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Press Release

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Ski Fashions: Sporty, Light and Purist Style

Among the groundbreaking trends and innovations revolving around ski and winter sports wear for the 2016/17 season are sustainability, new hybrid combinations, as well as natural materials and finishes. A surprising number of outfits show that clever technology combinations are also getting lighter – and compared to their heavier predecessors even promise improved performance. ISPO MUNICH presents everything on the topic “Ski Wear and Accessories” from January 24 to 27 in exhibit halls A4 and A5.

Added value is a must – and is the motto of almost all ski wear manufacturers today. One of the reasons may be the decreasing number of winter and ski days. Or the new trend “Athleisure”, combining fitness with leisure, and the reason that only half of the ski wear sold in the USA is actually used for the sport.

In any case, the brands in the alpine ski, freeride and ski touring fashion segment are no longer focusing on staying within their own trend niches and distinguishing themselves from each other in terms of technical features. On the contrary, ski fashion manufacturers are now also creating lifestyle-inspired styles that even work far beyond classic winter sports. On the other hand, there are the classic outdoor brands, who are applying highly innovative textile and functional technologies to their ski touring and freeride jackets, and in particular to their midlayers. They are tailored as timeless classics, protecting the wearer against cold and wet conditions, suitable for resort skiing, yet also for hiking, biking and even a stroll through the city.

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Manufacturers who accomplish bridging this multi-function gap also offer the perfectly matching functional under- and outerwear – another trend, covered by new collections comprised of everything from base to mid-layer to 3-layer outerwear.

Zip In or Use On Its Own

Fashions that look made for ski sports have even more features than just ensuring the wearer looks good in the snow: in the high-performance fashion segment there are detachable hoods, fur trim, snow guards. Zip-in systems allow the removal of ultra-light inner jackets and vests (Schöffel). The individual pieces are perfectly suitable to be worn on their own on the slopes as well as for classic outdoor activities in winter. The latest seam technologies yield ultra-flat results, are taped and often almost unnoticeable. Thanks to clever cutting techniques some ski jackets even forgo most seams. Narrower seam allowances and seam tapes also result in decreased weight. Different materials can now be interwoven without seams (FuseForm™, The North Face), increasing breathability, reducing weight, and maximizing range of motion.

Technical elements are moving into the spotlight: ultra-light zippers, such as for pit ventilation and pockets (e.g. Integral by YKK) can now be seamlessly integrated into a piece of apparel. The zipper not only conforms to the ever-present lightweight trend, but also features a PU coating, and is thus water-repellant and perfectly suitable for highly technical wear thanks to its vapor permeability. In addition, combination systems are becoming more elaborate, allowing the wearer to securely combine jacket and pants into a one-piece with the help of special hook and loop fasteners.



Lots of Gray, Lots of Monochrome

The urban spirit will influence the new ski wear collections for the fall/winter 2016/17; their looks are becoming more citified and they will have a wider range of use. Many of the new ski outfits express this with a color palette consisting of a wide variety of shades of gray. Active wear designer Birgit Brandt, a member of the international design network IDEAS says: “Most of the new ski wear styles will feature monochrome looks. If there are contrasts, they are more often achieved by a tone-in-tone combination and clever use of a variety of fabrics and materials, rather than by bright color blocks. Even the most monochromatic surfaces will feature interesting combinations, such as when fleecy wool qualities are worked together with soft, flat and shiny materials in one and the same piece.”

When the focus is on colors, next winter’s fashions will be dominated by dark blue shades, from navy to petrol. Shades of yellow, some subtle, some gold, rose gold or bronze, to bright lime are used as accents. Violet will regain territory in the women’s collections, and play an important role together with strong shades of berry, plum, and grenadine to deep pink. Tobias Schmid, Senior Product Manager Apparel for Ski and Snowboard at INTERSPORT Germany, says: “The color scheme for men will retain its sporty character with white, bright green, blue and orange.”

Patterns and prints will remain rather muted and less playful, yet modern and detail-oriented. Fade-out prints, gradients with muted colors, tweed, mélange and pinstripe looks, often in black and white and shades of gray will draw the eye.

Down and insulating jackets as well as the increasingly popular shorts and skirts for ski touring fans come with playful quilting variations. Boring horizontal stripes are out – small to large squares, diamonds, diagonal and cross stripes, asymmetric and gathered elements, and elaborate quilting combinations in one and the same outfit are in trend. They are



often finished with the help of clever techniques ensuring that the filler within the quilting chambers no longer moves around, thus eliminating cold spots in the seam areas.

Awareness of Nature and Environment

Sustainability, environmental protection and animal welfare are on the industry's agenda when it comes to the use of down, wool and merino wool – natural materials that continue to be very popular. An increasing number of manufacturers sign transparent agreements with producers who care for their animals instead of taking advantage of them, openly announced on websites including retraceable processes from start to finish. There are already some brands (such as Ternua), who use recycled down in their new anoraks. In addition, an increasing number of manufacturers insists on fluorocarbon-free waterproofing and refuses to produce anything with suspect textiles whose health impact is still unknown. The textile, membrane and coating industry tirelessly searches for eco-friendly solutions and renewable raw materials for even more robust and durable, yet softer, lighter and more functional sportswear. An example is a new 3-layer material, mostly sourced from recycled cork and polyester, finished with a water-resistant and breathable membrane (LMA, Regenerated Cork). A first is a sweatshirt made with fibers sourced from recycled plastic marine debris (O'Neill).

Freeride and Touring on the Rise

It seems that this coming winter most ski fashion manufacturers but also many classic outdoor brands are focusing on the ever increasing number of freeride and touring enthusiasts. Compact, light, elastic, but also water- and wind-proof, as well as with a purist's idea of sports and suitable for anything from resort skiing to hiking, these are the multi-faceted requirements for their sports fashions. This area is covered mostly by the



mid-price to high-end segment – thanks to clever technological features. In 2016/17 demanding athletic skiers will enjoy improved moisture management thanks to even lighter 3-layer outfits featuring new technical improvements, more powerful membranes, including upgraded lining materials. Most materials have become so light and thin that the pieces are less bulky, softer and more pleasant to the touch, and can be stowed even in the smallest of backpacks (e.g. Dynafit, Mammut, Haglöfs). Newly developed, innovative liners with PTFE-/ PFC-free 3-layer laminates (Moisture-Tech Apparel by Sympatex) ensure that even during the problematic change between peak performance and rest phases the membrane will wick even more moisture to the outside when sweat production increases.

New, high-quality and very flexible softshells will be the ideal companions for athletic, performance-oriented, alpine activities such as ski touring or trail running. Thanks to innovative material combinations they will not let the body cool off excessively even during a rest phase. Softshells with synthetic liners (e.g. Bergans) or made of the finest merino wool (Ortovox) used in hybrid combinations with a variety of highly elastic fabric inserts, such as in the armpit or on the back, ensure increased range of motion.

Groundbreaking Trends and Innovations

As the spotlight is on insulation with down, wool fleece to synthetic, ultra-fine and ultra-light water-repellant padding materials, featuring improved stretch at the same level as the outer and inner textiles used, some very intelligent combinations have created a buzz. There is, for example, a water-proof, yet at the same time breathable down jacket with exterior membrane (OutDry Extreme, Columbia). PFC-free, hydrophobic down (Berghaus, Nikwax) provides perfect insulation under extreme conditions and remains water-repellant for up to 16 hours. There is a lot of improvement in terms of breathability technology, resulting in faster



transport of excessive heat and moisture, shorter drying times for the outfit itself, and perfect vapor transport even under a hardshell. One of the innovations is a doubly woven, extremely dense down chamber construction without seams (Millet). This technology optimizes tear resistance and down density while offering improved warmth and also increasing the wind-and water-repellant character of the outer fabric. Because only a dry insulation is a good insulation there is new membrane technology (Thermium, WL Gore) that ensures that down, wool fleece and synthetic fibers remain protected against moisture from the outside. Positioned on top of the insulation it provides complete protection against wind, and withstands light rain and snow showers.

Breathable, waterproof and elastic is another membrane made with ceramic particles. It reflects the cold on the outside and keeps the body's warmth on the inside (Mountain Force). New softshell jet pants are made with a type of foam placed as a middle layer between the outer and the lining layers (Schoeller PCM, Mountain Force), providing full coverage temperature regulation.

Another innovation is a bluesign-certified insulation for demanding, aerobic outdoor activities such as skiing, yet also running and hiking. It features 4-way stretch, high breathability and temperature regulation, making the transport of excessive heat and moisture possible, while offering a high range of motion and staying dry and warm even under extreme pressure (PrimaLoft, PrimaLoft Gold Insulation Active). A special, proprietary finish and manufacturing process keeps the tiny fibers in place to eliminate any fiber migration. Applying this finish makes it possible to use more breathable materials with looser weaves or stretch characteristics. And since in the future product developers will have an even larger selection of stretch-quality outer materials and breathable outer and liner fabrics at their disposal, skiers can look forward to even more year-round sports fashions in 2016/17.



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