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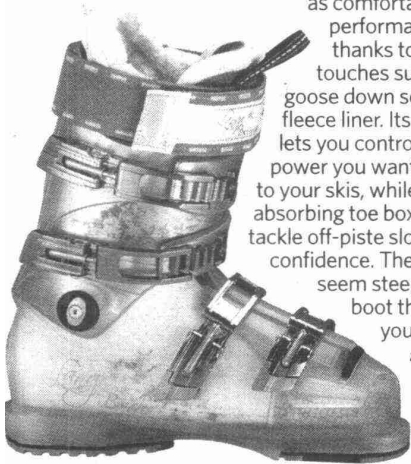
COLD FUSION

Pack more thrills into your next trip to the snow with the latest gadgets. By Mark Harris

LANGE BANSHEE BOOT

Don't let the fact that the Banshee boot has been a fixture on the World Cup and Super G circuits intimidate you.

This all-terrain boot for women skiers is as comfortable as it is performance-driven, thanks to luxury touches such as a goose down sole and polar fleece liner. Its long pattern lets you control how much power you want to deliver to your skis, while the shock-absorbing toe box lets you tackle off-piste slopes with confidence. The price may seem steep but it's a boot that will last you a long time.



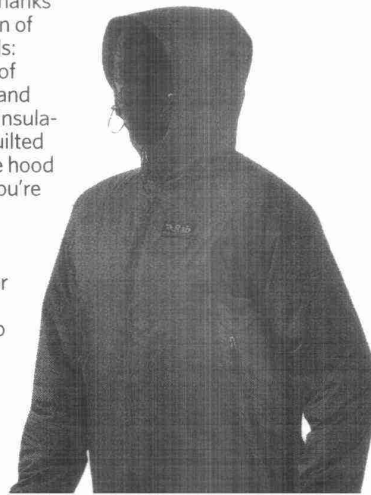
£280
07724 787
434;
langeski
boots.com

RAB PHOTON HOODIE

This new mid-layer top is both lighter and more wind-proof than traditional fleeces. That's thanks

to a combination of hi-tech materials: tough wind-proof Pertex outside; and cosy PrimaLoft insulation inside its quilted panels. Even the hood is insulated. If you're expecting bad weather, you'll want a water-proof outer layer - although PrimaLoft will keep you warm even when wet.

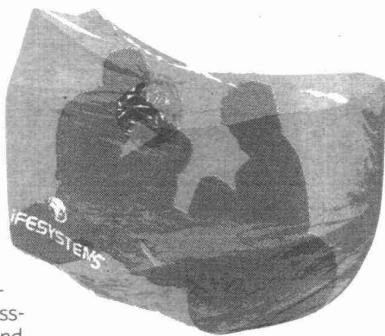
£100
01773 601
870; equip
uk.com



LIFE SYSTEMS 2-MAN BOTHY

Venture off-piste and you'll see that there's more to winter sports than a flood-lit slope and chairlift. Wilderness-bound cross-country skiers and snow-shoers could do worse than packing this tiny (10x10x16cm) survival shelter in their backpack. Designed to be water- and windproof, this ripstop nylon bothy provides instant protection from blizzards, with plenty of space for two people and their gear (larger versions are also available). It has reflective panels for visibility and packs down to a very portable 350g package.

£40
0118 981 1433; lifesystems.co.uk



SKI-MOJO

Skiing can take a real toll on your knees and thighs, so why not upgrade them with the latest in cybernetic ski-wear? The Ski-mojo fits inside your ski pants, storing energy as you bend your knees and releasing it again when you straighten your legs. The effect is to reduce strain on joints and muscles, smoothing your ride and improving traction. The British-engineered, 1.5kg gadget fits around your bottom, legs and ankles and does take a little getting used to. It's available in two sizes, for smaller and larger skiers.

£290
0114 248 4477; skiallday.co.uk



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DYNASTAR FERRARI FC08 SKIS

The piste has always been a favourite place for posing, but it's not often you see a Ferrari on the slopes. These motorsport-inspired skis are made from carbon fibre to reduce weight and increase resistance to shocks, and have precision bindings plated with titanium. A downside? Admirers are unlikely to notice the Ferrari logos as you barrel down a black run. Price includes a matching ski bag and poles.

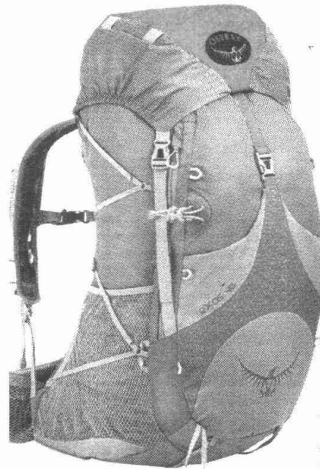
£1,750.
 07724 787 434;
 dynastar.com



If you stopped at Monte Carlo on the way to the slopes, you'll appreciate this entry-level snowboard. Its all-mountain design is forgiving in tricky conditions and speedy on groomed downhill slopes, with a directional shape for smoother, safer turns. The board is made from poplar and beech, with four layers of fibreglass for strength if you

decide to attempt some bigger hits. The Coast is available in 163cm or 166cm sizes.

£195
 0845 100 1000;
 snowand
 rock.com



OSPREY EXOS 46 PACK

If you're the kind of adventurer who saws the handles off their toothbrush, then you're likely to appreciate a metal-framed rucksack that weighs less than 1kg. Everything has been miniaturised and re-designed to save weight without sacrificing strength, so expect tiny buckles, thin compression straps and lots of light-weight webbing. Osprey's "Stow on the Go" system lets you store poles easily and the hip-belt and harness use Biostretch foam to combine comfort and ventilation. Perfect for the ultra-light traveller.

£130
 01202 572 775; ospreynacks.com

MOUNTAIN HARDWEAR RED SAVINA HEATED GLOVES

Cold hands can mean a miserable afternoon of huffing into gloves and fumbling with zips and buttons. These gloves are named after one of the world's hottest chilli peppers, boasting a triple-layer breathable insert, fleecy lining and integrated heating elements to keep your digits toasty. Lightweight rechargeable batteries provide up to six hours of warmth, regulated by an adjustable thermostat and a "flame" button that provides an instant surge of heat when it gets really chilly.

£200
 mountainhardwear.com



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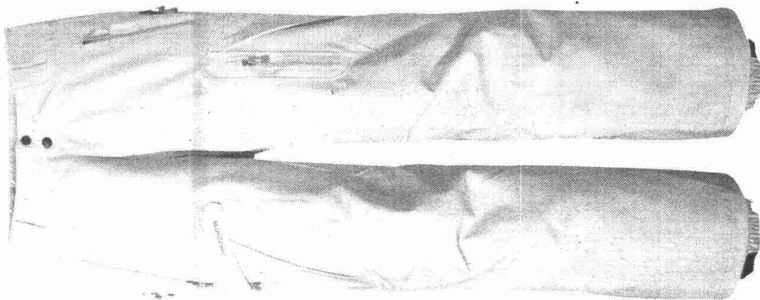
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PATAGONIA WOMEN'S POWDER BOWL PANTS

Not as stylish as some Patagonia gear but incredibly practical, these winter sports trousers have a breathable canvas shell with abrasion-resistant waterproofing and scuff guards (not that you would ever take a tumble, of course). You'll also be discovering hidden loops, zippers and pockets for weeks after buying them. With Patagonia's green reputation, it's no surprise the Powder Bowl pants are made from 100 per cent recycled polyester - just keep thinking of the planet as you fork out for trousers made from old drinks bottles.

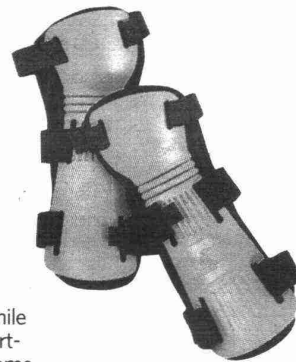
£220
020-7860 0100; patagonia.com



FLEXMETER WRIST GUARDS

Around a quarter of all snowboarding injuries involve the wrist and the majority of those are fractures. Novice snowboarders are particularly at risk, which makes these affordable double protection guards all the more sensible. Designed by a French trauma surgeon to allow mobility and protection, while remaining relatively comfortable to wear, Flexmeters come in a range of sizes - and are also suitable for off-road mountain biking come the spring.

£36
07920 488 521;
alpsgear.co.uk



NIKWAX TX DIRECT

When money's tight, it makes sense to look after the gear you've already got rather than splash out on expensive replacements. There's no reason why last season's jackets and fleeces can't keep protecting you against ice and snow. To keep technical fabrics such as Gore-Tex, eVent, Sympatex and microfibres working at their best, wash them in a waterproofing treatment such as TX Direct rather than normal detergent. It helps renew water repellence and maintain breathability, without changing the look or feel of your favourite winter wear.

£8
01892 786 400; nikwax.co.uk



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ZEGNA SOLAR SKI JACKET

Mobile phones are great on the slopes but sub-zero weather will quickly drain rechargeable batteries. Flip up the collar on this waterproof, breathable padded jacket to reveal solar panels that can charge up portable gadgets. The built-in solar cells feed power directly to phones, iPods or sat navs in a special internal pocket. The solar collar is fully waterproof and detaches, so you can leave it in a sunny car, for example. Although Zegna claims that an hour of sunshine will charge a phone for 35 minutes talk time, that sounds optimistic - it's probably more suited for keeping your mobile topped up for texts.

£1,000

zegna.com/solarski

