

The Corps: 2011 Gear Testers

Contributed by The Editors
Thursday, 19 August 2010

Ever wondered who has the hard job of testing gear for the Backcountry Gear Guide? Get to know our diverse crew.

With the research of the NFL Draft and the spontaneity of playground kickball selections, we recruited a team of testers from across the country for the 2011 Gear Test at Powder Mountain. Hailing from nine states--two thirds from the west, the rest from the east--our testers spent the week skiing, scrutinizing and commenting, providing the volumes of information synthesized into the Gear Guide. Get to know our diverse crew, with their varying backgrounds, skiing styles, home ranges and gear preferences, and be sure to check out their findings in the 2011 Backcountry Gear Guide.

-The Editors

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2011 Backcountry Gear Testers

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Cat Ambrose. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/cat.jpg{/rokzoom}

Cat Ambrose

AT Tester

Breckenridge, CO

Age: 29

Height: 5ft. 9in.

Weight: 160lbs.

Cat moved from the right coast to Breck' in 2003 and immediately discovered a love for backcountry skiing. Each season, she logs about 40 bc days in and around Summit County, CO. Touring on a powerful setup—the K2 Seth Vicious mounted

with the Marker Duke—she enjoys opening it up with medium-to-large-radius turns at high speeds. Cat prefers moderate-angle, powder-filled trees, which she calls "funsies."

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Weston Deutschlander. |}
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Weston Deutschlander

Telemark Tester

Park City, UT

Age: 25

Height: 6ft. 1in.

Weight: 195lbs.

For over a decade, Weston has been ripping freeheel turns across the country. Originally from the East, he moved to Park City three years ago and has since been a telemark instructor, coach, professional athlete and competitor. Each winter, he logs over 100 days with a fast, aggressive style that melds freeride and backcountry. Less focused on weight and comfort, Weston's primary gear concern is downhill performance.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Jeremy "Shaggy" Bailey. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}
|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/shaggy.jpg{/rokzoom}

Jeremy "Shaggy" Bailey

Telemark Tester

Steamboat Springs, CO

Age: 38

Height: 6ft.

Weight: 170lbs.

Learning to ski on a farm in Ohio is tough. Along with his brother, Shaggy managed to "ski" each winter while growing up, even though it involved a three-wheeler with a tail rope. It wasn't until 2000, when he met his wife, tester Marla Bailey, that Shaggy really went skiing. Though his skis were retro, the slopes at Winter Park/Mary Jane proved sufficient and he was hooked. Now, he logs over 65 days each season in the backcountry near Buffalo Pass, CO. A high-speed skier, he prefers a burly setup and rides the Scarpa T-Race and Rossi' S3.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Christine Raymond. |}
}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/christine.jpg{/rokzoom}

Christine Raymond

AT Tester

Bozeman, MT

Age: 44

Height: 5ft. 2in.

Weight: 125lbs.

Full-time software engineer, wife of BCM Technical Editor Lance Riek and mother of two, Christine barely squeaks in 30 bc days each winter. And with such a weighty schedule, she's got to fit in as many turns as possible on the lightest gear around. Whether it's a multi-day traverse or short jaunt in the backyard, Christine is always cognizant of weight: Her light setup features the Voile Carbon Surf and Scarpa Magic boot. She's most at home on mellow powder slopes and maximizes each run with her mainstay style of short-radius turns at slow-to-medium speeds.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Jeff Burke. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}
}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/jeff.jpg{/rokzoom}

Jeff Burke

AT Tester

Jackson, WY

Age: 37

Height: 5ft. 11in.

Weight: 160lbs.

Jeff is BCM Editor at Large and has been AT skiing for 25 years. Each season he serves up 120 days including 90 in and around Jackson Hole Mountain Resort--where he has patrolled for the past eight years--another 30 exclusively in the backcountry and excursions to wild places like Argentina and Iceland. A fan of spring corn and medium-radius turns, he's been known to mix it up with short, swing turns in steep chutes and couloirs. Jeff's quiver features heavy, but powerful skis like the Volkl Mantra and BD Zealot.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=[skitest] title=[Crista Seier. [Photo] Simon Peterson]}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/crista.jpg{/rokzoom}

Crista Seier

Telemark Tester

Crested Butte, CO

Age: 28

Height: 5ft. 7in.

Weight: 130lbs.

Even with six years of Telemark experience, "I'm still a rookie, in skiing and in life," says Crista--after being reminded of her youth by a 65-year-old friend. While she typically puts in 40 days each winter in and around Colorado, a knee injury last summer set her back this season. Still on the rebound, her current style is reserved, sticking to medium-radius turns at moderate speeds. She has a quiver of Volkl skis--like the Aura and T-rock--and rides the Garmont Venus.

Eli Moore

AT Tester

Cambridge, VT

Age: 35

Height: 5ft. 8in.

Weight: 160lbs.

Mank, slush, ice, granular, mud. They're not pretty, but they're the kind of conditions Eli often finds himself in. A professional ski patroller of 12 years, he does it all and with any luck, he--and his skis--will make it through 100 days of Mother Nature's spiciest concoctions 'til May. He dreams of steep corn and deep powder, but being a Vermonter, he knows that reality sucks and often looks like a tangle of saplings and glistening ice on the backside of Smugglers' Notch. An all-around skier armed with versatile boards, Eli tackles anything white.

Gavin Cooper

Telemark Tester

Gallatin Gateway, MT

Age: 28

Height: 6ft.

Weight: 165lbs.

A Telemark skier of seven years, Gavin skis almost every day each winter all over Montana. With an aggressive, snappy style, he enjoys making lots of turns while keeping speed and control. He prefers a quick, turnable ski and typically rides the Icelantic Shaman or BD Havoc in the backcountry. When it comes to boot choice, he's a devout Garmont Ener-G fanatic.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Becca Friedlander. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/becca.jpg{/rokzoom}

Becca Friedlander

Telemark Tester

Gallatin Gateway, MT

Age: 34

Height: 5ft. 4in.

Weight: 125lbs.

Every day she can, Becca hits the hill, carving turns at Big Sky, MT and logging over 30 days in the nearby bc. She has a soft spot for slushy spring bump and a self-described "mellow style." Becca claims to be a conservative skier, but enjoys the rush of steep lines and high speeds. With the Scarpa T1 as her go to boot, she rides the bc on the Movement Black Rose paired with the BD O1.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Mike Lorenz. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/lorenz.jpg{/rokzoom}

Mike Lorenz

AT Tester

Essex, VT

Age: 34

Height: 5ft. 10in.

Weight: 190lbs.

It's been a whirlwind year for the BCM Art Director. Between a new job at the mag' and his first backcountry tours, this expecting father is feeling the heat of his mid-thirties. But Mike is able to keep his cool, logging 35 days on snow this past winter. He's found solace in his new setup, which features the BD Factor boot and K2 Sidestash mounted with Fritschi Freeride bindings. An East Coast vet' who's most at home on dust-on-crust, he demands a versatile board that will do it all.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Gregg Davis. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/gregg.jpg{/rokzoom}

Gregg Davis

Alta, UT

AT Tester

Age: 45

Height: 6ft. 3in.

Weight: 200lbs.

In each of the past 19 years, Gregg has logged over 100 days on snow, with his last nine seasons primarily spent around Little Cottonwood Canyon, UT. He's checked off 16 lines in Andrew McLean's Chuting Gallery and each winter, racks up 50 slackcountry days in addition to 25 exclusive touring days. Gregg skis long, beefy boards and tours with Technica Agent boots and the Rossignol Scratch Steez mounted with Fritschi Freeride bindings. He lives for late-season corn, but poor Gregg spends most days chasing deep, untracked Wasatch powder.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Jim Rose. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/jim.jpg{/rokzoom}

Jim Rose

Telemark Tester

Johnson, VT

Age: 29

Height: 5ft. 8in.

Weight: 173lbs.

A five-year Gear Test veteran, Jim spends his winters dropping knees in Vermont's Green Mountains. Eight years ago,

he traded locked heels for pins and skins, and jumped into the woods near Smugglers' Notch. These days, he splits 60 days each winter between Vermont's front, side and backcountry. "I enjoy the up as much as the down," Jim says, striking a balance between weight and power with his personal bc setup of the BD Stigma and Scarpa T1.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Jaime Krakowiak. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/jaime.jpg{/rokzoom}

Jaime Krakowiak

AT and Telemark Tester

Breckenridge, CO

Age: 33

Height: 5ft. 2in.

Weight: 110lbs.

Jamie first experienced backcountry skiing in 1999, when she took a course in Alaska with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). Learning glacial and backcountry travel techniques, NOLS sparked her deep love for ski mountaineering. She moved to Breckenridge in 2001 to follow her newfound passion and later jumped on Telemark gear to better access the backcountry. For three seasons, she worked with the Roxy Mountain Project, a grassroots program devoted to fueling women's stoke on skiing and riding. Nowadays, she spends 70 days each winter climbing and skiing Colorado's 13 and 14ers and hitting laps on local mountain passes.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Lance Riek. |}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/lance.jpg{/rokzoom}

Lance Riek

AT Tester

Bozeman, MT

Age: 45

Height: 5ft. 8in.

Weight: 140lbs.

BCM's Technical Editor fits the bill for a weight-conscious skier. Riding skis like the Trab Free Rando Light, Voile Asylum and Goode Carbon 95--to name a few--Lance's entire quiver likely weighs only ounces more than many people's everyday setup. A busy father, he puts in 30 full bc days each winter, touring, traversing and logging laps throughout the Bozeman area. He has been dubbed "The Patroller" by the rest of the Backcountry editorial staff for his controlled, moderate-speed style.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Mindy Mulliken. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/mindy.jpg{/rokzoom}

Mindy Mulliken

Telemark Tester

Steamboat Springs, CO

Age: 30

Height: 5ft. 6in.

Weight: 125lbs.

Mindy charges hard. The inventor of the famed Beermingo, she is singlehandedly responsible for many bleary-eyed testers over the past two years. But when it comes to skiing, she rages too. For the past six winters, she's spent over 60 days splitting her time between front- and backcountry in Colorado and Montana. A fierce competitor, Mindy has participated in the Crested Butte Rando Race, The Wasatch Powderkeg and the Elk Mountains Grand Traverse. She skis the Scarpa T1 and BD Kilowatt and loves steeps and trees.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Jason Layh. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/jason.jpg{/rokzoom}

Jason Layh

Telemark Tester

Tahoe City, CA

Age: 34

Height: 6ft.

Weight: 178lbs.

Jason is the founder of Tahoe Freeheel, Alpine Meadows' youth Telemark program. Each year, he spends 200 days on snow, instructing, competing, guiding and always charging hard. He's taught at Whistler, patrolled at Fernie Mountain Resort, and has notched a few top-ten finishes in the North American Freeride Series. He's also a PSIA Level Three Telemark instructor. Each winter, over half of his days are spent in the backcountry. For Jason, speed is a must, airs are mandatory and steep chutes are always on tap.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Price Gilroy. |}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/price.jpg{/rokzoom}

Price Gilroy

Telemark Tester

Victor, ID

Age: 39

Height: 5ft. 4in.

Weight: 115lbs.

Price is a high-speed skier who loves big turns. She's equally at home on steeps or mellow tours and enjoys what she calls "pleasure backcountry"; spending time in the mountains simply for the sake of being out there. Depending on her child-rearing responsibilities, she'll log anywhere between 25 and 100 days in the Tetons. She has a diverse quiver with boards for each condition, and recently found bliss in her new pair of Garmont Electra boots.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Jay Prentiss. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/jay.jpg{/rokzoom}

Jay Prentiss

AT Tester

Crested Butte, CO

Age: 39

Height: 6ft.

Weight: 160lbs.

A freeski ambassador for Crested Butte Mountain Resort, Jay has 13 years of ski mountaineering and backcountry touring experience. He has skied many summits throughout the West Coast, Alaska and Europe including a first descent of the East Face of Colorado's Pyramid Peak. Jay, who prefers big-mountain lines and big turns, rides a collection of stiff, powerful Fischer boards. A self-described "all-terrain skier," he spends 40 days each season slashing turns in the backcountry.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Marla Bailey. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/marla.jpg{/rokzoom}

Marla Bailey

Telemark Tester

Steamboat Springs, CO

Age: 36

Height: 5ft. 8in.

Weight: 118lbs.

A Telemark skier of nine years, Marla's greatest accomplishment to date was being told "nice skiing, dude," on a day when her braids were tucked underneath her helmet. She lives to ski aggressively and has the setup to match, rocking the Scarpa T-Race and Rossignol Kali, among other powerful boards in her quiver. Marla makes each run count and is continually focused on perfecting every aspect of her Tele-turn. For 60-plus days each season, she seeks out "(1) balls-deep powder and (2) knee-deep powder," throughout the Buffalo Pass, CO backcountry. "I love the challenge of a steep, tight pitch... the steeper the better."

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Matteo Campbell. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/teo.jpg{/rokzoom}

Matteo Campbell

AT Tester

Cambridge, VT

Age: 36

Height: 5ft. 10in.

Weight: 150lbs.

At Bromley, VT in the mid-1970s, Teo started skiing with poop in his pants--when walking was still new to him. In the Eighties, the allure of neon boards coaxed him into snowboarding. But he came back to two planks, "when skis became as surfy and fun as snowboards," he recalls. Still hanging tight to his Burton-inspired youth, he rides fat boards like the BD Megawatt and Volant Spatula, even on average days in Vermont. Teo's a fast and powerful skier who will charge in any conditions.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Pat Gilroy. |}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/pat.jpg{/rokzoom}

Pat Gilroy

Telemark Tester

Victor, ID

Age: 37

Height: 5ft. 10in.

Weight: 155lbs.

Pat is an athletic powerhouse. He raced NCAA Division I Nordic at Western State College in Gunnison, CO. He's placed in the top three at Jackson Hole's Ski Mountaineering Championships. He regularly climbs and skis the peaks in his backyard--the Tetons to be specific. And he's no stranger to ski mountaineering trips to Alaska, Europe and New Zealand. Spending the majority of each season on Telemark gear--he reserves AT for long tours and mountaineering--Pat finds his groove making big turns in all types of terrain.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Megan Schultz.
|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/megan.jpg{/rokzoom}

Megan Schultz

Telemark Tester

Moretown, VT

Age: 32

Height: 5ft. 9in.

Weight: 185lbs.

Megan's a true Vermont skier. Her parents met at Mad River Glen: She was practically raised there and has never left its challenging slopes. A 12-year Tele-veteran, she has spent the last nine years instructing under the famed Single Chair for both MRG and the North American Telemark Organization. Each winter, she logs over 100 days, on-piste and throughout the Mad River Valley. Not one for straight-lining, Megan will pick her way through any conditions--even the occasional mud and grass--but prefers making as many turns as tightly as possible, preferably among trees.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Rachel Wood. [Photo] Simon
Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/rachel.jpg{/rokzoom}

Rachel Wood

Telemark Tester

Burlington, VT

Age: 22

Height: 5ft. 6in.

Weight: 125lbs.

Rachel grew up racing on Vermont "packed powder" and made the transition to free heels three years ago. Leading backcountry ski trips at the University of Vermont, Rachel puts in 25 bc days each winter stretched between Vermont, New York and New Hampshire. She has a low, aggressive style, which isn't always pretty but gets the job done. After two seasons on the BD Velvet and Garmont Venus, she's ready to make the jump to a powerful setup that can handle dicey New England conditions.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Sean Prentiss. |}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/sean.jpg{/rokzoom}

Sean Prentiss

Telemark Tester

Grand Rapids, MI

Age: 37

Height: 5ft. 6in.

Weight: 137lbs.

Sean spent many years searching for himself while backcountry touring throughout Montana, New Mexico, Colorado and Idaho. But all he discovered was great skiing and odd jobs. Now that he's found himself--in Michigan--he's stuck far from the big mountains he wishes he were skiing. Between a few trips to Colorado each winter and spring, he'll muster up 20 days of skiing (but if you ask, he'll say 50). He's a scrappy skier, with a quick, hoppy style. He prefers a light and nimble setup that's good for touring, fun and forgiving, like his Scarpa T2s and G3 Rapid Transit.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Brendan Mumey. |}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/brendan.jpg{/rokzoom}

Brendan Mumey

AT Tester

Bozeman, MT

Age: 41

Height: 6ft. 3in.

Weight: 193lbs.

Light-is-right, believes this quick-turning backcountry devotee. Each season, Brendan logs 30 days almost exclusively in the bc, rocking light-duty boards like the Ski Trab Duo Sint Aero and Goode C95—which together weight under nine pounds. After a ten-year stint on Telemark gear in the nineties, Brendan made the move to AT to quench his thirst for long climbs and soft snow.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Rob Bohn. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/rob.jpg{/rokzoom}

Rob Bohn

AT and Telemark Tester

Worcester, VT

Age: 43

Height: 5ft. 8in.

Weight: 198lbs.

BCM's Copy Editor claims to "shred the sickest gnar," so long as it's low-angle powder in evenly spaced trees. He spends most of his winter in search of frozen streams and Vermont peaks sans lift access. Shying from high speeds, he prefers floating, medium-to-long-radius turns. Bohn skis fatter boards with ample pop and turnability, like the Atomic Teledaddy and Icelantic Shaman. Also a boot tester, he likes the power of the Garmont Ener-G or a traditional, stiff alpine boot.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Sheridan Davis. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/sheridan.jpg{/rokzoom}

Sheridan Davis

Alta, UT

AT Tester

Age: 44

Height: 5ft. 9in.

Weight: 125lbs.

At 44, Sheridan was one of the most experienced testers on the hill. Ripping with the zest of any skier half her age, this AT diva is a Wasatch transplant, moving west from Vermont's Green Mountains eight years ago. Now, she logs over 50 days in the slack- and backcountry throughout Utah's Cottonwood Canyons. Sheridan has a quiver of fatties and her backcountry setup features the Volkl Gotama mounted with Fritschi Freeride bindings.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|HJ Schmidt. |}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/hj.jpg{/rokzoom}

HJ Schmidt

AT Tester

Bozeman, MT

Age: 30 years post-puberty

Height: 5ft. 11in.

Weight: 155lbs

A sidecountry savant of Bridger Bowl, HJ tallies 10 dedicated bc days each winter with trips north of the border in addition to a handful of spring and summer days spent rambling through the mountains for snow. He splits his time between AT and Telemark, claiming to belong to "that era of Tele-skiers who made Frankenstein equipment from old alpine gear." A fan of soft snow, HJ's top terrain choices are big chutes and long ridgelines off tall peaks.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Willie Kern. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/willie.jpg{/rokzoom}

Willie Kern

AT Tester

Logan, UT

Age: 37

Height: 6ft. 2in.

Weight: 199lbs.

It's been a work in progress, but over the past ten years, Willie has weaned himself almost entirely off chairlifts. He typically logs over one hundred days on skis, depending on when he inevitably hurts himself, and shreds like the big fella'

he is. "I enjoy medium-to-long-to-no-radius turns in complex terrain," he says. Bred in New England but transplanted to the West in the early '90s, he's skied extensively in Western Canada and Europe too.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Ron Johnson. |}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/ron.jpg{/rokzoom}

Ron Johnson

AT Tester

Bozeman, MT

Age: 54

Height: 5ft. 9in.

Weight: 170lbs.

Between patrolling at Montana's Bridger Bowl and forecasting avalanche conditions for the Gallatin National Forest, Ron has been around the block. These days, he logs 70 days each season, split between Nordic tracks, local hills and backcountry. With an inclination toward wide boards like the Goode Carbon 116 and Atomic Powder Cruise, Ron prefers steep couloirs, soft snow and medium-radius turns at moderate speeds.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Damian "Road Dust" Riddle. [Photo] Simon Peterson|}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/roaddust.jpg{/rokzoom}

Damian "Road Dust" Riddle

AT Tester

Leominster, MA

Age: 36

Height: 5ft. 10in.

Weight: 178lbs.

Damian has over 10 years of racing experience, with his career capped off banging gates at Western State College in Gunnison, CO. No longer into spandex and carving boards, he's still an aggressive skier and fast too, with a bent for big mountains and deep snow. He's into beefy gear, with a personal backcountry setup featuring the BD Factor boot and G3 El Hombre ski. He spends about 30 days each winter exploring the lost ski trails of northern New England and rekindles his competitive spirit at pond skimming championships throughout Vermont.

Click Image to Zoom{rokzoom album=|skitest| title=|Teri Dudzinski. |}images/stories/erik/gg11/profiles/teri.jpg{/rokzoom}

Teri Dudzinski

AT Tester

Bozeman, MT

Age: 39

Height: 5ft. 9in.

Weight: 150lbs.

Each season, Teri splits 50 days between Nordic, touring and resort. Growing up making turns in Colorado, she moved to Montana to experience spring skiing in the Beartooth Mountains, touring in the Bridger and Gallatin Ranges and the occasional foray to Canada. Though she dabbled in alpine and Tele for years, she now exclusively rides AT boards and boots that balance power and weight, with boots like the Garmont Adrenalin and Dynafit Aero. Teri prefers steep, consistent pitches and big turns.