



# News

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## Winter Eyewear Gets Personal: Spherical Shapes, Melanin-Enhanced Glasses, Personalized Goggle Straps, Helmet Compatible Are Major Trends

**MCLEAN, Va. (Winter 2003-04)** – Melanin-enhanced sunglasses from Uvex and a new goggle line from Marker, long known for its ski bindings and apparel, are among the newest sports eyewear products slated for winter 2003-04.

Personal style and comfort becomes a key motivator for buying sunglasses and goggles for the slopes or for the street. Manufacturers are offering goggle strap designs donning individualized graphic looks, mirrored lenses in different colors for both glasses and goggles and soft gradient lenses for the ultimate in street fashion. From Briko's adjustable fit features for different face types to Smith's easy-to-change interchangeable lens systems, winter eyewear emphasizes comfort and fit for every consumer. Of course, function is also very important, with new spherical designs for optimal vision and more helmet compatible choices, according to SnowSports Industries America (SIA), the national, not-for-profit, member-owned trade association that represents snow and winter sports outdoor companies.

And, although fashion over function emerges as a trend, sunglasses and goggles have never been more technical. For instance, Uvex's Melanin Polarized lenses provide sharper clearer visions with less eye strain that may help reduce the potential for eye problems like cataracts and macular degeneration.

### Hot Trends for 2003-04

"One of the major trends in goggles can be summed up in three words—fashion surpasses function," says Chris Farmer, goggle product line manager of Bolle Eyewear. "Consumers expect goggles to function correctly—eliminate fogging, protect their eyes and face and provide visual enhancement on the slopes.

"However, now more than ever, they expect it in a 'technically-cool,' very fashion-forward looking product. The product doesn't have to be overly technical, it just needs to look that way."

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Other trends in goggles, Farmer says, include mirrored lenses in silver, blue and red; spherical lenses; and strap graphics that provide a little identity and individualism for the wearer.

Uvex marketing coordinator Billie Faron offers this view: "Spheric lenses in a goggle, as opposed to thermal-formed lenses, allow for optically-correct, distortion-free vision, which is becoming more important to both racers and freestyle skiers and snowboarders who require full range of vision.

"Spheric lenses also allow for the body of the goggle to decrease in size without compromising vision or anti-fog capabilities," she says. "The extra volume of the lens compensates for the decrease in size of the body of the goggle."

Still another view is offered by Daryl Price, Smith Sports Optics goggle product manager: "A trend we're seeing in goggles is an increasing emphasis on helmet compatibility. To address this, we're introducing models with articulating straps, which are key for helmet fit."

In sunglasses, says his colleague, Smith sunglasses product manager Eric Carlson, "polarized lenses are a major buzzword at retail and provide excellent glare-reduction benefits to consumers. Mirror-coated lenses continue to be strong in sport and fashion circles. And soft-gradient lenses are a 'must have' for street fashion in today's market." The following products are just a sampling of over 55 SIA member companies that carry eyewear products.

#### **Hot Product Highlights for Winter 2003-04**

**Bolle:** "Although we recognize this latest fashion-over-function trend," Chris Farmer says, "we continue to 'design by reason.' Our product development objective is to design technically-sound products with fashion-forward frame designs and colors, sweating each and every detail to create the highest quality and best performing goggle for the consumer's dollar."

Bolle's **Zark** line features an easy-to-change interchangeable lens system (**Optics Swap**). The company's **Equipe** line of performance goggles features its AirBooster ventilation-management system; a helmet-compatible design; double-layer, ultra comfortable face-hugging foam; and a double lens.

**Briko:** Briko debuts two new sunglass models (**Maddox** and **Spire**) and three new goggles (**Prom Racing**, **Kronos** and **Blast Digit**) for '03-'04.

The Maddox features a Grilamid nylon frame, the strongest, most lightweight material available for sporting eyewear, according to the company. Wire inserts in temple ends provide for easy adjustment to a variety of faces. A hydrophilic ThermoFlex coating applied to temple ends increases comfort and stability, and hydrophilic ThermoLast nose piece inserts improve adherence. The Spire has the same technical features as the Maddox in a sleeker frame with oval lenses.

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Specifically designed for slalom racing, the Prom Racing goggle features a wide field of view ensured by a wraparound style frame. A new single-pin attachmentsystem between headband and frame increases comfort and fit, and a wider (30mm) headband offers a more secure fit. The goggle, which has triple-density face foam for added comfort, will be available with single or double lenses. The Kronos is Briko's new high-end freeride goggle. It features a mirrored vented bubble lens (a first for Briko). Its new frame design and color treatments allow for a "sunken" Briko logo within the frame. The Blast Digit goggle features a mirrored vented bubble lens. Special edition **Sky** and **Tiger** models will include an exclusive painting process that replicates digital images onto the goggle frame.

**Bugz:** Bugz Performance Eyewear, a division of Skyline Northwest Corp., is introducing **Breakerz** sunglasses, described by president Rick Runckel as a new and technical spin on an old idea, the glacier glass.

State-of-the-art nylon frames and new thermoplastic rubber side shields (or wings) make these sunglasses ideal for active endeavors ranging from snowsports to watersports, Runckel says. Breakerz use pivoting wings to stop wind, snow and sun glare from entering the eyes. The wings are removable, allowing wearers to achieve a normal sunglass look for the drive home from the mountains or an apres-ski drink on the deck, the company says.

**Carrera Sport:** This Austrian brand has two new goggles: the Zoom Trend, for small faces, and the Conan, a freeriding inspired model. Distinctive features throughout the 2003-04 goggle line include translucent frame colors, flash bronze and silver lenses and a new Icon strap design. In its sunglass offerings, Carrera Sport has more models for smaller faces (Flash, Storm, Arrow) and more metal designs (Secret, Dream, Mambo). Also look for iridium and infrared lenses.

**Dragon:** New from Dragon is the **Foil** goggle, said to offer the latest in air flow/anti-fog technology with the comfort and durability for which Dragon is known.

Among the Foil's features are high-grade polyurethane that's flexible at all temperatures; a unidirectional air-flow system to prevent fogging; Dragon's Compound Curve Corrected Lens technology; micro-fleece lined hypoallergenic contoured face foam; and a flexible spherical lens said to eliminate 100 percent of all harmful UV and blue light.

**Go Gabel:** Go Gabel introduces upgraded versions of its **Raptor** and **Freeride** goggles for the high-end market with 3D lenses in solar gold and smoke. For women, the Freeride will have a 3D sky lens.

**Louis Garneau:** New to the Louis Garneau sunglass line is the **Rev**, which comes with a prescription adapter included and is suitable for winter sports and cycling, the company says. The Rev comes with three pairs of interchangeable polycarbonate lenses (in charcoal, amber and clear) that are UV400 treated. The Rev also features a central ventilation system and a synthetic rubber nose for comfort.

**Marker:** Marker International, known worldwide for its bindings and skiwear, introduces a complete line of goggles for '03-'04.

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The collection uses a proprietary injection-molded spherical lens at retail price points above \$85 and stamped cylindrical lenses for lower-priced products, including inexpensive goggles for kids. According to Marker, its goggles will be manufactured by the Italian firm Intercast, which makes optical-quality windscreens and other products for the aerospace industry.

**Oakley:** This popular brand offers its first new goggle in many years. The Wisdom has a large field of vision and features a strap that can be adjusted to fit bigger heads.

**Spy Optic:** This cutting-edge goggle and sunglass brand targets young, action sports users. For 2003-04, a new spherical shaped goggle debuts. The new Comet Blue Camo has a bright blue/black/gray/white camoflauged frame. Other new models include pro signature goggles by Victoria Jealouse, Marc-Franc Montoya and others. In glasses, the new aviator-style 13 was designed with help from pro surfers Chris and Keith Malloy. The Dynasty is an oversized style for girls.

**Smith:** Smith updates its **Triad**, **Anthem** and **Grommet** models to include articulating straps and introduces a new model, the **Rhythm Regulator**, which is said to be 100-percent helmet compatible. The Rhythm Regulator is described as a versatile all-mountain goggle, combining stylistic elements of the team-inspired **Fuse Regulator** with the exceptional field-of-vision of the discontinued Epic.

The Rhythm Regulator features Smith's Carbonic-X Regulator lens, a molded strap end for quick and easy adjustment, custom painted frame colors, compression molded face foam, clip-buckle and double woven strap. It also incorporates a flexible urethane frame to provide exceptional fit and compatibility for use with or without helmets.

With its medium-sized frame, the Rhythm Regulator is appropriate for men and women, the company says. Custom-painted frame colors include black, silver, titanium red, titanium midnight, frost blue (with flower strap) and bronze. Suggested retail is \$55 for all frame colors with a RC36 or GL55 lens and \$75 with red mirror, blue mirror or RP25 lenses.

In sunglasses, Smith has new distortion-free polarized lens packages for its popular **Slider** series of interchangeable lens models; a new "dielectric blue" multi-layer coating said to provide exceptional clarity and eye protection without affecting overall light transmission of the gray base lens; and four new street series models. They are: the **Agent** and **Studio** (with metal frames) and the **Analyst** and **Hemi** (with handmade acetate frames). All four new models have multiple frame color/lens tint options and polarized lens options.

**Uvex:** Noteworthy features of the company's '03-'04 goggle line, according to Billie Faron, are saturated colors focusing on less translucent, but shinier, metallic finishes within the body of the goggle; helmet compatibility; and anti-fog scratch resistant Supravision coatings.

In sunglasses, Uvex emphasizes its use of melanin. "Melanin is nature's sunblock," Faron says, "and is present in our skin and eyes. Melanin levels decrease as we age, causing potential for eye problems like cataracts and macular degeneration. We've added melanin to a lens to decrease and eliminate this risk."

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The company's **Melanin Polarized** lenses are said to eliminate 99 percent of horizontal glare and provide 100-percent UV protection. They also enhance visual perception, making colors truer and more natural in appearance than other sun lenses, the company says. Ordinary tinted sun lenses just darken what wearers see and mask the real problems of glare, but Melanin Polarized lenses provide sharper, clearer vision with less eyestrain, according to Uvex.

Faron says Uvex has developed a unique patented polarization process, permanently molding polarizing film into the polycarbonate lens for glare protection that lasts as long as the lens. The process is said to prevent peeling, fading or chipping. Uvex Melanin Polarized polycarbonate lenses provide a combination of glare reduction, toughness and clarity. The company offers many styles with the Melanin Polarized lenses.

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**SnowSports Industries America (SIA) is the national, not-for-profit, member-owned trade association that represents snow and winter sports outdoor companies. SIA produces the SIA SnowSports Show, the largest trade show and gathering place for the snow sports industry. Proceeds from the SnowSports Show fund market development programs for all snow sport disciplines. SIA also annually produces more than a dozen industry research studies. For more information, check out [www.snowlink.com](http://www.snowlink.com). SnowSports Industries America, 8377-B Greensboro Drive, McLean, VA 22102-3587. Phone: (703) 556-9020, Fax: (703) 821-8276, Email: [siamail@snowsports.org](mailto:siamail@snowsports.org).**