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## **ISPO Trend Report**

### **Digital, individual, and sustainable: winter sports trends for 2019/2020**

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- **Customization: the demand for individual products continues to grow**
- **Trend towards sustainability is on the rise**
- **Urban lifestyle remains the trend in the winter sports sector**

Enthusiasm for winter sports remains unbroken. Demand for the right winter sports equipment is correspondingly high. The buying preferences of many amateur athletes have changed considerably in recent years: for example, consumers are increasingly interested in how sustainable their equipment is and what materials are used to produce it. In addition, many are becoming more willing to spend on high-quality products if this increases enjoyment and performance. Digital gadgets continue to be in high demand, as is customization. Custom-made skis are particularly gaining importance, as well as ecologically sound material technologies. These and other trends will all be showcased between February 3 and 6 at the sports trade show ISPO Munich.

#### **Trend towards sustainability is on the rise**

According to the annual industry report “The State of Fashion” by consulting firm McKinsey, young people in particular are increasingly excited by social engagement and environmental protection. Sustainable repair services, such as those offered by Patagonia, are becoming more and more important to consumers. U.S.-based PrimaLoft, a developer of material technologies, is in a position to revolutionize the market here with a genuinely new development. After four years of intensive work, it presented PrimaLoft Bio, the first synthetic insulation made completely from recycled, biodegradable fibers. Also, Holmenkol, the world’s oldest ski wax brand, introduced the first organic-certified and 100 percent biodegradable ski wax, making a clear statement. The Italian ski manufacturer NORDICA already relies on PrimaLoft liners made of recycled PET bottles for 80 percent of its footwear collection. In addition, eight recycled wine corks find a new life in each pair of NORDICA liners. La Sportiva is offering

exciting new developments with its Skorpion CR touring boot, for example, the shell of which is made of plant-based, resource-saving Pebax Rnew.

### **The ever-present trend – customization: the demand for individual skis and boots continues to grow**

Although boot fitting is not a new topic for ski hardware manufacturers, it is one that is becoming increasingly sophisticated. While your everyday off-the-shelf ski boot with its fixed size concept was considered to be state-of-the-art ten years ago, today every manufacturer without exception offers a boot-fitting concept. The methods used are very similar across brands. The fitting process is carried out using foot measurement, which is used to identify a suitable ski boot model from the collection. Once this has been determined, either the liner, the shell, or even both elements of the matching ski boot model are heat-molded to the shape of the customer's foot. These systems are increasingly being adopted by specialist retailers, because they create a tangible advantage for stationary retailers. One of the boot-fitting pioneers is Fischer Sports with its vacuum system. For the coming season, the Austrian brand has come up with a "mobile boot fitting" option: the newly developed Scan-Fit app, which can be used for making preselections from the comfort of home. Using a smartphone camera, three different "foot photos" are uploaded to the app, which are shot according to precise instructions. Once uploaded, the system calculates the right ski or cross-country boot from Fischer's current range.

### **Boot fitting now also for kids**

For the first time, NORDICA is now also offering children what was previously reserved exclusively for adult skiers. "Speedmachine J 3 Plus" is the name of the junior model, which is molded to the feet of youngsters using the same long-established process as employed for adults. Following a foot measurement at an authorized retailer, infrared technology is used to adapt the shell, the heat-moldable liner, and all modular components to the foot anatomy for an individualized fit.

### **Mass customization of alpine skis**

The development of the young Austrian ski label ORIGINAL+ is virtually a logical consequence of this. The ISPO Brandnew Overall Winner devised a convincing

concept for both customizing and producing skis in large quantities. The company's smart service is provided through an online ski configurator, which designs a ski that will be produced precisely according to the skier's needs. To do this, the prospective customer has to click through different stages, in which questions are asked about their biometric data, skiing preferences, and optionally the specifications of their preferred ski boot. After the configuration process, the ORIGINAL+ calculator determines the data for a completely customized ski, which can be ordered immediately online after any visual changes. Pioneering innovations are also emerging in the snowboard sector. The ISPO Brandnew Finalist BBoard from Switzerland manufactures snowboards that can be personalized according to the rider's wishes. Tailored to the customer's height, weight, and personal riding style, the board is made by hand according to an individual design. The Forge GTX hiking shoes by TECNICA are customizable and ensure that wearers get to their ski resorts during the winter. Brick-and-mortar stores show their expertise again here in that the Forge GTX outdoor boot can be adapted to the customer's unique feet measurements at the retailer. This is possible due to an upper construction that is equipped with heat-moldable elements in the heel area. The boot fitter also adapts the insole to the customer's anatomy. With this, TECNICA is seeking to set new standards when it comes to providing the correct fit.

Adaptability is an attribute that also falls under the collective term "customization" and is a feature integrated into the advanced Boa glove adjustment system from Leki. With the Nordic Tune Shark Boa, these specialists are bringing a trigger-compatible glove to the market that can be optimally adapted to the wearer's hand using the Boa adjustment system. In terms of transferring power, this is a step in a new direction, particularly for Nordic skiing where the use of poles is essential. Madshus has introduced its new technology Move, a dial on the binding of skin skis, which allows cross-country skiers to easily adjust the Rottefella binding's grip on terrain without having to unfasten their skis. This provides more grip for ascents and less skin contact with the ground on downhill for unadulterated fun on descents.

### **Higher, further, faster – but also safer**

In these performance-oriented times, which have also included mass sports for a long time now, more and more companies are working on smart safety systems,

because technical developments in alpine skis alone have meant that even average skiers and beginners are much faster than before. For safety equipment manufacturers it is about minimizing the impact of possible falls. For example, the Swedish label POC will be launching a back protector for kids on the market next season: not only does it provide excellent protection, it is also breathable and trackable via GPS. The latter is enabled by the so-called Trax POC Edition device, which is tucked away in a breast pocket at the front. What makes this ISPO Award Gold Winner (in the category “Accessories”) really special is the alarm triggered by the device in the event of an accident. In the field of avalanche airbags, the Jetforce Pro from Black Diamond took the gold title with its compact avalanche airbag system which, in addition to its prize-worthy lightweight design and easy handling, also includes a digital component: a Bluetooth element that makes regular updates child’s play. The maximum pack volume can be adjusted from 10 to 25 liters.

Simple, but effective: the helmets of Swedish company Flaxta are primarily geared to freeriders who like to snowboard or ski in untouched nature. Accordingly, the helmets are particularly light and breathable and have as a special feature an integrated NFC ID chip, which enables relevant information to be called up and received via smartphone in the event of a crash – a valuable aid for search parties and first responders.

### **Urban lifestyle remains the trend in the winter sports sector**

“The combination of fashionable, urban elements, in terms of color, material, cut, and fit, with function is vitally important in the winter sports sector,” says Ingo Jost, Director for Europe at Luhta Sportswear Company. According to Jost, it is especially Millennials who are increasingly looking for “crafted goods,” i.e. functional clothing that is also authentic and stylish. Jost sees this area gaining “increasing importance,” which could lend fresh impetus to the sports department and open new target groups. Overall, the clothing industry is bringing back a lot of color to the sector. Anything goes: from soft tones to vivid colors such as deep orange or olive. While the Norwegian label Bergans is embracing colorful creations, their compatriots at Helly Hansen are focusing on the traditional red, white, and blue combination. Icepeak, a brand that is part of the Finnish Luhta Sportswear Company, will be celebrating a revival of the 1990s next winter with its Star Collection. Still on the rise: clothing made of Merino wool, for top and bottom layers, on its own or in a mix with other materials, using sophisticated

knitting techniques. A slow-burning trend is that of intelligent enhancements and new developments in material functionality: the Swiss brand KJUS is relying here on its self-developed electronic HYDRO\_BOT membrane, which was bestowed the title of Gold Winner by the ISPO Award specialist jury: using electroosmosis, the wearer can pump out moisture in a targeted and controlled manner with up to ten times greater efficiency. The North Face has devoted itself completely to innovation. For the first time in Europe, the company is presenting its new membrane principle in the form of a completely new nano spinning method. The U.S. manufacturer was named an ISPO Award winner for this by the panel of experts.

#### **About ISPO**

ISPO is the world's leading sports network for business professionals and consumer experts. The platform was launched in 1970 and brings together an integrated range of industry-related analog and digital services under the ISPO family brand name. This includes the world's largest multisegment trade fairs ISPO Munich, ISPO Beijing and ISPO Shanghai as well as OutDoor by ISPO, the online news portal ISPO.com, and the business solutions ISPO Digitize, ISPO Brandnew, ISPO Open Innovation, ISPO Award, ISPO Academy, ISPO Textrends, ISPO Job Market and ISPO Shop. With its far-reaching mix of innovation promotion, industry networking, know-how and editorial insights, ISPO works 365 days a year to support companies and sports enthusiasts, and to foster passion for sport worldwide.

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