

EXPERT ALL-MOUNTAIN



THE CATEGORY

EXPERT ALL-MOUNTAIN

All-terrain cruising, long and short turns

■ Okay, maybe All-Mountain skis aren't as sexy a category as Big Mountain or as nutty as Park 'n' Pipe twins, but they make up more than half the skis in the lift line these days—and *Ski Canada* testers had no problem pushing the limits on this bunch. As well as checking agility and competence in soft

snow, testers skied this category up to high cruising speeds for good recreational skiers, and assessed stability in long and short turns on the groomed. And because they're by definition "All-Mountain" skis, overall versatility in managing all kinds of conditions helped define the best skis in this category.

EXPERT ALL-MOUNTAIN - MEN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

SKIER WEIGHT		SKIER ABILITY	
◀ LIGHTER HEAVIER ▶		◀ INTERMEDIATE EXPERT ▶	
OGASAKA E-TURN X	██████████▲	OGASAKA E-TURN X	██████████▲
FISCHER HEAT 76	██████████▲	PRIOR ORIGINAL	██████████▲
K2 APACHE XPLORER	██████████▲	LIBERTY HAZMAT	██████████▲
PRIOR ORIGINAL	██████████▲	K2 APACHE XPLORER	██████████▲
LIBERTY HAZMAT	██████████▲	FISCHER HEAT 76	██████████▲
SALOMON FURY	██████████▲	SALOMON FURY	██████████▲
HEAD PEAK 82	██████████▲	ROSSIGNOL AVENGER 82 Ti	██████████▲
ROSSIGNOL AVENGER 82 Ti	██████████▲	HEAD PEAK 82	██████████▲
VÖLKL UNLIMITED AC 50	██████████▲	ATOMIC NOMAD CRIMSON Ti	██████████▲
ATOMIC NOMAD CRIMSON Ti	██████████▲	VÖLKL UNLIMITED AC50	██████████▲

THE PLAYING FIELD

The weather was cold and breezy on test day with 16 cm of Big White freshies on a firm base and wind-blown powder. Consequently, testers were able to ski powder, firm snow and bumps off the Ridge Rocket Express, perfect given the category. In short we had everything—a true all-mountain experience.

EXPERT ALL-MOUNTAIN - MEN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

SNOW CONDITIONS		SKIER STYLE	
◀ SOFT HARD ▶		◀ FINESSE POWER ▶	
PRIOR ORIGINAL	██████████▲	OGASAKA E-TURN X	██████████▲
LIBERTY HAZMAT	██████████▲	PRIOR ORIGINAL	██████████▲
K2 APACHE XPLORER	██████████▲	K2 APACHE XPLORER	██████████▲
HEAD PEAK 82	██████████▲	HEAD PEAK 82	██████████▲
ATOMIC NOMAD CRIMSON Ti	██████████▲	SALOMON FURY	██████████▲
SALOMON FURY	██████████▲	LIBERTY HAZMAT	██████████▲
ROSSIGNOL AVENGER 82 Ti	██████████▲	FISCHER HEAT 76	██████████▲
VÖLKL UNLIMITED AC50	██████████▲	ROSSIGNOL AVENGER 82 Ti	██████████▲
OGASAKA E-TURN X	██████████▲	VÖLKL UNLIMITED AC50	██████████▲
FISCHER HEAT 76	██████████▲	ATOMIC NOMAD CRIMSON Ti	██████████▲



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ATOMIC	FISCHER	HEAD	K2	LIBERTY
NOMAD CRIMSON Ti	HEAT 76	PEAK 82	APACHE XPLORESR	HAZMAT
\$1,099*	\$1,125*	\$1,150*	\$1,100*	\$699
LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 155, 162, 169, 176* , 183	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 150, 155, 160, 165, 170*	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 161, 172, 177* , 183	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 170, 177* , 184	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 164, 171, 181* , 186
119.5 86 114	121 76 103	123 82 109	128 84 112	126 94 119
BEST IN: EDGE GRIP, STABILITY, LONG RADIUS	BEST IN: INITIATION, SHORT RADIUS	BEST IN: VERSATILITY, LONG RADIUS	BEST IN: AGILITY, INITIATION	BEST IN: LONG RADIUS, INITIATION
Powerful all-mountain skiers looking for a stable ski will love the Crimson Ti. Longer turns at speed will give you a steady, solid ride. It's agile and quick, and great in steeps and trees.	The Heat is an Eastern all-mountain candidate for a heavier, intermediate skier. It's a sporty beefed-up slalom ski that loved short-radius turns and a light touch at moderate speed.	If you're a heavier expert who likes to bring a gun to a knife fight, try the Peak 82. A high-scorer that testers really loved, this is a ski for a guy who likes to slice a turn in anything and watch the SPIKE channel on his phone at the same time.	Lighter, finesse-type skiers would best enjoy the Xplorer, with one tester likening it to a sensual experience. Overall, testers thought this is a great all-rounder that performs at all speeds and in all conditions.	The Hazmat is really a jibber's ski with a floaty freeride feel for the heavier all-mountain expert. Testers found that it was surprisingly quick in soft snow and a little sluggish on hardpack. The centre mount was obvious in a lineup of traditional binding settings.
<p>■ If you're a power expert, this ski is for you. It initiates turns well, which leads to a powerful edge grip. It's good in short turns and bumps, but is best in big carved turns. » MIKE MANARA</p> <p>■ This ski floats and steers easily for quick entry into the turn, and arcs on hardpack like a race carver. It's versatile, with great snow-ski sensitivity. » MIKE WEISS</p> <p>■ I found this the most stable ski in the test. It plows through crud like a tank. A really solid edge hold inspires confidence. It prefers medium- to long-radius turns. » HANK SHANNON</p>	<p>■ It has great edge hold on hardpack, is a master for cruising the steeps and strong through chop and powder—bumps are not its best playground. » MIKE WEISS</p> <p>■ This ski busts through crud with ease and is quick, agile and transitioned well between short and long turns. It has great stability and really inspires confidence. » HANK SHANNON</p> <p>■ It's a quick-turning ski that moves best on paced conditions. The tip felt a bit light initiating turns in crud, but once on edge it was game on. » DREW BRAGG</p>	<p>■ Wow! This was very easy to operate with effortless precision. It offers fantastic performance, agility and versatility even in the chop. » GEORGE TERWIEL</p> <p>■ A great stable ski in the crud! The tip was soft enough to make initiation easy. Deeper snow made the ski bog a bit, but groomers were a dream. It's user-friendly with no speed limit. » RON BETTS</p> <p>■ This is a true category ski that does it all. The ski comes with a self-skier option. It's versatile because of its shape, has great edge grip and performance, and is forgiving in soft snow and stable at speed. » MIKE MANARA</p>	<p>■ Floaty sensual turns evoke images of fantastic foreplay trimmed with electricity and a collage of sensations. Oh yeah, it was good! » DREW BRAGG</p> <p>■ This is one ski that will do it all. It loves all forms of snow and will eat up crud at mach 5—just keep pressure on the front. » ROSS COUTTS</p> <p>■ Strong, athletic players will get the best out of this all-mountain open GS cruiser. A solid platform offers firm edge grip. It skis best centred. Short turns and bumps need a finesse driver. » MIKE WEISS</p>	<p>■ It's a floaty ski that initiates easily and manoeuvres well in soft stuff. As conditions firmed up the tips bounced around a bit, but then the ski arced beautifully lower on the slope. » DREW BRAGG</p> <p>■ A go-to ski for soft-snow days that you could use anywhere, including the terrain park. It tends to straighten out if you get lazy on it. » RON BETTS</p> <p>■ This is a powder-oriented ski with great float. It has good edge grip at moderate to slow speeds. » GEORGE TERWIEL</p>

MEN

EXPERT ALL-MOUNTAIN



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OGASAKA

E-TURN X

\$1,199

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
160, 165, 170†, 175

115 76 105

17.3 @ 170

BEST IN:
INITIATION, AGILITY

The E-Turn X was a narrower ski than most in this category and was best suited for hardpack and quick, snappy turns. It's a versatile ski for a moderate-weight advanced skier looking for one ski in his quiver to have fun on.

☑ This is a quick, snappy, hyper ski that was incredibly agile. Short turns on hardpack were quick and easy. It easily manages speed and bumps, but don't get too deep in the snow. » MIKE NICHOLLS

☑ The ski performed well in bigger turns edge-to-edge. For bigger skiers in the chop it was hard to control. It's too narrow for an all-mountain ski. » MARK STEIN

☑ It's light and easy to manoeuvre in soft snow and chop. It needs a finesse player who can create the edge hold. The ski is great fun in the bumps and loves hardpack. » MIKE WEISS

PRIOR

ORIGINAL

\$999

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
165, 171, 175, 181†, 188, 193

125 95 115

23 @ 175

BEST IN:
AGILITY, INITIATION

Good flotation and performance make this a versatile ski at moderate speed. The Original is built on a park-and-pipe platform so it's playful and fun in soft snow and tight trees.

☑ This is a good all-mountain ski, with great flotation because of its shape and nice even flex. The sidecut allows the ski to be a versatile addition to your quiver, but it's meant for the deep stuff. » MIKE MANARA

☑ Überfloat, baby! This ski drew me to the paddock of untracked snow on Paradise Glades. It moved effortlessly through the trees. On-piste it behaved well but without much fanfare. » DREW BRAGG

☑ It's really nimble in round stuff, quick and agile in bumps, and comfortable down and across the fall line. The ski was best in short to medium turns at modest speeds. » HANK SHANNON

ROSSIGNOL

AVENGER 82 Ti

\$1,179*

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
162, 170, 177†, 182

126 82 112

17.8 @ 177

BEST IN:
EDGE GRIP, LONG RADIUS

At least one tester found the Avenger 82 to be the racebook of the category—you can open it up and make big, carved arcs. Expert skiers and ex-racers will love this fast, aggressive ski with excellent edge grip.

☑ This ski loves to move. It has great edge hold and incredible stability. The flex provides a ton of power for great rebound between turns. It likes long turns in the fall line. » MIKE MANARA

☑ Put this ski on edge and it holds on. It's fast with solid grip and moderate float. This one needs a skilled operator to really enjoy the effortless turns. » GEORGE TERWIEL

☑ It's incredibly stable, easy to initiate and versatile in all conditions and turn shapes. What more can you say! This is a fun, user-friendly ski that can be pushed as hard as the operator dares to go. » RON BETTS

SALOMON

FURY

\$1,249*

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
163, 170, 177†, 184

126 85 113

18 @ 177

BEST IN:
INITIATION, EDGE GRIP,
STABILITY, AGILITY

The Fury was one of the top-rated skis in the category. A heavier ski pro or expert will find it quick, snappy and with great edge grip. It will give you the freedom to move through all terrain and conditions with confidence.

☑ Apparently the French make more than just great wine. This ski is agile and stable, with undertones of smooth. A great vintage! » JOSH FOSTER

☑ Wow! This ski gave me more confidence than any other. I powered through the crud like it was smooth groomed, and made the transition evenly from long to short turns with ease and stability. Great ski! » RON BETTS

☑ It's sporty and there's dynamic energy to this ski. This one is versatile, has many ranges of turn shapes and adapts to different snow conditions. » MIKE WEISS

VÖLKL

UNLIMITED AC 50

\$1,250*

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
163, 170, 177†, 184

128 85 112

18 @ 177

BEST IN:
EDGE GRIP, STABILITY,
LONG RADIUS

An aggressive expert looking for a great all-mountain ski will enjoy the sporty power and solid edge grip of the AC 50. It's a ferocious carver and skis crud with surgical precision.

☑ Rename this ski "parkway." It was like butter, silky smooth in the crud and the wide tip made initiation easy. The ample sidecut was perfect for the conditions. » RON BETTS

☑ This ski requires a big guy to get it moving. It has some difficulty falling onto the edge, but once there it's super-stable with unreal edge hold. » HANK SHANNON

☑ This is a big all-mountain stick. It's comfortable cranking short turns in the fall line or in the deep stuff, as well as chopping out a track in the cut-up groomers. » ROSS COUTTS

WOMEN

EXPERT ALL-MOUNTAIN



Tester: Julie Markussen



ATOMIC

SEVENTH HEAVEN 79

\$849*

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
150, 157, **164†**, 171

118.5 79 104.5

16.5 @ 164

BEST IN:
SHORT RADIUS, EDGE GRIP, AGILITY

The heritage of this ski showed through with all of the testers commenting on its energy and ability to turn. It was narrower than some underfoot, which might limit how far you may want to venture into the deep stuff, and heavier skiers might want to add some length.

☑ The ski is agile and quick edge-to-edge on-piste. It's better for a lighter finesse skier since it was a bit light at speed for a heavier skier. » **LISA SUUTARI**

☑ This ski made everything nice and easy. Groomers were fantastic, with great edge grip and great shape in the turns and the bumps. Perfect initiation. » **JULIE MARKUSSEN**

☑ It's a super-nice turning ski that's easy to initiate short-radius turns on-piste and easy to control on bumps. Off-piste it would be better to have a longer length for stability on powder. » **AIKA MASUDA**

EXPERT ALL-MOUNTAIN - WOMEN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

	SKIER WEIGHT ◀ LIGHTER HEAVIER ▶		SKIER ABILITY ◀ INTERMEDIATE EXPERT ▶
K2 LOTTA LUV	██████████	LIBERTY JINX	██████████
FISCHER VAPOR	██████████	K2 LOTTA LUV	██████████
ATOMIC 7TH HEAVEN 79	██████████	FISCHER VAPOR	██████████
OGASAKA E-TURN E	██████████	PRIOR SISTER	██████████
PRIOR SISTER	██████████	OGASAKA E-TURN E	██████████
SALOMON FURY	██████████	ATOMIC 7TH HEAVEN 79	██████████
VÖLKL ATTIVA AURORA	██████████	VÖLKL ATTIVA AURORA	██████████
LIBERTY JINX	██████████	HEAD WILD ONE	██████████
HEAD WILD ONE	██████████	SALOMON FURY	██████████

EXPERT ALL-MOUNTAIN - WOMEN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

	SNOW CONDITIONS ◀ SOFT HARD ▶		SKIER STYLE ◀ FINESSE POWER ▶
PRIOR SISTER	██████████	FISCHER VAPOR	██████████
LIBERTY JINX	██████████	PRIOR SISTER	██████████
K2 LOTTA LUV	██████████	K2 LOTTA LUV	██████████
HEAD WILD ONE	██████████	OGASAKA E-TURN E	██████████
SALOMON FURY	██████████	ATOMIC 7TH HEAVEN 79	██████████
VÖLKL ATTIVA AURORA	██████████	HEAD WILD ONE	██████████
FISCHER VAPOR	██████████	LIBERTY JINX	██████████
OGASAKA E-TURN E	██████████	VÖLKL ATTIVA AURORA	██████████
ATOMIC 7TH HEAVEN 79	██████████	SALOMON FURY	██████████



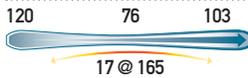
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FISCHER

VAPOR

\$999*

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
150, 155, 160, **165***, 170



BEST IN:
INITIATION, STABILITY

Wanted: a fluid all-mountain ski that's fun in the trees, loves dancing on the groomed, is willing to work through rough patches and knows how to make a woman happy. The Vapor may apply.

My kind of ski! It's dependable, adaptable and responsive to all your needs. It was best in soft packed snow. The harder you push, the more it gives back. » **MARTINA OSMAN**

This ski behaved well in groomed and ankle-deep snow, floated over chopped stuff and was fun in the trees. Its sweet spot was slightly forward for an all-mountain ski. » **JULIE MARKUSSEN**

A responsive ski that was nice in the slow turns and stable in longer-radius turns. It was great through crud and chopped-up snow. It's smooth and fluid, and required a bit more work in deep stuff. » **JEN LOTON**



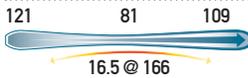
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HEAD

WILD ONE

\$1,125*

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
150, 156, 161, **166***, 172



BEST IN:
EDGE GRIP, AGILITY

According to the testers, the Wild One comes with full auto as well as manual. It's a ski that will not punish you for taking your mind off the task for a few seconds. With its softer tip and tail, you need to stay centred for the best ride.

I feel like a super-human goddess on this ski. It does it all: float through powder, plow through chop, and performs light and lively in short turns. It's well balanced with an even flex tip to tail. » **ANNE TERWIEL**

Finally a ski I didn't have to think about. Short turns, long turns, crud, fresh powder—this ski was an extension of my will. Its soft flex reduced the pop in short turns. » **MICHELE OSTAFEW**

This is a versatile, go-anywhere ski. It's light and easy to turn, and made the steeps and bumps effortless and easy on the legs. » **WENDY ANDERSON**



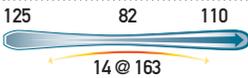
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K2

LOTTA LUV

\$999*

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
149, 156, **163***, 170



BEST IN:
AGILITY, INITIATION

There was a Lotta Luv for this tireless ski with a fun and energetic personality that performed well in bumps, crud and groomers. Strong intermediates to experts will enjoy this ski.

I felt invincible on this one in all terrain. It shapes turns well on-piste and in light powder, is forgiving in bumps and cuts like a knife in crud. The best in class! » **WENDY ANDERSON**

This ski could be your new best friend. It's adaptable and forgiving in all conditions, with a wide shovel that keeps you on top of soft snow and propels you through crud. » **MARTINA OSMAN**

This is a great fat ski that's extremely versatile and easy to turn. It loves powder and soft groomers though not as stable at high speed. » **WENDY LUMBY**



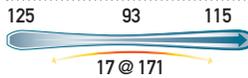
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LIBERTY

JINX

\$549

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
157, 164, **171***



BEST IN:
STABILITY, LONG RADIUS

An edgy, advanced skier looking to move to the all-mountain category should consider the Jinx. The centre mount will take a little getting used to, but you'll be happy in moguls and on big powder days.

This ski puts the phat in fat—it loves powder. It's light and easy to initiate and turn. Groomers are okay, but this ski loves the soft stuff. » **WENDY LUMBY**

A great fun ski that has good stability in powder, turns well and is easy to initiate. It's forgiving and flexible underfoot, with good performance in the moguls. » **AIKA MASUDA**

Go straight down the mountain in soft snow and huck. Make it steep, deep and fast and this ski will work. » **ANNE TERWIEL**



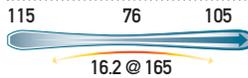
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OGASAKA

E-TURN E

\$1,119

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
155, 160, **165***, 170



BEST IN:
EDGE GRIP, LONG RADIUS

Have you ever met a GS ski that could do everything? Well, meet the E-Turn E. The word "predictable" came up more than once, along with "solid," "agile," "confident" and "trustworthy." Yahoo!

This is a dream ski that's predictable yet energetic, solid yet agile. It's a wonderful all-terrain ski. The ski has GS tendencies and shines in medium turns, but has no problem with longer or shorter turns. » **ANNE TERWIEL**

It's stable, solid and loves speed. This ski doesn't need an expert to turn, but shines at speed. It handles bumps and steep powder with confidence. It's predictable, turny on-piste and felt like a traditional ski. » **LISA SUUTARI**

This ski is light and energetic, easy to initiate and effortless to turn. It's perfect for the lighter, finesse performance skier. » **JEN LOTON**



SKIER ABILITIES

Testers often use common ability ratings to define the type of skier who would best enjoy a particular ski. Here's a summary of those ratings to help you determine if they're talking about you. Take note of your body weight and skiing style. Skiers who are light on their feet and ski with finesse and agility will rate a ski much differently than stronger skiers who power their way through a turn, snow conditions or terrain. Be sure to consider your level of fitness and number of skiing days per year when you are making your decision—it's always nice to be vertical when you hit the accelerator.

ASPIRING skiers are those who are just at the beginning of the learning process. They snowplow often and are still gaining experience with snow texture, choosing a line down the slope and usually ski quite slowly. Aspiring skiers prefer green slopes and may do rudimentary parallel turns in ideal conditions.

INTERMEDIATE skiers are well on their way to skiing the whole mountain. They have overcome most fears of speed and can turn at will on Green and Blue slopes. Intermediates usually ski parallel except when their confidence is shaken. Intermediates enjoy skis that have good stability, a big sweet spot and versatility to allow room to improve. Specialized skis such as slalom and high-performance carvers are usually not a good choice.

ADVANCED skiers ski faster and can carve on groomed conditions. They have the confidence to ski almost any pitch, including off-piste slopes. Their repertoire of ski experience is well developed to include all snow and slope conditions. They can adjust technique to suit prevailing conditions, although they don't always do it with style. Advanced skiers can enjoy good slalom and carving skis, and have fun off-piste.

EXPERT skiers have well-refined technical skills such as pressure control, enabling them to maximize carving and efficiency. They perform with ease in difficult conditions. They can sense differences in ski and snow behavior, and modify technique on the fly. Ski testers are all experts and create photo ops the entire length of the run.

SO WHERE'S DYNASTAR, ELAN AND NORDICA?

Ski Canada invites and encourages (but unlike other tests, does not charge) all ski manufacturers to the longest-running and most-respected magazine ski test in North America. Despite some persuasive powers, however, every year some companies decline to be tested. And because *Ski Canada* tests skis that aren't available in shops until the following season, we need their co-operation. In other words, we need next year's skis. All said, within the pages of *Ski Canada's* first two issues of the season, you should find most of your favourite brands tested.

WOMEN



W

PRIOR

SISTER

\$999

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
157, 161, **165**†, 171, 175

118 88 110

17.5 @ 165

BEST IN:
SHORT RADIUS, INITIATION,
STABILITY, AGILITY

Testers felt the Sister is not limited to the expert—strong intermediate to advanced skiers also would appreciate its responsive nature. This ski likes to go fast, and was especially fun in powder and trees.

It's a great ski for breaking into backcountry and big-mountain skiing. Just point it down and it glides as smooth as silk. It's great in long turns and surprisingly responsive in short turns. » **WENDY ANDERSON**

There was a little heavier feel to this ski, but it was easy to initiate, and fun and exciting in powder. It was easy to carve on groomed, with a solid feeling. » **WENDY LUMBY**

This ski is great in short radius and powder. The tail length and stiffer flex make it slightly unmanageable in bumps, but it's fun, fun, fun in fresh and soft crud. » **MICHELLE OSTAFEW**



W

SALOMON

FURY

\$1,249*

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
163, **170**†, 177, 184

126 84 112

16.4 @ 170

BEST IN:
LONG RADIUS, STABILITY

The Fury was stable, solid and easy-turning both on- and off-piste. It cut through crud as if it were a groomer, and handled steeps and bumps with grace. This is an advanced ski that can do it all.

This ski is like a demolition machine—solid and powerful through the arc. It responds best to a skier who is in command. Phenomenal edge-to-edge. » **MARTINA OSMAN**

A ski you can feel super-confident on with a big sweet spot. It's smooth and stable in long turns, a kick in short turns and isn't afraid of deeper snow. A great all-rounder and confidence-booster. » **JEN LOTON**

The ski responded well to early application of pressure at turn initiation and performed best at short radius on groomed snow. Smooth bases and glide made for a pleasurable ride. » **ANNE TERWIEL**



W

VÖLKL

ATTIVA AURORA

\$1,250*

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
154, **161**†, 168

129 78 99

14.8 @ 161

BEST IN:
INITIATION, STABILITY,
AGILITY

This is an elegant performance ski that will lead an expert anywhere, and give her the pleasure of owning an ice-gripping, snow-carving and crud-dicing instrument. And fun, too.

This ski loves to turn. It's easy to initiate, and floats effortlessly through powder and chopped snow. It can be unforgiving in the bumps, but dynamic in short and long radius, and had endless energy I couldn't overpower. » **WENDY ANDERSON**

A fun ski that excels more on groomed or lightly covered runs. This ski likes to go fast and offers smooth fun for someone who wants to cruise the mountain. » **JULIE MARKUSSEN**

Woo-hoo, what a blast! Short, long, crud, bumps, powder—this ski does it all with passion and connection. Great bite into the hardpack with smooth transition. Great base speed. » **JEN LOTON**