

Check 'em out!

15 favourites from the Big White demo van

IMPRESSIONS

So many skis make it to the annual Ski Canada Test that it's virtually impossible to test and rate them all. But when the formal testing for the day is complete at Big White each day, our testers are more than happy to take a few runs on skis brought along by proud manufacturers. These skis are judged outside the parameters of *Ski Canada's* traditional test categories. From their overall feedback, we get an impression of how the ski performs and feels, and for whom and where the ski is best suited. Enjoy the ride!

More test, including all data, good and bad: www.skicanadamag.com



1 ATOMIC D2 VARIO CUT 82

Category: Frontside Carver	
Level: Intermed./Advanced	MSRP: \$1,499 w/bindings
Length Available: 162, 172, 182	
Radius: 17.5 @ 172	Tip/Waist/Tail: 119.5/82/109.5

The D2 VC 82 wants to carve on hardpack, but it's also versatile enough to enjoy in soft snow; even in bumps. This is a stable ski that handles short turns effortlessly, and arcs medium to super-G turns with a smoothness that's surreal.

The ski loves to play around and transitions well into turn shapes. It's responsive in bumps and especially on-piste. A great flex enables quick initiation and grip through the carve. » **NIKI COCHREN**

There's a light feel to this ski. It has an easy entry with a race-feel exit, giving it a snappy release. With its wider dimension it can play all over the mountain.

» **MIKE WEISS**

2 BSI VALHALLAS

Category: Powder	
Level: Intermed./Advanced	MSRP: \$369 w/o bindings
Length Available: 163, 173	
Radius: 22 @ 163	Tip/Waist/Tail: 120/92/104

Boomtown Sports has created a lightweight ski that's right at home in powder. Those who love to stay off the groomed will appreciate a soft tip that easily plows through deep soft snow.

This ski was solid and stable in crud and bumps. It loved the off-piste best, and mostly enjoyed riding straight with relaxed turns. » **NIKI COCHREN**

It's super-light and easy to steer. The ski loves the powder and cuts through chop well. Because of the light weight, you have energy to spare. It's definitely not for groomers. » **PAUL "COVERBOY" OUELETTE**

3 FISCHER PROGRESSOR 8+

Category: All-Mountain	
Level: Advanced/Expert	MSRP: \$1,199 w/bindings
Length Available: 150, 155, 160, 165, 170	
Radius: 12/15 @ 165	Tip/Waist/Tail: 120/72/103

The women had fun all over the mountain on the Progressor 8+, scoring it high overall especially in agility and short-radius turns. The men found that with its easy initiation and good edge grip, it was best suited for light to mid-weight carvers, right at home on groomers.

This is a fun all-mountain ski. It ripped up the groomers, and was stable and nimble in soft snow. It's soft and forgiving, but can be pushed when necessary. Good for an aggressive intermediate to a light, more finesse expert. » **MELANIE KAMPHUIS**

It's easy to initiate with great edge hold, and small- to medium-size turn arcs are wicked. Longer turns at speed are a little soft. This ski has lots of life. » **GLEN HYLAND**

THE CATEGORIES

EXPERT ALL-MOUNTAIN

All-terrain cruising, long and short turns

As well as checking agility and competence in soft snow, testers skied this category up to high cruising speeds for recreational skiers and assessed stability in long and short turns on the groomed. Testers pushed the limits in this category. They expect these skis to do everything and test them aggressively. Overall versatility in managing all kinds of conditions defined the best skis in this category. Waist 76-86. (*This Issue.*)

ADVENTURE ALL-MOUNTAIN

All-terrain skiing, moderate speeds, medium turns

To match the expectations for this group, testing was not as fast or aggressive as in the high-performance Expert All-Mountain category. The same assessment of comfort in ungroomed snow was checked, with special attention to such things as how balanced they felt (sweet spot) and general good manners in less-than-perfect conditions. Testers want these skis to respond to every demand, and also be manageable and predictable. Waist 75-85. (*This Issue.*)

BIG MOUNTAIN

Like the name says—and beyond

This freeride category continues to test the limits of design—as well as graphics. Twintips long ago evolved from the terrain park to the trees and off under the ropes. Big Mountain skis are being seen more and more all over the mountain and age spectrum now. Manoeuvrability and stability make them popular choices for travelling through tricky off-piste terrain as well as high-speed riding, taking air and landing switch. There are some radical setups such as degrees of camber, binding positions and flex patterns that make these skis more difficult to judge, so read the ski data carefully. Waist 90+. (*This Issue.*)

ON-PISTE CRUISERS

High-performance GS-radius turns

These cruisers were not tested in gates, but most skis in this category have a racing pedigree. Testers pushed the limits to find the best balance between raw edge hold and user-friendliness. Where versatility is a big factor in All-Mountain skis, testers devoted special attention to such things as agility, power and edge grip for these skis. That said, testers did move in and out of a variety of terrain and asked the skis to demonstrate some versatility. The category is not expected to have a speed limit. Waist 68-78. (*See Buyer's Guide 2010, last issue.*)

EASY CRUISING

Mid-range performance in long and short turns

These skis represent excellent value, but also reasonable performance at intermediate to advanced speeds on groomed slopes. Appropriate criteria such as ease of initiation and stability got a lot of attention in identifying the best skis in this category. This category represents for many skiers their first carving skis and skis that can grow with them as speed and skills increase. Waist 70-75. (*See Buyer's Guide 2010, last issue.*)

POWDER

Fat boys, off-piste, heli- and cat-skiing

This most obvious category simply means big-snow and soft-snow. These skis hang in shop windows in places like Rossland, Revelstoke and Fernie more than they actually make it to car roofs, but if you still have room in your quiver, the long, über-wide boards with modest sidecuts and soft, even flexes will give you some unforgettable flotation and easy turning in the deep stuff. Waist 90+. (*See Travel Guide 2009, next issue.*)



MISSING

4 FISCHER VIRON 8.8

Category: All-Mountain	
Level: Advanced/Expert	MSRP: \$1,249 w/bindings
Length Available: 150, 155, 160, 165, 170	
Radius: 14 @ 165	Tip/Waist/Tail: 118/68/100

Lighter skiers will appreciate the excellent carving abilities of the Viron 8.8. Testers found it light, fun and easy to turn, and could hold an edge at speed. This ski scored equally well in both long- and short-radius turns.

I was pleasantly surprised with this ski. It's very light, but oh, how powerful. There was a lot of snow on the ground but it was blasting through with lots of energy. Smile and enjoy the ride. » **VAL CLUTIER**

It starts turns effortlessly. This is really forgiving to ski on, yet has a great top end. The ski is best described as silky smooth, and has great stability. It's best for an advanced skier looking for a great short-turn carver. » **HANK SHANNON**

5 HEAD CHIP 78

Category: All-Mountain	
Level: Advanced/Expert	MSRP: \$1,600 w/bindings
Length Available: 165, 171, 177, 183	
Radius: 15.7 @ 177	Tip/Waist/Tail: 125/78/111

Testers found the CHIP 78 to be an agile and versatile all-mountain ski. It was effortless in short- and long-radius turns, and transitions from turn-to-turn were silky smooth.

What a little monster! This all-mountain ripper was tons of fun. It's light and explosive, and easy to turn in all turn shapes. » **PAUL OUELETTE**

6 HEAD PERFECT ONE

Category: Women's	
Level: Intermed./Advanced	MSRP: \$930 w/bindings
Length Available: 146, 152, 158, 164, 170	
Radius: 12 @ 158	Tip/Waist/Tail: 115/67/99

Go fast and hard on this responsive, manoeuvrable ski. It's perfect for a lighter, strong skier who likes a stiff-enough ski to enable a stable platform at speed.

This is a ski you can really push, with great stability all through the turn. It's excellent for intermediate-advanced skiers who love all terrain. » **PATTY ATKEY**

It definitely prefers big turns, but a power girl can work the short ones. Stay centred for best results. Best suited to a powerful, fast east-coast girl. » **SHARON WATSON**

7 K2 BACKLASH

Category: High-Performance Off-Piste	
Level: Expert	MSRP: \$700 w/o bindings
Length Available: 167, 174, 181	
Radius: 19 @ 174	Tip/Waist/Tail: 129/92/115

True adventurous all-mountain skiers will love the BackLash. This is a fun ski that felt solid underfoot. It plowed through crud effortlessly and had great turn initiation. Testers found that you could put your trust in this ski.

This is a big ski with such grace and ability! It's smooth and easy to move from turn-to-turn as you crank up the speed and it cranks up performance. At higher speeds it feels like a carver. It effortlessly handles chop and deeper snow, and is fun in bumps. » **ANNE TERWIEL**

A really fun, go-anywhere-on-the-mountain ski! It makes crud feel like butter. The ski initiates easily and was very driver-friendly on edge. Great for out-of-bound enthusiasts and inbound explorers. » **RON BETTS**

8 K2 PAYBACK

Category: Women's High-Performance Backcountry	
Level: Expert	MSRP: \$700 w/o bindings
Length Available: 146, 153, 160, 167	
Radius: 16 @ 160	Tip/Waist/Tail: 129/92/115

There was no overall consensus on this ski. One tester felt the Payback was at home on groomed hardpack, while another thought it performed better on soft powder. All agreed that it was a fun ski to play around on, and was best at moderate speed.

This ski was fun and stable in large, fast turns in the soft. In the bumps it turned on a dime. » **JULIE MARKUSSEN**

It's fun and easy to turn. The ski is able to turn quickly, but it's not as stable in high-speed turns. » **WENDY LUMBY**

9 PRIOR HUSUME

Category: Freeride/Powder	
Level: Advanced	MSRP: \$999 w/o bindings
Length Available: 169, 175, 181, 188	
Radius: 25 @ 181	Tip/Waist/Tail: 131/104/118

The Husume is a soft-snow ski that was surprisingly light and agile. It had excellent flotation, and was easy to turn in powder and through tight trees and bumps. This ski loves to go fast and fly off everything.

The ski is light in comparison to its width. It rides like a shark because of the curved tip, so a shorter, lighter person will still love it. This ski loves to float and cruise. » **NIKI COCHREN**

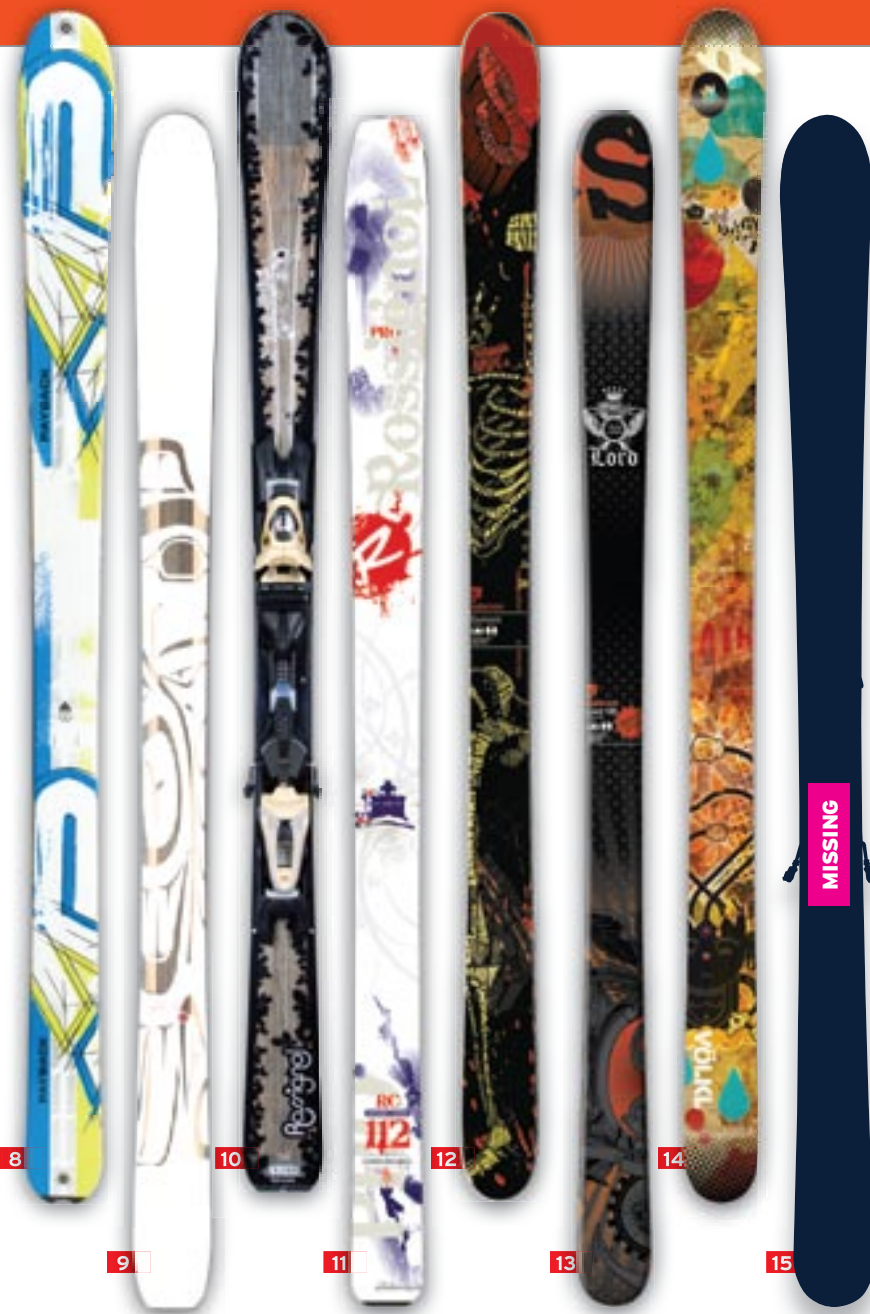
Awesome big-mountain ski! It chews through crud, chop and bumps like nobody's business. This ski has amazing flotation even in crusty snow, and was also great on the groomers, especially in fifth gear making big turns. » **MIKE MANARA**

10 ROSSIGNOL ATTRAXION ECHO

Category: Women's All-Mountain Carving	
Level: Advanced/Expert	MSRP: \$999 w/bindings
Length Available: 154, 162	
Radius: 12.8 @ 162	Tip/Waist/Tail: 127/75/108

The Attraxion Echo attracted top marks from our testers, with almost near-perfect scores for edge grip and versatility for this women's-specific ski. Although testers suggested the tune was off, they agreed it turns well and is very stable at high speed in all turn shapes.

I love this ski. This would be a ski I would ski on. It felt like a slalom race ski. It's great in bumps, easy to manoeuvre and has lots of grip. » **ROBYN BEAUDRY**



11 ROSSIGNOL PHANTOM PRO RC 112

Category: Freeride	
Level: Expert	MSRP: \$1,099 w/o bindings
Length Available: 178, 188, 198	
Radius: 34.7 @ 188	Tip/Waist/Tail: 140/112/120

It's steep and deep all the way for the Phantom Pro RC 112. It takes some muscle to turn this big guy, but it smashes through crud and eats up powder, and has a great big footprint for landings.

Passive aggressive, power this ski through initiation then hang on and enjoy the ride. Feed this ski a steady diet of freshness and free shots. This one's for a big-line powderhound. » **MIKE NICHOLLS**

12 SALOMON THE DUMONT

Category: Freestyle/Park&Pipe	
Level: Advanced/Expert	MSRP: \$775 w/o bindings
Length Available: 151, 161, 171, 176, 181	
Radius: 18.5 @ 176	Tip/Waist/Tail: 122/86/115

Skiers who spend a lot of the day in the park but only want a one-ski quiver would do well with The Dumont. It's playful and springy off rolls and bumps, and will quickly steer whatever size turn you like.

This ski likes jumps and freestyle stuff. Really good, solid construction helps to build the confidence to try new tricks. It's great for the advanced park freestyle skier. » **VAL CLUTIER**

I was surprised at how well this ski holds in carved turns. A more classic binding mount was to my liking and technique. It's really fun in the bumps as well. The park-and-pipe group will be all over this baby. » **DREW BRAGG**



13 SALOMON LORD

Category: All-Mountain	
Level: Intermed./Advanced	MSRP: \$800 w/o bindings
Length Available: 161, 169, 177, 185	
Radius: 17.4 @ 177	Tip/Waist/Tail: 128/87/115

Heavier, more powerful skiers will like the stability of the Lord. It performed wonderfully in deep powder, and cut through cruddy snow like a hot knife in butter.

I clicked in this ski and wanted to go. It has incredible momentum and stability throughout the turn. Its natural habitat would be off-piste. The ski likes to run straight and turn only when it must. » **NIKI COCHREN**

This skis like a monster truck. It drives through chopped-up powder with ease. It's stiff tip to tail. Requires power and control to be the lord of the mountain. » **BARTON LANE**

14 VÖLKL BRIDGE

Category: Freeride	
Level: Intermed./Advanced	MSRP: \$700 w/o bindings
Length Available: 161, 169, 177, 185	
Radius: 19.9 @ 177	Tip/Waist/Tail: 130/92/112

An all-mountain ripper who enjoys carving it up from time to time will love the aptly named Bridge. Its shape and size allow it to plow through crud and chop, and on-piste it is fun and holds an edge well. Ski it fast or slow in varied conditions and this ski will perform.

This ski loves to go fast in the soft powder and cruise on the groomers. It's light enough to manoeuvre through bumps and stable enough to handle a smooth piste. It definitely bridges the gap between groomed runs. » **NIKI COCHREN**

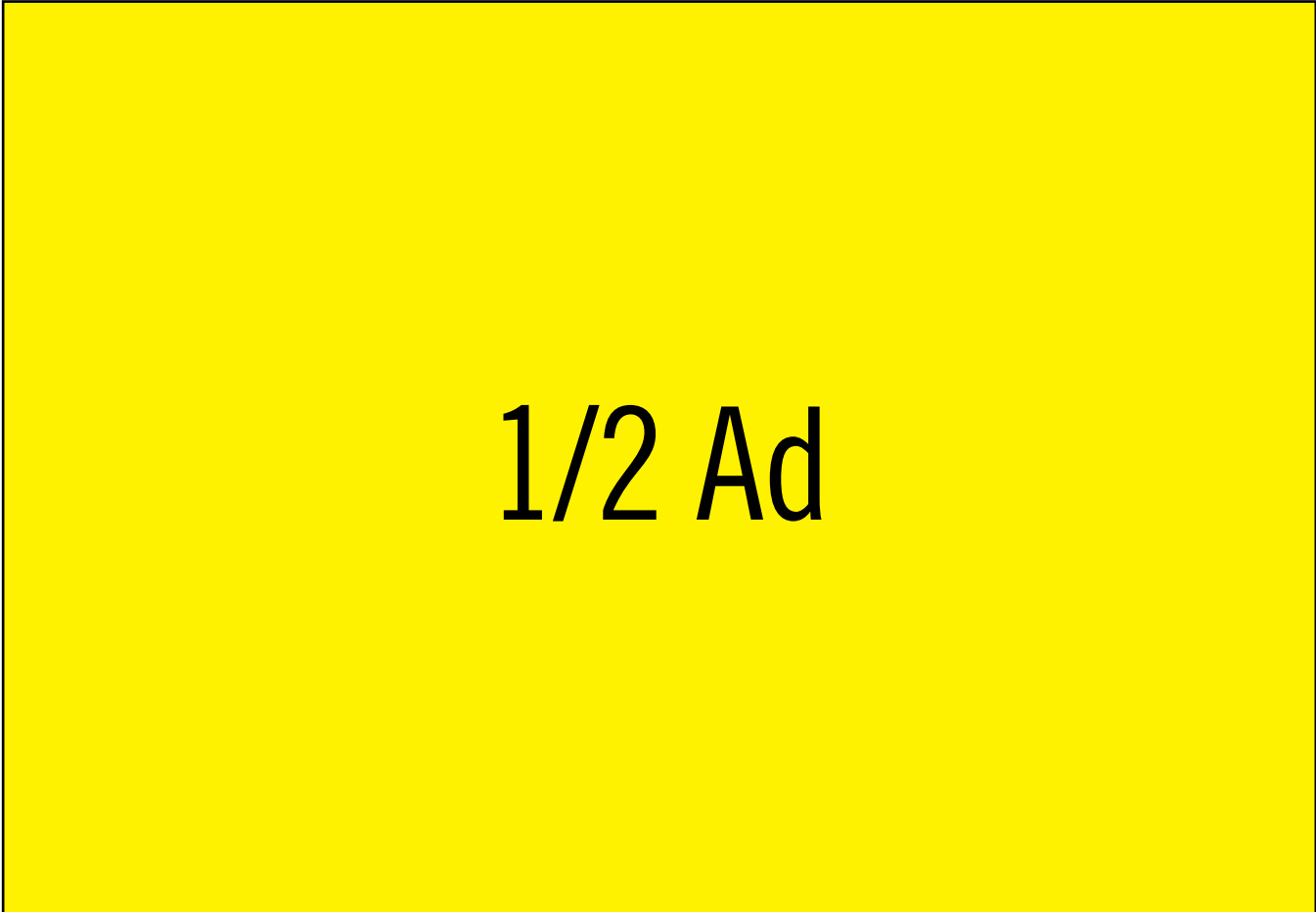
It rips through bumps and crud with the precision and control of a race ski on boilerplate. This ski prefers the fall line and big, honkin', freakin'-ass fast turns. It needs a strong powerful skier to appreciate the stiff, even flex of this bulldozer. » **BARTON LANE**

15 VÖLKL COSMO

Category: Women's	
Level: Intermed./Advanced	MSRP: \$700 w/o bindings
Length Available: 153, 161, 169	
Radius: 16 @ 161	Tip/Waist/Tail: 130/92/112

Testers agreed that the Cosmo was a fantastic all-round ski for all conditions, with excellent edge hold and stability. It was responsive and easy to handle in bumps, powder and on groomers. Lighter, finesse-type skiers will enjoy this one the most.

Great all-rounder! It's happy to carve, and is stiff enough to hold you up but has the responsiveness of a park ski. Great float for the deeper snow. This one is lots of fun. » **JEN LOTON**



1/2 Ad