

# ELAN MAGAZINE

NO.9  
WINTER 2023/24

*Always Good Times*



**W STUDIO**  
20 YEARS OF DEVOTION

**GLEN PLAKE**  
ALMOST FRENCHMAN

**PRIMETIME**  
CARVE OUT A GOOD TIME

**PLAYMAKER**  
MOUNTAIN AS A PLAYGROUND

**RYAN REGEZ**  
TIME ON HIS SIDE

**LEON KOROŠEC**  
INTERVIEW

**JAPOW**  
POWDER OF HOKKAIDO

**INGEMAR STENMARK**  
COLUMN



NEW  
ON-PISTE SERIES

ELAN PRIMETIME SERIES

# Carve out a good time with Primetime!

New revolutionary technology for people who  
want to ski better. Less effort, more carving.



ELANSports.COM/PRIMETIME

**elan**™  
*Always Good Times*





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ELAN MAGAZINE  
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PUBLISHER  
Elan, d. o. o.  
Begunje 1  
4275  
Begunje na Gorenjskem  
www.elanskis.com

EDITOR IN CHIEF  
Gregor Šket

AUTHORS  
Ben Fresco  
David Primožič  
Eetu Tourunen  
Gregor Šket  
Ingemar Stenmark  
Klarisa Veselič  
Lara Kamnik  
Martin Tekše  
Rebeka Lah  
Siggi Bjarni Sveinsson

TRANSLATION  
Trans Linguis d.o.o.  
www.trans-linguis.si

PROOFREADING  
Neil Morley

PHOTOS  
Alex Štokelj  
Bor Dobrin  
Elan Media  
Glen Plake Archive  
Jernej Leskovar  
Lara Kamnik  
Lea Bouard Archive  
Olivier Gough  
Rožle Bregar  
Samo Vidic  
Toni Konrad  
Uroš Polajžer  
Istock Photo

GRAPHIC DESIGN  
Kristina Simčič  
Elan, d. o. o.  
www.elanskis.com

PRINT  
TISKARNA KNJIGOVEZNICA  
RADOVLJICA d. o. o.  
www.tkr.si

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COVER PHOTO  
Samo Vidic



PRIDE

Skiing and outdoor activities are an important part of life, culture, tradition, and education in the environment where Elan is from. That is my story as well. I come from a nearby town with glorious views of the most beautiful Slovenian peaks. I could say Elan is my neighbor, friend, and inspiration. Alongside the euphoric stories that surrounded Elan over the years, my personal connection to Elan is also characterized by the fact that my mother both began and ended her professional career here. This is probably why my destiny has also been to follow in her footsteps. I can hardly believe that it has been twenty years since my first day. This is not a job in the classic sense of the word, where you get to the office at eight in the morning, switch off the computer at four in the afternoon and forget about everything until the next morning. This is a lifestyle. It is pleasure, inspiration, and pride. It is working with intriguing individuals who harness their expertise to generate solutions that consistently inspire the world with extraordinary ideas and inventions. We have developed genuine bonds of friendship and we intuitively dedicate moments of our lives to the well-being of the brand we love, even in our free time. It is a job that comes with a beautiful view out of the window and when you open it, the office is flooded with fresh air. In our work we always think of others and the environment around us. A beautiful natural environment surrounds our office building and factory, and we are dedicated to caring for it, protecting it and ensuring that those who will one day walk in our footsteps continue to enjoy its gifts.

Elan's people have always been tenacious, hardworking, dedicated, resourceful and full of ideas... That's why we make the best skis in the world. Every year when our eyes see skis from the new collection, our love and passion for skiing is reignited and this sentiment is shared by ski enthusiasts worldwide. We are fans of our athletes, of those who are just learning to ski, and of those who simply enjoy the most beautiful and unforgettable moments of this sport.

Our team is made up of world-changing innovators in the skiing realm, including the greatest skier of all time, numerous Olympic and World Champions, and an extensive community of ski and nature enthusiasts that is too vast to count. Being part of a team like this is a very special thing. We are active co-creators of unforgettable and beautiful moments, and that is deeply rewarding. That is why a job at Elan is much more than just a job. It is a source of pleasure and pride.

REBEKA LAH,  
Brand Deployment & Elan Alpine Ski Museum Manager



### MODERNIZATION OF SKI PRODUCTION



In recent years Elan has invested heavily in modernizing its production lines with the aim of further increasing product quality and safety at work, as well as introducing sustainable and environmentally friendly approaches, creating better working conditions, and employing new people. Although robotics and digitalization are being introduced into the production lines, people with their unique experience and manual skills remain an essential and indispensable component of many jobs. The modernization of production processes and improvement of working conditions will continue in the future to enable Elan to retain its position as the world's top ski manufacturer.

### ELAN AMBASSADORS IN THE SWISS ALPS



For the second year running, Elan organized a meeting for its ambassadors to test equipment, take plenty of photos, provide valuable feedback, and enjoy unforgettable moments while skiing in the mountains. This year's event took place in the beautiful ski resort of Bettmeralp in Switzerland and hosted nine athletes from the USA, Slovenia, France, Slovakia, Austria and Italy. The unique group was made up of athletes with different skills and abilities, which made the event even more exciting as the ski friends exchanged views and collaborated in various workshops. Our female ambassadors also took part in a special project to celebrate the 20th anniversary of W Studio. Thank you to Lea Bouard, Rilley Revallier, Martina Michalová, Hannah Köck, Maël Ollivier, Bode Barrett, May Štirn, Simon Hitti and Marco Tomasi. There is no better feeling than sharing time in the mountains with people who love what they do.

### 100% RENEWABLE ENERGY



At Elan we design, develop and manufacture premium products for a healthy and active lifestyle. When we develop new, innovative products, we always ask ourselves: How much energy will it take to create a new product? For those who set the trends in industrial production, the choice of energy and its source is one of the foremost strategic considerations. Elan's path to future victories will be powered by renewable energy, and part of our electricity will be generated by a major acquisition - a solar power plant installed at the factory to help achieve energy self-sufficiency. Our sixth joint energy project on the path to green transformation was delivered quickly and efficiently by Interenergo.

We have been working diligently towards the the goal of increasing energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from our core business, so setting up a power plant within our own facilities was a logical strategic move. The solar power plant with a total capacity of 2.8 MW will provide an average of 25% of the company's energy needs on an annual basis and will thus help to reduce emissions almost 1,400 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. The annual reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions due to independence from fossil fuels and the new solar power plant corresponds to as much CO<sub>2</sub> as would otherwise be absorbed by about 42,000 trees.

### 100 SETS OF SKIS FOR YOUNG SKIERS



To celebrate the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Slovenian Ski Association, Elan has donated 100 pairs of racing skis to young alpine skiers who we believe will grow into world-class athletes in the years to come. "Skiing has a great tradition in Slovenia and we are very happy to continue supporting this wonderful sport. This gesture is not only intended to support the Slovenian Ski Association, but also to keep helping promising young athletes on their way to outstanding achievements," said Leon Korošec, Vice President of the Elan Group and Director of the Winter Division, who extended his sincere congratulations to the Slovenian Ski Association.

# MULTIPLE AWARDS FOR ELAN'S PRIMETIME COLLECTION



reddot winner 2022

The new Primetime series is designed to create a new wave of enthusiasm for skiing on groomed slopes. Elan's flagship ski for the 2023/24 season has already won multiple awards since its launch thanks to its innovative technology, eye-catching graphics, and youthful design philosophy.

Year after year, Elan solidifies the reputation for innovation it has maintained throughout its existence. Over almost 80 years the company has launched numerous innovations that have transformed skiing while delighting users around the world. Throughout time the innovation, technological sophistication, and visual appeal have also been recognized by the juries of globally renowned institutions that award prizes to the best products. The list of awards and accolades that Elan products have received is long and the tradition continues year after year. This year, it is the Primetime series skis that has received several prestigious awards.

Juries are most impressed by the Primetime 55 and its women's counterpart, the Primetime N°5. Primetime 55 was recognized by the organizers of the biggest sports trade fair in Munich, where it received the ISPO Award. The same model was also awarded the prestigious Red Dot Design Award. The Primetime 55 and the Primetime N°5 also received the Plus X Award for innovation, high quality, design, functionality, and ergonomics.

"Awards are always a testament to the innovation of our products, but they are also a recognition of our work and the way we think. I am very pleased that we are still managing to create innovations that are trusted and enthusiastically received by users while also convincing experts in various fields," said David Primožič, Product Manager at Elan.







## Interview

# IT IS ALL ABOUT PEOPLE AND GOOD ENERGY

A conversation with Leon Korošec, Director of the Winter Sports Division and Vice President of the Elan Group.

🗨️ Gregor Šket 📷 Jernej Leskovar, Toni Konrad



Leon Korošec's physical appearance radiates youth, freshness, and dynamism. At only 48 years of age, he already has more than 20 years of experience in the ski industry. It would be hard to imagine a more suitable profile for the leader of the winter sports division. Leon Korošec possesses a unique combination of qualities that have enabled him to successfully lead Elan's skiing story for many years. He is a local from Gorenjska region, but at the same time a man of the world. He is a natural scientist as well as a social scientist. He is a businessman with a generous amount of empathy and sensitivity to employees, the environment, and society. He is an intellectual and a sportsman who knows how to appreciate moments in nature, where he gains energy for his many professional challenges.



**HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT AS THE MAN AT THE TOP OF ELAN, YOU ARE ALSO A SKI ENTHUSIAST?**

I think it's important for people who work for a brand that produces sports products to have a personal relationship with sports. Of course, that goes for me too. You don't have to be an ex-racer, but in any case, it's good to be involved in sport. At Elan, we have some interesting examples where some of our employees are involved in sport at a very high level, either competitively, or as experts, or educators.

**GIVEN THAT YOU ARE FROM TRŽIČ, YOU HAVE PROBABLY BEEN SKIING SINCE YOU WERE A CHILD?**

Yes, of course. My parents put me on skis at a very early age. And even then, the school

system was geared in that direction, and we were instilled with a love of sport, skiing, and nature. Ski and nature schools were undoubtedly the best weeks of my life, and I see that in my children too, and I would like to see the school systems in Europe continue to foster that.

**HOW MANY SKI DAYS DO YOU GET IN ONE SKI SEASON?**

In the last few years, I would give grade myself at about 4 out of five. I have relatively few full ski days, but on the other hand I do have quite a few work commitments on the slopes. It all probably adds up to a good thirty days.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SKI RESORT?**

I don't have a single favorite, but I have my top five. Even though I'm originally from Tržič, I love going to the Vogel which offers fantastic high mountain scenery and also great opportunities for touring and freeride skiing. I remember a time I went up towards the resort before daybreak. At first, I could still see lights in the background, but then I found myself in total darkness and silence. You know the saying that the darkest hour comes before dawn. Thoughts of bears and wolves started to cross my mind, but then dawn started to break and the first rays of sunlight over the hills were the best possible reward for perseverance. Apart from Vogel, I love going to the Dolomites, in fact anywhere in the wider Sella Ronda area is very beautiful, and the cuisine is excellent. From a business point of view, the entire Dolomites area is also a very good example of the coherent development of a destination and the cooperation of all stakeholders - ski resorts, accommodation, transport, etc. I recently travelled to Japan and Hokkaido is the "perfect" freeride destination because it snows all the time and in terms of living it is a total contrast to Tokyo. It's hard to find such unspoiled and rural areas here.

In the US, I really like Vail. This choice may seem a bit of a cliché, but all three resorts that are nearby, so Breckenridge, Copper Mountain, and Beaver Creek, offer an exceptional skiing experience at high altitude. For a weekend day trip, we like going to close by areas Austria. They have great snow and a great variety of terrain.

**HOW DO YOU KEEP FIT?**

I find this extremely important and I do various forms of functional exercise. But I prefer to get out into nature. I ski quite a lot in winter, more touring than alpine.

I often go on tours that are more like an aerobic form of exercise. That is the beauty of skiing today - that there is something for everyone.

**YOU GREW UP IN A TIME WHEN THE ELAN BRAND HAD A STRONG SYMBOLIC MEANING FOR SLOVENIANS. HOW DID YOU SEE THE ELAN BRAND AS A CHILD AND TEENAGER?**

I have very vivid memories of the moments when my parents and I went to the Elan store in Begunje to buy skis. In the mid-1980s I was of course fascinated by the successes of Bojan Križaj, Mateja Svet and Ingemar Stenmark. Being from Tržič, I was particularly impressed by Bojan who was a superstar at the time. I also vividly remember Elan's first MBX monoblock skis. Back then I received a scholarship for gifted kids and the skis cost six monthly payments. But this could never deter me from buying them. My classmate and I went to the shop in Begunje to buy them. Mine were 203 centimeters long and his were 207. I should check the development archive to see if I got the lengths right!

**HOW DID IT FEEL TO MEET LEGENDARY SKIERS LIKE BOJAN KRIŽAJ AND INGEMAR STENMARK AS AN ELAN EMPLOYEE AFTER HAVING WATCHED THEM ON TV AS A CHILD AND TEENAGER?**

I would be lying if I said I wasn't honored. Initially I was quite nervous about these encounters. But both of them impressed me even more when I got to know them a little better. Despite all their fantastic achievements, they always kept their feet firmly on the ground. At Elan's 70th anniversary, we went to visit Ingemar in Sweden. He came to get us at the airport, drove us to his home and welcomed us with the greatest hospitality and kindness. He is fundamentally a simple and sincere man and a true example of how to keep both feet firmly on the ground in spite of fame. Well done.

**DID YOU EVER THINK IN THOSE DAYS THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO WORK FOR ELAN ONE DAY?**

No, I never thought or even dreamed about it back then. I joined Elan in 2001 after seeing an employment ad in the Delo newspaper for a commercial manager. I had to cut my holiday short by a few days to go in for an interview, and I ended up getting the job. Not the most spectacular of starts, right?



**FOR EIGHT DECADES ELAN HAS HELD THE REPUTATION OF A SKI INNOVATOR THAT CHANGES SKIING. WHY DO YOU THINK THE SPIRIT OF INNOVATION IS SO STRONG IN A SMALL TOWN LIKE BEGUNJE NA GORENJSKEM?**

I once heard a piece of wisdom that talks about the importance of the first beat when starting a business. It is what gives that basic vision and direction that serves as a guide for the future. It is the seed that stays at the core of a business for fifty or a hundred years. This is what happened in the case of Elan. Rudi Finžgar had a very clear vision and that is why he succeeded despite what was a very disadvantageous time immediately after the Second World War. The entire nation was thinking only about rebuilding a destroyed country and making skis seemed to be just about the least significant thing in the world. But the vision, the idea and the passion were unstoppable. And so, in September 1945, the big day arrived. That is when he uttered his legendary: "Who can think of sleep, of money? The world is waiting for me. And for Elan." And so, the sports equipment manufacturing cooperative called Elan was born.

Rudi Finžgar was a man who never stopped, always looking for and encouraging new ideas. It is said that he once strolled through the fields surrounding Elan's modest workshops and told the farmers, "In the year 2000, a mighty Elan factory will stand here, you'll see". In fact, the factory opened its doors already in 1970. The innovation aspect is key, and it has





been maintained even in the face of many crises. Innovation was never a management tool, it was always at the core of the company.

**BESIDE ELAN, BEGUNJE IS ALSO HOME TO ANOTHER GLOBAL PHENOMENON - THE LEGENDARY AVSENIK BAND. BOTH OF THEM AND THEIR EXTRAORDINARY SUCCESS STORIES ARE PROOF OF THE EXCEPTIONAL CHARACTER OF THIS SMALL TOWN OF JUST OVER A THOUSAND INHABITANTS.**

We are very proud of the band, or rather the Avsenik family in Begunje. What is interesting is that both stories are characterized by extraordinary enthusiasm and perseverance. Perhaps this is a reflection of the legendary stubbornness of the people of Gorenjska. We have certainly seen our share of it at Elan. The latest has to be the Voyager folding ski that took seven years to develop. There were more than a few failed attempts, but we never gave up and, in the end, we succeeded in realizing one of the great ambitions of the ski industry.

**AS MENTIONED, ELAN HAS DELIGHTED THE SKIING WORLD WITH A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT INNOVATIONS. WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER TO BE THE COMPANY'S MOST IMPORTANT INVENTION?**

It has to be the SCX carving skis from the mid-1990s. It's the invention that changed everything. Skiing has never been the same since. Because of that invention, we can say with full confidence that every ski produced today has a little bit of Elan's DNA in it.

**HOW INTERESTED ARE YOU IN THE TECHNICAL PART OF THE SKI INDUSTRY?**

I'm certainly very interested in the technical side of the industry. After all, I went to a science high school, although I later turned more toward social sciences. I continue to be fascinated with the solutions that Elan's development team produces time and time again and I'm always keen to understand the technical principles behind them. The knowledge those guys have is just about limitless.

**THE LIST OF INNOVATIONS IS VERY LONG. LATELY, HOWEVER, THE VOYAGER FOLDING SKIS HAVE ATTRACTED**

**THE MOST ATTENTION, WITH ELAN FULFILLING AN AGE-OLD AMBITION OF MANY SKI MANUFACTURERS. HOW ARE VOYAGER FOLDING SKIS CHANGING SKIING?**

There are two aspects of the Voyager that need to be emphasized here. First and foremost, the skiing experience is on par with non-folding skis. Secondly, it is a fascinating technical and technological innovation that, despite breaking the integrity of the ski with a special intermediate section and base plate, retains all the necessary features and performance. This is a feature that impressed even the most demanding and technically savvy professionals and users. From a purely physical standpoint, it is almost a miracle.

**WHERE HAS THE VOYAGER BEEN MOST ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED?**

Definitely in non-alpine countries with a large enough skiing population. In Europe, the Voyager has caught on very well in bigger cities, where the society is very modern, with a relatively large number of ski enthusiasts, but no ski resorts.

**WHAT MAKES THE ELAN BRAND SO UNIQUE?**

At Elan, we have always been very good at combining technological sophistication with a human touch. We are high-tech, but we are not overly polished. We have a strong global presence, but at the same time we also have an ear for different local values. We try to understand different needs and we try to understand our users in the same way. Above all, our guiding principle is not purely economic. We truly believe that every good skier has exceptional experiences in the mountains. We put this into practice in all the markets where we have a presence.

**HOW MUCH HAS THE SKI INDUSTRY CHANGED IN THE LAST THREE DECADES?**

The market has reached maturity, which means that we don't have the kind of explosive growth that we see in the tech industries. There has also been a so-called micro-segmentation in the ski industry, which does make sense. The users have also recognized this, and they understand that the mountains offer different types of skiing experiences, which in turn require different or specific equipment. We notice that a lot of our users have two or three different pairs of skis that they use to ski groomed slopes, go touring, go freeriding, etc.

The last three decades have also seen a profound change in attitudes towards rental equipment, which has, at least in part, been facilitated by digitalization. That is why we have been paying a lot of attention to this segment as well.

**SPEAKING OF MICRO-SEGMENTATION, WE CANNOT OVERLOOK THE WOMEN'S SKI SEGMENT IN WHICH ELAN BROKE NEW GROUND WITH THE W STUDIO SERIES TWENTY YEARS AGO, NOT ONLY IN THE SKI INDUSTRY BUT IN THE SPORTS INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE.**

It's a fact that skiing is pretty evenly split between men and women. It therefore made sense to us to dedicate a special series of skis to women, taking into account the needs, desires and of course also the anatomical specificities of the fairer sex. So, we started designing women's skis and other products, but we felt it was very important to involve women in the entire process of creating these products, from the design and development phase all the way through to the implementation and production phase. We never took the approach of just

painting existing products in women's colors. I remember well the legendary book 'Don't Think Pink' about products that are truly and profoundly intended for women. We always took the user experience and demonstrable facts as our starting point. That is why these products have been so successful.

**THE SUSTAINABILITY ASPECT OF SKIING HAS ALSO BEEN GAINING IMPORTANCE. HOW DO YOU APPROACH SUSTAINABILITY AT ELAN AS THE COMPANY THAT PRODUCES MORE SKIS THAN ANY OTHER SKI MANUFACTURER IN A SINGLE LOCATION?**

Sustainability has literally been ingrained in our operations since the very beginning, for almost eighty years. We found that there are a number of things that we have always done at Elan that now deserve the adjective "sustainable". We have done things this way long before the subject ever became relevant. But even so, a few years ago, we drove out into the countryside a single kilometer away from our factory and set ourselves a goal: "This must stay exactly as it is now!". This awareness is an integral part of how we think.

But in the background is a thoroughly systematic approach that involves product development, production, human resources, management practices, etc. Each of these areas must contribute to sustainability, reducing environmental impacts and achieving carbon neutrality in the short, medium, and long term.

**FOR QUITE A WHILE NOW, ELAN HAS NO LONGER BEEN JUST THE PRIDE OF SLOVENIA, BUT A GLOBAL BRAND WITH A PRESENCE IN EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD. WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT MARKETS FOR YOU?**

Skiing has the longest tradition in central Europe, including Austria, Italy, Switzerland, France, Germany, and Slovenia, so this is our most important market. We also have a strong presence in the North American market, combining the USA and Canada and there are significant differences between the East and the West here. In recent years, the Asian market has been growing strongly as well.

**OVER THE YEARS ELAN HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED WITH MANY SKIING LEGENDS. INGEMAR STENMARK, THE BEST SKIER OF ALL TIME, WON ON ELAN SKIS IN THE PAST AND IN RECENT TIMES HE HAS BEEN**

**SUCCEEDED BY SKI CROSS STARS FILIP FLISAR, KELSEY SERWA, BRADY LEMAN AND RYAN REGEZ, AND OF COURSE THE CHARISMATIC GLEN PLAKE. WHAT DO THESE BIG NAMES MEAN FOR THE BRAND'S VISIBILITY AND HOW DO THEY FIT INTO THE ALWAYS GOOD TIMES PHILOSOPHY?**

A brand is essentially an intangible collection of different associations that live in the minds of its users. But at the same time, it's very important. These associations can be built not only through products but also through stories and personalities. Even though most of our users ski only recreationally, we believe that our presence in the various forms of professional skiing is very important for building our brand. We are proud that Ingemar Stenmark, the best male skier of all time, skied on our skis, as did all the legendary Slovenian ski aces. We are proud of the success of ski cross racers who win on our skis. We get a lot of attention through the uniquely recognizable Glen Plake who is extremely popular, especially in the USA. But above all, all these top skiers share the same values. We know that people are more impressed by interesting personalities and outstanding individuals who push boundaries than they are by products, so authentic personalities are key to the development of any brand.

**IN THIS RESPECT, THE INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN THE COMPANY MUST ALSO BE VERY IMPORTANT, AND SURELY THIS IS REFLECTED IN THE FINAL PRODUCTS.**

A brand can shine outwards if the energy comes from within. In other words, this means that all our employees and colleagues co-create the relationships and the special energy that ultimately results in great products. The inner energy among employees is the key to everything.

**HOW DO YOU PERSONALLY SEE THE FUTURE OF SKIING?**

Skiing has its own unique characteristics, of course. Climatic instability has become a fact of life that we all must worry about. At the same time, we are aware that skiing is one of the few winter outdoor activities that brings a great deal of joy, satisfaction, relaxation, and wonderful moments. And we want as many people as possible to experience these feelings for themselves. It is important to us that all this passion is passed on to future generations. We firmly believe in what we do, and we remain as committed as ever. That is why I believe that the future of skiing is bright.





**Primetime**

# CARVE OUT A GOOD TIME

Primetime skis continue the carving revolution Elan started in the mid-1990s by taking the fun of carving on groomed slopes to the next level.

📷 David Primožič 📷 Samo Vidic







Recently we have forgotten the pleasures of skiing on groomed slopes as many ski resorts were closed, forcing skiers to move into the backcountry. But now we are making our way back to the groomers, to the terrain that is meticulously prepared each night for a new day of skiing. Carving perfectly smooth slopes is a unique joy that mixes speed, adrenaline, and gravity. The moments of pure fun are interspersed with relaxed conversations with friends on the chairlift, hot tea in the hut, and apres ski with rosy cheeks.

Of course, all these experiences require the right set of skis; the kind of skis that make the skier feel at one with them and inspire trust in every situation. Given that Elan invented pronounced sidecut in the mid-1990s and single handedly started the carving revolution, each subsequent generation of skis is a reincarnation of the original carving ski from the 1990s, the Elan SCX. But Elan never stops innovating, and making skis better and better is a never-ending story. Elan's engineers and modern technology are the main drivers of this eternal progress. All this knowledge and experience is

now concentrated in the new Primetime ski series, created for ultimate enjoyment on groomed slopes. The family of eight ski models includes four men's and four women's skis that combine a fresh and youthful design philosophy with state-of-the-art carving technology for the ultimate groomed skiing experience.

Elan invented carving skiing and with this heritage we felt it was time to take the carving ski category to a whole new level and bring the fun and appeal back to skiing on groomed slopes.

Inspired by the joy of sliding down beautiful, groomed slopes, Primetime skis bring new excitement and thrills to skiers. Elan understands that there are different types of skiers who enjoy the groomers; some like speed, others enjoy carving short turns, and some simply love to cruise all day long. The Primetime family has a ski for everyone.

The Primetime range is designed to give every skier more natural control in the turn regardless of skiing ability. This is achieved by PowerMatch technology, which adapts the amount of material in the ski, to

the needs of the skier, for optimal power transfer from the skier to the snow. The technology is reinforced by Elan's revolutionary Amphibio profile that combines two profiles in one ski - classic camber on the inner edge and rocker on the outer edge. This ensures even more precision where it's needed most for controlled handling on a variety of groomed trails. The specific material layout enhances the performance of the dedicated left and right ski for excellent edge control and outstanding handling characteristics.

PowerMatch Dual Density Woodcore uses a thicker profile and stronger materials along the inner edge of the ski for strength, stability, edge grip, and responsiveness while the outer edge has a thinner profile and uses lighter materials for intuitive maneuverability, reduced weight, and an easy feel.

Despite their shared PowerMatch technology, each model of Primetime offers different construction with specific core configurations to adapt performance for different types of skiers on the slopes. The placement and amount of titanal changes with each model and is combined with Racing Sidewall

Technology to provide the right amount of power transfer to the snow, allowing seasoned experts and aspiring carvers to enjoy Primetime.

Like all Elan skis, the new Primetime series is crafted in the heart of the Slovenian Alps using 100% energy from renewable sources, in part from Elan's own solar plant, which substantially reduces Elan's impact on the environment. All materials used to produce the skis are sourced within 400 kilometres of the factory and up to 96 pairs of skilled hands touch the skis on their way from raw material to finished product.

The most important aspect of Elan's strategy is to inspire skiers to spend more time in nature. It turns out that there is a distinct lack of enthusiasm and innovation in the groomer ski category, so Elan designed a series of skis that create unforgettable moments and enable unrivalled carving experiences on the slopes. The Primetime family offers a model to suit every level of skiing intensity and experience, making these skis the perfect choice for groups of skiers enjoying great days on the slopes in good company.







55  
PRIMETIME

N°5

## Speed Demon

"These skis can do long and short turns and just love speed. These are the most precise skis in the Primetime series, but they can also be enjoyed by a very wide range of skiers. They allow for different skiing techniques and provide that adrenaline rush we are all looking for," explains former World Cup racer Bernard Vajdič about the feeling of skiing on Primetime 55.

PRIMETIME 55

PRIMETIME N°5



44  
PRIMETIME

N°4

## Early Bird

"A new name means a new definition of skiing pleasure. Primetime No.4 offers a unique combination of power and playfulness. This is what allows them to perform in a wide range of snow conditions. And most of all, they make it possible to start early not get tired until late afternoon," says ski demonstrator Manja Pernek.

PRIMETIME 44

PRIMETIME N°4



55+  
PRIMETIME +

N°4+

## Turn Lover

"Primetime No. 4+ had a tight turn radius and is the most carving oriented ski in the range. It's the type of ski that elevates that feeling of being on the first chair while everyone else is still sleeping. This is my 'primetime' moment. These skis make the pleasure even more intense, and I want to feel it with my friends every single day!" Hannah Köck, former Austrian World Cup racer, describes her new ski.

PRIMETIME 55+

PRIMETIME N°4+



33  
PRIMETIME

N°3

## All Day Excitement

"These are skis like no other. I was impressed by their stability and responsiveness, but at the same time they forgive mistakes so efficiently that even less experienced skiers will instantly feel like their skiing skills have been taken to the next level," says former top ski cross racer Marco Tomasi about the Primetime 33.

PRIMETIME 33

PRIMETIME N°3





## W Studio

# W STUDIO - 20 YEARS OF DEVOTION

Twenty years ago, Elan created the W Studio, a creative concept specializing in designing and developing skis and other products especially for women, thereby pioneering another new trend and once again proving its visionary and innovative spirit.

✍ Rebeka Lah

📷 Jernej Leskovar, Toni Konrad, Archive Elan





"Don't think about women adapting to the world. Think about the world adapting to women," said Bozoma Saint John, American businesswoman and former Chief Marketing Officer at Netflix. Her words of wisdom are an extension of those uttered by the legendary Coco Chanel, who believed that it is in fact women who carry the weight of the world on their shoulders. All this is true. Female nature is a balance of warmth and determination, graciousness and confidence, wisdom and emotion. Women have something men don't have and often can't understand. Despite often being denied important roles throughout history, facts say otherwise. Women have always had an enormous influence on decisive events, precisely because of their combination of emotional intelligence and wisdom. Thanks to the many brave, intelligent, and charismatic women who were able to stand up for their rights and equality, women in the modern world run governments, lead large companies, are world-class doctors, researchers, designers, architects, etc. Thankfully, it has become clear to all of us that they are indispensable, and above all, essential for social balance. And rightly so, because the world also needs the feminine principle to move in the right direction in a balanced way. Women shape trends and they possess just the right amounts of casualness, seriousness, and responsibility. They are aware of their qualities and their essence, and finally, they know how to have fun. This latter category is not the most important, but it is far from being unimportant. After all, legendary American designer Charles Eames said that fun should be taken seriously, and skiing certainly falls within this context. Not just to make one's way down a snowy slope, but as a holistic experience, as a way of creating unforgettable moments in good company, as a source of good energy that has profound beneficial effects on other aspects of life.

This is exactly what a few brilliant minds thought about in Begunje na Gorenjskem at the turn of the millennium. More than thirty years had passed since Elan started the so-called carving revolution which revolutionized skiing around the world. Skis with a pronounced sidecut have become the standard in both competition and recreation. New versions of skis made their way to market and thanks to various new technologies, they've gotten better and better. And then, Eureka! Another of the series of



great ideas emerged in 2003, Skis for women. It was not a market niche. It was not a fashion fad. It was a need. It was a logical continuation that could have occurred much earlier. In fact, it is not at all surprising that this idea was born in Begunje at a time when virtually no one in the entire sports industry was working on products especially for women. But it was fundamentally about much more than just skis. The aim of creating a dedicated product range was to encourage and empower women to pursue skiing and sport in general with all their confidence and passion. Elan firmly believes that there is a great skier in every woman. The belief is founded in an honest, authentic approach based on a wealth of knowledge, experience, tradition, creativity, passion, determination, respect and, finally, the alpine environment from which the Elan brand originates.

In the case of Elan skis for women, the approach far surpassed simply coloring the skis in softer tones and giving them more feminine names. Elan's engineers took a much broader and strategic approach to developing skis for women. They wanted to create skis that embodied the feminine principle in every way. They knew that ski design had historically been a male domain, and they also knew that only women could create true women's skis - from the first step to the last, from conception to execution, from sketch to physical production. The skis simply had to be touched by a woman's hand at every stage of development. The result of this equality focused thinking was the creation of W Studio. The design studio is made up of women skiers from different winds and worlds, from racers to recreational skiers, from weekend enthusiasts to fanatical addicts, from hobbyists to extremists. The story began at a simple meeting table where women from different backgrounds and beliefs started looking for their common denominator in skiing. Their annual meetings went on to change the course of skiing history. That is where the story of women's skis began - a story with a simple beginning, but a much broader meaning and a clear vision. After all these years, the story has not wavered. It remains consistent and represents a way of life and a lifestyle.



## What are Women's Skis?

This was the fundamental question that started it all. So, what are they? The answer is relatively simple: high performing, lightweight, and gorgeous. But as with all great ideas, this one contained a great deal of complexity, because the simplicity of a great idea never translates to its realization. Women's skis should be adapted to the anatomy and physical strength of women's bodies and, of course, to their style and taste. This means that they should be lighter and that the bindings should be positioned slightly differently. But making such skis without sacrificing their fundamental characteristics is, of course, a very challenging task. And this is where the wealth of knowledge that has so often produced impressive results again comes into play. Members of W Studio have managed to find the winning formula. Using modern materials and technologies, they have created skis that meet all three criteria without compromising on any of their basic functions. These are skis that perform in all conditions and always meet functional expectations. This is a basic requirement for skiers to feel confident and safe on the slopes and to be able to progress and improve their skills, not to mention enjoy themselves and have a good time.

Of course, they have also been working on beauty. This is a crucial element of women's skiing, so the women creating skis were not just ski experts, but also women interested in fashion, art, and modern trends. This is the spirit that has created skis bearing the W Studio signature for the past 20 years. The skis are designed, developed, and produced by women who know both theory and practice. Women whose minds are always focused on new ideas and whose hands know how to turn raw materials into something beautiful. These are women who love skiing.



## Something for Everyone

The very first range of women's skis made by Elan's W Studio team in 2003 contained nine models that fulfilled the wishes and needs of women skiers who approach skiing in different ways. Each winter thereafter the minds behind W Studio improved the skis and built on the range that grew bigger and better each year. Several legendary skis were created through the years, the Delight being the one that broke the barrier of light weight and performance. A 152 cm set of skis weighed only 3890 grams, including bindings, making them the lightest skis in the world. They were based on Elan's SlimShape technology that allowed for a slim profile design while preserving durability and power. Then came Black Magic, Insomnia, Twilight, Element, Wildcat, and many others. When the Ripstick series of touring skis was added in 2020, the collection was finally complete – Elan skis for women in every segment. Elan skis have always been designed with cutting-edge technologies such as Reflex Sidecut, Fusion, WaveFlex, Amphibio and many others, allowing the designers to tailor skis to the specific needs of each user. All these innovations allow women skiers to ski with ease and enjoy more as a result.

For the 2023/24 season, the women's collection includes 21 different models that cover all key segments. There are Elan skis for women who like to cruise the groomers, for those who enjoy floating in fresh powder and those who prefer to earn their turns on touring skis. And there are helmets, poles, bags, and other accessories available to complement the skis and round out the product range.





## Klarisa Veselić, Head of Product and W Studio

### **HOW IMPORTANT IS IT THAT THE W STUDIO TEAM IS MADE UP ONLY OF WOMEN?**

We develop all product segments, not only those for women, based on the user. We analyse their user experience at as many points of contact with our brand as possible. Based on the results we then identify what needs to be kept, what needs to be improved and what needs to maybe be removed. The W Studio is an extension of our research and development phase. We begin by analyzing the user, then the team turns into an idea generator. Based on ideas and concepts the Product Manager then records the guidelines for new projects. The team has a decisive role in the early design phase, during project validation and finally in the role of an end user because all the girls use our products daily, providing invaluable feedback and intelligence for further development.

### **DID MEN HELP YOU IN ANY WAY, ESPECIALLY WITH TECHNICAL IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES?**

Of course, it's not only women that are involved in the women's ski collection. Men work in all areas of the company as well – manufacturing, development, sales, etc. They are just as closely involved in parts of the process. Elan W Studio doesn't mean that it's only women who bring the skis to life from the initial concept to the final product. Women provide

ideas and initiate new projects that guide the research and development phase. We are present through all stages of the process, but it would be silly to say that it is only women who make women's skis.

### **HOW DOES THE PROCESS OF MAKING SKIS WORK AND HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?**

Leaving aside long-term strategic product planning, products usually see their end consumer after two years of development. The moment the development of a new model is approved, we first carefully define its purpose. This is the primary guideline for the development department with which we cooperate very closely because their knowledge and expertise make our innovative products possible. The development engineers then create several prototypes that represent different ways of tackling the problem we set out to solve. The prototypes are thoroughly tested by the test team that also includes the target user of the product. Based on the feedback we then decide whether to take the product to the next stage or to go back to prototyping. The 3D shape is very important since the product can live for five years or more, so we produce several life-size prototypes of the final shape even at this early stage. Once the design is complete, we add the 2D graphic image of the product. Concurrently we also work on the product's marketing story because it

is essential that it is not only visually attractive, but that it is perceived and understood by the user. We involve the end user at all these stages because it is important to keep checking that we are on the right track. The design of Elan products always supports the technology because it's our innovations that make our products unique and we want to convey this to the users.

### **THESE PRODUCTS ARE FAR FROM JUST BEING ABOUT DESIGN AND GRAPHICS, THEY ARE PRIMARILY ABOUT TECHNICAL ADAPTATIONS TO THE ANATOMY OF THE FEMALE BODY. HOW DO WOMEN'S SKIS DIFFER FROM THE MEN'S?**

Women's skis need to be manageable and lightweight regardless of segment. We consider the female anatomy that is different from the male. We have analyzed the movement and transmission of forces between turns in female skiers. Women on average prefer shorter skis and our job is to provide them with skis that feel just as stable as longer skis. Women also have a slightly different center of gravity when skiing and our skis are adapted to that. In the freeskiing segment we developed a great product that originated from the women's models with Tubelight core. It is a unique solution that increases strength and reduces weight with carbon and titanal inserts. The skis are not only lighter, but also more responsive and stable. Interestingly, there are no metal parts used in the Ripstick skis and they still perform perfectly on all types of snow.

### **ARE WOMEN'S SKIS MADE EXCLUSIVELY BY WOMEN? HOW MANY FEMALE HANDS TOUCH W STUDIO SKIS DURING THE CREATIVE AND MANUFACTURING PROCESS?**

Women are involved in each stage, from development, design, and production to sales. All these women think about skis with dedication and love, and they use their wealth of knowledge and experience to make them. Of course, men are also involved in the creation of women's skis, just as women are involved in the process of making "men's" skis. 60 pairs of hands, 35 of them women's, are involved in the production process of recreational skis made with polyurethane technology. Higher-end skis, which also feature a more complex design with more components, are made by up to 96 pairs of hands, 53 of those male and 43 females.

### **WHAT DOES THE “ALWAYS GOOD TIMES” PHILOSOPHY MEAN TO FEMALE SKIERS AND FOR MEMBERS OF W STUDIO?**

Women know how to enjoy and create beautiful moments, which is the essence of the Always Good Times philosophy and the mission of the Elan brand. When you combine the female philosophy of life with a product developed specifically for women, an unforgettable day in the mountains is an easy, authentic, and unforgettable adventure.



## THE WE CREATE PROJECT

Creative spirit has been one of the main drivers of the Elan brand from the very beginning. Finding new solutions, thinking about different angles and perspectives, designing new technologies and innovations are all essential parts of the Elan story. But the skis are always the base. After all, every true skier dreams of creating their own skis.

Elan's brand ambassadors, joined by a host of successful women from the fields of sport, design, fashion and environmentalism, have been given the opportunity to do just that as part of the We Create project. Women tend to see skis also an object of beauty, a mix of a painting canvas and sculpture. The skis impress with their shape and lines, as well as with their outward appearance, all of which together define its character. A limited series of Elan Women's skis bear the signatures of exceptional women, each of them at the top of their field. They are a true inspiration with their exceptional abilities and we are delighted to entrust them with our canvas so that they can express themselves and send out their message to inspire many future female skiers with us.





**Ryan Regez**

# TIME IS ON MY SIDE

We went to visit Olympic champion Ryan Regez in his hometown of Wengen, an idyllic Alpine village and one of the most important places in the history of Alpine skiing, as well as a place where Elan had its share of triumphs. With Ryan, it all just came together.

✍ Gregor Šket   📷 Bor Dobrin





Wengen is a small village in the heart of the Bernese Alps and living proof that the romantic notion of an idyllic mountain paradise is not just a dream. After parking the car down in the valley and boarding a narrow-gauge railway, we entered a fairytale world of our grandfathers and grandmothers. The Swiss clearly have a remarkable sense for preserving the best of the past and tradition and subtly combining it with the comforts of modern times.

Wengen is surrounded by mighty peaks including the Eiger (3967 m), the Mönch (4110 m) and the Jungfrau (4158 m), but it became famous around the world for the Lauberhorn world cup ski races that have been held there since the mid-1930s. Wengen is home to the world's longest downhill ski run, all four and a half kilometers of it, and the best racers blast through at an average speed of over 100 km/h with top speeds reaching up to 160 km/h. The slalom course is renowned for its extreme difficulty and steepness that only the greatest of masters can take on successfully. The Wengen slalom is also intertwined with the history of the Elan brand and Slovenian skiing. In 1980, Bojan Križaj achieved the first ever Yugoslavian and Slovenian World Cup victory there and went on to repeat his feat the following year despite only finishing tenth after the first run. Ingemar Stenmark also made his mark on the course, adding a couple of Wengen victories to his and Elan's trophy cabinets. Wengen lives and breathes skiing, and it is the

home of the Olympic ski cross champion Ryan Regez. It is actually interesting that a place with such a rich skiing tradition did not produce more top skiers. Local man Karl Molitor reigned supreme over the Lauberhorn slopes in the 1930s, along with two other Olympic medal holders, but their time in the limelight ended before the Second World War. It wasn't until 2022 that Ryan Regez brought gold back home to Wengen.

We visited him on a rather gray day in late March, when the snow started to lose its brilliant sheen and the green grass started boldly claiming back the hills. If the weather had been as bad on the day of the legendary downhill race, the heroes of the Lauberhorn would not have been allowed on the track, but would have stayed in the chalets and enjoyed traditional Swiss fondue. But that is how it goes. Sometimes the mountains hide away in the fog.

Hanging out with Ryan in a town of around 1,300 inhabitants was a special experience. Everyone knows him and everyone loves him. The kids look up at him with big eyes, the adults greet him and pat him on the back and the girls steal glances. After making our way back from Männlichen to Wengen and getting off the gondola, Ryan quickly invited us into the tourist office: "Let's go say hi to my crystal globe!". His most precious trophies are on display in a glass case at the office, except for his Olympic gold medal. "It's in my house and I caress it often," Ryan adds.



## Skiing is in his blood

Ryan is not actually all Swiss. His mother is English, so he speaks English with a typical gentleman's accent. But if you are born in Wengen, you're destined to ski. If your father is a ski coach, your fate is just about sealed. In Ryan's case, skiing was never a compulsion, but the noblest of loves. "I have magical memories of my childhood and growing up. We were protected here from many of the negative influences of the modern world. There are no crowds here, no traffic, no hurry. As a child I got used to living in harmony with nature. My friends and I played for endless hours in the forests and in the hills. Since then I have always loved adventures in nature. It is an important part of who I am."

Ryan was put on skis at a very early age, when he was two or three years old. "My father was the coach who taught me my first steps on skis. I remember we often went skiing after school. It was at least four times a week. And of course we also watched the Lauberhorn world cup races every year. As kids we were obsessed with collecting autographs from the best skiers in the world. Hermann Maier was my number one hero. Members of the Wengen Ski Club often trained on the Lauberhorn's downhill and slalom courses and I have very fond memories of the 2011 downhill race when I was still a teenager and they entrusted me with the role of one of the forerunners."





## Green Elans

Ryan Regez has been a member of Elan's international ski cross team for many years. He was still a teenager when the skis from Begunje caught his eye. "I've always been a bit different in a way. I never wanted to ski on the skis that everyone else had. When I was changing skis in 2007, I wanted to try Elan skis because I'd heard so much about them, and I also knew that their innovations had a very strong influence on the development of skiing. I clicked with the skis immediately and have been skiing on Elans ever since. The Elan racing team with Blaž Lazar at the helm is like a family to me. We get along great and we have lots of fun, but at the same time we also talk a lot about developing and improving the skis. The guys in the development department are amazing experts who always listen to our ideas and build skis that make us better and faster."

## The professional

Skiers are a special group of people. They are a mix of savages, heroes, and daredevils. Many of them often cross the thin line that separates success from disaster. Ryan had his wild years as well, hanging out with friends and partying hard. "When I switched from alpine disciplines to ski cross, I made a conscious decision to fully commit to the sport. I gave it my full attention and focus. From then on, I didn't want to leave anything to chance, and, above all, I didn't want to jeopardize the work and sacrifices I put in by making stupid or reckless decisions. I gave up many sporting activities that I used to love very much. I stopped playing football and other contact sports that have a relatively high risk of injury. But that doesn't mean that I just ski and work out in the gym all the time. I love tennis and beach volleyball, I enjoy mountain biking..."



## Olympic Games, Beijing 2022

Ryan started off his 2021/22 season with a win in Innichen, South Tyrol. Just before the Beijing Olympics he scored two consecutive victories in Idre Fjäll, Sweden and took on the role of the main favorite in China. "When a TV journalist asked me about my Olympic goals, I said I would be happy with any medal. But that was a complete lie. In reality, I only wanted the gold medal. I visualized the Olympic run countless times, and at the end of each run they hung the gold medal around my neck." And then the moment happened that changed everything. "I often still remember that final heat and I get goosebumps every time. I remember not having the best start, but fortunately none of the other three guys got off to a good start either. When I took the lead on the first set of waves, I said to myself: 'Oh my God, I'm in front.' I managed to hang on to the lead until the last corner. The sun was low and I could see the shadows of the guys behind me all the time. But then the shadows slowly disappeared and I couldn't hear anything anymore. I knew that I had a good margin on the others. My heart started pounding wildly in my chest even before I crossed the finish line. It's a feeling that can't be described by words."

When he arrived home in Wengen, he was given a grand reception. "A friend was with me when we took the train from Lauterbrunnen to Wengen. When we got off the carriage, I couldn't believe the number of people that gathered at the train station and on the main street. Only then did I realize just what I had achieved. I was also delighted to see that my friends, relatives and neighbors shared my success."

After that, nothing was the same anymore: "Changes were good and bad. It's nice when people recognize you on the street and congratulate you, but sometimes I wish I had a little more privacy."



## Motivation

When top athletes reach their peak, some often face emptiness and a lack of motivation while others commit and work even harder. "The battle for the crystal globe began shortly after the Olympics, and I wanted it just as much as I wanted that Olympic medal. With three competitors evenly matched in the fight, there was no time to rest on laurels." In the very last race of the season Ryan managed to achieve his next goal and won the crystal globe, the one now on display in the glass case at the tourist office in Wengen.

Unfortunately, Ryan also learned first-hand about the unpredictable aspects of sport. He injured his knee in one of the first races of the 2022/23 season in Arosa, had to undergo season ending surgery. "I heard a strange sound when I fell. At first I thought it was the bindings releasing, but when I saw both skis were still attached to my legs, it became clear that the sound came from something else. After the operation I started the period of rehabilitation and I had a lot of time to think. I also used the time to study business finance and passed a good number of exams while also training systematically in the gym. When things got tough, I thought back to the feelings I had after winning the Olympic medal and the crystal globe. I had no choice but to move forward with optimism. I am truly confident that I will come back stronger and that time is on my side."



**Playmaker**

# MAKE THE MOUNTAIN A PLAYGROUND

Handcrafted in the Slovenian Alps, validated in North America, and designed to deliver a surfy and playful feel, Elan's all new Playmaker opens a new chapter with skiers that bring creativity and style to all aspects of the mountain.

📷 Ben Fresco   📷 Toni Konrad

Rain falls on an April morning in Bend, Oregon, but the forecast is calling for 18-24" of fresh snow just up the road at Mount Bachelor. Four skiers from different regions of North America have gathered in the Pacific Northwest for a three-day photoshoot and to test a new lineup of Elan skis that are set to hit ski shops in Fall of 2023. Conditions like this can be hit or miss for photography, but the stoke was high, so the team packs ski gear into their trucks and begins the trek up to the 9000' volcano that sits atop the Cascade Range.

The crew ranges in age from early 20's to mid-30's and they all have something in common; each are talented skiers with a skill set that blurs the line between freestyle and freeride. Over the past few decades, skiers who mix this playful blend of park influenced skiing into their everyday experience have grown in numbers. The invention of twin tip skis led to the widespread development of terrain parks, which popularized freeride and freestyle programs. Today, there's an entire generation of skiers that learned to ski on twin tips and in programs that focus on creativity rather than speed or technique.

After a brief meeting in the base lodge to outline the goals of the trip, the hand-picked team eagerly heads outside where the snow is piling up. The vibe continues to escalate within the young group as they get to know each other better. Regardless of how the photos turn out, they know they're in for an epic powder day testing the new collection of freeride twin-tip skis that were designed with terrain and conditions like this and creative skiers like them in mind.





## The Right Tools for the Job

There's no substitute for having the right tools for the job. If you look at each discipline of skiing as a job and each category of skis as a tool, it's clear that some tools are better suited for jobs than others. For example, ski racers need the lightning-fast quickness and stability to tackle solid, icy surfaces, found in the Ace series. Conversely, big-mountain skiers need the wider platform of Ripstick, that delivers the flotation and maneuverability to handle deep snow. While it's possible to use Ace in powder and you can race on a Ripstick, you'll probably have more fun and better results if you choose the tool that was designed with your day's work in mind. A few years ago, Elan began assessing its toolbox to see what was missing. We talked with athletes, met with trendsetting retail partners, and did a deep dive into products and users that might be underserved by the existing offering. A pattern emerged; sales of freeride twin-tip skis were growing in North America. Athletes thought they could bring more of their friends into the Elan family if a bi-directional freeride ski was available. Retailers said they like doing business with Elan and if we built a freeride twin, they would prefer to buy it from us. The momentum for a new category of skis to satisfy skiers like the assembled test crew was already in motion years before.

## User & Purpose Driven

When Elan builds new products, the goals are clear; innovate with the intent to deliver the best equipment that provides a better experience in the mountains for every type of skier. Whether igniting the sidecut revolution, pioneering asymmetrical construction, or changing the game in lightweight high-performance design, form and function walk together during the development process resulting in products that are purpose and user driven. Considering the challenge breaking into a new category presents, the product department set out to understand everything key users wanted. From performance, to look, and feel of the new collection, each aspect was studied carefully.

Research showed this brand of skiers viewed the mountain as a playground in which they slash turns in the local powder stash, carve a groomer, and drop into a terrain park switch, all in one run. Thus, they wanted the performance of a freeride ski combined with the loose, surfy feel of a freestyle twin. Visually, they identified with products that were bold and different. Most importantly, users wanted the product as whole to represent their lifestyle – fun, free, and a little wild.

## Dual Personality

Defining the new collection began with the development of a bi-directional shape with a loose feel that could also be pushed hard. New footprints, designs, and profiles were tested by key users, and Dual Float technology emerged as a design that was strong, playful, and loose all at the same time. Dual Float features a 3D trapezoid shape with 360 Sidewall construction which delivers the needed grip and trustworthy feel through the middle of the ski, while allowing the extremities to remain light and playful. The Surf Rocker profile then blends rocker smoothly into both tip and tail for a loose feel with excellent flotation in both directions, allowing the ski to pivot and slide on command.

While shape and profile were being refined, identifying a construction that delivered the best ride quality was the next task. Ripstick's Tubelite Woodcore had built a reputation for having a smooth ride, with powerful pop and rebound – two very desirable characteristics in a freeride twin – making it a logical starting place. Tubelite also offered a consistent technology story, with a twist; the carbon rods were adapted for Playmaker by reducing their length to accentuate the loose, playful feel and improve performance riding and landing switch. This optimized core would find its way into two widths that complimented Ripstick; 91 mm for skiers that desired quickness and grip in the resort and park, and 101 mm for riders that spend equal time in search of fresh snow and natural terrain features to play with. With performance and ride characteristics nearing completion, it was time to give the unisex, two-ski collection a visual personality of its own. Recalling that users wanted a product that reflected their lifestyle, the new collection would feature a graphic design clad in neon pink highlights that was clean, a little wild, and sure to capture attention. An icon depicting a wave crashing at the bottom of a mountain signified the all-new collection was designed to surf, slash, and make the mountain a playground. The name of this new collection; Playmaker.

## Living up to the Name

Over a span of three days, the team slashed through tight trees, surfed secret powder stashes, and hit natural booters while shooting photos and sharing high fives. The new collection was put to the ultimate test, in the perfect environment, with target riders confirming that Playmaker lived up to its name by delivering the trustworthy performance needed to blend both freeride and freestyle worlds. Playmaker's personality also stood out, giving Elan a new voice that was fun, free, and just wild enough to bring a few new friends into the Elan family.







**Marco & Filip**

# BIG IN JAPAN

The Japanese island of Hokkaido, more specifically the area around Niseko, offers probably the best snow in the world. Elan ambassadors Marco Tomasi and Filip Flisar reunited in Japan for a few epic lines through the trees.

✍ Martin Tekše

📷 Toni Konrad, Samo Vidic, Istock Photo





#### HOKKAIDO TOP 5

Bo-Yo, excellent ramen served in the middle of the ski slopes.

Huge Russian eagles nesting in the trees around Sapporo.

Unimaginable amounts of snow.

The traditional onsen hot springs.

Real espresso on the slopes.

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#### Marco and Filip

Hokkaido is the setting for the story of two friends and exceptional skiers, whose paths crossed once again in the north of Japan. Marco Tomasi of Italy or, more accurately, South Tyrol, and Filip Flisar from Slovenia have known each other for many years. Both were promising young ski racers. Marco favored the speed disciplines, Filip the technical ones and by a series of coincidences, they both ended up in ski cross. For several years they raced around the world and often trained together. Many stories and anecdotes occurred during this time, but there is more to their friendship than skiing and ski cross. They were also brought together by Elan, as they are both brand ambassadors. In some ways, they are living proof that opposites attract. Marco is more measured, while Filip is outgoing and always on the hunt for fun and good times. When they finished their careers, their lives took them in different directions. Filip became a father while Marco travelled the world extensively and, in addition to skiing, indulged in his other favorite sports - surfing and mountain biking.

When you get off at Narita Airport in Tokyo after a twelve-hour eastward flight from Europe, you find that Japan truly is a world apart. The land of the rising sun offers a remarkable contrast between tradition and modernity, a place where ancient customs and traditions are subtly intertwined with state-of-the-art technology. When you climb the 600-meter-tall Skytree and see all the way to Japan's sacred Mount Fuji on a clear day, you instantly realize the scale of Japan's capital, a megalopolis whose sprawling area is home to nearly 30 million people.

Tokyo is a city of contrasts. Shibuya, Shinjuku, and Akihabara are places to experience the metropolitan pulse, the hustle and bustle, and the noise, but almost every district of the city has an oasis of calm where the silence of ancient temples instantly makes you forget that you are in one of the most densely populated cities in the world.

However, Japan is much more than Tokyo and the main island of Honshu. The country hides many gems that diverge from the bustling metropolis. Board the Japanese Shinkansen bullet train and head north for a thousand kilometers to the island of Hokkaido. There, unspoiled nature and wilderness still reign free. In Europe, we're no longer used to such remote areas, but they still exist in Japan. And there is another treasure to be found there - the best snow in the world. That is why Hokkaido has become a winter pilgrimage destination for ski nomads who are prepared to go to the ends of the earth in search of dry powder.







#### HOKKAIDO TOP 5

Fresh powder is available virtually all winter.

Extraordinary nature in winter and summer.

Total wilderness is only a 5-minute drive from the city.

Vast areas with immense opportunities for nature exploration.

Affordable prices of food, accommodation, and ski passes.

## MARCO'S TOP 5

### The Japanese Coincidence

Marco is a nomad. Recently, he sold his apartment in South Tyrol to have more freedom to travel the world, affording him the ability to change his plans at the last minute. This is exactly what happened just before the start of last winter, which he had planned to spend in Aspen. At the last minute, Marco was made an offer he could not refuse in the form of an invite from his Australian-Japanese friend Saki who runs a mountaineering agency and ski school in Niseko. "I made the decision in a flash. Japan has always intrigued me, especially the remote parts of Hokkaido that are truly fantastic. I've always wanted to get to know them a little better, so spending a winter in these places was the realization of a long-held wish," explains Marco with his characteristic smile and warm, friendly voice. So, he packed three pairs of skis in a large bag. His Ripstick 116, which is perfect for meter deep powder days, was accompanied by two brand new pairs of Playmaker and Primetime skis, along with a bright green Elan jacket, a pair of brown ski pants and a green and black checked flannel shirt. Marco is known for his unique dress style based on modern retro pieces. The weeks went by quickly and Marco slowly and surely turned into an expert on the local scene. "It all turned out much better than I imagined. I was impressed by the Japanese hot springs, where people enjoy peace and quiet. I fell in love with Japanese food and, of course, the snow. I simply could not believe how often it snows here. From the beginning of December to the end of February there were only eight days when it did not snow. Sometimes there are just a few centimeters of fresh snow waiting for you in the morning. But if the sky is generous, it throws down a meter of powder overnight. I can't even remember how many times I've had to shovel out the car that was literally buried in snow."

Then Marco got an email saying that the Elan team was coming to Hokkaido, and Filip Flisar was in as well. It was a great opportunity to reunite with an old friend and Filip had never been to Japan before.

"Everyone who has been to Hokkaido has spoken highly of the conditions there. I really, really wanted to experience it for myself. Of course, I was in it for the snow and the skiing, but as a gourmet, I was also tempted by Japanese food. I wanted to learn about Japanese culture and experience their way of life."

This time, the meeting of friends was different. There was no rivalry and competitiveness inherent in ski cross races, in which they so often fought down the track, each trying to outdo the other. This time, they (and their company) enjoyed a cozy get-together in an izakaya, a typical Japanese pub, where they reminisced about their racing days over Japanese beer. Of course, they also skied together. The sight of two former pros floating casually on endless powder, drifting through the trees, and leaping over obstacles was almost otherworldly. They looked like two kids, like two fanatics, who found themselves in their natural habitat and instinctively let their essence shine through.

"I don't think I've ever felt lighter, drier snow anywhere, ever. I felt like I was skiing in a weightless space. Maybe I would have liked to have the slopes a bit steeper, but when you experience such amazing snow conditions, you really can't be picky," said Flisar.

In addition to being amazed by the snow, Filip is also a car enthusiast and was taken by the variety of Japanese models, "Even though most of the Japanese brands are present in Europe, I saw cars and vehicles in Japan that I never knew existed. I was most impressed by the miniature trucks and vans."

A week is a very short time for true ski fanatics. So, of course, a vow has been made to return - next winter's Japanese adventure is already being planned.

### JAPOW

The island of Hokkaido is, among other things, famous for possibly the best snow in the world. It's called Japow, a name made up of Japan and Powder. Far from being a myth, this extremely dry snow is the result of meteorological facts. The secret lies in the warm current that flows past the Hokkaido coast in the Sea of Japan. During the winter months, moisture that evaporates from the sea is cooled by cold winds from Siberia that create huge air masses in the form of clouds. When wind blows them over land, it triggers heavy snowfall. This phenomenon is most frequent in January, leading skiers and snowboarders to invent the nickname Japanuary, because that's when snow conditions are at their best. On average, between 12 and 15 meters of snow fall in Niseko every winter. The snow cover can be more than five meters deep, and it usually snows as many as eighty days out of a hundred.





**Finland**

# TAKE VOYAGER TO AURORA

The snowy landscape of Finland holds many winter experiences, from the northern lights and sleigh rides to relaxing in an Arctic spa and, of course, skiing in deep dry powder.

📷 Lara Kamnik 📷 Lara Kamnik, Uroš Polajžer





We've traveled the world and experienced a lot, but we rarely find ourselves in a place that leaves us speechless. Finland most certainly did. It is a fantastic part of the world that offers many unforgettable winter experiences.

The flight from Helsinki to Kittilä Airport is about two and a half hours, but when you step off the plane, you are in another world. The airport building is small and encased in snow for a good part of the year. All the roads leading up to the airport are covered in snow or ice, so cars make an odd sound as they drive on winter tires with small steel studs that dig into the surface in search of traction. Driving without studded tires is nearly impossible. If you find yourself there in the middle of winter, the chances are that you will end up in the pitch dark as the sun doesn't rise at all in December. But, after the winter solstice on the 22nd of December, the light slowly starts making its way back into the day. Everything is very different above the 65th parallel. This is the latitude where the arctic circle begins, shared in Europe by Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. It is also home to an incredibly special land known as Lapland, or Lappi in Finnish.

Being in the middle of an endless expanse of snow in the middle of winter is a special experience. The region is said to have the cleanest air in the world, but it is also bitterly cold. Temperatures hover around 20 degrees below freezing, sometimes dropping as low as -40 degrees C. If you wear the right clothes, you can forget about the cold and the completely dry snow and millions of spruce trees create an unforgettable natural backdrop.

The greatest charm of the Nordic countries is the Aurora Borealis, or northern lights, which are created when electrically charged particles from the sun travel through space and encounter the Earth's atmosphere, creating a reaction that causes the particles to glow. This creates a light show that makes the sky appear to dance in rhythms of green-violet light. The scene is completely surreal and gives the impression of being on another planet. Nordic people have become accustomed to harsh weather conditions over many millennia, but they are also aware of the privileges that Mother Nature has bestowed on them. The Finns are experts in minimalist natural architecture, creating special all-glass bungalows in which you can observe the Northern Lights while lying in bed. Lying on your back and gazing up at the sky at the green patterns and organic shapes, you cannot help but surrender to a feeling of complete silence and solitude. Well, they really don't have a problem with solitude up north. There are far more reindeer there than people. But it's true that each reindeer belongs to someone, even if they wander all alone through the wilderness for more than eight months of the year. They give a reindeer to

the winners of the traditional World Cup slalom in Levi each year.

Rides on reindeer-drawn sleighs are also part of Nordic culture. For centuries, the reindeer-powered sleighs were the only reliable means of transport in winter conditions. Only in the last half century have snowmobiles replaced them. Today, a ride on a sleigh pulled by reindeer is one of the most popular tourist attractions. After a day of Nordic adventures, a glass of strong brandy at the ice bar, served straight from a glass made of ice, is a nice treat. Before bedtime, you can also indulge in a sauna or an outdoor arctic spa.

## Skiing with Voyager

Of course, it would be a sin not to pack skis when traveling to this snowy destination. Levi is Finland's largest ski resort and thanks to its unique weather conditions it offers an exceptional skiing experience in completely dry powder snow. But traveling so far north with your skis poses a significant logistical challenge. It's even more difficult and stressful if the journey also involves air travel.

But this time was different. We traveled with Voyager folding skis. Instead of almost two-meter-long bags, we folded them neatly in a special bag with enough room for all the gear - ski boots, poles, helmet, goggles, gloves, ski jacket and pants. Packing has never been easier. After landing, we picked up our skis on the usual conveyor belt with all the other luggage. Although we hired a small car, we had no problem fitting everything into the boot with plenty of room to spare for two suitcases and a rucksack. And we didn't even have to take the back seats out. We drove to the gondola as if we were going to the shops.

The Voyager did not only impress us by making traveling easier, but it also impressed us with its usability and performance. The special four-axis mechanism that takes care of folding or assembling the skis works perfectly. The ski assembles in a single move, and you don't even feel it while skiing. In terms of ride feel and characteristics, the Voyager is no different from a classic ski. Snow performance is exceptional, offering excellent feel in all snow conditions, with tons of confidence and stability through short and long turns at any speed. The folding ski poles and the two custom-designed bags also serve their practical purpose perfectly.

Voyager skis are made for people like us, an increasing group of users that come from urban environments but use every spare moment to escape into the great outdoors. That is exactly who we are.







**Iceland**

# BONDS OF A FRIENDSHIP

✍ Siggí Bjarni Sveinsson

📷 Róžle Bregar





In Slovenia, while grieving the unexpected loss of my close friend Jure, I felt lost and empty. However, I wanted to honor his legacy, support his family, and find closure. Thus, I came up with the idea of climbing six mountains in one day, each one representing one of Jure's documentaries. Rožle, who had worked with Jure on a documentary previously, and a team of Icelanders, introduced me to Aleš Česen, and we embarked on the project together. The experience of honoring our friend's memory and supporting his family created a strong bond between us. Years later, I proposed an adventure in Iceland to Aleš and Rožle. Together, we explored a new side of Iceland, engaging in outdoor activities along the way, and strengthening our precious friendship.

We planned our trip with simplicity, despite its complexity, agreeing on an itinerary and necessary equipment, and allowing our moods and the weather to guide us. Though the weather was unpromising, we were determined to begin our adventure exploring the East Fjords, a region I had never visited in winter. In "The Fjord Town" of Borgarfjörður Eystri, we soaked in the beauty of the surrounding mountains. We continued our drive along the south coast, stopping to explore a glacier lagoon and ice cave before reaching Hofn for the night. A mountain pass was closed due to a storm, so we took our time exploring the East Fjords, encountering reindeer and visiting lighthouses. Once the pass to Borgafjordur Eystri was cleared, we crossed it in my Jeep Rubicon 4x4 and arrived at our home for the next few days, the Blábjörg Guesthouse.

The Blábjörg Guesthouse, with its breathtaking surroundings, was the perfect base for our adventure. Our apartment had ample space to organize our equipment and work on trip content. We gathered to assess the weather conditions and spotted a narrow window of good weather the next day in one part of the fjord. Utilizing our knowledge of Iceland's microclimates, we began to explore the remote fjord early the following day.

We set out on our skis, feeling free and alone in the remote parts of Iceland. Our close bond strengthened as we journeyed together, not just in search of perfect skiing conditions, but for the pure joy of being present in the moment. During our tour,

we observed the terrain and noticed the effects of the storm, gathering valuable information for our plans. As we skinned up gentle slopes, scrambled over ridges, and skied down into the valleys, we relished in the raw beauty of our surroundings. Seven hours flew by and we returned to our guesthouse, fulfilled and satisfied. Despite the approaching storm, we were content with our incredible day on the slopes.

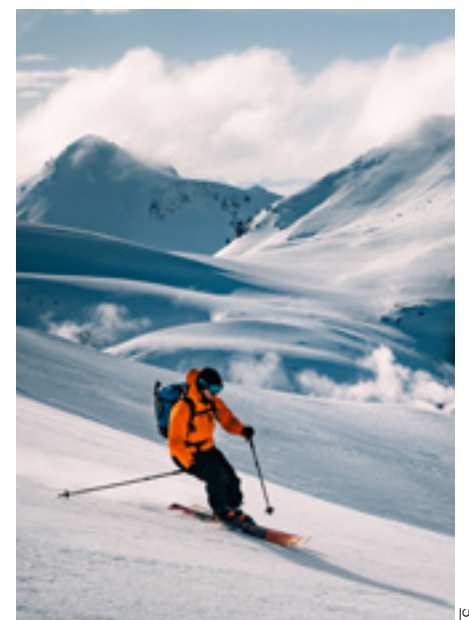
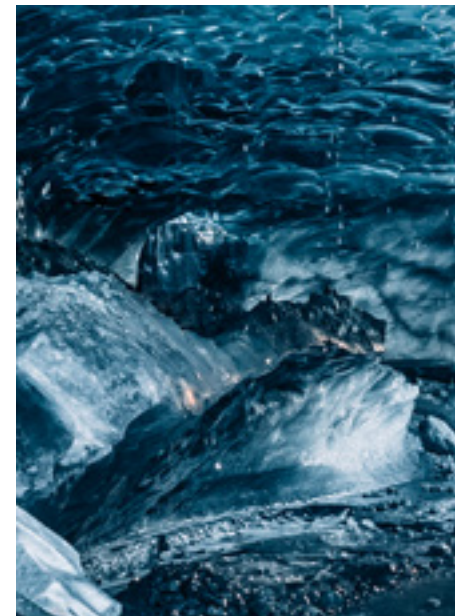
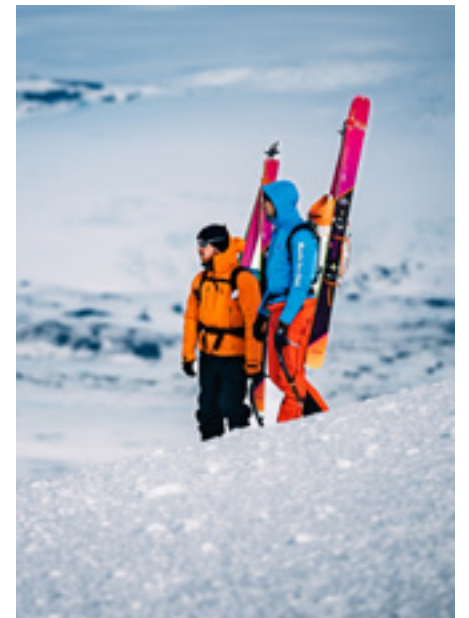
In the evening, as we headed out to explore in the midst of the storm, the fresh snow energized us. We ventured down a mountain road to experience the changing conditions at the blue hour, just after sunset. The winds had loaded 30cm of fresh powder, creating the perfect conditions for skiing. We toured around mellow terrain, skiing while we still had light.

As we drove back to the guesthouse, we reminisced about our magical day and how amazing these conditions were. Suddenly, I remembered a technique I was taught for skiing - being towed behind a vehicle with skis on. Aleš and Rožle were on the rope, and I drove and plowed through the fresh snow. We had another hour of unforgettable skiing in Borgarfjörður Eystri.

We fuelled up, got some groceries, and said goodbye to Blábjörg Guesthouse for now. The storm was forecasted to get calmer in the north of Iceland towards the evening, and we wanted to take advantage of it and use the car as a base, as it is fitted with a four-person roof tent.

During our journey north, we quickly realized that the storm had closed off all roads connecting the two parts of Iceland. However, we held out hope that the roads would open once the storm subsided. After waiting at the base of the road closure for a few hours, we were given the green light to continue our journey north.

Due to bitter cold and poor skiing conditions, we opted for ice climbing the next day at a dramatic location with views over the bay of Húsavík. The 15 kilometer snowy drive was challenging, but we made it to the base by the ocean for a memorable campsite. The following morning was calm and perfect for climbing, and we had an unforgettable experience climbing over breaking waves. After capturing amazing shots and completing





some good climbs, we met up with friends for an off-road adventure.

Since conditions weren't in our favor in the north, we decided to attempt to cross the Icelandic highlands from north to south with our friends, stopping by the beautiful mountain range called Kerlingafjöll to ski there. It took us the whole day to cross the mountain road called Kjölur, but we were rewarded with remote, beautiful landscapes and perfect driving conditions. We arrived at Kerlingafjöll just before sunset and found an amazing camp location to set up for our skiing adventure the following day. We were greeted with an incredible display of the northern lights, despite the severe cold (-20C) and strong winds that made camp life challenging.

Waking up the following day with a clear sky made it all worth it. It was a beautiful day to go exploring. With skis on our backs and crampons on our boots, we set off for the highest peak of Kerlingafjöll. The mountains are geothermal areas and a volcano system located in the central highlands. Steam was coming out of the ground in valleys surrounding us. It was a surreal experience to witness the contrasts of heat and cold all around. Topping out provided us with a view of the central highlands, and more importantly, we got a view of the conditions for our dream plan to traverse further east in the highlands and get to my family mountain hut. The conditions looked great, and the cold temperatures were creating ice bridges over the rivers on our path towards the hut.

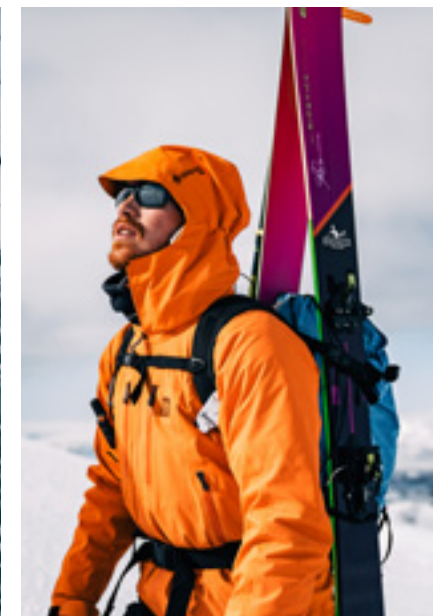
After summiting and taking a moment of silence to meditate, we were ready to enjoy our rewards from the climb and enjoy skiing. As we removed our skins, clipped in our boots, and started skiing, we felt the speed, turns, and crusty snow under our skis. Geothermal steam, sun, views, the wind on our faces, smiles, and laughter. It was an exhilarating experience and felt like skiing on the

edge of the world. Although it wasn't a long slope or the best skiing conditions, we were together, experiencing this magical world called Iceland, and it needed to be celebrated.

As a child, I learned the tradition of having a lamb BBQ during mountain trips from my grandparents. We made sure to leave no trace in the untouched wilderness while cooking the lamb, and sharing the experience with friends brought us closer. During dinner, we joked that seeing the Northern Lights would make our perfect day even more perfect. To our surprise, we witnessed an incredible display of the Aurora Borealis right after finishing our meal. We were left in awe of nature's beauty and realized that embracing it with an open heart is the only way to truly appreciate it.

We still had a long way to go before finishing our Infinite Circle expedition in remote parts of Iceland. But we were drawn to my family's mountain hut to take a break and reflect on our experiences. The weather was calm, but heavy snowfall and zero visibility made driving on the frozen terrain a unique and challenging experience. With the help of GPS tracks from a previous trip, we took our time and made it safely to the hut.

The hut, built by my grandfather and his brothers 40 years ago, is a simple place with just a fireplace for warmth, water from a nearby spring, and electricity from a small solar panel. But it's my absolute favorite place in the world, and the perfect spot for us to reflect on our journey together. We talked about how unique our friendship is, and how even during tough times, the world has a way of helping us heal. We embraced the memory of Jure and how he connected us in a way made this experience happen years later. By respecting each other and nature, we find true fulfillment and happiness. The time we spent in the hut was the perfect ending to our Infinite Circle adventure.







**Glen Plake**

# ALMOST FRENCHMAN

Glen Plake is the most recognizable American skier in the world, thanks in part to his iconic mohawk and punk rock persona. An unexpected trip to Chamonix, France in the mid-1980's proved to be a pivotal moment for skiing and his life. Almost forty years later, Plake is still known for the 'hawk and is still thrilled about the picturesque mountain mecca's challenging terrain and stunning scenery. Now his second home, Plake returns to Chamonix each winter to spend his days skiing, exploring, and sharing his passion for the sport with others.

📷 Ben Fresco    📷 John Norris, Olivier Gough, Glen Plake personal archive



They say the best things in life happen when you least expect it. Glen Plake's version of this adage begins in 1987 in the heart of the French Alps when he unexpectedly found himself in Chamonix, France. He was invited at the last minute as a stand in for an injured skier, to ski in Greg Stump's revolutionary ski film, "The Blizzard of Ahhh's."

At the time, Glen didn't have a lot going on; he was rehabbing a broken leg, pounding nails, and doing whatever else he could to make ends meet while living in his hometown of South Lake Tahoe, California. One day, the phone rang and on the other end of the line was cinematographer Greg Stump, with an invitation to come to Chamonix, France to be part of his next ski film. One of the film's cast members had broken her back and they needed a top-notch skier, fast. In typical punk rock fashion, Glen didn't really care where he was headed. He didn't know much, or anything really, about Chamonix, he just knew he had a fresh passport and needed a change. In no time, he was heading to Cham on a one-way ticket with his gear and he would figure out the rest later. Little did Plake know, this trip would change his life and the sport of skiing forever.

Upon his arrival, Plake encountered a steep learning curve to understand the history of his surroundings. He found himself in "La Capitale Mondiale du ski et de l'alpinisme" (the world capital of skiing and mountaineering) and although he had never heard of Jacques Balmat, the first person to reach the summit of Mont Blanc in 1786, his attitude would change quickly. His respect for the surrounding mountains and those that came before him would grow fast, as would his fondness for the Chamonix village.

"At the time, I could have been rightly described as a typical arrogant American. But after three weeks of filming, everything changed. When the shoot was wrapped, I announced to the entire team on set that I wasn't going home, I was staying in Chamonix," recalls Plake, beginning the story with his characteristic laugh that has become one of his trademarks over the years. In fact, that laughter is such an integral part of him that it even rivals his legendary mohawk.



## Love at First Sight

Chamonix impresses with its fantastic Alpine scenery, watched over by the majestic Mont Blanc, which at 15,774 feet is the highest mountain in Europe west of Russia. Anyone who has ever taken the aerial tramway up to Aiguille du Midi and skied down Vallee Blanche and Mer de Glace knows exactly what we are talking about. Plake quickly fell in love with Chamonix's tremendous beauty and endless possibilities to appreciate fulfilling moments in the mountains. Like his wife Kimberly, he found something that he was truly in harmony with.

For Glen, skiing is a way of life. He has spent his entire career pushing the boundaries of what's possible on skis, and he continues to do so today. Now he is in his 50s, but he still skis with the same energy and enthusiasm as he did when he was a young pro skier. He can often be found skiing the famous Vallee Blanche, a 20-kilometer off-piste run that winds its way down the glacier from the top of the Aiguille du Midi. And Chamonix offers him endless possibilities for incredible outdoor activities.

"It's an exceptional place in all seasons. It all takes place at high altitude, which is just so magical and tempting. You can go skiing, you can go climbing, and do so much other stuff. If I skied Vallee Blanche every day until the day I die, I would certainly die happy," enthuses the American, who has become almost French in a way.

"I was taken by the fantastic nature that surrounds Chamonix. Weather permitting, I ski every day. But beyond that, I am fascinated by another fact, summed up in one sentence by a good friend of mine: 'The best thing about Chamonix is how easy it is to get out of it.' He wanted to say that the logistics here are remarkably simple. You can be in Italy and Switzerland in no time, and you can fly from Geneva to wherever your heart desires."



## Skiing Culturalist

Thanks to his career in skiing and his convenient location in the Alps, Plake has taken advantage of the ease of travel from Chamonix to experience dozens, if not hundreds of unique destinations as well as endless opportunities to emerge himself in different cultures. In this respect, he is a true culturalist who has been welcomed by the local French community.

"I love skiing immensely from many points of view. Learning about different cultures is certainly an extremely important part of it. Skiing has given me a broader view of the world. I enjoy coming to Begunje and being part of Slovenian culture. I just love hanging out with the people who have been making such great skis at Elan for almost 80 years. I have similar feelings in Italy, where I am collaborating with another brand in the development of ski boots. The same goes for Chamonix, which I consider my second home."

"I'm often asked if I'm a fan of the French way of life. Yes, I definitely am. What impresses me most is their easy-going approach to life without a definite plan. This means that everything can change in an instant, which I also find very convenient. At the same time, I have to say that Chamonix is not a typical reflection of the French lifestyle. It is just too international. On Rue du Docteur Paccard, the main promenade, you can hear all the world's languages at any time. And it's this colourful-ness that delights me. I'm aware that I'm a stranger in Chamonix. But I have received a very warm welcome, nevertheless. Kimberly and I live right in the center of town, opposite the town hall, and we enjoy it immensely. We haven't felt like tourists for a long time. We know restaurants that only locals go to, and over the years we've learned to speak French decently enough. We can't hide our American accents, but we can communicate quite well."



## LE CHAMONIARD

We have a joke that comes from the word 'Chamoniard', which in French equates to a resident of Chamonix. In a way, it could also be a compound word of Chamonix, American and Canard (duck). That's why my friends here call me an American-Chamoniard duck."

Although a joke, the nickname is fitting because of Glen's part-time French residency and love of water. In the summer, he has become an accomplished water-skier, cyclist, and has raced the Baja 1000 on both two wheels and four. In the winter, he can be found exploring the Sierra Nevada backcountry and skiing Mammoth Mountain.

"I like to say I have two lives. One above 6,500 feet above sea level and one below that. I certainly can't complain. It's true that I am a skier at heart. But I'm also a kind of amphibian who also enjoys water."

Looking back on how Plake became the most recognizable American skier in the world, it was this unexpected trip to Chamonix to film "The Blizzard of Ahhh's" that proved to be a pivotal moment in his life and had a significant impact on the world of skiing. The movie introduced a new level of athleticism and creativity to the sport, resulting in the modern "Freeskiing" era. Chamonix's challenging terrain, mountain beauty, and endless opportunities to explore fostered Glen's respect for the mountains. And the welcoming community of like-minded skiers who shared his passion for the mountains and appreciation for skiing culture inspired him to make Chamonix his second home.





## Sustainability

# PEOPLE OF ELAN

Elan is a company that has had sustainability in its blood since the very beginning. The company recently made greater strides towards environmental care and social responsibility, but its greatest asset and the foremost driver of sustainability, remains its people.

📍 Eetu Tourunen

📷 Jernej Leskovar



Begunje is a small settlement in the northwest of Slovenia with just over one thousand inhabitants, but the village nestled at the foot of the Slovenian Alps is a special place. It is a place of concentrated creative energy that is home to two global phenomena - the ski manufacturer Elan and, of course, the Avsenik band. Deep down Begunje is closely tied to skiing and that connection can be felt even in the parking lot of Elan's factory that has been setting trends in skiing for almost eighty years.

## MIRAN PRISTAVEC, Production Director



## Connecting Tradition and Innovation

The people whose passion and love for the sport have created this never-ending story are the main drivers of sustainable development for the most innovative brand in the ski industry, as demonstrated by the innovations that have and continue to transform skiing as a sport and an experience. Without the people, their energy, will, knowledge, dedication, imagination and countless ideas, this story would surely have ended long ago. In fact, the only punctuation mark necessary in this story are three dots. The story continues, flows, and always surprises with new beginnings and milestones. It is being created by people who have dedicated their lives to designing the best skis in the world. The founding father Rudi Finžgar got them hooked and now they've continued to build on his work for decades. Among them are top technical experts and engineers, but the most valuable skills they possess are not taught in any school.

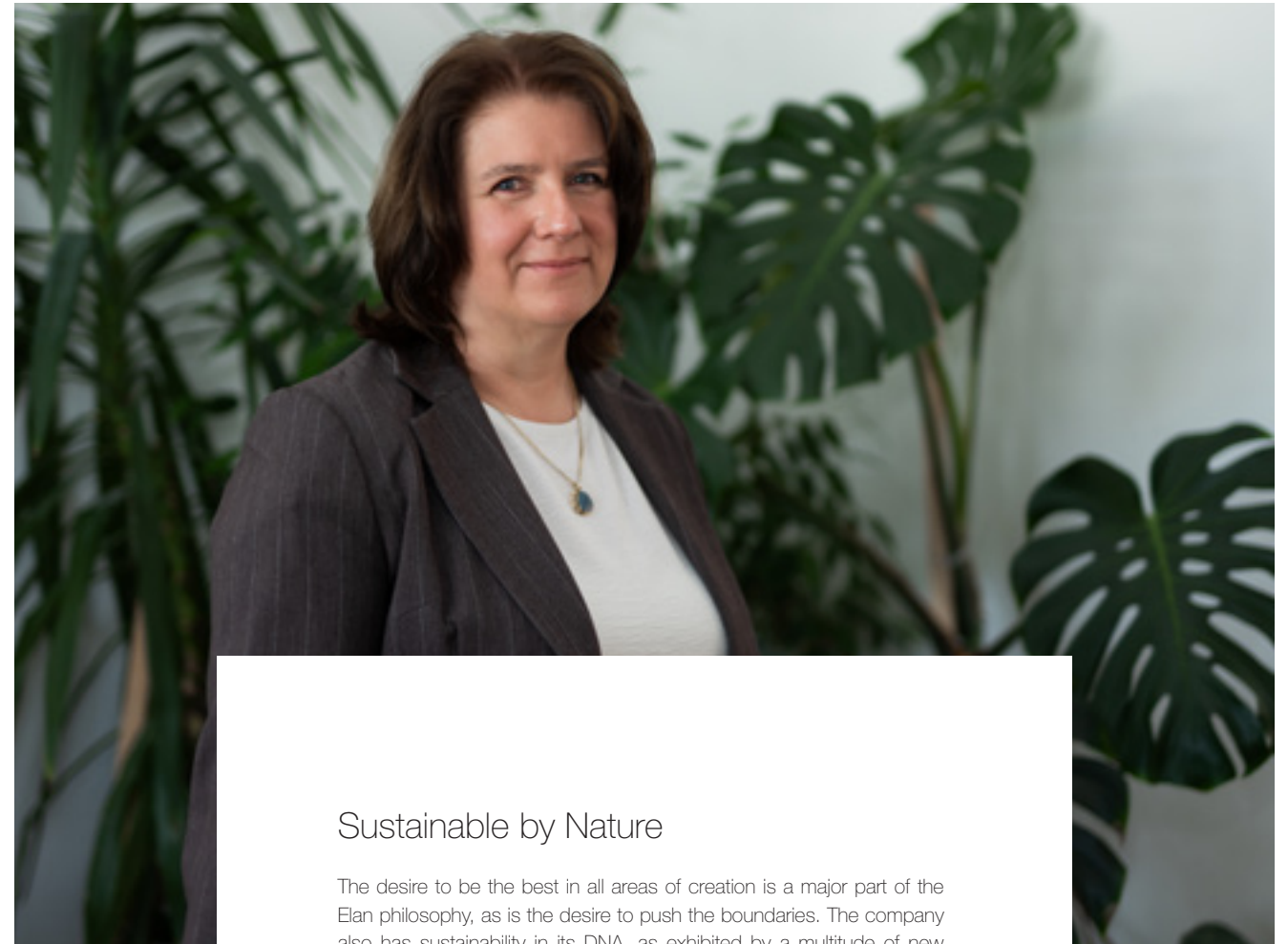
"Making skis is a very specific process. It's not just a matter of applying technical and physical laws. It's about finding the finest sensations that someone who doesn't ski can't know. That's why the love for skiing is so important," begins Miran Pristavec, a mechanical engineer who is Elan's Production Director. At heart he is an athlete, a skier. For a man in his mid-fifties, he is in very good shape, as evident from his firm handshake. "Much of the knowledge and skills are passed down from generation to generation. It's the little secrets that make great masters. Ski making is a process of continuous improvement and in this sense, new generations are improving on what their fathers and grandfathers taught them," he adds.

While the continuous development of local human resources brings new skills and technologies to Elan, the long-term and multi-generational interdependence of the workforce shows that certain processes are at their best when they remain true to tradition. "They are proud of the craftsmanship that is present at every step and today represents a competitive advantage with added value," concludes Pristavec.

The orderliness of the organizational culture, the perseverance and dedication of the employees encourage many of them to start, grow and conclude their personal careers in Begunje. As many as 60% of the employees have been with the company for five years or more, and almost a quarter of them boast twenty years of service or more. The decades-long commitment to the company also forms a permanent basis for improvements and upgrades that place Elan's products at the very top of the world in terms of innovation and quality.



## ANITA JERALA PETERMAN, Head of Purchase



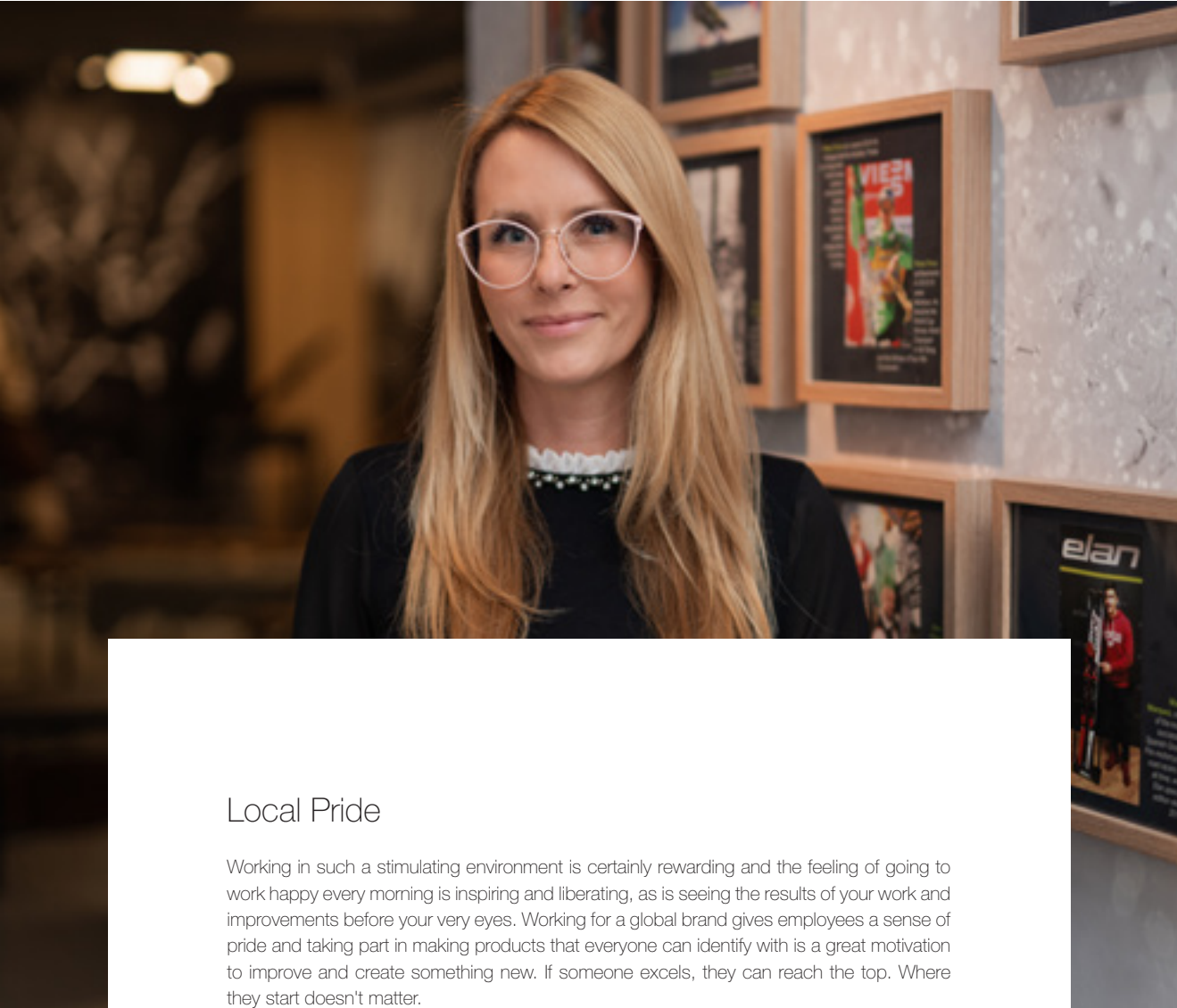
### Sustainable by Nature

The desire to be the best in all areas of creation is a major part of the Elan philosophy, as is the desire to push the boundaries. The company also has sustainability in its DNA, as exhibited by a multitude of new technologies, practices, and ways of working that support responsible development. But it is ambition that pushes us to take new and bigger steps. So, Elan has set new goals that make it easier for the company to identify potential reserves and new opportunities, thus gaining extra confidence based on a genuine concern for the environment and people. The employees have welcomed the new initiatives, and many are actively involved with new ideas and are eagerly working with others. All this further increases the global reach of their initiatives and actions.

Elan sources most raw materials and components from partners within 400 kilometers of the factory and its facilities are powered by renewable energy sources. "It's a fact that ski production is primarily a European industry. That's why it is a bit easier for us to source raw materials and components from partners located close by. But when we choose business partners, we are increasingly interested in their commitment to sustainability, their attitude toward the environment, and the percentage of recycled materials they use. We also know that these are slow processes that cannot be changed overnight," explains Anita Jerala Peterman, who has worked her entire career at Elan where she currently manages the purchasing department as one of the main promoters of sustainability. "Of course, we are also working to raise awareness among our customers, who we want to be able to recognize that our skis are made in an environmentally friendly way."



**REBEKA LAH,**  
Brand Deployment & Alpine Ski Museum Manager



Local Pride

Working in such a stimulating environment is certainly rewarding and the feeling of going to work happy every morning is inspiring and liberating, as is seeing the results of your work and improvements before your very eyes. Working for a global brand gives employees a sense of pride and taking part in making products that everyone can identify with is a great motivation to improve and create something new. If someone excels, they can reach the top. Where they start doesn't matter.

"In these terms, career development is the cornerstone of Elan's growth and has traditionally been embedded in the company's organizational culture. We are always working hard to maintain long-term employment to ensure motivation and business stability. Approximately 91 percent of the workers involved in the production process are on permanent contracts, the company allocates over 2,000 hours to additional training and follows the highest occupational safety standards to ensure a safe working environment. At Elan we have the utmost respect for the local knowledge of our people and their commitment to the company. Elan is an integral part of Slovenian alpine heritage and culture. The rich history of sporting and business successes fills the halls of the Elan Alpine Ski Museum year after year. As it records its history, the company's focus for the future relies on intergenerational cooperation. Today the company employs the third generation of Elan people," explains Rebeka Lah, Brand Deployment Manager at Elan.

While the continuous development of local human resources brings new skills and technologies to Elan, the long-term and multi-generational interdependence of the workforce shows that certain processes are at their best when they remain true to tradition. The company is committed to furthering the development of ski culture and the maintenance of a successful skiing tradition in Slovenia and beyond.

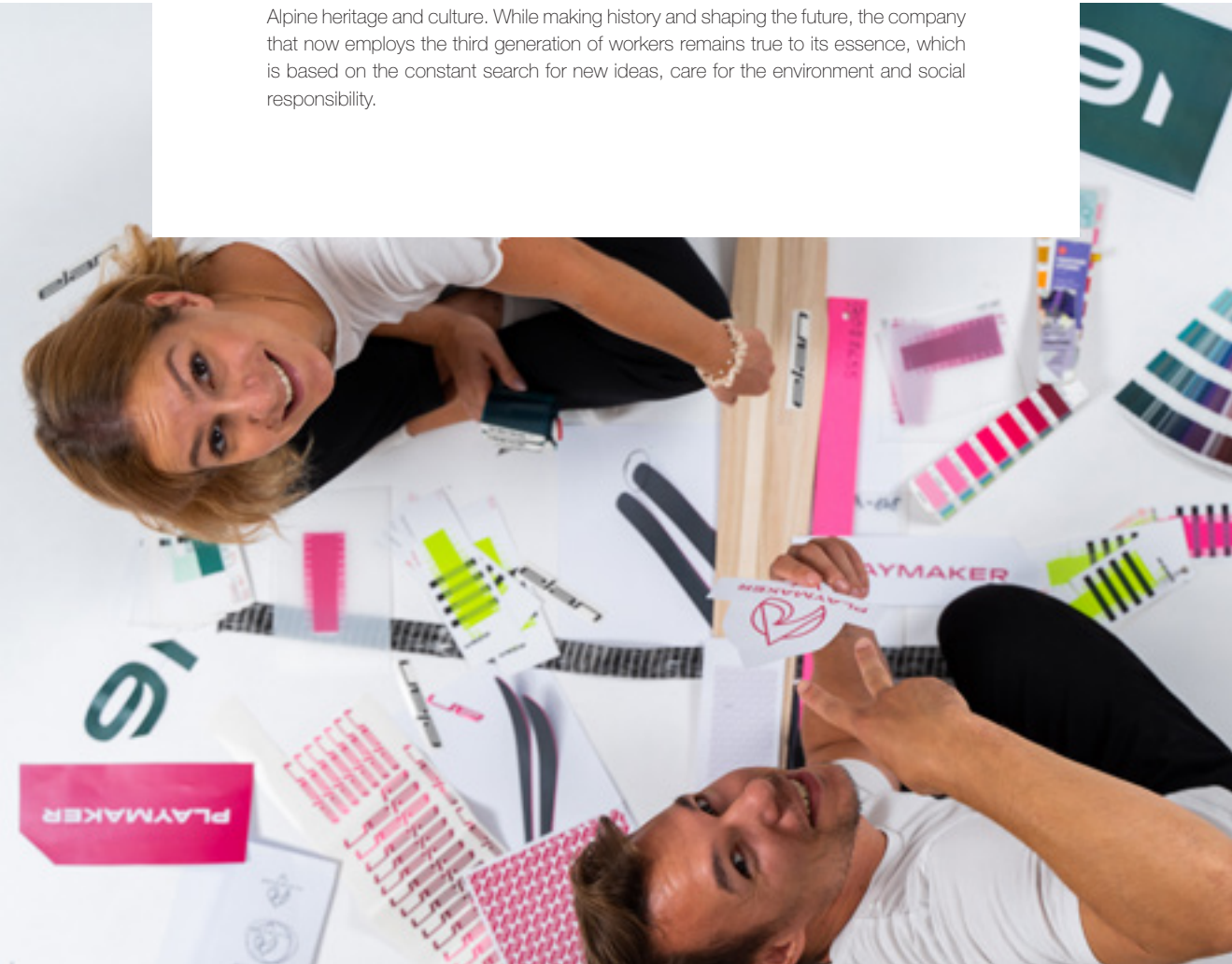
Gender Equality

Skiing is not a male-dominated sport, although the ski industry often gives the opposite impression. The contribution of women at the levels of strategy, design, production, and user experience has been one of the greatest drivers of Elan's innovation and development over the past two decades. They were the first in the industry to recognize the need for innovative products developed specifically for women. The concept has since evolved into the creation of a women's ski community that encourages and empowers female skiers to pursue skiing and sport in general with confidence and passion.

That is why women are equally involved in strategic decision-making, creative, development, and production positions. 27 percent of decision-making positions at Elan are held by women, and they are just as indispensable in craftsmanship skills - each Elan ski goes through up to 96 pairs of hands in the production process, and up to 58 percent of those belong to women.

The creative concept of W Studio, which brings together a dedicated team of women with different skills and interests, has been designing solutions tailored to the needs of female skiers for 20 years. An inclusive internal culture has led to market solutions that bring skiing closer to a growing number of women around the world.

These are all reasons why Elan has earned a reputation as a global ski innovator over its eight decades of existence while also becoming an integral part of Slovenia's Alpine heritage and culture. While making history and shaping the future, the company that now employs the third generation of workers remains true to its essence, which is based on the constant search for new ideas, care for the environment and social responsibility.





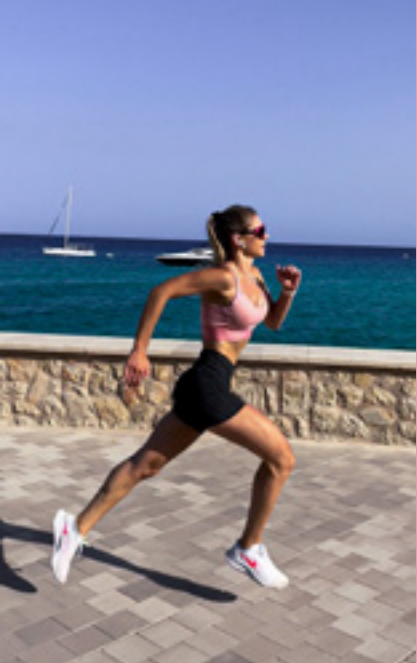


## Funky Interview

# MUCH MORE THAN A SKIER

Lea Bouard is a freestyle skier who competed at the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics. With Franco-German blood flowing through her veins, she has competed for both France and Germany throughout her extensive career. She sees skiing as a form of dancing on snow, but Lea is more than just a skier. She is a fun-loving girl who enjoys the outdoors. In summer, she swaps her skis for a surfboard and catches waves to work on her balance, which comes in handy when skiing over bumps. As a member of Elan's W Studio, she created her own vision of the Ripstick 94W skis as part of the We Create project that perfectly captures her dynamic lifestyle and her unique blend of love and passion for winter and summer, for the mountains and the sea. For Lea, no winter is too cold and no summer too hot.





**WHICH THREE WORDS WOULD YOU USE TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF?**  
Positive, fun-loving, and open-minded.

**WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF SKIING?**  
My passion is indescribable, it's all at once, freedom, joy, adrenaline...

**DID YOU HAVE ANY ROLE MODELS WHILE GROWING UP?**  
No, but I watched a lot of what the boys were doing and copied it.

**WHAT DOES SPEED MEANS TO YOU?**  
Adrenaline, I want always more. More speed means more adrenaline.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SKIING MOMENT?**  
Skiing deep powder on a bluebird sky.

**COULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PERFECT SKIING DAY?**  
When I can share my passion with other freeriders on a sunny powder day. I like feeling happy and seeing others smile as well.

**YOUR BEST AND WORST SKIING MEMORY?**  
The best of the best was being alone at the top of the mountain in British Columbia before riding my biggest and steepest line.  
The second-best memory was when I was Dual Moguls World Champion in 2019 Universiade as a mogul skier. Reaching the top step of the podium is indescribable!  
My worst memory was when I broke my collarbone 2014. It was the first time I broke something. It's not the feeling of having broken something that's the worst, but the feeling of knowing that the season is over, and I couldn't ski for a month.

**WHAT WOULD YOU BE IF YOU WERE NOT A SKIER?**  
I would be a dancer, because for me, skiing is dancing on snow. It's the same thing! I have loved to dance since the day I was born.

**WHO WOULD YOU VOTE FOR AS THE BEST SKIER OF ALL TIME?**  
Candide Thovex.

**WHAT OTHER SPORTS DO YOU DO?**  
Dancing, trail running, cycling, mountain biking, yoga, surfing ...

**WHEN THE WINTER IS OVER, DO YOU START COUNTING DOWN TO THE NEXT ONE OR DO YOU LOOK FORWARD TO THE SUMMER?**  
I love all board sports, so I need the summer break to surf and longboard in beautiful places. But of course, four months is far too long not to ski, so I'm looking forward to going to the glaciers in the summer.

**WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE SUMMER ACTIVITIES?**  
I hate just lying on a beach or anywhere else and do nothing. I am always on the move; I travel to explore the world. I follow the flow and the vibe of always having good times, even in the summer.

**WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SUMMER AND WINTER PLACE?**  
My favorite winter spot is where I call home: the French Alps. Because I love coming back at the end of my ski trips to wash my things and to do my papers and my professional appointments. Just kidding, that's not the fun part of coming home.  
It's home because I feel safe again and it feels good to see my family and all the people I love again. Friends are important in life, and they will

always support your choices, but also give you good advice when you have doubts.  
My favorite summer place is Hossegor. It is where I go almost every summer in September after the holidays to surf.

**WHAT WAS YOUR LAST VACATION?**  
Hossegor last September.

**WHERE WOULD YOU GO IF YOU HAD A WEEKEND, A WEEK, AND A MONTH – AND MONEY WAS NO OBJECT?**  
I would take my stuff and explore every country and every city. I would travel around the world.

**HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE YOUR PERSONAL STYLE?**  
Difficult to say, it depends on my current mood and plans. It can be streetwear, sportswear, trendy girly glam, casual chic, elegant, or sexy.

**DO YOU WEAR JEWELRY, OR DO YOU HAVE A LUCKY CHARM?**  
I have a bracelet, necklace, earrings, rings, and I never take them off even for skiing and sports! I prefer gold or silver and good quality, so I don't lose them and do not have to change them. My lucky charm is my little "sun" tattoo just under the collarbone that I broke, to remind me in the morning when I look in the mirror that I'm a little sunshine and everything will be fine.

**WHAT DO YOU DO FOR CHARITY AND FOR REDUCING YOUR CARBON FOOTPRINT?**  
I travel by public transport when possible, carpooling, walking, or cycling when possible. I practice composting and recycling and I do my shopping in organic supermarkets.

**WHICH IS YOUR FAVORITE SPORTS TEAM (HOCKEY, FOOTBALL, BASKETBALL ...) ?**  
To be honest, I don't have a TV, so I never watch these sports... I always watch skiing to improve myself.

**LAST BOOK, MOVIE, CONCERT, THEATRE, EXHIBITION?**  
I never watch movies, don't do concerts, theatre, or exhibitions. I don't have the time, or I don't take the time for that. I'd rather be outside. Last book was in 2020 during the Covid quarantine, something about your mindset. I love to draw and the last time I painted was also during Covid because I had a lot of time.

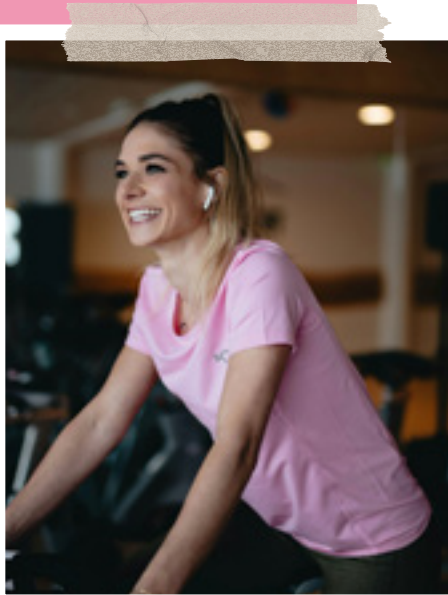
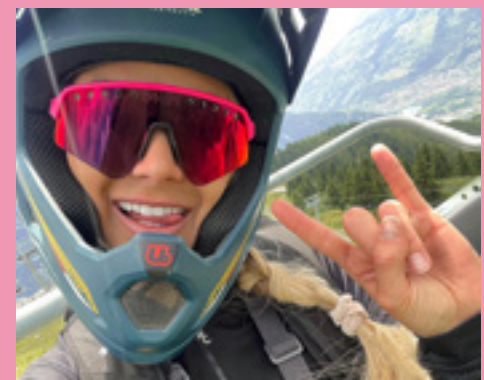
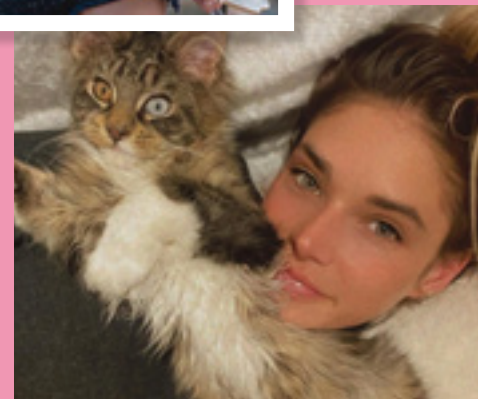
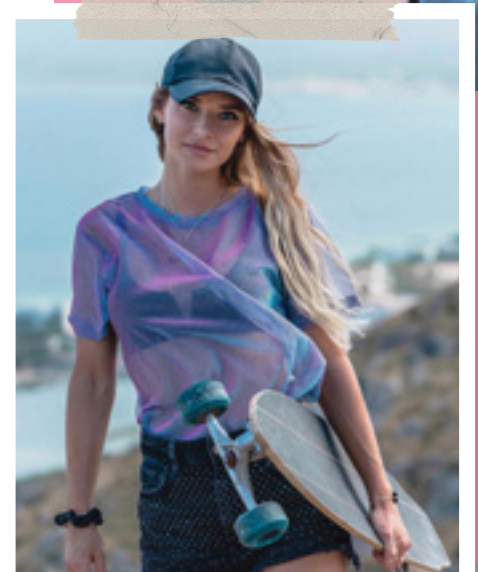
**DO YOU HAVE ANY PETS?**  
I have a big cat with odd eyes, a little fluffy tiger because it's a Maine Coon.

**DO YOU COOK YOURSELF?**  
Yes, I love to cook and do some baking.

**WHAT IS THE BEST DISH YOU MAKE?**  
Risotto with noix de Saint-Jacques.

**WHAT ARE YOU MOST IN AWE OF?**  
Being part of the extreme sports movie titled Human Extreme.

**WHAT IS YOUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE IN LIFE?**  
Success and failure are two sides of the same coin.







### Primetime 55 & N°5 / On-Piste

Primetime 55 and Primetime N°5 rule in edge-to-edge quickness and deliver elite carving capacity with a smooth energetic feel, with no speed limits. These are the most exact skis in the Elan on-piste category.



### Sky + Maxx Blue / Kids' skis

The most innovative kids' skis available in the market now look like mommy's and daddy's skis. Thanks to Elan's patented U-Flex technology, young skiers can fully flex the ski allowing them to feel the sensation of carving from their very first turn, on skis that look just like mom and dad's. 25% more flex, 250% more fun.



### Ace SCX

It's time to shift gears! The ACE SCX is built with racing DNA and has the power & control to take charge of the piste. This crossover between a short and long turn ski allows you to choose what kind of turn you make with perfection.



### Wildcat 82 CX + EON pro blue + Hotrod blue

Designed by women, the Wildcat 82 CX is developed to reign supreme as a master of all-mountain performance in any condition and terrain with quickness and grip. Together with matching Eon Pro blue women-specific helmet and Hotrod blue ski pole, you can enjoy your day on the mountain in style.



### Ripstick 96 Black Edition

Premium style and timeless design are merged with a state-of-the-art carbon construction that takes the Ripsticks' performance and versatility to the next level providing unsurpassed power and stability. The Ripstick 96 Black Edition is ready to over-deliver on their promise to skiers looking for the ultimate, all-conditions freeride ski.



### Ripstick Tour 94W

The Ripstick Tour was created for touring skiers with the intent to deliver the superior downhill performance of a freeride ski at a fraction of the weight for uphill efficiency. Ripstick Tour 94W is designed for adventurous women who want all the benefits of lightweight technology in a wider chassis designed for bigger mountains and deeper snow.



### Playmaker 101

Playmaker 101 perfectly blends the confident performance of a freeride ski with the surfy personality of a freestyle twin. From pillows and spines to wind lips and jump lines the 101 waist delivers the versatility to crush top-to-bottom laps in any condition and terrain and makes Playmaker the ultimate tool for skier that blend elements of freestyle and freeride into every run.



### Wingman 82 Ti Eco construction story

Ideal for effortless all mountain carving and cruising, the Wingman 82 Ti has the power to push your limits without a punishing feel. The ski is one of the new Wingman models, which reinforces Elan's commitment to more sustainable ski production. All wood used in production is sustainably sourced and traceable, with guaranteed reforestation. The Wingman 82Ti also utilizes digital printing which reduces volatile organic chemical waste, along with transparency in the graphic to further limit the amount of ink used in production, which is powered by renewable energy and uses Elan's solar power plant to provide 25% of its own electricity.





## Elan Museum

# GLORY DAYS

In 1980 Bojan Križaj scored the first Slovenian victory in a World Cup race at the Wengen slalom. The following year he did it again. In both cases, he was propelled to victory by the legendary Elan RC05 skis.

 Rebeka Lah     Archive Elan

I had a poster of Bojan Križaj on the wall above my bed in my room as a child. In my own little world, this was the ultimate image of sports; Bojan on the steep slope of Wengen, speeding to victory on his RC zero-fives. That hundred and twenty-fifth of a second in which the master photographer Egon Kaše captured the fight of one of the best Slovenian skiers of all time on one of the most notorious slalom courses has become legendary.

I was eight years old in 1980. Like every kid at the time, I fantasized about becoming Bojan on the tiny hill in front of our block. Well, he raced on slightly more challenging slopes. He had the dubious fortune of racing in the era of the unbeatable giant Ingemar Stenmark. Despite the Swede's superiority over his rivals, it was only a matter of time before that elusive number 1 would light up alongside Bojan's name. Then came that Sunday in January when it all finally came together. The skills, the talent, the courage, and all the endless turns he made between the gates on the icy slopes of Zelenica above his hometown of Tržič finally paid off. With number 6 on his chest, Bojan raced down the Wengen track in a kind of controlled rodeo and on that day even the great Ingemar Stenmark could do nothing but watch and in the end reach out a sporting hand to congratulate Bojan on his piece of history. For the people of Slovenia, the win was nothing short of spectacular. It was the first time a Slovenian skier won a World Cup race.

With his trademark his blonde hair blowing in the wind, Bojan skied with a unique combination of elegance, passion, feeling, determination, and courage. Not only were helmets not compulsory in slaloms at that time, but no one even thought of using one. Bojan didn't even wear a hat. Uninformed critics claimed he was often betrayed by stage fright, but they had no idea what they were talking about. At the time, the crowds at World Cup races were enormous. The view from the starting hut towards the valley must have been terrifying. A skier had to have nerves of steel and a remarkable ability to concentrate to be able to do their best under such pressure. In Bojan's case, the pressure was even greater because as a young man of just twenty-three, he carried on his shoulders the expectations, wishes, and aspirations of an entire nation for which skiing was a major part of its national consciousness and identity. In this respect the magnitude of his victory was even greater.

Every victory has its share of positive side-effects, including relaxation, relief, and faith that together create a special form of confidence. The following year the scene was set for the second act of Križaj's Wengen story. Perhaps this was even more inspiring than the first.

"In 1981 I raced in the Kitzbühel downhill just before Wengen and I crashed quite hard. I came to Switzerland bruised; my whole body was sore. So, after the first run of the Wengen slalom, where I defended my victory from a year ago, I only came 10th," recalls Križaj. The rest is history. That year he achieved one of the most memorable victories in the history of the World Cup. Back then, the top five finishers from the first run started the second run in

reverse order. After five runs, it looked like Ingemar Stenmark was going to win. Then Luxembourg's Marc Girardelli caused a commotion with a superb ride to overtake the legendary Swede. But his joy was short lived. Bojan Križaj stood in the start hut with number 2 on his chest. His eyes were calm, focused, and determined. It was as if he knew the labyrinth of red and blue gates by heart. That famous steep run, on which mere mortals can barely stand, seemed almost flat. And then, for the second year in a row, the number 1 lit up next to the name Križaj.

Bojan Križaj remains the most successful Slovenian male skier in history. In addition to Wengen, he also won at other classic venues in his career, including Kranjska Gora, Madonna di Campiglio, and Kitzbühel. In 1982, he won the silver medal at the World Championships in Schladming. In the winter of 1986/87, he won the small crystal globe as the world's best slalom racer. In total, he achieved 8 World Cup victories in his career, all in slalom, making him the third most successful slalom skier of his generation.

These are the stories that make up Elan's history. These are the stories on display at the Elan Alpine Ski Museum in Begunje, Slovenia.

### **BOJAN'S RC05**

Bojan Križaj achieved both of his Wengen victories on Elan RC05 skis. The legendary black, two-meter-long RC zero-fives were the archetype of an outstanding slalom ski. "For me, confidence in the equipment was key. This was especially important on steep and icy slopes like Wengen. I also had the best advisor and confidant in my technician Miran Gašperšič, who had a wealth of technical skills and detailed knowledge of the structure of the skis. He was always able to advise me on the choice of skis, and his advice almost always proved to be correct and sound," Križaj recalls. The RC05 skis that the Slovenian ace raced and won with are also on display at the Elan Museum.





# JUST ONE PAIR OF SKIS

Many years have passed since the end of my career. Sometimes it seems like it all happened in some other life. Nevertheless, every now and then some unusual detail comes to mind from the days when I was still an active skier. I put my racing skis away in 1989, and skiing has really changed a lot in just over three decades. Just the look of the skis says it all. Compared to today's skis, our two-meter skis look like some strange planks. Skiing is a kind of scientific and technical sport in which a lot depends on the equipment. Modern competitors spend much of their time testing and choosing equipment. They come to each race with a fairly large number of skis, from which they can choose those that are most suitable for the snow and weather conditions prevailing on a given day.

When I look at all this equipment I start to think of the years when I started competing in the World Cup. I remembered an anecdote that seems completely impossible nowadays, but it is real. In the 1974/75 season, I skied on a single pair of skis in all the races - in all slaloms and giant slaloms. They were white Elan skis with the green Impulse logo. I actually had two pairs, but for about fifteen races I always rode with only one pair. Back then, slalom and giant slalom skis didn't differ as much as they do today. However, the slalom skis were 205 centimeters long, the giant slalom skis were five centimeters longer. Slalom skis were made only of wood and fiberglass, while giant slalom skis had an additional layer of material. For the most part, all my competitors in each discipline skied the appropriate skis. From that point of view, I was kind of a maverick or a black sheep. I still don't know why it suited me at the time. I couldn't even say that I got more attached to a certain pair, because the other one was also excellent, and above all, the same. I didn't even consider myself particularly superstitious. I just got used to that pair and it didn't make any sense for me to change skis. And since I only had two pairs, I had that second pair, which was practically untouched, as a backup. Of course, we prepared the skis anew before each race and, of course, we sharpened the edges. At the end of the season, they were as thin as a needle. At that time, edges were not made of one piece, but consisted of many parts about three centimeters long. At the spring races, they were already so worn out that they started to fall out. I had no choice but to hammer them back into place before the race. At that time I didn't have Jure Vogelnik who took such a good care of my skis almost all my career, so I came up with some useful and handy tricks myself. Since the strategy of one pair of skis in all slalom and giant slalom races was so successful, I used it in the following season as well.

Later in my career I switched to using different skis for slalom and giant slalom. But even then, I only had two pairs of skis for each discipline in each season and one more pair as a reserve. In fact, I have never owned more than six pairs of skis in one season in my fifteen-year career. They impressed me again and again with their exceptional quality and, above all, with the fact that they were always the same. Due to their superior driving characteristics, I could completely always rely on them, which definitely boosted my overall confidence.

*Ingemar Stenmark*



Mt. Bachelor USA  
Bode Barrett



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