

## ■ Colorado Homegrown

If you want to truly participate in snow localism, take a look at these skis, boards and more from brands based and manufacturing right here in the Centennial State. These local goods reflect the ethics of the natives—they are built to perform in all the conditions you can find on Colorado's high mountains and speak to an ethic of sustainability alongside core riding.

By Doug Schnitzspahn

### 1. Liberty Skis

Based in Avon, Colorado, and founded with a focus on delivering high-performance twin tips, Liberty has proven that local boards can have global appeal, selling strong across North America, Europe and Asia. The skis marry a freestyle attitude with big-mountain chops, an aesthetic you'll see manifested in local style but not necessarily reflected in the offerings of mass-market brands that are looking to build skis for more mainstream demographics. Plus, Liberty scores some authentic green cred by running a wind-powered operation and featuring light, eco-friendly bamboo cores in the skis. Coming in with dimensions of 135/105/122, the slightly rockered, all-mountain Helix typifies the brand's Colorado-centric philosophy, proving its mettle on everything from screaming groomers to deep backcountry. [libertyskis.com](http://libertyskis.com)

### 2. Venture Snowboards

For the past decade (before extreme resort Silverton even existed) Lisa and Klemens Branner have been crafting boards in Silverton and testing them in the local San Juan backcountry. The couple places a high premium on sustainability, insisting on using only Forest Stewardship Council certified wood for its cores and paying for wind power. The split board Storm-R is the crowning glory of the brand's forged-in-the-backcountry ethos. A split that assembles quickly, it features a stiff midsection and tail to give it some guts in garbage snow. A touch of rocker, a softer, wider nose and generous stance offset mean it will absolutely float in powder. [venturesnowboards.com](http://venturesnowboards.com)

### 3. Icelantic

AT is elbowing telemark off the table for the means by which skiers access the backcountry—especially here in Colorado where lifelong alpine skiers and aging telemarkers ... get it? A.T.) want to explore the big terrain beyond the gates. Icelantic arose to fill that need, an AT-specific brand based in the Front Range that delivers via boards decorated with top sheets straight out of The Lord of the Rings. [icelanticboards.com](http://icelanticboards.com)

### 4. Never Summer Snowboards

Named for that always alluring but hard to reach range of peaks beyond Rocky Mountain National Park, Never Summer (which began building snowboards in Denver way back before they were even legal at the resorts in 1983) is one of a handful of independent snowboard brands to thrive in the shadow of Burton and other big names. A lot of that success has to do with the company's commitment to a Colorado state of mind. The all-mountain SL-R, for example, offers stability in untracked or in-area, thanks to its supple flex and unique rocker combined with camber. [neversummer.com](http://neversummer.com)

### 5. FlyLow Gear

Ok, so FlyLow is not manufactured in Colorado. Like most apparel it's made in Asia (unlike with hardgoods it is extremely rare to find mass-produced technical apparel *not* made overseas due to the sourcing of fabrics). But the backcountry company is heavily rooted here since local founders Greg Steen and Dan Abrams test and develop all the product in their home mountains (look for them on Berthoud Pass). FlyLow's Higgins jacket is something you won't find anywhere else, at least. It looks and performs like a hard shell, repelling the elements and breathing when you sweat, but it's a soft shell, allowing for stretch and comfort when you chug through back-county laps. [flylowgear.com](http://flylowgear.com)

### 6. Rocky Mountain Underground

Want a pair of RMU skis? Join the club. Literally. This young company builds its skis only by special order for its members. To join, you need to prove you can hang with the other members. Good luck. [rmuskis.com](http://rmuskis.com)

