

Ice picks



Optician previews the latest sunglasses and goggles that winter sports fanatics will be wanting to buy this season



The uncertainty that currently abounds in the financial markets will very likely affect purchase decisions in the coming months.

However people are always prepared to spend heavily on their passions, and winter sports, and skiing in particular, definitely enter into that category. The genuine vision benefits offered by different lens technologies coupled with the pressure to look glamorous or dashing on the slopes mean that people

who can afford to go on a winter sports holiday are likely to be prepared to spend heavily on their eyewear. After all, what is the point jetting off to the Alps if you don't look the part too? Or going off piste for some powder only to find your goggles can't cope with the conditions?

For this season Adidas Eyewear has launched the ID2 goggle, which has already won two design awards. The ID2, which has a retro futuristic 'Jedi-like' appearance and boasts easily interchangeable lenses, is said

1 Pro-skier Mirjam Jaeger wearing Bollé Fathom Red Psychedelic Fire Orange by Bushnell Performance Optics
2 Bikkembergs BK587 by Allison

Featuring frames



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3 ID2 by Adidas Eyewear

4 Bloc X3120 Predator by Inline

4 Animal Ruby by Inspecc

5 Jill-SP100-010 by Robert La Roche

6 Bollé Nova Red Rum 20222 by Bushnell Performance Optical

to combine style and function. The frame of the goggle comes in two pieces that function as one, providing optimum fit and performance when worn in conjunction with a helmet. The dual frame enables the rear section containing the lens to sit snugly to the face. The partially connected front section, to which the strap is attached, is able to stretch out and effectively 'lift' away to fit the helmet while the main frame stays put.

The goggle also features the Climacool ventilation system, which is integrated into both frames and an anti-fog coating is applied on both sides of the lens. This is enhanced by a nano-surface coated fleece foam at the top of the frame. Exclusive to Adidas Eyewear, the nano-pad keeps the foam breathable while creating a hydrophobic surface, which means that snow and water droplets literally roll off.

Urban freesports label Animal was looking for a light, strong and flexible material for its snowboarding frames. Inspecc came up with TR90 nylon polymers, which are said to offer a

flexible, super-strong finish, resulting in a tough series of frames, exceptionally resistant to chemicals such as sunscreen, and highly resistant to UV damage and breakdown. Tested by pro snowboarders these frames are said to represent the true spirit of freesports – funky, fresh, and almost indestructible.

Bikkemberg's stated aim is to create a tangible link between the worlds of fashion and sports. Its collection features urbane masculine features, with square forms and models designed for men with equal passion for life and sport. The materials used are mainly injected plastics, which respond to lightness and flexibility requirements; whereas metal frames are often combined with nylon threads to add interest and the sides have logos both inside and outside using bas-reliefs and coloured enamels.



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Bollé's products include the newly launched Fathom spherical lensed goggle with Equaliser technology, which is said to eliminate distortion at altitude, and the Nova goggle with light-reactive modulator lenses (which can be worn in all conditions). Both models are compatible with the prescription adapter which opticians can buy separately and glaze themselves.

Another range using an optical correction clip-on is the high-end Jill sports sunglasses by Robert La Roche. These feature a ventilation system, grip technology and an interchangeable 9-base lens system.

Rudy Project's Horus sunglasses blend distinctive wraparound geometry with the patented Rx-Swap, a user-friendly and fully integrated performance clip system which



Featuring frames



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allows wearers to swiftly change their spare lenses according to the weather conditions. The frames also feature 360° adjustable temples, equalised Grilamid architecture, and Ergo3Max, a thermoplastic nose piece.

Sports sales

So, with all the different products to offer, what can be done to actually sell to consumers? Something to consider is a seasonal window display promoting your winter sports offerings. For winter 08/09 Adidas Eyewear has introduced the Adidas Eyewear winter window, which features some of its award-winning winter frames and is designed to encourage new customers into independent practices. The display features the latest branded point-of-sale (POS) material, which is free to opticians purchasing 10 or more of selected Adidas winter sports frames. The POS includes glossy posters, product display cards, sunglass and goggle stands, and three distinctive product display trays.

A stand-out issue for generating sales is product knowledge. Some potential

buyers will need guiding through the basic functions of different products, while advanced skiers will want to find out about the latest improvements to their existing equipment. Either way, staff must know their stuff.

'The biggest single thing that can help to sell winter sports frames is knowing the product range inside out,' advises Colin Moulson, sports optometrist for Black & Lizards. 'Practices often have a lot of skiing, or other sports-related stock but staff often do not have enough knowledge to really help people find what they need. This is particularly the case with regards to the various lenses on the market. Some brands' ranges use over 20 different lenses and people need some expert assistance.

'Engaging with the person and really getting to the core of what they need is also important. This can be achieved by applying visual task analysis principles. Skiing is a sport that is done in various light conditions and therefore has differing needs for eyewear. This means the ability to change the lenses easily is of paramount importance

- 8 Ambush White Persimmon by Oakley
- 9 Oil Rig Grey by Oakley
- 10 Stockholm Haki Elevation by Oakley
- 11 Zoom 15-47-29 Horus by Rudy Project
- 12 Puma model PU15079_Si by Charmant
- 13 Puma model PU15077P_OR by Charmant

to have good vision in bright or low light. In general we are seeing more interchangeable lens and prescription inserts and I would estimate that more than half of our sports frames sales are now for inserts.'

With winter sports, a large part of the market is for goggles, which is an area that a lot of practitioners shy away from. Moulson advocates embracing this area rather than being intimidated by it, saying a better approach 'would be to embrace it and ensure that staff who deal with customers have good knowledge of the products you offer'. Purchases in this area can be expensive and if an item does not function in the manner expected or needed out on a mountainside the user is likely to remember and withhold their custom in the future. ●