



# From roots to rocker

Gabriella Le Breton adds a generous hint of nostalgia as she looks at the latest ski and snowboard gear



## Skis and boards

From £580

The humble ski has come a long way since its earliest incarnation as a long, straight wooden plank. Today's skis benefit from decades of research and development, involving more technical terms than you can shake a ski pole at: from side-cut, wood and torsion box cores, reverse camber, rocker technology, twin tips, cap ski construction and fibreglass laminates. Learn more about the intricacies of ski and snowboard construction and create your very own custom kit during a two-day course in Innsbruck. Following a design consultation with the resident SPURart experts, you'll craft your dream skis or board together with them in their workshop, finishing off your pride and joy with a bespoke wood veneer design (from €690, including design consultation, building workshop and materials).

[www.spurart.at](http://www.spurart.at); 0043 660 732 9763



## Boots

From £600



Skiing footwear has evolved over the past 110 years from simple leather footwear to the cream of the crop: hand-made, bespoke Strolz boots. Originally from Lech, Austria, and now exclusively available in the UK from Yorkshire-based Slide & Glide, Strolz are the only customised orthopaedic ski boots available. Each pair is crafted to

accommodate the unique anatomy of your feet by an expert fitter, Steven Hankin, who has some 25 years' experience with Strolz. The creation of your boots starts with an in-depth analysis of

your feet and the determination of your skier type and correct shell configuration for your weight, physiology and ability. Using this data, the correct Strolz shell is selected and shaped to your feet (for problem feet and legs, special shells can be produced by Strolz in Austria). Hankin completes the personalisation of your boot by using foam to create comfortable, supportive liners, aligning stance and posture through canting and wedging, and producing a bespoke footbed if required. The total process takes two to three hours - the result will last for years. [www.strolz.co.uk](http://www.strolz.co.uk); 01943 461136

## Ski poles

The earliest skiers had just one long spear. The first depiction of a skier with two poles dates from 1741, and aluminium poles were only introduced in 1959. Modern-day poles from the leading producer LEKI are crafted from carbon composite fibre and come with a "Trigger S" system to improve power transmission, enhance comfort and avoid injury. The pioneering concept was first launched in the late '90s, and has been honed since. A broad hand strap features a small, tear-proof loop between the thumb and forefinger, which is easily clipped into the pole grip. A release button sits on top of each pole, and a spring-loaded release system ensures the strap releases under severe tensile stress (from a fall or encounter with a tree), thus reducing the chance of injury to hands and fingers.

[www.ellisbrigham.co.uk](http://www.ellisbrigham.co.uk); 0844 372 1010

From £60



£350



## Bindings

The earliest ski bindings were fashioned from twisted birch root, which gave way to animal skin before Ski Club pioneers started using bindings with a secure toe iron and loose heel in 1903. Fast forward to 2013 and Diamer Fritsch Swiss offers the ultimate binding for those who still hanker for some occasional loose heel action: the lightweight (1kg each) Freeride Pro binding with Power Transmission Control. Specifically designed for fat skis, these wide bindings are ideal for skiers looking to earn their big mountain turns, combining the downhill performance of a top alpine binding with the walking comfort of a high-end touring binding. [www.snowandrock.com](http://www.snowandrock.com); 0845 100 1000

## Jacket and trousers

Hardwearing but prone to becoming waterlogged, tweed was as good as it got for outer layers for the Ski Club's first members. Today, we have the magic that is Gore-Tex, officially invented in the US in 1969 and patented during the 1970s. Norrøna was one of the first brands in Europe to use the revolutionary waterproof fabric and still produces the jacket it launched in 1977, the Trollveggen. Norrøna's Lofoten Gore-Tex range is ideal for contemporary skiers and riders, with co-ordinating jackets and trousers for men and women, and a one-piece for the brave (jackets from £459, trousers from £429, one-piece from £999), tried and tested by some of the world's leading freeriders. The jackets come with a removable powder skirt, which cleverly attaches to the matching pants with buttons or a zipper. The range comes in Norrøna's trademark vivid colours with contrasting waterproofed zippers and new ripstop Gore-Tex Pro Shell stretch for enhanced durability. [www.norrøna.com](http://www.norrøna.com)



## Helmet

The use of helmets by recreational skiers is a relatively recent development but the young Swedish brand POC has been at the forefront of helmet technology for most of its life, pioneering anti-rotational violence technology and the Multi-directional Impact Protection System (MIPS). The POC Lab gathers the world's leading neurologists, back specialists and experts in sports medicine and materials to address the increasing physical risks associated with the rapid evolution of skiing and riding (increasing speeds, higher jumps and drops, more extreme stunts). Meanwhile their famous athletes put the products of their labours to the test on the hill.

[www.pocsports.com](http://www.pocsports.com); 0131 449 7323



## Goggles

No more spindly snow glasses with thin wire frame and legs and leather sides - today's mountain lovers have Oakley Airwave 1.5 goggles. New and improved since they took the market by storm last year, these remarkable goggles integrate Wi-Fi, GPS, MFi Bluetooth® and onboard sensors to show your geographical location, temperature, distance and vertical drop travelled on a built-in, heads-up display. This is perceived to be the size of a 14-inch screen that's five feet away (thus not requiring your eyes to refocus as you ski). The ground-breaking goggles even give instant access to analytics that track how high and far you jump, and how much time you spend in the air. It also enables you to view incoming phonecalls and texts and preload maps, music playlists, buddy tracking technology and Apps. The high-definition, peripheral vision lenses can easily be clipped in and out to adapt to different conditions. [www.oakley.com](http://www.oakley.com)



## Camera

110 years ago, as the Ski Club was born, Dr. Julius Neubronner patented a miniature camera activated by a timing mechanism, which he attached to pigeons' chests with leather straps to gather aerial shots of his native Germany. Today we're the ones with cameras strapped to our chests, as we record our glorious descents and (often unintentional) aerial moments. The Polaroid Corporation, originally founded in 1937 and famous for its instant film cameras, has launched the high-definition, waterproof sports XS7 camera and video camera for a mere £60. The robust camera comes with a waterproof case and variety of mounts, is light and portable, and offers great value for money. [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk) ►



## Warm layers

► Gone are the days when wrapping up warmly for a day in the snow involved a Viegella shirt and heavy, scratchy woollens. Modern technology has brought us a dizzying range of feather-light, high-performance materials which render us almost impervious to cold, wet and wind. The Marmot Isotherm Hoody hits the UK this winter and represents all that's best about modern, technical clothing: it's made with Polartec® Alpha® encased in a breathable mesh interior lining, and features a 20-denier Pertex Quantum outer layer. For not-so-techy types, that means it's exceptionally breathable, repels moisture, is highly wind and abrasion resistant, packs down small, weighs just 400g, and offers the warmth of down without the bulk. [www.marmot.eu](http://www.marmot.eu); 01539 563616



£180



From  
£330

## Avalanche equipment

Back in 1903, a St Bernard with a keg of whiskey was your best bet in an avalanche. Today, off-piste riders don a transceiver and pack a rucksack shovel and probe as a matter of course. The Swiss company Mammut is a pioneer in avalanche safety equipment, with most guides recommending its Barryvox transceivers for their reliability, durability and ease of use. Mammut is offering a new avalanche safety bundle for this winter, comprising a Pulse Barryvox (digital/analogue) or Element Barryvox (digital) transceiver, an Alugator Light Shovel and Probe Light for £420 and £330 respectively. Also new this winter is the extended range of Mammut Protection Airbags, specially shaped to protect the head, neck and chest area and ensure an optimal position in an avalanche. The airbag system is now completely removable, allowing you to select the right backpack type for your activity, from the lightweight (1.8kg) 30 litre Light Removable Airbag (£500) to the 35 litre Pro Protection Airbag (£640). All packs come with ski, snowboard, axe and ski-pole attachments and multiple compartments. (For more on transceivers see p.66.) [www.mammut.ch](http://www.mammut.ch); 01625 508218

## Wax

Johannes Scheffer from Lapland is the first recorded person to have waxed his skis, back in 1673. We don't know precisely what he used, but it's more likely to have been a lump of seal fat than the digital waxing irons that today's tuners select from their arsenal. Speak to the experts at Snow+Rock, who will explain the techniques and joy of waxing and tuning, and advise you whether to plump for a handy Toko All-in-One wax (£9.99) and Toko Ergo Race tuner (£29.99) or go the whole hog with a Toko Wax Iron (£49.99), Multi-base file control (£54.99) and Diamond Finishing File (£29.99).

[www.snowandrock.com](http://www.snowandrock.com); 0845 100 1000

From  
£9.99



From  
£29



## Beanie

While helmets are recommended for skiing, it's hard to beat the comfort and warmth of a hand-knitted hat for strolls around town and après-ski drinks. If you don't knit yourself and the women in your life

aren't up for the challenge, call Grannies Inc., a group of English grannies who love to knit. Go online, create your own design or give a granny free rein, chose which granny you would like to knit your hat for you and leave the hard work up to her. Your bespoke beanie will arrive in just a few days, crafted with merino wool dyed in a Devon mill. [www.granniesinc.co.uk](http://www.granniesinc.co.uk); 020 7737 9243 ■

