Columbia Sportswear Minx Shorty Omni Heat Print



Columbia Sportswear Luscher Omni-Heat

Columbia will also be introducing its first true rain boot, the Luscher Omni-Heat, \$50, which offers waterproof protection from the rain and incorporates an all-over Omni-Heat Reflective lining to reflect body heat back to the wearer. The boot stands out since it will be made in the U.S., the first time the company has tapped domestic production in a long time.

Over the past few seasons, Teva has extended its product line to offer a solution to consumers 365 days out of the year with a focus on combining "function with fashion," said Juerg Geser, Teva's senior product line director. This includes transitional footwear styles like the De La Vina, Kimtah Trail and Camden Ridge.

"If it is really cold, we offer the Chair 5 for men and Jordanelle for women," said Geser. "This award winning product has separated itself from the snow boot market through its amazing travel-ready foldable upper, lightweight construction and a removable inner bootie which the consumer can use as a slipper inside their ski condo or lodge at the close of the day."



Photo courtesy Keen



Teva Chair 5



Teva Jordanelle

For Fall 2014, both the Chair 5 and Jordanelle, \$170, are being updated with improved comfort and warmth as well as added detailing like a zipper stash pocket which holds a boot bag for travel. Both the Chair 5 and Jordanelle feature White Spider Rubber sole for traction in cold weather and 3M Thinsulate sonal insulation with 250g Thinsulate throughout and 400g in toe area for warmth.

Another highlight from Teva is the Surge Mid eVent, \$130, low-top version is \$120, featuring a TevaSphere outsole that uses a spherical heel with two support pods for lightweight minimalism without sacrificing stability. Also

features a Spider365 Rubber outsole, an eVent waterproof breathable membrane, and Mush infused footbed with Poron pod.

Built for style and functionality, Oboz's Mendenhall Mid, \$125, features a combo Nubuck leather and poly/cotton upper to keep feet cool. Soft collar



Oboz Mendenhall Mid

cushions concealed inside are features found in Oboz' hikers: the supportive BFit insole and protective toe and heel counters.

"Color and immediate comfort from softer constructions in boots are still a strong trend," said Josh Fairchilds, Oboz's VP of development. "Color helps grab attention, particularly for women, and a comfortable boot helps make the sale."

With a nod to classic hiking boots, Oboz' Bridger, \$160, features soft leather, with waterproof/breathable BDry lining, requiring little break-in for a comfortable, supple fit. Underneath, co-engineered components - including the last, footbed, midsole, chassis, shank and outsole - support the foot, promote natural flex and supplies traction. ■



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- 6-8 ATA Show
Nashville, TN
- 7-9 MWSRA January Show
Madison, WI
- 7-9 WWSRA Rocky Mtn Preview
Denver, CO
- 7-9 WWSRA Northwest Preview
Portland, OR
- 9-11 Surf Expo
Orlando, FL
- 13-14 WWSRA Intermountain Preview
Salt Lake City, UT
- 13-15 WWSRA NorCal Early Preview
Reno, NV
- 14-17 SHOT Show
Las Vegas, NV
- 15-18 NBS Winter-Specialty Market
Fort Worth, TX
- 16-18 Sports Licensing & Tailgate Show
Las Vegas, NV
- 17-19 Imprinted Sportswear Show (ISS)
Long Beach, CA
- 21 ORWM Demo Day
TBA
- 22-25 Outdoor Retailer Winter Market
Salt Lake City, UT
- 30-2 SIA Snow Show
Denver, CO

FEBRUARY

- 3-4 SIA On-Snow Demo
Copper Mountain, CO
- 3-4 SIA Nordic Demo
Copper Mountain, CO
- 5-7 FFANY
New York, NY
- 5-8 Sports Inc. Outdoor Show
Phoenix, AZ
- 6-10 NBS Semi-Annual Market
Fort Worth, TX

- 9-11 EORA SE February Show
Greenville, SC
- 10-13 Worldwide Spring Show
Reno, NV
- 11-13 MWSRA February Show
Madison, WI
- 18-19 MWSRA New Model Demo
Hastings, MN

MARCH

- 4-5 SFIA National Health Through Fitness Day
Washington, DC
- 14-16 Imprinted Sportswear Show (ISS)
Atlantic City, NJ

APRIL

- 4-6 Imprinted Sportswear Show (ISS)
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