

The Anton Glider

A Carving Ski Revolution?



SNOWEAST ski testers at Windham Mountain, NY
L-R: Amy Rosmarin, Jay "Junior" Frischman, Morten Lund, Anton Wilson and Mitch Kaplan



Mitch has some poignant thoughts as he first inspects the "Glider"



The Anton Glider are not your father's skis

or... How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Become a A CARVING WHIZ!

By Mitch Kaplan

Photography by Gerry Pallor & SNOWEAST Staff

I gave in. What did I have to lose? A day of skiing at Windham Mountain? Some loss.

I bummed a ride to Windham with Mr. Publisher (hey, a writer's pay is meager enough, why incur expenses?), where he introduced me to the ski's inventor. His name? You guessed it: Anton. Anton Wilson. Anton expended more energy greeting me than I expend in a normal day. If his ski generated as much torque and energy in turns as he did, it would be something special.

We - myself, Mr. Publisher, writer Mort Lund, Anton and his assistant Jay "Junior" Frischman - gathered at the ski rack, where a collection of short skis awaited us. On top each wore standard bindings. But, these were mounted on a space-age looking blue metal deck with holes in its sides, from which flat, silver metal straps projected front and back, attaching to the skis' topfaces near tip and tail: the springs.

Hey, they did look like truck springs.

Anton adjusted my bindings, and we rode the lift. What, I asked, makes the Anton Glider different? The springs, of course. Plus, their short length, and the placement of the edges.

As Anton explains it, it's difficult to distribute pressure from tip to tail on a traditional ski (yes, even a shaped ski), and more difficult to achieve and maintain the acute edge angle needed to carve. A regular ski is made to bend only one way - up when you press down.

The Glider bends up and down. The springs provide constant, consistent pressure, front and back, up and down. The ski is, as Anton says, "pre-loaded," so even if your weight goes back or forward, the tips and tails stay on the snow. And, better, the fore and aft springs act independently, like a car's independent suspension, allowing continual snow contact and a smooth ride. A glide, if you will.

Now, add the short length and edge placement not outside the foot, like a standard ski, but under the boot, and suddenly you can achieve a carve with only slight angulation.

After explaining all this on the lift, Anton demonstrated on the snow: when he lifted his toe as high as he could

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I want you to try this ski. It's radically different," said this magazine's esteemed publisher.

I responded with skepticism.

Why? I've skied through at least three ski design revolutions: metal, box construction and, currently, shaped skis. And, ski makers have touted even minor design changes - hell, even graphics changes - as the breakthrough that would make me ski like Billy Kidd, Picabo Street and Bode Miller combined.

I'd have settled for being the best Mitch Kaplan skier I could be.

"So," I asked, "what's so special about these . . . whaddaya- call-ems?"

"Anton Gliders," said Mr. Publisher.

"And what makes them so special?"

"Springs."

"Springs? Like what? Bedsprings?"

"No, no, more like truck springs."

"Now you want me to ski on trucks? Like an eighteen-wheeler?"

"Jeez," Mr. Publisher wheezed, "just come and see what these skis can do."



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while leaning back, the ski tip remained on the snow; when he did this on a normal ski, you could twang the tip like a guitar string.

Yeah-But Does It Work?

Most theories sound good, in theory. But, only testing determines if a product actually works. So, downhill I went.

Anton produces a few models, and I began on the Advance 5.5, a ski designed for beginners. No, miracles did not happen. Indeed, I had to mentally throttle back and resist trying to crank the skis and my angulation to set the edge. Less was more.

However, after two runs on Windham's novice slopes, things fell into place. Skiing with weight equal on both skis, carve happened. I looked back and - hey! There lay two sharp, parallel tracks. Cool.

Next up, the GT, designed for more advanced skiers. Oddly, they seemed more sluggish than the beginner Advanced 5.5. What, I asked Anton, was up with that? Turned out I'm too light. The GT is wider and made for heavyweights who need a broader weight distribution.

Then, I clicked into the FS and headed to the mountaintop. Now, this ski induced a World Cup feeling. It carved, even on Windham's steepest, iciest trails.

Anton also makes an EX model, his most all-around, all-mountain ski.

"This is not a new, better ski," Anton said later. "This is a major breach with existing technology. Even the novice's Advance 5.5 has technology that applies equally well to high-performance racing and beginner-level skiing: it reduces chatter, adds stability, uses the whole length of the ski, and gives stability and confidence to first time skiers. It's not like we're adding training wheels. It's like what radial tires did for driving: they provided a major breakthrough in the way cars handled."

The Anton Glider, he was quick to point out, is not for off-piste or powder skiing. It makes skiing on hardpack and groomed slopes easier and more enjoyable. "The basic ski goes back to 2000 BC (or whenever!), and is based on soft snow conforming to the ski from tip to tail," Anton explained. "But, on a groomed surface, there is no soft snow to conform. So, the ski must conform to the snow. This ski conforms to the snow."

In creating the Glider, Anton wasn't initially aiming at racers or experts. He wanted two things. One, to allow perpetual intermediates to be able to readily carve turns like an expert. And, two (and more importantly), to allow never-ev-ers and beginners to have fun immediately.

To illustrate, he tells of a colleague's wife, Cathy. A middle-aged woman of minimal athletic ability, Cathy hated skiing, but went on ski vacations to be with her husband, an inveterate skier. One morning at Aspen's Buttermilk, Anton and Jay put Cathy on the FS model, gave her some instruction, and left her to explore on her own.

"I came upon her late in the afternoon," Anton related, "and she was still skiing. It was getting cold. It was getting dark. I asked her how she was doing. 'This is really fun,' she said, 'but let me tell you about it later - I want to make the last chair.'"

She had learned to enjoy skiing in just a day.



Mitch gets into "Gliding"

Anton Wilson, inventor and engineer, explains the technology that makes his skis work



And The Catch Is?

Anton will describe at length the physics and other technical mumbo-jumbo involved in making these skis work. I won't pretend to understand all that. I will witness that they do work. There's just one problem: they're expensive.

Currently, the handmade Limited Edition Carbon Series can be bought through the company Web site for \$3990. The Virtual Powder Series, standard production models, will cost half that, and should be available sometime during the upcoming season.

Few people will spend that kind of money for sports equipment. Fewer will spend it sight unseen. The good news is that Anton will be staging demo days at various resorts this winter. (See antongliders.com for the schedule.) And the price should continue to come down.

Novices and skiing dropouts can learn/re-learn on them at New York's Belleayre Mountain, where the ski school will offer a series of Glider introductory clinics. "This is a demo/teaching program that will allow people to try them and learn to ski," Anton said. "Or, if you've tried skiing but given up because it was too difficult, it was scary, or you made no progress, this will show you a different game. People who give it another try are guaranteed to have a new experience."

You really can feel like an accomplished skier after a few runs. As Anton says, "You don't have to be an expert. The expert is built into the ski."

I, for one, think he is on to something. ❄️



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