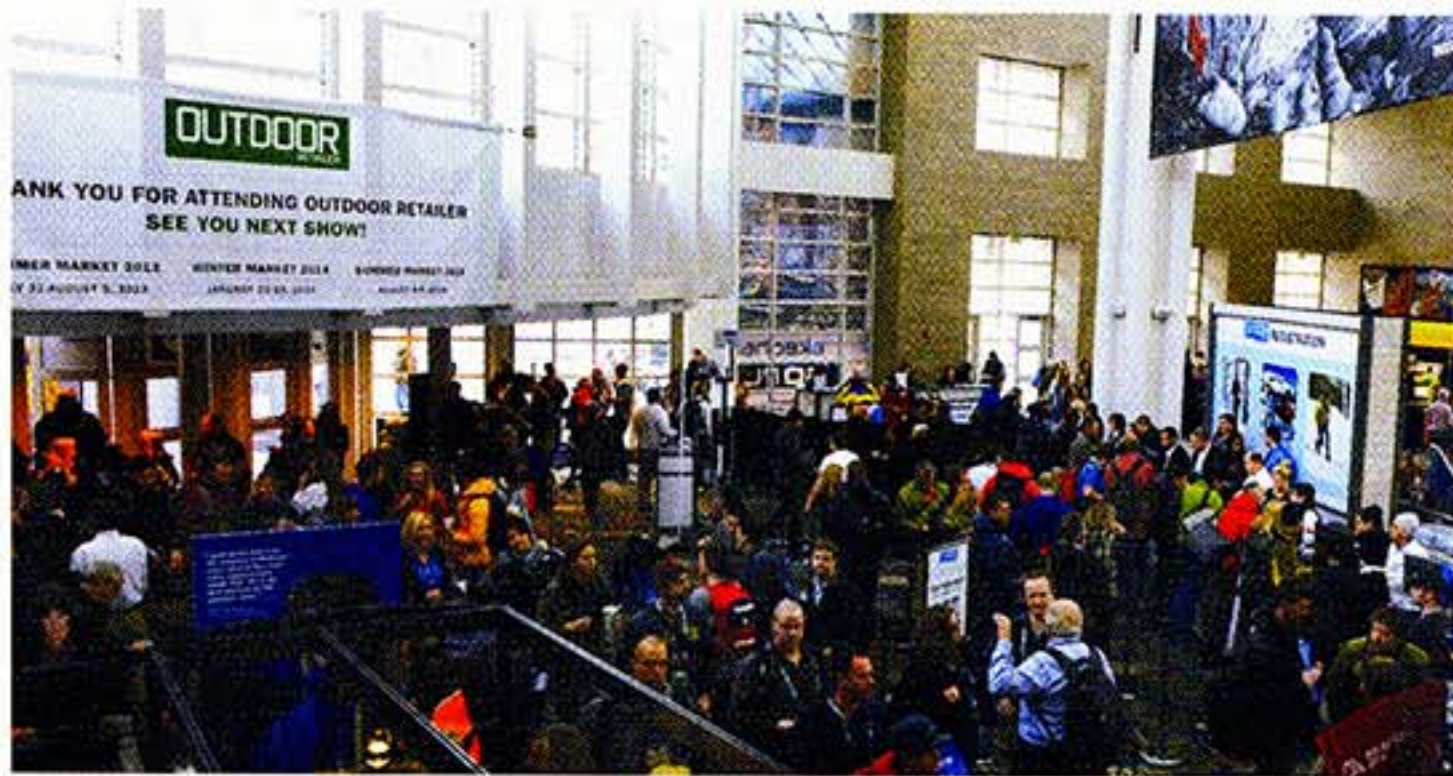


## IN THE MARKET | OUTDOOR RETAILER WINTER MARKET

New Developments in Insulations and Finishes to Keep Outerwear Performing for Winter. **By Emily Walzer**

# Wishing for Winter



Outside on the streets and indoors on display the talk at Outdoor Retailer Winter Market was the weather, and in particular how to keep warm. Textile suppliers came prepared arriving in Utah with plenty of insulation technology to debut and discuss during the four-day trade show – which will remain in Salt Lake City, Utah through 2016.

Performance factors such as water-resistance and breathability, in addition to weatherproof constructions, are central to new insulation products and gives evidence to the growing crossover in functionality between insulation categories, i.e., synthetics promoting softness and loft, while down offerings are increasingly engineered to behave like synthetics with complete disregard to dampness.

DWR chemistry was also a topic of textile chatter. The dust-up surrounding the Greenpeace report circulated last fall continues to spark interest and a seminar devoted to the subject of DWR chemistry drew 160 attendees during the Show. Seminar presenters Mike Belliveau, Environmental Health Strategy Center; Chuck Haryslak, Polartec; and Tony Kingsbury, ChemRisk provided a general landscape of information and the global collaborative efforts underway. The OIA Chemicals Management Group recently named a DWR Task Force that currently consists of 50 members including brands,

retailers, NGOs and textile and chemical suppliers. (For more on DWR, see page 14.)

Another theme of ORWM13 was “Made in America.” Several outdoor brands highlighted new as well renewed USA-made collections and were eager to speak about domestic supply chains. Woolrich president, Nicholas P. Brayton, announced three significant domestic manufacturing goals for the company: “To increase the yardage of wool produced in our woolen mill by 50 percent in 2013; to introduce a 100 percent American made apparel collection in Fall 2013; and to increase our American-made product offerings by 2015, ensuring that more than 50 percent of Woolrich woolen garments proudly include American made wool.”

As for the Show itself, there were 177 new exhibitors and 950 brands in total represented, an eight percent increase over last year’s Winter Market, and organizers describe attendance as “strong.” Impressions, however, varied widely from “This was a dull, slow Show,” to “Our best show in six years!”

The vastness of OR and the blurring of the lines between product collections, seasonality and category offerings is making it more difficult to find and define newness at this industry event. There are sandals next to insulated snow boots and sweet little print dresses next to military inspired field jackets and few blockbuster introductions. Here, however, are some

newsworthy notes and quotes:

A handful of textile brands benefitted from the considerable hype surrounding the Black Diamond apparel launch. The use of materials from Polartec, PrimaLoft, Schoeller and to a slightly lesser extent Pertex were highlighted in press materials and line presentations. In addition, rather than a hangtag, new Black Diamond garments have ingredient branding printed on the inside lining, again, focusing attention on textile involvement in product development.

On the insulation front, an interesting entry is Pinneco, with a house brand called Pinneco Core. The company specializes in research and development and has a state-of-the-art testing lab in Taiwan as well as offices in Vancouver, Canada and is owned by parent company Hong Kong Nonwoven. An impressive company lab is equipped with an exclusive, high-tech body mannequin designed to simulate human temperature fluctuation depending on activities and environments. The synthetic fiber insulation, Pinneco Core,

### INFLUENCERS

**CYCLING:** Forget hiking, and think cycling. Specifically in terms of color, flash and prints. Look for outdoor brands to incorporate more brights, and digital as well as sublimated prints into apparel, with sleek looks and flat fabrics.

**YOGA:** According to a study released by Yoga Journal in December, the number of Americans practicing yoga jumped 29 percent, to 20.4 million – or 8.7 percent of American adults – since the previous study in 2008, when 15.8 million practiced. Add to that that yoga is viewed as “weatherproof” exercise easing retailer stress in today’s concern about climate change. Look for textiles that feature softness, drape, and subtle performance features with an eco-slant.

**TEMPERATURE REGULATION:** Material people are hinting that we are on the brink of the next level of temperature regulation technology with fibers that react to temperature change. For examples, the fibers lay flat when warm to keep the wearer cool but “stand up” and loft when temps decrease to keep the wearer warm. *Buzzword: Reactive*



**Dawn Patrol Hybrid Shell:** Black Diamond’s three-layer Schoeller C-change and Schoeller StretchWoven alpine shell has been bio mapped. The materials function for wear during a wide-range of weather when active, but protect when standing still. Nanosphere repels dirt and oil and water.

is distinguished by a breathable membrane that acts like a “thermal gate” between customized thicknesses of insulation. The product has launched with Big Agnes sleeping bag Shoestring SL.

Another insulation newcomer is Celliant. The company previewed a “heat responsive down” that is available through Allied. According to Celliant CEO Seth Casden, the product is 30 percent warmer thanks to IR characteristics of Celliant. “The minerals are heat sponges,” he states. The initial target application is sleeping bags.

Watch for testing and traceability to become bigger issues within the down category. “There are so many questions and the jury is still out regarding the efficacy of the technology across the board of new down waterproof insulations that we need to harmonize testing,” commented Chad Altbauer, Downlite, who also mentioned his company’s Downtrac traceability program. Like wool in past years, down is now on PETA’s radar and being looked at carefully regarding ethical treatment of animals.

And what about wool? The industry’s love affair with the natural fiber continues with interest in American growers gaining traction. Blends are becoming popular as well as some fresh looks. Some standouts at the Designer Textile booth included Merino/Tencel and Merino/hemp blends in addition to 100 percent textured Merino jacquards. It will be interesting to see if summer-weight wool now overshadows winter wool innovation.

Speaking of summer, next up is Summer Market, July 31 - August 3, 2013, with the Open Air Demo on July 30. ●