

## Tele Boots 2007

Contributed by Oliver Blackman & Alan Moats  
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For the record, Oliver Blackman is light (5'9", 145lbs.), and light on his skis. From skiing fast in soft snow—he avoids ice and hardpack like the plague—to hiking and skinning, Oliver wants one softer-flexing boot to meet all his needs, and prefers a neutral binding.

## Telemark Boots 2007

Alan Moats (6'1", 190lbs.), a former force on the U.S. National Telemark Team, has been racing since he was a pup. It shows in his form—a precise, driving style off and on trail. He has found that his "freestyle" technique—free to incorporate any movement that works, drop-kneed or alpine—is best matched by a torsionally and laterally stiff boot with soft, deep-flexing bellows.

### Scarpa T2x

weight: 6lbs. 15oz./pair (26)

sizes: 24.5–32

Buy Now From:

Scarpa: The T2X can drive a fat ski in crud on-piste or break trail all day to a distant ski descent. Asymmetric-flexion bellows, overlap closure and a taller cuff add robust power. The T2X has the power for modern ambitions without the weight penalty, making it a great touring boot.

Oliver: The older T2 was a great boot in my opinion, but it came with some annoying weaknesses. Scarpa seems to have fixed them all in the new T2X. They scrapped the old walk/ski-mode wire bails, which popped out unpredictably or broke, and replaced them with a cuff lock similar to that of the more fail-safe T1. The removable rear spoiler with attached power strap is now an integral part of the shell, as is a replaceable plastic bellows protector.

Be cautioned that the T2 is no longer the same soft boot. The new model is higher, heavier and stiffer. Out of the box, it fits the boot with plenty of room in the toe box, and the heel pocket held my skinny heels securely. It's the ticket for someone looking to find the performance of a boot between the old T2 and the T1.

Alan: The Scarpa T2 has grown up. The new red T2X is taller, stiffer and more powerful than its previous incarnations, but it still felt light and agile. The bellows and cuff flex are of the "coil spring" style rather than that of "supple leather," so it favors a rear-loaded rebound style of skiing. The boot requires a bit of pressure before it begins to flex, making it less desirable for me when skinning and off-piste.

## Scarpa T1

weight: 8lbs. 9oz./pair (26)

sizes: 22.5–31

Scarpa: T1s are built to drive big-mountain boards through mank and crud with style, yet are light and flexible enough for cruising on a tour. Scarpa's Easy Lock micro-adjustable buckles and dual-density thermofit liner ensure a custom fit. An overlapping cuff does away with extra space and slop for more edge control.

Oliver: The T1 is essentially the same boot as last year's model. And why change? This is a boot that is generally acknowledged to have set the standard for high-performance plastic telemark boots and has developed a loyal following all over the world. Although they might be best suited to lift-served skiing and those with feet at the narrower end of the spectrum, the T1 has become more versatile with the addition of lighter conformable liners. The T1 feels a bit stiffer in a more upright position than some other boots, giving a sense of instant response and power. For aggressive skiers looking for a tool to drive big skis and those willing to do a little more work on the way up, the T1 will reward you with performance on the way down.

Alan: The T1 still has the no-nonsense power, close fit and aggressive stance of the original Terminator that radically changed the sport in the early '90s. With its torsional strength, close ankle wrap and direct edge drive, the T1's ability to power the lead ski is among the best. The bellows are reasonably supple, but the toe-box and duckbill are fairly stiff. As a result, the snow feel of the rear/inside foot is wooden, lacking in finesse and sensitivity, until the rear boot is heavily weighted. As with the T2, this design favors an aggressive rear-loaded rebound technique. As a heavier skier, I discovered that the T1 has a 'design limit'. On hard snow, the T1 supports a powerful turn up to a point and then it begins to smear if it's loaded beyond that point. A better Scarpa choice for a heavier or more aggressive skier driving a big ski might be the T1 Race.

Garmont Syner-G

weight: 7lbs. 9oz./pair (27.5)

sizes: 25-30.5

Buy Now From:

Garmont: The Syner-G is an all-around free-heel boot with Triple-G Multi-Injection Technology, providing a synergistic skiing performance with touring comfort. The Syner-G's locking mid-height cuff is high and sturdy enough for big skis without being restrictive in the backcountry. The shell's tongue and inner boot are high for forward-flexing performance with broad pressure distribution to protect sensitive shins.

Oliver: It's always good to have one's biases challenged. As someone who flopped around in a pair of Garas (too wide) and tried to tame a pair of Squadras (too stiff), I was skeptical about any further relationship with Garmont boots until I tried the Syner-G. This time they felt right. Although the boots felt a bit wider throughout than the Scarpas, my heels were held securely and the Syner-Gs seemed to move naturally with my feet. The thermo-formable G-fit liners have a traditional tongue that gives a very secure fit around the ankle, even without a buckle or strap directly over the instep. The flex is soft enough to allow lighter skiers to move up and down without feeling rocked back by too much resistance from the cuff, while still providing good lateral support. For the lighter skier who enjoys a softer flex and for those who want a versatile hiking and skinning tool still capable of handling big descents, the Syner-G is hard to beat.

Alan: I haven't skied the Syner-G, and for the type of skiing I do, I doubt I will any time soon. Since I found Ener-G a bit soft, and since the Syner-G is even softer, I would not expect the Syner-G to work for me. On the other hand, my girlfriend (135lbs.) tried out the Syner-G and loved it.

Garmont

Ener-G

weight: 8lbs. 2oz./pair (27.5)

sizes: 25–30.5

Buy Now From:

Garmont: The Triple-Injected Ener-G is our stiffest, burliest boot for all-mountain free-heel skiing. It's a very aggressive boot, suitable for steep, high-speed free-riding on and off piste, racing and ski mountaineering. The Ener-G is very rigid torsionally, giving superb lateral control with a sweet, progressive forward flex that builds energy through the turn.

Oliver: Although the Ener-G is a bigger boot than I need, I never felt that I was overmatched. Because the cuff allows a skier's ankle to flex easily at first and then provides support progressively, the boot's power was manageable even for a lightweight. Garmont has positioned and designed the Ener-G's cuff and bellows so that the boot moves comfortably without pinching or creating hotspots. Unlike the feeling of some other stiff boots when coupled with more neutral bindings, this one didn't give me the feeling of detachment from the ski as it flexed forward. Heavier and more aggressive skiers who like the fit and flex of Garmont boots should consider the Ener-G as a reasonable choice for both resort-based and alpine backcountry adventures.

Alan: The Garmont Ener-G is an excellent all-around boot. The shell is noticeably softer than its ancestors, the Scorpio and the Triple G, so it would not be my boot of choice to drive the biggest skis, but the lightweight, super-comfortable thermo liner and easy "knee-to-the-ski" flex makes hiking, skinning and all-day use a dream. Details such as a roomy toe-box and anatomically positioned micro-adjustable buckles ensure an easy fit for most feet.

Crispi X-R

weight: 6lbs. 15oz./pair (27)

sizes: 24.5–32

Crispi: This new boot is designed for the person wanting the combination of precision and power to drive the stiffest and widest skis while charging the steepest and deepest, inbounds and out. A four-buckle boot w/ power strap, the X-R has an integrated carbon stirrup that extends the length of the sole and up the medial and lateral sides of the ankle to provide response and power.

Alan: The Crispi X-R is my new power boot of choice. For the skier who wants the sheer muscle to drive a big ski, a torsionally stiff carbon-reinforced shell and supple, anatomically repositioned bellows provide both power and exceptional feel for the snow. With the cuff locked in the most forward of three positions, and the four well-placed buckles and power strap snugged up, it set me up to take on blue ice FIS race courses. But after easing (or unlocking) the cuff angle and the power strap, I had a comfortable, sensitive boot that was just as at home skinning as it was dropping cornices off piste. This is not your old Crispi.

Editor's note: The test sample sent was just big enough to be too big for Oliver's foot. Skiing an oversized boot is one thing. Skiing an oversized race-inspired boot as substantial as the X-R is plain frightening. To quote Oliver: "Based solely on appearance, I'm glad they didn't fit. Too tall, too heavy, too disco for a confirmed member of the crunchy, granola-for-lunch bunch; everything about this boot tells me that I'm not part of its target market."

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