

First Turn

Contributed by Adam Howard

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My daydream was interrupted by the sound of P-tex grinding on asphalt. I started to laugh. My fellow enthusiast, suffering a loss of form, was now sprawled out on the street. She looked back at me pointed and howled. I stood in a cloud of blue smoke, breathing carbon monoxide with 40 feet of six-millimeter static line draping from my hand—tied to the bumper of my roommate's Crown Victoria.

I'm not usually one to skitch (i.e. being dragged behind something), especially on tele-gear. Most years I would have waited at least the 15 minutes to drive to the nearest incline to make that first precious turn of the season. But I needed an excuse to relegate my faithful Tua Cirques to rock-ski-dom. I also needed to put a long summer behind me. Now.

We all aspire to get into the backcountry, but when it comes to the first turn of the year it's less about location and more about sensation. In the early season, pastures, golf courses, town roads, and backyards are for a moment as backcountry as we need. And regardless of where you make it, that first turn is perhaps the most important of the year. It doesn't just represent what is to come, but what will pass. This would be my first turn of the year in many ways; first since ACL reconstruction; first since having my heart broken; first behind a Ford first thing in the morning. I needed to immerse myself in this ski season. And as the towline grew taut; my season began.

-Adam Howard, Editor