

The gear to get

By Kari Bodnarchuk
GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Much of this season's snow sports gear pushes boundaries and sets new norms. You'll find some of the lightest-ever skis, boots, and bindings, full snowboard setups for the youngest-ever riders, and standard winter accessories that offer surprising twists. Here are some of our favorite picks for the upcoming season.

Let your toddler take on snowboarding

Watch your toddler surf down the stairs on cardboard, or descend snowy hills on random plastic objects — just like we did. Or get your budding rider snowboard boots that look as small as Christmas tree ornaments and a snowboard not much wider than a lunch tray. New this year, Burton offers a super comfy Grom Boot that comes with 3M Thinsulate insulation and fits children with feet as small as 7C and 8C (the smallest boots in the industry), and the compatible XS Grom binding, which comes with fun googly eyes and, more important, a wide buckle that's easy to adjust with little mitten-covered hands. Use those with the existing and ever-popular 80cm Chicklet (girls') or Chopper (boys') board. Nine New England resorts, including Jiminy Peak, Attitash, and Mount Snow, will carry Burton's new and smallest 70cm board this season. (Keep an eye out for this board in retail stores next year.) The flexible and forgiving board has upturned catch-free edges that will make learning even more fun. Attach the redesigned Riglet Reel tow cable to any of the small boards so you can pull your rider around for good practice. Boot, \$89.95; bindings \$79.95; 80cm board, \$179.95. 800-881-3138, www.burton.com.

Wear your phone on your winter outing

If you have ever fumbled with your cellphone while on a chairlift, left it behind at an après-ski bar, or tucked it into a pocket while skiing and missed an important call, then you will instantly recognize the benefit of this ingenious piece of winter gear. The Peepsnake Smartphone Scarf has a zippered pocket with a see-through window on one end of the scarf that fits your phone, even in its case, so you have easy access to it during your snowy adventures. Answer incoming calls, send a text, snap a photo, and navigate your phone's touchscreen without taking the device out of its protective pocket. The scarf has another small pocket on the other end for holding your hotel key and some cash. The Premium scarf, made with thick Polartec Wind Pro fleece, has a pocket that fits smaller phones, while micro 250 fleece Plush scarf fits larger phones, such as the iPhone 6 and Samsung Galaxy S5. \$39.95-\$49. 404-248-2991, www.peepsnake.com

Rad gear with Sox graphics

What's not to love about RAMP's skis and snowboards? The company makes all products by hand in Park City, Utah, uses non-toxic resins and certified bamboo for its cores, producing a thicker but smoother and more environmentally friendly ride (bamboo grows faster than other softer woods used), and has perfected a vacuum-molded process that lets the wood retain more of its integrity and perform better. Here's the best part, Fenway fans: You can get Boston Red Sox (or any MLB) graphics on your skis or board. RAMP offers the 90mm Woodpecker (men's) and Chickadee (women's) skis, and the all-mountain Tumbleweed board with MLB graphics, or you can custom order other models (with a wait). The playful, all-mountain skis can handle powder, groomers, and crud — perfect for New England slopes — and the Tumbleweed offers a stiff, poppy ride on mixed terrain. \$649 for Woodpecker/Chickadee, \$549 Tumbleweed through RAMP's website. 888-406-0567, www.rampsports.com



A Nordic adventure for you and your pooch

Take your dog on an adventure, or let your dog take you for a ride, with Ruffwear's Omnijore Joring System, a skijoring system for Nordic skiers and their energetic canines. Strap the sturdy, easy-to-use harness to your dog and attach the human harness around your waist and legs. Then clip the 8-foot-long towline between the two harnesses and let your pooch pull you through the snow as you follow behind on cross-country skis. It's not as crazy as it sounds. The towline has a section of forgiving bungee-like material that helps eliminate sudden jolts, and attaches to a quick-release buckle on your harness, so you can get out instantly if Fido decides to beeline for a squirrel. Your harness also has a handy water bottle holder and two zippered pockets. \$149.95. 888-783-3932, www.ruffwear.com

Pressure in all the right places

Opedix's three-quarter length Knee-Tec Tights (right) are built for athletes, from runners to skiers, and not only help reduce tired muscles and soreness, but also alleviate some of the pressure on your joints by keeping them better aligned. Reinforced panels in key places on the tights, such as around your knees, provide extra tension that helps hold everything in place and keeps your body moving efficiently. The idea: Maintaining good alignment and reducing muscle fatigue helps prevent injury. The thick tights, made of a breathable, moisture-wicking, mostly nylon material, provide a good layer of warmth under your ski or snowboard pants. The three-quarter length works great with ski boots, eliminating bulkiness. Available in men's and women's versions. \$225. 800-975-8233, www.opedix.com



This alpine touring setup can tackle any terrain

Hop on G3's new Synapse Carbon ultralightweight backcountry skis and you can float on powder, dig into hard pack, and tackle anything in between. Three full-carbon models range from 92mm to 109mm wide, but the 101mm offers great versatility for New England's varied weather and terrain. The stiff, responsive skis come with a rockered tip, early rise tail, and slight camber underfoot. Add G3's innovative new ION bindings for a ridiculously lightweight package — only about 4 pounds per ski (in combo with the 165cm skis). These bindings come with a spring-loaded pin system for clipping in the toe of your boot — just step in and the two toe wings clamp onto your compatible boots — and a step-in heel that secures your boot or else quickly rotates out of the way when it's time to skin up and climb (G3 makes the compatible Alpinist High Traction Climbing Skins). Skis \$869.95, \$529.95 bindings, skins \$153.95-179.95. 866-924-9048, www.genuineguidegear.com.

A lightweight backcountry boot

Scarpa's featherweight F1 Evo (below right) tips the scale at 2.3 pounds per boot (size 25), and has the most innovative hands-free system for switching between walk and ski modes. The boot, which comes in men's and women's versions, freely pivots from the ankle as you walk, giving you 62 degrees in range of motion. Step into a pin binding like the ION and your heel instantly locks into place and the boot becomes rigid, offering a comfortably secure fit for ripping up the slopes. The F1 Evo has a carbon shell, a moldable Intuition liner, a nonslip Vibram sole, and a combination of Boa and strap closures. The Boa closure on the lower section of the boot helps distribute pressure and eliminate hot spots that can develop with buckle systems. \$699. 303-998-2895, www.scarpa.com



Keep your gear feeling hot, hot, hot

Even when your boots have been hanging out in your house or condo all night, they can still cool off on the way to the mountain. Aspen-based Hot Gear Bags (above) makes a variety of easy-to-carry bags that have heaters for keeping your ski or snowboard gear dry and toasty until it's time to slip them on. Plug your bag into a wall socket or car outlet using the included adapters, and then set the temperature for 122 degrees to 150 degrees Fahrenheit. The bag has a passive venting system that helps eliminate moisture and odors from boots and clothes. It also has a heated foot pad that you can stand on while getting into your gear. The most popular Classic bag has 50 liters of space for gear, and handy external compartments for holding helmet, goggles, and other small items. The bag can be used as a carry-on item, and comes with backpack and shoulder straps. \$179. 970-404-2345, www.skigearbag.com



Soft shells that can handle tough conditions

Take Outdoor Research's new Trickshot jacket (above) on all your winter adventures, whether you're tearing up the backcountry on your AT gear, tackling in-bounds terrain on your snowboard, or being towed through open meadows on a skijoring adventure. The jacket, which comes in men's and women's versions, has a stretchy soft-shell fabric that offers good range of motion, and a comfortable fleece lining that provides extra warmth and moisture management. The Pertex Shield fabric, exclusive to Outdoor Research, keeps you completely dry when the wet snow starts flying, yet prevents you from overheating thanks to its great breathability. The CrossFlo vents between your armpits and chest boost air flow and also help regulate body temperature. The jacket comes with a zip-out powder skirt, a RECCO reflector, a slim zippered inner pocket for stashing lunch money, and a helmet-compatible hood. An added bonus: Inside the media chest pocket, you'll find a built-in chamois attached by bungee cord for easily wiping down your goggles. Complete your outfit with the Trickshot pants, which come in the same soft-shell outer fabric and inner fleece material, and have four thigh vents, and three zippered pockets. \$350 pants; \$425 jacket. 855-967-8197, www.outdoorresearch.com

Goggles that change with your lighting

Bolle's new Gravity Modulator snow goggles (left) have a polychromatic lens that automatically adjusts based on lighting conditions, so you don't have to swap out your goggles or lens as the weather shifts. The goggles come in two tints, including Modulator Vermilion Blue and a grayish-pink Modulator Light Control. Both work in all conditions, even on days that start sunny and then turn overcast, producing a flat light on the slopes. The antifog goggles have good ventilation and an antiscratch surface so they can withstand normal drops and tumbles. The head strap attaches to plastic "wings" that stand out from the main lens. Although this design feature makes the goggles look larger, it also makes them more comfortable when wearing them all day, taking some of the pressure off your face. The unisex goggles suit medium to larger heads. \$139.99. 800-222-6553, www.bolle.com

Kari Bodnarchuk can be reached at travelwriter@karib.us.