



International Trade Fair For Sports Equipment and Fashion 2009

The Report on Lesser-Known Brands

By
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ExoticSkis.com
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Photo of Messe Munchen trade center by Messe München GmbH

The 69th **ISPO** (International Trade Fair For Sports Equipment and Fashion) was held February 1-4 2009 in Munich, Germany. For those who aren't aware, ISPO is the biggest, baddest ski trade show on the Planet. More than 60,000 industry trade visitors (no public consumer access) from more than 100 different countries came to meet, haggle and place orders with 1,950 exhibitors in more than 185,000 square meters (that's roughly 34.5 U.S. Football fields!) of display space. ISPO is overwhelming, immense, intense and a monument to the vitality of the ski industry around the World. Simply an amazing display of marketing efforts.

While lots of reports from ISPO will concentrate on the big names of the ski industry like K2, Atomic, Fischer, Blizzard, Elan and others commonly found in nearly any ski shop around the World, we will give you an idea of the activity happening at the lesser-known ski companies who saved up their Euros to rent booth space at ISPO. Many small companies cannot afford (or see

no advantage in) attending ISPO as an exhibitor, so while you won't see all the small names here, we thought we'd give you a quick glimpse of a few who had a presence at the monster ski show. While ExoticSkis did not get a chance to interview each and every small brand or successfully fight our way through the crowds to get decent photographs of the 2009-2010 models from these smaller ski builders with our snapshot-quality camera, you might enjoy the discovery of brands and skis you never heard of out there. Think of this as a skunk-works spy shot collection of what kinds of skis are lurking in the bushes, just waiting to get your attention....and now...in no particular order....



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Black Crows

<http://www.blackcrows-skis.com>

The current French powerhouse of the freeride ski movement is going strong with lots of models and their trademark graphic identity. Wood core/fiberglass constructions, ABS sidewalls and strategic reinforcements. Very popular here in France for a reason: people like them. And they're French.





Lots of people like the look of the Black Crows bases better than the topsheets!

Bohème

<http://www.bohème.fr/>

Bohème was once a small artisanal shop in 1998 with only a couple people. 50-80 pairs in 2004, 150 pairs in 2005, 250 pairs in 2006, 600 pairs in 2007 after courting an investor to build a new factory, they generate more than 800 pairs of skis a year with 7 people. Vacuum pressed (the best way, some will say) with more than 37 hours of labor per ski and up to 10 hours of hand finishing, they are not cheap at between €1,200-€1,600 per pair, but you get handmade skis meticulously made with pride.





Rustic look of Bohème's handmade skis.

Amplid

<http://www.amplid.com>

Amplid from Germany is enjoying a very hot, popular line of skis and was generating a lot of buzz at ISPO. Freestyle meets Freeride. Tons of technical features in their construction that appeal to lots of people. The once-niche brand is maturing into a corporate entity with the resources to keep a steady stream of improvements going into a healthy lineup of varied ski designs. The ever-popular Cholesterolone and Cholesterolone RC (reverse camber) just keep selling and selling.



Amplid's graphics are part of their market appeal. Their tech specs are the other.



Different look for Amplid - more geometric than organic.

VIST

<http://www.vist.it>

VIST has decided that selling expensive SL and GS racing skis (manufactured by a small shop in Italy for them) a few seasons ago was not making money the way their fashion clothing was generating cash, so they have concentrated this season on completing their transition to haute-couture fashion company with ultra-premium skis. Their seriously diverse and respected binding and plate systems are still alive and well, but VIST has gone for the Breitling and Jaguar crowd with their very high-fashion ski apparel and matching skis. The "Aurum" line of skis and clothing is the top-shelf market product with skis selling between €2,500 - €3900 per pair...plus clothing! The skis are still extremely high quality, precision crafted, hand-made tools and are gorgeous to look at. They retain their no-nonsense race-carving construction and geometries and come mated with various VIST plates and bindings.

I suspect the skis will be overwhelming to some of the skiers targeted by the fashions they are selling. These are seriously



high-performance, seriously expensive skis. We hope to get on a few pairs and report how they behave in the real world....not in the "by appointment only" ISPO trade salon.

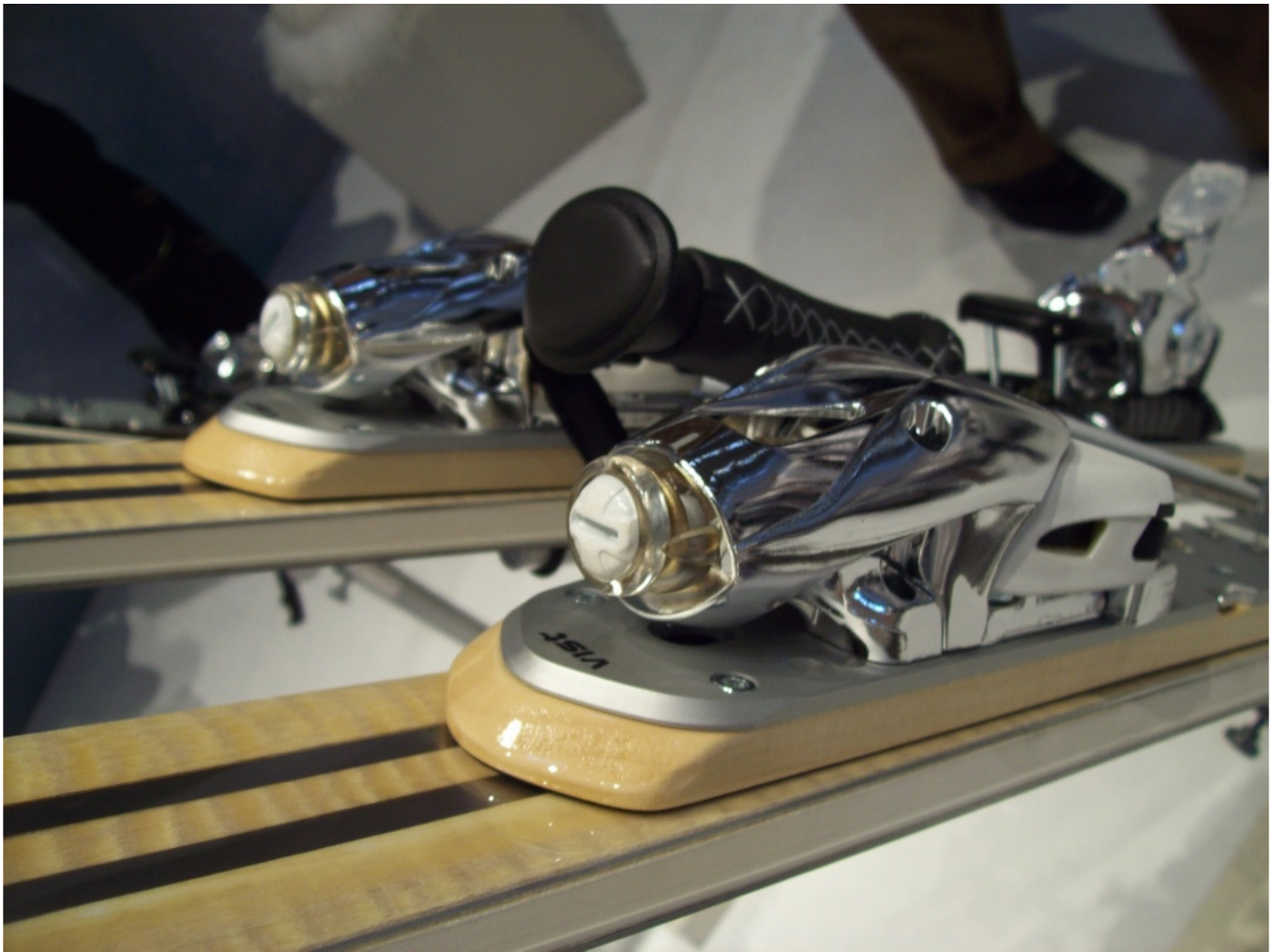
VIST Aurum "Black" close-up



VIST Aurum "White" model



The "Super Front" Classic Series



Closeup of the Aurum "White" with its wood riser and plated binding components (including the plated springs)



VIST plate systems are still impressive (yes, the bindings are chromed)



VIST's marketing person was nice enough to call over one of their male models to dress up in their parka with matching patterns to the ski (see the lettering on the topsheet)



Closeup of VIST's sublimated wording in the fabric matching the ski topsheet...it's what every jet-setter wants next year.





Another shot of the VIST Classic "SuperFront" and "Crossover" series



Tail details of the VIST Crossover with sublimated topsheet text

Goode

<http://www.goode.com/>

The die-hard builder of carbon-fiber skis is still going strong with a big selection of nearly 25 models in different shapes and sizes of their “world's lightest” skis. Some people like the feel, others can't get used to the feedback and touch of pure carbon fiber. we haven't tried them yet, but would like to.



The Goode booth was eye-catching and nicely done. Black is still cool.



Here's half their model line.



Here's the other half of Goode's line.

ASP

<http://www.3lmnt.com>

Alain Stoll has expanded his company into the ski arena with some bamboo core skis for freeride and freestyle. All are less than €465, so they are affordable. Cool protective gear, snobikes, water and bicycle toys too. Check it out.



GPO / Gaspo

<http://www.gaspo.at>



GPO / Gaspo "Exclusive"
retails at €399!

The amazing price gurus at Gaspo are jumping on the "premium priced" wood-topsheet ski market with their "Exclusive" ski. Not much is known about it, other than it is wood core and sells for €399!. It looked well manufactured. GPS makes touring skis, fun carvers, all-mountain carvers and an extensive line of skiboards. They are also developing a new binding system and play ski for climbing/skiing...see the pics... Very affordable line of winter toys for the family markets. GPO manufactures ONLY wood-core (sandwich and cap) skis, skiboards, snowskates and snowboards. No foam. You can design your own topsheet graphics for a snowboard, skiboar or skateboard at their site <http://www.boarddesigner.com>. Innovative and fun. Remarkable retail prices of €139 for intermediate-level wood-core carving skis (140cm-170cm), €159 for twintip all-mountain skis (142-162cm) or frontside carvers. A price leader for shops looking for amazing margins on retail markups.



GPO JET CARVER

Der Allroundcarver für alle die leichter Carven wollen; Twin-tip Konstruktion, mittlere Carving-Taillierung (105-70-95 mm) und einer top Technik. Multimodularer laminierter Sandwich Holz kern, Fibreglasshülle mit Speedlaminaten, CAP-Bauweise, 3-D Effekte, durchgehende auf Gummi gelagerte Kante, P-tex Belag; Tip-Protector;

The allroundcarver for those who want easy carving; twin-tip construction with middle carving sidecut (105-70-95 mm) and latest technics. Multimodular laminated sandwich wood-core, fibreglass shell with speed laminates, CAP-construction, 3-D effects, continuous elastomer supported steel edges, P-tex base, tip-protector.

GPO CROSS X

Der Carver für den breiten Anwendungsbereich bis zum Rennlauf. Der innovative Shape (108-67-98) erzeugt eine enorme Dynamik und Spritzigkeit. Multimodularer laminierter Sandwich-Holz kern, Fibreglasscoque mit Speedeinlagen, CAP-Bauweise, 3-D Effekte, durchgehende auf Gummi gelagerte Kante, Pe-Tex Belag; Tip-Protector;

The carver for a wide range of application up to racing use. The innovative shape (108-67-98) generates an enormous dynamic and liveliness. Multimodular laminated sandwich-wood-core, fibreglass-coque with speed-layers, CAP-construction, 3-D effects, continuous elastomer supported steel edges, P-tex base, tip protector.



MODELL

Length	Radius
140 cm	11,82
150 cm	14,06
160 cm	15,94
170 cm	18,67

JET-CARVER RED

Art.-Nr./Ref.-Nr.
73427
73428
73429
73430

JET-CARVER BLUE

Art.-Nr./Ref.-Nr.
73431
73432
73433
73434

MODELL

Length	Radius
140 cm	11,00
150 cm	13,00
160 cm	15,00
170 cm	17,00

CROSS X BLUE

Art.-Nr./Ref.-Nr.
73435
73436
73437
73438

CROSS X GREEN

Art.-Nr./Ref.-Nr.
73439
73440
73441
73442

Thei GPO wood-core carver line retails for €139- €149 !! (photo from press kit)





GPO's new "Plate release platform" idea: boot /ski interface is always the same...no matter how long your boots are...hmmmm...



GPO's new "B.I.S.S." (Big Snowshow-Skate) play-system: easy runs up the hill...then ski down. They told me it was extremely affordable for the family market at €289. Skins are included.



GPO also makes some rather "interesting" snow toys if you dare to try them. "Microboard" (left) for €199 or "Monoboard" (right) for €129 retail.

Duel

<http://www.dueltime.it>

The Italian racing and carving fanatics at Duel have a strong lineup of SL, GS and a specialty carving ski for the European Carving Cup (no-poles extreme carve racing around pylons). All very nicely built. They make about 700 pairs of skis in 2009. Expect to pay about €800 - €1100 per pair.



Gianluca Grigoletto is the man behind the ski designs at Duel. FIS Carving Cup star. He knows carving skis. (photo from <http://www.carvingcup.com>)





Another shot of Gianluca Grigoletto (photo from Duel catalog)



Kessler

<http://www.kessler-swiss.com/>

Hansjürg Kessler is the carving-shape guru behind one of the most talked-about geometries for on-piste turns in the last couple seasons. His snowboards are legendary with a serious cult following. His skis have remarkable turn behavior (we tested the Palmer P02 and found everyone likes it). The "Palmer" P02 carving ski is licensed by Head from Kessler and marketed under the Palmer brand. Voted as a finalist at the ISPO new product competition, his line of skis and snowboards are serious carving instruments. A passionate ski and snowboard shaper. Custom builds are available.



Kessler snowboards and skis (any color you want as long as it's black). There are rumors of a "red" Kessler seen in the wild with race-level performance-enhancing construction. We'd love to get our feet on a pair of those.



A rack of Kesslers.

Powder Equipment

<http://www.powderequipment.de>

Another finalist for the ISPO new product category was Powder Equipment. Their line of snowboards and skis are hand made, with less than 500 pairs of skis produced. Poplar cores with their own proprietary carbon/kevlar weave. Great shapes and beautiful designs. € 950- € 970 / pr.



Powder Equipment's booth at ISPO



Powder Equipment standard black and white topsheets



Powder Equipment skis and boards

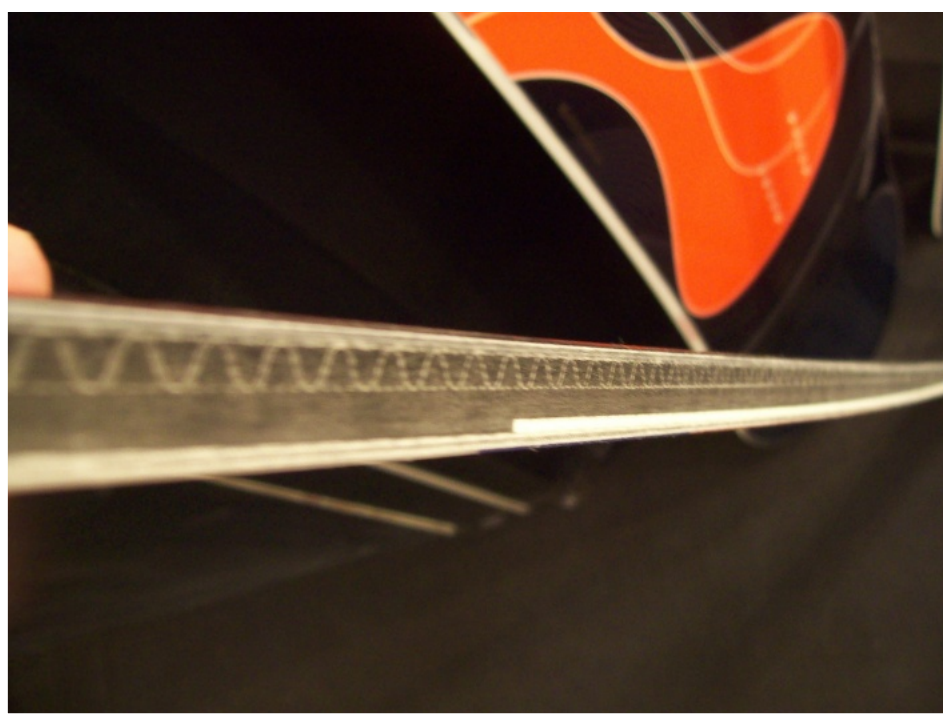


Powder skis by Powder Equipment (bag has custom topsheet versions for the show)

Swallow Ski

<http://www.swallow-ski.com/>

Swallow ski company has been making skis for more than 50 years. Their market is primarily Japan, but we managed to get two pairs of skis to test last season (the Professor 106 and Zuma twintip) from Mr. Hisao Mizushima (nice guy and helpful!) and thought they were really impressive for the very affordable prices. Swallow has a very deep line of affordable skis for families and apparently, they sell like crazy in Japan. They have a new ski this year (MegaWave) built with a 3D glass weave into which foam is injected, layered with titanal and glass. While everyone seems to be using wood cores, or coming back to wood cores, Swallow's new ski is unique in using foam. The three Megawave models have very distinctive flexes, with the top-of-the-line Megawave being seriously, seriously stiff. Hopefully we can get on a pair this season and see what they feel like. The Swallow Professor 106 we tried amazed everyone who tried it with its intensive rebound and grip.



Cutaway of new Swallow Megawave 3D fiber / foam core





From left to right: Swallow Megawave "Titanal", "One" (double layer core) and "Two"

Movement

<http://www.movementskis.com>

Movement's Flyswatter was the hit of the powder-freak crowd at ISPO with its radical tip and tail rocker rise profile. Fun looking. This design will reduce the number of people stepping on your skis in a liftline I think....they won't be able to lift theirs up high enough to get onto the Flyswatters....;-)



Movement's FlySwatter turned every head that walked by. It just looks like something fun.

Sporten

<http://www.sporten.cz/>

Sporten is not well known in North America, but is a ski building powerhouse in Europe. They make more skis in more shapes for more kinds of skiing than just about anyone I can think of other than the really big companies. They saw the light and are bringing out a line of big mountain freeride and freestyle skis. Their specification brochures were not printed in time to bring to ISPO, so dimensions are unknown (I was too lazy to use my ruler on all their skis at the show). Their fat skis are definitely FAT and with a rockered ski in the lineup, they should have the pure powder enthusiasts taken care of. Below is a pic of the freeride lineup.



Sporten's new line of freeride skis for 2009-2010



Closeup of some models of the Sporten freeride line.



New Sporten powder ski (appears flat or slight rocker)



This was the extent of the Sporten freeride line last season. It has been nearly tripled.

Rottfella/Naxo

<http://www.naxo.ch>

These Naxo bindings were show stoppers set up on the table like this. I had to them to you.



Hagan

<http://www.hagan-ski.com>

Hagan is another company that has been around for decades (since 1924), but little known in North America. They specialize in touring, tour-freeride and some specialty skis you should have a look at. Hagan has very lightweight skis for recreation and competition, with a popular following.



You've got to love a company that has pictures of eating and drinking to accompany each model of their skis. (yes, each model has a different photo of this apres-ski party on the web site).





Mountain Wave

<http://www.mountain-wave.de>

Mountain Wave skis is a tiny company of only a couple guys who have skis made by the highly-regarded ski production engineer Rainer Nachbaur at Differences in Austria & Lichtenstein. The high-quality woodcore skis are named after songs ("Get Up", "Promis", "Push", "Diplomat", "Believer") with waist sizes ranging from 72mm-102mm, hitting every segment of the market except the uber-fat powder tools. Very nice guys with a passion for skiing and bringing people the high-quality skis they need to enjoy the freeride lifestyle in the mountains. Limited production.



Mountain Wave skis at their cozy wooden booth.
Yes, drinking beer is normal during show hours at ISPO.



Mountain Wave "Pro Model", "Push" and "Believer" skis

ZAG Freeride

<http://www.zagskis.com>

Zag Freeride has a famous reputation as a company whose skis people either cherish passionately or dislike. Why, I don't know. We hope to get on some this season and report on them with an unbiased opinion. Their 2009-2010 lineup is seriously geared toward the big-snow, big mountain freeride crowd. Nearly every ski in the new line has been modified in either flex or dimensions somehow. Nine different models span waist widths from 75mm to 104mm, complete with a rockered version of the Slap (Slap MW) and rockered version of the Purist (Purist RX) with a cambered underfoot section (not flat). Their long-nosed Heli Gold model comes back with a stiffer flex.



Zag H112RX Pro model

Sloping

<http://www.sloping.ch/>

Here is another company selling a solution for “climb up – ski down” adventures. The skis are very high-quality, wood core sandwich carving tools (made by Rainer Nachbaur of Differences skis in Austria or Lichtenstein). 148cm length with various skins can choose from.



Sloping skin-up/ski-down skis. Verry nice quality and great geometry.

Bluemoris

<http://www.bluemoris.com/>

Bluemoris is another Japanese company, smaller and younger than Swallow, but equally impressive with its diverse line of affordable skis and snowboards for every segment of the family markets. Essentially, they market through a few different brand names for different market segments.



Virus

<http://www.virus-snowsports.com>

Frank Dietzel's Virus Snowsports in Germany gets my vote for the hottest, sexiest skis and snowboards at ISPO 2009. His new premium quality snowboards and skis are carving weapons of the highest order. The new titanal-framed, carbon-kevlar boards and skis are stunningly beautiful, bridging the gap between art and engineering. They are first on my list of skis to try and demo. Sorry for the poor photos. You will spend €1399 on the Raptor carver. No pricing of the new ski models yet. Virus makes about 500 pairs of skis per year.



Virus Taipan Luxury Edition racecarver with polished titanal frame & VIST plates



Closeup of the polished titanal frame of the Virus Taipan



Virus skis from right-to-left: Taipan racecarver, Scorpion "oversize carver", Raptor carver, Soulsurfer, Soulcarver, Ripper park & pipe ski. Frank Dietzel is wearing the striped shoes.



Enlarged view of a poor photograph of the Virus skis



Some of the Virus snowboard line

Faction

<http://www.factionskis.com>

"Create. Resist. Unite." is their motto. The folks at Faction have been busy tweaking their lineup and adding new skis (and getting a cease-and-desist order from Gene Simmons of the band KISS since Faction used his stage likeness on their "Thirteen" ski topsheet...that's another story). Jesse tells me the new "Royal" (150-122-142 rocker) is getting great reports from preproduction riders, and the "Thirteen" is another perfect ski for them. 8 different skis for 2009-2010. This company is hot right now and rolling. Birch/Poplar cores, ABS sidewalls, half rocker, full rocker, cambered and flat skis.



Faction "Royal" (150-122-142)



Long view of the Faction "Royal"



Faction lineup 2010

Differences

<http://www.differences.at/>

Rainer Nachbaur's shop makes about 5000 pairs of skis per year (which I never would have guessed) with about 14 employees. Having previously produced special WorldCup skis for companies such as Nordica, Blizzard and Atomic using his special materials engineering and production expertise and facilities, Rainer knows about high-quality skis. As the builder of skis for brands such as Heidi, Mountain Wave and Rip'nWood, he knows about contract production. His shop builds about 1,500 pairs of their own carving and freeride skis under the Differences brand name. They all share a minimalist color-only topsheet and flawless construction with very high-quality materials.



The Differences ski lineup. Yes, they come in different colors.



Aston-Martin contracted with Differences to produce their special ski package for their branding.



Critter protects Rainer in his booth as he talks business with men in very expensive shoes.

ZAI

<http://www.zai.ch>

Several other premium-market ski makers told me Zai skis is the target they shoot for as a competitor. Four lines of skis are available. Zai Tila & Laisa, Zai Spada limited, Zai Classic and the Hublot black model. All are sold with bindings, poles and carrying bag. The Hublot All Black is a cobrand of their carbon fiber stone (Gneiss) core technology with the luxury watch company Hublot (don't ask about the price). The Tila models are for groomed runs. The Laisa models are for off-piste skiing.



Zai Tila Collection

The Zai Spada is the “stone core” ski you may have heard about. Technically it is a core created by sheathing Rofna-Porphyr gneiss (a green stone used in the Tissot Rockwatch also) in carbon fiber using technology from TechnoCarbon Technologies in Germany. It is supposed to have amazing strength and vibration dampening qualities. We will try to get a test on them this season and let you know how they behave in the real world.

Be prepared to pay €2435 - €5500 per pair. Limited production of 111 pairs on the high-end models.



Zai Tila Tips (Photo from their press kit)



Zai Laisa Collection

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Choose your stone from Andeer or Biasca



Closeup of Zai Spada cutaway - yes, it is a stone core.



Your Zai skis come as a package. Only as a package.



Lacroix

<http://www.ski-lacroix.com/>

The Lacroix ski company has gone completely into the premium ski market with a dizzying array of high-priced skis in many configurations. They all are variations on the wood core, titanal, carbon and kevlar sandwich design. Of course, you can spend up to €20,000 on a pair of skis from them, or if you really need a package, you can buy the “Courchevel” - a €50,000 box

with skis, bindings, poles, goggles, gloves, season pass to Les 3 Vallees and a couple leather pouches. Hurry, because only 10 packages will be available. Ask Santa for this box under your tree next year.



Courchevel package for €50,000
(comes with a ski pass to Les 3 Vallees)



Another shot of the really nice roller box with pull-out ski drawer.

Hammer

<http://www.hammersnowboards.com>

Hammer has a lineup of matching skis and snowboards. They are produced in either Spain or Switzerland, depending on the model. Their line runs from carving skis to freestyle to freeride.





Radical

<http://www.radical-sports.com>

Radical is a Swiss company making handmade snowboards, skis, skateboards and custom builds since 1984. Carbon-Kevlar sandwich constructions with longitudinal and woven triax fabrics including basalt-coated fiberglass layered over beechwood-reinforced poplar cores and graphite race bases. The skis utilize some snowboard-inspired tip shapes with deep sidecuts and some are available in medium or stiff torsional stiffnesses (usually, ski companies only provide longitudinal flex variations). Very lightweight (1.3kg) freestyle skis (“Radical Ski”) with carbon-fiber topsheets, along with a lower-priced version (“Team”) without the high-tech materials (simple fiberglass wood core sandwich). Their “Freerider” model is for all-terrain carving/freeriding (85 or 90mm waist) with an eye toward carving strength with its carbon-Kevlar triax sandwich construction. These are also lightweight at 1.5kg. For 2009-2010, they have a 25 year anniversary, special edition line of snowboards and skis – only 25 of each will be manufactured. The 25th anniversary “Carver” model is available in 167cm or 157cm versions with special geometries of 125-73-106 (167cm) and 118-68-100 (157cm) and features special Kevlar inserts and construction tweaks for extreme torsional stiffness, power and edge grip. Nice looking skis. Prices range from €669 to €1068. No price info on the Anniversary Special ski.



Radical's line of skis

PlayMaker

<http://www.playmaker.com.tw>

Playmaker is a relatively large, custom OEM manufacturer in Taiwan. They have been making sports equipment for various brands since 1968 including in-line skates, ice skates,

skateboards, snowboards, snowboard bindings, skis, protective gear, wakeboards, kiteboards...you name it. If you want your own brand of these kinds of things, PlayMaker knows how to manufacture them and they have the capacity to pump out volume products to your specifications.

They produced 40,000 snowboards in 2000. Their clients include K2, Head, Elan, Technica, RD, Atomic, TecnoPro, O'Brien, Connelly and others.

They can manufacture foam-core or wood-core (beech/aspen) skis in sandwich or cap constructions. You can order skis made by PlayMaker in volumes as small as 100 pairs. You get the picture.



Playmaker carving skis. The construction and finish appeared to be excellent. The ski geometries are modern and well-designed (or copied)

APO

<http://www.apo-snow.com/>

APO employs 9 people and has a popular following in France for their skis and snowboards. After a long history of having other companies produce snowboards and skis and starting-stopping several companies to build the brand name since 1986, Regis Rolland launched APO-Snowboards in 2003. 2008 saw the line of skis introduced and has been going strong ever since.

Producing a full line of freestyle and freeride skis in lots of lengths, APO builds solid, wood torsionbox/fiberglass skis, reported in China. Priced between €489 and €589.



APO skis catch everyone's eye at their booth

Majesty

<http://www.majestyskis.com>

Majesty began life as Majestic skis, but reportedly had to change their name for trademark reasons. Producing wood-core skis at the Nobile facility in Poland, Majesty has more ladies' skis this year. Their workmanship and model design is right-on with

good geometries and poplar/ash cores with carbon-Kevlar stringers, ABS sidewalls and 2.5mm wide edges for durability. Their "Gryfion" leather-topped model is a head-turner, and they make kids' skis ! Their VF Lumberjack is the powder cruiser at 155-120-145. Nice line of skis. Priced from about €449 to €500.



Majesty Lumberjack fat ski. Nice graphics.



Majesty line of skis

Schuetz Sports

<http://www.schuetz-sports.com>

A new entry into the premium ski market is Schuetz Sports from Andrin and Fabiean Schuetz of Switzerland. Beautiful, beautiful skis meticulously hand made of beech or ash wood cores, double titanal/fiberglass layers, carbon fiber and stainless steel edges (try tuning those with a cheap file) by a shop of six people in Austria. Premium skis at a premium price of €1190 to €2400.



Schuetz "Mahogany Niro" model (photo from press kit)

Custom builds are possible by contacting them. They produce a "premium" line and the "exclusive" line with all-mountain and freeride models. My photos were poor, so I pulled some from the press kit CD. 800 pairs maximum per year – 15 pairs a day maximum.



Schuetz "Apfel" model (photo from press kit)!



Schuetz "Olive" model (photo from press kit)



Schuetz "Freeride" model from the premium line (photo from press kit)



Schuetz booth

Core Skis

<http://www.coreskis.com>

Core skis in Switzerland got my vote for runner-up hottest small ski company with their extensive line of no-nonsense carving machines and line of freeride/freestyle skis (not pictured) made in a small shop in northern Italy (they look exactly like the famous Blossom factory products to me upon close inspection, and the Blossom factory is in northern Italy...hmmm...). The shapes and construction and quality were very impressive and put most other designs to shame (in my biased opinion). 1000 pairs per year. Expect to pay €1200 to €1600 per pair with VIST binding/plate systems.









New Core freeride skis 145-120-135 in 185cm - 30m radius.
(photo from press kit)

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Mountain Boy Sledworks

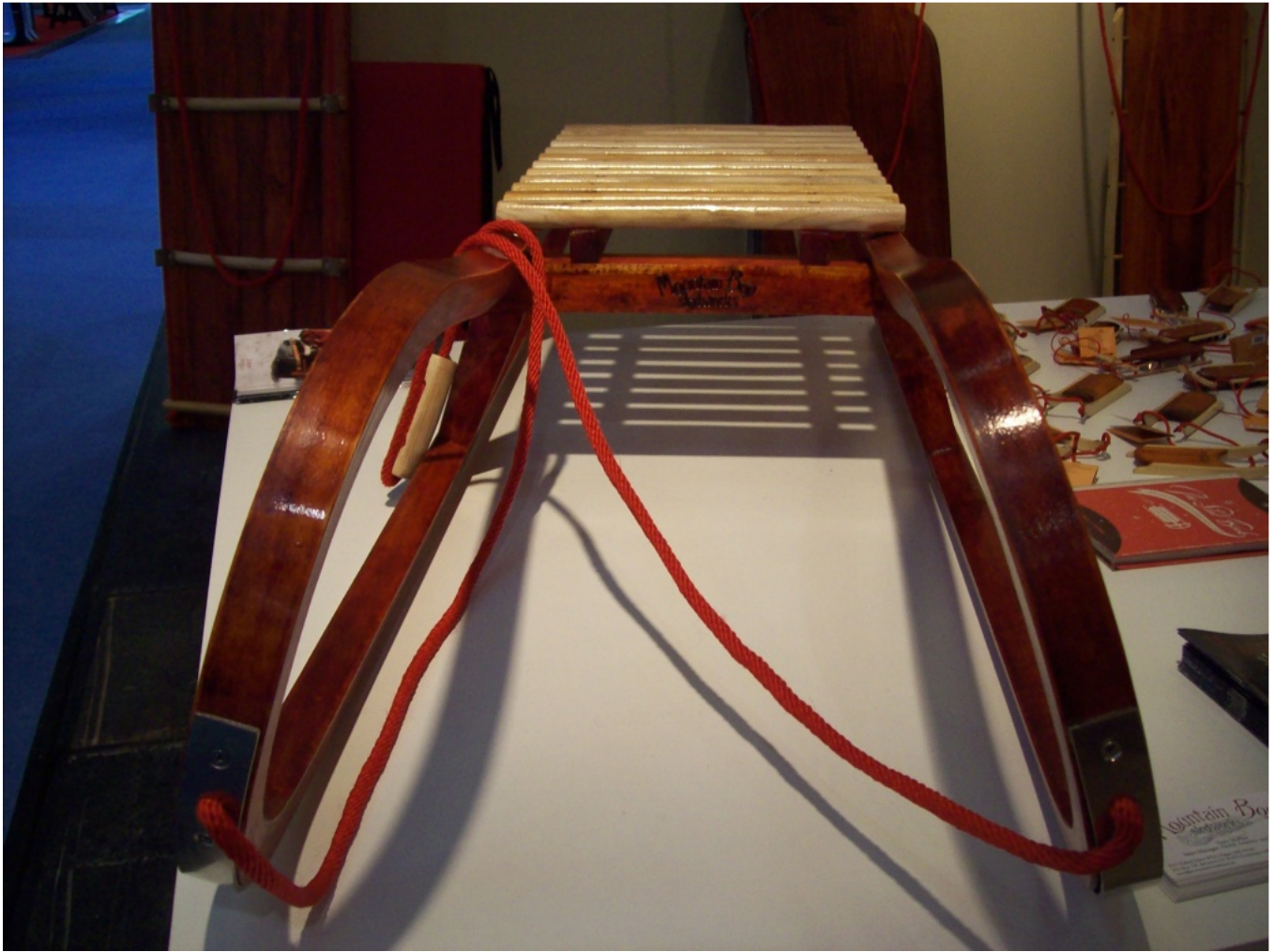
<http://www.mountainboysleds.com/>

Ok, Ok, not skis, but Terry Mullins from Mountain Boy Sledworks in Colorado was the nicest guy and had really nice wooden sleds....waaay better than the injection-molded mass-produced snow toys being hawked by tons of other vendors at the show. People staffing the booths around his were begging him to sell his demo stock to them to take home to their kids after ISPO. He actually sold some so he wouldn't have to schlep them home again! Excellent Xmas ornaments too! Check out his site.





Terry Mullins and his sleds at ISPO



Nice wooden sleds and awesome mini-sled Xmas ornaments
(the runner sled ones have articulated steering)

Misc. Pics form ISPO:



Yes, it's a champagne bar.



Underwear is HUGE at ISPO (and graphically intensive)
 You can also visit a hall nearly completely dedicated to fabric suppliers (Taiwan, Pakistan, China)



Colmar wins the "most over-the-top" booth award
(yes, there is a downstairs section through the door on the left)



It's important to wine and dine your retailers and distributors at ISPO



ISPO Press lounge has free coffee, juices, fruit, newspapers and clocks!



Some "booths" at ISPO are like small city blocks with salons of couches, chairs, tables, bars with refrigerators, stools, full kitchens including stoves and water, private meeting rooms...you name it. The smallest booths start at around €3000 with a single electrical plug and quickly rise to 5 or 6 digit pricetags for the 4 days of the exposition. The logistics of delivering, building and breaking-down these booths is staggering. Sneaking into the back bowels of the convention center reveals complete truck-door access to any portion of the collection of halls and within their interiors, with loading-unloading areas and massive storage and meeting room facilities.



Ride skis had an actual funhouse with lines of people to go in, and an animatronic gremlin outside moving and making noise. Does this feel like a cozy "indie" ski company to you...or have they fallen into corporate excess putting money into show business instead of skis?



While we typically don't report on the "Big Name" ski companies like Atomic, but their D2 DoubleDeck split-ski variable geometry concept is exotic and different. Most reports we have read say these skis are nice, but not really remarkable...but the idea is definitely interesting.





ISPO is not just about skis, but nearly all winter sports. Cool toys are everywhere.



Bicycle folds into a backpack carrier!

About ExoticSkis.com



ExoticSkis.com began around 2005 as a hobby project to create a list of all the ski companies besides the "big name" brands everyone sees at typical ski shops. We started learning more and more about dozens, and dozens of small and large ski companies most people never heard of.

We started taking notes about them, monitoring their websites, ski blogs, ski forums, word-of-mouth, rumors and referrals by everyday ski enthusiasts. It has become addictive and fun. One day we got up the nerve to ask some companies if we could test their skis and report about our experiences at our little website. To

our surprise, we got to demo some very interesting skis, and found many of them to be excellent.

Today, ExoticSkis.com lists more than two hundred companies from all over the World, and receives visitors from more than forty different nations each week. We host some of the only published on-snow reviews of some skis. If our list and reviews help to alert some skiers to some alternatives to the big corporate ski giants, we're happy. We think it's the biggest list of its kind, and even if it isn't, we like it anyway and it's fun!

We don't sell skis and we don't sell advertising to ski companies. ExoticSkis.com is a volunteer effort supported by a small group of contributors and enthusiasts who simply love different skis and the stories behind their designers and builders. We don't get paid by any ski companies to test or write about their products. Sometimes they give us skis so we can loan them out for widespread reviews all season long. Sometimes we have to buy the skis with our own money, but most of the time we have to return the demos to their owners after we review them. We don't even get discount lift tickets (bummer). We do, however, get to ski some really interesting skis, and that makes it all worth the effort! If you hear about any ski companies we don't have in our list, let us know so we can tell the world about them.

Cheers,
Eric Edelstein

