



photo: Dragon

GOGGLES 15/16 TREND REPORT

Much more than just a fashion accessory, nowadays goggles benefit from NASA-esque technology that brings with it hefty price tags. From filtering out unwanted light waves to equalizing pressure, the new models are designed to enhance any experience you might have in the mountains – including your looks. Our 15/16 Goggle Trend Report tells you just why stocking high quality goggles pays off in the long run. **Report by Anna Langer.**

Continuing on from last year, trends in the goggle market are all about “wide view, better sight, less frame”, as Sinner sum it up in six little words. Melon even state “maximising field of vision” as “the most important thing for us when we create a goggle”. Approaches to address this are a plenty, from lens-technology to frames that vary between super thin and none at all.

FRAMES

Dragon pioneered the frameless look years ago with their APX series, enabling them to significantly stock up their range, “while others are coming out with their first frameless goggle to go up against our original” says Dragon’s Director of Product, Mike Tobia. Oakley, Electric, Bern, Spy, VonZipper, TSG, Zeal, Quiksilver, Roxy, Brunotti, and POC continue their frameless lines from last season, adding more models for 15/16, while Gloryfy took frameless design “one step further” with a goggle that “literally have no frame.” United under the Marchon umbrella, Nike Vision “utilized the frameless bracket system from Dragon as the foundation of technology but then evolved it by having a thin frame enclosure and integrated ventilation within the bracket system.” Next to

continue in their frameless designs, Dirty Dog blend a fusion of frame and no-frame models “to deliver new semi-frameless options”, similar to the new semi-frameless Bollé Scarlett, that is “specifically designed for women and features a great field of vision, superior fit as well as helmet compatibility”. Sinner also go for an “ultra-thin” goggle frame with their new Mohawk and Snowstar models and Giro extend their Expansion View Technology, as “incorporating EXV technology parts with a reduction in the frame, which offers a greater field-of-view than simply reducing the frame”. Shred and Melon also argue that frameless models are actually “restricting the view compared to framed goggles” (Melon) as to “still have definitive structural integrity, the frame gets put under the lens closer to the eye” (Shred).

LENSES

With or without frames, spherical lenses that mimic the curve of the eyeball and offer “less distorted visual perception” (Spektrum) as well as “maximum vertical and peripheral vision” (POC) uphold their dominance in the ranges of all brands we interviewed. Zeal, TSG and Melon only work with this lens type, most other collections apply them to top-notch

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models, as they “seem to target the higher end market” (Carve).

At the same time, there is a “resurgence in cylindrical goggles” according to Dragon and Smith. This trend has built up over the last couple of seasons, Spy think, as “athletes have been sporting them for a few seasons now, which means it’s in the cycle of finding it in the more mass markets” as these shapes address “different user needs, price targets” (Bollé) and “design preferences” (Oakley). Besides lower price points, this more flat shape also offers a “mellow, cool, retro and understated” look, “but with the full-on ‘under-the-hood’ tech, function and features” (Giro). This “clean and simple design aesthetic, that ties nicely into the current trend and feeling of minimalist design” (Smith) is available at a lower price point, making it a great choice for entry-level models. Bern even believe them to be the “future of optics for the winter sports market and allows us to push the envelope of the helmet/goggle relationship.”

Shred pair their cylindrical shapes with their Carved Lens technology for the Amazify, “that has a lens with tapered thickness that compensates loss in vision power as eyes track side to side.” True innovation in 15/16 is happening behind or rather inside the lenses. Oakley already debuted their revolutionary PRIZM technology last year, that “allows you to see snow in a completely new light, literally” by selectively elevating certain light waves while reducing others” and add more Iridium coated variations for next year. But they’re are not the only ones enhancing contrast. The new Bollé Modulator™ Light Control lenses “adapt instantly to changing light while reducing distracting glare” and the new POC NXT lenses with “colour vision-boosting filter called HCD (High Chromatic Definition)” have extreme contrast enhancing effects as well, as does Spy Happy Lense Technology and POC’s patent-pending Sonar Technology from Zeiss, that enhances “contrast perception, high brilliance of colours and contours, especially at high speed and in changing light conditions.” Giro implement Zeiss lenses as well, that are “engineered to be taper-correct to eliminate prismatic distortion and deliver the ultimate in crisp, clear, superior vision.” Shred follow a similar and yet unique approach with their NODISTORTION™ lenses, “which allow for pressure equalization between double lenses as altitude changes occur.”

In general, there is a larger range of photochromic (Dragon, Smith, Dirty Dog, Bollé, Zeal) and polarized lenses (Smith, Sinner, Spektrum, Bollé) on offer than ever before, with Zeal making polarized “the new standard” for 2015/16, introducing the lightest of its kind with their photochromic, polarized Automatic Lens for stormy days.

TINTS & COLOURS

Lens tints however have not changed much, only yellow and green lenses seem to be having a low-light-comeback with Giro and Electric, the latter offering a green bonus lens with all models. Colours for frames and bands are staying pretty similar to previous seasons too, with a little bit of everything for everyone. Bold, bright colours are staying strong by themselves (Brunotti), as colour blocks (Oakley), paired with darker shades (Shred), neons (Quiksilver and Zeal), “in line with outerwear outfits” (Roxy), “fun patterns” (Electric), “daring full frame graphics” (Smith), or “all over geometrical prints” (Sinner). Dragon contrast “organic imagery and shapes with hard-edged elements” while Spektrum, Sinner and Bollé stick to the blue side of the colour palette, Sinner have “transparent frosted” frames and Melon goggles sport matte finishes that were popular with sunglasses collections in Summer.

At the same time, colour-ways are calming down a bit too, with lots

of earthy, toned-down shades like army and navy from Sinner, Zeal, Gloryfy, Spektrum, VonZipper, Brunotti, and Quiksilver, some teamed up with old-school style patches (Dragon, Zeal, Quiksilver), culminating in the camouflage numbers from Oakley, Brunotti and Nike Vision. The latter also work with “tasteful colour accents” and Smith promote “clean, understated and refined designs.” And for the first time, there is also quite a choice in monochrome and black and white styles from O’Neill, Carve, Spektrum, VonZipper, TSG, Brunotti, and Gloryfy.

Melon on the other hand leaves it up to their customers to decide on the colours used for their designated model, offering a total of 450 different combinations – per model. And in case that’s not quite enough choice yet, you can quickly change the strap thanks to their “SwitchFast strap system, allowing the user to change the look of their goggles to suit their mood.”

TECHNOLOGIES & MATERIALS

Being able to adapt visual properties to surroundings is becoming more and more sought after and goggles brands are stepping up to the challenge. This includes Electric’s Press Seal Technology, Dragon’s swift lock technology, the Smith I/O quick lens change system, Quiksilver’s quick change system, the Shred NO BS™ lens replacement system, the new Magnetic Interchange Lens System with self-locating magnets from Giro and the 1-Click interchangeable lens system from Bollé.

There is also little news when it comes to new materials, besides Bern’s light weight Plus Foam, their new eco-friendly recycled material, Spy’s playmate material, that makes their products completely decomposable and Zeal’s new “proprietary foam that wicks moisture three times better, allowing us to reduce the depth of our goggles’ fit.” However there is a lot to mention when it comes to material treatments. VonZipper report three innovations at once: “the Glaricade Lens Coatings against fog and reflection, the Shinerblok internal glare deduction technique and an internal light-dampening texture inside the frame to further assist in glare reduction.” Shred implement hydro-repellent NOCLOG treatments for their vent foams, “keeping the top vent foam with its pores open so that the hot/cold air flow can reduce the temperature build up and keep the lenses free from fogging throughout the stormy days, when regular goggles usually accumulate enough snow/water that clogs all the pores and make you ride in the dark.” Dragon “armour” their vents as well, preventing “the vent foam from icing and fogging up your goggle” as does the Bollé Equalizer™ technology that delivers a “fog-free view by allowing dual direction airflow to maintain ideal air pressure and precision optics between the sealed double lens”. The Smith Goggle AirEvac even incorporates two zones within the perimeter of the goggle, “with different porosity of foam to increase air circulation and reduce fogging.”

Looks like a bright new world out there.

HIGHLIGHTS

- LENS COATINGS TO ENHANCE CONTRAST & REDUCE FOG AND GLARE
- QUICK-CHANGE SYSTEMS
- EARTH TONES, MONOCHROME, CAMOUFLAGE
- FRAMELESS & SEMI-FRAMELESS FRAMES