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Vision Now magazine



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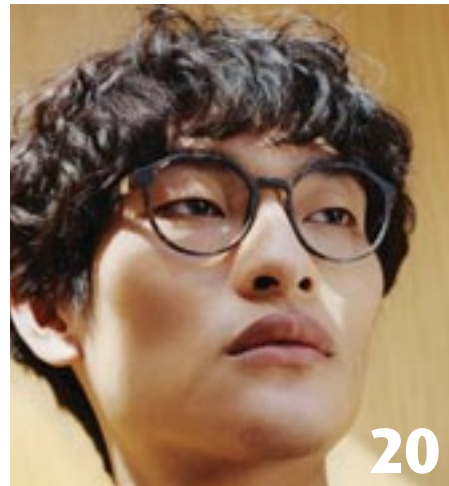
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Vision Now magazine is published by Peekay Publishing Ltd for The PK National Eyecare Group Ltd, the UK's largest purchasing group for independent opticians.



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Editor's comment



At the time of writing, Primary Care Support England was preparing to launch its new online ophthalmic payments service. Under the scheme, registered practices can either submit and track General Ophthalmic Services (GOS) claims online or through an eGOS enabled PMS. Always at the forefront of optical PMS, Optinet was the first to introduce eGOS integration with Optinet Flex in Scotland in 2016.

As we report in *News* this month, Optinet is now rolling out this service in England, having supported five practices to become early adopters of eGOS1 and eGOS3 form submissions. eGOS is practically a 'no-brainer' – reducing time, costs and the risk of claims being rejected. So do get in contact with the Optinet team to discuss your individual requirements.

Speaking of risk, the General Optical Council recently published the results of its survey looking into current and future risks posed to patients and the public by optical professionals. The good news, in a PR sense, is that optometrists and dispensing opticians remained low risk when compared to other healthcare professionals, such as doctors and nurses. However, one risk area that registrants thought could become more severe in the future was communication, as clinical roles and responsibilities evolved.

Independents are not generally beset by time and target pressures, so communication is just one of many areas where you can outclass the competition. If you're looking to reboot your communications strategy, the NEG Business Club offers expert guidance on this and many other topics – all designed to keep your risks low, and your returns high. Visit <https://negbc.practicebuilding.co.uk> to get the business ball rolling.

Nicky Collinson

Editor

The Editor welcomes letters, articles and other contributions for publication in the magazine and reserves the right to amend them. Any such contribution, whether it bears the author's name, initials or pseudonym, is accepted on the understanding that its author is responsible for the opinions expressed in it and that its publication does not imply that such opinions are those of The PK National Eyecare Group Ltd. Articles submitted for publication should be original, unpublished work and are accepted on the basis that they will not be published in any other journal. Acceptance of material for publication is not a guarantee that it will be included in any particular issue. Copyright © 2019 for Peekay Publishing Ltd. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying and recording, without the written permission of the publishers. Such written permission should also be obtained before any part of this publication is stored in a retrieval system of any nature.

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1 De Rigo

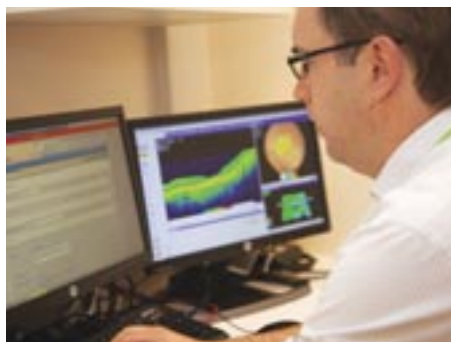


New Police X Lewis Hamilton

De Rigo UK said it was “thrilled” to announce it was now a preferred supplier to NEG, meaning an exclusive discount for members purchasing its eyewear through the group.

De Rigo offers a fantastic range of premium and luxury brands, including the recently launched Police x Lewis Hamilton Collection, the iconic British fashion brand Mulberry, along with a range of other sports lifestyle, affordable luxury and premium designer names. View all the different brands at www.derigo.com

4 Optrafair 20/20



Pearse Keane analysing an OCT scan

2 Optinet



Are you ready for eGOS with Optinet Flex?

Optinet has supported five independent practices in England this month to become early adopters of electronic General Ophthalmic Services (eGOS) GOS1 and GOS3 form submissions – with full integration to the company’s flagship Flex practice management system (PMS). Optinet was the first to offer eGOS integration to Scottish practices in 2016. It is now rolling out its eGOS programme across England, as Primary Care Support England commences acceptance of e-submissions.

Chris Smith, Optinet business development manager, said: “Optinet Flex integration with eGOS not only saves practices time and money, but its pre-validation function reduces the risk of claims being rejected due to data error input on manual forms. The system also enables practices to enjoy a longer submission window, because forms no longer have to be collated and posted, and to generally benefit from a more secure way to submit claims.

“So far, feedback from customers has been hugely positive – and we are now looking forward to introducing a statement download and reconciliation function to improve the service yet further,” Chris added. NEG members can apply for a free 12-month trial of Optinet Flex and get ready for eGOS at the same time. Email sales@optinetuk.com or call Chris Smith on 07500 874599.

3 Lenstec Optical Group

Lenstec Optical Group’s (LOG) new 1.74 and 1.67 index double aspheric, I-Focus DA, is described as offering “unparalleled optical performance by combining the most advanced lens design software with innovative semi-finished lens options”. Available in 1.74 and 1.67 indices, LOG said it could now offer options for patients who require higher-than-average optical power lenses, with lenses that are thinner and more cosmetically appealing than standard aspheric lenses.

Scott Pearson, general manager at Rawdon Optical, said: “I-Focus DA really shouts about how ‘super-thin’ can be achieved even on the most complex of prescription lenses. It’s really important for us to be able to offer our customers what they need on a daily basis when challenged with difficult prescriptions, or patient needs, and manufacture our own high quality digital lenses right here in the UK.”

Technological change and innovation are the key themes for Optrafair 20/20, which runs from 4-6 April at the Birmingham NEC.

Among the host of keynote lecturers is Pearse Keane, who has been awarded the inaugural Optrafair Lecture. Pearse is leading a five-year research project at Moorfields, launched in 2016, in partnership with artificial intelligence (AI) company DeepMind to determine if AI could help improve patient eye health care.

Regarding his Optrafair Lecture, Pearse said: “I will describe the motivation – and urgent need – to apply deep learning to optometry and ophthalmology, the processes required to establish a research collaboration between the NHS and a company like DeepMind, the initial results of our research, and why I believe that optometry and ophthalmology could be fundamentally reinvented through the application of artificial intelligence.” Register for Optrafair 20/20 at www.optrafair.co.uk

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1. Sphere only. CooperVision data on file, (2015). Non dispensing, double masked, randomised study n=20. Improved comfort on insertion.
2. Brennan, N.A. Beyond Flux: Total Corneal Oxygen Consumption as an Index of Corneal Oxygenation During Contact Lens Wear. Optom Vis Sci 2005.
*clariti[®] 1 day has a UV blocker that supports ocular health. UV-absorbing contact lenses are not substitutes for protective UV-absorbing eyewear, such as UV-absorbing goggles or sunglasses, because they do not completely cover the eye and surrounding area. Patients should continue to use UV-absorbing eyewear as directed. © 2019 CooperVision.



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5 100% Optical



100% Optical CET open for bookings

More than 130 seminar topics have been confirmed for 100% Optical in January, which are being released to book in stages. Topics will cover: myopia with case-led discussions and lectures; glaucoma, featuring a masterclass in patient examination; and dry eye patient management. A forum for the whole practice team to understand how to use social media, and ensure that appropriate boundaries are followed, will also be available.

Additional seminars include a focus on new business standards conducted by Dr Peter Hampson, clinical director for the Association of Optometrists (AOP), and Deborah Nathan, who leads the employment team at the AOP. Using case illustrations, Professor John Wild will cover the different techniques available for the detection of visual field loss using standard automated perimetry, and on the final day, Dr Lisa Hill will explore emerging therapies to treat ocular surface scarring after infection or trauma to the eye.

New for 2020, the Future Practice Hub will bring to life future practice on the show floor, via a consulting room, diagnostic suite and dispensing area. In each area, tailored CET content will be delivered through discussion and hands-on skills workshops, and in its seminar space, the hub will offer education on contemporary areas of practice. Education will also be provided in the ABDO CET Theatre. Book seminars at www.100percentoptical.com

8 Rodenstock

Rodenstock will be returning to a UK trade fair after a four-year absence by exhibiting at 100% Optical, taking place from 25-27 January at the London ExCeL. The company said it was planning its return with a fresh new look and with some surprises in store. Its focus would be on the DNEye 2 scanner, as well as the other innovative equipment and lenses within the group. Eyewear

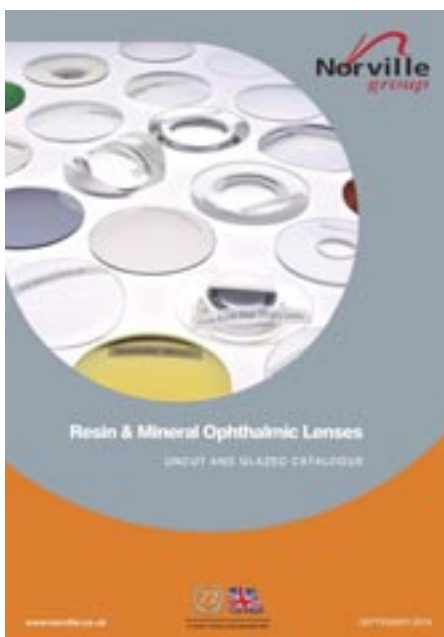
6 Go Eyewear



24k gold AH1999

Ana Hickmann Eyewear has launched its first-ever 24k gold plated edition frame for women. Described as “elegance and beauty in one unique piece”, the AH1999 frame made by the Go Eyewear Group is a limited and numbered edition of only 500 pieces worldwide. Totally developed and produced in Italy, the rare piece of eyewear jewellery comes with an exclusive and luxury matching display box.

7 Norville



Altogether there are more than 70 new listings in the 2019 edition of Norville's prescription lens availability catalogue. “The Norville team takes great pride year-on-year in evolving its immense offering of prescription lenses across each and every resin and glass index,” commented chairman, Frank Norville. “The route to higher powers and prisms is often limited by the materials and thickness we can source, against a picture of dwindling world choice.

“Our aim is to simplify this range, without restricting the possibilities on offer. Yet we continue to uncover new combinations. Our lens of the year 2018 must be a +15.00 1.67 Lenticular Bifocal [HSA] in Reactolite Photochromic. One possible candidate for 2019 is new listing MonoPal, a progressive lens for those with monocular vision needs,” Frank concluded.

will also be displayed, including luxury brand Porsche.

Rodenstock UK managing director, David Baker, said: “Myself and all at Rodenstock are delighted to be exhibiting at 100% Optical. We will have some very exciting new product launches, business growing initiatives, fun and entertainment on our brand new show stand. If you're not ‘in love with Rodenstock’ already, come and join us to find out why we can become your ideal partner for what will be a very exciting



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9 Heidelberg Engineering



Emily Malbon and Tim Cole

Following Christopher Mody's move to become clinical director with Heidelberg Engineering, Tim Cole has been promoted to clinical affairs manager and Emily Malbon to head of UK marketing and education at Heidelberg Engineering UK. In his new role, Chris will work with the global product

management and clinical affairs team members to foster collaborative relationships. Tim will provide clinical direction and feedback that will help to shape product development and research activity, while Emily will manage the Academy team to deliver high-quality education.

"Both Emily and Tim have advanced progressively during their time at Heidelberg Engineering, playing a crucial role in clinical education globally," said Tosh Vadha, Heidelberg Engineering general manager. "They are both avid learners, determined individuals and bring a wealth of experience to their new positions. I would like to say a huge thank you to Chris for his work and commitment towards Heidelberg Engineering UK. It has been a pleasure working closely with Chris."

10 Positive Impact

Paul Humphries and Mike Cornwell have joined Positive Impact (PI) as business development consultants. Covering the Midlands, Paul re-joins the company after having worked on a project for Alcon for the past 18 months. Mike has worked in optical sales for 15 years and spent most of that time with Sauflon Pharmaceuticals. He joins PI from Scope Ophthalmics to cover the North West.

Both appointments follow the roll out of NaturalVue 1-day multifocal contact lenses for presbyopia and myopia management. PI director of marketing and professional services, Nick Atkins, said: "Having worked



Paul Humphries

Mike Cornwell

with both in the past, I am delighted to have them on the team to introduce even more independent practitioners to the business development opportunities presented by the unique benefits of NaturalVue and Duette hybrid contact lenses."

12 Marchon

Chloé has launched a new vintage-inspired style, Bonnie, distinguished by an oversized infinity shape and a light acetate profile of differing thicknesses. The rounded front design is offset with straight sides that extend to laminated tips in contrasting colours, where signature Chloé eardrop cutouts serve as an aesthetic and functional way to attach a jewellery-inspired chain accessory.

Featured in the brand's autumn/winter 2019

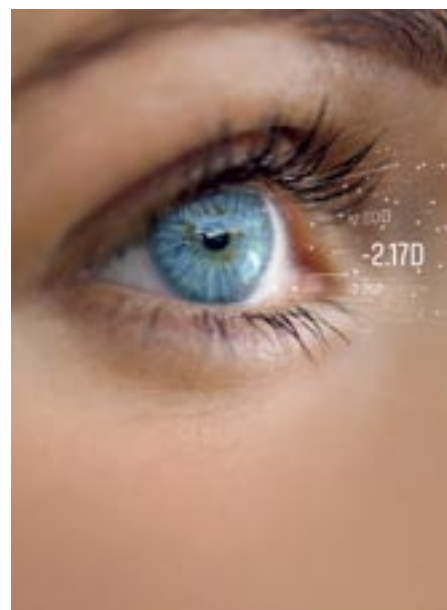


Vintage inspired Bonnie

runway show and advertising campaign, the new Bonnie style is offered as a sunglass in Light Havana, Havana,

Havana/Gradient Brown and Light Havana/Gradient Purple, as well as an optical style in Light Havana and Havana.

11 Essilor



New integrated lens solution

Essilor has officially launched its AVA (Advanced Vision Accuracy) integrated solution, made possible by the introduction of the Vision-R800 phoropter by Essilor Instruments. The Vision-R800 offers subjective refraction in 0.01D steps with instantaneous changes of sphere, cylinder and axis at the same time. The precise prescription can then be delivered through Essilor's premium digital lens designs: Varilux X series, Varilux Physio 3.0 and Eyezen.

Essilor UK managing director, Tim Precious, said: "Essilor research shows that 95 per cent of the population have more sensitive vision that the current correction steps of 0.25D allow for. This new lens calculation system now targets 0.01D prescription in each lens optimisation point. We have analysed over 100,000 vision parameters over five years of research to create this solution."



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13 Transitions Optical



New matrix structure for photochromic lens

After five years R&D, Transitions Optical recently unveiled its new Transitions Signature GEN8 lenses at Silmo Paris. The performance of photochromic lenses is linked to two components: the matrix in which the dyes reside and the photochromic dyes themselves. For the first time since 2005, the new generation of Transitions lenses renews the matrix and the dyes at the same time. The new matrix is a nano-structured material, which mimics a semi-crystalline structure, creating free zones for improved dye mobility.

The new lenses also activate faster and go even darker than previous generations. They also fade back three minutes faster, whilst blocking 100 per cent UV. The lenses are available in grey, brown (a more chestnut brown), graphite green, sapphire, amethyst, emerald and amber, and will be available in the UK from January 2020.

14 Seiko Optical

New SmartZoom lenses from Seiko Optical have been optimised to reduce eyestrain and provide comfort when using digital devices. Incorporating Zoom Power in the lower part of the lens helps mitigate the symptoms of digital eye strain, with four Zoom powers: 0.50D, 0.75D, 1.00D and 1.25D. Balance Zone Technology provides a highly natural eye appearance, extremely thin lens edges and maximum optical precision, said the company. SmartZoom lenses are also 360° inner aspheric lenses, which are thin and lightweight with wide visual fields and "exceptional" image quality.

With all the features of SmartZoom, SmartZoom Xceed lenses are said to provide exceptional comfort due to the higher level of customisation to patients' individual measurements and frame choices. Both SmartZoom and SmartZoom Xceed are available in a wide range of materials and coating options.

15 UltraVision



Trial lenses available

The Seed daily disposable toric contact lens, Seed 1day Pure Moisture for Astigmatism, is now available in the UK from UltraVision CLPL. Economically priced in packs of 32 and only available to registered eyecare professionals, the lens is available in sphere powers from +5.00D to -10.00D with four choices of cyl and four options of axis.

Seed 1day Pure Moisture for Astigmatism are said to achieve high levels of comfort by utilising alginate, a natural moisturising agent extracted from seaweed. Manufactured from Seed's exclusive Seed Ionic Bond (SIB) material, the lens is said to ensure biocompatibility. It also contains both positive and negative ions resulting in electrical stability, which keeps dust and impurities away from the lens. For more information or for free trial lenses, visit www.seed-uk.com, telephone on 0800 585 115 or email on info@seed-uk.com

16 Pennine Optical



Venetian splendour in new collection

Mazzimo Black Label is the latest addition to the Pennine Optical frame portfolio. A collection of ladies and gents frames inspired by the splendour of Venice, each frame is designed and hand made in Italy using world renowned Italian mazzuchelli acetates and monel metal. All new releases will incorporate the latest colour palette on the season's catwalks ensuring this range stays stylish, fresh and on-trend. Mazzimo Black Label is exclusive to Pennine Optical and the Lenstec Optical Group.



MZ062 c2



MZ046 c2

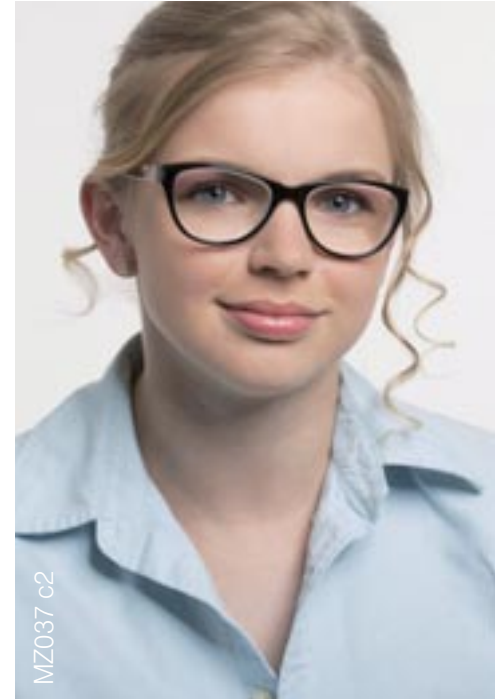
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MZ070 c1

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MZ060 c1



MZ069 c1

NEW



MZ071 c2

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17 Dunelm Optical



John Procter

John Procter is the new managing director of Dunelm Optical. John recently retired from politics, representing Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire in the European Parliament. He is currently chairman of the Royal Armouries, which has three museums across the UK. John said: "It is enormously exciting to be working in a company with such a proud family history and heritage. The entire workforce is working collectively to push the business forward and maintain our standing within the optical industry."

Laura Pearce has also joined the company as laboratory sales manager. A qualified dispensing optician, Laura has worked in optical practice for 16 years – owning three independent practices in Yorkshire. She will play a key role in growing Dunelm's footprint among independent opticians, spearheading lens sales and offering support.



Laura Pearce

18 British Contact Lens Association

Cheryl Donnelly will step down as chief executive of the British Contact Lens Association (BCLA) at the end of the year, after six years in the role. She said: "The BCLA has always played a huge part in my career – it is fundamental to anyone who has an interest in contact lenses and the anterior eye. I have been hugely privileged to work alongside so many incredible people over the years and I can look back with an enormous sense of pride on everything we have achieved together."

BCLA president, Jonathon Bench, said: "Cheryl has worked tirelessly to transform, modernise and enhance the member experience and all of us who have benefited from her infectious enthusiasm and determination owe her a huge debt of gratitude. The challenge is now on for us to ensure her legacy lives on."



Cheryl Donnelly

* BCLA members may bring one guest free of charge to its Pioneers and Visionaries Conference in London on 26 November. The 2019 BCLA Pioneers Lecture, entitled 'Understanding contact lens discomfort', will be presented by Professor Michel Guillon. Register at www.bcla.org.uk

19 Vision Care for Homeless People



Christmas appeal to practices

Vision Care for Homeless People (VCHP) is aiming to help even more homeless people this Christmas gain an eye examination and spectacles, by asking optical practices across the UK to contact to their local homeless shelters and offer their services. Currently, VCHP runs Christmas clinics in conjunction with Crisis, around London, with more than 80 volunteers last December and generous donations from across the optical community.

Elaine Styles, VCHP chair, said: "We know from our weekly regional clinics that London is not the only place in the UK that needs optometry services at Christmas for the dispossessed. We are urging practices to reach out to their local homeless centres and discuss providing a service in their community, for a truly Christmas Spectacle. This may be within the practice or as a domiciliary service within the refuge centre." Advice packs are available on the VCHP website at www.visioncarecharity.org

20 General Optical Council

The General Optical Council (GOC) has launched a new website to support the new Standards for Optical Businesses that came into effect on 1 October 2019. The website presents the new business standards in an accessible and searchable format, and hosts supporting guidance, FAQs and videos with tips about how to apply the standards in practice.

Alistair Bridge, GOC director of strategy, said: "The new standards reflect the good practice that all optical business owners should follow, and we urge all businesses to read them and decide how to apply them in their practice. We also welcome the support of our stakeholders in raising awareness of the standards and publishing guidance for their members." Visit the Standards microsite at www.standards.optical.org

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1. Akerman et al., Patient and Eye Care Professional satisfaction with a novel Water Gradient daily disposable multifocal contact lens, 2nd World Congress of Optometry, Hyderabad, India; 11-13 September, 2017. 2. Maissa C, et al. Evaluation of the Lubricity of DAILIES TOTAL1 contact lenses after wear. Opt Vis Sci Annual meeting 2014. 3. Ham BM, Cole RB, Jacob JT. Identification and comparison of the polar phospholipids in normal and dry eye rabbit tears by MALDI-TOF mass spectrometry. Invest Ophthalmol Vis Sci. 2006;47(8):3330-3338. 4. Belda-Salmerón L, Ferrer-Blasco T, Albarrán-Diego C, Madrid-Costa D, Montés-Micó R. Diurnal variations in visual performance for disposable contact lenses. Optom Vis Sci. 2013;90(7):682-690. 13309 © 2019 Alcon. GB/NC/DAI/03/19/0035

21 Association of Optometrists



Who will get your vote?

Patients and practitioners are invited to celebrate the achievements of their local optometrist, dispensing optician or optical practice by casting their vote in the Association of Optometrists (AOP) Awards 2020 sponsored by CooperVision. Following shortlisting by a panel of industry experts, 12 award categories are now open to a public vote including the new accolade, Hospital Optometry Team of the Year. A further two categories, Frame of the Year and Product of the Year, will be chosen by AOP members.

Commenting on the finalists, head judge, Dr Ian Beasley, said: "To recognise this landmark year we chose a theme of 'Excellence in optics'. The entries for this year's awards have certainly lived up to that – with such brilliant calibre, and a higher-volume of submissions than we've seen before. It's been a pleasure to review them and see the fantastic work being done throughout the profession." The ceremony will take place at 100% Optical. Voting is open until 18 December. Visit www.aop.org.uk for more details.

22 Association of British Dispensing Opticians



Max Halford

The Association of British Dispensing Opticians (ABDO) has updated its guidance on contact lens aftercare frequency. ABDO clinical lead, Max Halford, said: "We continually review our policies to ensure that our advice and guidance to members is current. It became apparent that as practitioners now use more innovative materials in clinic, ABDO's previous advice was outdated."

The new guidance is as follows: "Contact lens aftercare appointments are a vital part of a patient's eye health regime. The frequency of these checks should be based purely on the eye care practitioner's professional judgement of the patient's clinical needs, the type of contact lens worn, the modality of wear and the practitioner's structured judgement of the risk of adverse incidents. Neither pressure from the patient nor commercial interests should form any part of this decision-making process."

AN INDEPENDENT VIEW

Having their cake and eating it?

The AIO has been asked what the reaction by independents has been to the announcement of EssilorLuxottica's acquisition of GrandVision. In particular, the AIO has been approached for input by the EC or the Competition and Markets Authority. The answer to the latter question is a clear, 'No' (at least so far), but the answer to the former is quite complex.

Many independents have been sourcing products from these companies for years and, of course, they have some of the highest profile specs brands. At the top end of the market in particular, there are some independents whose businesses are, in part at least, reliant on the sale of these brands. Further, there are long-term personal relationships with employees of the company that have real meaning for some independents.

On the face of it, the issue for the sector is a fairly fundamental one: do you continue to do business with an organisation who can disintermediate you at different points in the market? With the group moving forward with the acquisition of Vision Express at one point, and distributing specs online through Glasses Direct at another, it would seem that there is a squeeze on the independent sector from an organisation that still wishes to supply it. Cake and eating it come to mind.

Whilst offering unique lens ranges to independents may be a positive, other suppliers do this as well, and assisting with digital strategies does not need to be driven by a product supplier. Where independents may continue to get real value is through being able to sell top end spectacle brands, although there have been times when unreasonable sales quotas have been imposed.

Independents are used to the challenges that an ever-changing market pose to the sector. It is generally through providing patients with consistent and excellent long-term eye health care that they continue to thrive in locations the length and breadth of the country. How the ever-growing EssilorLuxottica/Vision Express stable of companies fits in to serving the sector operating the 'clinical first' model for the long-term is perhaps a question for them to consider. Squeezing sales out of top-end-of-the-market brand supplies is perhaps not the best way to endear themselves to an already somewhat alienated sector.

Association for
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Independent Optometrists
and Dispensing Opticians

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1853

Company founded

1861

Vulcanite eyeglass frames

1875

Produces first microscopes

1883

Creates its first photographic lens

1887

Patents iris diaphragm shutter helping give rise to snapshot photography

1902

Creates Balopticon slide projector to project images

1922

Produces Super Cinephor lens first used in cinemas

1937

Introduces Ray-Ban® goggles

1949

Develops first ultraviolet microscope optics

1953

Creates CinemaScope lens technology for widescreen film projection

1964

A Bausch + Lomb Super Baltar lens captures the first close range images of moon surface from within the moon's orbit

1971

Launches SofLens® the world's first mass-produced soft contact lens

1982

Creates its first bifocal contact lens

1983

Acquires Polymer Technology Corporation rigid gas permeable contact lenses and portfolio

1998

Launches PureVision® silicone hydrogel contact lenses

2010

Launches PureVision® 2, contact lenses with high definition optics

2012

Launches Biotrue® ONEday contact lenses with Surface Active Technology™ - a next generation hydrogel

2014

Launches Bausch + Lomb ULTRA® contact lenses with Moisture Seal® Technology

2017

Launches Bausch + Lomb ULTRA® for Astigmatism and Biotrue® ONEday for Astigmatism

2019

Launches Bausch + Lomb ULTRA® Multifocal for Astigmatism contact lenses

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Developing thoughts



If technology is taking over then service will have to win, writes Phil Mullins

Let's make it personal

I was recently having a conversation about the ever-increasing use of technology in the optical market, and where it might be heading in the near future. We are already at a point where autorefractors are now more accurate than humans, and outside the UK companies are experimenting with refracting eyes using mobile phones. Developments in artificial intelligence (AI) could see in the next few years a computer reading OCT scans and referring any patients who might have issues.

The impact of all this on the optometry profession could be significant indeed. And if you're a dispensing optician, don't feel too smug. There are devices already on the market that can scan a patient's head, 3D print the frame and then digitally make the lenses, all perfectly fitting and providing great vision. In fact, it won't be long before the printer will print the frame and lenses together as a single unit.

But let's just stop for a second, before we all rip up our GOC registration, shut up shop and go and sell coffee. Technology is not everything to everyone. It still can't deal with human interaction and respond to a human need in the way that we can. It's still the case that people like people, or at least most people. I'm sure many of you would have come into optics with the idea of working with people and helping them, often changing their lives, and there is always going to be a need for that. My belief is that this is where independent practices can really make a difference and gain an edge over the competition, by using their extra time to develop a customer experience that makes the patient feel like an individual.

ALL IN THE DETAIL

To create such an experience, it's the little

details that will make all the difference. Although it was a long time ago, when I was doing my A levels, I worked as a silver service waiter at a very nice hotel in Somerset (unfortunately it's a Marks & Spencer now). The hotel had a mix of regular visitors and locals who ate in the restaurant, as well as people coming just as a one-off. But what they all enjoyed was the service and the feel of the hotel. We had one waiter, who everyone would ask for, Duncan. Now Duncan didn't cook the food, or change the cutlery or the seating, so the product was the same, but what he did do was make sure the lead up to the product was simple but perfect.

Duncan would come into work before everyone else, re-lay his entire station making sure everything was where he wanted it to be. He would get a fresh pack of white serving cloths, so he never had to leave his workstation to get replacements. He checked the menu, which he knew like the back of his hand, and knew what everything tasted like. This meant that when a customer asked for a recommendation, he was able to suggest something after asking a couple of questions about their tastes.

If people had concerns about ingredients or how something was made, Duncan knew the answer straight away. For regulars, he would set their favourite table the way they liked, he would have their drinks ready for when they arrived and would discuss what might be new on the menu that they might like to try. He even remembered the birthdays and anniversaries of patrons who returned year after year.

Going the extra mile is all very well and good, but what does it achieve? Well in Duncan's case his income per cover, i.e.



Technology will never replace the human touch

what each customer spent, was at least a third more than anyone else's. His tips were probably five times more than the rest put together. His view was that his performance was to enable customers to enjoy the experience and be happy with the value they had for the money they had spent. He would never apologise for the price or be worried about recommending the most expensive items, but he would always make sure the customers were comfortable in saying no.

None of this is rocket science or hard to do, and is something that can easily be part of an independent's business. Spending a few minutes at the end of an eye examination talking about all the options, discussing the different lens types that you have found good to wear, or a new contact lens that you recently tried at the gym, can go a long way.

And why can't we offer the patient a coffee the way they like it when they arrive? Send them birthday cards, make sure you offer appointment times that work for them, enable contact lens patients to order lenses via your website, make engaging with you easy and enjoyable. If you focus on the small things, the personal (human) touch, then you will find that patients will keep coming back and spend happily.

Leading the way in sustainability

Neubau Eyewear is set to launch its first-ever collection made from 100 per cent bio-based materials using 3D printed technology...

In 2020, Austrian eyewear manufacturer Neubau Eyewear will redefine the production of its sustainable models and thereby achieve another milestone on its path to sustainability. As the new decade dawns, the label will use a method that produces eyewear from a 100 per cent bio-based material – Natural3D – that will be exclusively used with 3D printing technology.

FROM SEEDS TO SUNGLASSES

The base of Natural3D is an oil extracted from the seeds of the castor oil plant, which Neubau Eyewear has been using under the name of NaturalPX since 2017. NaturalPX consists of 65 per cent castor oil and is used for injection-moulded polymer spectacles to produce particularly light and flexible frames. Now with Natural3D, for the first time it is also possible to use an entirely natural material in a 3D printer. Layer by layer, this method is positioning Neubau Eyewear as a true sustainability trailblazer.

To begin with, four optical frames and three sunglass models made from the 100 per cent bio-based material – including the Special Edition 2020 – are in the pipeline for next April. A malleable titanium needle will be integrated into the 3D-printed models to comfortably adapt the temple arms to the wearer.

THREE-DIMENSIONAL SUSTAINABILITY

Eyewear production using 3D printing is a real success story for Neubau Eyewear: its high-tech production is particularly resource-efficient because layers of powdered plastic are fused together using a laser, and any residual material is reused. As a sustainability pioneer in the eyewear sector, Neubau Eyewear has already launched several models with 3D applications – but not yet a complete model. This is set to change in 2020 with the release of the Natural3D styles.

Under the management of global brand director, Daniel Liktor, Neubau Eyewear combines the fresh spirit of young, creative minds with longstanding expertise and sustainable production. The brand is an offshoot of the successful Silhouette International Group from Austria and benefits from its parent company's decades of know-how. Its products therefore meet the highest quality standards with a dynamic, progressive approach to technology and design.

Since 2017, Neubau Eyewear has been using natural raw material NaturalPX to make its extremely flexible and lightweight frames, 65 per cent of which is based on an oil extracted from the seeds of castor oil plants. And in 2020, it is going one step further by using a 100 per cent bio-based material. Natural3D looks set to be the first European brand to produce fully sustainable frames using the 3D printing method.

SEE & DO GOOD

To this young Austrian eyewear brand, sustainability has always been more than just another fad. Neubau Eyewear is staying true to its motto: See & Do Good. For the company, this means to engage with one's environment and surroundings, in the city as much as anywhere else, with respect and awareness. In a practical sense, it also means producing frames in an environmentally friendly way while at the same time supporting visionary urban projects.

Apart from Neubau's own initiatives, See and Do Good supports other projects that benefit the environment. Neubau collaborates with the Salatpiraten urban garden in Vienna, sponsors several hives of the Honey Bee Conservancy in New York City, or teams up with Gabarage, an upcycling studio bringing used materials to new and useful life. And that's just to name



Totally bio-based, Natural3D frames will be 3D printed

but a few of the projects the brand is working on.

LATEST COLLECTIONS: AUTUMN 2019

Barbara and Robin

New for autumn 2019 are models Barbara and Robin, both crafted from Neubau's signature NaturalPX material. The iconic spectacle styles bring two bold 1920s shapes bang up-to-date – continuing to signify Neubau's ethos of style and sustainability.

Robin makes a statement in a panto shape, which has been well-loved for decades. Regarded as a symbol of individuality and creativity when first introduced, the shape offers a rounded lens with a subtle flatter top. A unisex model, Robin is available in four soft colourways to flatter all skin tones and tastes from a muted maroon to a deep coffee-toned tortoise pattern.



New statement panto shape, Robin



Robin in muted maroon



Hazelnut and silver hues in Robin

Meanwhile, Barbara introduces an elongated cat-eye, embodying 1920s glamour, reinventing classic charm using a traditional spectacle shape with an attractively lengthened design. Alluding to autumn/winter 2019's colour palette, the collection is available in four on-trend colourways, varying from a contrasting teal and gold to a striking aubergine tortoise pattern with rose gold accents. However, Barbara also offers a matte black or hazelnut finish, for more traditional spectacle wearers.



Barbara in teal and gold

Theo and Max 3D

Also new this season, models Theo and Max 3D offer a stunning and playful two-tone look that is guaranteed to make them a must-have accessory for glasses wearers looking to add an extra touch to their look. Both models are characterised by contrasts of vibrantly coloured 3D applications against elegant silhouettes of stainless steel, cleverly merging Neubau's flair for urban style and forward-thinking innovative design.



Barbara in black coal

Inspired by eyewear fashionistas from the 1960s, ladies' model Max 3D is a jaw-dropper: the stand-out cat eye shape with its extravagantly curved silhouette adds a feminine flair and a twist on an already popular look for sunglasses. This delicate frame adds softer lines to facial features, particularly those with heart, square or oval-shaped faces. Max 3D, sophisticated yet feminine, is available in a versatile array of shades including lavender, black ink matte, roasted berry, glorious gold, black coal and rose matte.

Theo 3D follows in Max's retro-inspired footsteps with a frame reminiscent of 1980s eyewear styles. A sporty style with a fresh outlook, the strong angles of this eye-catching frame emphasises facial features without being too severe. Theo 3D, contrastingly to Max, offers a more casual approach with colours such as denim, eclectic silver and evergreen, glorious gold, morning coffee and gold.



Theo and Max 3D

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Delving into diverse disciplines

Last month's joint AIO and BABO conference was a truly unique event for independents, writes Mike Ockenden

The Association for Independent Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians (AIO) and the British Association of Behavioural Optometrists (BABO) held their annual conferences jointly this year, on 5 and 6 October in Bristol. The combined event was a great success.

The action-packed weekend included a great CET programme, the largest ever exhibition put on at any AIO or BABO event and a fascinating panel session, which included representatives from all the major optical bodies. There was also a special student programme and, as ever when the AIO is involved, there was also a wonderful social programme.

By bringing together the lecture programmes that both organisations would historically have run separately, delegates had a choice of no less than 32 different CET sessions covering a very wide range of topics. Both organisations had decided that this year's programme should contain some less mainstream topics as well as more traditional CET content, and the range of options available to delegates was extraordinary.

A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING

A number of sessions focused on behavioural optometry and vision therapy and many delegates said that they had a much greater understanding of these disciplines as a result. The range of the



Kam Balaggan discusses flashers and floaters



Checking out the latest products

lectures was extensive covering subjects such as using virtual reality to treat binocular vision disorders, optometry and visual stress, and brain injury rehabilitation.

There were fascinating presentations on the future of artificial intelligence (AI) in the provision of clinical optical services, blue light and circadian rhythms and the impact on sleep patterns, as well as the use of social media in optometry. The sessions given by Peter Thomas from Moorfields on AI, and by Stuart Peirson from Oxford University on the effects of blue light, were particularly well received.

Peter Thomas was very much of the view that AI was more likely to impact on hospital eye departments than community optometry and in-practice dispensing – in fact it could drive community optometry ever further up the clinical value chain, he suggested. Peter explored what AI could do now and what would be possible in the future.

Stuart Peirson lectured on the research that he has been conducting at Oxford University, and the finding that brightness of light was perhaps more of an issue than the colour of the light source in improving sleep-wake patterns. He said that it was important to avoid high-brightness and blue based light sources in the evening, and this should be explained in a way that was understandable to the patient.

There were several other highlights, which included Geoff Shayler lecturing on the



Eva Davé advises on eyewear styling

impact of vision therapy on patients' lives, which was very much brought to life by Geoff's patient, Laura Lupton, speaking from the heart about how treatment had changed her life. Geoff also referred to his famous treatment of William Fox Pitt who went on to win Olympic Gold following vision therapy.

Kam Balaggan gave what many delegates said was the best lecture on flashing lights and floaters that they had ever attended. His lecture helped enhance delegates' understanding of how to diagnose and differentiate retinal breaks, the presenting symptoms of common vitreo-retinal conditions, and how to articulate to a patient with a posterior vitreous detachment or retinal detachment the implications of this condition.

Peter Simcock's Macular OCT Masterclass was just that – a masterclass in the use of OCT to detect glaucoma, the importance of scan reliability and how to use trend analysis to monitor change. The session also covered how to explain an OCT scan to patients in a way that was simple to understand, and to discuss the implications of findings that suggested glaucomatous risk or progression.

The line-up also featured a session on how to get involved in research projects by the College of Optometrists, two workshops on visual impairment and supporting sight loss convened by Dan Williams and Jayshree Vasani respectively, and how to assess

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children in special schools led by Marek Karas from SeeAbility.

PRODUCT SHOWCASE

The theme of variety was very much carried over into the conference exhibition, and perhaps this was best demonstrated by the platinum sponsors. On the one hand there was regular AIO supporter and sponsor, the Eyewear Company, which has been involved with the AIO for many years, and on the other RemmedVR from Poland, an entirely new sponsor whose product is an 'in-home' virtual reality tool for vision therapy with children under the supervision of an optometrist.

Other exhibitors ranged from sophisticated clinical equipment suppliers to lens and frame companies to finance companies and specialist business consultants. Friends and partners in the AIO Practice Support Network – Eyeplan, Myers La Roche, and of course NEG – were also sponsors of the event.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

One of the features of the joint conference was a panel session on the Saturday afternoon that included representatives from all the main optical bodies. These included the General Optical Council (GOC), the College of Optometrists, the Association of Optometrists, the Association of British Dispensing Opticians, the Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians, the Local Optical Committee Support Unit (LOCSU) and the British Contact Lens Association – as well as the AIO and BABO chairmen. The event made use of Slido technology, which meant that all delegates could get involved in asking questions and opining on the issues raised.

A big topic of conversation was the GOC Education Strategic Review and the subject of degree level apprenticeships in optometry led by 'trailblazer' employers. There was a divergence of view and delegates were clearly sceptical about the



Taking questions during the panel session

direction being taken with apprenticeships in what is a clinical profession.

One audience member asked whether the ever-expanding university base offering optometry degrees would result in a 'dumbing down' of the profession. AIO chairman, Christian French, said that this should not be the case. In fact, his view was the opposite in so much as smaller and more focused cohorts of students should enable lecturers to achieve even more in imparting clinical training.

Behavioural optometry was also tabled, and it was asked whether it should form part of the undergraduate optometry syllabus. There was a view from the GOC and the College that there needed to be scientific evidence of the effectiveness of the discipline. BABO chairman, John Stevenson, was clear that such scientific evidence did indeed exist. A further question asked if behavioural optometry and vision therapy provided an opportunity for independents to grow their business and the panel was generally in agreement that such specialisms did.

Other questions raised included the future role that LOCSU envisaged for dispensing opticians, whether the future of independent practice would rely on being brave enough to walk away from the NHS contract, and whether large multiples were playing too big a role in shaping the future of the profession. It was fair to say that the panel session could have gone on considerably longer than the 50 minutes that were allocated to it, and unfortunately there were many questions raised which time did not permit being addressed by the panel.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION

The conference also featured a student programme with more than 50 students from six universities attending from as far away as Manchester and Plymouth. The students were from all years and Shamina Asif, Wasim Sarwar and Sana Asif from the Optom Academy delivered an introduction to the pre-reg year as well as some real-life case studies. Peter Black, who delivered two

workshops as part of the main conference programme, also presented to the students on practical dispensing focusing on their ability to diagnose specific eye conditions.

The feedback from the students was warm and enthusiastic and they greatly enjoyed the opportunity to visit the exhibition – and partake of a free lunch of course. This is now the fourth consecutive year that the AIO conference has included a student stream and it is very heartening to find out how many are interested in independent practice as a long-term career option. They are, of course, the future life blood of the sector.

SOCIAL PROGRAMME

This year's joint conference was the first time that a special social programme was arranged to attract back many retired former AIO members for something of a reunion. Tours of SS Great Britain and Bristol Cathedral were on offer on the Saturday and of the Aerospace Museum at Filton on the Sunday.

The welcome dinner on the Friday evening before the conference was very much enjoyed to the sounds of the Fab Twins – although there were actually three of them – playing some great 1960s and 1970s numbers. A lot of dancing featured late into the evening. The sell-out gala dinner on the Saturday evening was held in the lovely Palm Court room at the Royal Bristol Hotel and featured some quite extraordinary card magic by Sean Heydon.

This event is unique in the optical calendar bringing together two professional bodies for independent practitioners, and providing a great balance between an intimate and friendly exhibition, a superb lecture programme and an excellent social programme. With the involvement of all ages – youth at one end of the spectrum and retired practitioners at the other – it really is an 'all inclusive' celebration of independent practice.

Mike Ockenden is secretariat lead of the Association for Independent Optometrists and Dispensing Opticians.



Taking a break in the exhibition hall



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Planning for Generation Next

David Ellison explains why practices need to be fully prepared for succession planning

Although there has been a fair amount of publicity about succession planning in the past, many independent practice owners are retiring without having prepared an exit strategy or succession plan.

Let's start with an official definition. Succession planning is simply undertaking the transition of business ownership. It's a process for identifying the key leadership positions and identifying members of the workforce to assume these positions. Succession planning increases the availability of experienced and capable employees, and prepares them for leadership roles as they become available.

Succession planning is basically preparing for the inevitable, accepting that no one in an organisation can be regarded as being irreplaceable. What's surprising is that in an age of dramatic convergence and business disruption within an evolving marketplace, succession planning still isn't being given top priority.

HOW TO MAKE A PLAN

Of course, there's no shortage of agencies ready and willing to help you plan your succession. The independent practice owner needs to be proactive and keep an open mind. Although the obvious successor will probably be the second in command, other promising candidates shouldn't be disregarded. The position(s) which need to be covered by the succession plan have to be identified. A job description for the position(s) identified then needs to be drafted. The job descriptions then need to be matched against the skills, experience and competency of your highly talented staff.

Having identified any gaps between the job descriptions and the job skills of existing staff, a development plan needs to be established to bridge these gaps through training. Staff identified for succession planning will need to be monitored on an ongoing basis and offered feedback to ensure they will be prepared to take over a new role at any time. A trial run to test candidates' suitability and preparedness is recommended.

There have been a number of reasons why the right person hasn't succeeded the



Optrafair 20/20 will feature a new space for students to network

independent practice owner. Lack of planning can lead to the practice owner and management arbitrarily appointing his or her successor. Favouritism sometimes comes into play and there can be a lack of transparency. Communication is key – the succession plan should be shared with the board of directors and human resources.

Then there's the money to consider if a change in business ownership is planned. Are management looking to buy out or buy in, or will an employee ownership trust need to be established? You have access to a host of highly skilled finance professionals who are ready to help you – but be careful how you choose your partners.

WORDS TO THE WISE

Succession planning needs to take place at all levels of organisations large and small. Dame Mary Perkins, founder of Specsavers, said recently: "The business is well set up now with succession planning at all levels. You think about succession planning for the owners, but you've got to have succession planning at board level, senior level, right the way through for a company to be going forward."

Phil Mullins, NEG director of business development, believes that independent practices, like large organisations, need to think about their succession plans too. He asks: "Who works for you? Who could take over? If I haven't got that person, I need to start working to find them or work with another practice who has someone suitable."

Phil also believes that concerted action by membership and trade associations such as NEG and the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians (FMO) is needed to bring "keen young professionals and older independents' together". He suggests: "Independents need to look to who the next generation is going to be. Independent practitioners need to work with colleges and universities to encourage students to come through. How many independents offer pre-registration apprenticeships?"

Phil adds: "The industry needs someone to bring that thinking together and match up businesses with those keen youngsters. Those links are missing. They need to come together to create a kind of dating agency." Indeed, the FMO is keen to provide a platform at Optrafair 20/20 to bring pre-reg students, keen young professionals and older independents together.

To that end, the show will see a new University Village and Students Reunion Bar focused on postgraduate training and encouraging alumni to visit and meet colleagues. A competition will encourage students to write papers with the best entry winning the Rising Star Award, as well as some valuable kit for the future.

Optrafair 20/20 runs from 4 to 6 April at the Birmingham NEC. Register at www.optrafair.co.uk

David Ellison is operations director at the Federation of Manufacturing Opticians.

Eyewear showcase at Silmo Paris

By Joan Grady



Gold Rush by Paul Costelloe

Style, innovation, quality and technology reigned victoriously in eyewear designs presented at Silmo Paris 2019. The interaction of these characteristics was creatively infused in the optical and sunglass designs on display. Retro influences from various decades were entwined throughout the collections, and updated with innovative, contemporary elements.

Frame shapes reflected a conservative refinement, highlighted with beautiful colourations; plus attention to detail with the latest finely tuned technical attributes. Colours ran the gamut from matte and shiny blacks, to stunning neutrals in honey, bark, caramel, tea, chestnut and amber. Radiant shades of purple, from lilac to aubergine, and blue tones from glossy sky blue to deep indigo, featured in gifted metal and acetate designs.

Manufacturers and designers emphasise fine quality, as independent opticians and their clients desire to purchase less, and buy better. The awareness of conservation and the threat to the environment has encouraged companies to create designs that are sustainable, and eco-friendly, while never compromising on style and creativity.

CHARACTER, CHARISMA AND CRAFTSMANSHIP

Micro shapes are a stylish statement at Götti Switzerland with slim, narrow frames and a delicate character that capture the spirit and ambiance of the free wheeling 1990s. With emphasis on superior materials, the frames are crafted in Japanese titanium. Lightweight and durable, colours include black matte, shiny and gold finishes.

Timeless styling is an essential quality in Paul Costelloe eyewear designs from Dunelm Optical. The latest sleek frame is Gold Rush, a supple and graceful round shape with a distinctive, textured finish. New arrivals at Paul Costelloe include



Gardin - Stylish statement by Götti Switzerland

frames in stainless steel, aluminium, acetate and mixed materials.

Graphics infiltrate designs at Jean-François Rey with Wave – frames that are fluid and appear to be in airy movement. Technical ingenuity by the Marseille-based label is achieved by folding and colouring wafer-thin strips of stainless steel ribbons, which



Light and airy – Wave designs by JF Rey

then criss-cross on the front and are fixed to the lug on semi-rimless frames equipped with spring hinges.

Lafont Paris celebrates its 40th year of eyewear creations this year with designs for men, women and children that are internationally recognised for their styling that flourishes with beautiful colourations. To mark the anniversary occasion, Lafont's contemporary designs are featured in a dazzling array of stripes, plaids, polka dots and leopard prints.



Dashing stripes at Lafont Paris

INSPIRED APPROACHES

Architecture and graphics frequently influence eyewear creations. Parisian designer Jeremy Tarian won his second Silmo d'Or with his elegant Graphic frame luxuriously constructed in sanded steel worked in volume mixed with acetates and bright colours.

A visit to Los Cabos on the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula in Mexico triggered the concept for the design, as Tarian was seduced with the intense colours and graphic lines of the Mexican architect and engineer, Luis Barragan. Two-tone colouration accentuates Graphic in burgundy acetate with soft colour nuances.

Nature plays an important role in Andy Wolf designs. The Austrian brand is located in the rich landscape of Styria, and the



Silmo d'Or winner, Graphic by Jeremy Tarian



Crafted in Austria – Andy Wolf Eyewear
(photo credit: Michele di Oro)

region’s flora and fauna provided ideal scenery, particularly at an alpaca farm where the frames were photographed. Andy Wolf silhouettes include slim, strong shapes in earth tones, stone grey and green variations. The company emphasises the use of sustainable resources, and all frames are handmade locally in the Styria region.



Timeless design: Salt Optics

The southern California location of Salt Optics motivates its streamlined eyewear choreographed with flattering curves and colours reflecting the many aspects of nature’s beauty. Designs include sun and optical variations for men and women that embody the Salt creed: sustainability, the finest materials handcrafted in Japan, with superb fit and luxurious finishes.

The Skagen painters were a group of 19th century Scandinavian artists who captured the



Luminescence of the Skagen painters: Fleye Copenhagen
(photo credit: Ida Emilie Risager)



Signature statement: Emmanuelle Khanh

fabulous composition of colours and light in the northernmost corner of Denmark. These remarkable paintings influenced Fleye Copenhagen, whose frames reflect the remarkable luminescence and nuances of the artist’s work in the Nordic Light collection. Handcrafted in lightweight beta-titanium, the designs exude minimalistic aesthetics and refreshing finesse.

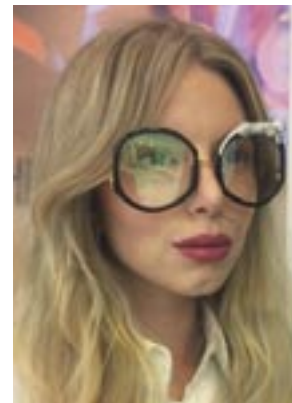


Exuberant colours in Turban by I.a. Eyeworks
(photo credit: Mimi Haddon/Shirley Kurata)

EXPRESSIVE AND INNOVATIVE

40th anniversary accolades at Silmo were also celebrated by I.a. Eyeworks (LAE). In 1979, Gai Gherardi and Barbara McReynolds opened their optical shop, and have since catapulted LAE into an innovative and influential house of eyewear design. The California label is noted for bold shapes, vivid colours and mixed materials that highlight the individualistic styles. Multidisciplinary artists, who capture the essence of the brand, photographed the anniversary campaign. Among LAE’s most recognised catchphrases is: “A face is like a work of art. It deserves a great frame”.

Luxurious shapes, colours, concepts and materials weave through daring eyewear creations by Anna-Karin Karlsson. Sumptuous glossy acetate is adorned with Swarovski crystals – all hand set – on the latest gleaming interpretation of the Panther, with



Purr-fect Panther with Swarovski crystals by Anna-Karin Karlsson

voluminous shaping and a graceful feline nestled comfortably on the frame front.

Fifty years ago, French designer Emmanuelle Khanh (EK) laid the groundwork for eyewear

as an authentic fashion accessory. The timelessness of her glamorous, oversized shapes in elegant materials with quality detailing is nowadays even more significant. The latest collection by the exceptionally talented Eva Gaumé is a feast of EK’s vision for memorable eyewear in natural colours, plus ravishing pastels and rich tones.



Red Velvet: Layer Cake collection by Theo Belgium

Layer cakes are irresistible for Theo, as the Belgium brand dishes up a delicious group of cake craze options for eyewear. The Layer Cake collection is milled from a single titanium plate, with two different layers in six delectable designs including Eton Mess, Red Velvet, and Lemon Curd. Taste buds are spoilt for choice.

Silmo Paris is an ideal platform for independent opticians to explore and discover multiple possibilities that confirm the continual evolution of eyewear, with dynamic, stimulating and inspiring potential. The dates for Silmo Paris 2020 are 2-5 October.



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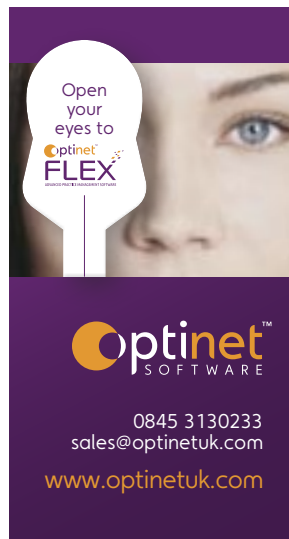
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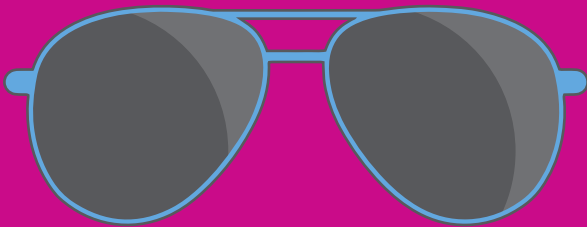
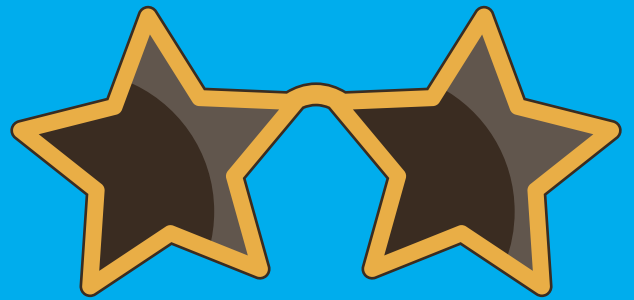
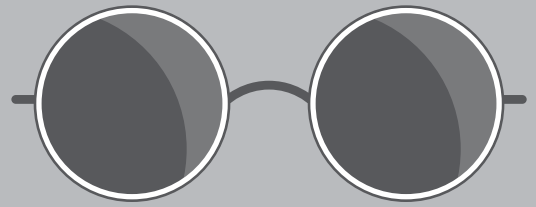
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