

Vans walks home with major SIMA 2015 awards

The Surf Industry Manufacturers Association (SIMA) Image Awards show Thursday, 12 February 2015, was one of the most exciting in years with several awards streaks broken, different brands winning in major categories and a touching tribute to the industry's longest-serving retailers.



Some big winners included Volcom, which ended a major Image Award dry spell with two victories in important award categories: Boardshort of the Year and Women's Apparel Brand of the Year.

Both boardshorts and women's are major focuses of Volcom, and their concentration in those areas appears to be paying off. Though Volcom usually receives multiple nominations each year, it had not won an Image Award since 2007.

Vans also had a huge night, winning Footwear Product of the Year for its Surf Siders, making it the fourth consecutive year Vans has taken this category. In somewhat of an upset, the company also won Men's Apparel Brand of Year, signalling the brand's clothing is gaining acceptance and share in the core market. Patagonia also won two awards with only a single product, the Yulex Nexkin Wetsuit, in the categories of Wetsuit of the Year and Environmental Product of the Year.

Beach Riot scored a major coup by winning Women's Swim Brand of the Year, unseating reigning champion L*Space, which won the award seven years in a row. Beach Riot becomes the only brand besides L*Space to win the award since SIMA introduced the swim category.

One brand that kept its winning streak alive is Channel Islands, which won again for Surfboard of the Year. That is the

seventh straight win for Channel Islands, which always brings a large crew down on a party bus from Santa Barbara for the awards.

Roark Revival scored another big win by taking home the coveted Men's Marketing Campaign of the Year award for the second consecutive year. Roark beat out other, more established brands with bigger budgets with its creative "Rocketship to Reykjavik" campaign. Rip Curl, nominated for six awards, won the first award of the night for its "My Bikini" Women's Marketing Campaign. Rip Curl swim and women's apparel have been gaining traction at retail.

Socks juggernaut Stance won for Accessory Product of the Year for its socks, the second year in a row it has taken home the award in this category. FCS also has a streak going, and won for the second year in a row in the Hardgoods Accessory Product of the Year category. This year the brand won for its FCSII Essential Series Fin Collection.

Lastly, Vissla, nominated for five awards, won the much-watched Breakout Brand of the Year award, for its noteworthy market debut last year.

SIMA added a new feature to the awards this year by honouring 20 retailers that have been in business for at least 50 years with the Surf Shop Golden Wave Award. Established in 2003, the SIMA Image Awards is the only awards program that gives SIMA members and surf specialty retailers the opportunity to recognise fellow surf industry companies for their outstanding contributions to the surf industry.

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