

Munich, February 3, 2015

Press Release

Snowboard Hardware Trends

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## Split Boards Double The Fun

### Split boards still strong, Freeride and Backcountry dominate the market

The strong freeriding and backcountry trend continues. Manufacturers' product portfolios continue to focus on equipment that makes off-piste adventures optimally enjoyable for snowboarders. Those who stay on the groomed slopes generally ride in park and pipe. Boards are becoming lighter without compromising on vibration absorption and stability. All versions feature clean looks. Attractive, mostly muted surfaces dominate the scene. In addition, there are elaborate photo prints ranging from kittens, beaches with palm trees to puffy cloud formations.

In the coming season **split boards** will continue to be at the forefront of snowboarding. A few years ago, these dividable boards experienced their renaissance as the backcountry touring trend began to boom, and manufacturers took note. Since then the interest in these practical touring boards has not abated. While in the beginning they were specialized designs mostly by smaller manufacturers, to date there are few brands that do not have a split board in their collection. This not only increases the portfolio overall, but also the variety of models. The long-time split board suppliers benefit from their experience with the high technical requirements for material and technology.

Innovations include twin splits, split boards with identically shaped nose and tail. The binding is mounted in the middle instead of towards the tail, as normally done on freeride boards, to improve buoyancy in powder. Prior is a pioneer in this area. The target group consists of snowboarders who not only look for a fresh powder line, but also like to jump and do tricks.

Weight is reduced where possible. Lightweight carbon constructions are particularly useful for cutting weight. The "Milligramm" by Amplid from Bavaria is the absolute lightweight. The board weighs half a kilogram less than comparable

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boards. Amplid also designed the perfect pole for touring enthusiasts. In contrast to conventional telescoping poles, the "Carbon Quad" can be broken down into four sections and will fit even into a small backpack while riding downhill. In addition, it is the lightest pole currently on the market.

To split or not to split? If you cannot (or do not want to) decide, and keep all your options open, the "Solitude" by Flow is the right board for you. The freeride/all-mountain board can be used as a split board as well as a regular board on and off piste.

**Light weight** is a primary issue for freeride boards. Anyone who carries his or her board strapped to a backpack on the way up will appreciate each gram of reduced weight. Goodboards uses basalt fibers sourced from lava rock, a material that requires little energy and is light weight. Compared to fiberglass basalt offers extremely good mechanical capabilities such as extraordinary vibration absorption and low weight.

**Special boards** turn snowboarding into never-ending fun even for unique requirements. The "XXWide" by Goodboards, for example, is a board with all-mountain shape that offers sufficient space for boarders with large feet (sizes 47 to 51) thanks to its extra-wide center. Amplid's twin tip "True Pillow" creates a larger area for flotation by reducing length but increasing width. Swallow tails, like the "Darwin" by Flow, continue to be popular, and show their strengths in deep powder.

**Snowboard looks** will be more muted in the 2015/16 season than in prior years. There are a lot of black and earth tones on high-quality surfaces. Color blocking and pop colors are almost gone. Where color comes into play it is in rather unobtrusive areas. Narrow borders or graphic patterns catch the eye. Nature photos, such as the images by Nitro's team photographers, or those on some of Rossignol's boards, not only reflect winter scenes, but sometimes even bring beaches and palm trees into play. Graphics depicting a hamburger on one highback and French fries on the other foot may cause rumbling stomachs. The "Artist Edition" by Nitro applies designs to bindings.



**Bindings and boots** are getting more sophisticated. Ultra-light, effective vibration absorption systems protect joints even under extreme load. The cable construction in ratchets and straps have become so advanced that most systems have to be adjusted just once. Quick-lock systems are the order of the day, a tool-less tilt adjustment is a convenient feature.

An increasing number of boots exclusively feature cabled fastening systems with adjustment wheels. Hiking boot soles are used to provide secure grip even on icy halfpipe copings, yet feature a flat enough profile that it will not collect mud and splatter it all over your turns.

For more information on snowboard material trends, visit ISPO MUNICH from February 5 to 8, 2015, or go to <http://munich.ispo.com/en/>

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