



News

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Female Friendly Gear for All Levels; More High-Performance Skis, Boards and Boots; New Fit Features and Insulating Systems

MCLEAN, Va. (Winter 2003-04) – For women who slide on snow, it’s all about choice this year. More than ever, ski, boot, snowboard and snowshoe manufacturers are demonstrating that they recognize the importance of the female market by offering full lines of women-specific products, rather than just a few models. From beginners to experts, women can find equipment that will help them reach their potential on the snow, according to SnowSports Industries America (SIA), the national, not-for-profit, member-owned trade association that represents snow and winter sports outdoor companies.

Hot Trends for 2003-04

Women-specific equipment is designed with these differences in mind. Women’s boots are designed—or lasted—to fit a woman’s smaller, skinnier foot, and to accommodate her lower calf. Skis and snowboards are lighter in weight and softer in flex. Bindings can be mounted farther forward and the heel lifted at a certain angle, so women can better pressure the tip and shovel of the ski at the beginning of the turn. Women’s snowshoes are designed to fit narrower feet, and lighter-weight frames are tapered at the tip and tail to accommodate the natural female gait.

Women of all abilities perform better on equipment optimized for their physical characteristics, and manufacturers have added to their women’s lines this year, many at the top. “I have seen a greater demand for higher performance,” William McSherry, product manager for Head Tyrolia Wintersports. “Last season, we adapted our real World Cup racing boot for women (the FR 9.5 Women), and it is now one of our best-selling women’s boots. In the past, the alleged conventional

The Study of the Male and Female Anatomy

The physical differences between men and women account for differences in how the two sexes ski, snowboard and snowshoe. Since women have smaller shoulders and bigger hips, their center of gravity is lower and farther back than men’s. On skis, for instance, this makes it harder for women to pressure the front of the ski to initiate a turn. Since women are generally lighter and have smaller feet than men, it’s more difficult for them to flex a ski or snowboard, which can make it harder for them to control it.

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wisdom was that women would not pay for performance. The fantastic sales results of the FR 9.5 women's boot and the i.C 160 Lightning women's ski, again one of our best sellers, proves that women want and will invest in the highest levels of performance."

Brian DePue, snowboard brand coordinator for Elan Snowboards, notes a parallel trend toward high-performance women's snowboards, with manufacturers striving to keep up with advancing women riders. "The level of riding is increasing so fast that many women have had to ride non-gender-specific boards to keep progressing," he says. "Women are as discriminating and as athletic as men," says Scott Russo, marketing director international for Dalbello Italy, parent company of Dalbello Sports LLC in New Hampshire.

"They're a very committed, dedicated and loyal segment of the marketplace. For instance, they're a lot less likely than men to throw their skis away and get a snowboard once they reach a certain age and manufacturers are paying more attention and building more products for this very important group of customers."

Some companies, like Atomic, have added entire women's lines this year, with skis, boots and bindings for women of all abilities. K2's newly designed T:Nine series also spans all skill levels. Dynastar and Rossignol offer skis with built-in heel lift. In fact, Rossignol's new Sapphire Pulsion has a binding plate built into it. The plate, positioned forward with a raised heel, is connected in the front for added leverage and split in the back to increase edge grip. The ski is stiffer in the back to improve turn initiation and increase performance.

Snowboard manufacturers like Burton and K2 continue to provide their female customers with the latest in boot, board and binding technology. The first female-specific cross-country skis debut from Alpina Sports, which offers five new Nordic skis for women. K2 has a new telemark ski and snowshoe innovators Tubbs and Redfeather have once again created new, state-of-the-art models engineered just for women.

The attention to detail for Winter 2003-04 will put a smile on many women's faces. For instance, there are a number of solutions offered for cold feet. Dolomite has a boot that comes with a Hotronic liner for extra warmth and Burton uses Outlast (a temperature regulating insulation) in its boot to keep the feet warm. Lowa boots come with heat-moldable liners. Other interesting developments include a Burton boot with an "airbag" for extra-impact cushioning.

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Hot Product Highlights for Winter 2003-04

Alpine Gear for Women

Atomic Skis/Boots: Atomic unveils its new **WINGS program**—"Women in Gear Systems"—a complete, feature-jammed system of women-specific skis, boots and bindings. WINGS skis range from the ultra-performing, high-end **R:10W** (\$795), with its aggressive acceleration and razor-sharp control for expert freeriders, down to the **C:6W** (\$269), an easy-turning ski for beginners. The **CR:310W** binding (\$260), which has five Variozone positions, can be fine-tuned to match the individual's skiing stance. WINGS boots run the gamut from the **CR:10W** (\$469), designed for aggressive, all-mountain freeriders, to the **e:5W** (\$249), an easy-on boot that offers advancing skiers comfort and responsiveness.

Blizzard: In Blizzard's new-technology Expressor line, the **FXP 7.0 L** (\$450) is a brand-new, high-performance, all-mountain ski for women. The 7.0 is softer, with a farther-forward mounting position. The **Epic 6** (\$400) and **Epic 5** (\$350), women's skis introduced last winter, have been spruced up with Quattro Thermo-gel, a dampening system unaffected by temperature. Finally, the **T-Gel 4L** (\$325), Blizzard's opening-price-point women's ski, has new graphics this year.

Dalbello: Dalbello's extensive women's boot collection grows by three models this year. Three new **Visio** models (\$169-\$299) are now offered in the company's New Technology category. Engineered to fit a woman's foot, these high-tech soft boots are lightweight, with a two-buckle design.

Dolomite: For every single man's boot, Dolomite makes a woman's counterpart. These boots feature a female lasted liner, which is specifically shaped to better fit a woman's leg and foot anatomy. The **DC Series** (\$300-\$435), which was introduced in '02-'03 and updated this year, is what Dolomite calls its "soft concept" and is particularly appealing to women. Bucking tradition, the DC Series features boots that are both high-performance *and* warm and comfortable. The **DC 100** (\$435) and **DC 80** (\$375) feature new Hotronic liners this year.

Dynastar: Last year, Dynastar introduced its super-lightweight, female-specific **Exclusive** skis, which account for a woman's different build with a binding position already mounted forward and a heel lift built right into the ski. This year, Dynastar is bolstering the top of the line, with the **Exclusive Carve** (\$629), designed for experts seeking an exceptional performance ski that's easy to use, and the **Exclusive 10** (\$550), an all-mountain expert ski with a versatile, high-performance shape. The new skis join the **Exclusive 8** (\$475) for beginning to intermediate skiers and **Exclusive 9** (\$525) for advancing skiers.

Elan: Elan's **Whisper** series (\$375-\$500) of women-specific skis, introduced last season, has been improved upon for '03-'04. Not simply a softer version of a unisex model, the Whisper has

several features that ensure it requires less strength to initiate a smooth, graceful turn. It has monobloc-capped construction with a thinner wood core, bindings are mounted farther forward, and its dampening and energy-control system uses lighter-weight and lower-density materials so that the ski reacts quickly, giving the skier more power.

Head Skis/Boots: Head has consistently provided women with versatile performance products for every skill level. New is the **C140 Lightning** (\$500), featuring an exciting new shape with extremely light construction for intermediate skiers looking to improve. Head has also beefed up the power in its best women's ski, the **i.M 70 Lightning** (\$650), by adding titanal laminates. And Head is offering four new women's boots and upgrading a best seller, the **Edge 10.0** (\$425) for advanced skiers. Three of the new women's boots, the **E-Fit 5, 7 and 9** (\$325-\$455), are members of Head's feature-packed, super-lightweight E-Fit series for intermediate to advanced skiers; the "E" is for extra comfort. The fourth new boot, the **Edge 9.5 Heat Fit** (\$375), is a superlight, front-entry option for advanced skiers.

K2: K2's **T:Nine** series (\$300-\$795) is designed specifically by women for women and spans all ability levels. The flagship of the nine-model line is the **T:Nine Spire** (\$675), a high-performance, lighter weight ski with a spruce core and a metal laminate construction. Other skis in the line include the **T:Nine Phat Luv** (\$675), a high-performance powder ski; the **T:Nine Echo** (\$375), an intermediate all-mountain ski; and the **T:Nine Skye** (\$300), an all-mountain ski for novices. A portion of all T:Nine sales will be donated to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation.

Lowa: New from Lowa is the **Struktura Light**, a feature-packed boot made with lady-lasted liners and sculpted cuffs to accommodate the female calf. Designed for longer distance touring and extreme skiing, the Struktura comes standard with a heat-moldable liner, which can be molded to the foot either by the heat and pressure created by wearing it, or by using a hair dryer or a ski shop's heating device.

Rossignol: The brand-new **Sapphire Pulsion** (\$599-\$649) was designed exclusively for women. Lightweight with a thin profile, it has a binding plate built into it. The plate, positioned forward with a raised heel, is connected in the front for added leverage and split in the back to increase edge grip. The ski is stiffer in the back to improve turn initiation and increase performance.

Tecnica: Tecnica introduces the women's **Gamma** boot series. The **Gamma 9 Ultrafit** (\$450) and **Gamma 7 Ultrafit** (\$375) offer a true women's low-volume fit, with both shells and liners lasted specifically for the female anatomy. The four-buckle overlap boots are lightweight with a moderate flex, which can be adjusted using the Reactive Flex System in the shell with inserts.

Volkl: Volkl updates the **Gamma** series, its most complete women's ski collection to date.

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Each ski in the line features 20/20 Core Technology, which means it is 20 percent lighter and 20 percent softer, with no loss in the ski's stability or edge grip. The line's flagship, the powerful **7 24 AX3 Gamma** (\$900, including the Motion 12 binding system), offers superior performance in all conditions and is a new addition for the 2003-04 season.

Snowboarding Gear for Women

Burton Boards/Boots/Bindings: Burton's Global Team of progressive women riders have designed new women's boards, boots and bindings for Winter 2003-04. The high-performing **Sensation** board series (\$470) offers women a solid ride and a snappy flex in all types of terrain. The core has a lighter, more efficient tip and tail for reduced swingweight and better shock absorption at impact. The **Supreme** (\$280), a serious boot for serious riders, is light, supportive and warm. It features climate-controlling Outlast in the liner, a medium flex and a five-part outsole with Skydex inserts in the toe and heel to reduce impact while allowing the rider to react quickly. The **Sapphire** (\$199), an ultra-lightweight, all-terrain boot, is the first women's boot with an airbag for extra impact cushioning. In the binding arena, the **Lexa's** (\$199) anatomically correct right and left baseplates are sized to fit women's boots perfectly without slop or pinching, and the highback won't hit or pinch calf muscles.

The **Stiletto** (\$140) binding offers easy flex, easy adjustment and women-specific fit for both freedom and support, no matter how hard the rider rips. The Stiletto design takes into account a woman's calf with its Nylon Hi-Back and injected EVA ankle straps.

Elan Boards: The popular **Aurora** (\$329) board for women has been updated this year to include Elan's patented Active Technology Chassis (ATC), which is a 3D topsheet that reduces vibration throughout the entire board. The use of ATC has trickled down from Elan's flagship board, the Vertigo.

K2 Boards/Boots/Bindings: K2 has several exciting additions to its stable of women's snowboarding products. The brand-new, easy-riding **Skylla** (\$299), with a progressive sidecut, is perfect for riders on their way up. For girls destined to rip, there's the new **Mini Luna** (\$129-\$149, sizes 105-125), the little sister of K2's Luna and Kandi boards. Two new women's bindings are among this year's picks: the high-performance **Virtue** (\$229), which provides response and support without sacrificing comfort, and the ultra-comfy **Bliss** (\$129), featuring a smaller, forgiving plastic baseplate for women's smaller feet. In boots, there's the new **WT1** (\$259), designed by K2's pro female riders to meet their own riding needs. The lightweight, high-performance boot comes complete with the new, patent-pending Boa-Fit-3D liner, which has a Boa ankle harness for superior ankle support and can be

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adjusted without unlacing the boots. The **Tracker Boa** (\$229), another high-end technical boot, comes with the Boa Cable Closure System for precise lace tension, so there's no more laces, sore fingers or heel lift. Moving down the line, there's the **Range** (\$129), a comfortable women's boot with solid response.

Nordic Gear for Women

Alpina Skis/Boots: After extensive research into what the female market wanted, Alpina introduces five new cross-country skis for women, three under the **Madshus** brand, along with a new women's boot line. With its secure grip and good glide, the nimble and maneuverable Alpina **Pursuit**, a wood-core, cap ski with a dramatic sidecut and non-wax base, is a very versatile touring ski. The Alpina **Vantage** is a wood-core backcountry ski with steel edges. Shorter and wider than a general touring ski, it provides exceptional stability and agility in the untracked woods or open fields. The Madshus **Cardio Z1**, a high-end touring ski, has the feel and response of a racing ski, but with a more stable platform. The Madshus **Cardio Z2** is a light, responsive ski that is excellent for training or racing. Finally, the ultra-responsive and quick Madshus **Cardio Skate** has the same dynamic profile as the Z2, but has added torsional stability that the sport of skating demands. Alpina's new **XC Boot Series** is designed to work in unison with the skis to enhance a woman's on-snow performance. The **CSL**, built on a woman's last with a softer midsole, allowing a more fluid flex. The **BC** (backcountry) category adds brand-new boots for women, the **Outbound** and **1550** models.

Karhu: In telemark skis, Karhu introduces the **Jil**, a women's version of the Jak ski.

K2: K2 introduces the **InStinx** (\$479), a women's telemark ski. A mid-fat, soft ski that comes with inserts for bindings (like a snowboard), the Instinx is versatile, lively and agile. It joins **She's Piste** (\$459), K2's original female tele ski, which was introduced last season and sold out early.

Salomon: Salomon recognizes that women make up more than 50 percent of the skiing population. To address the female skier, Salomon has built women specific boots called **Vitane** that are closer fitting and have added insulation for warmth. The Vitane line is comprised of active performance and touring models. **Vitane Active** boots come in both classic and skate models and are designed for women seeking high performance in a recreational boot. The **Vitane Touring** boots are primarily for in-track skiing or open field touring.

Snowshoes for Women

Atlas: Atlas Snow-Shoe Company is teaming up with the Women's Sports Foundation to promote snowshoeing to a larger audience of women. The Women's Sports Foundation works to

ensure participation and leadership opportunities for all girls and women in sports. Information about the foundation's work will be found on all of Atlas's new Elektra women-specific snowshoes. And proceeds from Elektra sales and events will go to support the foundation's work.

Redfeather: Redfeather introduces newly designed **Women's Performance** (\$209-\$219) and **Women's Sports** (\$139-\$149) snowshoe models. The Performance snowshoe, with a narrower tapered frame to allow women to walk with an easy, natural motion, comes with the high-tech, easy-on/easy-off, female-specific **Escape** binding and a Balanced Hinge system designed for women. The Sports model, completely redesigned this year, has a new frame to match women's walking and running strides and an updated deck with new color schemes.

Tubbs: Tubbs, which pioneered women-specific snowshoes five years ago, introduces two new women's models in the reengineered Altitude series. The **Altitude 21** (\$209) and **25W** (\$219) join two other Altitude models and two Pinnacle series models made specifically for women. Like the others, the 21 and 25W feature lightweight aluminum frames, are sized and scaled to optimize a woman's narrower stride, and feature lighter colors and unique cosmetics. Both new models, designed for day hiking and "go-anywhere" performance, come complete with the female-specific Bear Hug binding and Tubbs' new SurTrac crampon system.

SIA

SnowSports Industries America (SIA) is the national, not-for-profit, member-owned trade association that represents snow and winter sports outdoor companies. SIA produces the SIA SnowSports Show, the largest trade show and gathering place for the snow sports industry. Proceeds from the SnowSports Show fund market development programs for all snow sport disciplines. SIA also annually produces more than a dozen industry research studies. For more information, check out www.snowlink.com. SnowSports Industries America, 8377-B Greensboro Drive, McLean, VA 22102-3587. Phone: (703) 556-9020, Fax: (703) 821-8276, Email: siamail@snowsports.org.