



# Small & Independent Ski Brands:

## Quick Impressions Of Selected Models

Killington, Vermont  
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[ExoticSkis.com](http://ExoticSkis.com)



## The Beast's Test Fest: *Season 2*

Since the December 2013 rebirth of the consumer on-snow demo days dubbed “Test Fest”, Killington's Lyndsay Gang, Jeff

Alexander and Rob Megnin refined the logistics, layout and execution of the event for 2014 to get the demo tents right next to skiers getting on the Superstar high-speed lift. ExoticSkis.com helped bump-up the count of small ski companies at the event, and the result was a whole lot of people trying skis they never heard of built in Utah, Colorado, Massachusetts, Maine and Vermont.

We talked to many happy skiers who were thrilled to hang out and talk with the actual ski makers themselves....in the flesh....and learn how the skis were made, how the small companies got started, their philosophy about their ski designs, which models might be best for their kind of skiing, how they can get the skis customized to their liking...and endless other topics. Everyone we talked to was excited by the presence of the smaller builders (many based right here in New England) at the event.....including the demo staff of the “Big Brands” like Elan, Head, Blizzard....etc. The staffers loved the mix-and-mingle of the new guys in town...a refreshing change from seeing the same old brands and the same old staff at every demo day event they go to each season. The fun part was watching the staff from the big brands take rides on the smaller brand skis and coming back impressed.

### Partners:



AMERICA'S ACTIVE LIFESTYLE LEADER



Killington partnered with Outside Television, SPY Optics and Monster energy drinks to add some draw to the event. National outdoor brand placement can be a big help to add legitimacy and impact to an event such as a two-day, on-snow demo fest.



# Support For Small, Innovative Ski Companies

Killington started assembling their list of vendors for the Test Fest by combing through the usual list of major brands such as Fischer, Head, Elan, Rossignol, Blizzard...etc. ExoticSkis.com approached the Marketing Department and suggested they add some spice to the mix by inviting some smaller, perhaps lesser-known brands to set up shop along the demo alley, and the Marketing Department took to the idea right away. In a matter of two weeks before the event, the vendor list grew to include brands such as:



The presence of these exciting, smaller brands at a multi-day, consumer demo event at a large resort is very promising and shows the crop of ever-growing smaller ski and snowboard brands is going mainstream... not only in the eyes of consumers, but the resort industry itself.

Killington gets our congratulations for inviting these companies to participate and show their products to the skiers hungry for new and exciting equipment. It shows that a relatively large, corporate-governed ski resort can indeed reach out and support small companies contributing to the health and well-being of the industry, and that makes things better for skiers and the industry as a whole. The skier response was exciting.

## Insurance: A Big Obstacle & Opportunity

While many small companies could not attend due to scheduling conflicts...some emerging companies were stymied by the modern-day requirement to maintain liability insurance for the public trying their products at events such as the Test Fest. Killington, like any responsible sponsor of events, requires the vendors to provide proof of liability insurance before they can participate in the event. This insurance typically takes the form of \$2 million aggregate / \$1 million per occurrence policy, and requires the host corporation (Killington in this case) to be named as an insured party.

This insurance requirement stopped several small companies from attending since such coverage can be a large expense for a startup, and as one company explained...”*Adding another named insured to our current event policy added an additional 15% to our total policy cost.*” Savvy entrepreneurs should see an opportunity to provide liability coverage for small companies looking to participate in ski and snowboard product testing events at affordable prices and flexible scheduling. With more than 350 U.S. and international companies listed at ExoticSkis.com, the market potential should be self-evident.

## Setup:



For Killington's second reboot year of their demo day event operations, they did an admirable job of attracting ski, snowboard, helmet and pole manufacturers to their site in mid-December for a two-day “Test Fest”. Everyone was invited to set up along the access road, just below the Superstar lift. This year, tents were set up right next to the lift, so skiers could ski down to the demo tents, swap gear and then head back up to the lift for testing runs. The K1 base lodge was a 30 second walk, so the situation worked great for skiers and staffers. Anyone driving up the Killington access road was met with the rows of branded demo tents, upping the stoke factor and peaking people's interest as they arrived.



# Quick Impressions...or “Speed Dating” Some Skis

We couldn't get out on all the skis from the smaller companies, but we tried to pick a few examples of some skis of particular interest to us. Normally, we here at ExoticSkis.com dislike reviews based on a few runs or a single day of testing since such short testing times really don't let people know what it's like to live with a ski in real-world conditions. We didn't really “test” these skis, but essentially speed-dated them, and we'll let you know what we thought.

## Conditions:

Vermont saw a nice coating of several inches of dry, fresh snow in the days before the event to cover the season's first layers of manmade base and natural snowfall depths, making it a dry, comfortably cool testing day with great surface conditions and many trail choices. The only problem was dense cloudcover at ground level, making visibility difficult and kept speeds lower than they otherwise would have been. Overall, a great day to test skis.



## *Killington* The Terrain:

Killington's terrain is great for testing since you can find wide-open, high-speed runs, tight trees, shrubs, flats, steeps, hardpack groomers, ungroomed wild-snow, small bumps, bigger bumps, cut-up snow, manicured snow...you name it...so it was a good venue to test skis, and the SuperStar lift next to the demo alley is high-speed and allows access to many kinds of terrain quickly and repeatedly. We could find slopes facing nearly any direction you could think of, both sheltered in the trees and windblown to pieces. Their man-made snow base from weeks of snowmaking efforts provided a consistent and durable underlayment for the natural snow and newly blown surfaces we found for Test Fest.

## The Skis:

Rather than try to get 1 or 2 runs on as many models as possible and end up with 1-2 run impressions, we concentrated on getting a bunch of runs on a smaller selection of skis to get a better opinion of them on different areas of Killington's terrain.

- Lucid Cannon 182cm
- White Room Alaia 180cm (130-109-108 r=13.4m)

- White Room Rise 183cm (125-132-108-115)
- Ramp Jailbird 165cm (121-70-107 r=12.9m)
- Ramp Jailbird 175cm (125-70-111 r=13.5m)
- HG Stinger 178cm (125-96-125 r=18m)
- Parlor Cardinal 178cm (126-90-116 r=19.4m)

## The Artisanal Brands Are Here!

For 2014, Killington presented several tiny, artisanal ski companies (HG Skis, White Room Skis, Parlor Skis and Lucid Skis) in addition to the somewhat small-sized, up-and-comer brands such as RAMP and ICELANTIC (and DPS in attendance in 2013) along side some of the “Big 10” brands such as Head, Fischer, Elan, Blizzard...etc. The response by the visitors was impressive as they over and over again found these small ski company demo tents, then ran off to grab their friends to show them the treasures they just found. The added excitement was unmistakable.



Mike Kilchenstein's [RAMP Sports](#) has transformed itself from a small, U.S.A. startup outsourcing the production of its ski and snowboard designs from Asia, to an increasingly prominent and successful U.S. company now making most of its products in a brand-new factory in Park City, Utah. U.S.-made Kelvar and fiberglass composites, innovative, rapid-change mold production technology mated with high-sustainability, eco-sensitive materials such as bamboo cores and pine-based, no-petroleum resins have essentially resulted in a completely new line of skis for the company since the startup skis we tested several seasons ago at [ExoticSkis.com](#). RAMP's aggressive direct-sales

pricing and pro-discount programs make the skis affordable, and their corporate responsibility and environmentally-sensitive manufacturing programs make the corporation very interesting.



New graphics licensing for 2015 includes Major League Baseball, National Football League and NCAA topsheet availability (yes, you can get those Patriots-logoed PeacePipes you always wanted!)

## RAMP Jailbird 165 and 175cm (121-70-107 $r=12.9m$ ) \$649 usd (website)



The Jailbird is a brand-new slalom-carver model for RAMP in 2015. Squarely aimed at the frontside carving market skiers who wanted something more turny than the super-popular Frenzy, the Jailbird shows off a traditional SL-influenced shaping and camber in a civilian-friendly chassis infused with RAMP's bamboo core layered with triax and biax fiberglass and kevlar. The first impression of the Jailbird is one of energetic enthusiasm underfoot due to the bamboo core being light and responsive. I expected the Jailbirds to hook up automatically into a slot-car-like carving behavior as soon as they were rolled up on edge and pressured, but they had a slight hesitation at initiation, then set their edges into the surface and “settled into the bottom of the turn” very nicely with a crisp, clean exit with plenty of energy. The hesitation at turn initiation could have been the particular binding mount location, but I did not have time to experiment with boot placement adjustments in the demo bindings to find out. Vibration control

was pretty good for a bamboo ski, with just a hint of buzzy vibration at higher speeds on the hardpack where I could find it. Fun factor was very high, while trench-digging behavior was a little less than expected. This is the first iteration of the Jailbird, so in typical RAMP fashion, they will be making rapid-production adjustments to their designs as they get more feedback from the field. Overall, the Jailbird (in both 165 and 175cm versions I tried) was a fun and light-handling slalom carver for the frontside, with a clean, appealing peek-a-boo-see-the-layers topsheet. I think this could be a strong staple in the RAMP lineup with just a little tweaking of the mount position and shaping....but they have to figure out what the target audience is....ex-racers, or groomer-hunting civilians looking for a sporty, grippy carving sensation. Good news...it's priced well and RAMP stands behind their products with enthusiasm.



Nick Mukai, Ian Reinholt, Saskia Haugen-Reinholt and John Gonter are the folks behind Lucid skis, which began life way back in 2009 in Kingfield Maine. Their goal is to produce East-coast skis from locally sustainable materials as possible (their cores come from within 40 miles of the shop). Simplicity and elegance in effectiveness are the hallmarks of Lucid's skis...each one built carefully by hand for each customer.

Currently Ian and Nick are dreaming up advanced concepts such as triaxial hickory veneer to replace fiberglass (exotic idea!), and

promoting internships and educational opportunities for people looking to get experience with manufacturing processes. The main focus now is on using wood's intrinsic qualities and locating them strategically in the core lamination for maximum performance. Hornbeam, hickory, black locust or rock maple make up the sidewalls and play key roles in the core lamination. Lucid creates cores with at least 80% basswood because they believe it has superior qualities and is available



*John and Nick with their Lucid Skis from Maine*



locally in Maine...making the ski a product of its surrounding environment when manufactured.

Nick is very passionate about his ski designs and composition materials and has an endless energy about him when talking about the future of the skis and what they can do. Just look at his picture (left). I don't know about you...but I want someone like Nick making MY skis.



## Lucid Cannon 182cm (128-92-112)

**Lucid Skis** Cannon model is similar to many skis created by woodgrain-eski designers because it has a beautiful veneer of attractive wood covering a stout and energetic chassis. The ski is meant to be driven and responds enthusiastically to strong input rather than lazy misdirection. The shaping of the Cannon does not deliver a darty, jackrabbit ride, but rather a strong, smooth, well controlled



are capable of handling race-like pressures with quiet reserve. The faster and harder you push it, the more at home it feels. Tight, woodsy terrain can become a bit of a handful with the 182cm length and its relative stiffness, but it's right at home laying down tracks with authority in open terrain, or cutting through skied-out material. Traditionally cambered with a bit of early rise tip. Lucid's description of the Cannon is :

*“The Lucid Cannon is the stiffest ski in the Lucid line and designed for aggressive high speed charging through all conditions. Amazing carver on groomers and wide enough to devour crud and shred the powder. Light swing weight for bumps and trees, rockered tip, traditional underfoot camber. All Lucid Skis are made using a vertically laminated ash and basswood core with hornbeam, hickory, rock maple or black locust sidewalls. All woods used are sourced from local sawyers in Maine. The core is sandwiched between two layers of triaxial fiberglass. The bases are standard p-*

*tex and the edges high carbon, hardened steel. The top sheet is beautiful native rock maple veneer and every pair is finished with U.V. protective marine clear-coat, wet sanded and wax polished.. The Lucid medallion on the tail is real gold leaf.”* Edge grip is very sound once you get the ski to engage along its length. If you push into too tight a radius, it can balk a little due to its length and stiffness, but let it run in its sweet spot and it can cut through skied-out surfaces, crud and junk without a hint of deflection or protest. The Canon reminds me of one of those skis you can grab for nearly any situation or snow condition, and you know it will be reliable and capable no matter what comes your way. Secure and solid describe the feel underfoot.

The Canon's shaping is conservative, but very effective for nearly all kinds of terrain and surface types. Plenty of power is available in the midbody and tail sections, and it loves speed. Scrubbing speed with broadslides requires a little attention at the helm due to its stiffness and camber, but it works just fine that way when you need it to. Ex racer types will love the version of the Cannon I rode.

Intermediates may find it a bit stiff (Lucid can customize the flex, so this is not an issue) and should probably downsize a bit for Eastern conditions. I got the impression after examining the ski and making some runs with it, that it would last a very long time and probably not lose its integrity for several seasons. Fit and finish were very good, with a touch of “definitely hand-made” character which many skiers who tried the skis said they loved.

The Canon has a very wide performance envelope for Eastern conditions, and I think that is what Nick and his crew are shooting for. Beautiful skis hand-crafted by a passionate crew of enthusiasts.



*Lucid Skis*



Vincent Faraci carefully crafts only a few pairs of [White Room skis](#) in the northern part of Vermont each season, and they are beautiful works of art with great performance and personality.

Vin creates his skis with cores of locally harvested, laminated mixtures of maple, ash, yellow birch, and poplar, eco-friendly epoxy resins, Durasurf 4001 Durasurf bases, Durasurf UHMWPE sidewalls, Rockwell hardness 48 steel edges from CDW, VDS rubber dampening strips, Vectorply triaxial fiberglass as well as carbon fiber. He tops them off with beautiful wood veneers, abalone shell inlays, wood burning and custom metal leafing (very nice).

Photographs don't do justice to Vin's creations, and everyone who came by the demo tent for White Room essentially gasped when they saw the craftsmanship and obvious care displayed by the skis' final form. "Gorgeous" was the word most typically heard by visitors to Vin's tent. White Room skis are painstakingly assembled from very carefully selected materials with specific performance goals in mind.

Like Lucid Skis from Maine, Vin's skis are built one-at-a-time for specific customers with specific ideas of what they want from their skis. Artisanal construction is the best way to describe it. One person said they wanted to buy the skis and just mount them on the wall in their living room.







White Room Skis



## White Room Skis Alaia 180 cm (130-109-108 r-13.4m)



This 5-point geometry ski from White Room immediately felt like it wanted to be “in snow” rather than “on snow” at slower, low-angle speeds. It felt maybe a bit laggy and maybe a little burly... but not really...if that makes any sense... Being in the 110mm category underfoot, this was understandable. Bump up the speed a few notches and get it up on edge with some pressure, and it immediately hooked up with a vengeance and carved impressive lines across mixed surfaces and even hardpack in GS-mode.

Venturing into the softer stuff off the edges of the trails revealed the Alaia likes to surf its nose and hook up underfoot and in the tail to pretty much let you go anywhere with security without burning too many calories to get it done. Alaia has an elegant turn shape in its sweet spot radius, and can be thrown sideways to scrub speed with ease. Dampening is excellent, and the faster you go, the better they go, becoming agile, but always stable.

It feels like Vin wanted a back-country ski with frontside prowess, and he hit the mark nicely. The craftsmanship and cosmetic appeal are stunningly attractive. The ski is a work of art that performs impressively with a great personality lots of people will find hard to resist. Really nice and unique.



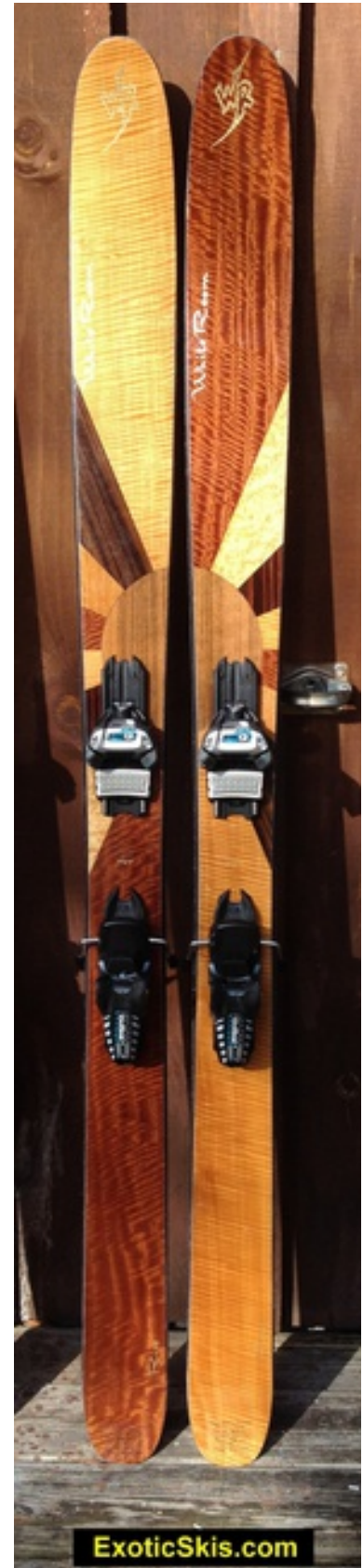
*Vin Faraci of White Room Skis and Nick Mukai of Lucid Skis hanging out, talking about....well....skis..*

**White Room Skis Rise 183 cm (125-132-108-115mm - 30 cm tip rocker with reverse side cut in the tip, traditional side cut and camber underfoot with sidecut all the way back to a flared tail)**

Vin Feraci said “...*these are my favorites...*” when he handed me the 183s. These were one of his “4-point” designs, and they immediately put a grin on my face and several other people who tried it. The balanced mix of rocker, sidecut, camber and flex had a great sweet spot enhancing the turn initiation with a shortened effective edge, yet railed with authority and was able to snake in and out of the Eastern trees without much effort.

A strong and sporty tail led to some really fun acceleration out of the turns when loaded and released. This ski had a relatively thick base profile underfoot, yet tapered down to a more common tip and tail thickness, which was unusual, but very effective and delivered a great ride. There is a feeling of refinement and elegance to the way the White Room Rise behaved, and in an age where some skis coming out of major factories feel somewhat generic at times, the specialized feel coming from a small shop's design is welcome and very rewarding.

This ski, like Vin's other designs, has a backcountry flavor with frontside chops added in for Eastern conditions. Watching people pick up a pair of White Room skis and examine the woodwork was like watching kids in a candy store. The good news is these are not just pretty skis, but really effective tools for people who are serious about performance.







make up their lineup for the 2014-2015 season, with each built carefully by hand out of combinations of maple and aspen laminate cores sandwiched with various types of fiberglass and carbon fiber, depending on the customer's profile. The founders all have racing backgrounds and they want their East coast skis to have essential carving prowess dedicated in the DNA of each ski, but shaped to deliver different rides for different conditions people find all over New England.

The guys have been aggressive at getting demo day promotional

opportunities to happen throughout Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts, and they want to become New England's best custom ski builder. Current topsheet themes for the fleet range from single color (blue, red), to peek-a-boo cutouts to reveal the wood and laminates below, as well as options for custom topsheet designs. Parlor has a fleet of models, including the fully-cambered

Harrier carver at 128-87-110, cambered or reverse-cambered Cardinal at 136-100-126 and 126-90-116, reverse-camber Sparrow at 142-107-117 and reverse-camber Heron at 150-120-136. A new "code name Seagull" model with more-splayed, 5-point design for loose-and-fun frontside feel is in the works.

The cool thing is Parlor produces models in a wide range of lengths from 154cm to 192cm...superb for getting people just the right ski underfoot for their desired terrain and style.



I spent several laps on two versions of their flagship “Cardinal” model in 100mm and 90mm waisted versions back-to-back. Both skis had a similar pattern of being relatively thick and sturdy (similar to many race-stock skis) to take enthusiastic levels of pressure at various speeds and retain their integrity and behavior. These profiles are easily customized and strategically thinned, depending on the desires of the customer (one of the nice things about CAD designs and milling these days).

## Parlor Skis Cardinal 178 cm (136-100-125 r=19.6@178cm)



The racing-red Parlor Cardinal (100m waisted version) has a relatively large radius of 19.6 meters for an Eastern one-ski quiver model, and it likes to go fast. Ski the 178cm version at slow speeds and it might feel a little balky compared to many “one-ski-to-do-it-all” designs intended for East coast tight, steep, often ice-riddled conditions (downsize to 171cm version to get more responsiveness at slow speeds). Get it up to speed and put pressure into its sweet spot with some attitude and it responds like the strong, torsionally tough design it was meant to be. The Cardinal really likes cutting through crud and cut-up snow surfaces under power, and when driven (not ridden), it holds its line unflinchingly. Strong, secure and with plenty of confidence underfoot.

Even though the demo pair was 178cm, it felt a bit longer due to its relative stiffness and nearly 20 meter radius. Taking the Cardinal 100s into the tight trees between Killington's trails found the skis to be a little balky and stout at slow speeds due to its 178cm length, and relatively stiff in the bumpier sections, although the rounded tails definitely prevented hangups in the rear when the bumps got tight in the trees. I kept getting the impression these were skis with some repressed GS turns in their genetic makeup...yearning to be let loose on open terrain. I also kept getting the impression the Parlor Cardinal would be a great western frontside daily driver...even though it's advertised as an Eastern design.

Exit the woods onto open terrain, and let them run, you can get some great high-angle trenches dug while slaying any surface irregularities in your path. The Cardinal 100s don't seem to have a real speed limit on any typical Eastern terrain for 95% of most



skiers. The harder you drive them, the better they like it.

The only thing I was looking for in the Cardinal 100, but did not find, was a sense of finesse and accuracy. This version was more muscle-car than line-hunting GT racer, but with the addicting arrest-me red topsheet color, it seemed to be perfectly at home blasting across any surfaces without a flinch.

The guys at Parlor pride themselves in “ski fitting” to tailor the proper length and flex characteristics to the client's profile, so you can get pretty much any personality you might want in their skis. They can customize the core materials and layup to produce the desired behavior for their customers...and that's a great thing.

They can tune the construction like a musical instrument to get the personality and behavior progression customers are looking for. Fit and finish were top-shelf and super solid. These skis will probably last for several seasons under hard use before they show any signs of degradation. I expect big things from Parlor in the future. They are just getting started.





## Parlor Skis Cardinal 178 cm (125-90-116 r=19.6@178cm)

While the racing-red Cardinal 100 grabbed your eye on the rack, the eerie-blue 90mm version looked quietly impressive. As soon as I had two turns on the Cardinal 90, it became apparent Parlor downsized the Cardinal 100 underfoot, but kept the same radius for a reason....it rips like a race ski on vacation. While the 100mm version felt a little balky at slower speeds in 178cm in the tighter terrain areas, the 90mm Cardinal hooked into its turn initiation with much less effort than its 100mm brother and fed its pressure along the entire length of the ski to load the tail nicely with a pleasure-inducing kick in the tail when released.

The 90mm Cardinal is much more at home in the East as a one-ski-quiver for most frontside activity than the 100mm version which seems like a western daily driver. The Cardinal 90 responds to inputs more quickly and more deeply than the Cardinal 100, yet retains the excellent lineholding ability through cut up surfaces...only with more responsiveness and eagerness underfoot than its wider brother. Top end speed limit is probably 15% less than the Cardinal 100, but you get much more reactivity and responsiveness in tight trees and bumpier terrain. Bumps can still be a little bit of a harsh ride with the Cardinal 90, but then again, it's a ski more at home ripping trenches in the groomers and cut up snow than any bump ski.

The Cardinal 90 rewards an athletic pilot with a driving style, rather than a back-seat sightseer, so it's probably a good candidate ski for advancing intermediates looking for a high-

performance ride, or the ex-racer looking for a hot rod to take out on days when there are a few inches of fresh snow out there. Again, there is a bit of burly feel to the Cardinal at slower speeds which quickly disappears when you power it up or stand on it with some authority. Personally, I love race skis and race-carvers and all-mountain designs in the East with a carving bias, and the Cardinal 90 fits squarely into the toolbox for those situations. If I were to ask the Parlor guys to customize the Cardinal 90 a little, I would have a hard time deciding whether I wanted it more turny with a 15 or 16 meter radius and keep the stiffness, or soften the forebody slightly with its 19.6m radius to get lower-calorie turn engagement. Hmmm....



Harrison Goldberg founded [HG Skis](#) back in 2010 as a garage-brand freestyle ski company in Burlington, Vermont. But has been creating designs since 2006. Since partnering with Connor Gaeta, Harrison has gotten HG skis into full production mode, generating a refined freestyle ski with great all-mountain skiability and a dedicated following of park and pipe enthusiasts.

HG Skis is concentrating on perfecting their signature freestyle “Stinger” model to make it as versatile, appealing and irresistible as possible, rather than fill every niche in the ski market people can think of. It's a smart move to concentrate on your strength of interest, not meet every market opportunity available.

The HG Stinger model is designed by HG's crew and manufactured by the highly-regarded Utopie OEM factory in Quebec, Canada. It's a classic center-mount freestyle stance ski with extra-thick bases and edges for rail durability, traditional camber and plenty of energy.

When you talk to guys at HG Skis, you get the immediate impression these are enthusiastic skiers who are making the exact kind of ski they always wanted, and that kind of stoke is addicting to be around, and when you try their Stinger design, you realize what kind of skiers they are, and that's a great connection to make between skiers and the ski designers.



*Harrison, Sam and Tazer of HG Skis*

## HG Stinger 178 cm (125-96-125 $r=18m$ )

The Stinger has extra-thick base and edge construction to withstand lots of rail abuse, yet has a very agile, lightweight swing-weight feel to it. Hand flex shows a soft tip and tail, and sturdy midbody underfoot. The first few turns were surprising since many center-mount freestyle skis feel a bit skittery and pivoty underfoot, while the HG Stinger hooked up and set a really impressive carve at slow speeds and higher speeds with very little effort, giving the pilot an immediate feeling of security and confidence to explore pretty much anything on the hill. Working the Stinger full-length tip-to-tail at different speeds shows HG built a whole lot of all-mountain capabilities into their signature model, making it super appealing to people who do more than venture into the park and stay there all day.

“Playful” is the operative word with the Stinger since it has plenty of pop and zing throughout the entire ski (not just underfoot or in the tail), and begs to be used to get up and off the snow at every bump, ridge and hump you find. Agility is top-shelf without being squirrely, allowing you to place the forebody, mid-body or tail anywhere on-demand, and lets you weight and pressure it as needed without any “fail zones” giving up the ghost just when you need it most.

Predictable security is a good way to describe the reliability of the grip and pop with the Stinger. The more you ski it, the more it begs to be taken into different terrain and give you an exciting ride.



*HG Stinger heavy-duty edge details*



After a few runs, it became obvious the Stinger is very well balanced between its flex and geometry and has been refined and adjusted to produce a precise, energetic ride with an unusually wide performance envelope in lots of different terrain and conditions. I even got it off-piste and into the trees with some fresh snow and found it's a great tree ski with plenty of agility, float and compliance in the bumpy tree sections, begging to flow in and out of the troughs and popping up and over logs and stumps as you find them.

I am not a park and pipe rider, so I can't talk about the quality of the airtime antics and behaviors of the Stinger, but the responsiveness, security and accuracy of the HG stinger is right-on to let people put the ski anywhere they want, when they want it, and get lots of controllable energy underfoot and along its length as needed...and that's a great thing in a ski.



While there are plenty of specialized park and pipe skis out there, the HG Stinger is a design meant to appeal to riders who have more than just man-made obstacles and half-pipes on their mind, but demand high-end performance wherever they ski...in and out of the park. Personally, I was super impressed and proud to see what HG has created in the hills of Vermont. If you don't try the HG Stinger when you're looking for a freestyle ski, you're missing something special.

## About ExoticSkis.com:



### What We Are:

ExoticSkis.com is regarded by the ski industry as the World's leading resource for lists, information and news about more than 350 small, independent, innovative ski designers and manufacturers around the globe.

ExoticSkis.com also hosts some of the only on-snow tests of some of the World's most interesting and impressive skis from this list of rare, unusual and creative ski builders. Since starting in 2005, our goal is to give ski enthusiasts a place to learn about alternative ski makers and their interesting products, and to give ski designers and manufacturers a place to notify the public about their efforts.

### What We Are Not:

ExoticSkis.com does not sell or market skis for any manufacturers, so our reviews remain unbiased and accurate. We don't sell advertising space to ski manufacturers or distributors. No staff or official ExoticSkis.com tester is paid or compensated in any way by a ski or snowboard company or distribution network, agent, retailer or representative to write any reviews or company listings for the skis under evaluation. None of the product reviews or listings authored by ExoticSkis.com were paid for by any ski or snowboard company. Some products we review have been purchased at retail, some at a reduced price, some are on short or long-term loan, and some are received at no charge. Some products are new, some are used, and some are prototypes, demonstration models or blemished/seconds quality. ExoticSkis.com discloses the nature of the product (new, used, demo, prototype, blem/seconds) in its reviews.

### What We Do:

ExoticSkis.com maintains the definitive listing and information about these unique and unusual ski companies, sortable by country and type of ski. We produce some of the only on-snow tests in the World of these distinctive skis. We promote awareness of these ski designers and their products to allow ski enthusiasts to choose skis from alternative sources rather than the industrial-scale manufacturers. While the major ski manufacturers such as Atomic, Blizzard, Dynastar, Elan, Fischer, Head, K2, Kastle, Rossignol, Salomon, and Volkl all mass-produce many fine skis, there are hundreds of alternative ski builders making exceptional skis of countless varieties for enthusiasts around the globe. ExoticSkis.com brings knowledge of these small manufacturers to the public.

Cheers.

Eric Edelstein - Founder  
<http://www.ExoticSkis.com>