

Glen Plake Debuts AT Boot - The Dalbello Virus

Contributed by Adam Howard - BCM
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Glen Plake has joined the AT revolution. No, he's not new to ski mountaineering. Nor is he a rookie when it comes to equipment endorsement and design. But 20 years after breaking onto the big screen ski scene in *Blizzard Of Ahhhhs*, Plake can now call himself a denizen of 'da feet.

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At the recent SIA tradeshow in Las Vegas, Plake sat down with Backcountry Magazine to introduce his new AT boots, the Dalbello Virus (\$690), and Virus Light (with tech fittings). And if the Mohawk didn't take us back to the days of extreme, the fluorescent pink and yellow colors of the boot surely did. Like Plake himself, the Virus is a wild mix of alchemy and attitude, and could be one of the most interesting products to hit the market this year.

At a glance, and aside from the colors, the boot is a classic Dalbello, featuring that big tongue reminiscent of the iconic Raichle Flexon Comp. But closer inspection reveals some interesting differences. First, it's got a walk mode. Second, by unhooking a latch, the tongue folds backward near the top to maximize walking stride. For the downhill, just re-latch it, and, according to Plake, you've got the best downhill performance on the market.

"I think the AT market has been getting away with a lot and not being good stewards of design," Plake said. Really Glen? I mean, don't sugar coat it. "A lot of products have been successful by default."

Though most of us know him for his on-screen feats, Plake's been ski touring for 20 years, from the Sierra to Europe, and the Himalaya. Last summer he skied Callengate (over 6,000m) in Peru. Watch the Chainsaw Productions video by Brad Holmes below...

While the verdict is out on the Virus, it will be vetted at Backcountry's upcoming gear tests at Powder Mountain, Utah, March 25-30. And we'll have the full review in the annual Gear Guide, due out in late August. Until then, we thought we'd give Plake the final word on why he helped create the Virus at all: "Because none of the AT boots on the market fit my needs. I want it to be skiable, and I want it to move correctly. I'm not getting into it because it's vogue, and I'm certainly not doing something to prolong my career."