2009 Editors Choice Selections - Skis

Contributed by The Editors
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2009 Backcountry Magazine Editors Choice Ski Selections

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SKIS
Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|EC Skis| title=|Movement Goliath Ski|}images/stories/editors_choice_2009/Goliath_Movement.jpg{/rokzoom}
Movement Goliath

Size[CM] 191

Tip/Waist/Tail:[MM] 135-108-124

Weight/Pair: 10LBS 1OZ

www.movementskis.com

Testers described this ski in single word sentences: "Solid." "Powerful." "Stable." "Damp." "AWESOME." One of the longest skis in the test, the Goliath won over testers with its raw power and edge hold, but surprised many with its agility. "Skied much shorter than it is," one tester said. "Screams out to go fast, fast, fast, but will patiently arc through the trees," said another. If perfect big mountain dimensions, oversize two mm edges, and a
stiff flex are the chassis and suspension of this ski, then an okume/poplar/power-rail beech composite core is the engine.

"I loved giving this ski everything I've got and getting equal return from my investment," said one giddy Montana skier. "A Caddy Eldorado with a penchant for speed," said another, "this ski has no speed limit, and no fear of any terrain." For dedicated touring, this category dominator is heavy underfoot, but for sidecountry forays or day trips into the steep and deep, the Goliath inspires; "Pure confidence."

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|EC Skis| title=|Rossignol Ravyn Ski|}images/stories/editors_choice_2009/Ravyn_Rossignol.jpg{/rokzoom}

Rossignol Ravyn

Size[CM] 174, 186

Tip/Waist/Tail:[MM] 140-110-133

Weight/Pair: 9LBS 12OZ (186)

www.rossignol.com

So the name's spelling has changed. But that's no raven on the black-to-black topsheet, it's still the Rossi coq; French avian of choice. This is the widest ski in Rossi's line, but only a few testers found it fledged for long, full-bodied turns. Most preferred to wing it through narrower turn shapes, and softer sow.

"Powerful, a fantastic resort and sidecountry powder ski for the hard corps contingent." And then: "Love it in crud and pow. Great edge-to-edge and very forgiving. Easy to slide a turn at any point." And finally: "Awesome all terrain/all mountain ski; the harder it's pushed, the easier it is to ski."

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|EC Skis| title=|K2 Coomba Ski|}images/stories/editors_choice_2009/Coomba_K2.jpg{/rokzoom}

K2 Coomba

Size[CM] 167, 174, 181, 188

Tip/Waist/Tail:[MM] 135-102-121

Weight/Pair: 8LBS 3OZ (174)

www.K2alpinetouring.com

Coomba yeah! This tribute ski to the late Doug Coombs first appeared in K2's alpine line last year, and this year has been added to the backcountry line. It has the footprint of the Anti Piste without the latter's soft-flexing tip. And that made a noticeable difference in how it grabbed a turn, making it one of the best skis tested.

"Awesome," said one tester. "Does everything the Anti Piste can do, but better, quicker—initiates a turn, unlike the Anti Piste. A lightweight, stiffer fatty that is playful and forgiving. A fun, all-mountain ripper." "Versatile dimensions and accommodating flex," said another. And beyond that, "Very diverse, very adaptable," added another. Many testers remarked on its light feel—"Could be your primary touring ski or your everyday inbounds ski," said one.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|EC Skis| title=|Karhu Storm Ski|}images/stories/editors_choice_2009/Storm_Karhu.jpg{/rokzoom}

Karhu Storm

Size[CM] 170, 177, 184

Tip/Waist/Tail:[MM] 128-96-117

Weight/Pair: 8LBS 6OZ (177)

www.karhuskico.com

This Storm didn't leave any destruction in its wake—just impressed testers. "A smooth ride," said one. "Give these babies an aggressive skier and they'll give the sugar."

With a robust Macroblock core, in which strips of maple and aspen are laminated in parallel, and Karhu's visible Titanal 3 metal construction technology, the Storm scored highest in dampness, long turns, and busting-through-tough-snow aptitude. "Easy turn initiation with a smooth, buttery pop to the turns," said one Green Mountain transplant. "A great all-around powder touring ski," said another, "awesome at high speeds, and also at slower speed, short turns."

Some skiers found the Storm a bit much in tight quarters, "Not great in tight trees," said one. Another found the flex unusual, "Soft shovel and stiff tail made for a tough balance." But consider this from a young tele-tester: "The stiff tail is great for snapping out of turns."

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|EC Skis| title=|Dynafit Manaslu Ski|}images/stories/editors_choice_2009/Manaslu_Dynafit.jpg{/rokzoom}

Dynafit Manaslu

Size[CM] 169, 178, 187

Tip/Waist/Tail:[MM] 122-95-108 (178)

Weight/Pair: 6LBS (178)

www.dynafit.us

Named for the 8th highest mountain in the world, the Manaslu ("Mountain of the Spirit" in Nepalese) gave a lively performance for testers who had Dynafit-compatible boots. And for a few reasons, this might be the most important ski of `09. One, it's got Dynafit inserts, which means the home mount is finally attainable for the everyman. Two, it's actually a freeride ski with a rockered tip for massive float. Finally, it's mega-light, lighter by far than any other ski in its width range.

For testers this was not a hard-snow ski, but for western backcountry, all agreed on its validity. "A solid-skiing and LIGHT, ski," said one of our larger skiers. "Long turns are stable and it locks in nicely once initiated." Another added, "It rules on everything in the fast, far and deep category." A pleased Colorado tester said, "I'll be mounting these up as my everyday touring ski."

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|EC Skis| title=|Atomic RT86 Ski|}images/stories/editors_choice_2009/RT86_Atomic.jpg{/rokzoom}

Atomic RT 86

Size[CM] 162, 169, 176, 183

Tip/Waist/Tail:[MM] 127-86-113

Weight/Pair: 6LBS 5OZ (186)

www.atomicsnow.com

"Don't they spray that stuff on corn in the Midwest?" asked one agro tester. No, but for farming multiple laps most testers felt the newly overhauled, feathery-light RT 86 (for 86mm under foot) was at home on any mountain. Said our 6' 4" 200 pound Alta local: "Clamps on and turns when you want. Blink and switch edges. Light and airy, but definitely stiff enough to ride anything."

Another large-breed liked the RT's "pop," adding that it was, "Super forgiving, predictable, and versatile, with enough girth to ski deeper snow." There were a few exceptions to the accolades among testers; its high-speed scores fell off due its deep sidecut. "A little chattery on hardpack when arcing across the fall line," one of our Big Sky freeheelers noted.

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 squirrelly; no turning where you don't want to be headed."

{easycomments}