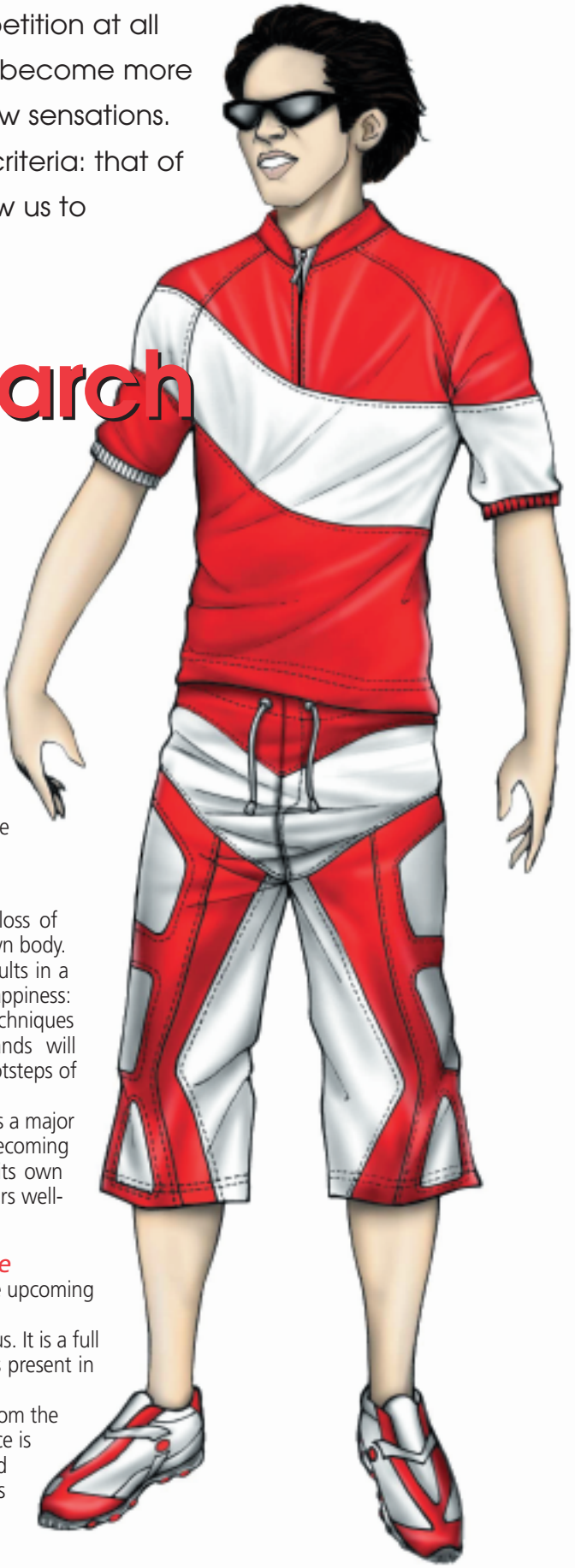
Sebastien and Benjamin de Diesbach, of Paris-based Promostyl, consider the trends for the immediate future and suggest that we shall seek to reintroduce the notion that pleasure is preferable to pain. The 'competition at all costs' spirit is running out of breath as people become more interested in savouring life, in experiencing new sensations. So performance will now be judged on new criteria: that of liberating the body. Freeing the body will allow us to experience more intense sensations.

Trends: the search for sensations



In order to experience more sensations, we must free the body of heavy garments and equipment. This opens a trend towards 'no equipment' that is particularly strong in the outdoor sector. It is no longer enough for us to see the landscape; we want to experience the veritable fusion of our bodies with nature.

Because everything today already appears extremely technical, the new frontier is that of weight reduction. We want to be protected without being aware of the protection. We eliminate the superfluous from equipment and apparel.

The body is considered as equipment

Seeing the chaos in everyday life and all the signs of a general loss of direction, modern man seeks to hide away within the refuge of his own body. Thus 'self' becomes his home. This trend towards seeking refuge results in a growing awareness of the body's well-being. The first source of happiness: food. We seek to improve our body by purifying it. Modern fasting techniques might contribute to increased well-being. Tomorrow, sports brands will undoubtedly begin working in the food domain – following in the footsteps of Reebok, now marketing its own mineral water.

In line with our quest for good sensations, the elimination of stress is a major concern. Previously confined to the gym or urban spas, massage is becoming readily available and, much as yoga, is being considered a sport in its own right. Not a sport that seeks high performance, but a sport that delivers well-being and has a therapeutic side.

Two attitudes for the next era: Exuberance & Reserve

The quest for sensations will be expressed in two major ways for the upcoming seasons.

The first is based on the unbridled creativity that we all have within us. It is a full flow of exuberance and the joy of life. An unrestrained energy that is present in extreme sports such as kite surfing or mountain biking.

The second expression of our quest for sensations is very different from the first. Here, we shall have a certain reserve, a sense of restraint. Elegance is an integral part of this current and will be very evident in sports and sports equipment. There is definitely a demand for quality within this trend, in both the material and the existential sense of the word.

Exuberance

This expressionistic current is highly dynamic, almost violent. It is seen in a wave of bold graphics and bright colours.

Fighting acrobatics

The spirit of adventure is also expressed with the creation of new fusion styles, combining unexpected cultures and sports activities. Break dancing is the fusion of acrobatics and combat sports. It constitutes a permanent self-challenge. You throw yourself onto the stage as if it was a boxing ring… and you perform movements that are nearly impossible to recreate. Break dancing is the power of movement, an activity where aggressiveness, grace and agility are all equally important.

Another example of fusion: power sports

Motor sports and power sports and taking to the air. We leave the ground behind and reach for the clouds. Acrobatic figures give an artistic character to these power sports. We go from extreme sports to style and elegance. These new sports activities illustrate what Hemingway used to say about bull fighting: 'style is grace under pressure'. The toreador faces up to the raw, terrifying strength of the bull and then gracefully moves aside with a few dance steps…Extreme sports will continue to become increasingly 'artistic': the marriage of style and power.

Machine design

This alliance of power and style is already visible in sport shoes. Designers take inspiration from mechanical pieces and are using pre-moulding techniques from the automobile industry. Shoes are thus made sublime – because they are considered as technical as a sports car. Fila is currently working with Ferrari to design a new running shoe.

Reserve

Our second major trend is that of Reserve. If our first, Exuberance, demanded creativity, Reserve is a quest for elevation. We will reject that which is 'low' and aspire towards that which is 'high'. We shall actively seek quality – in both the material and the spiritual. This aspiration aims to generate a better quality of living.

Local expeditions

The quality of life is communicated by a greater attention to the small things in everyday life, starting with one's local countryside. Progressively, we shall begin to see our surroundings with new eyes, a new conscience. The richness of local landscapes will become apparent and we will no longer feel the need to go to the ends of the earth to discover something new. This is the 'regional' outdoor trend.

These local expeditions will present fine opportunities to engage in cultural tourism and the observation of nature (bird watching as an example).

Blending into nature

When fly-fishing, you must become a part of nature: you are in the river and you must observe the fish closely in order to be successful. You watch and then imitate nature to a 'T'. There is also a certain Utopian notion in this desire to commune with nature, a world that is not yet altered by civilisation. It is all about adopting a certain attitude of Reserve towards nature: being a small part of it, not dominating it.

Fly-fishing is a new attraction for young urban fishermen, such as Thomas Legrand who is a graphic artist in the record industry. The cerebral, artistic side of fly-fishing makes it interesting to these young sportsmen. Here it is not a question of power, but rather of style and precision. Fly-fishing is a continuity sport in the sense that, when you are not actually in the water fishing, you are making your materials (the creation of flies is an art-form in itself!).





Drilling a hole takes on a new meaning for dentist Hervé Gorel when he gets to the green.

Free time becomes Elegant

The aspiration for a higher quality in life brings with it the return of elegance in sports. Here, we see Hervé Gorel, a dentist, who, when working, is anything but elegant. However, as soon as he hits the golf green, he is a new man! Today, professional wear is increasingly casual. Leisure and casual (or free time) apparel is becoming increasingly elegant.

Sports garments provide great inspiration for ready-to-wear designers such as Castelbajac and Yamamoto. The opposite is also true: city wear is loaning its elegance to sports apparel. Golf shoes take on "wing-tip" perforations and technical pants don traditional checks. Tomorrow, many sporting products will adopt the codes of traditional, urban elegance.

The Sense of Belonging

There is also a desire to be a part of limited communities: this allows us to escape from the violence of the masses and from globalisation - and take refuge in a more sophisticated world. Many parents today are afraid to let their children join football clubs where hooliganism has become commonplace; they prefer to enrol their offspring in other types of sports. The golf course is not only a giant garden where nature has been domesticated; it is also a place to socialise. One meets one's contemporaries in the very heart of golf: the clubhouse.

Pro-shop: The One-Off Spirit

This requirement to belong is also what makes a success of those exclusive boutiques: the Pro-Shops - on golf courses across the world. The products are marked with the logo of the club. A whole range of is marketed based on the concept of golf - much in the manner of after-ski products in ski resorts. This concept will surely spread to include other sports and serves to fulfil the consumer's desire for belonging…and for elegance.