

Gearing up

Much of this year’s winter gear incorporates familiar technology in an innovative way: inflatable bladders that help you float on snow or stay warm, and heaters that help you see better or stay on the slopes longer. Here are some of our top picks for the season.

BY KARI BODNARCHUK | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT



SCOTT SULLIVAN

Goggles that offer clear views

Forget defogging solutions, lens coatings, or mini fans to keep your goggles clear. Oregon-based Abominable Labs has released the new **Abom goggle**, which has built-in technology that can clear your goggles in less than 30 seconds and keep them defogged all day. The ingenious goggles have a transparent heat-conductive film that’s sandwiched between two polycarbonate lenses. Push the glove-friendly button and heat gets transmitted into that thin layer, defogging your goggles much like a car’s defroster. In on-demand mode, the heat stays on for 10 minutes before switching off. In active mode, the heat stays on all day, and a quick tap on the button adds an extra burst of heat. Recharge the goggles by micro USB. \$249.99. 844-246-2266, www.abom.com



IAN COBLE

Digital device for Nordic skis

Madshus, the Norwegian Nordic ski maker, now embeds a digital chip into its higher-end skis that helps match you to the right ski based on your biometric profile and abilities, and the skis’ internal properties. Each ski has an Empower chip that tracks how that ski was made, and records its flex profile and other characteristics. Head to a retailer that can read the embedded technology — like the Ski Rack in Burlington, Vt., or Boulder Nordic Sport in Portland, Maine — and provide your height, weight, and skill level. Then find out which skis in stock will best suit you. The technology appears in classic and skate skis for week-end warriors to serious competitors: Check out the Hypersonic, Nanosonic, and Redline series. The Madshus app helps you determine how to wax your skis, and also tracks your workouts. \$475-\$760. 800-426-1617, www.madshus.com

Boots with built-in heaters

Cold toes can make a great ski day go downhill fast. Salomon’s new **Quest Access Custom Heat boots** have built-in heaters that keep your toes toasty while skiing. The women’s boot, geared to beginner to intermediate skiers, have a Therm-iC boot heater battery pack integrated into the liner, and an easy-to-access temperature selector that can be adjusted to three different heat settings. The boots also come with a partially moldable liner, Salomon’s Ride and Hike easy-walk mode, and a flex index of 80. \$600. 800-875-2619, www.salomon.com



Pump up your jacket for warmth

NuDown’s clever new vests and jackets use a unique system for keeping you warm: a layer of compressible air chambers. Use the built-in, palm-size hand pump to inflate the chambers — filling the space between your body and the jacket — and keep you warmer. Or deflate the chambers to encourage air flow and cool you down. The stylish line includes the Mount Whitney vest and Squaw Peak soft-shell jacket, which incorporate the air chamber imprint into the design, and the Mount Tallac hard-shell jacket. They all have taped seams and built-in Recco technology, while the two jackets have removable helmet-compatible hoods and pit zips. Available in men’s and women’s versions. \$450-\$800. 775-297-4666, www.nudown.com



Lightweight lid protects your head

Heading for the icefalls and steep walls of North Conway and beyond? Bring **Petzl’s latest version of the Meteor climbing helmet**, geared to climbers and mountaineers. The 7.8-ounce helmet now comes in two sizes to accommodate smaller heads (the previous model was available in one size, and suited to larger heads): Choose from the 48-56cm or the 53-61cm version. The helmet has large well-placed vents to keep air circulating, a comfortable foam lining, and Petzl’s new magnetic buckle system, which lets you attach the chin strap with one hand. \$99.95 at REI. 801-926-1500, www.petzl.com



Bagging it

Thule’s new ski and snowboard bags protect your precious gear during travel. The RoundTrip comes in multiple versions that can hold one or two skis or snowboards. Each bag has thick padding, a waterproof tarpaulin interior, and a padded sleeve that fits over the tips and tails of your skis or snowboards for protection. It also has a large internal zippered mesh pocket, and internal and external compression straps to keep gear in place. The exterior is made with a heavy nylon and heavy-duty waterproof polyester with a laminate coating. Wheels, a removable shoulder strap, and grab handles make it easy to transport the packed bags, and the zipper can accommodate a lock (sold separately). The respective bags fit skis up to 195cm and snowboards up to 170cm. \$99.95-\$239.95. 800-238-2388, www.thule.com



Inflatable snowshoes for fun or emergency

Take **Yukon Charlie’s Airlift inflatable snowshoes** into the backcountry and use them to access snow stashes (great for snowboarders), in case of a gear emergency such as a broken ski or binding, or for exploration when the snow gets too deep for walking. Or keep them in your car or snowmobile, just in case. These durable snowshoes weigh just 2¼ pounds per pair and have an inflatable PVC bladder with a 1,000-denier nylon cover and aluminum crampons that can survive off-trail adventures. They have easy-adjust bindings that fit women’s size 5 to men’s size 14 shoes, and support people weighing up to 225 pounds. Use the included hand pump or a CO2 cartridge to inflate the snowshoes. \$179.99. 866-766-7463, www.yukoncharlies.com



Gear lets little skiers learn faster

Last year, **Elan** incorporated its U-Flex technology into its kids’ gear, making its entire line of non-race skis and boots 25 percent more flexible. The result: Budding skiers can make smoother turns with less effort, and therefore have more fun as they learn. The softer and more flexible plastic of the Ezzy and Bloom boots work in harmony with Elan’s U-Flex line of skis, enabling kids to better control their gear and roll up on their edges even when making some of their first turns. This year, Elan has extended the U-Flex technology to its 105, 110, 115, and 120cm skis, making it accessible to taller kids just getting into the sport. Boots range from 16.5 to 22.5; skis come in lengths from 70cm to 120cm. Skis \$275-\$325; boots \$150-\$160. 800-425-7462, www.elanskis.com



High-tech board, old-school look

The retro-looking **Japow** sports a big nose, back-seat stance, and swallowtail shape, meaning it is the snowboarder’s version of the pow-pow ski and built to float. The board, made by Colorado-based Weston Snowboards, has a core made of paulownia, bamboo, and poplar, carbon and fiberglass to add stiffness, and a rosewood veneer top sheet. It has rockered tips and a slight camber in the middle, meaning it still knows how to carve, but this board lives for big dumps and trips to powder country. Sizes: 159cm and 169cm. \$899. 970-827-4060, www.westonsnowboards.com

Poles that adjust to conditions

Leki’s new **BlueBird Vario Trigger S poles** let you quickly adjust pole length to suit changing conditions and terrain. Adjust the length of the poles between 110cm and 140cm using the quick-release Speed Lock 2 system. The poles have an aluminum upper shaft and a carbon lower shaft, and the Trigger S quick-release strap system, a great feature for hopping on and off the chairlift or for when you need to make quick adjustments in the backcountry. The poles come with two sets of baskets. \$149.95. 800-255-9982, www.leki.com

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