



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SKI TEST

ALTHOUGH WE TRY TO COVER ALL BASES, THERE ARE STILL SOME AREAS WHERE INQUIRING MINDS WANT TO KNOW MORE.

**WHY DON'T YOU USE ORDINARY SKIERS AS TESTERS?** Our testers are ordinary skiers—just with a few important differences. They come from many backgrounds but all have one common trait: they are avid, accomplished skiers with years of experience on countless models of skis. Many are instructors or coaches. They know what each ability level needs and how to test the limits of each category. They know how recreational skis should feel and how carving skis should perform. They also have the experience and background to detect subtle differences in ski behaviour that only comes from years of skiing full-time. And then they are able to express these subtleties in specific terms so readers can draw a meaningful picture of how that ski performed. Good testers are a rare breed. Yes, test impressions from the general public have value because they can quickly identify skis they liked or disliked, but then it gets kinda thin on specifics. Readers who are researching skis to purchase need real information and we haven't yet found a substitute for years of training and experience.

**DESCRIBE THE TEST PROCESS.** The group is first up the mountain to review the test slope and briefed by the technical editor on the test criteria for the day. Each category has a battery of specific tests on speed and turn shape, and every skier is required to conduct the same test. By the time the team arrives back at the pit, the suppliers and test skis are at their stations and the fun begins. Joe Grierson, the whip-cracking pit boss, ensures that things run smoothly and order prevails, no easy task with 25 people rotating through the pit every few minutes. The testers take one run on each ski,

assessing the same criteria in the same way every time. When they finish they can take a break; and they need it. Testers will ski more than 40,000 vertical metres during the week.

**WHY DO YOU MASK THE SKIS?** A heavy blue opaque tape is put on all skis so the brand isn't obvious. This requires quite an effort and wouldn't be a practice the suppliers would miss, but it serves two purposes:

- Graphics are designed to impress and we do not want testers receiving first impressions that may distract them. We want them thinking about how the ski feels, not how it looks.

- *Ski Canada* has a long tradition of conducting the most professional ski test in the business. Impartiality is at the core of our credibility so it's important that we do everything possible to make the process as unbiased as possible.

**WHAT'S WITH THE TESTER "ABILITIES"?** We use words like athletic, technical, finesse, power, etc. to describe each tester's style. The words are self-explanatory but it serves as a reminder that all testers are not the same, and we want our readers to know that we have a variety of expert skiers assessing the skis. It may also give one more clue as to how much that tester's comments relate to you.

**SOME TESTERS ARE SPONSORED BY A CERTAIN BRAND. DOESN'T THAT AFFECT TEST RESULTS?** No, not at all. *Ski Canada* is the only magazine ski test that

we know of that discards feedback from testers when they are skiing on their personal ski brand, sponsored or otherwise. (Just for fun, we have compared final results with all the marks included and found that results change insignificantly.) But even though the final

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"Hello Bell Mobility? This is Joe Grierson at the Ski Canada Test. Can you call my mother and assure her I'm wearing two pairs of underwear?"



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outcome is not affected, we leave personal ski results out on principle. We also discard a ski's highest and lowest marks to eliminate other personal bias that may creep in.

**THERE ARE OTHER SKI TESTS. WHAT MAKES THE SKI CANADA TEST SPECIAL?** You may have seen some ski tests where the skiers take out the brand of their choice (not masked), take a few runs and then complete a feedback form. At other events, we do that too, but we call it general skier impressions. During the *Ski Canada* event, testers take one run on every ski in sequential order. Skis are masked and the speed and turn shape for the test run itself is strictly monitored so every run is exactly the same for that day. When the testers return to the pit, they immediately step into a new pair of skis to repeat the process. Our testers are not there for a few runs on skis of their choice; they are conducting a tightly controlled comparison test. Seventeen fields of numeric data are collected from each run as well as tester-written comments. And unlike other ski publications, *Ski Canada* prints *all* results including those for skis that least impressed our testers. We feel our test is unbiased and fair, and that the reader deserves to see everything, warts and all.

**HOW ACCURATE ARE THE RESULTS? I SEE A PARTICULAR BRAND GOT RAVE REVIEWS. SHOULD I GO OUT AND BUY A PAIR?** Well, it can depend. A rave review does not necessarily mean that ski is for you. Is that ski designed for the kind of skiing you like to do? If not, it could be the wrong choice. Decide on your category and realistically assess your needs first. Finally, if at all possible, ski on them yourself. The ski test is just one of the tools you have to help make a good choice. Some shops rent skis they sell and in other cases suppliers have demo days to allow you that all-important "feel good" test. If they don't feel good, don't buy them. Who knows, you might discover that a ski that got tepid reviews by some of our testers is just the ride you were looking for.

**I'M NOT A GOOD SKIER LIKE YOUR TEST TEAM MEMBERS SO HOW CAN THE TEST RESULTS HELP ME?**

We test skis that are designed for skiers of all levels, including yours. And our experienced skiers know how you ski. All skis were taken on appropriate terrain at the appropriate speed to assess how good they will be at helping aspiring skiers. Tester feedback gives helpful hints on stability, ease of steering, preferred snow conditions and recommended skier weight.

**I NOTICE THAT SOME BRANDS WERE NOT TESTED. WHERE'S SALOMON? WHERE'S BLIZZARD?**

All suppliers are invited to participate in our test each year; some decline. But we simply can't test a brand without a ski supplier's participation because we are testing next year's equipment and only the suppliers have access to next year's gear. The reasons given for not participating vary from costs to disputes over our strict methodology and frank results. If your favourite ski is missing, it wouldn't hurt to tell the company rep you're disappointed it's not in *Ski Canada!*

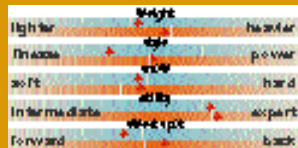
**HOW MUCH ARE THE TESTERS PAID?** A good tester is worth a lot, but believe it or not they do not receive one penny for an entire week of their time. They even pay their own way to the test from across Canada. They must truly be one of the most significant volunteer groups in the ski industry. Their contribution to the skiing public is immense. (Participation in the Lifa underwear party by Helly Hansen is mandatory.)

**I JUST SAW ANOTHER SKI TEST THAT GAVE A DIFFERENT RATING TO THE SAME SKI YOU TESTED. WHAT GIVES?**

Is this a "test" where every ski is a winner or "Best Buy"? What methodology was used to test the ski? How many skiers tested it? What were the criteria? Was the test administered in an unbiased, uniform way? What were the snow conditions on test day? And let's face it, testers are people not machines. In the end, all we can say is that we conduct the most professional test possible and we stand by the results.

Stats	Men/Women
Suggested retail:	\$900/\$900
Tip/Waist/Tail-Sidecut:	113/76/93-18@182/17@176
Lengths tested:	182, 176/170
Lengths available:	160-190/160-182
Best in:	Off-piste/Versatility
Test rating:	★★★★1/2 / ★★★★★
Recommendations:	

MERBLUE WOMEN CRANDE



★ **Editors' Choice (Women)**

**ROSSIGNOL B2 (MEN)  
ROSSIGNOL B2 W (WOMEN)**



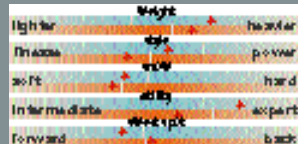
Numerous refinements to the old X series of Bandits have freshened these popular backside skis. The women enjoyed their ride a bit more than the men. The B2 W impressed the female testers with great versatility and the ability to handle changing conditions with ease. Everyone felt like a hero on the B2 W. The men were a tad less impressed and less in agreement. Lighter skiers found that the B2 got tossed a bit in the crud and required a backseat position to ski well. Others noted its great feeling in short turns and bumps.

**TESTERS WHO SAID IT BEST:** So easy in everything, incredible, outstanding ski—marvelous. (Bowie) In the fluff this ski did great. Not as versatile as some, but an expert bowler. (Coultts)

**PEAKS:** B2 W was versatile and silky smooth. B2 was excellent in short turns and soft bumpy terrain.

**VALLEYS:** B2 W was a bit loose at high speed in crud. B2's long turns felt choppy.

Stats	Men/Women
Suggested retail:	\$900
Tip/Waist/Tail-Sidecut:	115/81/104-24@185
Lengths tested:	175, 185/165, 175
Lengths available:	165, 175, 185
Best in:	Off-piste/Stability
Test rating:	★★★★1/2 / ★★★★★
Recommendations:	



★ **Editors' Choice (Women)**

**VOLANT MACHETE SIN**



Testers couldn't say enough about the stability and confidence they felt on the Machete Sin. It's a bravery-inspiring ski that's unfazed by chopped-up conditions, but versatile enough to cut short turns on the soft groomed. Many testers remarked on the weight of the ski, which they loved because of the invincible feeling of steadiness and power at any speed. Probably best enjoyed by heavier, powerful all-mountain fans.

**TESTERS WHO SAID IT BEST:** Heavy ski but very reliable in the powder. Crud didn't even slow it down. (Bowie) Awesome, super stable, very smooth, a rockin' good ride. A big ski for a big or strong guy or gal. (Books)

**PEAKS:** Powerful, stable, versatile, confidence-inspiring.

**VALLEYS:** May feel a bit sluggish for slower, lighter skiers.