



photo: Melon

50 SHADES OF NEW TRENDS

Actually not quite, as after a couple of seasons of proper action with bold new styles and innovative developments in materials and lens technology, the eyewear sector is calming down a bit. Leaving trends some time to spread through the whole population and offering brands an opportunity to refine as well as solidify their styles. **By Anna Langer.**

While there were at least one or two new trends to report from each brand in previous season, the major trend in 2016 will be “simply to simplify!” thinks James Robinson, Art Director/Brand Manager at Carve. “The last few seasons have been about brights, fluos and being bold,” he continues and sums up: “the eyewear is not the hero piece but part of the overall look.”

“ATHLEISURE”

“The “athleisure” movement has had a huge impact on all fashion and accessories. As a result, we are seeing that consumers are looking for product that looks good but still offers performance aspects like polarized lenses or Hytrel™ rubber on the frame,” says Juliette Koh, Curator of Happy Eyewear (Product Director) at Spy. Dragon had already anticipated this last year, when they launched their XP Performance lenses. “This season’s collection boasts a complete range from directional lifestyle designs to elite performance features bound by a cohesive design language that visually speaks for the brand,” explains Mike Tobia, Director of Product. Electric is going in a similar direction, offering “style that performs” with their new S-Line products, that are “a mash-up of our most popular styles with performance enhancing features,” state Mike Nelson and Thom Moran from the Global Product & Design Team. “We’ve done this in response to the lack of good looking performance products out there.”

Shred Optics also reference the “desire of consumers to have the

perfect combination of style and performance simultaneous in each pair of sunglasses they purchase”, Animal agree that “sports sunglasses are becoming more lifestyle inspired” and Zeal add their automatic goggle lens technology, “to provide a seamless transition in the lenses’ tint no matter what weather Mother Nature throws at you,” says Nate Hrivnak from Zeal Marketing.

Roxy and Quiksilver on the other hand stick with their line division in two parts: “Performance and Lifestyle” for the girls, “Performance and Modern Original” for the guys. “The products have details on quality and innovation dedicated to sports (surf/ snow). The main focus is on lens technologies and on frames features,” according to Eyewear Product Manager JP Bonnemason. “Our Lifestyle / Modern Original collection is based on core market fashion and eyewear trends.” A vital factor in performance is the fit of the glasses on your face, more precisely the nose, where they should neither pinch nor slide off. Smith address this with “megol nose and temple pads and Smith’s new detachable sunglass leash” or even “tailor fit adjustable nose pad technology” on their metal models. “Nose pads engineered with two-position adjustability, providing a personal fit while also designed specifically to not pull or catch your hair when worn on top of your head” illustrates Joe Snyder, Category Manager Eyewear. Electric work with “Performance Grip nose pads and temple sleeves to prevent frame slippage even during rigorous activity or while sweating” and Neff also highlight rubber nose pieces in their favourite models.



photo: Von Zipper

SIMPLY RETRO

Whether tailored for performance, lifestyle or both, retro shapes are still strong. Sinner's Marketing Manager Dennis van de Ven thinks that "round frames are hot" and is backed up by Neff, who name the Oswald, a "rounded silhouette that combines elements of both modern and retro design" as one of their favourites for next year. Raen go for "retro styling but with modern acetates and finishing" and Carve agree that "there seems to be a real push back to classic styles, with Wayfarers and Aviators making a comeback." Gloryfy have a "twist on the classical Wayfarer look" in their line as well, "but with our unbreakable technology and our own design. The matte coating in combination with the mirrored lenses, gives it a unique look!" says Claudio Blassnig, Head of Marketing.

While Dirty Dog expect a revival for wrap styles, they also have styles following the recent surge for "lightweight and more simplistic design" with slimmer, less chunky styles. Like the new Spy Cameo, "which has a delicate, yet strong, aesthetic" or Raen's "super thin metal frame surrounded by acetate" that gives "an amazing 3D look," according to Rob Fairweather from UK Sales.

This will excite ladies who prefer unisex models, but there will also be more female specific models from Electric, Shred and Animal, who are expanding their ranges in this sector.

LEAN & GREEN

Another trend factoring in favour of the female customers are efforts to make sunnies light as a feather. Dirty Dog doesn't use a specific new material, says General Manager Martin Jones, "but we are developing light weight options which will feel extremely flexible as well as extremely comfortable." VonZipper use Nylon Grilamid for their "sportier styles. Getting together with durability and lightweight" states Aecio Flávio Costa, Brand & Marketing Manager Europe and Shred even patented their NOWEIGHT™ formula for hyper-lite glasses. Metal can also be an option for lightweight frames, as Animal use it. And also Spy is "exploring more that can be done with metals" but instead of "the same aviator", they are trying "different metal profiles, sizes, and shapes." Carve have introduced "aluminium temples" but also offer TR90 in their range, "which has memory technology and is extremely flexible, some styles like the DC can basically be laid flat and bounce back to the original shape," states James. Sinner implement this extremely flexible material mainly for their kids collection, to prevents them from breaking their frames.

Unsinkable sunnies stay important as well, especially for water sports. The pioneers in that sector, Dragon, add new styles to their H20 collection, "now available with injected colour frames." And Dirty Dog also continue to "develop the floating frame for our outdoor and extreme sports sectors."

Eco-friendly sunglasses are still a bit of a minority, but choices are growing steadily. Smith has been working with Evolve, a material that "incorporates 53% bio-based" substances for a while, increasing the range "into what has become the largest eco-friendly sunglass collection in the world," says Joe. "We believe that sunglasses should be handcrafted and designed with intent to minimize their footprint, paving the way for responsibly and stylishly made sunglasses that stand up to life's adventures," says Nate summing up Zeal's ethos. "We work with the best in the industry to offer Italian-made frames derived from M49 – a cotton-based, eco-friendly acetate that offers superior fit and feel for the sunglass savant. Handcrafted, durable, yet biodegradable in an anaerobic environment in just 18 months." Sinner also focus "more and more on environmentally-friendly products" and introduce a new eco-friendly material in 2016. "We completed our range of handmade eco-friendly bamboo sunglasses with the brand-new CX ECO FRIENDLY SERIES. These models have a 100% recyclable, environmentally friendly production process," Dennis explains.

CLEVER LENSES

Just like regular technologies, those implemented in sunglass lenses are developing faster than you can blink. And incorporate more features than you can possibly imagine – they can even save lives! At least from POC: "With the mission to save lives and reduce the consequences of accidents we have worked in close collaboration with Carl Zeiss Vision to support the vision and reduce reaction time in different situations," explains Product Developer Tove Fritzell. "By analysing the exterior factors that affect your performance and safety, we have been able to optimize the eyewear for the specific activity.

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Tints have specific transmission curves, that will bring you contrast to where you need it.” Stronger contrast and hence enhanced vision are also tackled by Smith’s ChromaPop technology that is “designed to enhance colours and provide superior optical clarity,” Spy’s Happy Lens Technology, the SINTEC® polarised and Photochromic TRANS+® lenses from Sinner as well as Shred’s No Distortion lenses, that are “tested under the harshest of conditions with the US Air Force.” Zeal also have a new “automatic lens” in their Big Timber and Decoy models, that transitions from a 15-28% VLT range “so you can focus on the path ahead, sun up to sun down without ever changing your sunnies.”

MIRROR MIRROR

So-called “revo” or mirror lenses are staying on the shelves next year, in classical strong tones or updated with softer shades like Bronze Fade w/ Silver Mirror or Green Polar w/ Blue from Spy, subtle metallic silvers, rose tints from Electric and even a ‘rainbow’ lens colour-way from Animal. “Diversification and choice is one of our core offerings and we have eight different tints dependant on customer preference, as well as a wide selection of Revo coatings” says James Pointer, Co-founder of Melon Optics, who are also “both improving the hydrophobic and anti scratch coating as well as adding anti-reflective coatings to the inside of our lenses.”

“Nose pads engineered with two-position adjustability, providing a personal fit while also designed specifically to not pull or catch your hair when worn on top of your head”

Joe Snyder, Category Manager Eyewear for Smith

ALL THE COLOURS OF THE RAINBOW

Matching the ‘simplistic’ theme, solid lens tints are making a comeback too, especially for the non-performance models from Roxy and Quiksilver, as well as Carve. Electric carry this toned-down vibe over to their frames, exploring “the darker side of earth tones with deep rich green and olives offset in black”

Shred add “wood effect and texture” with a brushed finish and there are a lot of printed frame versions emerging in 2016 as well. Melon “will be concentrating on diversifying our colourways both in our Premium Collection and Original Collections. Think custom acetates and limited edition prints,” similar to Neff, who work with “seasonal patterns”. Dirty Dog also “believe colour will play a key part in 2016, both frame colour and lens colour.”

PRESCRIPTION

According to Spy, colour is also a trend for prescription glasses: “The main trends we see are in colour. While black tends to be a best seller in sunglasses, consumers are surprisingly daring with their RX frames. We are featuring new colours like Green Smoke and Translucent Sepia to expand the offering.” Dragon is also expanding their RX line “with three new collections targeting our younger consumer base. The Detail collection bridges over from suns into RX featuring our double tail signifier on the frame fronts.” This is the direction Roxy and Quiksilver are heading too, stating that “this market is really important” for them, especially teenagers and kids,

who “are still our best target because Quiksilver and Roxy bring some fun to a medical accessory thanks to logos, colours or new concept.” VonZipper also sees the “Ophthalmic market as a vital Brand’s extension. We’ve been out for a couple of seasons and it is time to get back stronger with a RX collection for 2016,” says Aecio. And Zeal sums up: “RX lenses are an integral part of our mission that defines us as a leader within the optical industry. This is for the four eyes out there who realize the benefits from Zeals, yet who don’t wish to sacrifice quality or comfort.” Because if there’s only one trend crystallising, it’s that glasses emerging from the boardsports world are getting better every year. 

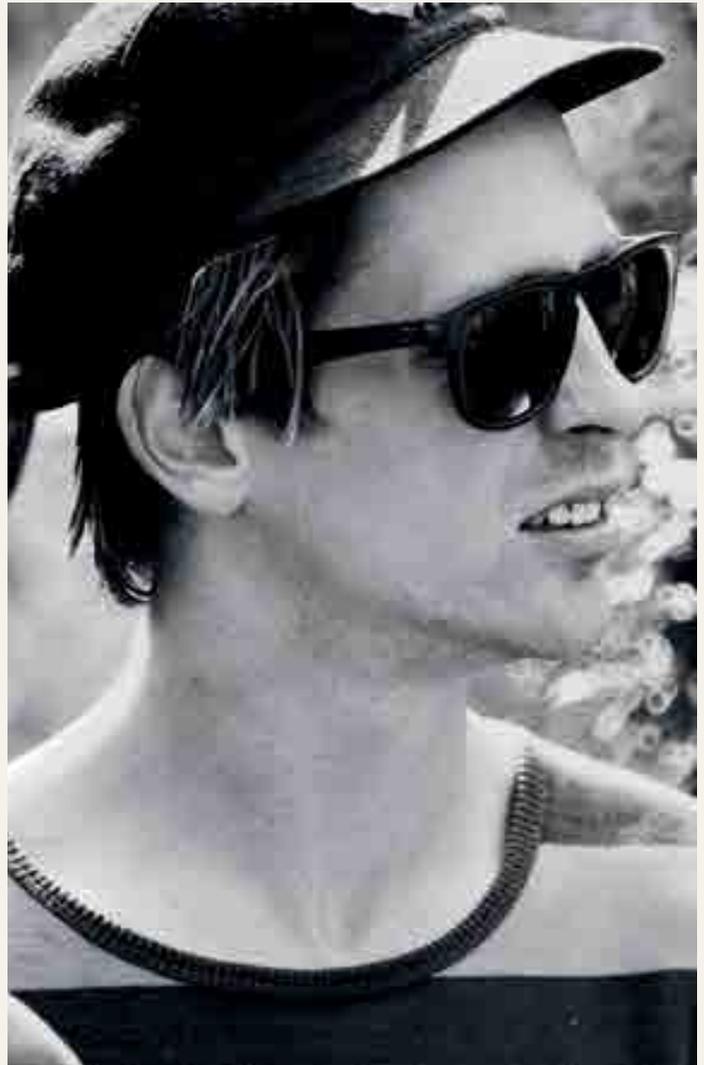


photo: Electric

HIGHLIGHTS

Simple, simplistic, simplified

Functional lens technology

‘Athleisure’ styling

Light & slim