

**FREESKIER**

THIS IS SKIING

**THE  
TREND  
BOOK  
2015**

**YOUR NEW CONSUMER:  
FIND OUT WHAT THE  
NEXT GENERATION  
OF SKIERS IS BUYING**

**ALL HOPPED UP ON GEAR:  
SEE THE BEST OF WHAT  
NEXT YEAR HAS  
TO OFFER**

**NOT-SO-IMMINENT DEMISE:  
LEARNING FROM  
THE MISTAKES OF  
SNOWBOARDING**







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not just another pretty boot

# AK





and just getting started

# DEDICATED TO SKIING SINCE 1989

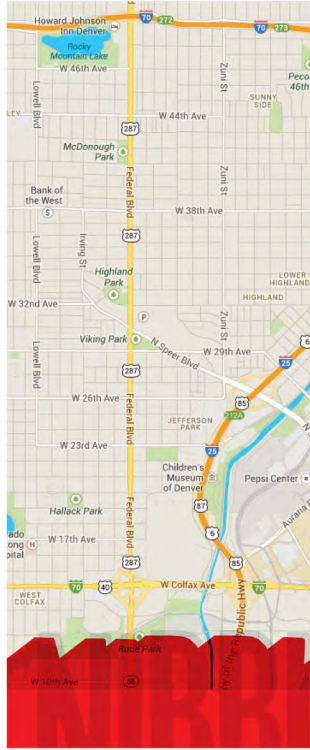


FREESKIING'S  
**ORIGINAL**  
OUTERWEAR  
BRAND

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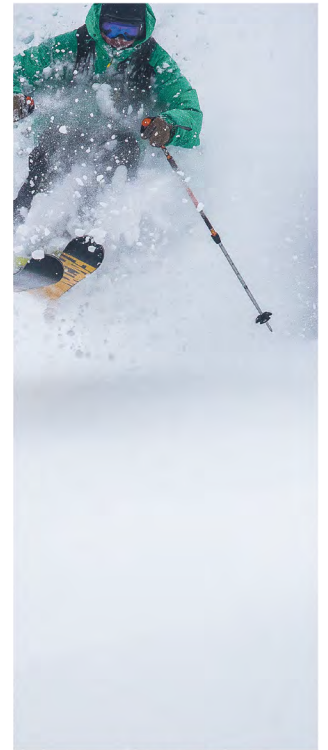
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**BOOTH # 1803**





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# MUSIC ARTS SPORTS

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BUD LIGHT

33  
MAG

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FREESKIER SKIING'S INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE

014



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**RENEGADE  
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RAVEN**



**FREESKIER**

## TREND BOOK

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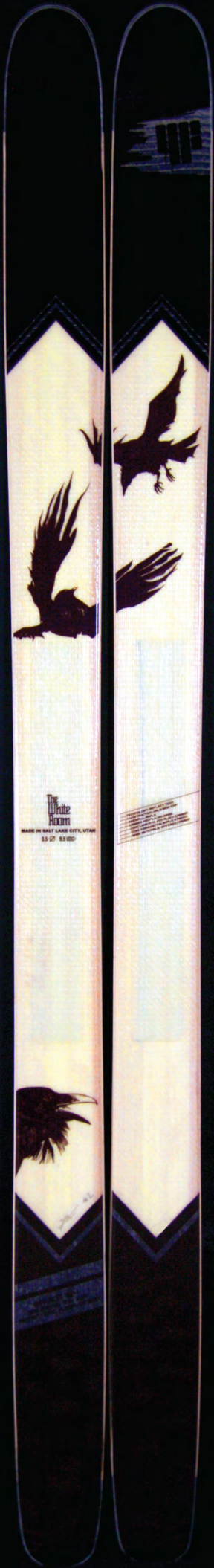
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Raven prototyping at Sunrise Lodge  
Golden Alpine Holidays, B.C.  
December 2013



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# 4FRNT

RIDER OWNED. RIDER INSPIRED.



*A few days ago, I got a look at the prototype issue of FREESKIER magazine. It was essentially a six-page pamphlet that laid out the hottest new trends in the sport. It talked about a new breed of skier who loved “launching cliffs and playing in terrain parks.” It also spotlighted the latest gear and outerwear styles—a mix of some terribly awesome BFA mogul pants and a Serac jacket that resembled something one might wear aboard a Coast Guard cutter.*

The *FREESKIER* prototype looks a little absurd from a 2014 perspective, but the truth is, when it was released in 1997, it couldn't have been more on point—if not ahead of the curve.

Not long after, my icy little home mountain in Gilford, NH built its first terrain park, and I got myself a pair of Salomon Teneighties. Oh, how cliché of me to bring up the Teneighty out of nostalgia, but every time I see a pair, I'm reminded of those horribly built take-offs, unforgiving landings and never-ending

good times at Gunstock Mountain Resort (I hear the park has since gotten much better).

As founder Brad Fayfield and his cohorts were handing out the *FREESKIER* prototype—with quite possibly the worst title font I've ever seen - the sport was seeing the emergence of a new participant; one that approached the sport from all angles. This was a skier with a zeal for the unexplored corners of the sport, a desire to reclaim skiing's energy, and a fervor to show the world a new side of skiing.

Then, we viewed that skier a pioneer. Today, we call them a freeskiier. And now they account for almost half of the entire ski market. In fact, over the last three seasons, skiers who identify themselves as freeskiiers have increased 47%, to 5.4 million participants. For more on the size and power of this market segment, see page 22.

Almost two decades after that raw prototype circulated the SIA trade show, we're proud to release the inaugural issue of the *FREESKIER* TREND BOOK,

documenting the most cutting edge brands, people and products pushing the sport today. No longer are we trying to convince people that freeskiing is a legitimate niche in skiing, but instead we get to showcase the incredible products, companies and people that have made it the most fun, potent and thriving part of our sport.

We also take a deeper look into the freeskiing market as a whole, and the people behind the brands (pg. 52). We reveal which brands most resonate with this

audience (pg. 36), and which marketing speaks to them most effectively (pg. 58). We explore the lessons learned from snowboarding's meteoric boom and bust (pg. 30). And perhaps most importantly, we explore some of the ways that we can keep skiing thriving for years to come. We don't know what those years will bring, but we're excited to find out.

– Damian Quigley  
Project Editor

✱



# NIBBLETS



## HANK'S TRADESHOW DRANKS

If there's one thing this industry knows, it's how to balance work and play. While we all attend SIA to conduct some serious business, we must remember that the Snow Show falls on a weekend and we must act appropriately. The following is a recommended list of libations to keep your weekend flowing smoothly.

### 1. COCK-A-DOODLE-DOO

Wake up, Sunshine! It's time for another long, hard day on the floor. Delay the onset of your hangover for at least a little while with this early morning special: 1.5 oz reposada tequila, .5 oz Kahlua, 2 tbsp agave nectar, coffee, cream, vanilla extract, nutmeg to garnish. ¡Ay, caramba!

### 2. NIPS

As per usual, Grandpa Jack, ol' Uncle Joe and their scrawny nephew, John, will be guarding the entrance to the showroom, with a hawk's eye for any bad actors. That's you. Avoid the bust by slipping nips of your choice into your buddy's backpack. Once grandpa inevitably misses them, snag them back and give your accomplice a nice slap on the ass in a gesture of appreciation. Your day just got way better.

### 3. BOOTH BEER

The price is right, folks. Every SIA attendee, from the rooks to the vets, knows that an icy cold brew at a solid booth party is the only way to end the day. The key is timing it right. Don't be at the Skier's Edge booth when there's a keg toss going down between the K2 and Armada booths.

### 4. SMIRNOFF ICE

With more or less the entire ski industry gathered in one spot, you'd best watch your back. While some might say the game is "Old," I'll be the first to say, "It sure ain't tired." Do yourself a favor and keep an Ice on you at all times during the Snow Show. Chicks (and dudes) dig a well-executed "block."

### 5. BEAR FIGHT

It takes brute strength to knock back a jager bomb directly after a car bomb, but it feels so good. Good enough that you'll feel like a grizzly bear and a polar bear are having an epic battle inside of your gut. No matter how you feel though, one thing is for sure, you'll make tons of bad decisions that will result in great stories.

## THIS ISSUE: BY# THE#S

6

Pounds of gummy bears eaten by editors

1

Condos trashed

8

Number of times we spelled "SNOCRU" wrong

13

Resorts skied

1

Flights booked to Sochi

19

Work emails sent between the hours of 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.

5

Macs purchased

7

Big Macs purchased

2

Tinder hookups



## SHIT PEOPLE SAY AT SIA

- "I'm so hungover."
- "Do you have an appointment?"
- "Can I get a bracelet for tonight?"
- "Have you seen our new Über-Mega-Tech?"
- "It's a real game-changer!"
- "Do you have a card?"
- "Is Shaun White here?"
- "What time are you tapping that keg at?"
- "My feet hurt."
- "Why would I come on Sunday?"
- "I should probably eat something."
- "Have you seen the Snow Sugar girls?"

## ONE WEEK, ONE MILLION

Today's savvy skiers know that every January, us lucky industry folk descend upon the Denver Convention Center to see all that next year has to offer. While they can't all join the party, they live for getting updates through various digital outlets and know they can count on *Freeskier* to provide them with comprehensive coverage, both during and after the show. That's why they come back in droves every year.

When you break down the projections between pageviews on *freeskier.com*, Facebook impressions, Twitter reach, Instagram double taps, E-newsletter opens and YouTube plays, *Freeskier* expects to see over one million impressions on SIA-specific content alone. That's a whole lotta eyeballs!

### PROJECTIONS FOR THE WEEK SURROUNDING SIA 2014

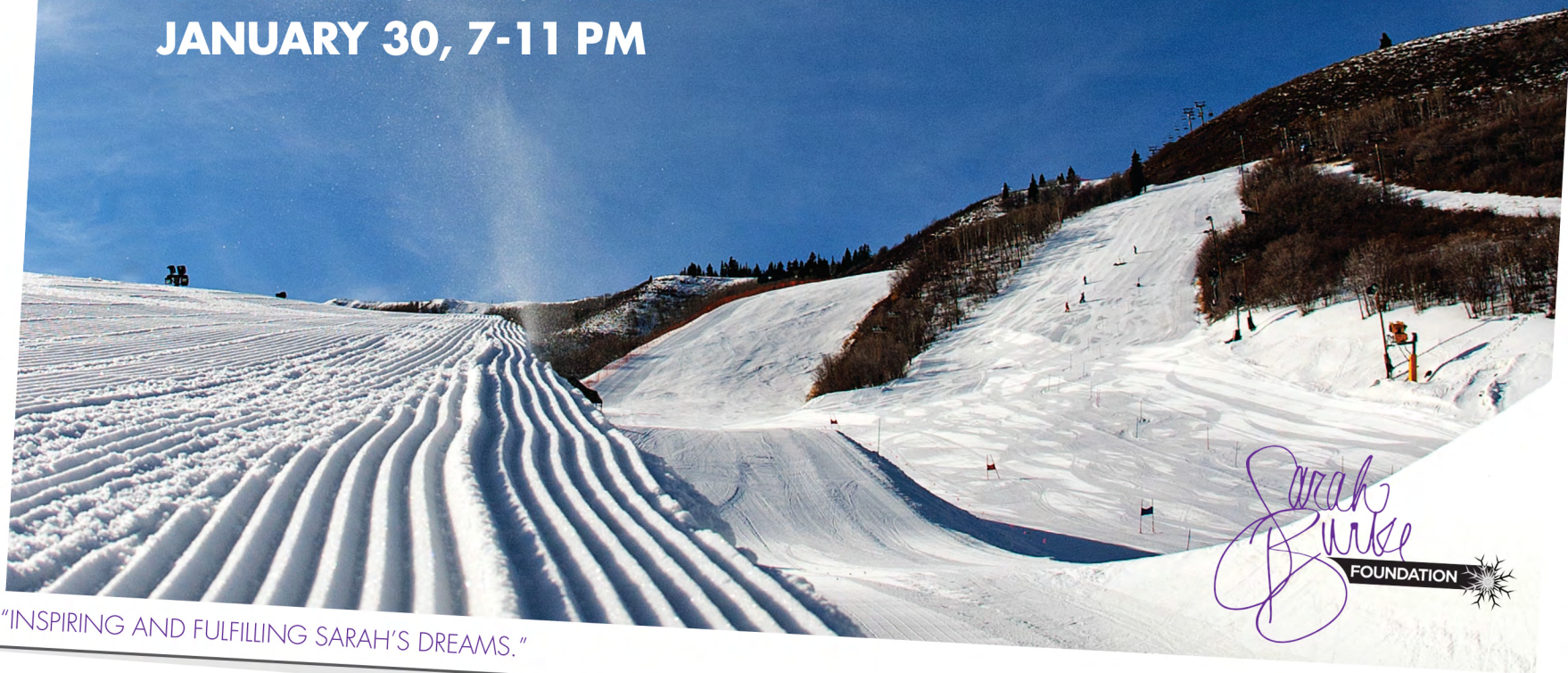
-  **ON-SITE** FREESKIER.COM  
100,000 pageviews
-  **FACEBOOK** FACEBOOK.COM/FREESKIER  
150,000 impressions
-  **TWITTER** @FREESKIER  
500,000 impressions
-  **INSTAGRAM** @FREESKIERMAGAZINE  
150,000 impressions
-  **YOUTUBE** /FREESKIERMAGAZINE  
60,000 plays
-  **E-NEWSLETTERS**  
40,000 opens



# CELEBRATE Sarah

at Freeskier's second annual photo exhibition and fundraiser, hosted by the ArtHaus gallery. This party for a purpose will raise money for the Sarah Burke Foundation while being your one stop shop to rub shoulders with friends, athletes and industry folk alike. Bid on professionally framed photos from this year's volume of Freeskier in a silent auction, or guarantee a take-home by donating \$50 to the cause and receiving a limited edition Sarah poster and facemask.

**THE ARTHAUS**  
3343 LARIMER STREET, DENVER, CO 80205  
**JANUARY 30, 7-11 PM**



Sarah  
Burke  
FOUNDATION

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# NIBBLETS



**CLICK HERE FOR GEAR**  
(GEAR VIEWS ON [FREESKIER.COM](http://FREESKIER.COM))

Over the course of 2013, [freeskier.com/gear](http://freeskier.com/gear) received

**2,500,000**

pageviews. With in-depth reviews, extensive how-to-buy articles, infographics, and links to great deals, [freeskier.com/gear](http://freeskier.com/gear) is one of the foremost resources available to skiers when it comes to gettin' the scoop on fresh product. Here we break down the top 10 most viewed categories in our gear section as well as the most popular ski categories.

**MOST VIEWED PRODUCTS:**

1. SKIS
2. BOOTS
3. JACKETS
4. GOGGLES
5. BINDINGS
6. HELMETS
7. OUTERWEAR
8. GLOVES
9. PACKS
10. GADGETS

**MOST VIEWED SKI CATEGORIES:**

1. ALL-MOUNTAIN
2. BIG-MOUNTAIN
3. POWDER
4. PARK
5. MICROBREW

**WHERE ARE THEY NOW:**  
**KLAUS OBERMEYER**



**BOOTH 2103, YODELING.**



## PERMISSION TO PARTY

WHILE EVERYBODY LOOKS FORWARD TO A SOLID BOOTH PARTY AT THE END OF THE DAY, THINGS CAN ONLY GET SO CRAZY IN A CONVENTION CENTER. ONCE YOU'RE DONE COLLECTING BUSINESS CARDS, WE RECOMMEND SHOWING YOUR FACE AT ANY OR ALL OF THE FOLLOWING PLACES WHICH WILL YIELD A 44% GREATER CHANCE OF YOUR NIGHT ENDING IN EPIC FASHION, ACCORDING TO A STUDY WE MADE UP FOR THIS NIBBLET.

**THURSDAY**  
**FREESKIER'S SARAH BURKE FUNDRAISER**  
7PM, 3333 LARIMER ST.

The second annual *Freeskier* photo exhibit and fundraiser for the Sarah Burke Foundation returns to the ArtHaus. Swing by and bid on framed prints while rubbing shoulders with all the athletes, editors and industry folk.

**ORAGE'S SNOW SHOW HOE DOWN**  
9PM, 2701 LARIMER ST.

The official afterparty of *Freeskier's* Sarah Burke Fundraiser, Orage's Hoe Down will not disappoint. Follow Banks Gilberti's golden locks to Meadowlark bar and get down to some live music by Old Death Whisper.

**FRIDAY**  
**ICELANTIC'S WINTER ON THE ROCKS**  
7PM, MORRISON, CO

For the third year running, Icelantic and partners bring big names to the best venue around. Jurassic 5 will be throwing down on Friday night with support from Ghostland Observatory. This party is definitely worth the short cab ride out of town.

**SATURDAY**  
**THE DIAMOND CABARET AND STEAKHOUSE**  
9-ISH, 1222 GLENARM PLACE

Your time at the Snow Show wouldn't be complete without a trip to the finest gentleman's club in town. Conveniently located just around the corner from the Convention Center, it opens at 11AM and is the perfect spot for a client lunch or a steak dinner after the show.

## 2014 ON-SNOW DEMO HOSTED BY

**Copper mountain** Monday, February 3. 9AM – 4PM  
Tuesday, February 4. 9AM – 4PM

We get to ski next year's gear and call it work? Yep. That's why we do this! Here are a couple insider tips for your time on snow, courtesy of Copper's very own, Ms. Austyn Williams.

**BEST CHAIR FOR HOT LAPS:** American Eagle is in the heart of Center Village, where SIA will be stationed, approx. 7 min lift time. From there jump on Excelerator Lift, 3 min lift time.

**BEST POW STASH:** Union Peak (Flyer to Sierra - skier's left), Union Meadow (Flyer to Sierra - right), Lower Enchanted Forest (Eagle, Excelerator - far skier's left).

**BEST BAR TO PRETEND YOU'RE BACK IN COLLEGE:** Mulligans Irish Pub overlooks the frozen West Lake in Center Village and is known for its late-night scene and X-Beer pong table.

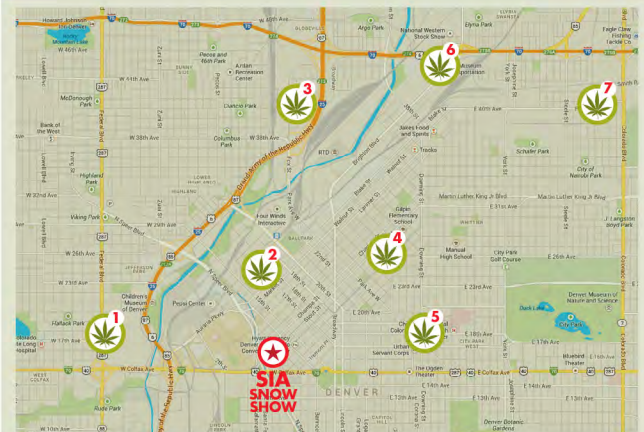
**BEST REASON TO PARTY (LIKE YOU NEED ONE):**  
Monday, 7pm-12am  
High Fives' Happiest Hour Party at the Storm King Lounge.  
A raffle and silent auction will raise money for the foundation while you get to mingle with all your co-Snow Show attendees.

## DING! MARIJUANA AFFECTS THE SNOW SHOW

On January 1st of 2014, the sale of recreational marijuana was officially legalized in Colorado, making this SIA Snow Show particularly (un)memorable. While roughly half the industry has been pretending it was legal for years, there will no doubt be a spike in inhalation this year, yielding the following outcomes:

1. INCREASE IN MISSED APPOINTMENTS
2. RECORD BREAKING SALES AT THE SAUSAGE BOOTH
3. LONGER MEETINGS WITH LESS PRODUCTIVITY
4. DIMINISHED AIR QUALITY AT OR AROUND 4:20
5. ATTENDANCE BY TANNER HALL
6. STOKED EDITORS FROM SNOWBOARD MAG

## A WALKING MAP OF DENVER



1. MILE HIGH MEDICAL CANNABIS, 1705 Federal Blvd., Denver 9 – 7
2. LODO WELLNESS, 1617 Wazee St., Denver 10 – 7
3. KINDMAN, 4125 Elati St., Denver 10 – 7
4. DENVER KUSH CLUB, 2615 Welton St., Denver 10 – 7
5. THE HEALTH CENTER, 1736 Downing St., Denver 10 – 7
6. 3D CANNABIS CENTER, 4305 Brighton Blvd., Denver 10 – 7
7. THE SHELTER, 4095 Jackson St., Denver 9 – 7



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 **CTR**  
by Chaos

# FREESKIING FRENZY

SALES TRENDS AND DEMOGRAPHICS FROM AN EXPLODING SECTOR

BY MIKE LEWIS

In a sport whose legacy stretches back millennia in the Nordic countries, Himalayas and Siberia, it's hard to overhaul tradition. But after bursting onto the scene in the late '90s, freeskiing is reshaping the entire snow sports industry as a new generation redefines the looks, trends and tech on slopes across the globe.

Freeskiing was born out of a perfect storm that included athletes' frustration with the International Ski Federation (FIS) and its strict rules, the rapid technological evolution of gear and the influence of snowboard culture. Enthusiastic mogul skiers like JF Cusson and JP Auclair, tired of having their creativity stifled by the FIS, wanted to get out from under its umbrella and be free to do what they wanted.

Innovation that began in the mid-'80s with Olin's Albert ski, the first shaped ski, started a domino effect in progressive technology and, borrowing heavily from snowboarding's gear and on-mountain style, the movement rocketed forward as Mike Douglas convinced Salomon to craft the first twin-tip ski. Volant countered with the release of Shane McConkey-inspired reverse camber boards, which led to an onslaught of new tip and tail camber profiles, progressive sidecuts and a bevy of other new technologies, motivating customers to purchase a new pair of sticks seasonally. Not to mention build quivers to meet snow, style and terrain conditions.



## "FREE," OUR FAVORITE FOUR-LETTER WORD

While some chalk it up to semantics and simply part of the evolution of the sport, freeskiing is changing how skiers approach the mountain, where they ride, how they identify themselves and how they shop. In the last year alone, SnowSports Industries America (SIA) saw a huge increase in self-identified "freeskiers," and SIA expects that trend to continue.

"The most interesting thing about snow sports participation this year was a 46 percent increase in the number of participants who identified themselves as 'freeskiers' and a 19 percent drop in the number of skiers claiming 'alpine,'" says SIA Director of Research Kelly Davis, whose survey included more than 40,000 US households.

Davis and her team were astounded by this massive shift, and SIA decided to delve deeper into its causes, conducting a follow-up survey of more than 6,000 snow sports participants, asking them what they like about skiing and riding.

To illustrate the widely varying words and phrases in the responses, they used a word cloud, with the most popular responses appearing larger and closer to the cloud's center. The biggest surprise? The word "freedom," a term SIA had never seen before in its participation analysis.



# EVOLUTION ON FAST FORWARD:

## FREESKIING'S PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

### BIG NUMBERS

28

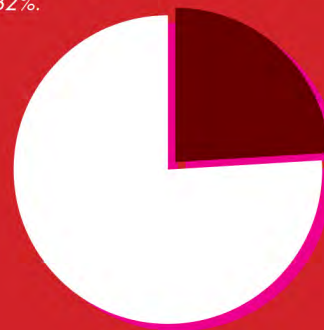
Number of twin-tip brands tracked in SIA sales data in 2009/10.

42

Number of twin-tip brands on SIA's radar during the 2012/13 season—almost a 50% jump in just three seasons.

### FREESKI PARTY-TICIPATION

Over the last three seasons, the number of total skiers has increased by less than one percent. During that same time the number of self-proclaimed freeskiers has increased by 82%.



**2009/10**  
12,340,000 Total skiers.  
ALPINE = 76%  
FREESKI = 24%

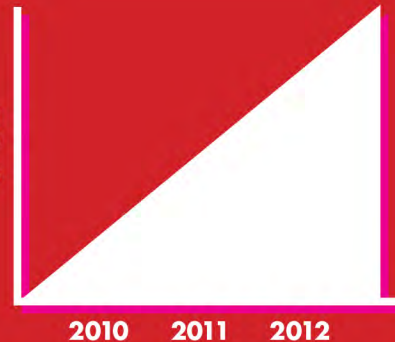


**2012/2013**  
12,446,000 Total skiers.  
ALPINE = 57%  
FREESKI = 43%

% GROWTH  
TOTAL SKI  
SALES



% GROWTH  
TWIN TIP  
SKIS SALES



### SALES TRENDS

#### TWIN-TIP VS. ALPINE SKI SALES

Over the last three seasons, ski sales have grown just 5%, while twin-tip ski sales are up more than 26%, accounting for nearly 35% of all ski sales last season.

**5% vs 26%**  
GROWTH vs GROWTH  
YOU DO THE MATH

## TOP SELLING TWIN-TIP BRANDS (SINCE 2010)

While the exact rankings are confidential under SIA's agreement, the top five twin-tip brands tallied sales of 407,238 pairs of skis since the 2010/11 season. The sixth-tenth ranked brands' sales totaled just 137,013 pairs of skis during the period—only slightly more than sales of the top selling brand, which sold 123,155 pairs during this time.

Combined note for both groups: While many iconic brands are at the top of the twin-tip sales charts, younger brands such as Armada, Icelantic, 4FRNT, Moment and Liberty are growing steadily.

#### 1-5 (ALPHABETICAL ORDER)



#### 6-10 (ALPHABETICAL ORDER)





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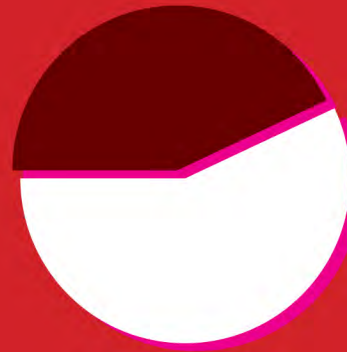
[WWW.EIRASKI.COM](http://WWW.EIRASKI.COM)



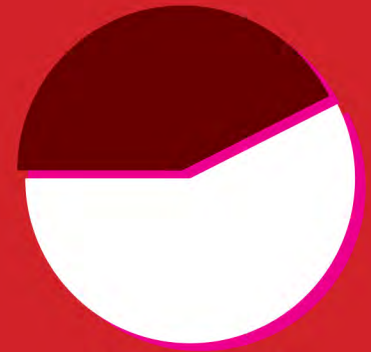




# KNOW YOUR CUSTOMER



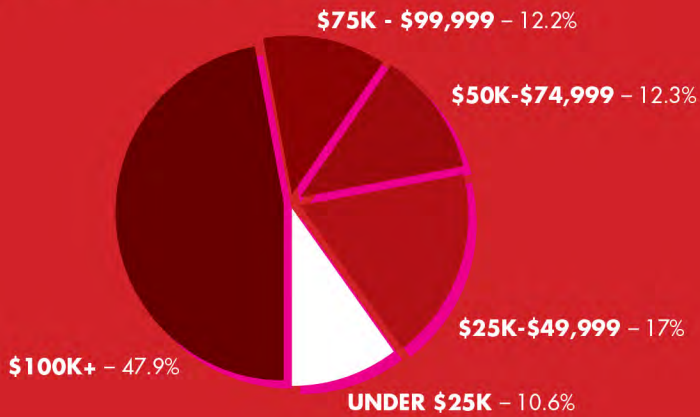
**45% OF MALES IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS "FREESKIERS"**



**41% OF FEMALES IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AS "FREESKIERS"**

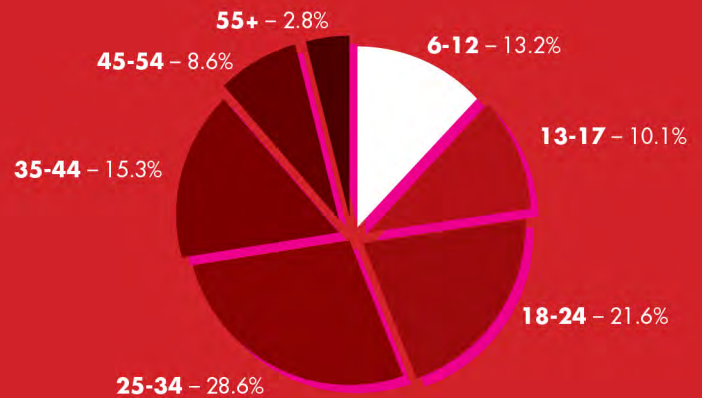
## INCOME

The demographic breakdown of freeskiers is nearly identical to that of snowboarders. Except for income. Freeskiers are much more affluent than snowboarders, of which only 35.7% come from households earning more than \$100K. This is a huge upside for an industry based on selling people things they don't necessarily need, AKA disposable income!



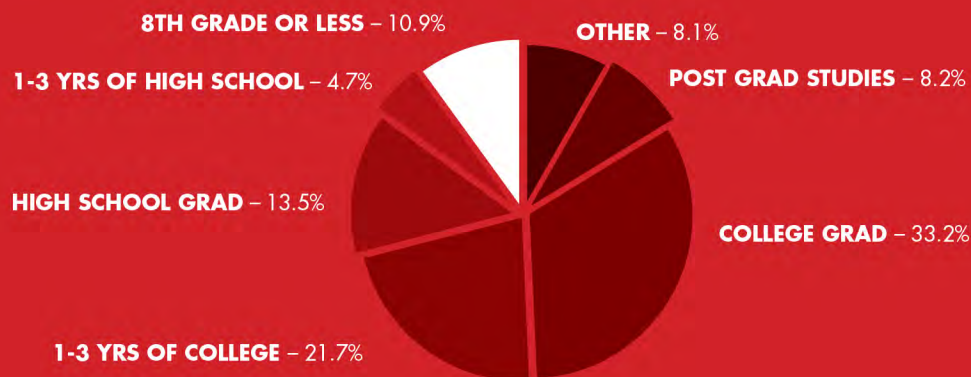
## AGE

With nearly half of all freeskiers under the age of 25, the party's longevity is looking good for years to come.



## EDUCATION

Skiers are no bums. For such a young demographic, the education rates are very high.



**SNOWSPORTS INDUSTRIES AMERICA**

SIA provides the most reliable, relevant, and current information possible about the snow sports market. For more information on research, membership, or to purchase reports, visit [snowsports.org](http://snowsports.org) or contact SIA Director of Research, Kelly Davis, at [kdavis@snowsports.org](mailto:kdavis@snowsports.org)

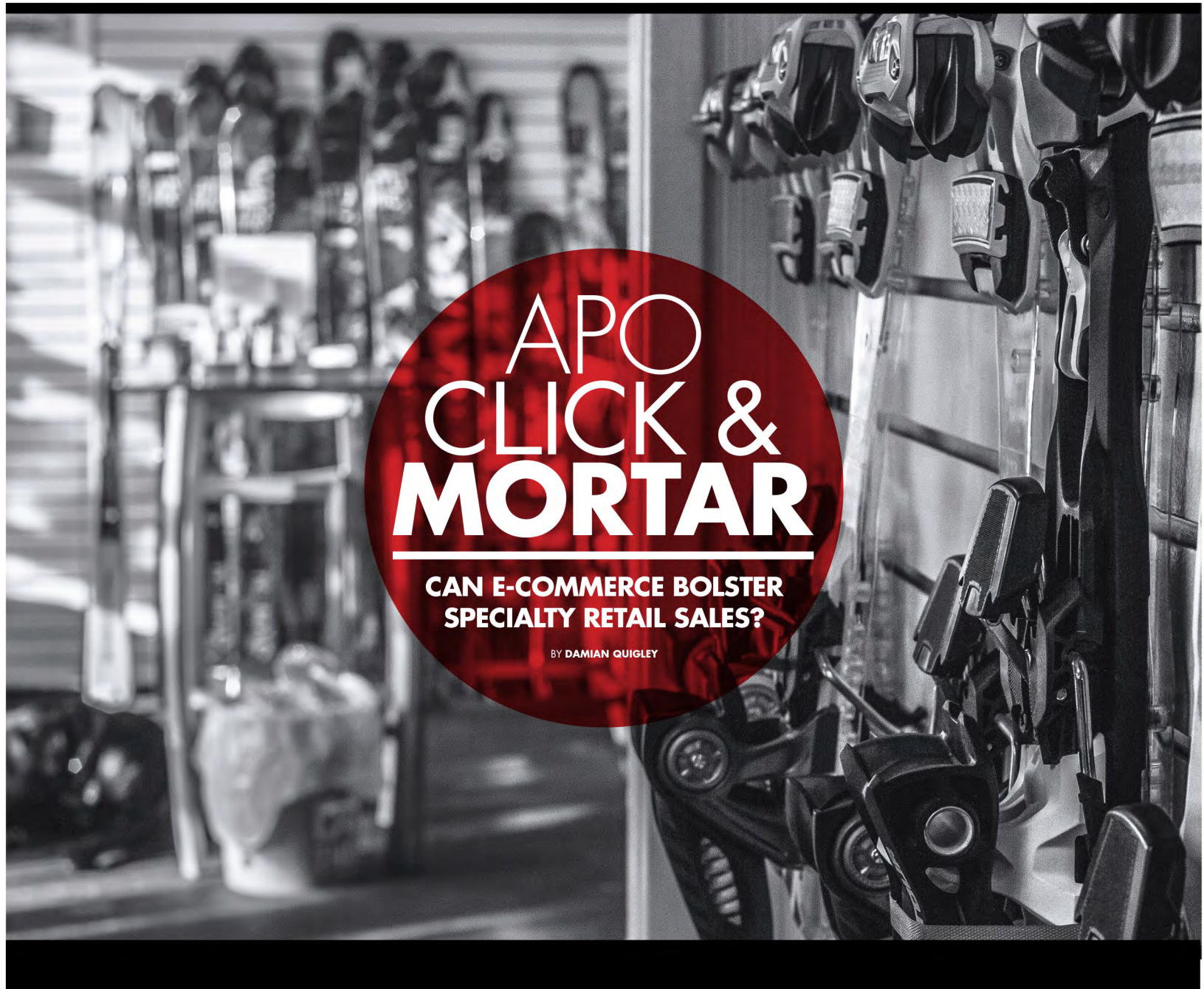


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# APO CLICK & MORTAR

**CAN E-COMMERCE BOLSTER  
SPECIALTY RETAIL SALES?**

BY DAMIAN QUIGLEY

*The retail landscape has become somewhat daunting for specialty retailers in this time of online bargains, discount chain stores and sliver-sized margins. While the average customer can appreciate the varied selection and knowledgeable employees of their local ski shop, convenience and price often trump customer service and lead the consumer to browse the web rather than the local retailer's floor. APO USA's new Click & Mortar program seeks to remedy this problem by offering direct sales that lead customers straight to specialty retailers' doorsteps, and hopefully, to their cash registers.*

The program was first implemented this past fall, just as the snow sports retail cycle began to ramp up. APO USA posted a banner for the program on the homepage of its website that included the words "Support your local retailer." One click away from that is an explanation of the program. In no uncertain terms, the user is told that APO is committed to supporting specialty retailers. In addition to a summary of why the program exists, the actionables are laid out:

- WE WILL BE PRESENT ONLY IN SPECIALTY RETAIL STORES.
- WE WILL DELIVER ONLINE SALES ONLY TO THE SPECIALTY RETAILER PROVIDING CUSTOMERS WITH A PERSONALIZED SERVICE.
- WE WILL SHARE REVENUE WITH OUR RETAILERS, THROUGH SALES MADE ONLINE.
- WE WILL CONTINUE TO COMMIT TO DRIVING OUR CUSTOMERS TO THE SPECIALTY RETAILER.

"The consumer is reading a letter from myself and the CEO", says Marty Carrigan of Global Sales Guys, representatives of APO USA. "It says that the local shop is really important to our business and the future of skiing."

When customers order a product from APO's website, they're given a choice of local dealers from which they can pick it up. APO then coordinates with the retailer to fulfill the order from its inventory, or ships the product to that location. The brand will then share a percentage of the sale with the retailer, depending on what level APO dealer they are, and the retailer can use that to order more product.

"By sending the consumers back into the specialty store, they're going to spend money in that store," says Carrigan. "Maybe not more APO products, but maybe they're going to buy bindings or a jacket or a hat. Something that's an impulse buy."

The program is still in its infancy so there's no hard data to assess its performance, but it's certainly an interesting move in a time when many brands are selling direct, and a generation of kids is shopping on their iPhones. It bares some resemblance to the Shopatron model which aligns retailers and manufacturers online, but Zach Hallatt, a buyer for an APO dealer in upstate New York called The Ski

Company, points out that the critical thing that the Shopatron model is missing is personalized service, "The people on Shopatron click on the item, it ships to their house and there's no customer interaction." He believes that Click & Mortar will help customers who know what they want but don't necessarily know what they need.

"A person could want a certain binding, but it might not be right for their height or weight," he says. "Once they get into the store, we can help equip them with the right equipment and everyday things that they may not have thought of."

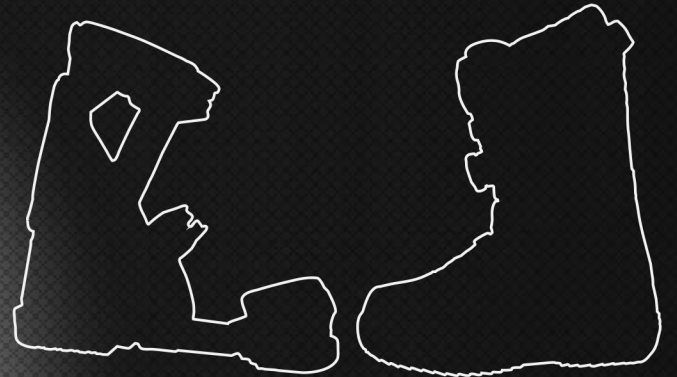
APO has tapped over 200 retailers around the country to participate in the program

during its inaugural year, and if by some chance, one of them doesn't land near the customer, they'll find another retailer that does. In an effort to spread the word, any shop can participate in the program this year, but after that, the retailer must be an APO dealer.

In a time when many brands and specialty retailers are struggling to keep up, this exercise in relationship building could be a compromise that allows e-commerce to coexist peacefully with brick and mortar operations. "If the retailers embrace this program, they can change the industry," says Carrigan. "They can change the way business is being done."



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# LESSONS FROM THE OTHER SIDE

BY MIKE LEWIS

WHAT THE SKI INDUSTRY CAN LEARN FROM THE SNOWBOARDING BUBBLE

S // JONES P // MAHIS L // SALT LAKE CITY, UT



In the 1990s, snowboarding went from a small, punk rock sport, with a core group of frothing riders and a few brands outfitting clandestine shred missions, to a mainstream poster child of "extreme" and a Wall Street darling. This led to an avalanche of investment that saw the industry

explode in the span of just a few seasons. But as quickly as the market boomed, a bust overtook it, leaving the trail of snowboarding's history littered with the headstones of hundreds of once thriving brands and retailers.

S // SYMMS P // SEO L // SALT LAKE CITY, UT



The tide lifting the swell of freeskiing right now is a bit of a cut and paste scenario of what snowboarding went through a generation ago. From terrain parks to equipment technology and urban riding, freeskiing has taken numerous cues from

its side-sliding brethren's playbook. And as freeskiing's popularity and market share explode, it's time to take some notes from snowboarding's past on what *not* to do.



# THE GO-GONE '90S

In the '80s and early '90s, snowboarding's driving force was a core group of disciples who all knew each other or instantly bonded over the sight of a board on a shop rack. But bans on boards at most resorts didn't allow much room for the sport to flourish—until a perfect storm of popularity, product innovation, mainstream acceptance and resort access struck, leading to a deluge of demand virtually overnight.

"By the mid-'90s snowboarding was hot," says Pete Saari, co-founder of Mervin Manufacturing, one of snowboarding's pioneer companies. "Rumors of [snowboarding] being an Olympic sport were growing. More and more magazines were popping up. The Japanese snowboard market was absolutely on fire. Snowboarding had become



S // FORUM TEAM IN RESISTANCE P // MATHIS

fashion in Japan—people were buying two or three snowboards and putting them on their car tops and in their rooms as fashion accessories. An unbelievable and unsustainable amount of boards were heading to Japan."

Whenever fortunes are soaring, human nature leads us to believe it will never

end, and most people go all in. In 1996, Ride Snowboards went public on the Nasdaq, its stock shot through the roof and Morrow Snowboards quickly followed suit. Everyone with money to invest wanted a piece of the action, and the industry ballooned from about 20 brands to over 500 in just a few years.

And then catastrophe struck. Those Japanese kids moved on to the next fad; huge conglomerates like Jarden and VF Corp scooped up many of snowboarding's brands; and licensing companies consolidated others, turning them into commodities; leaving the market awash in excess product being sold at a fraction of its value.

"The collapse was simply the natural effect of boom and bust that comes when supply for the product and culture are excessive," says another of snowboarding's founding fathers, mastermind of Bonfire Snowboarding and current VP of digital apparel and gear at Amer Sports, Brad Steward.

S // WALKER AND KEARNS P // MATHIS



## MEMBERS ONLY

Both freeskiing and snowboarding are firmly rooted in a love of the mountains. While love often makes you do stupid things, it also forces you to set everything else aside and fight for it.

"Snowboarding in the '90s was fueled by a renegade, nonconformist, anti-establishment and anti-skier hierarchy," explains Edward "Duke" Edukas, co-owner of Costa Mesa's Surfside Sports, the largest independently owned snowboard retailer in Southern California.

Edukas, whose shop opened its doors in 1975, believes that freeskiing has taken off for similar reasons, but unlike snowboarding, it isn't defining itself through hatred of other disciplines of snow sliders and has opened its arms to converts.

"The big difference now is the kids don't care what you do," adds Marty Carrigan, who has been in the business since the late '80s, helping run brands like Morrow and Palmer Snowboards before going on to found Global Sales Guys, which distributes snowboards and skis, including

the Icelandic and APO brands. "They all hang out—and do both. It's not 'us against them.'"

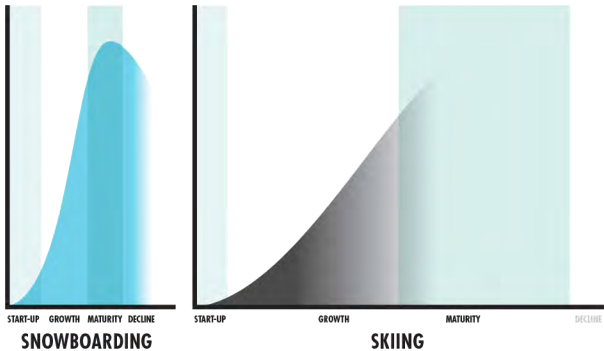
Carrigan sees the real opportunity in the freeskiing market not in focusing on a specific, narrow niche, as snowboarding did in the '90s, but in targeting youth in general. "Snowboarding didn't evolve," explains Carrigan. "It held on to being too exclusive. There's always room for specialists, and there should be, but now the smart guys are embracing youth in general and not further limiting the size of their market by being too cool for specific segments."

While inclusiveness is vital for brands, it's an even bigger component of a successful retailer's business. One of the biggest downfall of snowboard shops was employees giving off the same negative vibe they conveyed to skiers, to everyone who walked through their doors who wasn't a "core" rider. There are a ton of reasons that the number of independent snowboard shops has dwindled, but a lack of customer service and a welcoming attitude to new customers is one of the biggest.

# DÉJÀ NEW LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

When asked what similarities he sees between snowboarding and freeskiing, Steward sums it up in one word: "Optimism—that ethereal blend of hope, hype and heart that leads new trails to be blazed, new cultures to self-create and new inspirations to roll through the thirsty gullies of the snow sports industry like water into the dry savanna."

The roots of both sports are firmly planted in passion, and the arc of progression finds freeskiing coming out of the heady start-up phase of its business life cycle with a multitude of brands and shops sprouting up. These retailers are driven by the desire to spread the stoke while at the same time making a living in the sport and lifestyle that defines their very being.



"There are vivid parallels between snowboarding in the '90s and freeskiing today, considering how many new small brands there are," says former pro skier and evo founder and CEO, Bryce Phillips. "Retailers really need to hone in on the small brands that have an especially compelling position within the market."

Phillips has grown his shop into a brand of its own with a strong understanding of the market—where it's been in the past and what's next. Industries generally follow a path dubbed the "business life cycle," which progresses through four phases from "start-up" to "growth" and eventually to "maturity" and "decline." While this is inevitable, members of the industry can help control longevity and keep it healthy for a long, vibrant time. Infusions of new ideas, new customers, new innovations, and new markets; along with avoiding the pitfalls of similar industries, all help keep industries in the growth phase longer and out of the downward spiral of maturity and decline.

"There were hundreds of snowboard hardgoods companies at SIA in the mid-'90s. You could see it was a big party, but there was no differentiation," says snowboard industry vet and Never Summer director of sales, Mike "Gags" Gagliardi. "Those brands had killer riders, great booths, but it was all smoke and mirrors. There were so many cookie cutter brands that came out at that point with a formula: start a brand, create an image, work with someone overseas and go from there. When Japan collapsed, they all had to find a home here [in the US], and then discounting became rampant."



S // STEPH P // MALONEY

The collapse was simply the natural effect of boom and bust that comes when supply for the product and culture are excessive.

As freeskiing marches down the road of its growth phase, it is doomed to repeat some of the same mistakes every industry does, but the smart players will chart their own ways around these land mines by parlaying what has helped put snowboarding back on the right track several times: an infusion of new technologies, connecting with new customers and being sure not to flood the market with excess product.

## PICKING YOUR PARTNERS HOW RETAILERS CAN PICK THE RIGHT BRANDS

As the industry grows and new brands pop up, retailers need to be sure they're choosing the right partners and not going down in flames with fads. Follow these tips to see through the fog and find partners that will grow with you for the long haul.

### 1. AVOID PRODUCT DISCOUNTERS

First and foremost, go online and check out any new brand you're considering. Are they discounting? Are they dumping on Amazon? Steer clear. You don't want to build a relationship while wondering who else they've been with and how dirty things are going to get at the end of the season.

### 2. PRODUCTION DEDUCTIONS

Ask your sales rep and the brand manager what their production strategy is. Do they build solely to pre-books? If not, how much over do they go? The brands that are leaving demand on the table each season have the best odds of sticking around. The ones that are overproducing, no matter how hot they are right now, will wind up leaving you in the situation discussed in #1.

### 3. LOYALTY IS A TWO-WAY STREET

Be honest with brands from the get-go about your goals. Talk to other shops that they work with and see how loyal and responsive they are. Get to know their rep and ask other shops in their region how responsive they are. Before you seal the deal, go on a few dates, get to know the people behind the brand. At the end of the day, you buy product from people not brands, and it's a hell of a lot more fun doing business with friends.

### 4. TRY BEFORE YOU BUY

In a similar vein, always demo product before you commit to a brand, regardless of the hype. Learn about its R&D, where the product is made and what goes into it. The '90s were full of brands with amazing pros and marketing masterminds, but things aren't always what they seem once you get the wrapping off. Product should always be at least as important as marketing, if not more—especially in today's age of hyper-educated consumers.

### 5. THE TOTAL PACKAGE

Set your standards high and remember that not every brand is right for every shop. Pete Saari, co-founder of Mervin Manufacturing, sums it up, "For a retailer, the ideal situation is that product is delivered on time, and sells early and well at full margin. I would look for small manufacturers that have a bit of buzz and a complete package: quality product, proven delivery history, sellable pricing, a genuine brand story and some solid marketing support. With small manufacturers, a local component is also interesting—skis made in Utah are more likely to sell in Utah."



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## STANDING OUT IN THE CROWD

Unlike freeskiing's rise, snowboarding's explosion occurred in a sort of Wild West. When snowboarding started, there were no brands present and new ones flooded into the vacuum. Established ski brands wanted nothing to do with snowboarding in the early days, and snowboarders gave those brands the finger when they tried to get in the game.

Today's big ski brands learned that lesson and understand that freeskiing is their current salvation. They are retooling to meet the trends, just as they did with snowboarding over the long term. According to SIA, the top-five selling twin-tip ski brands last season, alphabetically, were Atomic, K2, Line, Rossignol and Vökl.

These brands accounted for nearly 68-percent of all twin-tip skis sold last season, leaving a minuscule slice of the pie open to upstarts and the other 45 brands SIA tracked in this space. But that small slice is where much of the real innovation and excitement is happening, and is what's keeping the industry in the growth stage.

"What's exciting about skiing right now is all the young companies. They push the big companies by taking risks and doing things bigger companies can't do because of their size and timing—it's like steering an aircraft carrier versus a speed boat," says Carrigan.

The trick for retailers is to make educated bets on which horses to pick in this race—to partner with the brands that will stand the test of time and emerge successful.

Just as we can learn lessons from snowboarding's pioneers, there are parallels with today's upstart snowboarding brands that are well-planned and capitalized, infusing stoke into the industry. As an industry becomes more mature, new businesses must create a lasting means of differentiation to stand out in a crowded field.

"To exist, you have to be different in a way that's defensible and compelling to customers," says Phillips. "Those that have carved out a truly differentiated position will thrive, and those that aren't too different will disappear."

The trick for retailers is to make educated bets on which horses to pick in this race—to partner with the brands that will stand the test of time and emerge successful. New businesses are not doomed to make the mistakes of those that came before them if they observe, digest their lessons and make their own decisions armed with that knowledge.

"The most obvious lesson [of the '90s] to me was to love what you do with no boundaries," says Steward. "To try, fail and try again and again—to stand up in the crowd and community and do what you believe in. The retailers who have done this have survived and gone on to the greatest part of their lives—from giving themselves wholly to growing a sport and community. Looking back from 2014 to 1994, the '90s weren't a decade to me. They were a decision—a decision I made to love snowboarding and work hard to be one of the best at it."

This decision, along with many others along the way, has kept Steward ahead of the game and doing what he loves. Hopefully, many more can say the same in 2034.

## TAKEAWAYS FROM SNOWBOARDING'S BUBBLE

The '90s were a unique era in snow sports as snowboarding exploded nearly overnight and then imploded nearly as quickly, leaving the market littered with once-cool brands, out of work pros and a glut of product. We reached out to some of the snowboard industry's pioneers as well as some leading thinkers on the ski side, to get their takes on the parallels between the two industries and the lessons the burgeoning freeski world can draw.

### Be Your Customers

Odds are you're in this business for one reason—your passion for skiing. If you're not, it's time to rethink your career choice. Life and business get busy, but get your ass on the hill. Talk with people on the chairlift, have an open dialog with your customers and stay in touch with what's going on in the park and the backcountry.

### Take Risks

It's easy to take the safe road—to do what you've always done in the past and to please the customers you already have. But if you're successful and stand the test of time, your customers are going to evolve and you need to as well. Try new categories, bet on new brands, throw some shit at the wall and see what sticks!

### Customer Service Is King

One of snowboarding's major failings was its excessive cool factor. Moms didn't feel comfortable going into shops in the '90s, and kids of all ages were getting vibed. The shops that survived those times focused on service, for all people, with a welcoming environment, knowledgeable staff, and added services that differentiated them from the hoards.

### Diversify or Die

Skiing by its very nature speaks to a small, geographically isolated demographic. The snowboarding brands (not to mention surf and skate) that have succeeded have done so by speaking to a broader market or offering additional product categories to their core—think Burton, Volcom and 686. Find ways to have a broader appeal with different product categories and marketing.

### Trust Your Gut

Listen to the advice of others. Learn everything you can. But at the end of the day, you know your business best. Listen to your gut. Take financials out of it and do what you think is right for you, your partners, your customers and the sport.



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# A New Generation of Consumer Buying Habits

It wasn't long ago that skiers needed just a few key items to get on the hill. Skis, boots, poles and whatever layering they could easily get their hands on. But in today's world of technology and fashion, consumers, and particularly our readers, have become hyper-informed on all things gear-related. They crave the newest

of everything. They talk about it, they advise others on it and they want to be involved whenever possible. We polled more than 7,000 readers of freeskier.com to get an idea of the what, when, how and where of their gear addictions and buying habits. The following trends are what we found.

## WHERE DO YOU PURCHASE YOUR SKI GEAR?\*

**72%**  
SKI SHOP

**57%**  
ONLINE RETAILER

**20%**  
USED GEAR (SKI SWAP, EBAY, CRAIGSLIST, ETC)

**2%**  
BIG BOX RETAILER

## HOW OFTEN DO YOU PURCHASE:

### HARDGOODS?

MORE THAN ONCE PER YEAR: 16%  
EVERY FOUR YEARS, OR MORE: 6%  
ONCE EVERY THREE YEARS: 19%  
EVERY OTHER YEAR: 30%  
ANNUALLY: 29%

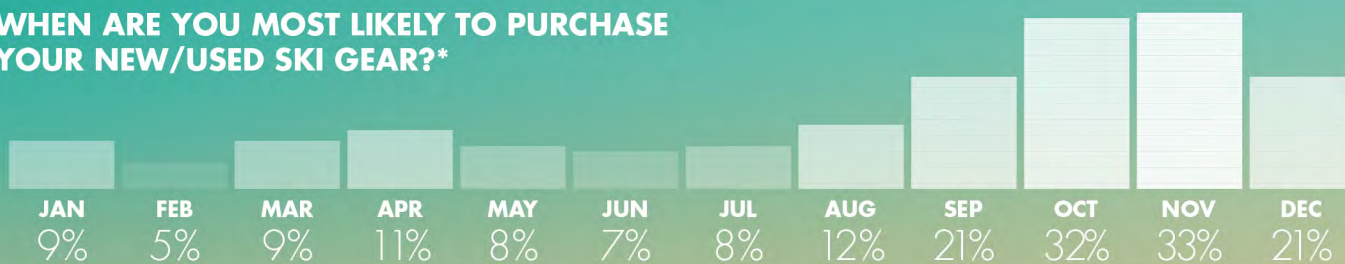


### SOFTGOODS?

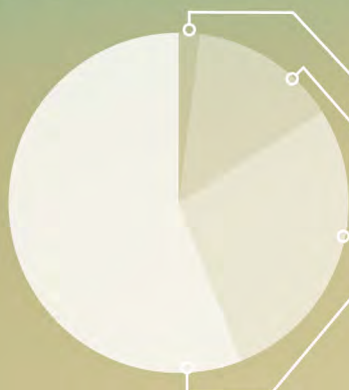
EVERY FOUR YEARS, OR MORE: 3%  
ONCE EVERY THREE YEARS: 8%  
EVERY OTHER YEAR: 23%  
ANNUALLY: 37%  
MORE THAN ONCE PER YEAR: 29%



## WHEN ARE YOU MOST LIKELY TO PURCHASE YOUR NEW/USED SKI GEAR?\*



## WOULD YOU PURCHASE SKI GEAR DIRECT FROM THE MANUFACTURER?\*



NO, I SUPPORT MY FAVORITE ONLINE RETAILER: 2%  
NO, I SUPPORT MY LOCAL SKI SHOP: 14%  
I DON'T CARE, I JUST WANT THE BEST DEAL: 28%  
YES, I WOULD PURCHASE FROM THE MANUFACTURER: 56%

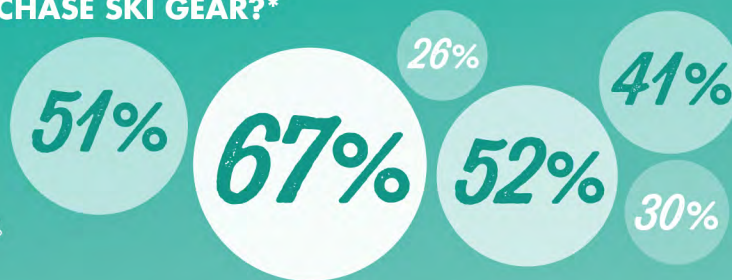
\* RESPONDENTS HAD THE OPTION OF CHOOSING ALL APPLICABLE ANSWERS.

### IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS, WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAVE YOU RECOMMENDED OR ADVISED OTHERS ON THE PURCHASE OF?

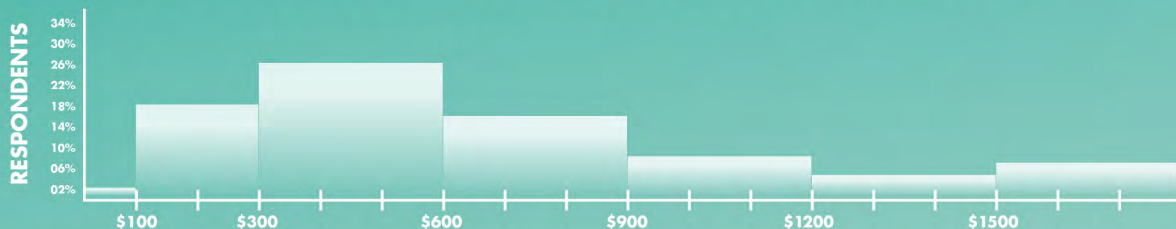


### WHO/WHAT INFLUENCES YOU TO PURCHASE SKI GEAR?\*

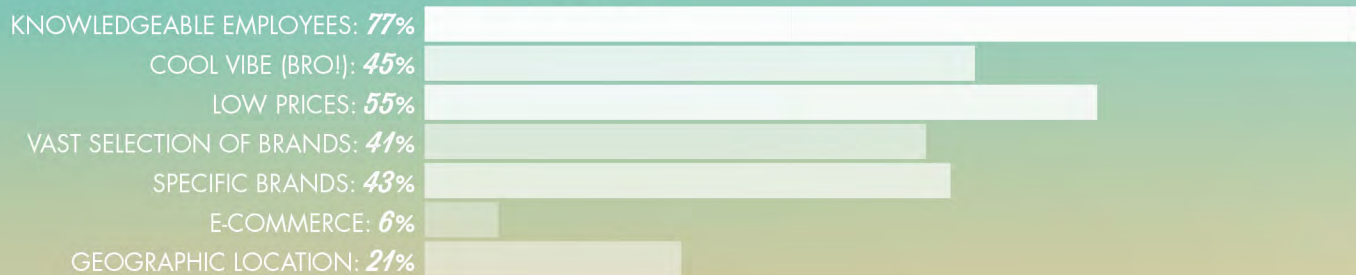
1. SKI MEDIA GEAR REVIEWS: 67%
2. BRAND LOYALTY: 52%
3. FRIENDS (WORD OF MOUTH): 51%
4. PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES: 41%
5. SKI MEDIA ADS/EDITORIAL (ONLINE AND/OR PRINT): 30%
6. SHOP EMPLOYEES: 26%



### HOW MUCH, ON AVERAGE, DO YOU SPEND ON SKI GEAR EVERY YEAR?



### WHAT DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A SKI SHOP?\*

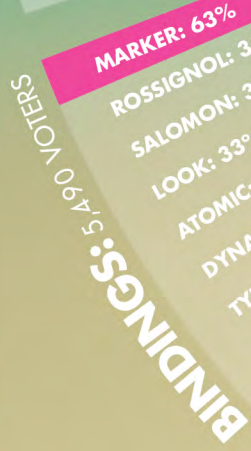


### DO YOU CURRENTLY OWN (AND ACTIVELY USE) MORE THAN ONE PAIR OF SKIS?



# WHO DO YOU LOVE?

## BOOTS: 5,675 VOTERS



## SKIS: 7,315 VOTERS

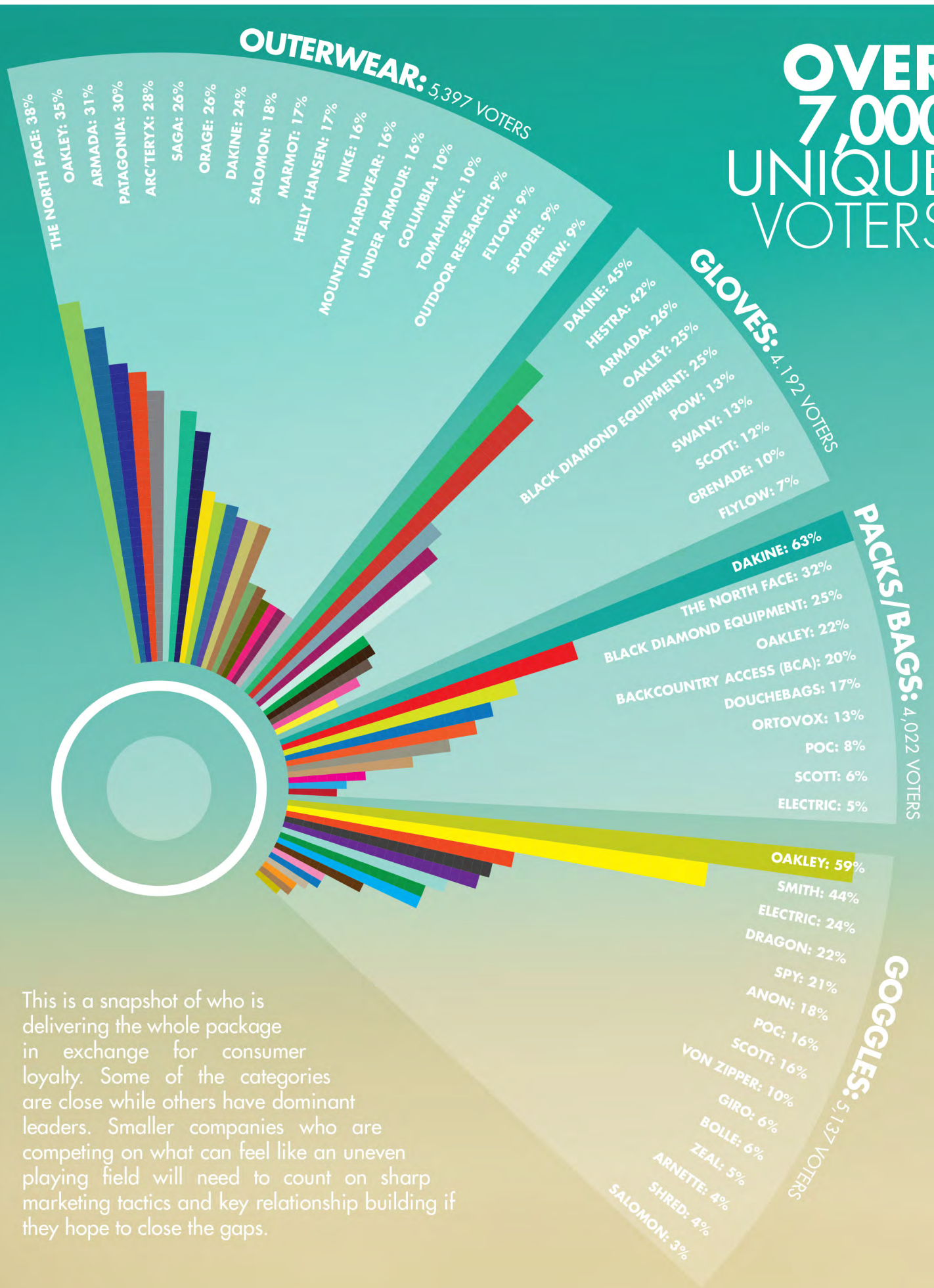


## HELMETS: 4,590 VOTERS



When it comes to brand selection, options are not slim and companies need to work harder than ever to earn the loyalty of consumers. Today's informed buyer demands not only the best in quality but also wants to feel engaged. The world of social media has made brands approachable and those who speak back are rewarded in kind.

**OVER  
7,000  
UNIQUE  
VOTERS**



This is a snapshot of who is delivering the whole package in exchange for consumer loyalty. Some of the categories are close while others have dominant leaders. Smaller companies who are competing on what can feel like an uneven playing field will need to count on sharp marketing tactics and key relationship building if they hope to close the gaps.

# IMPERIAL GEAR

OUR INDUSTRY IS MUCH LIKE THE BEER INDUSTRY. WE HAVE LARGE, RESPECTED COMPANIES WITH LOYAL FOLLOWINGS AS WELL AS NEW BRANDS POPPING UP EVERY YEAR, KEEPING THE FORMER ON THEIR TOES AND PUSHING THE ENVELOPE WITH INNOVATIVE NEW STYLES, METHODS AND TECHNOLOGIES. EVERY SEASON, THESE COMPANIES BREW UP A PLETHORA OF NEW TOYS FOR US TO GAWK AT, TEST OUT AND WRITE ABOUT. THE GEAR ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES IS A TASTER OF WHAT YOU'LL SEE COMING DOWN THE LINE THIS YEAR. SOME OF IT WE'VE TRIED, SOME OF IT WE CAN'T WAIT TO TRY, BUT ALL OF IT IS WORTH YOUR ATTENTION. SO TAKE A QUICK TOUR, YOU'RE SURE TO FIND SOMETHING THAT SUITS YOUR TASTE.



GEAR:

## BOOTS

THE RIGHT BOOT CAN MAKE OR BREAK A SKIER'S WHOLE EXPERIENCE. WITH WALK/HIKE/BAR MODES BACK EN VOGUE, BOOT MANUFACTURERS ARE NOW FOCUSING ON LIGHTWEIGHT BOOTS THAT CAN PERFORM AT THE HIGHEST LEVEL.

Lange, sometimes mistaken for a company that manufactures only narrow-lasted boots, is building on the foundation laid by its XT boot line, developing the XC 120, which features a 102 mm last to cater to those with wider foot shapes. It features a 120 flex, along with durable, grip material in the toes, arches, and heels to combat slippage on those tricky hikes.

K2 expands on last year's boot collection debut with its first women's-specific freeride boot line, which includes the Minaret 100. This 100-flex, expert level women's boot takes the technology K2 used in its men's Pinnacle series, including the Synchro Interlock cuff mechanism, and combines it with an anatomical fit for women. A great choice for ladies who get after it in the backcountry.



Salomon's Ghost FS 90 maxes out the comfort along with the performance. The Salomon Cushioning System features a dual density foam material in the footboard, as well as an extra padded spoiler to keep calves snug. The oversized pivot points are designed to meet the needs of today's wider skis, providing more direct energy transmission going from edge to edge.

Atomic's Hawx boot line received an upgrade this year with the addition of 3M Thinsulate insulation that surrounds the entire foot to keep it warm in any conditions. The Hawx 2.0 120 will accommodate a medium volume foot with Memory Fit heat molding that provides a personalized touch to the shell, cuff and liner.

Fischer, well known for its Vacuum boot fitting technology, a customizable shell and liner molding process, has taken those same processes and applied them to a fully adaptable touring boot, the Vacuum Tour. The company claims a 60 degree range of fore and aft ankle motion for mobility while touring, and semi-overlap construction (a blend of the three-piece and overlap designs) for better downhill performance.



GEAR:

# SKIS

WITH RETAILERS REJUVENATING OLD FAVORITES, FILLING IN HOLES IN CURRENT LINES AND ADDING NEW ONES, THERE'S A BEVY OF NEW STICKS OUT THERE TO BE SKIED. THE MOST COMMON THEMES YOU'LL SEE THIS YEAR ARE A REDUCTION IN WEIGHT AND AN INCREASE IN DURABILITY.

**1.** Those with an eye on the Olympics, including eager consumers, will get more than a glance of Salomon's NFX, which has been in development for three years now. A wood core and full, vertical sidewalls come standard on the Sochi-bound Salomon, which top level contenders, Bobby Brown and James Woods, have been thrusting into the spotlight.

**2.** Faction has built a pro team and product line around the iconic Candide Thovex, and recently added the immensely popular Adam Delorme to its roster, a man who certainly has the potential to push sales. The 90 mm-waisted Candide 1.0 has been redesigned with thicker edges and carbon reinforcement to make it a super durable park and pipe ski. In addition, the all-new Candide 2.0 is a 102 mm-waisted all-mountain offering that will fill in a gap in the series. Both offer tip and tail rocker with a poplar/ash wood core.

**3.** Fischer's new Ranger skis will take the place of the Watea line. The flat tailed freeride skis are available in 96 mm and 106 mm waist widths and feature all new Air Tec wood cores which are milled for weight reduction, and titanium inserts in the binding area for retention and stability.

**4.** Rossignol impressed a lot of people last year with its honeycomb tip and tail design, dubbed Air Tip Technology. With the solid response, the company has expanded the line to include the Sin 7 and women's Saffron 7, pictured here. At 98 mm underfoot, this ski is a great all-mountain choice for the lady that values versatility and increased maneuverability.

**5.** Vökl's powerhouse all-mountain ski, the Mantra, comes back with a little more of a user-friendly feel this year. The waist has been nudged up to 100 mm and a full rocker has been added for a slightly more playful feel in varied conditions. But don't be mistaken, the ski still features titanium for a powerful build that will blast through anything.

**6.** Atomic expands on its freeski powder category this year with the addition of two new Automatic models. In addition to the 117 mm waist width, it now offers 102 mm and 109 mm versions which feature the same flex pattern, including a poplar wood core and relaxed flex in the tail. This new lineup provides multiple options to skiers who want a lightweight ski that can be taken anywhere.

**7.** Head introduces its all new women's Joy series this year, which borrows technology from another department of the company. Graphene, a super light and super strong material used in Head's tennis rackets, makes its way into the women's alpine lineup, allowing for featherlight skis and a weight distribution that prevents them from getting bucked around in variable snow. Look for Graphene to enter the men's line next year too.

**8.** The Cham skis from Dynastar have earned a loyal following over the last few years, but the series has had a noticeable hole in waist width offerings until now. The Cham 117 features a slightly more forgiving tail, a paulownia wood core, and falls within the waist width zone that a lot of west coast skiers look for in a daily driver.

**9.** Line is also answering the call for lightweight and high performance skis with the Magnum Opus, an evolution of the Eric Pollard-inspired Sir Francis Bacon and Mr. Pollard's Opus. The Magnum features a super lightweight wood and composite core with a 124 mm waist width and generous rocker profile for guaranteed good times in deep snow.







GEAR:

## OUTERWEAR

LOOK GOOD, FEEL GOOD, SKI BETTER. IT'S SCIENCE. EVERYBODY HAS HIS OR HER OWN FASHION SENSE BUT NOT EVERYBODY HAS AN AWARENESS OF TEXTILE TECHNOLOGY. LUCKY FOR THEM, OUTERWEAR COMPANIES ARE GETTING BETTER AND BETTER AT INTEGRATING STREET-INSPIRED STYLE INTO TECHNICALLY PROFICIENT PIECES. LAST YEAR WE SAW A LOT OF CAMO ON THE HILL. THE CONSUMER WILL SURELY SEE THAT CONTINUE THIS YEAR, AS WELL AS AN INCREASE IN MORE RADICAL PRINTS, AS COMPANIES STRETCH THE GRAPHIC BOUNDARIES.

**1.** The North Face adds some serious spice to its classic image this year by presenting a full line of bold prints and freshening up the brand logo as well. The women's Tight Ship Insulated Jacket, available in both a White Mahalo and Blue Mahalo print, is a 2L piece that's waterproof, breathable and fully seam sealed to keep the elements out while you make a statement to everyone on the hill.

**2.** Patagonia has always been known for quality product but expands its design portfolio this year with some subtle camo. This Snowshot jacket is a 3-in-1 piece that features a zip out mid layer with 60 g of Thermogreen insulation. A great piece with plenty of versatility.

**3.** Armada was all over the print game last year with a number of different camos but heads a different direction this year with the tropical Ripton pullover. It features 2L Gore-Tex, hoodie-style pockets and extra long zips on either side, making it a versatile piece with a casual look.



**4.** Now in its second year of outerwear production, Faction is already pushing the limits. The women's Tinsley jacket, pictured here, brings street-inspired style in a technically sound package that includes a 10K rating, YKK zippers and 100-percent seam sealing. Also look for Faction's new Aerogel insulation, a thin, synthetic fabric that insulates without bulk, in the men's Darwin and Franklin jackets.

**5.** Flylow utilizes Polartec's NeoShell in its Lab Coat 2.0 and Compound Pant 2.0. The highly waterproof/breathable material is supplemented by full seam taping, YKK zippers and 16-inch pit zips that provide added venting on long walks through the mountains.

**6.** The women's Parkatype jacket from Orage is sure to keep you warm in any conditions. The piece features 600 fill down with a silky smooth lining and is reverse-laminated on the exterior, giving it a very unique feel. Subtle styling cues ensure that in addition to being the warmest person around, you'll also be looking good.

**7.** Aspen, Colorado-based Strafe Outerwear caters to skiers looking for technical outerwear with a comfortable fit and style. Also utilizing Polartec NeoShell, the new Cham jacket and pant combination is a minimalist kit aimed at those venturing in the backcountry. It comes with oversized chest pockets for storing climbing skins, along with a hidden inside pocket within that's great for tucking away small items.

**8.** Dakine teases a little bit of the print trend with a pineapple print adorning the inside of the new Logan jacket but clean styling on the exterior. The lightweight piece uses 2L Gore-Tex with a DWR finish to fend off the elements and will please the consumer who likes high quality without any gimmicks.



GEAR:

# LAYERING

WE LIVE IN A FASHION-FORWARD WORLD AND LAYERING IS NO EXCEPTION. WHETHER IT BE ON THE HILL DURING A WARM SPRING AFTERNOON OR IN THE BAR AT THE END OF A POW-FILLED DAY, SKIERS WANT TO BE ABLE TO TAKE THEIR SHELLS

OFF WITHOUT LOOKING LIKE THEY'RE WEARING GRANDMA'S UNDERWEAR. MANUFACTURERS HAVE RESPONDED WITH CASUAL LOOKING SOFTSHELL PIECES AND BASE LAYERS WITH GRAPHIC PRINTS.

**1.** Under Armour introduces its Infrared Dobson Cotton Softshell hoody, a piece that can be used as a mid layer or an outer layer when the weather isn't too treacherous. The hoody comes with UA Storm, a water repellent and wind repellency, and Under Armour's Coldgear Infrared coating on the hoody's liner, for retaining body heat. Lastly, it features a new magnetic zipper that comes together with ease.

**2.** Armada's Contra base layer fights the stereotypical and boring layers of yesteryear with graphics that will appeal to skiers who want to stand out. The piece utilizes Polartec Power Dry material to wick moisture and keep the user dry. Perfect for looking good and feeling even better.

**3.** Atomic dives into the apparel category for 2014-15. The new collection features three tiers of full layering setups. This Treeline Primaloft Jacket is one of the mid layers and comes complete with a durable water repellent treatment and 60 grams of Primaloft Silver insulation in the body and sleeve. A great layering piece on cold days or outer layer for the spring.



GEAR:  
**GOGGLES**

GOGGLE TECHNOLOGY HAS PROGRESSED LEAPS AND BOUNDS OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS AS COMPANIES CONTINUE TO PLAY WITH TECHNOLOGY BOTH IN AND AROUND THE LENS. THIS YEAR WILL SEE AN EXPANSION ON THAT AS WELL AS A REFINEMENT OF EXISTING PIECES.

**1.** Oakley's aptly-named Flight Deck goggle takes its styling cues from the shield of a fighter pilot, giving it as big a field of vision as you're going to find on the market. The goggle features Oakley's all-new RidgLock quick-change lens system, which utilizes a rigid sub-frame and two attachment points in the forehead for quick and easy lens switches.

**2.** Zeal's new Forecast goggle is catered towards those who appreciate the simple things in life. An ergonomic frame design delivers serious comfort with a wide field of view and Zeal's Automatic lens technology adjusts the lens' light transmission based on available natural light.

**3.** POC made improvements on its award-winning Lid goggle, which features the same frameless construction for an uninhibited field of vision, triple layer face foam for comfort, and high quality polycarbonate outer lens that the Lid is known for. This year POC added a patent pending lens attachment system for easy lens changes, but didn't have to do away with its frameless construction, ensuring the wearer has the ultimate field of vision.

**4.** anon's Magna-Tech is what has made the M1 and M2 goggles benchmarks for quick-change lenses in the optics world. This year the brand goes a step further and integrates magnets into the MIG goggle and facemask combo. Magnets in the bottom of the goggle frame and the front/top of the facemask connect the pair, while perforated vents help prevent the lens from fogging up.

GEAR:

# PROTECTION

TEN YEARS AGO, ODDS ARE YOU WOULDN'T HAVE IMAGINED WHAT PEOPLE ARE DOING ON SKIS THESE DAYS. WITH ATHLETES PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES FURTHER EVERY YEAR, SAFETY AND PROTECTION HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT. AIRBAG PACKS CONTINUE TO PROLIFERATE THE MARKET AND RETAILERS WILL LIKELY SEE AN INCREASE IN SALES OF ITEMS LIKE BACK PROTECTORS OVER THE COMING YEARS AS BOTH PROFESSIONAL AND RECREATIONAL ATHLETES EMBRACE THEM.

Slytech is a leader in such protective equipment and the Second Skin XT foam used in this Backpro XT Lite is one of the reasons why. The shock-absorbing foam provides the user with the protection they need to push the limits without sacrificing comfort. This piece is at home in the halfpipe as well as the high alpine.

K2 has jumped into the airbag game this year, a logical move after acquiring BCA. The new Backside Float pack comes in 15 and 30 liter capacities with a single chamber airbag inflated by compressed air. It's designed to carry all you need into the backcountry while delivering a clean design and minimizing any dangling straps. Strategically located pockets and systems carry everything from goggles to an ice axe, while keeping weight close to the body.





GEAR:  
**HELMETS**

HELMETS ARE MORE COMMONPLACE AMONG CONSUMERS YEAR OVER YEAR WITH THE NEWEST GENERATION OF SKIERS SEEING THEM AS THE NORM. NEW TECHNOLOGIES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED IN RECENT YEARS, TARGETING SPECIFIC TYPES OF SKIERS, AND MANUFACTURERS CONTINUE TO REFINE THEM IN THEIR LATEST OFFERINGS.

**1.** The all-new Phoenix OTIS helmet from Marker features temperature-resistant polymer foam in key areas around the head to protect against multiple impact crashes. The hybrid helmet construction combines the durability of a hard shell with the benefits of a soft-shell. The force of impact is distributed around the exterior of the hard shell while the in-mold shell and fit system wrap the back of the head for added protection.

**2.** POC's market share has been growing steadily over the past few years as it continues to deliver top shelf safety gear and the utilization of MIPS in its Fornix helmet is a prime example of that. The technology allows the shell of the helmet to move independently of the liner, dispersing the energy of forceful, oblique impacts to the head. Generous venting and a size adjustment system help make this helmet as comfortable as it is safe.

**3.** Giro introduced its first softshell helmet, the Combyn, last year and now adds the Discord to that category. Like the Combyn, it uses a dual density Vinyl Nitrile liner to absorb high energy impacts and effectively dissipate the lower energy, day-to-day impacts taken by aggressive skiers. Lastly, it features active venting for adaptability to multiple conditions.





GEAR:

# BINDINGS

THIS YEAR BRINGS SOME NEW RELEASES, OLD FAVORITES AND MODIFIED VERSIONS OF CURRENT BINDINGS. SMALL TWEAKS KEEP THE BINDING TECH UP TO SPEED WHILE MANUFACTURERS ANSWER THE CALL FROM THE RETAIL WORLD FOR MULTI-YEAR MODELS.

**1.** Those looking for an alpine touring binding that they can use both in and out of the resort should check out Tyrolia's Adrenalin 16. The 16-DIN binding is in its second year and features an extra wide, 80 mm heel track for a wider area of contact and three climbing settings.

**2.** Look's popular Pivot binding will be available in a 4-12 DIN option for this coming season. The Pivot models have been wildly successful across many categories of skiers and will now be accessible to younger and lighter skiers.

**3.** Atomic offers up a new binding geared toward versatility. The Warden 13 accommodates DIN and tech soles, as well as Salomon's Walk-To-Ride soles. Ease of adjustability is provided by one screw, and a large platform aids in power transmission.

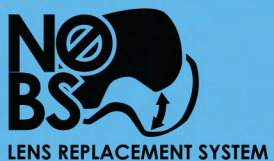
**4.** Marker's reliable 6-16 DIN freeride binding, the Jester, is back this year with a stealthy paint job and it will continue to disappear from shop shelves. The height-adjustable, stainless-steel AFD helps ensure a safe release when warranted and a wide chassis delivers precise handling.

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# HELLBENT ON SUCCESS:

## FIVE LEADERS THAT HELP POWER AN INDUSTRY

BY DAMIAN QUIGLEY

From a distance, people could assume that most businesses are finely tuned machines run by people who work regularly scheduled hours and share equal responsibility. Some businesses actually do run like that. I held jobs at a few of them. But those gigs are mostly relegated to industries that are of little importance to the people within them—nine-to-fivers who have no problem leaving work behind once they walk out the door and only go back on Monday morning because that's what they're supposed to do.

On the other hand, you have the ski trade and similar industries where "work" hardly ever gets left at the office. We work plenty of overtime and we usually can't get through a weekend without some sort of job-related activity. But whether we get to go test product in the mountains or are stuck in the office finishing a project, we always come back on Monday—because it's where we want to be.

While ski industry gigs come with a lot of perks, some roles take a lot of commitment, namely, positions in which a person is not only an employee of a brand, but in turn, an ambassador who is always on the clock. As new brands come and go with each season, the ones you can count on to be there when the dust settles are those that are run by motivated individuals. Because what drives success in our space is the people who are willing to put everything on the line to bring a new idea to fruition or recover from one that didn't go quite as planned. They do it because they're passionate about skiing, and they're the backbone of our industry.

The people on the following pages are not the only hard workers in the industry, nor do they run any business single-handedly. But they exemplify the dedication that leads to success and are key players in their respective companies, whose longevity is aided by their efforts.

So no matter where you sit at the industry roundtable, remember that when it comes to building relationships, it's not always about the lowest prices or the latest fads. It's about aligning yourself with people, and therefore brands, who care. Because those people will ensure our sport lives on long after we've all hung up our boots.

# JOE PREBICH

## CHANGING THE VIEWERS' PERSPECTIVE

BY DONNY O'NEILL

Hitting the reset button on a brand is a bold move, but that's exactly what Boulder, CO-based Zeal Optics did two years ago, with the hopes of turning a mediocre image around. Originally a small operation owned by a husband and wife, Zeal was bought by Maui Jim in 2012, and as one of its first moves, hired Joe Prebich to head up its marketing efforts and help achieve the lofty goal.

A well-established guru of snowsports media and marketing, Prebich's path to success started at the age of 16 when he started a ski and snowboard publication called *218 Magazine*. Named for the area code in Northern Minnesota where he grew up, the magazine gave him a chance to refine his writing and editing skills. His newfound aptitude didn't go unnoticed by the folks at *Snowboarder* magazine, where he took on the role of online editor before heading over to Red Bull to work as Shaun White's brand manager. His time with the energy drink company built his awareness of brand strategy and eventually led to a position at Oakley as the company's global sports marketing manager.

"The reality [about being hired by Oakley] was that I really wanted to learn more about product," says Prebich. "I wanted to learn more about how product was developed, what the process was, how a global business was transacting on many different product categories, and who were all of those people touching on those points to make a company like Oakley survive and thrive."

After about a year and half at Oakley, Prebich felt that he had done the majority of what he had wanted to do at the company, when he was approached by Zeal. The company wanted Prebich to use the creative strategies that he had

executed with Oakley but apply them to a brand that was starting fresh. "That's what they were really committed to," says Prebich. "Taking the time to change the entire brand, not to just put lipstick on the pig, but to truly build a whole different skeleton of how we're going to change the industry's perception [of Zeal]."

Prebich noticed that Zeal had not gone through any real transformations during its tenure in the optics space, but the industry had gone through massive change. "There were so many consumers that weren't being spoken to," says Prebich. "That was the most influential part of why we needed a change—because there was a group of people that had spent their entire lives skiing, but they had finally outgrown their product."

Prebich believed that the maturation process could be applied to Zeal. "There was no real innovation blending what consumers were looking for," says Prebich. "The consumers are smart, they want protection, they want polarization, they're looking for ecological responsibility, they want to make sure their dollar is going towards a brand that isn't just a nameless corporation but one that gives back."

That consciousness within the brand was one of Prebich's major marketing strategies to turn around those bored consumers. Prebich wanted the brand image to speak to the customer, and the people behind the brand to actually live the lifestyle it portrayed. "We wanted to make sure that the Zeal brand was built in authenticity, where people that are a part of the brand live this life," says Prebich. "The ski and outdoor industry is something that they've always wanted to be a part of, and it's something that they actively participate in."

Zeal's employees actively use the company's product, testing it in conditions that they believe are parallel to what the end user will put it through. Consumers have picked up on the brand's authenticity, but it's the retailers' recognition of that conversation that may be the key to Zeal's success. "We don't want to be a brand that forces marketing. We don't charge for displays, we don't charge for marketing, we don't charge for window wraps," says Prebich. "We have a one-to-one relationship with all of our retailers. We reach out to them and make sure that our images help them to sell product."

Prebich sees 2014 as a huge year for Zeal, as its rebranding will finally come full circle. "They're going to be surprised that such a small brand with ten people here in Boulder is producing such high quality pieces," says Prebich. "What it means to be a small brand—it doesn't mean that you're just small, you just have to have the identity and the ethics behind the way that you do business."





# JEFF MECHURA & MIKE GUTT

## HOW THESE MARKETING GURUS HAVE TURNED K2 INTO ONE OF THE WEIRDEST—AND MOST SUCCESSFUL—SKI BRANDS OUT THERE

BY MEGAN MICHELSON

If you've looked through a ski magazine recently, you've probably noticed the spread advertising the debut of K2's new boot line. It's a photo of a full-bellied guy with an award-winning mullet (his name is DJ Mullet) wearing a skin-tight green racing suit and K2's new Pinnacle 130 boots. The text reads: *Not just another pretty boot.*

The ad is nothing out of the ordinary for K2, which has earned a reputation in the ski industry as a brand that's not afraid to put out humorous, often outrageous marketing campaigns, all in the name of doing something different. The masterminds of the company's comical identity are Mike Gutt, K2's brand director who's been with the company for 14 years,

and Jeff Mechura, the vice president of global marketing and a 17-year K2 veteran.

"This was our first year getting into ski boots, and we knew we needed a strong message to launch the program," Gutt says. "We had so many things that we wanted to communicate in the ad—the tech, all the features—but we wanted to do it in true K2 fashion, which meant having fun with it."

At a marketing meeting to discuss the direction of the boot ads early last year, Drew Pigott from K2's graphics team presented a few traditional ideas, and in the back of the stack, he snuck in a photo of a Lange Girl with a strange

looking guy's head pasted on. Everyone in the room laughed, and immediately, they knew that was it. "What seemed like a joke was actually a brilliant idea for a parody," Gutt says.

The list of other K2 hilarity over the years seems endless. In 2005, K2's machine shop turned a 1972 Plymouth Fury into an *Animal House*-style, fraternity-themed K2 Death Mobile. In 2008, the company hired Orange County Choppers to design a custom K2-branded motorcycle to debut at the trade shows. In 2012, it teamed up with British Columbia's CMH Heli-Skiing to rebrand one of their lodges as the K2 Rotor Lodge, a retro-looking motor lodge

complete with a neon sign.

One year, the pro team was dressed up as rock stars for a K2 "Rocker Party" that celebrated rockered technology. This year, the brand is sponsoring a taco truck painted with an image of a Mexican wrestler at Crystal Mountain, Washington. And inside the company headquarters in Seattle, you'll find a skate ramp, a saloon, and old-school ski paraphernalia mixed with souvenirs from Shane McConkey's Saucer Boy antics.

"It's definitely been a goal to keep the tonality and image of K2 fun, different and unexpected," says Mechura. "Those standards were set back in the day by K2's lighthearted and unique marketing efforts."

Apparently, those standards are working well for the business. Since K2's launch in 1962, it's gone global with over 200 employees in Seattle and distributors all over the world, and the brand has held the number one spot in units sold for years, according to SIA.

The risk of the comedy-based brand identity? "Some people might not take K2 seriously at times," Gutt says. "But we make great products and let those products speak for themselves."

Mechura agrees. "It's probably fair to say that a few people might not understand some of the things K2 does. We get that," he says. "It ultimately

comes down to one thing. A brand can have the best athletes, great advertising and great promotions, but unless the brand has great product as the foundation, none of the other things matter."

Gutt and Mechura say their goal with the future of K2 is to keep the brand predictably unpredictable and to innovate in every way possible. And, of course, to have fun.

"If you're having fun, everything happens much more naturally," Mechura says, "and it shows in everything the brand does."

# JORDAN JUDD

## TAKING A COMPANY FROM GATE BASHING TO POWDER SLASHING

BY MEGAN MICHELSON

If there's one ski hardgoods company that has successfully bridged the gap from old school to new school, it's Atomic, a brand with deep roots in the racing world that's now paving the way in modern freeriding. And if there's one guy who has contributed heavily to that transition, it's Jordan Judd, who was, until recently, Atomic's sales director.

It was in 2007, when the company moved its US headquarters from New Hampshire to Ogden, Utah, that Judd was brought on as the director of marketing. Prior to joining Atomic, he had worked various ski industry jobs: He co-owned retail stores in Utah, he had a gig in sales and marketing with Line Skis, and he'd worked with filmmaker Kris Ostness on a trilogy of ski movies.

The job offer at Atomic seemed like a good next step. "At the time, Atomic was not doing very well in the US market," Judd said. "My boss, Mike Adams [Atomic's general manager], and I both shared a common view that to succeed with Atomic in the United States, we needed to make the brand relevant to the US consumer. That meant we needed to broaden our position without abandoning our roots."

Their roots, of course, meant ski racing, a gradually decreasing market in the US, in contrast to the flourishing freeride scene.

For Judd and the rest of the Atomic team, that meant staying true to their loyal consumer—those who trusted the brand for its made-in-Austria racing heritage—but altering the image of the brand to appeal to a new set of skiers.

"We formulated a plan on how to rebuild the brand in the US, and we presented it to our colleagues in Austria and they agreed," Judd says. "From that point on, it was a team effort

on a global scale with regards to product development and marketing strategy."

Their strategy was multifold. They teamed up with Kris Ostness to produce two ski films: *44 Days*, which was targeted at younger, freestyle skiers, and *Skiing Is \_\_\_\_*, a mainstream film that brought skiers of multiple disciplines together.

As the de-facto team manager, Judd helped recruit several rising freeride athletes to establish a fresh face for the brand. In 2007, they brought on big-mountain skier Tim Durtschi. Later, after Judd placed some persuasive phone calls, they signed pro skiers Dana Flahr, Chris Benchetler and Sage Cattabriga-Alosa, among others. They've also signed halfpipe and slopestyle athletes such as Jossi Wells and Gus Kenworthy, a move which could pay off highly if either get an invite to Sochi this February.

With freeride skiers on board, the brand now had the credibility and chops to roll out some revolutionary new skis. In 2008, Chris Benchetler tested the first Bent Chetler prototypes—what would later become a top-selling big-mountain ski—while on a product-testing trip in Alaska with Daron Rahlves.

"I remember sitting around a picnic table at a heli operation with Chris Benchetler and Daron Rahlves discussing ski design and prototypes," Judd says. "It took global teamwork and a commitment to change, and over the next couple of years, we continued that spirit and continued to build the brand."

In 2012, Atomic introduced the Automatic, a big-mountain powder ski co-designed by Cattabriga-Alosa and Flahr. Again, the ski flew off the shelves.



The transition to freeride, it turned out, has been good for business. In 2007, Atomic was ranked eighth in retail dollars sold, and in 2013, it ranked second. Additionally, Atomic has been dominant among the top 20 best-selling skis at specialty retail stores over the past few years.

The success hasn't come without hurdles. "Our biggest challenge was getting people to believe and buy into our vision. You've got a brand that was sending one message to the skiing community and that was racing. We were out of touch with any other skiers, and frankly, our products just weren't cool," Judd says. "All I could do was keep preaching where we were headed and ultimately work with everyone to realize that vision."

Next up for Judd? He'll be taking what he learned at Atomic and applying it to its sister company Salomon. Last May, Judd became the vice president and regional commercial director for apparel at Salomon North America.

"Atomic is in great hands with guys and girls like Jake Strassburger, Ryan Hardy and Kathryn Smith here in the US, and I liked the idea of taking on a new challenge," Judd says. "Hopefully, we'll be able to make Salomon resonate with the North American consumer. I believe I learned how to do this at Atomic, and now, I hope to be able to utilize many of the same tactics in my new role."



# MIKE NICK

## A CHANGING OF THE GUARD

BY HENRIK LAMPERT

Mike Nick's involvement in the ski industry wasn't always as a businessman. The man is a true OG freeskiier with X Games medals and numerous ski flick appearances under his belt. He has more fun skiing than just about anyone you will ever meet and his unwavering passion for the sport is undeniable. What's special about Nick is that he effectively channels that passion to help steer Orage, maintaining its status as one of the most progressive brands in skiing.

A Guilderland, NY, native, Nick now lives in Burlington, VT, with his wife and two boys. When not on the road, he spends his days working in Orage's Burlington office, helping to fulfill the brand's mission set in place some 25 years ago by founders Eric D'Anjou and Evelyn Trempe: To blur the lines between technical outerwear and fashion while supporting the fun-loving nature of skiing.

Though Nick got his start in the industry as an athlete, his entrepreneurial spirit kicked in and led him to start his own clothing brand, Siver Cartel, not long after. "The industry had been run by the old guard for far too long," Nick explains. "I felt it was time for change. It was the young kids with a new vision who were shaking things up. I was a part of that movement as an athlete, and I wanted to go one step further to make an impact on the industry as a whole, with Siver, and my vision of the future of ski brands."

Nick continued to compete in the early 2000s while running his company, and his talent, experience and initiative landed him a spot on Orage's athlete roster where he and D'Anjou hit it off. "It wasn't long before Eric and I saw that even though we came from two very different backgrounds, we shared a strong passion to innovate skiing and the industry as a whole," says Nick. "We were destined to work side by side to accomplish our goals."

Siver Cartel was eventually sold to Coalition, the parent company of Orage, in 2002. Nick continued to run the brand alongside the one he skied for, until they were ultimately merged a few years later, holding on to the Orage name. He made sure the new Orage also held on to its personality, promoting the ideals of progression and fun. The infamous Orage Masters, an insane blend of outlandish shenanigans, disguised as an annual competition, was soon born and it exemplifies the brand perfectly. To this day, the event is still just a bunch of skiers out there having a good time, and Mike played a key role in bringing it to life.

Nick was climbing through the Orage ranks while the brand was still under Coalition's ownership, but he and D'Anjou, who had been bouncing around positions at the parent company, knew the brand had the potential to do more within the sport. During the winter of 2012-13, they decided to do something about it. "We came to the decision that Orage performs better when privately owned, Nick says. "He and I put together a plan to pursue a management buyout to reclaim the brand."

As co-owner, Nick now plays the role of VP of sales and marketing where his strategy is basic but effective. "The plan is to run a simpler business model," he says, "to make things enjoyable and have fun. There's really no secret to what we're trying to do. It's the passion of a group of like-minded people who share a common vision for skiing, product design and having fun doing what we do that makes Orage what it is."

While the business model isn't a secret, it's also not one that just anybody can achieve. It takes somebody who has an attachment, beyond the bottom line, to the world we live, work and play in. Nick has worked with Orage for 14 years now and believes the future is bright on all fronts. His mission is to deliver the Orage product and message to every type of ski consumer.

"Five years from now, I see us chest deep in pow, I see us in the park, I see us on groomers, I see us on the streets and in the resorts. We'll just continue to do the same thing we've always done: innovate through style."



Independent  
Homegrown  
Mountain Raised

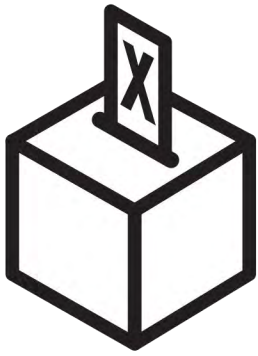
FLYLOWGEAR.COM



Started by a couple of skiers who  
imagined better gear for the mountains.







# READER RATED

## THE FREESKIER AUDIENCE RANKS THEIR FAVORITE PRINT ADS OF 2013

*"Did you see that K2 ad?"*

For people who deal in, or with, advertising, it's not often that any one particular piece stands out so much as to evoke a conversation. K2 was one of the companies that pulled it off this year.

We can all appreciate good creative, because we know the effort that goes into creating it. Teams of people spend countless hours honing their message through words and images. Sometimes it's a slow and steady process and other times it can be a simple stroke of genius. Either way, you get but a few seconds on the other end to make an impact on the viewer.

As a whole, the advertising creative submitted to *Freeskier* is top shelf. If not, we push back. We want to see advertisers create ads that will speak to the consumers they're targeting. Otherwise, it's a waste of money.

This year, we decided to ask the audience what they think. Our staff took a cross section of our favorite ads and surveyed the readers to see what resonated.

We asked folks to spend a moment analyzing each of our selections and assign a "stoke score" accordingly. The results yield four main takeaways as to what works well: athletes, perspective, honesty and humor. Six of the top-voted ads feature sponsored athletes utilizing the products or services being promoted. The common theme among them is compelling photography with unique perspectives—something that captures your attention.

The ads ranking second and third use honesty and humor, respectively. Faction features the iconic freeskier, Candide Thovex, paired with an authentic vibe that speaks to the reason we all started skiing in the first place. And the K2 spread, well, they went there and if you're going to go there, you need to go all the way. Because "pretty funny" doesn't get remembered.

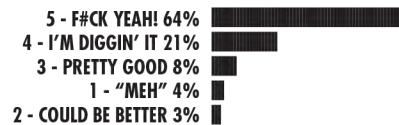
So go forth, advertisers, be unique, be compelling and make them laugh. Because the only way they're going to remember you is if you get them talking.

**WE ASKED READERS:  
IS THIS ADVERTISEMENT  
EFFECTIVE?  
I.E. DOES IT SPEAK TO YOU?**

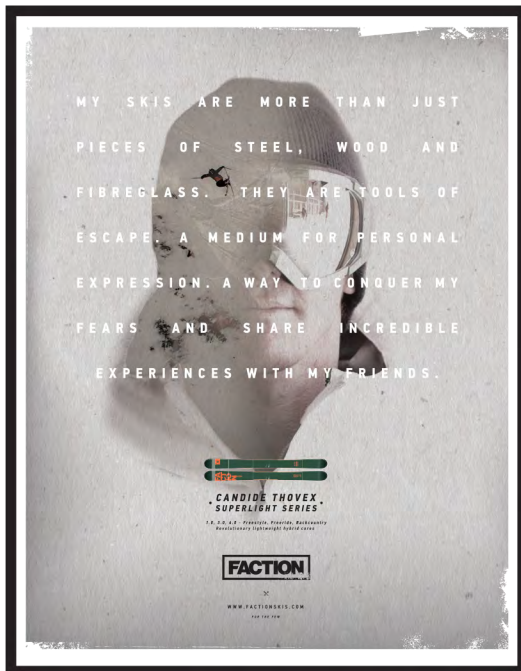
**5 POINTS — F#CK YEAH!  
4 POINTS — I'M DIGGIN' IT  
3 POINTS — PRETTY GOOD  
2 POINTS — COULD BE BETTER  
1 POINT — "MEH"**



## #1 GOPRO (7,065 POINTS) 1,634 VOTES

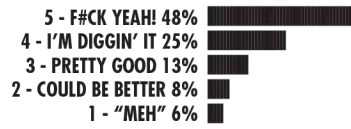


This GoPro advertisement, featuring athlete Tom Wallisch, is perhaps the most well-rounded ad we've showcased. It features a household-name athlete, demonstrates a fun, exciting way to use the product being advertised, and relates to the average consumer, as anyone can go out and get a good ol' selfie with their GoPro.



## #2 FACTION

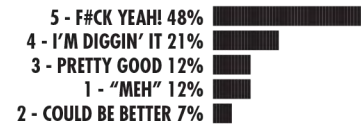
(6,153 POINTS) 1,550 VOTES



Faction draws upon the influence of the legendary Candide Thovex in its ad for the Candide Superlight Series. In this case, Faction relies heavily upon the athlete's sheer cool-factor. In promoting Candide's honest, simple message, they bring into play a certain relatability factor. The product shot? Tiny. The action? Downplayed. People envisioning Candide's idea of using the mountain as a canvas? Bingo.

## #3 K2

(5,519 POINTS) 1,442 VOTES



This K2 ad is likely the most talked about print advertisement of 2013/14. To have DJ Mullet lying provocatively in a tight, green spandex suit, whilst wearing K2's new boot, complete with a stab at the Lange ads of yore via the short caption, it's an all around win. The fact that this ad was presented as a fold-out certainly didn't hurt, either. When you go to buy new boots this year, DJ Mullet and that bright, green Pinnacle 130 will inevitably be seared into your memory.

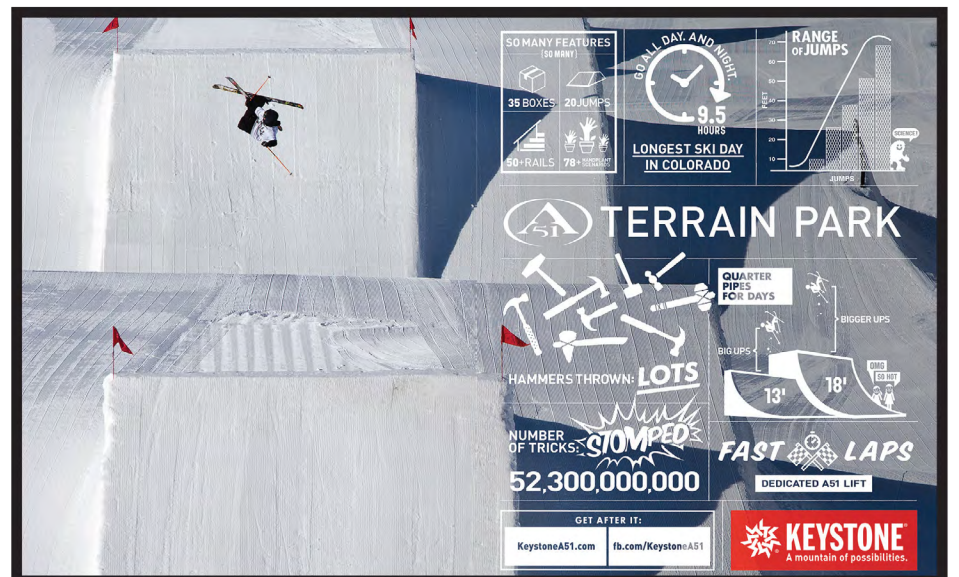


## #4 KEYSTONE

(4,444 POINTS) 1,231 VOTES



Who doesn't love a good infographic? Keystone Resort capitalizes on this "play with the page" idea in its A51 Terrain Park ad. Throw in some rad action, coupled with a showcasing of the perfectly groomed goods, and this advertisement is sure to resonate.



# #5 THE NORTH FACE

(4,384 POINTS) 1,126 VOTES



"Never Stop Exploring." The North Face brings this idea to the forefront in this ad for its Steep Series. The product shot is minimal, nor is Cattabriga-Alosa's name particularly played up. First thought? Alaska. Second thought? I want to go skiing there. After thought? When I do go, I'd be well equipped with Steep Series.

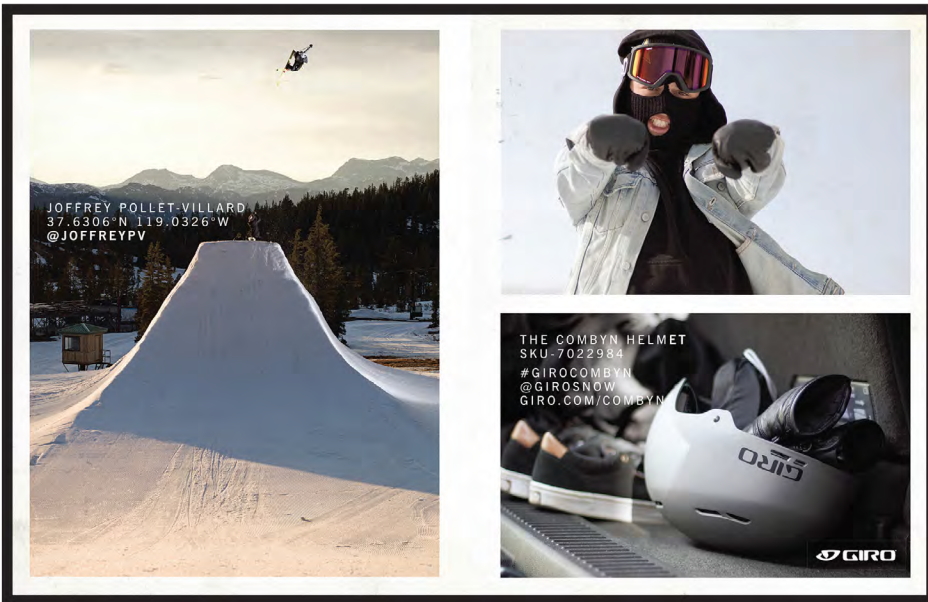


# #6 EIRA

(4,168 POINTS) 1,336 VOTES



Eira's mission: to be sustainable throughout all aspects of design and development. How to convey the message? Invite the reader to be a part of the gang. While Walker's action shot (right) is rad on its own, it's the series of images on the left that resonate most with our editors. It's about fun, it's about getting out there with your friends. And what's not to like about that? Eira also includes a call to action to "Join the conversation," citing three of its social outlets.



# #7 GIRO

(4,039 POINTS) 1,320 VOTES



There is a nice balance here. We've got extremely rad action on the left, a glimpse of JPV's personality in the top right, and a nice, well-presented shot of the product below that. "Oh, I totally pack my gloves into my helmet when I'm done skiing, too. And hey, those look a lot like my shoes..." Overall, this spread benefits from a clean, minimalistic design.

# #8 DAKINE

(3,920 POINTS) 1,345 VOTES



It's a similar story here: It's clean. We have a balance of spectacular action photography, emphasis on the product, and a portrait of the world-famous Tanner Hall. In this case, Dakine plays up the athlete a bit more, though. That "TANNER HALL" ain't exactly subtle. Folks will be quick to associate Dakine with a name like Hall. Chalk that up as a win.





## COMPANY SPOTLIGHT 2015

Now that you've digested 60 pages of products, people and ideas that define our industry, we'd like to present the icing on the cake. We invited our partners to showcase the latest and greatest products that they will be talking about in 2015. Here's a first look with the stories behind them.

**ANON**  
**ATOMIC**  
**EIRA**  
**K2**  
**ORAGE**  
**PHUNKSHUN**  
**PRET**  
**SALOMON**  
**SHRED/SLYTECH**  
**SMITH OPTICS**  
**WHITEDOT**





**A2 COLLECTION - M2 GOGGLE (IN DFK) + RODAN HELMET (IN SWERVE):** This pair is a seamless blend of style and technology. The goggle comes with a spare greybird lens and features Magna-Tech quick-change lens technology, Wall-to-Wall vision and full perimeter channel venting. The helmet features an ultra lightweight, in-molded polycarbonate shell with a Boa® fit system, and is Skullcandy™ ASFX audio compatible. **M2 \$240, RODAN \$130**

**WM1 (IN AUSTRALIS):** The WM1 builds on the popularity of the M1 and M2 goggles, with Magna-Tech quick-change lens technology in a women's-specific design. Spherical Lens Technology with Wall-to-Wall vision gives the user clarity and a wide field of view, while full perimeter channel venting, flush mount outriggers and triple layer face foam ensure comfort. Spare greybird lens included. **\$220**

**MIG + MIG FM (IN IMBEARASSED):** The all-new MIG goggle and facemask utilize magnetic technology to integrate facial and eye protection without hassle. This lightweight pair features triple layer face foam and Integral Clarity Technology to give its user a comfortable, stylish and worry-free day in the mountains. **\$190**



## LEADING THE CHARGE IN THE QUICK-CHANGE LENS REVOLUTION

anon., has become one of the most respected helmet and goggle brands on snow by virtue of relentless R&D and highly effective marketing. Its sought-after products use modern styling that speaks to today's athletes, and its high profile team, led by Michelle Parker and Eric Pollard, provides constant visibility among influential consumers.

In 2012, the company made a huge splash in the goggle market when it released the M1 goggle with patent-pending Magna-Tech. The technology is now considered by many to be the benchmark, as magnets in the lens and frame make swapping lenses a breeze.

"The M1 goggle changed the way that people think about quick-change lens technology," says Randy Torcom, global brand director. "We continued to build on that story with the launch of the M2 last year, now we've got a women's-specific model coming into the market." With WM1, anon. now has a well-rounded line and is moving to incorporate the magnetic technology into other accessories.

"Magna-Tech to this day is still the fastest [quick-change lens technology], on the market, and the easiest and most intuitive one to use as well," says Torcom. "We're also using the technology to figure out new and innovative ways to accessorize, particularly with our MIG goggle and

integrated facemask." The MIG is a new frameless design that utilizes magnets on the lower portion of the goggle to attach a polyester and spandex facemask.

In addition to its achievements in goggle technology, the company has moved up the ranks in helmet manufacturing. Among its offerings is the A2 Collection, which features men's, women's- and youth-specific helmet and goggle combinations that integrate seamlessly.

"What the A2 collection is all about is [making helmets] that we feel stand out the most, not just from an innovation and integration standpoint but also from an aesthetic standpoint," says Torcom. "anon. has historically, even when it was just a goggle company, hung its hat on being a fashion forward and stylistic brand, and the A2 Collection is a really good example of how that story and brand identity transcend into our helmet line."

This continued commitment to innovation, as well as a growing stable of athlete representatives, will ensure that anon. remains among the top brands in the game.

"We're all passionate riders, fully committed and dedicated to the success of the brand," says Torcom. "We're making huge investments to ensure that the evolution of our product development process continues to lead the charge."





## DEFINING A SKIING COMPANY

With a logo that's known the world over for adorning title-winning race skis, Atomic is a hardgoods company that needs little introduction. In recent years, the symbol has been increasingly seen on top of the harrowing spines of Alaskan mountains and airing its way through world-class terrain parks as the company embraces and contributes to the freeride category with skis like the Bent Chetler, Automatic, Punx and Infamous. This year, the Austrian brand makes another leap as it adds apparel to its extensive list of product offerings.

Before entering the crowded market, Atomic spent three years developing the line, knowing that its loyal but discerning customers would be expecting a certain standard of quality. When asked why the company wanted to enter the outerwear space, Kathryn Smith, consumer marketing manager for the brand, said research indicated that customers already thought of Atomic as a player in the apparel game. "This encouraged us even though we had not yet entered the space," says Smith. But in the end, it came down to the company's long-term goals. "Primarily, Atomic needed to execute on its strategy to go from a 'ski' company to a 'skiing' company."

The men's and women's collections consist of three tiers, each catering to a different type of skier and offering not only outerwear but a complete layering system—a fundamental part of the apparel equation that is missed by some consumers and manufacturers alike. Construction of the outerwear utilizes mainly Pertex, a stretchy, waterproof and breathable fabric, with Primaloft insulation and microfleece bringing warmth in the layering.

The first and most unique of the three tiers is Cliffline, which will appeal to the skier that wants the highest performance. "Cliffline focuses on the consumer segment we call the 'win consumer'," says Smith. "These folks have a very specific need from the products that they purchase." The centerpiece is an insulated, skiable midlayer that can be used about 80-percent of the time and then supplemented with a foldaway storm shell when harsh weather rolls in. The remainder of the time the shell is stored in a discrete back pocket.

The next tier, Ridgeline, focuses on what Atomic sees as the "achieve consumer"—one who doesn't need extreme performance but seeks versatility. The more traditional system uses shells pieces that are supplemented by primaloft and microfleece midlayers. Finally, Treeline hits the sweetspot for the "enjoy consumer." "Treeline is our insulated offering that taps into the need for ease of use," says Smith. These insulated pieces are perfect for the more casual, resort-focused skiers who still want high-quality gear.



ATOMIC

The faces of the new apparel campaign are long-time Atomic team member Darron Rahlves along with Dana Flahr who is the first athlete to be fully outfitted in Atomic gear from head to toe, and helped the company in refining the new outerwear. "I was working with them a bunch," he says of the testing process. "I checked [the pieces] out and gave them some feedback. When the next samples came in I grabbed them and went straight to Alaska. I'm pretty fired up on how they came out. Super lightweight, crazy comfortable and warm."

If Flahr can tackle his day job in these pieces then there's no doubt they will stand up to whatever abuse most people will throw at them. Atomic's time and attention to detail has paid off in this endeavor and the brand is sure to make waves as it steals some market share from the rest of the outerwear crowd.



**ATOMIC CLIFFLINE STORMFOLD JACKET:**

The Cliffline Stormfold Jacket features Atomic's radical new approach to layering. Stormfold technology offers a skiable midlayer with Pertex Shield+ 3L Stretch and Pertex Equilibrium, the Cliffline 3L is a wind resistant, waterproof and breathable pant ready to help you tackle the steep and deep. **\$400**

**ATOMIC CLIFFLINE 3L PANT:**

You want to go places and you want pants that can take you there. Enter the Cliffline 3L pant. Offering Pertex Shield+ 3L Stretch and Pertex Equilibrium, the Cliffline 3L is a wind resistant, waterproof and breathable pant ready to help you tackle the steep and deep. **\$400**

**ATOMIC RIDGELINE PRIMALOFT JACKET WITH HOOD:**

With this piece, Atomic has answered the age old question - "What is the perfect midlayer?" The Ridgeline Primaloft jacket with hood is a super light, insulated and water-resistant midlayer, featuring Pertex Microlight fabric with DWR treatment and Primaloft Silver insulation. The perfect jacket for every day on the slopes. **\$250**



# eira™



**WHITEOUT JACKET (WOMENS):** The Whiteout Jacket is designed to stand out. Made of 100 percent recycled poly with mechanical stretch, this 20K/20K jacket features YKK® Gold Mirror zips and a custom printed satin lining you've just gotta see. Available in a variety of colors, including this kick ass zebra print. **\$280**

## SUSTAINABLE STYLE

In Eira's short history, the brand has made a name for itself by striking a balance between technical outerwear and innovative style while bringing it all to fruition with sustainable materials. The idea for Eira was hatched by outerwear design veteran, Paul McGrath.

"Hanging around with the skiers and talking about the brands they were [wearing] and the things that they were into, it sounded to me like there was a hole in the market," says McGrath. "I've always wanted to do a brand for [freeskiers], to start something fresh and new—come at it very differently from a design aspect."

During his time in the industry, he had the opportunity to meet with pro skiers Peter Olenick, Joe Schuster and Ian Cosco. The relationships he forged with them would end up solidifying their places as the first team riders for the Canadian brand and also allow free-flowing communication between the business and the athletes, something that ensures riders' feedback shows up in the designs. "Working with Eira has been amazing," says Schuster. "I've had more input with the [outerwear] design and overall appearance of the brand than with anyone else I have worked with."

The company's formative years saw production of solely men's clothing, but with that line well-established, the brand is now making its foray into women's outerwear this year. McGrath says Eira's vision with the women's line is simple, to take styling cues from women's street wear and accessories and implement it into technical outerwear. Bold colors and prints are rampant through the collection and one of the pieces, the Whiteout jacket, features gold mirror zippers along with a custom printed satin lining. Multiple color options in the jacket are sure to make a splash, while its 20K/20K rating provides ultimate protection from the elements.



On the men's side, Eira continues to focus on street style in outerwear. This year, Eira's designs concentrate on subtleties like pocket placement, for instance, developing hidden on-seam pockets around the torso, such as those you would see in a bomber jacket, and implementing them in the all-new Lodge jacket. The Lodge also boasts 60 grams of Primaloft insulation with a 20K/20K rating, and McGrath credits athlete input with helping achieve this balance of style and functionality. Eira team riders are encouraged to continually provide feedback, good or bad, in order to ensure that the brand stays true to its mission of producing quality-driven, technical outerwear. "The athletes are helping all of the time," he says, "from a function standpoint and a style standpoint."

The new products also remain loyal to Eira's sustainability message; the Whiteout is made of 100-percent recycled polyester, and the Lodge features Primaloft Silver Insulation Eco, which utilizes post-consumer recycled materials.

While fashion and function sell product, the company takes a strong position on sustainability, believing that a commitment to the environment is what will ensure success for the brand, and industry as a whole. "I think that's where the industry should be heading anyway—the sport we love needs the environment," says McGrath. "It's a really big priority for us."

eira



#### WOMENS NORTHERN

**SHELL (FAR LEFT):** The Northern Shell is the perfect blend of femininity and technology. The Shocking Pink jacket, with Faded Rose colored YKK® Aqua Guard® zips, is a classic fit, regular length shell made of 100 percent nylon and rated at 20K/20K. It features a droptail silhouette as well as zippered sleeve pockets and also works as a system jacket when paired with the Eira Solitude Liner. **\$260**

#### MENS LODGE JACKET:

The 20K/20K Lodge jacket is a team favorite. It's filled with 60 g of Primaloft Silver Eco insulation, supporting Eira's sustainability focus, and features fully taped seams along with creative pocket design. This jacket will keep you warm and dry, no matter the conditions. **\$290**



## BUILDING BOOTS FOR THE MODERN SKIER

Having been in business for over five decades, K2 could have easily lost touch with the modern skier. However, through tireless innovation and a fun-loving company culture, the brand remains at the forefront of the industry. Its latest endeavor, a new line of ski boots, has been quite well received for a number of reasons.

Almost all ski boots were born from a race-boot mold and mentality, and despite monumental changes in ski design and skier technique, most ski boots look fairly similar to their 20-year-old ancestors. The designers at K2 thought it was time to switch things up a little.

"The whole purpose of the [traditional] boot was to pressure the tips and tails for edge grip," says Mike Gutt, K2's global marketing manager. "As skis have evolved, we're skiing a more upright stance, and rather than driving the tips or the tail, we're engaging the whole edge and the surface area of the ski."

And while race-inspired boots are designed for optimum performance on perfectly groomed, hard snow, today's skier seeks different types of terrain and features, most of which aren't smooth.

It's what K2 calls E3 (Energy Efficiency Engineering) Philosophy. Whereas traditional riveted boots connect the upper cuff and the lower shell with a fixed, hard metal contact point, K2's new boots connect the two pieces by interlocking TPU materials that stretch cooperatively to promote fluid, natural flex. It's a dynamic power transfer made for skiing any conditions, not just the racecourse. A Y-shaped spine design on the back of the boot adds strength and power to the interlocked area.

For 2014-15, every boot in the line features Intuition foam in the lower half of the liners (read: comfort and warmth), while the upper cuff's collar and tongue offer the performance benefits of a traditional liner.

The SpYne 130, part of the all-mountain collection, is K2 athlete Andy Mahre's go to. "The SpYne technology offers better power transfer than riveted boots, which is a key element in making precise maneuvers," says Mahre. "I also like the fact that everything is removable, so it's very easy to custom fit or replace parts."

Mahre has also spent time in the Pinnacle 130 boot, K2's flagship freeride boot with uphill capabilities. "They ski very



similar to the SpYne but have a walk mode and tech fittings in the toe, making them a more versatile boot."

"A lot of [alpine touring] boots out there are basically an alpine boot with a walk feature," says Gutt. "They've taken out the rivets and exchanged them for a walking mechanism. We didn't have existing molds, so we started from scratch."

The main selling point on the Pinnacle is a mechanism on the rear portion of the boot called "Synchro Interlock" which locks the shell in both the fore and aft direction to deliver 100 percent of the promised flex index when engaged or a wide range of motion when disengaged. The three-buckle design, along with a convenient Velcro-less top power buckle invented by guide and global director for K2's adventure category Mike Hattrup, keep the boot's weight down. Integrated tech fittings mean the boot can drive a modern DIN-alpine binding or a tech binding system.

"The boots are selling really well," says Gutt. "It's still early, but the momentum is huge." And if there's one thing K2 knows, it's how to keep the momentum going.



### PINNACLE 130:

FLEX: 130 LAST: 97MM(LV) AND 100MM

The Pinnacle 130 returns to the men's Freeride collection, featuring the same award-winning design, but with the addition of a wider, more durable third buckle. The Pinnacle 130 utilizes Integrated tech fittings and Synchro Interlock walk-mode and INTUITION® liners with Tour Flex Notches to provide comfortable uphill capabilities without compromising downhill performance. **\$850**



**ROUTE:**

At 320 grams, the highly ventilated Route debuts as the lightest snow sports helmet in the world, while ensuring a proper fit with the Boa® 360 Wrap Fit System. It features seamless integration with goggles such as the new semi-frameless K2 PhotoAncic and passes industry safety certifications for ski and bike. **\$150**

**SHREDITOR 92:**

**DIMENSIONS:** 124/92/118 **SIZES:** 163, 170, 177, 184

The new Shreditor 92 is perfect for versatile skiers who shred the park, frontside groomers and backside powder. This maneuverable twin tip draws influence from K2'S freeride and freestyle categories, and features All-Terrain Rocker with tapered tips/tails for switch or regular skiing, and predictability in all conditions. **\$600**



## DEDICATED TO SKIERS THEN, NOW AND FOREVERMORE

Orage's beginnings were modest and honest. In 1989, a business student at the University of Québec in Montréal began crafting waterproof ski jackets and pants. She made gear for herself, her friends and the university ski team. Her name was Evelyn Trempe, and it didn't take long before she and her beau, Eric D'Anjou, began selling the goods out of her car on the streets of Montréal. The duo shared the common goal of redefining what ski outerwear could be—they looked to blur the lines between urban-styled and technically proficient outerwear. And so Orage was born.

Today, as one of few ski-specific brands, Orage continues to fulfill that vision and has expanded to include offices in both Montreal, QC and Burlington, VT. In addition to outerwear, the company now produces mid- and baselayers, accessories and casual wear that stake their claim not only on high quality but unique style. This combination has propelled Orage into the hearts of skiing's core fans as well as more than 500 stores worldwide. "The support these [retailers] have shown our brand over the years is where our responsibility lies," says Mike Nick, vice president of marketing and sales. "It's our job to find ways to improve their business, which in turn benefits everyone."

Part of improving the retail side is providing an authentic product. Nick, a former Orage athlete, explains what it takes to deliver that. "A lot of it comes from your gut," he says. "We're conscious of what's going on around us and what other brands are doing, and we have a strong sense of skiing's history, but a lot of what we do is based on what feels right to us. Retailers look to Orage for something fresh in their stores. Skiers look to us to show them a good time, and our athletes expect us to keep pushing the limits of product design."

The athletes are a vital part of that product design. Whether it's the input of Andrew Whiteford on a highly technical piece such as the Seven Prolite jacket or Phil Casabon on the extra durable B-Dog jacket, it's vital to have that feedback.

But at the end of the day, Orage knows that producing the right products is a balancing act. "The trick is to be able to filter through what the athletes are

asking for and what the market is asking for," says Nick. "Technical ski wear is where we hang our hat, but we know what's up. We've always worked hard to blur the lines between street style and slope style."

What the market is asking for now is a variety of technical pieces that don't look so technical. Skiers want to be able to switch up outfits and take them from being on the hill to hanging out downtown. That translates to an expansion of the Orage line to include a larger fall outerwear collection, more layering pieces and lifestyle clothing to round it all out.

Another part of serving the retailers and the brand itself is to present and maintain a vibrant image. Orage maintains one of progression and lightheartedness. "We're in this thing to have fun. You can't take it too seriously. We're just sliding on snow," says Nick.

To that end, the company continues its infamous Orage Masters this spring. The somewhat-annual event is dubbed the "anti-comp" and has one rule: no rules. Somehow, a winner is crowned, but the important takeaway is that everybody who goes, doesn't want to leave, and everybody who wasn't there, wishes they were.

The event "is our way of rolling our brand up into a ball and throwing it out there for the world to see," Nick explains. And what the world should see is a brand that is driven by passion and honesty, with ideals that ensure it will continue to thrive in an industry that rewards authenticity.





**DEAL JACKET (WOMEN'S):** Inspired by Orage team rider Tatum Monod we introduce the Deal jacket in 2014. A strategically seam sealed, Prime 10 insulated canvas jacket featuring a unique "boyfriend fit" with just enough room, and a long ladylike silhouette. With a printed interior, a unique expandable collar and perfect pocket placement the Deal is the real deal. **\$330**

**RETALLACK JACKET (MEN'S):** Orage has been building jackets with the Retallack guide crew for six years now. The crew takes pride in relentlessly pounding on their gear and Orage takes pride in knowing that after five months of day in and day out field testing their jackets come out with only a scratch or two from a tree snag or a grease smear. More importantly, Orage remains Retallack's outerwear of choice. **\$400**

**REPUBLIC JACKET (MEN'S):** If it's the warmth of a tropical island beach rug that you're looking for while slaying pow in the dead of winter, the Republic jacket is your new best friend. Coming in both insulated and shell versions, you can pick your poison and battle old man winter with style. **\$250 shell / \$300 insulated**

# PHUNKSHUN WEAR

## FACEMASKS



### PROTECTION TO HELP YOU LAST LONGER

Whether it's hiking a ridge on a windy day or braving the streets in the cold of night, keeping the mug protected is a huge part of any skier's battle with the elements. Though, when Jacob Levy wanted a facemask that balanced fashion and function, he couldn't find anything that fit the bill. So he decided to sew a few of his own. After a couple of years and a lot of positive feedback, he teamed up with his friend Lanny Goldwasser and formed Phunkshun Wear in 2009.

Eventually, they converted one of the bedrooms in their Silverthorne, CO, condo into a mini manufacturing facility and ramped up production. "[Levy and Goldwasser] said, 'We see a potential here and see product that can take off and will take off, but we need to put the right people in place,'" says current CEO Jay Badgely.

Badgely was brought on as marketing manager in 2012 to bring a bit of business savvy to the company and was promoted to CEO soon after. He now oversees the day-to-day operations of the company.

Those operations include building facemasks with high-quality materials, such as the anti-microbial mesh (great for preventing odor and wetness) in the DL Trunk facemask and the Merino wool (a natural, temperature-regulating material) in the all-new Convertible Ballerclava. "We're extremely diligent and have really high standards to hit," says Badgely. "Putting in the time and having a product that stands above and beyond what else is out there is what really makes it worth it for us."

The masks not only perform well, they exude fun for anyone who wears them or sees them on the hill. The unique graphics and patterns range from bold graphics like gas masks and rainbow zebra stripes to more subtle designs like snow camo and chain mail. "The graphics are fun," says Badgely. "There's something for everybody, whether it be toned down or ridiculously loud and bright."

While the traditional consumer side of the company is growing, the brand is also capitalizing on the production of custom facemasks, an idea that Goldwasser says is big business. Phunkshun has recently produced custom masks for companies such as Salomon, GoPro and Rossignol. These custom jobs have expanded from collaborations with a select few companies to retailers now ordering branded facemasks. "It's really cool when you have a retail shop that has a local following. They're proud to display [the facemask] to their customers," says Badgely.

All this success now has the owners' sights set on international expansion, starting with the 2014 ISPO tradeshow, where they will present the same, fun-loving brand image that has done so well in the US. "Our strategy is to find distribution partners that aren't just getting the product in and moving it as quickly as they can, and not supporting the retailer, or the company," says Badgely. "We want people who are involved in the sport and believe in the product."

The company was founded upon a passion for being on snow and in an effort to keep people on snow longer, and that commitment to the skiing can only work in Phunkshun's favor as they move forward. "We are mountain folk, no matter where we may be located at a certain time," says Badgely. For us it's not just a job, it's a passion."

**SL (SINGLE LAYER) TALL TRUNK:** *UPF 50+, Anti-Microbial, Moisture Wicking.* Built from a polyester and spandex blend, the SL Tall utilizes a mesh-style fabric to provide unparalleled breathability while still protecting you from harmful ultraviolet rays. Say goodbye to overheating and foggy eyewear. **\$20**





**CONVERTIBLE MERINO BALLERCLAVA® (LEFT):** *Naturally Wicking, UPF 40+, Odor Resistant.* We combined Merino wool with our new Convertible Ballerclava®. The result? A mask made from temperature-regulating, natural fabric with a hinged construction, providing increased functionality for the wearer. Basically, this mask rocks. **\$45**



**DL (DOUBLE LAYER) TRUNK:** *Water Repellent, UPF 50+, Anti-Microbial, Moisture Wicking.* The Double Layer Trunk features an outer layer of polyester and spandex, treated with a DWR application to repel water, ice, and snow. The inner layer is an anti-microbial mesh that prevents odor and wicks sweat. These two layers create a neutral air zone between fabrics, keeping the temperature inside your mask comfortable. **\$25**





# pret

## FLIPPING PROTECTION ON ITS HEAD

Pret helmets was started four years ago by a group of ski industry veterans who came together in Park City, UT, with a common goal: to create better performing and better looking helmets through reduced weight, improved ventilation, a custom-fit system and clean aesthetics.

"There wasn't really anything in the market that was super light and comfortable. Everything kind of fit but wasn't perfect," says co-founder and VP of sales and marketing, Mark Featherstone. "So we got together, put a bunch of money in the [pot] and started designing."

Pret prides itself on a reduced helmet profile thanks to simplicity in design. The helmets have a narrower shell than most on the market, something that Pret believes makes the helmet safer because of the closer fit. "Because the shell of the helmet is more narrow, there needs to be less fit material inside of it," says Ephraim Learned, the company's Colorado sales rep. "The consumer is constantly talking about how it looks good, where they're used to seeing themselves with a round helmet that looks considerably bigger."

Each helmet includes a fit system that allows up to four centimeters of adjustment. "The fit system is attached much further back in the helmet than what's been standard," says Learned. "So that does a really good job of cradling the back of your head and holding the helmet very securely."

Another nice feature is the Fidlock SNAP buckle on the chin strap. Utilizing magnets as opposed to the traditional buckle designs, the system makes for far less fumbling around.

"The whole point is just to be able to have one-handed operation, even while wearing your glove or mitt," says Learned. "We're usually raging [down the mountain] to keep up with each other, and instead of having to take your gloves off and find the two ends of the strap, you can just grab that and kind of get it close to the other end and have it attach automatically."

In addition to a quality product, the success Pret has had is due in large part to its focus on relationships with athletes and shops. The company targeted personable and talented people such as Brant

Moles and Caroline Gleich to represent the brand, and then put helmets on the shelves of respected shops like Granite Chief in Truckee, CA; Cole Sports in Park City, UT; and Jackson Hole Sports in Jackson Hole, WY.

"We wanted key shops in key areas—market leaders," says Featherstone. "So when people walk into that shop, there's no question that the product in that shop is good."

The strategy has been working and the reception, for such a young company, has been welcoming. With this solid foundation laid, you can expect the brand's market share to increase quickly over the next few years.



P // WISSMAN

**CARBON EFFECT (LEFT):** The highest performing helmet in the Pret lineup, the Carbon Effect provides completely adjustable ventilation for all conditions. It features 13 external vents, 19 internal vents and VTT3—the best temperature control system available. Lightweight and compact, the helmet features the new ACT technology construction and the RCS fit system. **\$250**



**CYNIC:** Deceptively simple, clean, and capable. The Cynic is perfect for park, backcountry or big mountain pursuits. Front intake vents and internal channels feed the perfect amount of fresh air through the helmet and remove excess heat for optimal temperature control. **\$100**

**pret**



**LID/KID LID:** The Lid is a simple, lightweight and low profile helmet. It features a best-in-class fit system and great ventilation features, amounting to pure function. The Kid Lid has all the same features but is sized specifically for kids. Lid: **\$80**  
Kid Lid: **\$75**



## EXPANDING THE SOFT SIDE WITH A NEW LINE OF BACKCOUNTRY-ORIENTED APPAREL



Salomon has long been a dominant player in the hardgoods game, and while it's been in the apparel business for a number of years, the focus has been primarily on downhill performance—until now. This year, Salomon's Quest line, a name first given to their touring-enabled boots, now includes a variety of outerwear pieces dedicated to those who like to go up to get down.

"The Quest line blends Salomon's authentic ski heritage with the versatility of outdoor products to build the best gear for adventure-minded skiers," says Jordan Judd, VP of apparel and gear for Salomon North America.

The line culminates with the Quest BC collection, which includes jackets, pants and midlayers, and is built for the skier who spends roughly 20-percent of his or her time skiing uphill. "It's for the backcountry skier who wants high-end, technical fabrics and lightweight layering systems but still wants their products featured for skiing," says Judd.

Salomon's most technical kit, the Soulquest BC GTX 3L jacket and pants, includes a fit technology called MotionFit. Salomon's unique tailoring and pattern-engineering system strives for maximum freedom of movement through extensive mapping of the human anatomy. The R&D team spent three years studying and analyzing the body's various movement and angles while skiing. Salomon's designers used the research to develop apparel that provides the mobility that backcountry and big-mountain skiers need. The technology was launched in one jacket and pant last year and is now used in more than 80 models across Salomon's alpine skiing, nordic skiing, outdoor and endurance product categories. "Not all jackets and pants move with you the same way," says Judd. "With MotionFit, you don't feel it tugging and pulling at you while ski."



Salomon recently signed ski mountaineer Andreas Fransson to the apparel team. He is part of Salomon's Mountain Collective, a group of athletes, engineers, developers, designers and artists whose expertise, ideas and feedback Salomon relies on. The Chamonix-based, Swedish skier will wear the Soulquest kit while he skis some of the world's most technical lines, and he'll go on to help build and test the next evolution of Salomon apparel. He lives less than an hour from the company's apparel-lab in Annecy, where he builds prototypes and sends athletes out to immediately test the gear. A daily occurrence. The "S-Lab" has been used to create apparel in the past, but the Quest BC line is the first alpine ski apparel that's undergone this rigorous testing process which the company reserves for its highest-end, most technical and innovative products.

Chris Rubens, a Revelstoke, BC-based skier who has been with Salomon for more than ten years, is also a part of the Mountain Collective and wearing the Soulquest BC GTX jacket and pant. "It's one of the best three-layer Gore-Tex suits on the market," says Rubens, who wears the kit both in and out of bounds. "The pockets are just where I want them, and there's nothing extra to get in the way. It's lightweight and packable, and the fit is designed specifically for the ergonomics of skiing. The clothing feels loose, without being too baggy and cumbersome."

As the sport evolves, so will Salomon's apparel strategy, says Judd. "You will see Salomon look to provide technical, versatile outerwear and layering solutions that meet the demands of the ever-changing conditions and terrain skiers encounter."



S / D / S // GUNDBERSON L // JAPAN

**SALOMON SOULQUEST BC DOWN JACKET:** The warmth of 600 fill, water repellent down teams up with the protection and construction offered by Pertex Shield, Advanced Skin Active Dry and Smartskin to create the Soulquest BC Down Jacket. This high performance backcountry jacket is designed in collaboration with Salomon's top athletes. **\$550**

**SALOMON SOULQUEST BC GTX 3L JACKET:** If big lines and technical descents are what you like to ski, then the Soulquest BC GTX 3L is the jacket for you. Featuring 3L Gore-Tex Pro protection and MOTIONfit technology, the Soulquest is a super technical jacket offering pro level features, fabrics and fit. **\$600**

**SALOMON SOULQUEST BC GTX 3L PANT:** Designed in collaboration with Salomon's top athletes, the Soulquest BC GTX 3L pant is a pro level, technical backcountry piece that boasts 3L Gore-Tex protection, MOTIONfit technology and knee articulation, making it perfect for big climbs, steep turns and deeps days. **\$500**

# SHRED

## SLYTECH

Founded by professional skier Ted Ligety and self-proclaimed "product geek" Carlo Salmini, Shred/Slytech was born of a mutual love for getting rad in the mountains. Equally important to the founders is a desire to create products that meet the needs of world-class athletes, from slopestyle shredders to big mountain slayers. Shred/Slytech gives the athletes what they want, in terms of style and performance, and has been working its way onto our readers' radars via bold advertisements and a strong team roster.

A professional athlete himself, Ligety knows a thing or two about what skiers demand in their daily pursuits and is able to pinpoint specific needs for the end consumer, as well as test the gear in the harshest of conditions. Along with Ligety, the brand has names such as Oscar Sherlin, Duncan Adams and Lupe Hagearty on the team roster and utilizes its entire team to distill products to the highest level.

The athletes' feedback falls upon the ears of Shred/Slytech's capable engineers, who provide high-tech solutions for producing top of the line safety and performance gear. The company holds special connections to research institutions and labs such as those at MIT, where two of the co-owners earned their MBAs. The combination of these relationships as well as those with athletes, ensures the products maintain a delicate balance of style and performance.

For 2014-15, Shred brings the Smartefy Shrastawood goggle to the table, complete with NoDistortion lens technology. The dual spherical lens features a small internal valve that equalizes pressure variation caused by changes in altitude and prevents warping and distortion while simultaneously filtering moisture. The NO BS quick-change lens replacement system also provides easy swapping of the lenses when the weather calls for it.

Slytech brings huge advancements to the safety arena this year with the introduction of 2nd Skin XT, found in both the Backpro XT Lite back protector and Slam-Cap

helmet. The foam used in the Backpro XT Lite provides the utmost in dynamic, shock-absorbing protection while remaining comfortable enough for the user to wear all day. The lightweight Slam-Cap uses the 2nd Skin XT foam in conjunction with a honeycomb cone structure to laterally diffuse impact force for an unparalleled level of protection.

While the bevy of Slytech's protective products is serious business, Shred and Slytech have found their own unique personalities. "Both brands quickly found their own individual identities that were molded by the demands of high-level snow athletes: Shred Optics maintains its no-compromises approach to the unification of style and performance, while Slytech Protection has rejected conventional norms to push safety and comfort levels to the limit through unparalleled technology," said Fede Merle, CMO. The snow-sports industry has never before seen such a rare alliance of style and performance or safety and comfort; or at least it has never been clearly achieved.

Going forward, Shred/Slytech will continue its mission in "finding what's missing," as Salmini puts it. "We are not necessarily adapting to a landscape constantly in flux but rather being true to who we are because that is what will keep fueling our growth, momentum and success."



**SHRED SMARTIFY SHRSTAWOOD:**

Stacked with style and technology, the Smartify unleashes a fury against conformity. Our complementary second spherical-lens goggles feature a universal fit approved for medium-small faces, our NODISTORTION™ lens technology and NO BS™ Lens Replacement System, and are crafted to cast light upon the path of progression. **\$179**

**SHRED SLAM-CAP YARDSALE:**

True progression can only be born out of innovation and the Slam-cap is nothing but revolutionary. It is an in-molded helmet with an embedded layer of the new Slytech NOSHOCK™ Honeycomb Cone Structure, born from SLYTECH 2nd SKIN™ XT within the injected EPS foam. The Slam-cap dissipates impact forces laterally to provide one of the safest, lightest, and most comfortable helmets on the market. It also exceeds CE EN1077/B and ASTM F2040 standards. **\$179**

**SLYTECH BACKPRO XT LITE:**

Our traditional back protector is far from standard, using an updated and improved SLYTECH 2ND SKIN™ XT formula, we have fundamentally altered the standard by which all protection gear will be measured. By improving the comfort and dynamic nature of the compound without altering the safety performance, we are once again able to push the boundaries of safety and comfort while exceeding the highest European safety standards. **\$199**



## EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY MEETS INSPIRED DESIGN

It was the early 60s when Ketchum, Idaho orthodontist Bob Smith started using his dental tools to tinker with foam and glue in hopes of creating a better goggle. His friends helped him build prototypes around the kitchen table and ultimately he created the first goggle with a sealed thermal lens and breathable vent foam. In 1965, Smith Optics, Inc. was founded.

Ingenuity is still a core value at Smith, where employees ski and bike on their lunch break. "There's a dawn patrol mission every day," says Cassie Abel, communications manager. "We're using the products and constantly providing feedback to product managers who are also out there. We live the life we preach."

Over the last 50 years, Smith Optics has contributed a myriad of important features and technologies to the goggle world. One such contribution came seven years ago, when the company introduced the first rimless, interchangeable-lens goggle. Founded on fit, flexibility and ventilation, it has succeeded as a top seller. This year, Smith releases the I/O 7, which the company says is the ultimate in minimalist performance. The features have evolved to include a single-pivot quick release, AirEvac Integration technology and Facial Geometry frame design, which all contribute to the original goals of the goggle. For the price-conscious consumer, the company is also introducing the semi-rimless Squad goggle which uses Carbonic-X mirrored lenses to offer a large field of view for \$80.



S // CATTABRIGA-ALOSA P // FISHER TOR L // NEACOLA RANGE, AK



Helmet compatibility was important to Smith even before they started making helmets five years ago. "Everyone had a gaper gap, including myself" says Abel. "We pride ourselves on the ultimate integration system. It's low profile, it fits well and the vents align with the goggle to help with airflow." Now, Smith helmets share top market space in the category.

Smith's latest helmet release is the Vantage with Aerocore, which uses Koroyd®, an impact-resistant material that provides a 30-percent reduction in energy transmission compared to traditional EPS foam. The helmet features four strips of the material to offer additional protection around the vents. "For backcountry folks, it's super lightweight and well ventilated," says Abel.

Lastly, Smith's I/D Collection (Inspired Design) matches Smith athletes with the internal design team and outside artists to create some of its most popular designs. "Many brands design a product and slap an athlete's name on it," says Abel. "We talked with our athletes in depth about their style of riding and their desires to make sure they were paired with the right artist."

Sage Cattabriga-Alosa designed his own artwork for this season's Signature I/O goggle, the Sage Metatron. Inspired by a trip to Alaska, he designed his "Space Spines" artwork to depict a surreal mountain landscape in varying hues of green. Cattabriga-Alosa pursued a fine arts degree before his skiing career took off, and he was happy to join the Inspired Design program two years ago and put his digital artwork to use on a new canvas.

"After being on the team for a bunch of years, it seemed really fitting to take my involvement to a further level," says Cattabriga-Alosa. "To sit with the designers, to go through my abstract digital work and see what works best on a goggle—it felt like a good evolution. It's exciting seeing it on the mountain."

Just as Bob Smith relied on his friends to provide feedback on those earliest prototypes, Smith Optics relies on its athletes for design inspiration and performance testing today.

"The athletes are an extension of our family," says Abel. "Inspired Design was another way to incorporate our athletes into our products. The project turned out some of our most popular designs."





**I/O 7:** Seven years ago, Smith revolutionized goggles by introducing the first rimless, interchangeable one to the world. Today the company introduces the next level in rimless interchangeability with the I/O 7. While others have chosen to sacrifice fit, flexibility, and ventilation to incorporate more parts, more weight, and more gimmicks, the I/O 7 features Single-Pivot Quick Release, AirEvac Integration technology, and Facial Geometry frame design for the ultimate in minimalist performance. **\$225**



**VANTAGE:** Using AEROCORE™ construction, featuring Koroyd®, the Vantage simultaneously maximizes full coverage protection and increased airflow. It also offers the Boa® FS360 fit system with a 360° halo design for a custom fit and combines all of this with the Smith-pioneered AirEvac technology for goggle integration. The Vantage delivers the perfect blend of technology and style. **\$220**

**SQUAD (BELOW):** Taking a page from the spherical Vice and Virtue models, the Squad brings semi-rimless technology and our premium, molded Carbonic-X Mirrored lenses to our Cylindrical Series. Massive field of view and excellent helmet compatibility are but a few of the weapons in the Squad's quiver. **\$80**

S // BROWN P // JORENSEN MSP L // KIRKWOOD, CA







# whitedot

## GAINING TRACTION THROUGH INNOVATION

Whitedot has been pushing the envelope of ski construction since being founded in 2007. The five owners all share the integral roles of developers and testers as they create skis that are catered to forward-thinking athletes. Having gained a loyal contingent of followers in its early days, the company's flexibility and commitment to innovation keeps it growing every year.

With only five members, the smaller scale operation allows flexibility in the decision-making processes that may not be a luxury of larger, more layered companies.

"Being a small company, it's really quite easy for us to be agile," says co-founder Mark Perkins. "As soon as we see a bit of technology that works, we can always bring it in, prototype it and then look to consolidate that opportunity as it presents itself. Some of these large companies can't really do that because of the way they're organized."

As part of its company ethos, Whitedot focuses on what it terms "Purity of Purpose" and "Clarity of Design" in order to ease the ski selection process. The company features very simple top sheet graphics that put emphasis on the ski design itself, highlighting its shape and construction. This helps shop employees sell the skis based on tangible, structural evidence, without rainbows and unicorns getting in the way.

"The guy in the shop doesn't have to explain the ski. You're almost drawn to the ski that suits you, naturally," says Perkins. "We want the skier to be able to just walk up to the rack and pick their skis or see them on the mountain and say, 'OK I can see what's going on with that ski.'"

The newest addition to Whitedot's fleet, the CarbonLite series, is a collection of previous models rebuilt with new materials to create a lighter and more durable ski. "The CarbonLite [series] evolved from exploiting new technologies and being able to use carbon Kevlar instead of fiberglass and resin," says co-founder Adam Gorrill. "And also, using organic materials such as flax, as a dampener, to complement the carbon Kevlar, [gives] a nice, natural feel to the ski."

Now five years into the endeavor, the founders have a firm grasp on their ideal ski construction and a growing confidence in the products they are bringing to market. "If we just had to make skis, it would be easy," says Perkins. "If it was just skiers making skis, then we could just put our feet up. The challenge is to sell the skis, for one, and market the skis properly."

whitedot

The company's initial efforts were built upon a grassroots following. "We purposely started with the underground network, particularly in Europe," says Perkins. "We tried to use all of our marketing funds to actually push pro riders and our social networks, and now that we're starting to go a little bit bigger, we can look to explore more traditional methods."

Perkins and his colleagues understand that continued success needs to come from more than just a solid product, but also from increased visibility in the industry. With the former in place, the company will continue to charge forward on all fronts and bring



ALL MODELS SHOWN IN TRADITIONAL CONSTRUCTION

**PREACHER** (AVAILABLE IN TRADITIONAL / CARBONLITE CONSTRUCTION)  
169cm, 179cm, 189cm

This ski will accommodate the most experienced of skiers while taking first time off-piste skiers to new realms. The Preacher offers plenty of flotation in deep powder while the positive camber and full length torsional stiffness offer incredible edge grip. It was designed with a 155mm wide tip to allow for a weight-forward stance and ease of turn initiation, as well as a tapered tip to avoid hooking in the soft stuff. **\$898 / \$1248**

**RANGER** (AVAILABLE IN TRADITIONAL / CARBONLITE CONSTRUCTION)  
168cm, 177cm, 186cm, 195cm

The Ranger is Whitedot's most versatile all-mountain ski and the ideal choice for both groomed trails and backcountry terrain. The performance profile is great for both longer radius turns on groomed trails and aiding in ski touring along steep ascents to reach the deepest corners of glacier environments. The CNC'd aluminium tail can also double up as a Pick whilst building anchors and assessing terrain. **\$898 / \$1248**

**REDEEMER** (AVAILABLE IN TRADITIONAL / CARBONLITE CONSTRUCTION)  
180cm, 190cm

As Whitedot's flagship powder ski, the Redeemer is an adaptable and dependable friend in the big mountains. The rider-influenced design is often spotted at the front of the lift line, ready for first tracks, with the 128mm waist offering plenty of float and Whitedot's trademark, full-length torsional stiffness providing a solid ride. Add in full tip and tail rocker profile and you've got a truly versatile ski. **\$936/\$1276**



# SPOON TECHNOLOGY

*Expands Into the Deep* 

Since the Spoon's award-winning debut at the SIA and ISPO tradeshows in 2011, it has gone through six design iterations and evolved into a transformative deep snow ski. Inspired by the performance upgrade that spooning offers, in 2013, we took the most innovative elements of the Spoon and applied them to our other deep snow skis: the Lotus 120 and Lotus 138.



In 2007, DPS founder Stephan Drake began exploring new ways to increase ski angle and encourage lift for more dynamic, stylistic carves and slides in deep snow. Dramatically convex bases became the focus, which were first realized in the groundbreaking Spoon.

On traditional skis, once the middle and three-quarter phase of the turn are reached, and a high ski angle achieved, the shovel trenches-in; losing the precious surface area that creates lift. The result: a ski that wants to hook uphill. Fall line resistance increases and speed is lost. The ski moves off plane, and abruptly your body and equipment can't ski powder the way you want, or dream of.

On a spooned ski, the pilot gains intuitive control of the final turn shape. Slide or carve, maybe somewhere in-between, the slippery feel at the beginning of the turn is an element that is naturally sensed and executed, rather than cerebrally processed. Once you reach the power phase of the turn, the Spoon continues to provide both floatation and slip. At high ski angles, the shovel is buoyant, due to the increased surface area, and it also becomes resistant

to grabbing and pulling that happens with square-edged skis. Thereby, you stay on plane; maintaining speed and balance to access new levels of fluidity and creativity.

In 2013, we infused shovel convexity into both the Lotus 120 and Lotus 138, albeit with less dramatic convexity than the Spoon. You may notice that we've added the word Spoon at the end of each Lotus skis' name. While the Lotus 120 and Lotus 138 keep their distinctive identities and versatility—reserving the big Spoon for the deepest days—the benefits of Spoon Technology now enable both the Lotus 120 and Lotus 138 to drift and surf powder more naturally.

Since the first prototypes, we dropped convexity from the tail sections on all shapes—it was determined that tails still need squared edges for drive and lateral

acceleration at the end of the turn, and that the inherent benefit of the slippery feel of Spoon Technology shape comes from its shovel design. You will also notice the unique beveled base design allows all three Spoon shapes to be stone-ground for maximum speed and acceleration in dry snow.

Spoon Technology is a testament to the research and development that was originally bred in the original concept Spoon. By exploring the farthest reaches of deep snow imagination, we refined the technology, optimized it to a slew of designs, and have hopefully opened up a new era of smiles in the deep snow game.

Find Spoon Technology in all 2014/15 Lotus family skis: Lotus 120 Spoon, Lotus 138 Spoon, and the Spoon.

► Visit DPS at booth 3509 today.

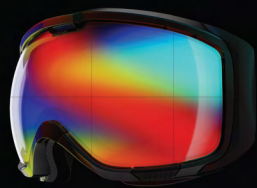
**Flat-running surface** // Allows for easy stone grinding for maximum speed and acceleration in dry snow.

**Shovel convexity** // Prevents shovel trenching and grabbing, while encouraging maximum floatation for a slippery, slarvy, surfing turn.



**Squared tails, sans convexity** // Promotes drive and lateral acceleration at the end of the turn, transferring a powerful thrust into the easily maneuverable, convex shovel.

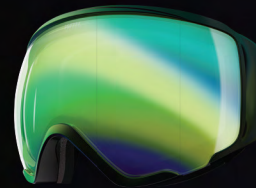
# MAGNA TECH



**m1.**



**m2.**



**wm1.**