



Venture co-founder Lisa Branner holds the Powder Pig, the latest design coming from the brand's "Shape Shack" division.

Shaping Up

While surfers have long treated board shaping as an essential and sacred craft, snowboarders have been slow to adopt such a perspective. Nonetheless, sophisticated shapes are increasingly common in the shred industry.

"The interest in creative board shapes has always been there—it's a grassroots undercurrent that has been present all along," explains Venture Cofounder Klem Branner. Yet recent evolutions in board design have thrust shaping into the limelight. "The world of rocker, camber, and hybrids has opened the door for designers and engineers to be more creative and push the boundaries of what a snowboard looks and is shaped like," notes Capita U.S. Marketing and Product Development Manager Sean Tedore.

Discerning riders are also helping drive this innovation. "As riders become more sophisticated in their taste of terrain and conditions, so will their appetite for having the right tools in their toolbox," offers Chris Cunningham, Burton's senior business unit director of boards and bindings. Creating these tools requires carefully considering a range of variables. "Each and every part of a board's design—from sidecut to camber line to flex to shape—is [essential] to make the best riding board available for its intended customer," explains Tedore.

To help bring new designs to life, brands are tapping riders and developing ongoing collaborations. Venture recently launched its Shape Shack, a division of the company that works with guest shapers like Johan Olofsson to develop new designs. According to Branner, the Shape Shack reflects a logical evolution for the company. "We have been building boards from scratch since day one, so we have always had the ability to create whatever we wanted," he notes. "What's different now is how we are inviting other perspectives from passionate riders into the mix."

Burton continues to expand the role Craig's—its Burlington-based prototyping facility—plays in dreaming up new designs. "We can experiment with anything so the speed of innovation is fast and intense," explains Cunningham. Through Craig's, Burton will be debuting a range of new shapes developed by team riders like Terje, Kimmy Fasani, and John Jackson.

For next year, Salomon is debuting its Dirksen Collection, a portfolio of discipline-driven decks created in collaboration with Josh Dirksen. "There is always a way to customize a specific board to a specific type of terrain or riding style," explains Dirksen. "The collection of boards that we designed with Salomon represents this concept."

Whether pressing rails or floating pow, these new decks are sure to make riders smile. And although their shapes will dominate stories on the sales floor, the stories they create on the snow will be even better. After all, Dirksen notes, "The best snowboards make the best days even better."

—Michael Sudmeier

Bro'd to SIA

For those who ply their trade in the shred industry, attending SIA is invaluable. Whether scoping out new products, connecting with colleagues, or assessing the current landscape of the industry, attendees face no shortage of stimuli. This is especially true for Josh Johnson, who is attending the show after winning a free trip through Bro'd to SIA, a contest sponsored by Transworld Business and SIA.

The contest aims to expose future leaders of the industry to SIA and aid them in furthering their careers. Johnson has worked at The Youth Shelter Supply in Waite Park, Minnesota for three years. "I do everything from selling products on the sales floor to board maintenance and repair to designing ads to cleaning the porcelain," he explains.

The Youth Shelter Supply Co-owner Mike Thienes notes, "Josh is a great kid to work with! He rips on a snowboard and knows the products in the store." Thienes explains that Josh also assists him with graphic design and web projects. When not shredding or holding things down at the shop, Johnson spends his time painting, drawing, and designing graphics.

At SIA, Johnson has kept busy previewing next year's collections, noting trends in graphics, and hitting up film premieres. He explains that attending SIA "is a good way to get myself out there and be more than a shop kid—I'm getting my feet in the door." This moves him one step closer to attaining his dream of working as a designer. "My goal in the snow industry is to one day be working for a snowboard company designing graphics," he explains. "It's a pretty big goal, but I'm going to do everything I possibly can to make it happen." So far, it seems like Johnson is off to an excellent start.

—M.S.



After winning a free trip to SIA, Josh Johnson is one step closer to snagging a job as a designer in the industry.

Four on the Floor

What new product or brand are you most excited about?



“Capita—I think they’ve set themselves up as a top brand.”
—Justin Weigel,
Nichol’s Snowboards,
Dearborn, Michigan



“The Anon M2 is f#*@ing dope. It’s fully frameless and the magnets are [refined] and totally worked out.”
—Hans Ziegler, Buyer, Sun Logic,
Breckenridge, Colorado



“I like Holden—just the style and the price points. Now they have a really good price point, and their style is always clean.”
—Nick James, Owner, Divide Board Shop, Winter Park, Colorado



“I’m excited about the Bench outerwear—it’s something different that not everyone in town has.”
—Dave Krease, Director of Retail, Wasted Sun, Boulder, Colorado



Yesterday’s panel on snowboard rental equipment emphasized that shops are at the front lines in sharing the stoke.

Making a Good First Impression

Rental gear isn’t always glamorous. At SIA, no one enlists bikini-clad models or pro riders to promote the latest beginner boards. Nonetheless, rental products are starting to turn heads. Increasingly, the industry is viewing rental equipment and proper instruction as essential in combating snowboarding’s decreasing rates of participation.

Yesterday, a panel met to discuss new developments in rental equipment and the role shops and instructors can play in getting new riders

hooked on shredding. **Transworld Business** Editor-in-Chief **Mike Lewis** hosted the seminar, titled “You’ll Always Remember Your First Time—But Was It Any Good?” The panel included **Burton** Vice President of Global Resorts **Jeff Boliba**, **AASI** Team Member **Scott Anfangi**, and **Sam Wagner**, an assistant buyer at **Tahoe Dave’s and Dave’s Snowboards**.

“The right gear, the right coach, and the right environment—if you have all those things, it’s going to work,” offered Boliba. New product developments have aided shops and instructors in introducing new riders to the sport. Board advancements like flat cambers, concave bases, and beveled edges are accelerating the learning curve. Anfangi explained that this new technology “Is not going to absolve you from catching your edges, but it gives you a greater margin of error.” Bindings that offer tool-free adjustability can also aid shops and instructors in better meeting the needs of new riders.

The panel emphasized that rental shops determine a rider’s first impression of snowboarding. To capitalize on this opportunity, shops stand to benefit from resources like the AASI, Burton’s Learn to Ride program, and Ski Area Management’s Rental Buyer’s Guide. In addition to these resources, increased collaboration between manufacturers, brands, and instructors stands to boost retention. After all, notes Wagner, “We want to make sure that people are on the right stuff and that they keep coming back.”

—M.S.

Pushing It Real Good

Last night, hundreds of riders descended on the Burton booth to meet hip-hop royalty. Pepa, from the pioneering hip-hop trio, Salt-n-Pepa debuted a collaboration between Burton and **Lifebeat** while speaking about the importance of preventing HIV and AIDS.

“For over twenty years, Lifebeat has been mobilizing the music industry to help raise awareness and resources around HIV and AIDS,” explains Burton Vice President of Marketing **Anne-Marie Dacyshyn**. Almost since Lifebeat’s inception, Salt-n-Pepa has served as ambassadors for the organization. According to Pepa, the group became involved with Lifebeat early in its career and “the relationship just grew from there. We loved what they had done and what they were doing.”

As part of its partnership with Lifebeat, Burton’s 2014 Women’s Lipstick Restricted will pay homage to Salt-n-Pepa. The series of four boards feature topsheets that rock an iconic photo from the eighties of Salt-n-Pepa. The bases showcase lyrics from the group like “Ah Push It!” and “Real Good!” Pepa notes that she feels honored to work with Burton and Lifebeat in continuing to raise awareness and promote the prevention of HIV and AIDS. She explains, “To come together for this great, amazing cause to raise awareness, I’m just happy about it.”

Burton’s partnership with Lifebeat comes at an especially important time, as HIV and AIDS are on the rise among at-risk youth between the ages of 14 and 24. Lifebeat reached out to Burton as a means to further awareness and reach a new demographic. Lifebeat Outreach Programs Manager **Sharlene Shortt** explains that Burton offers “a creative way of reaching youth in a whole new language.” This language transcends products, as Burton and Lifebeat are partnering on a range of promotions, events, and campaigns in line with the organization’s mission.

—M.S.

Hip-hop icon Pepa, from Salt-n-Pepa, poses with fans after unveiling a new partnership between Burton and Lifebeat.

