

Racing stripes

Völkl Racetiger, \$1,900

Developed from the skis worn by those fearless World Cup racers in tight lycra suits, Völkl's Racetiger brings the thrill of the Giant Slalom to expert skiers with a hankering for speed. The GS Titanium Racetiger offers ultimate control and the fastest way to the bottom of the piste thanks to its XTD Wood Core technology that incorporates independent wood cores down each side of the ski for precise edge grip and stability at speed. Throw in some titanium for strength and rigidity and you'll be skiing like you're on rails.

www.gravitysports.co.nz



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Skinny fats/fat skinny

The Kingswood 170 Skinny, \$1,250

Six-year-old Kingswood Skis is New Zealand's only ski manufacturer, custom-making from a former ships chandlery in Lyttleton (five minutes from home, 90 minutes from the ski fields). The world's first carbon-neutral ski manufacturer, they sponsor ridesharing website snowpool.org.nz, support local energy initiatives and use locally sourced materials wherever possible (around the sustainable solid bamboo cores from China).

www.kingswood.com



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DESIGN A NEW GRAPHIC AND WIN A FREE PAIR OF SKIS. KINGSWOOD SKIS, IS CALLING ON SKIERS TO HELP DESIGN A NEW GRAPHIC FOR THE COMPANY'S HAND-MADE SKIS. THE TOP DESIGN WILL GO INTO PRODUCTION THIS YEAR AND THE DESIGNER WILL RECEIVE A FREE PAIR OF KINGSWOOD SKIS (WORTH \$1295) FEATURING THE NEW DESIGN. GO TO WWW.KINGSWOOD.COM TO DOWNLOAD DETAILS. ENTRIES CLOSE AUGUST 26 2008.

GEAR NOTES
Share a ride to the snow with www.skipool.org.nz



Q&A with Alex Herbert, ski designer

How does a New Zealand company get the edge over the global giants in the ski business?

We were really frustrated that the best wide off-piste skis just weren't readily available: the big companies were giving prototypes to pros and top athletes, but not in New Zealand, only in Europe or North America. So I thought if I can't buy them I will make them myself. I made the first few pairs out of local plastics, with steel edges from my repair shop cast-offs, then tested them. I am completely ski-obsessed so I wasn't happy with overseas

gear, which seemed to be all about technical development to make them cheaper, not better. I wanted to make them affordable for people who are passionate about skiing. They don't have a lot of money because they spend too much time skiing.

So how can skis be carbon neutral?

The base material is Chinese bamboo. We experimented first with bamboo flooring, and when we did our research we discovered it is one of the most sustainable materials, readily available, fantastic to work with. The glues are

made in Auckland. We figure, if skiers aren't motivated to do something about climate change, who is? We'd like the snow to stick around.

You sell to skiers around the world, how do you market?

Our skis go to Japan, Afghanistan, Europe, America. Right at the beginning we couldn't keep up with demand [Alex makes up to five pairs a week at the peak of the season]. We sell direct from our web-site, plus keen skiers are a community, so they tell each other.