

2009 Editors Choice Selections - Women's

Contributed by The Editors
Friday, 31 October 2008

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2009 Backcountry Magazine Editors Choice Women's Equipment Selections

Colorado to California, Massachusetts to Montana; more than 40 men and women testers from ten states converged on the slopes of Powder Mountain, Utah for Backcountry's biggest-and-best ski, boot, and binding test ever. Frozen chickenheads to boot-top powder, inbounds bumps to slackcountry buff, conditions were perfect for real-life testing and our biggest-ever collection of women's gear was pounded for six long days. Only the best survived-and you'll find best of the best here: The Editors Choices for women-specific gear were...

WOMEN'S EDITORS CHOICE SKIS

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|EC Skis| title=|Black Diamond Joule Women's Ski|images/stories/editors_choice_2009/Joule_Black_Diamond.jpg{/rokzoom}}

Black Diamond Joule

Size[CM] 155, 165, 175

Tip/Waist/Tail:[MM] 125-95-112

Weight/Pair: 7LBS 4OZ (175)

www.bdel.com

Testers found the Joule was again a measure of power in the women's ski world. And of all the wide-bodied women's skis on the market, only the Joule measured up to our expert women. Like the men's Kilowatt, the Joule boasts Formula 1 wood core construction. "Not quite as demanding (as the Kilowatt)," said one veteran telemark diva. "Lets you drive AND goes where you want to go.

A sturdy, responsive, solid All Mountain ski with even transitioning." A Montana AT tester agreed. "Responsive, and lets you stay in control," she said. Several testers felt the Joule was perhaps the best Quiver of One choice in the test. "Dynamic," our Steamboat transplant said. "A great pick for women seeking a single all-around backcountry ski." Still, she said she might upgrade to the Kilowatt, given her hard-charging ways.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|EC Skis| title=|G3 Viva Women's Ski|images/stories/editors_choice_2009/Viva_G3.jpg{/rokzoom}}

G3 Viva

Size[CM] 157, 166

Tip/Waist/Tail:[MM] 121, 88, 109

Weight/Pair: 7LBS (166)

www.genuineguidegear.com

Both intermediates and experts—producing rare solidarity among our women testers this year—celebrated the fattest of three new releases in G3's Elle series, la Viva. One freeheeler found it an "incredibly sturdy, solid ski that makes each turn sure-footedly." She gave it a nine of ten overall with high marks throughout for aptitude in crud, variable snow, and dampness.

On the AT side, our PSIA instructor offered this: "Good solid ski. It did exactly what I wanted it to do without too much effort. It held an edge on hardpack and crushed the chunder. I could work these skis into my quiver EASILY!" A veteran tester said this of the Nectar: "Very damp," adding the Viva was, "Stiffer than the [K2] Dawn Patrol, fairly predictable, and not squirrely; no turning where you don't want to be headed."

WOMEN'S EDITORS CHOICE AT BOOT

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|EC Boots| title=|Scarpa Diva Women's AT Boot|images/stories/editors_choice_2009/Diva_Scarpa.jpg{/rokzoom}

Scarpa

Diva

MSRP: \$679

Specs: 6lbs. 7oz.; sizes 22.5-27;

www.scarpa.net

The Diva won't improve your singing voice, but might have you screaming with delight. For the second year, the Diva's four-buckles and Dynafit compatibility made it a favorite among testers. "I put them on and loved them—with few adjustments," said one of our female testers. "I could rip large-radius turns with confidence." The Diva features a women-specific Intuition Precision Lady liner that comes pre-molded to a medium-size women's fit (narrower heel, lower volume) with a calf scallop (to accommodate lower calf muscle) on the back of the liner to give women a comfortable and powerful AT gun.

The specifically placed heel retention buckle holds the ankle securely into the back pocket. "Closest to an alpine style fit of all the boots tested," said one die-hard alpine gal. "It felt like a custom boot right out of the box." The Diva also comes with two tongues: one downhill, and one hinged touring.

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