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PHOTO BY TODD NAWASHIMA

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Photography by Don Cudney

Attitude at Altitude

From left, Sam Warren, Annelise Loevlie, Ben Anderson and Travis Cook, all from Icelantic AT Boards



PHOTO BY TODD NAKASHIMA

New ski maker meant to change industry

By Cassie Clark

From his parent's Evergreen garage, Ben Anderson spent the winter of 2002/2003 working to reshape the sport of skiing.

He tested new materials, shapes and lengths. He broke and redesigned his foundation model of a shorter, wider, more versatile ski until he got what he wanted. He called the finished product the Scout.

By 2004, he had formed his own company, Icelantic AT Boards, and he was ready to show the ski in the desert in Las Vegas.

Anderson, 25, took the Scout to the 2004

Snowsports Industries America tradeshow, where he met Robin Cecil, U.S. representative for ISPO, which bills itself as the largest international tradeshow for sports hardware, footwear and apparel, and is held twice a year in Munich, Germany.

Cecil, who was based in Salt Lake City, convinced Anderson to apply for ISPO's annual BrandNew awards, given to young companies with the year's most innovative products. In 2005, the Scout was runner-up in the competition. Applying again in 2006, Anderson said, "We

thought we could win with the whole line."

Collaborating with a high-school buddy, Travis Cook, who has been put in charge of research and development for Icelantic, Anderson developed four designs: the Scout and the Nomad, for big-mountain and all-terrain riding; the Pilgrim, a terrain-park, slalom hybrid for icy conditions; and the powder-specific Shaman. They took them all to ISPO again in January and won the Brand New Thermolite Hardware Winter 2006 Award, beating out 171 companies from 25 countries.

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» NEW COLORADO SKI... CONTINUED


The company came home with 457 international and domestic orders for skis from five international distributors.

"We've had a 98 percent success rate once people get on the skis," says Anderson, whose company now has five employees including himself. That success has dictated the company's marketing focus on on-mountain demonstrations with on-hill representatives.

"The reason why they have picked up some interest is because they had an on-hill rep at Hoodoo this last year," said Svein Berg, of Berg's Ski Shop in Eugene, Ore., who has ordered the Shaman and Nomad for his store this season. "She did a great job of getting people curious about the product. They are fresh in this market."

While Anderson says the company is letting the skis speak for themselves, relying on their shape, size and graphics to spark interest, it also is buying full-page ads in *Backcountry*, *Freeskier* and *Powder* magazines. Icelantic skis are mentioned in several 2006 buyers' guides as well. Nine Colorado retailers are carrying Icelantic AT Boards this season: Exit 240 Ski & Bike and Mason De Ski in Idaho Springs; Bent Gate in Golden; The Butte Co. and the Slope in Crested Butte; Boulder Sports and Boulder Outdoor Center; Paragon Sports in Evergreen, and the ski shop at the Loveland Ski Area.

With the ski industry accounting for \$1.1 billion of tourist spending in Colorado, according to a 2003 ski-area economic impact study, Icelantic has a good shot at success.

"Our skis really appeal to beginner and intermediate skiers because of their lengths," says Anderson, "and advanced skiers like them because of their maneuverability." Icelantic AT Boards are also available in 30 stores nationally as well as shops in Canada, France, Italy, Russia and Norway. As most of this winter's orders were simply sample sales, one or two pairs of one model or another, Anderson is hoping to boost total sales to 2,000 pairs for the 07/08 season. 

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