



photo: dragon

SUNGLASSES TREND REPORT

Sunnies are great accessories for (almost) any kind of shop. They take up little space, rarely have warranty issues and are always in season (even in winter, as Electric's new Winter Lens showcases). And while there are new models, trends and innovations launched every year, this category is a true classic and even the most eccentric styles will always find devoted fans. Yet for this summer, we'd recommend you follow along these lines. **Report by Anna Langer**

TRENDS

The overall trend concerning individual style and taste has been prevalent for quite a while now and doesn't stop at eyewear. If anything, it's double as important here, with the brand's individual approach becoming just as important as the consumers'. "It's about clearly standing for something and defining your unique position in the market place" explains Dragon's Mike Tobia, and "unique aesthetics" (Shred), tying with a growth of subcultures, as Melon notice: "People are becoming more interested in riding alternative shapes (surfboards and snowboards) and supporting independent brands," says co-founder James Pointer.

Neff combine both sides of this by constructing their own identity around an "affordable and diverse" collection that allows consumers "to purchase several different frames and be able to build their own look around who they want to be on any given day" says Kevin Dell, Director of Merchandising.

Shifting the focus back to the roots of company identities also means that sports performance is becoming an important factor again and is often addressed in special collections, separate from more lifestyle-oriented lines. Quiksilver and Roxy work with "a new segmentation which allows to propose two ranges for two different consumers: Performance & Lifestyle," that are sold to different retailer types and focus on respectively relevant features.

Oakley address this with a "completely new sports performance collection" that is "spearheaded by the iconic Jawbreaker full frame shield", says EMEA Optics Brand Manager Axel Brosch. And they are by far not the only ones bringing wrap styles back. With the Mudslinger, Electric name a wrap model as one of their key styles for 2015 too, as do Quiksilver, Neff, Bushnell and Arnette. Nike SB on the other hand define the whole line through sports: "Athlete's performance is what drives us and defines our style."

"Classic style lines with organic design return for a cleaner look" - Spy



photo: dragon

Lifestyle models continue the vintage-vibes from last year as well, showing a lot of “Vintage inspired frames” (Electric, Quiksilver, Roxy, Melon, Carve, Otis, Raen), revived classics (Filtrate, Gloryfy, Sabre) such as Wayfarer (Sinner, Neff, Urban Beach), Aviator (Urban Beach, Animal, Bushnell) and Cat Eye styles (Roxy, Urban Beach, Bushnell, Otis), or new variations of typical models like Smith’s Archive collection.

Next to these “classic style lines with organic design” that are “returning for a cleaner look” according to Spy’s Product Director Juliette Koh, there are a bunch of little sub-trends worth mentioning, including details like key holes, double bridges, metal accents or inside frame colour pops (Neff, Quiksilver, Roxy, Proof). Melon work with “wide square frames”, similar to “geometric and angular shapes” from Dirty Dog, Bushnell and D’Blanc, the latter of which balance “angular details with rounder lens shapes.” Circular frames can also be found in collections from Melon, VonZipper, Oakley, Proof and Quiksilver.

INNOVATIONS

The revived interest in sports performance carries quite some innovations in its wake, some of which have already been inaugurated last season or carried over from the goggle segments. “The major push for technology is in the lenses. With the market becoming more aware of lens technology, having a polar and non-polar lens tech will be in high demand”, reckons VonZipper. The Dragon XP Cross

“Those who bought Quiksilver / Roxy at the beginning are the people who need to wear prescription glasses now. However teenagers and kids are still our best target because Quiksilver and Roxy bring some fun to medical accessory thanks to logos, colours and new concepts.”

Performance and Adaptive Technology “provides optimal functionality with features that adapt to demanding outdoor conditions”, Dragon’s Mike Tobia told us. Gloryfy’s “unbreakable transformer lens” and the Oakley PRIZM lens technology are two more examples, that “enhances vision and contrast for specific environments and applications” in “demanding conditions,” states Oakley EMEA Optics Brand Manager Axel Brosch. Electric work with melanin infused lenses, “that use the body’s natural defence against the harmful effects of the sun,” says Mike Neslon, VP of Global Product And Design; and Shred offer “unparalleled vision quality and durability through NXT NoDistortion” proprietary liquid casting for crystal clear vision,” so CMO/CFO Federico Merle, that we already know from their goggles. Similar crossover performance solutions include Spy’s Happy Lens Technology, Smith’s ChromaPop, Sinner’s polarized SINTEC and photochromic Trans+ lenses as well as Dragon’s Predator Lens Technology, that is especially impact resistant and “available in an array of specially formulated tints ready to visually enhance and take on anything you throw at them.”

Electric even introduce a Winter Specific lens that is especially tailored for flat light conditions, while Roxy, Quiksilver and Dragon continue to focus on summer use, expanding the floatable properties of their frames to a wider range of lifestyle models.

MATERIALS

While Grilamid and metal will always be around (Melon, Animal, Bushnell, Carve, D’Blanc, Electric, Nike SB, Roxy, Quiksilver), the use of Acetate is increasing steadily (Urban Beach, Animal, Dragon, D’Blanc, Shred, Electric, Filtrate, Melon, Roxy, Quiksilver, Raen). Since it’s plant-based, it addresses the growing eco-consciousness and at the same time ensures highest quality standards, being durable and light at the same time. Shred implement “injected and hand moulded acetates” for their NoWeight™ frame technology. Electric and D’Blanc rely on Italian craftsmanship for an especially luxurious finish. On top of that, Sinner also work with bamboo, Proof use layers of exotic hardwood and Shred upgrade some of their models with temples made from rosewood and bamboo. Zeal take their eco-approach even further, manufacturing their whole line from plant-based materials – even the lenses, that “decrease the weight of the sunnies and increase the clarity of the lenses,” explains Digital Marketing Manager Mike Lewis.

THEMES & COLOUR STORIES

Urban Beach will adding bamboo to their collection next year as well and have started with a woodgrain effect on their cat eye styles, that ties with the strong comeback of more neutral and toned-down colours we’ll be seeing in 2015. This includes a lot of neutral (Electric), natural (Sinner) and earthy tones (Filtrate, Gloryfy), “vintage toned down translucence colours with contrasting temples” from VonZipper, “street element” inspired colours (Nike SB), crystal and clear frames (Dirty Dog, Neff, Urban Beach), “rich classic colours that enhance value” (D’Blanc) are next to matte and matte black variations of all kinds (Dragon, Melon, Neff, Oakley,

“It’s about clearly standing for something and defining your unique position in the market place” - Dragon



Carve, Filtrate, Otis, Raen), sometimes even with an added soft touch texture effect (Quiksilver, Spy, Bushnell).

Oakley pair matte with colours, which are staying strong as well, especially in the more sports-heavy department. Contrasting colours in inlays, details or mirror lenses are the biggest story here, seen on Dragon, Sinner, Quiksilver, Shred, Urban Beach, Smith, Nike SB, Proof and Dirty Dog. Bushnell and Electric have also added some more “feminine” shades for the ladies, the latter including “smokey crimson, rose gold, and nude” that complements the new metallic lenses from Carve and Roxy. O’Neill balance brightly printed highlight pieces from the men’s line, but “with more muted, subtle tones for a grown up, laid-back take on girlish trends” for the women.

Except for some Hawaii themed prints (Dragon), multi-coloured prints and bright, Rio-inspired shades (O’Neill) and carry-overs from boardshorts as well as apparel collections (Quiksilver, Neff), “colourful Havana’s with psychedelic graphics and ‘Marihuana’ as well as ‘Tapes’ prints” from Arnette and the comeback of Oakley’s “iconic Fingerprint print”, tortoise is all the rage next year. “Tortoise bestsellers in new variations such as Vintage Tort, Mason Tiger Grey, Tiger Grey, Midnight Oil and Matte Spotted Tort” at Electric, “brown or green tortoise” from Quiksilver, “Pop Tort colour stories” mixing classic tortoise frame colours with bright pop Spectra™ lenses (Spy) and classic tortoise (VonZipper, Melon, Neff, Roxy, Animal, Urban Beach, Carve, Filtrate, Otis, Proof, Raen), even on handmade acetate from D’Blanc.

PRESCRIPTION

RX lines are becoming more important year after year and bring sports performance as well as style to the everyday life of people wearing glasses. Quiksilver and Roxy state this market as “really important,” for young and old alike. “Those who bought Quiksilver / Roxy at the beginning are the people who need to wear prescription glasses now. However teenagers and kids are still our best target because

“Tortoise bestsellers in new variations such as Vintage Tort, Mason Tiger Grey, Tiger Grey, Midnight Oil and Matte Spotted Tort”

- Electric

Quiksilver and Roxy bring some fun to medical accessory thanks to logos, colours and new concepts.”

Dragon, Smith, Spy, Animal, Arnette, Proof, Raen, VonZipper and Oakley have dedicated collections for this segment and Sabre are working on their first “Clear Times” collection for 2015. Dirty Dog acknowledge this trend too, agreeing that it’s a “huge growth market but presents its challenges as the convex nature of sports wraps, and the complex nature of prescription, limits the options”, as Operations Manager Corrie Williams states. Electric bypass this obstacle by offering their range to be fitted with prescription lenses from your optician of choice and Carve, Gloryfy, Sinner and Zeal have a “wide selection of RX-compatible frames” too – the latter even offering fitting in their own lab.

5

HIGHLIGHTS

- Performance Vs Lifestyle
- Tortoise – classic, matte, updated
- Shield Wraps & Round Lenses
- Adaptive Lenses
- Hand-crafted Acetate & Bamboo