

SECTION 4:
SNOWBOARDING
& OUTDOORS

Notice, a small company based in Whitefish, builds custom boards meant to stand the test of time. Find a review of the Notice Everyday on page 53. PHOTO COURTESY NOTICE SNOWBOARDS.



GETTIN'

Sideways



Travis Tollefson riding a Dungul Fish, a powder-dedicated board with no bindings or straps that he builds in Bozeman. See story on page 50. PHOTO BY DAN ARMSTRONG

As we were planning this issue in late January, testing boards, researching, and schralping the living fluff out of the southwest Montana mountains, the mainstream digitized outdoor industry was having a conversation about the value – and future – of snowboarding.

The Outdoor Retailer trade show had just occurred in Salt Lake City and the Snow Sports Industries show was about to open on Jan. 27, when Outside Online published Marc Peruzzi's opinion piece entitled, "Can Snowboarding Be Saved?"

"Shortsighted marketers are riding snowboarding into the ground, but there may still be hope to keep the sport alive," proclaimed the subheading of Peruzzi's story, which had been shared 38,600 times as of EBS press time.

Peruzzi went on to say that by leveraging the sport's "rebel cred," the industry aimed it first at teenagers, placing snowboarding into a white-bread box that's now inhabited by those same teenagers, all grown up.

Since the trade shows, American snowboarders Sage Kotsenburg and Jamie Anderson won Olympic gold in the new Olympic sport of slopestyle. In the 2014 Subaru Freeride Series – coming to Big Sky in early April – snowboarders are for the first time at the same venues and events as skiers.

On Feb. 7, Outside Online published another opinion piece, this one by snowboarder Annie Fast, entitled, "Snowboarding Lives! (Long Live Snowboarding!)"

Fat relayed National Ski Areas Association data reporting snowboarders average more days on snow than skiers, a trend dating back to 2001 when the NSAA first started tracking it.

Snowboarding, Fast continued, makes up 24.8 percent of the "participant base" in the industry, noting that the average age is 27 – not exactly over the hill, as Peruzzi suggested. Among women ages 25–44, she said, the sport grew by 40 percent in the last four seasons.

After mulling it over in the EBS office (where we are 40 percent snowboarders, 60 percent skiers), we decided this is a lot of hype around a fine American-born sport we all know is solidified as part of our culture, particularly in Big Sky.

With the ongoing technological advances of snowboard technology, one of our testers pointed out there really is a perfect ride out there for anyone. In this issue alone, we've featured big mountain boards from Burton and K2; a women's specific board from Burton; boards from smaller niche companies Notice and Venture; and Dungul Fishes, which are ridden with no bindings at all.

Although you're not likely to catch me sliding sideways anymore, I logged some 300 days on a snowboard years ago. I know all about catching my heelside edge on a groomer while learning, how to lay a turn so deep it brings you full circle, and also this: There is nothing in this world quite like snowboarding in pow. Snowboarders, you win this time.

– Emily Wolfe

No strings attached

Dungul Fish builds custom powder surfers

BY EMILY WOLFE

EXPLORE BIG SKY MANAGING EDITOR

Dungul is slang for super-fluffy powder. It's the kind of snow you can blow away with just a light breath. Coined in the 1990s by a group of Bozeman High students that spent all their free time riding the deeps on the Bridger Ridge or dreaming about it, dungul makes you gasp with euphoria when it billows past you.

It's also the namesake for a small company born on the south side of Bozeman, Dungul Fish, which builds wooden boards meant for floating through the stuff.

"It's a powder surfer, a snowboard that you ride in pow that has no bindings, straps or ropes," says Dungul Fish owner Travis Tollefson, who was one of those rowdy Bridger teenagers.

"The whole point of the game is to stick it in your face," he said, referring to the snow that flies into your grill on a big day. "That's what it's all about. That, and being by pine trees. I like being by pine trees."

Tollefson has been snowboarding since Bridger first allowed it in the early 1990s, and began making the boards in late 2012, after riding a Burton No Fish in the Taylor Fork south of Big Sky. The shape and weight of that binding-less board didn't suit him, but he saw the potential.

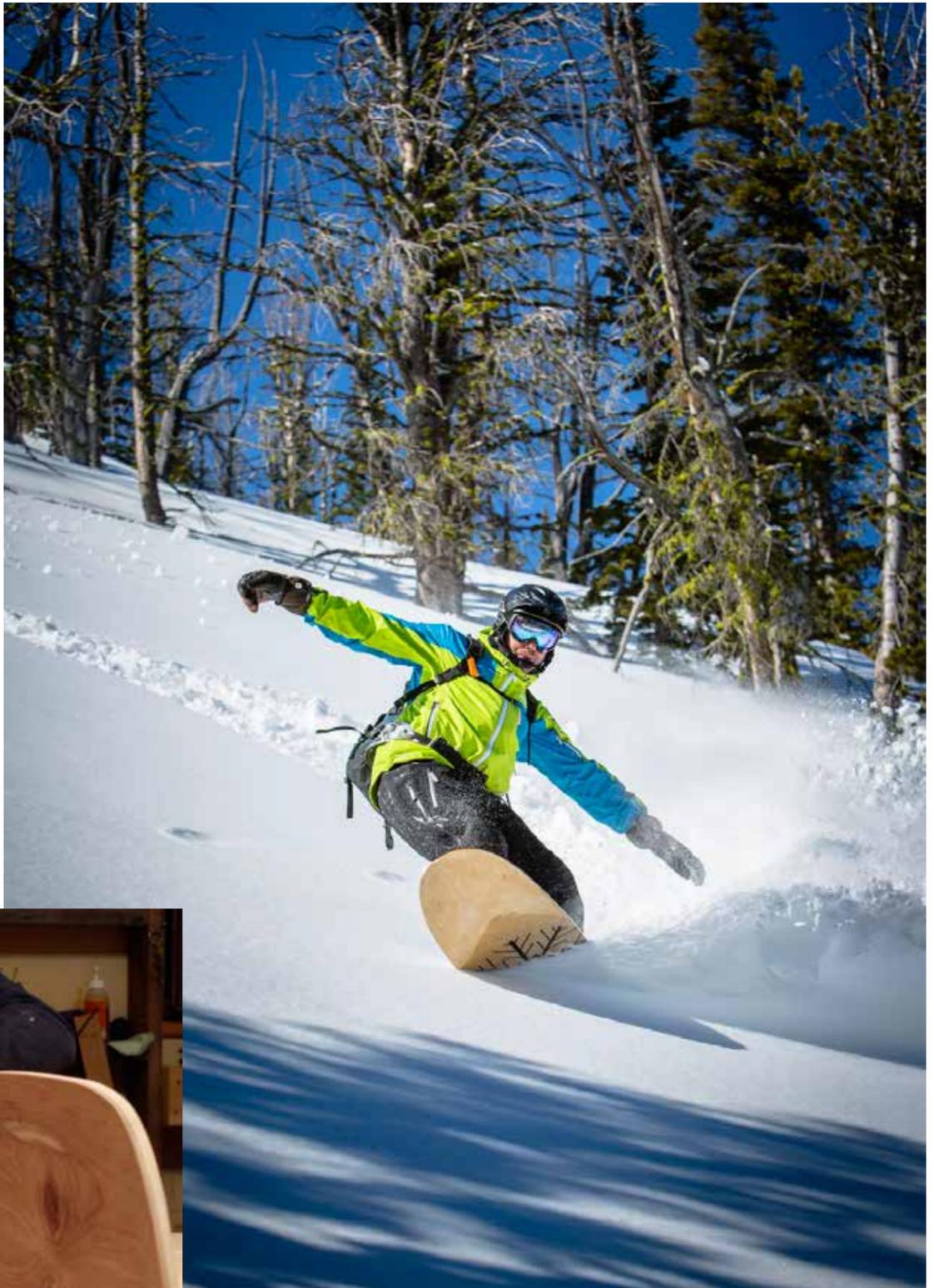
"It dawned on me that it was a perfect idea to carry one in the backcountry all the time," Tollefson said. "Even if you're just out snowmobiling, it's fun to mix it up and shred some turns."

An accomplished woodworker – the family business Tollefson Builders does everything from cabinetry to homebuilding, trim work to timber framing – Tollefson studied surfboard shapes, other powder surfers and even ski designs before making his first fish.

"I got pretty interested in the surf aspect of it, the soul of a fall line," he says.

The fishes have traction pads and a leash like a surfboard, but that's it – no straps, just you, the dungul, the board and the mountain.

It's the simplicity of it that draws Joey Weamer, a Bozeman-based ski rep for 4FRNT, Strafe and Bern, among others.



Riding a swell in the Montana backcountry. PHOTO BY DAN ARMSTRONG



Tollefson studied surfboard shapes, other powder surfers and even ski designs before making his first Dungul Fish. PHOTO BY EMILY WOLFE

"It's all about not being serious," Weamer said. "I spend so much time talking about tech. You know how much time it takes to talk about pow surfing? Two minutes. Simplicity: no bindings, no boots, no straps, no strings."

But powder surfing is entirely conditions dependent, Tollefson says, calling it fickle. "If it's not pow – and I wouldn't want to be there anyways – it doesn't work."

Weamer points out the obvious analogy to surfing waves: "There isn't always swell. You can't always go surfing unless there's waves."

These two are part of a growing cadre. Search it on YouTube, and you'll find pro skiers Pep Fugas and Kye Peterson riding powder surfers. "A lot of guys, if [they're] on a long road trip and run

into a storm, just pull over and go get a pow surf lap in," Weamer said.

Because they have more of a directional shape like a gun-shaped surfboard, Tollefson says his boards are made for going bigger and faster.

So far he has made four different shapes – a 154 cm, a 156 cm split fish (like a split snowboard) and a 167 cm, as well as a Soul Fish, which has a pointier, wider nose, a narrow stern, and a pronounced, flared swallow tail.

Tollefson glues and presses layers of wood together with epoxy and vices; shapes them with a planer and a router; sands the cedar, alder, cherry or mahogany top sheets; and creates the custom artwork on the top sheet and bases, all by hand.

"No machine makes these things, so it ends up slightly different every time," he said. "That's part of the soul, which is the root of these things. It's about the love and the pow."

Contact Dungul Fish online at [facebook.com/dungulfish](https://www.facebook.com/dungulfish) to learn more or demo a board.

Local rider Q&A

Galen Bridgewater

BY KELSEY DZINTARS
EXPLORE BIG SKY STAFF WRITER

Galen Bridgewater is a ripping local snowboarder with a boundless love for the sport, as well as the creativity and community that comes with it. Originally from Warren, Vt., Bridgewater drove to Bozeman eight years ago to check out the terrain southwest Montana had to offer.

She bought a pass to Moonlight and never looked back. Now she's traveling to freeride competitions around the country and looking to push herself and the sport to the next level.

Age: 25
Hometown: Warren, Vermont
Board: Never Summer SL
Stance: Goofy

What do you like about snowboarding at Big Sky?
I like the community that Big Sky provides, and the love here for the sport. I love the steepness of the mountain and being able to get away to your own area. There are people here of all different types that mold together through this freedom and creativity.

At Moonlight I knew all the ski instructors, kids and employees – it's a whole separate family, a wealth of life – getting to know people through an active lifestyle. It's spiritual. It's not about who's the best, it's about the love for yourself and other people.

Where's your favorite place to ride?
I like the Headwaters [and] the Ridge at Bridger.

Favorite line?
Jack to Rock Creek in the Headwaters.

You just started doing some freeride competitions?
Yes, mainly to travel, meet new people and make connections in the industry and at other ski areas. The competitions are important to push women's snowboarding, and I see more women in every comp I go to.

What has been your favorite spot to travel to?
Taos, New Mexico. Taos has similar terrain to Montana – steep trees. Right when we pulled in the parking lot, employees were super cool and friendly. It's a fresh and accepting feeling that makes you want to be on a mountain.



Galen Bridgewater with the Headwater cirque at Moonlight Basin in the background PHOTO BY TYLER BUSBY



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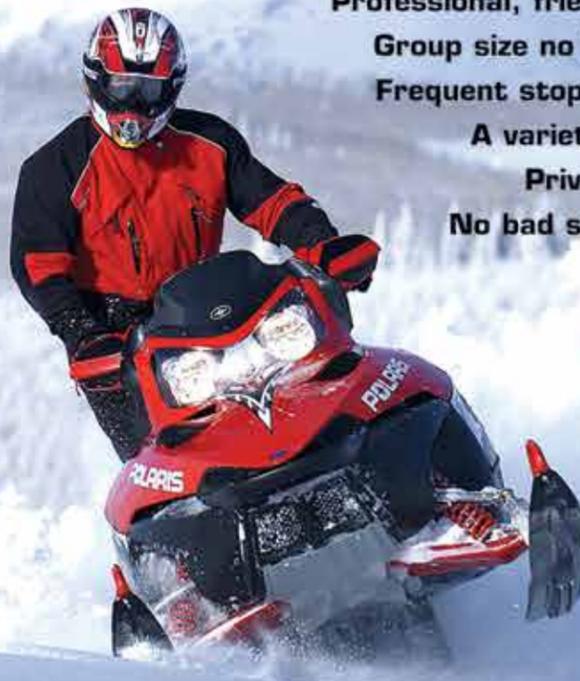
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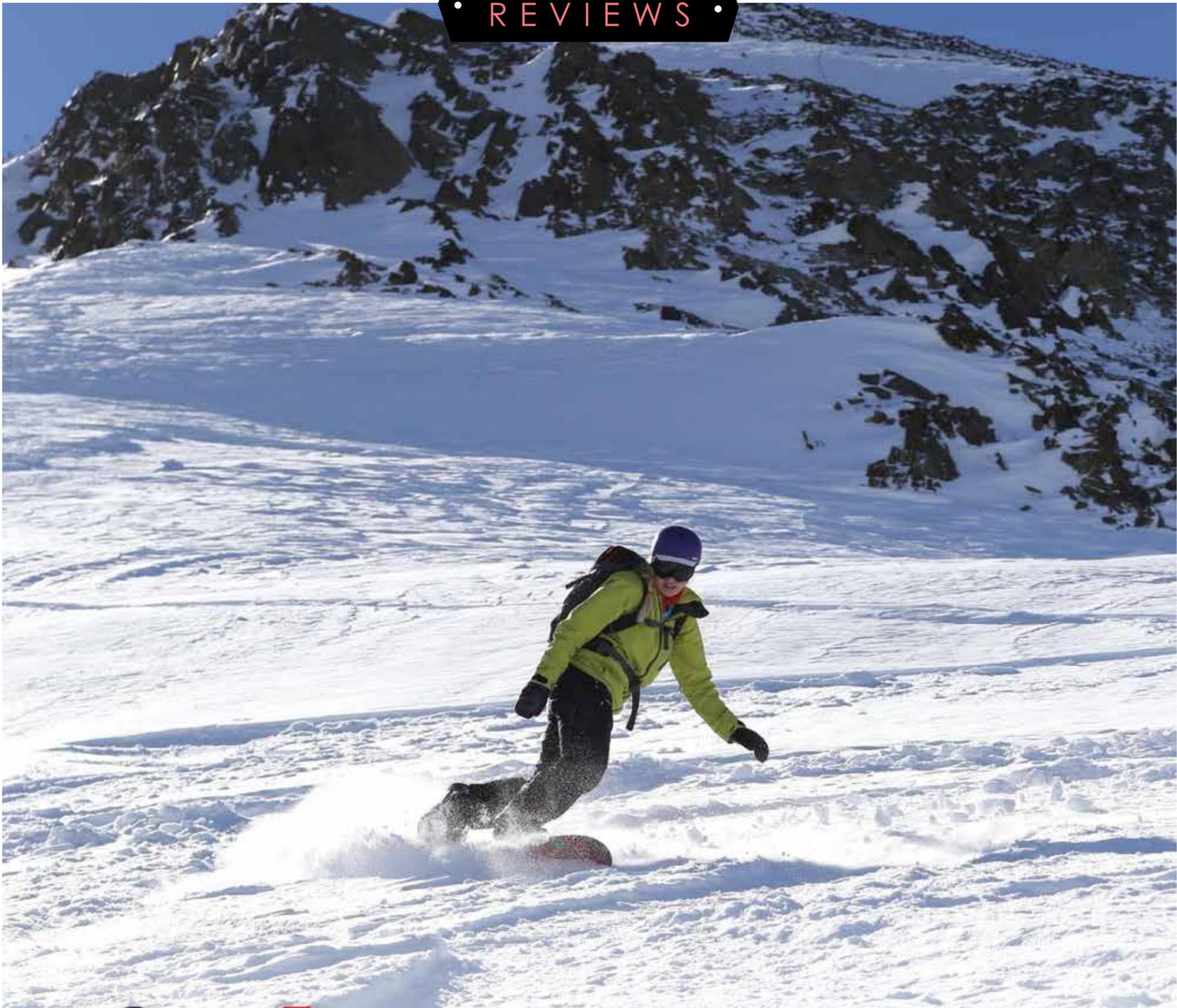
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Burton Custom X: Kicking ass for a decade

BY KELSEY DZINTARS

From trees to tram, Burton's Custom X charges, as it has since 2004 when it first hit shops.

Stiff, light and aggressive, this legendary all-mountain freeride model lets you fly, while its classic camber gives it pop – be ready when you hit the rolling groomers riding toward Six Shooter.

I was pleasantly surprised by the super-lightweight Dragonfly Core, Burton's nicest wood core made of over 500 independent laminations. This was my first experience with the company's Squeeze Box core profile technology, which has thinner sections underfoot to increase flex and maneuverability, and thicker core sections outside the foot that enhance foot control and stability. These thicker areas also boost acceleration in and out of turns, making speedy carving even more fun.

While blasting through crud and pow, traditional camber makes keeping the nose up a little tougher compared to hybrid-camber models. But otherwise, I found it handled like a beast on all terrain. I'd recommend the Custom X to intermediate and advanced riders who like big turns and high speeds.

**Shout out to Big Sky Ski Repair for baking this board in their hotbox for the ultimate ride.*

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Everyday

A Notice snowboard review

BY JOE PAULET
EXPLORE BIG SKY STAFF WRITER

I've been snowboarding for 19 years and have seen boutique snowboard companies come and go, boasting of innovation and improvement on the tried and tested. Notice Snowboards, out of Whitefish, is different.

Instead of relying on overhyped ads and the "next big thing," they've made a great board in the 158 Everyday, and let it do the talking. I first noticed the blunt tip and tail, sidewall construction and traditional camber - cornerstones of good board design in my book. It was fairly lightweight, yet didn't feel flimsy.

On my first run, I was impressed by the edge hold thanks to the slightly wavy, four-stage rail pattern. After a few more, I started getting acclimated to the new deck and began to open it up.

Rocketing past my skier buddy, I realized the true nature of this board: stability. The harder I pushed it, the more responsive it

felt. I was comfortable taking it through trees and bumps, and pushing it down the fall line.

The Everyday is wider than average (great for me with a size 12 boot), but this doesn't compromise overall speed or control. I found it to be a blend of trusted features and modern construction, consisting of American-made materials.

This board is one of the company's classic designs, but Notice can make you a completely customized ride - triaxial woven fiberglass, wood-core sandwich construction, carbon fiber, camber, edges and rails, top sheet - you name it, you got it. There's no special one-off binding mounts, no hologram topsheet; just a great design and solid, handmade construction.

Go to Whitefish and visit Brittan Ellingson, founder and shaper at Notice Snowboards, and when you see him, tell him he's doing a great job.

prices vary by custom options
noticesnowboards.com

JP is in the house. PHOTO BY JOSEPH T. O'CONNOR

Venture Skyler Special

Shape

BY E-MO

Snowboards, like the souls that ride them, are shaped by their mountain surroundings. So it's no wonder the Shape Shack and Venture Snowboards took root in Colorado's wild and rugged San Juan Mountains. Based out of Silverton and led by Venture's head shaper Klemens Branner, also one of the company's owners, the Shape Shack is the experimental arm of this boutique big mountain brand.

The Shape Shack's philosophy is simple: With infinite ways to ride the mountain, there are just as many shapes to do it on. Here new ideas are tested by their team as well as guest shapers including snowboard legend Johan Olofsson. The result? Progression.

Limited edition decks are available to the public, and some of the innovations have made their way into production.



EMo riding Lizard Control, a line off Lone Mountain. PHOTO BY CHANCE LENAY

For their latest batch of shred-tacular shapes, Venture teamed up with Silverton Guides and backcountry badass Skyler Holgate, of SASS Global Tours, to make the Skyler Special. It is the perfect fusion of surf/skate style that also suits the steeps.

found in the 160 plenty of board to help me stand and deliver. All of this combined with the sturdy construction and proven durability Venture is known for should put this board on the radar of any serious freestyle rider looking to bring their game to the peaks.

\$595 venturesnowboards.com



I found this twin to be playful and nimble in tight quarters and on natural terrain features. With a poplar/ash core and triaxial fiberglass construction, it has plenty of pop and a lighter, more balanced spin-weight than similar, older model Venture boards. Airds and tricks come with ease.

Don't let the shape fool you, however. At speed and in the steep, variable terrain of Lone Mountain, I still


 SNOWBOARD
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Burton Day Trader, Custom Flying V

BY RACHEL ANDERSON

Big mountain riding requires a big mountain board, and in the women's specific market that can be a challenge.

The Day Trader is a directional freeride snowboard. With a flat-top camber and rocker in the tail and the tip, it provides a relatively stable ride.

The medium flex of this board allowed me to pop off of natural features easily while maneuvering through powder seamlessly. After spending time in the trees, I hit some fast groomers, and it kept up speed.

Available sizes for the Day Trader are limited to 145 or 150, with no wide sizes offered. As an advanced snowboarder and a taller woman, I've experienced a lack of diversity in sizes when it comes to women's specific boards. Burton's biggest women's board is a 155.

This board is a perfect fit for an intermediate to advanced shorter female rider who wants to slash through deep snow.

In my seven years of riding Lone Mountain, I've come to prefer men's snowboards, which tend to offer more of a variety in size, stiffness and overall personal preference of choices.

After demoing the Day Trader, I took out a 156 Burton Custom Flying V, a men's board. With the blend of rocker and camber, it performed well in powder, and turning was clean and effortless.

Very playful, this all-mountain board held its own on any type of mountain terrain, whether in the park or on the peak. Suitable for both genders, this board is designed for intermediate to advanced riders.

SNOWBOARD
REVIEWS



K2 Ultra Dream

BY TYLER BUSBY

With aggressive yet playful characteristics, this board is what dreams are made of, or maybe just the board you want to make those dream-like lines on.

K2's revolutionary Tweekend rocker gives the Ultra Dream added stability and float in deep snow by extending the rocker profile from its All-Terrain Baseline inserts to the very ends of the board, providing an increased rideable surface you can feel. The skate-inspired Bambooyah wood core gives the Ultra Dream great pop and amazing strength.

On top of that, a five-year warranty against core breakage is a confidence boost in all riding conditions. The all-new BC Shaping sets this board apart from the crowd, adding greater control and stability for when things get steep and deep.

K2 describes the Ultra Dream as "the all-terrain, all everything dream machine," and they couldn't be more spot on.

\$550 k2snowboarding.com