



R I D I N G P O I N T



By Barb Kastens, Editor

Spring Has Sprung

The winter that wouldn't go away has finally come to an end, and not a minute too soon for many outdoor enthusiasts. It's rare in recent warmer years that we have snow in Minnesota in April, but snow in May? That's downright depressing. I'm an avid golfer and gardener, both of which have gotten off to a late start this year thanks to the fickleness of mother nature.

The weather may have also had a rollercoaster effect on the buying patterns of customers in your store. Perhaps those looking for spring supplies started out as a mere trickle, only to become a stampede as the weather suddenly warmed and riders realized just how far behind schedule they were.

We picked one of our first warm, sunny days to photograph the belts that appear in this month's Fashion Break, beginning on page 6. The stunning selection that was sent our way courtesy of many of our belt manufacturers shows the creative genius of the company's designers. As you will see, the variety of materials, shapes and colors will leave no customer without enough choices.

Our 2007 State of the Market Report is another familiar sign of spring. We moved it from the May issue to June this year, so if you had started to think you missed it, you can relax, it begins on page 10. It looks as though it wasn't exactly business as usual last year, due to a troubled U.S. economy.

Find part two of the March piece on marketing to the Hispanic demographic on pages 18-19. Retailers from Chicago, Royse City, Texas and Los Angeles weighed in on ways they've found to attract this group to their own stores, and provided some helpful insights as well.

In response to a need that we sensed, we are stepping up our coverage of the horse health sector with articles and galleries that will appear several times each year. This month, we present a gallery of horse health products, beginning on page 20. This is just part of a raft of exciting changes we have planned for the coming months. Look for a hint at what the biggest change will be on the cover of our upcoming 2008-2009 Buyers Guide, which will be mailed to you July 1.

One final note, in the May article about Jochen Schleese and his company, Schleese Saddlery, we neglected to mention that the company currently sells its products to retailers in Europe, and will begin a similar program for U.S. retailers in the next few months. We're sorry for any confusion this omission has caused. ☐

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