



# THE EYES HAVE IT!

*You better believe Brad Ludden protects his eyes when he crashes through the famous surf wave of the Zambezi River in Zambia.*

**How to pick shades that are really cool and functional, too!**

**| By Mark Anders**

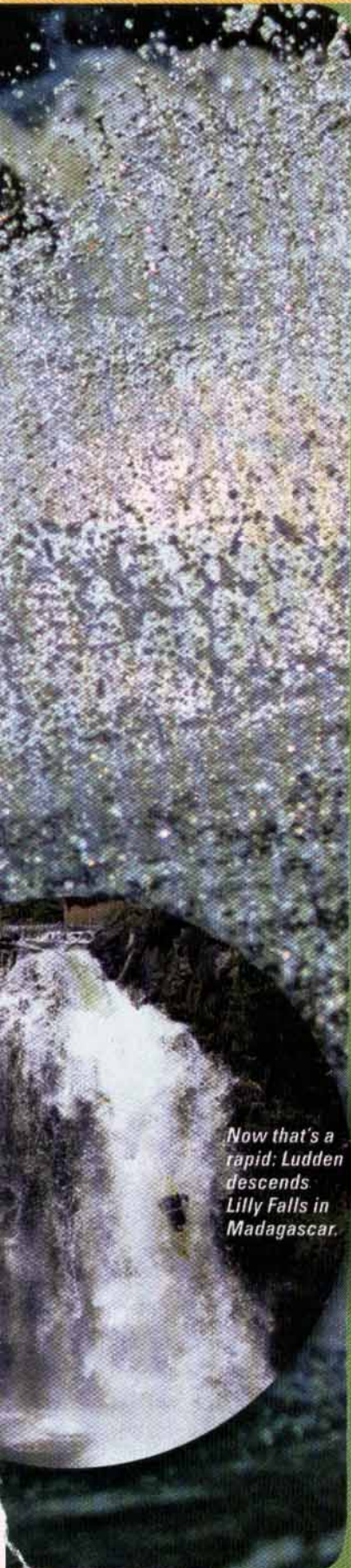
**That rack of \$10 sunglasses at the local discount or drug store? Walk right on past that thing while repeating after me: "You get what you pay for, you get what you pay for...."**

Buy cheap sunglasses and you'll get cheap sunglasses, poorly made ones that won't offer good vision, won't last long and, worst of all, might not protect your eyes from the damaging ultraviolet rays of the sun.

But buy quality ones—not necessarily pricey ones—and you'll take care of your eyesight.

"Anytime you're in the outdoors, especially around snow, water or rocks, there's going to be lots of glare and reflection," professional whitewater kayaker Brad Ludden says. "Since I spend 90 percent of my life outdoors, I'm at risk for eye problems such as establishing cataracts early on. That's why I wear sunglasses whenever I can."

Whether you wear shades to protect your eyes or simply to look like a rock star, here's the good news: Sunglasses can be functional and cool—without you spending a king's ransom. You just have to be a smart sunglass shopper. Here's how.



DAN ARMSTRONG (2)

GRAYSON SCHAFFER

Now that's a rapid: Ludden descends Lilly Falls in Madagascar.

## THE LOWDOWN

**WHERE TO SHOP:** "Never shop for shades on a street corner," Ludden says. "You know, where they sell 'Jokeleys' [fake Oakleys]." Sunglass-specific shops or outdoor stores usually have knowledgeable staff, and you don't have to worry about buying fake or counterfeit sunglasses. Plan to spend at least \$30 to get a quality pair of sunglasses. Cheaper shades are likely to be of questionable quality. But don't overdo it, either: over \$100, you're probably just paying for a trendy brand name.

**SPORT-SPECIFIC:** Before you go shopping, consider what you'll be using your shades for. Look at your hobbies. Are you around the water a lot? Do you love to ski or hike in the snow? Is cycling your thing? "Figure out what you want before you go in the store," Ludden says. "Then have them show you a few that match your criteria and fit your face the best."

**THE LENS MATTERS:** For most outdoor sports, shatterproof polycarbonate lenses are best. Glass lenses are recommended only for low-impact activities like fishing or chilling out. Also, make sure the lens provides 100 percent UV protection from the sun's harmful rays. Most have a sticker on the lens to let you know. "If you buy glasses with cheap lenses they can give you headaches, almost like a prescription that's not right for your eyes," Ludden warns. "It can also throw off your depth perception, and whether you're kayaking or mountain biking or whatever, that's really important. It's worth spending a little extra money for better lenses."

**POLARIZATION:** Polarization is a lens technology that reduces glare and the dangerous rays that can cause cataracts at a young age. Get polarized lenses if you spend a lot of time around water or snowy conditions. Insist on glasses with polarization that's sandwiched between two lenses—avoid those with spray-on polarization (it can wear off over time).

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## THIS GUY'S GEAR

**Name:** Brad Ludden  
**Job:** Professional kayaker  
**Age:** 25  
**Home:** Vail, Colo.

Growing up in Montana, Brad Ludden started paddling whitewater at age 8 and turned pro before he even got his driver's license. Ludden won the Junior National Freestyle Championships in 1999 and two medals at the World Championships. Then he focused his efforts on river exploration. So far he has logged more than 100 first descents (rivers that have never been run) in 40 countries. Ludden also spends his free time running a special camp he founded to teach kids with cancer how to kayak ([www.firstdescents.org](http://www.firstdescents.org)).

When Ludden's on the river charging rapids and hucking waterfalls, this is the gear he relies on:

▼ **Smith Optics Stance** (\$70) "These shades are polarized so they reduce the glare on the river. They fit me really well and have a tight wrap on my head so no light can get under the glasses to my eyes."



**Croakies** (\$7; [www.croakies.com](http://www.croakies.com))

"On a big river your shades can get ripped right off your face. I like neoprene Croakies because they are not too bulky or long. And if the sun goes behind a cloud, I can just pull my glasses off and hang them around my neck. I wouldn't go near the river without them."

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## GUY GEAR: SUNGLASSES

**FRAME AND FIT:** Some frames are metal, but most sports sunglasses have durable and lightweight plastic frames. Take a look at the frame and make sure the joints are strong. The arms and earpieces should feel sturdy and stay put on your face—but not so tight that it hurts or gives you a headache. The lenses should be close to your face so glare can't seep in along the sides between your cheeks. For high-speed sports or extra-bright conditions, look for wrap-style shades that provide maximum coverage. Too close to your eye can be bad because you'll get the dreaded eyelash bash on the lenses. "You don't want to know they are on your face," Ludden says. "You want sunglasses to be so comfortable that you forget about them."

**RETAINERS:** Unless there's a good reason not to wear a strap—say, while mountain biking, where it could snag on a limb—it's wise to add a retainer. You paid good money for good sunglasses; you don't want your last look at them to be them sinking to a river bottom.

### WHAT'S HOT

*BL's* own Guy Gear picks the best shades under the sun.

#### CHILLIN'

**Quiksilver Akka Dakka** (\$70) You want cool? You need the Akka Dakka. These big polycarbonate lenses with 100 percent UV protection wrap horizontally and vertically so you'll never get eyelash bash. ([www.quiksilver.com](http://www.quiksilver.com) or 1-800-576-4004)

**Oakley Fives 3.0** (\$80) These lightweight sunglasses were designed as street sunglasses for Oakley's sponsored pro athletes. They provide 100 percent UV filtering and are impact-resistant—and cool, too! ([www.oakley.com](http://www.oakley.com) or 1-800-403-7449)

#### HIKING/OUTDOORS

**Ryders Sprint** (\$39) A screaming deal at less than 40 bucks, the Sprint wrap-style shades have airflow vents in the lenses to minimize fogging up when you're charging up the trail. Impact-resistant and 100 percent UV protection. ([www.ryderseyewear.com](http://www.ryderseyewear.com) or 1-800-665-2903)



Bollé Mongrel

**Bollé Mongrel** (\$80) Cool-looking, comfortable frames with shatter-resistant, 100 percent UV protective interchangeable lenses (extra lenses for \$24 to \$64 each) and Thermogrip rubber temples so your shades stay put when things get really sweaty. ([www.bolle.com](http://www.bolle.com) or 1-800-222-6553)

#### CYCLING

**Zeal Blast** (\$90) Mountain bikers and roadies will dig the swap-out polycarbonate lenses of the Blast. You can pick the right lens for the conditions (extra lenses for \$20 to \$50). The patented anti-fog vented frame has interchangeable nose pads and a removable sweat guard for a truly customizable fit. Impact-resistant and 100 percent UV protection. ([www.zealoptics.com](http://www.zealoptics.com) or [435] 259-6970)



Native Dash XR



Zeal Blast



Quiksilver Akka Dakka



Oakley Fives 3.0



Ryders Sprint

**Native Dash XR** (\$115) Changing light conditions?

No problem. The Dash XR comes with four polycarbonate lenses—polarized gray, orange, yellow and clear—all with 100 percent UV filtering. The frame weighs less than one ounce and comes with self-adjusting nose pads. ([www.nativeeyewear.com](http://www.nativeeyewear.com))

#### FISHING

**Smith Optics Sweetwater II** (\$70) The Sweetwater's gray polarized lenses provide 100 percent protection from UV rays and, nearly as important, it cuts glare to near zero so it's easier to stalk those bonefish. ([www.smithoptics.com](http://www.smithoptics.com) or 1-800-635-4401)

### Hobie Ventura

(\$65) These stylish 100 percent UV-protective wrap shades have high-end polarized polycarbonate lenses with a water-shedding coating that eliminates glare and lets you see below the water's surface. (www.hobiepolarized.com or 1-866-393-5464)



Hobie Ventura

### MOUNTAINEERING

**Cébé Spot** (\$95) The Spot is a stylish update to traditional glacier glasses with detachable side shields. Take them off when you're sweating on those tough climbs. Pop 'em back in for full wrap protection from the blinding snow. Impact-resistant and 100 percent UV shielding. (www.cebe.com)



Cébé Spot

**Julbo Sherpa** (\$39) High altitude-worthy eye protection for less than \$40, the Sherpa's polycarbonate lenses block 100 percent of UV light while the removable leather side shields eliminate glare seepage. (www.julbousa.com or 1-800-651-0833)



Julbo Sherpa

### WATERSPORTS

**Peppers Laguna** (\$28) A great value, the Laguna has lightweight frames with polarized triacetate lenses that block 100 percent of UV rays. And go ahead, drop 'em in the drink—they float! (www.peppersusa.com or 1-800-998-4786)



Peppers Laguna

**SeaSpecs Jet Specs** (\$59) Surfers, kayakers and kiteboarders will dig these JetSpecs with their polarized polycarbonate lenses and a built-in strap that'll make sure the shades stay put, no matter how bad you wipe out. Impact-resistant and 100 percent UV protection. (www.seaspecs.com or [305] 899-9198) †

Smith Optics Sweetwater II



### THIS GUY'S GEAR

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DAN ROBERTSON

▼ **Dagger Crazy 88** (\$899; www.dagger.com or 1-800-433-1969) "That's my favorite boat ever made. It rocks because it allows us to do all the cool freestyle tricks—and even invent new ones."



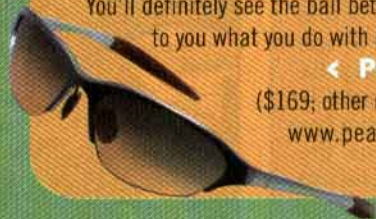
**Nike ACG Toketee** (\$60) "This is the kayaking shoe I designed. It's named after a waterfall in Oregon that I want to run some day. It's formfitting, so I can wear it inside my kayak, and the sole is super sticky and adheres to the steep slippery rocks on the river."

### Better Vision, Better Game?

Seeing better helps athletes play better. The number one rule in sports: "Keep your eye on the ball."

Sunglasses from PeakVision Sports could help you do so. Designed specifically for golfers and baseball players, PeakVision shades use a unique technology to help all players see the ball better and, for golfers, to read greens better.

They're costly, but our tests have proved they work. You'll definitely see the ball better. After that, it's up to you what you do with it.



◀ **PeakVision Edge**

(\$169; other models \$119 to \$169; www.peakvisionsports.com)

SeaSpecs Jet Specs

