



SUNWEAR LENSES SHINE ON

BY JOHN SEEGER

THE WORD that best describes the latest trends in sunwear lenses is "choice." The range of sun lenses and lens add-ons is simply staggering. The following highlights will help you sort through the cornucopia of options.

POLARIZATION

Although polarizing filters have been incorporated into sun lenses since the 1920s, the

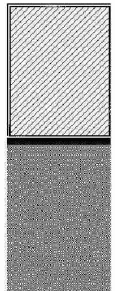
science and technology of maximizing the polarization effect is still being refined to provide greater comfort, crisper optics, and greater relief from blinding glare.

For example, Essilor of America, Inc.'s polarizing lenses block glare caused by light reflected off of flat surfaces such as water, the road, and snow. Available in a wide array of materials and designs, these lenses use horizontally aligned molecules to eliminate plane polarized glare. The result is clear, comfortable vision.

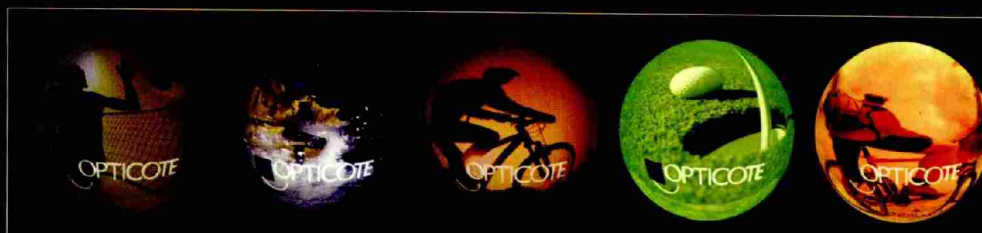
Younger Optics' NuPolar[®] polarized lens technology delivers glare-blocking ability in the company's single vision, flat top, and IMAGE[®] progressive lenses. Younger's polarizing technology is so popular, in fact, that other companies use it in their lenses as well. NuPolar lenses improve contrast while delivering improved visual comfort in outdoor situations that are full of glare.

NuPolar lenses use a proprietary manufacturing process where the polarizing film is suspended inside the mold cavity. When the

PHOTO: 7EYE's sunwear lenses are made of NXT, featuring ballistic level impact resistance.



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"Sunwear continues to be the arena where eyewear can be DARING and EXPERIMENTAL."

lens material is cast, it surrounds the polarizing film. This means that the polarizing film of NuPolar lenses is encapsulated rather than laminated, thereby eliminating the potential problem of delamination.

MIRROR TREATMENTS

Mirrors are no longer limited to the shiny opaque silver coatings used years ago on metal-rimmed, aviator-style shades. New mirrors are dazzling orange, blue, green, red, and multicolored. Gradient applications provide a new, crisp look along with more comfort for the wearer. You'll also find them in flash form, where there's just a hint of mirror.

Opticote, Inc.'s new Rxxtreme® mirror treatment is offered in six intense colors. Applied to colored or polarized polycarbonate lenses, this mirror treatment combines impact protection with fashion. Opticote touts that this new mirror is four times harder than standard mirrors, which makes it virtually impossible to scratch or wear off. You'll find a back-side anti-reflective lens treatment included as well as an oleophobic and hydrophobic topcoat, so lenses are easy to clean and keep clean.

PHOTOCHROMICS

Oakley, Inc. set a new trend in plano sunwear when it partnered with Transitions Optical, Inc. to provide Oakley Activated by Transitions™ photochromic lenses. These sun lenses turn a medium color in dim light and get sunglass dark in bright light. This provides outdoors enthusiasts the variable light regulation they have been missing. Think of how helpful this can be outdoors.

On most days, the lighting conditions change from street to street and from minute to minute. These lenses adjust accordingly without the wearer having to switch sunglasses or use interchangeable lenses. While they have photochromic technology, they still use Oakley's patented

Plutonite® lens material and lens designs. You'll find them available in Rx form too through Oakley's Rx program.

IMPACT RESISTANCE

Sunwear providers are beginning to supply lenses with higher degrees of impact resistance. Wiley X Eyewear, for example, offers Selenite™ lenses. These lenses meet ballistic level impact standards. Made originally for the military and used by law enforcement and other governmental agencies, Wiley X's eyewear is now available to the general public for rough and tumble use...or just for looking cool.

Kaenon Polarized offers its SR-91® polarized lens material in all of its sunwear. This patented and proprietary lens material exceeds the ANSI Z87.1 impact standard used for safety eyewear, which makes it suitable for rigorous use outdoors. With a specific gravity of only 1.15 g/cm³, it's the lightest polarized lens available and the second lightest lens material on the market. (Non-polarized Trivex® weighs in at 1.11 g/cm³, and polycarbonate comes in at 1.21 g/cm³.) It comes with a lifetime warranty against splitting or cracking.

INTERCAST produces a lens material known as NXT® that's pretty tough stuff. Used by many sunglass manufacturers, NXT has ballistic level impact resistance. In fact, some of the company's advertising shows pellets fired from a gun and stopped by a block of NXT. That's an impressive graphical image that makes an impact all its own.

WRAPS

The sleek styling and aggressive good looks of ever-popular wrap styles have magnetic charm for outdoorsy types. Brands such as Luxottica Group's Ray-Ban® are helping to set the pace for this style of eyewear. The classic Ray-Ban sunwear collection continues to add new styles that cut innovative ground. The 8.00D- and 9.00D-base models

such as Style Nos. RB 3268, RB3321, and RB3320 bring these aggressively stylish frames into new territory.

Another trend that continues to increase is Rx sunwear. As sunwear's popularity grows, Rx patients want the same styles and designs their plano counterparts have. Companies like 7EYE are responding. 7EYE offers Rx lenses in its SPF100 and SPF75 series, which have a typical Rx range of +3.00D to -5.00D in both single vision and multifocal designs. With 7EYE's introduction of the 24:7 NXT Original to eyecare professionals, single vision Rx patients can now get all the benefits of an NXT photochromic lens.

Sunwear continues to be the arena where eyewear can be daring and experimental. As long as this is the case, continue to expect a huge amount of choice in this category. □

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ULTRA-VIOLET PROTECTION

A significant benefit of sunwear lenses continues to be the protection they provide from the damage caused by ultra-violet (UV) light. Although patients often think of sunglasses as fashion accessories and as a means of providing their eyes with relief from bright visible light, it's the invisible part of sunlight that can hurt them—the UV portion. That's why most sunglasses today provide high levels of UV protection, some offering 100% UVA and UVB protection up to 380nm. Some lenses, such as Transitions Optical's new Transitions® VI lenses, even provide UV protection up to 400nm.

ABOVE: Opticote offers its Rxxtreme mirror coating in colors geared toward specific outdoor activities.