

# BUYER GUIDE 2

Fat and in shape will get you everywhere. Versatility is front and centre in this year's gear.

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## THE MUSES HEARD.

**I** Crystal-ball gazing is risky business for a technical editor, but a week in the aisles at the last Ski Industries Association show in Las Vegas gave a grassroots hint at the direction of ski products of the future. One insider from a major manufacturer proclaimed, "Carving is dead as a doornail." Maybe he meant carving skis as a category. The problem is that specialized, one-trick-pony skis are harder to sell to a skiing population that can ski Chickopee one week and Lake Louise the next. It can be confusing, too. For example, since skis have become wider and twintips more common, it's more and more difficult to tell the difference between a freeride ski and a park-only freestyle ski. What most skiers really want is a ski that works in a variety of conditions. To serve that need, expect a new breed of versatile skis to hit shelves this fall. These skis are on the fat side (80-mm waists are common) and feature lots of shape, but are softer than traditional carving skis. Most brands call them "all-mountain" or "all-terrain" skis, but they are more realistically versatile than all-mountain skis of past years. Think of a fat guy who is incredibly fast on his feet. This new versatility was abundantly clear at the instruction tips photo shoot in the spring with Paul Cunnius, Ski Canada's new technical editor for testing. He cut up the groomed and danced through the bumps on a pair of K2 Outlaws that measured in at a beefy 88 mm!

The one-ski quiver is back in favour—especially appreciated by those checking-in at the airport.