

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. (See Fall 2009, next 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. (See Fall 2009, next 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+. (See Fall 2009, next 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. (This issue.)

EASY CRUISING

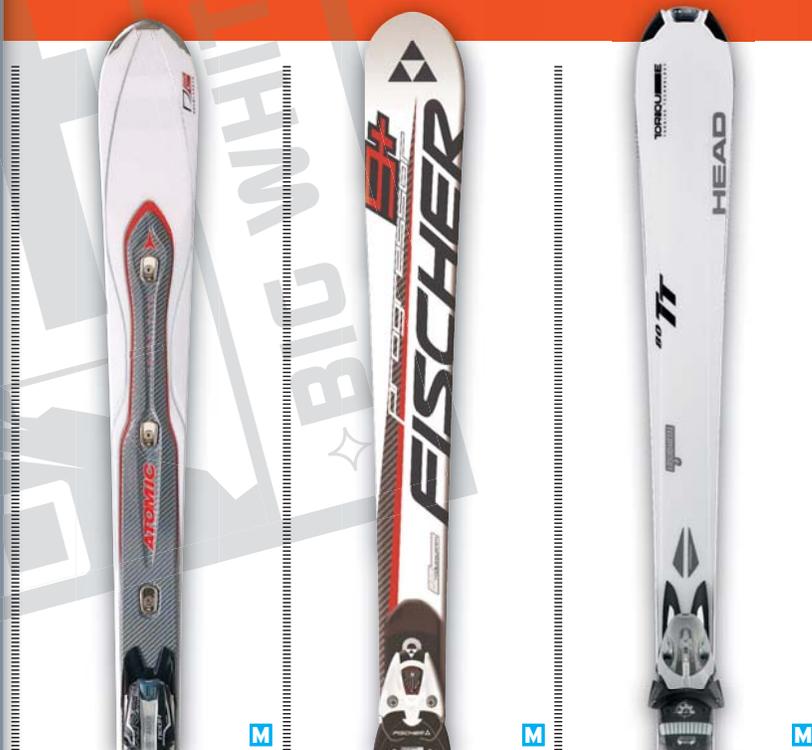
Mid-range performance in long and short turns

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. (This 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, December.)



ATOMIC	FISCHER	HEAD
D2 VARIO FLEX 82	PROGRESSOR 9+	ICON TT80
\$1,199*	\$1,299*	\$1,150*
LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 158, 166, 174† , 182	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 160, 165, 170, 175† , 180	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 152, 158, 164, 170, 176†
121.5 82 111	117 70 100	118 66 102
17 @ 174	18 @ 175	14.4 @ 176
BEST IN: EDGE GRIP, LONG RADIUS	BEST IN: INITIATION, EDGE GRIP, SHORT RADIUS	BEST IN: STABILITY, LONG RADIUS

This is a rock-solid ski with no apparent speed limit. A medium to heavy expert looking for a lively ski will love its quick initiation with a constant edge in any speed or turn.

☑ A sports-car feeling with an aggressive driver needed. Its large sweet spot makes you relaxed and confident. Awesome fun. » **MIKE WEISS**

☑ This ski can really hold an edge with only a focus on balance in the centre of skiing the arc. You're constantly aware of the edge. » **ROSS COUTTS**

☑ Tip it and rip it! It's fairly stiff tip to tail and requires a powerful, aggressive operator. This ski prefers big easy arcs down and across the fall line. » **BARTON LANE**

The Progressor 9+ is a classic expert ski that testers agreed is slippery fast through the arc. This one is perfect for a light skier who doesn't need to be skiing full power all the time.

☑ This ski works best at moderate speed. It's responsive and easy to operate, and is good in both short and long turns. » **GEORGE TERWIEL**

☑ A really fun ski! It rolls on and off edge easily, and is quick and nimble into the turn, with good energy out of the turn. It's best suited for shorter to medium turns. There's some loss of stability at speed. » **HANK SHANNON**

☑ It's fast through the arc of the turn, and easy to ski in short or long turns. This ski is for a pure carver who does not want a beefy ski. » **DREW BRAGG**

This ski was a top pick. A confidence-builder that's easy to pivot and has great edge control, the Icon TT80 skied lighter than it looked. All agreed that it was happier when it was pushed.

☑ Power woven with silk. This ski carves silent, powerful turns at any speed. It's a stable, solid, smooth standout » **MARK STEIN**

☑ It has amazing edge hold on a good pitch, and exits the turn with tons of energy. It's a bit sluggish in short turns. » **BARTON LANE**

☑ This is a strong, beefy ski. It has a stiff yet even flex, giving the ski a powerful feel from tip to tail. It performed best in long turns. Point them downhill and hold on. » **MIKE MANARA**



M



M



M



M



M

ON-PISTE CRUISERS

K2	OGASAKA	ROSSIGNOL	SALOMON	VÖLKL
APACHE CROSSFIRE	KEOS RF	CLASSIC 80 Ti	EQUIPE 24 HOURS	TIGERSHARK II
\$1,049*	\$1,399	\$1,299*	\$1,125*	\$1,450*
LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 163, 170*, 177, 184	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 160, 165, 170, 175*	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 160, 165, 170, 175, 180*	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 154, 162, 170*, 178	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 161, 168, 175*
122 74 106	109 69 99	124 80 112	119 72 103	121 75 104
BEST IN: INITIATION, AGILITY	BEST IN: LONG RADIUS, EDGE GRIP	BEST IN: STABILITY, EDGE GRIP, LONG RADIUS	BEST IN: EDGE GRIP, INITIATION, LONG RADIUS	BEST IN: EDGE GRIP, LONG RADIUS

Testers found this ski to be the most versatile in the category. The Crossfire is a one-ski mountain master that could easily take an advanced skier to the next level.

☑️ Tons of fun! It skied like a freight train on rails, exiting the turn with a wow factor. Mixing up the radius is worth the lift ticket. » **BARTON LANE**

☑️ This ski is a versatile all-rounder. It's nice first thing in the morning on freshly groomed stuff, and just as good on the last run when it's chopped up. » **JOSH FOSTER**

☑️ There's a fabulous feel underfoot, with an even flex pattern to give you control of the turn shapes. It's versatile, has good dampening characteristics, and gives you confidence and comfort on all terrain and speeds. » **MIKE WEISS**

This is a stable and responsive ride for the aggressive power skier who likes to churn out metronome-like turns. It has good edge grip on big turns, and a racy sweet spot that's a bit back of centre.

☑️ Wow! I wanted to do big arcs at mach speed all the way. It requires a big effort but once on, the ski responds. A phenomenal edge—like a freight train. » **HANK SHANNON**

☑️ It's a smooth performer on the groomed. A little more stiffness would have been nice in the tail, but it holds well when progressively tipped over. It's not limited to one turn radius. » **RON BETTS**

☑️ This ski is easy to initiate and flows through the arc. It's a ski for the traditional ski owner who likes a medium flex. Medium speed and turns best suit this cruiser. » **MIKE WEISS**

Ski the Classic 80 Ti back of centre. Testers commented on its noticeable square tail and width but once they hit the line they were glued to it. This ski could handle both short and long turns with ease.

☑️ Stable, responsive edge grip; it's equally explosive in short and long turns. There's no speed limit, but it's not as good at slow speeds. » **GEORGE TERWIEL**

☑️ This ski had great versatility—it was good in both short and long turns. It had great edge grip and nice flex, with a softer shovel and stiff tail. » **MIKE MANARA**

☑️ Very versatile in turn shape and size. You can change the size of turn from turn-to-turn or even during the turn. Smooth and fast, this was a blast! » **MARK STEIN**

3-2-1-go, masters racers! The 24 Hours has incredible edge hold that inspires confidence. It's stable and fun at faster speeds, yet forgiving. This is a perfect ski for the weekend warrior.

☑️ Arc-o-matics! This ski dives into every turn with gusto. It's a short-radius machine, but can still arc a medium turn. It has two settings: On and Off. » **MARK STEIN**

☑️ This ski has incredible edge hold and stability at speed. It likes to be pushed through medium- to long-radius turns, and will arc effortlessly across or down the fall line. » **HANK SHANNON**

☑️ It's easy to initiate, and great flow makes the bottom third of the turn feel like someone lit the afterburners. A wide sweet spot makes this a user-friendly ski. Great feel. » **RON BETTS**

The Tigershark II is reserved for the expert, athletic charger. It clawed through the snow and into the arc, and was confident and secure at speed with great edge grip in short and long turns. The PowerSwitch really works.

☑️ A really powerful ski that's at its best with the pedal all the way down. It's suited for a heavier skier who can handle the stiffer flex. » **DREW BRAGG**

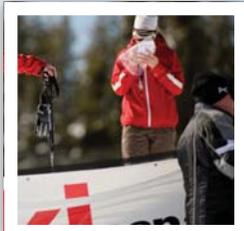
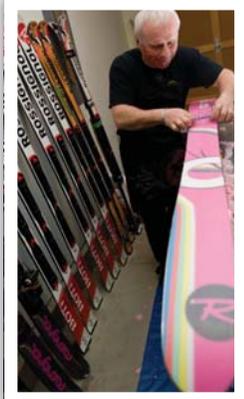
☑️ Ultimate carving at its best! This ski requires athletic effort, as it should. It has incredible edge hold and stability in all turn shapes, and tears up the corduroy. » **HANK SHANNON**

☑️ The harder you push, the more it responds. This ski is like butter. The tip engages smoothly and pulls really well through the turn. It's better in long than short turns, but does both well, and it's not afraid of speed. » **RON BETTS**



Tester: Lisa Suutari

ON-PISTE CRUISERS



ON-PISTE CRUISERS - WOMEN'S RECOMMENDATIONS			
SKIER WEIGHT		SKIER ABILITY	
◀ LIGHTER HEAVIER ▶		◀ INTERMEDIATE EXPERT ▶	
K2 BURNIN LUV		FISCHER PROGRESSOR 9+	
FISCHER PROGRESSOR 9+		K2 BURNIN LUV	
VOLKL ATTIVA FUEGO		VOLKL ATTIVA FUEGO	
HEAD ICON TT80		OGASAKA KEOS RF	
OGASAKA KEOS RF		SALOMON EQUIPE 24 HOURS	
SALOMON EQUIPE 24 HOURS		HEAD ICON TT80	
ROSSIGNOL CLASSIC 80 TI		ATOMIC D2 VF 82	
ATOMIC D2 VF 82		ROSSIGNOL CLASSIC 80 TI	
SNOW CONDITIONS		SKIER STYLE	
◀ SOFT HARD ▶		◀ FINESSE POWER ▶	
FISCHER PROGRESSOR 9+		FISCHER PROGRESSOR 9+	
K2 BURNIN LUV		K2 BURNIN LUV	
VOLKL ATTIVA FUEGO		VOLKL ATTIVA FUEGO	
SALOMON EQUIPE 24 HOURS		OGASAKA KEOS RF	
ATOMIC D2 VF 82		SALOMON EQUIPE 24 HOURS	
OGASAKA KEOS RF		HEAD ICON TT80	
ROSSIGNOL CLASSIC 80 TI		ROSSIGNOL CLASSIC 80 TI	
HEAD ICON TT80		ATOMIC D2 VF 82	



W



W



W



W



W

ATOMIC	FISCHER	HEAD	K2	OGASAKA
D2 VARIO FLEX 82	PROGRESSOR 9+	ICON TT80	BURNIN LUV	KEOS RF
\$1,199*	\$1,299*	\$1,080 *	\$929 *	\$1,399
LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 158, 166* , 174, 182	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 160, 165* , 170, 175, 180	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 152, 158, 164* , 170, 176	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 149, 156, 163* , 170	LENGTHS AVAILABLE: 160, 165, 170* , 175
119 82 108.5	117 70 100	117 66 101	117 70 101	109 69 99
16.5 @ 166	13 @ 165	12.4 @ 164	13 @ 163	17.3 @ 170
BEST IN: STABILITY, LONG RADIUS	BEST IN: SHORT RADIUS, AGILITY	BEST IN: LONG RADIUS, EDGE GRIP, STABILITY	BEST IN: AGILITY, LONG RADIUS	BEST IN: LONG RADIUS, EDGE GRIP

Are you an advanced to expert skier with no fear of commitment? Then you will love this ski. It's a strong, stable, go-fast ski for an aggressive, big-turn cruiser who wants to rip.

It grips at high speed, and offers sheer performance in both long- and short-radius turns—especially at speed. It's a very stable carver. Awesome! » **AIKA MASUDA**

Wow, what a ride! It's easy to turn and super-solid at high speeds. Feel free to push this one to the limit. » **WENDY LUMBY**

This ski is a bottomless pit and any attempt to fill it with power, aggression and expert ski skills is futile. Give 'er. » **MICHELLE OSTAFEW**

The Progressor is a versatile carver that complements a finesse skier who is light on her feet and likes to put together a few short turns in and out of the bumps.

A fun ski! It wants to turn and doesn't demand a lot from you to carve a solid turn. It's lively for small turns, and stable at speed in bigger turns. » **LISA SUUTARI**

It's snappy and loves to turn quickly. This ski rocked in short-radius turns and ate up the bumps. » **MELANIE KAMPHUIS**

This ski likes to turn. It's quick and easy in short turns, and yet powerful and stable when you open it up. It has a softer tip and tail, but it's solid underfoot. A definite confidence-builder. » **WENDY ANDERSON**

This is a machine for the strong, agile expert who likes to ski fast and use the features of the ski to her advantage. It's a little harder to steer in short turns, but holds like glue at speed.

It's solid and stable at medium- to large-radius turns, but lacked spring and was harder to initiate in short radius. Great edge grip and easy initiation for the fun, cruising sweepers. » **JEN LOTON**

Solid edge grip and stable at speed in long turns. The sweet spot is slightly forward, with a stiff tail; if you get caught back, it will kick. Short turns require some work for a slightly heavier skier. » **WENDY ANDERSON**

This is a great cruiser that suits long turns best. It's harder to steer the tip in short turns; slow rebound gives you time to re-centre. Great edge hold. » **ROBYN BEAUDRY**

We're not recommending you close your eyes, but this ski has a Zen feeling that flows with energy, confidence and rhythm. It's very nimble with great rebound energy.

This ski has lots of positive energy, which provides responsive feedback on every turn regardless of turn size or speed. Its even flex pattern creates a really smooth ski. » **ANNE TERWIEL**

This is an easy, light ski. It feels as if you're floating on a cloud. It's excellent in both short- and medium-radius turns. » **WENDY LUMBY**

Fun, fun, fun! Fast long turns, smooth and quick in short turns, and it loved the bumps. Soft or hard snow, this ski put a smile on my face. » **MELANIE KAMPHUIS**

Here is a black-diamond groomer that's solid and fast with a desire to stay solid and go faster. The sweet spot is a little back, but once you find it you can ask the ski to perform and it will. Did we mention it likes to go fast?

A true masters GS race ski. It's surprisingly quick in short turns for a ski so progressive, and stable in long ones; and versatile enough to be an all-piste ski. » **LISA SUUTARI**

This is a super-light and lively ski. Great rebound energy in short turns, and extremely quick edge-to-edge. You need to stay centred for best performance. » **WENDY ANDERSON**

It's unobtrusive and easygoing in short turns, but not lively though. This ski is relaxed and stable in long-radius turns. » **MICHELLE OSTAFEW**

ON-PISTE CRUISERS

WOMEN

TEST CRITERIA

Each tester evaluates a number of characteristics out of 10 points to help present a complete picture of how a ski stacks up after a single run. This data is provided for the reader without alteration. At the end of each day, the testers meet to compare their impressions and offer a consensus on which type of skier would enjoy the ski. Testers have their preferences relating to their skiing background and style, so factors such as the length of the ski tested and the tune affects each skier's opinion. Weigh their comments against what's important to you and how you ski. Here's what they are measuring:

EDGE GRIP: How well does the ski hold its line once it's tipped on edge. Usually the stiffer the torsion, the better the edge grip. Edge grip is important for carving. Remember the test skis were tuned by factory technicians for the test day and checked during the day for any deterioration. It makes a huge difference.

STABILITY: As speed and snow conditions vary, so does the feel of the ski underfoot. A ski that is too soft may feel loose and floppy, while a stiff ski may feel heavy and be difficult to initiate into a turn. Well-balanced skis tend to be stable at designed-for speeds, but still retain liveliness for turning.

AGILITY: The result of easy initiation at a variety of speeds, energy transfer from edge-to-edge and good acceleration. When the wow factor is there, the skis are matching the skier's weight and skiing style, and feel light, responsive and inspire confidence. For big cruising turns, agility is a good thing but don't confuse it with wandering instability.

VERSATILITY: Versatility continues to be one of the most important factors and for good reason. Ski manufacturers continue to offer innovations in ski profiles and materials to define the perfect ski. Conditions change with every run and skiers live for the freedom of moving from the bumps, through the crud to carving at speed. In some cases the changes feel seamless to the testers, while in other cases the testers (who are only allowed one run per ski) have to really look for the sweet spot.

ON-PISTE CRUISERS



W



W



W

ROSSIGNOL

CLASSIC 80 Ti

\$1,299 *

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
160, 165, 170†, 175, 180

124 80 112

16.5 @ 170

BEST IN:
EDGE GRIP, LONG RADIUS

This must be what a racer wants for a freeski day. Some testers loved the tune and some didn't, but they all agreed this was a skier's ski designed and crafted for cruising with a mission.

Excellent tune on a dyed-in-the-wool GS ski. A high-performance, uncompromising sharp tip did not apologize for asking an expert touch to initiate the slow, short-radius turns. » MICHELLE OSTAFEW

Not for the faint-hearted. This ski is all about the edge and fall line. Lay it over and go. I loved short and long turns at speed. A heavier power skier may achieve more. » WENDY ANDERSON

A great ski! It's fun for the advanced skier who wants to carve the entire mountain. It has great edge-to-edge movement, and is solid in softer snow. » JULIE MARKUSSEN

SALOMON

EQUIPE 24 HOURS

\$1,125 *

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
154, 162, 170†, 178

119 72 103

15.2 @ 170

BEST IN:
LONG RADIUS, EDGE GRIP, STABILITY

A versatile, well-mannered and adaptable ski that's great for the advanced expert who likes groomers, but will venture into uneven terrain for a little variety. Lay this ski out and it will give you a lot back.

Wow, this is what I'm talking about, what a ski! It's great in short, fun in long, and just an all-round great versatile ski. I pushed it and it was perfect. » JULIE MARKUSSEN

A little bit grabby at the tip or I was moving too quickly. I forgot the ski was on my feet; I just did what I wanted and it went along with it. Remarkable. » MICHELLE OSTAFEW

This ski was great for a performance ski. It was easy to go from short radius to long, had awesome grip, was great in bumps and easy to steer even in longer-length turns. You don't have to be on to feel great. » ROBYN BEAUDRY

VÖLKL

ATTIVA FUEGO

\$1,050 *

LENGTHS AVAILABLE:
144, 151, 158†, 165

121 73 105

14.6 @ 158

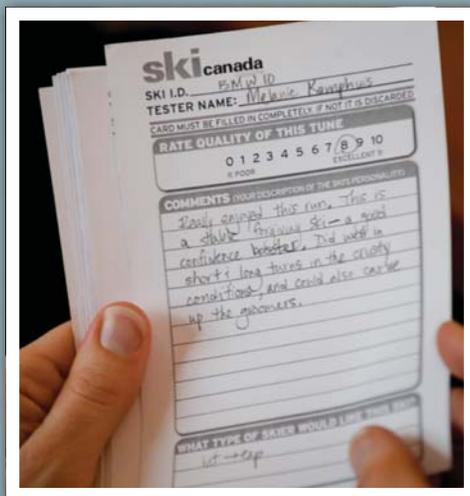
BEST IN:
INITIATION, EDGE GRIP, SHORT RADIUS

Put it on and set it loose! The Fuego is a versatile performance ski for the advanced to expert skier who likes to mix short-radius turns in with the long ones for a fun, fast and solid ride.

This ski can take whatever you ask of it, with energetic short turns and stable, smooth long turns. It has a well-balanced sweet spot—and no surprises. » ANNE TERWIEL

An excellent ski for the average female. It's lightweight and super-easy to turn, and seemed happiest in short to medium turns. It did not like to be pushed past a certain speed. » WENDY LUMBY

What a fun ride this was. It's very quick edge-to-edge on groomed and through the bumps. When I let it go downhill, it was fast and solid. » MELANIE KAMPHUIS





www.bigwhite.com

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:

**Kettle Valley Steakhouse and Wine Bar | Beano's Coffee Parlour | Big White Bakery
SNOWSHOE SAM'S**



TO SUBSCRIBE TO SKI CANADA MAGAZINE: www.skicanadamag.com or toll free 1-800-263-5295