

## Hitting It Hard

Contributed by Drew Pogge

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“Use the right tool for the job.” This is one of the most valuable lessons my dad ever taught me. His weapon of choice? Why, a three-pound sledge, of course. The point he demonstrated to me time and again (and again and again) is that there are two ways to do something: Use the proper tool and do it right, or use what’s handy and hope for the best. Rarely did my father have the right tool for the job. Not that I’m not one to judge—I have a large, sledge-hammer shaped hole in the wall of my office, cleverly concealed behind my new print. But my dad and I are not alone. Many of us pursue the sledge-hammer approach when selecting backcountry equipment: the biggest, stiffest, heaviest gear we can physically haul up a mountain. And when we want to rip, our gear can handle anything. But do we always need to bludgeon the mountain into submission? What about going farther, faster, and higher? What about doing more with less? We’re talking Gear Guide here, and our toolbox has expanded again, with skis, splitboards, boots and bindings that weigh less and do more. There are tools aplenty for any job you can imagine, from heavy-handed sidecountry hammering to pounding vertical to finishing peak projects and everything between.

The gear we choose reflects the type of ski experience we hope to live, and while gear shouldn’t define that experience, it can make our goals more easily attainable. And, ultimately, it’s not about the tools we use, but the products—the experiences— rendered by those tools. Just cross your fingers they don’t render a hole in the wall.

Then again, another memorable piece of tool-related advice handed down to me by my dad is this: “When in doubt, hit it harder.” I try to live my life this way. And very soon, as summer fades and the snow starts falling over the mountains, I’m going to grab whatever tool is handy, and hit it as hard as I can.

-Drew Pogge, Editor