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—Chad Perrin, Jones Snowboards

board sales for its annual market intelligence reports. According to **Kelly Davis**, SIA's director of research, the growth has been, simply put, too large to ignore: "We are seeing incredible growth in the backcountry category, and splitboards are a part of it. Although the total number of splitboards sold at retail is small compared to all snowboard sales, sales of splitboards doubled last season, and there is every indication that splitboard sales will double again this season."

K2 Snowboarding is positioning its new Kwicker Splitboard System as a game changer. With a board based on partner Voile's puck and plate system, a binding that's a new iteration of K2's Clicker, and a boot that incorporates K2's Endo Construction and **Boa** lacing, the integrated system is designed to be lighter to carry and quicker to transition between skinning and shredding modes.

The combo of advanced technology and user friendliness is aimed at getting more consumers on splitboards, says **Hunter Waldron**, K2 Snowboarding global marketing manager. "The Kwicker System is going to be marketed to any and all splitboarders. In the beginning, we set out to advance the speed and weight for the high-end backcountry rider. But, in the process, we developed what we see as the most simple and easy-to-use system out there. We really feel this will get new users turned on to splitboarding. The learning curve is easier to overcome, and there are less parts and steps to the process."

In addition to the advancements in splitboard technology that are helping drive the trend, Waldron believes that something else is at the heart of splitboarding's rapid growth. "Snowboarding is maturing to a point where riders are looking for new places to go and ways to expand their riding beyond the resort," he says. "There is a back-to-basics appeal to the backcountry. Maybe it's a reaction to technology and our plugged-in lives, but people are more and more seeking the barebones experience of the outdoors. Earning your turns is a pure way to snowboard, and we all seem to enjoy that type of purity these days."

Jones Snowboards refers to its new superlight Ultracraft as a board that will move the sport forward. "Reducing splitboard weight has been on the Jones radar since we launched our original boards four years ago," says **Chad Perrin**, the company's global brand director. "The Ultracraft is designed with a new, top-secret ultra-lightweight core technology. Jones is the only company with access to this core tech. It's a game changer in the category for sure."

With women in the mix seeking backcountry lines, too, companies are smartly rising to the demand. **Gnu** is still riding high on last year's successful introduction of the Women's B-Pro Splits, **Barrett Christy's** pow board of choice. Over at **Never Summer**, "we're very excited about the Women's Raven Split in a 151," says snow sales manager **Mike Gagliardi**. "It has a ladies'-specific flex pattern and a narrower width, and it features all the Carbonium technology we put into the new women's Raven—dampening systems, dual carbon X's underfoot, elastomeric stabilizers."

Never Summer also debuts the Prospector, with new Extended Tour Rocker and Camber. The board, which Gagliardi calls a "tapered powder crusher" comes in regular width and wide models, and adds an extended flat zone in the middle of the rocker for superior grip in tour mode. "The result is better climbing and traversing while maintaining the effectiveness of our rocker/camber scheme in ride mode," he adds.

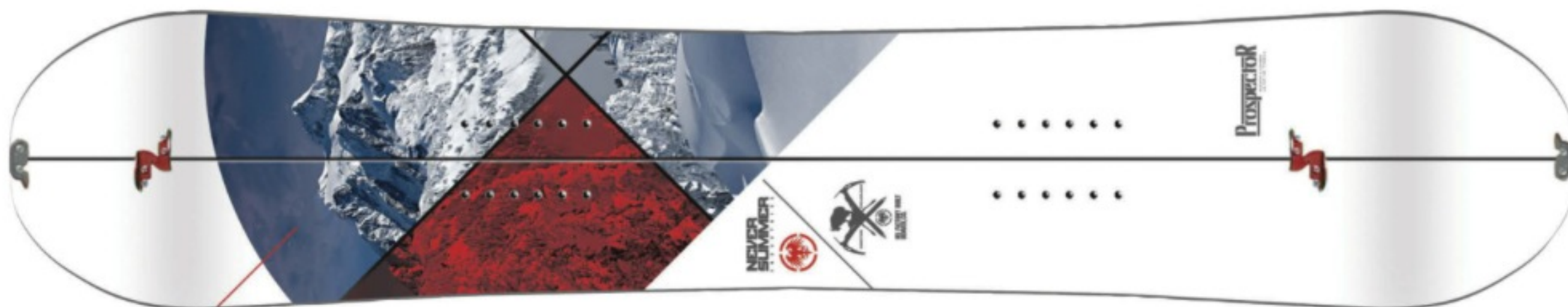
Venture Snowboards' new split, the Zelix, is a directional twin with 20 mm of stance offset to give riders both awesome float and effortless switch. The company calls it a "go anywhere, ride anything quiver of one."

At the Snow Show, splitboard and powder-specific boards, boots, and bindings are also being showcased at the **Backcountry Experience** booth (#4571) for powder lovers of all denominations to scope out.

—Jamie Lynn Magyar

"The sport has seen a rapid growth, which has translated into greater demand for ... a variety of splitboard shapes."

—Gus Cormack, Prior



▲ Never Summer Prospector



▲ Prior BC Splitboard