

Bright colors and hard-working fabrics are key trends in cross-country skiwear

Both familiar and innovative features will greet cross-country skiers shopping for new apparel this fall. "Traditional, functional garments will be readily available, but watch out for big surprises in color," says skiwear expert Barbara Alley.

"While there's still plenty of navy blue, red and forest green to be found, cross-country garments also come in neon brights and icy pastels. It's an exciting and varied palette of colors," she adds.

"Cross-country skiwear dressing systems are based on layering functional garments on top of each other and adding or removing them, depending on the level of activity," says Alley.

"Each layer must perform well on its own and in combination with other layers. Layers can also be used to make a fashion statement."

Long underwear, she observes, is a good example. "New fabric technology has improved old-fashioned long johns, with fabrics that pull perspiration away from the skin, and keep the wearer warm. They've become increasingly important in long underwear design."

"Synthetics from a variety of manufacturers are the latest favorites, and each year their properties improve. Even silk is a high performance skiwear fabric favored

by many cross-country skiers," she observes.

One-piece suits popular

In addition to performance and versatility in layers next to the skin, cross-country skiers will also find new silhouettes and garments to add to their outerwear collections, notes Alley.

"Growing in popularity is the roomy one-piece powder suit, which can either be worn over a sweater and long underwear or as a true shell garment, worn over stretch pants and a pullover shell."

The newest suits feature blousy tops and big shoulders, high-tech fabrics and low bulk/high warmth insulations, she says. "The best powder suits also come with extra zippered pockets for carrying gear. Zippers and snaps themselves are hard-working and durable since garments come on and off frequently during the day. Hide-away hoods and stirrups on pant legs for snug fit are other popular features."

Another silhouette growing in popularity is the stretchy, one-piece, skintight racing suit, which allows the ultimate in freedom of movement as well as streamlining the skier's body to increase speed.

"Stretch fabrics are also being used to make knickers and bib overalls for cross-country skiers who want the comfort of

stretch without the overall racing look," Alley says. "These suits are also ideal candidates for layering fleeced-lined warm-up suits or other shell garments."

Accessories show innovations

Innovations in accessories for cross-country skiers include more sophisticated fibers in gloves, mittens, leg gaiters and socks which continue to follow the low bulk/high warmth, high absorption principle.

"Apply the layering principle to accessories," advises Alley. "Glove or mitten liners made of an absorbent synthetic, for example, combined with a lightweight leather glove or mitten shell, allow for maximum flexibility and warmth."

Wool continues to be the most popular and practical material for hats, which can also be lined with synthetics or another material to keep them comfortable.

"Accessories for carrying gear, like fanny packs and knapsacks, as well as sunglasses and leg gaiters, are practical and add a fashion element," says Alley.

"Accessories may also be the place where the skier can choose to add a new color to his wardrobe. A sweater or hat in a new neon bright could be a fun accent to a traditional neutral-toned outfit."

Ski accessories

This year's new hot colors and hi-tech fabric engineering, featured in jackets, pants and boots, show up in skiing accessories as well, says skiwear expert Barbara Alley.

"Accessories are just as important in a skier's outfit as are major clothing items," Alley says. "Leg and neck gaiters, gloves, hats and sweaters all help keep moisture and cold out and body heat in, and belt and fanny packs carry keys, wallets and snacks while keeping hands free."

Skiwear fashion trends for the 1985-86 season carry through in accessories, Alley adds.

"The same bright yellows and other neon brights, pale 'ice cream' pastels and functional neutrals found in outerwear also show up in accessories that can match the rest of an outfit completely, comple-

ment or contrast it."

Gloves, for example, might feature a racing stripe design contrasting with the black, navy, dark green or fire-engine red that makes up most of the article.

Hints for longer lasting ski goggles

Your goggles will be more effective and will last longer if you:

- Read and save all manufacturer's literature.
- Keep the goggles in the bag or case provided when not in use.
- Use anti-fog cloth or solution only when and as recommended.
- Be careful not to scratch the inside

surface of the anti-fog lenses or to touch them with your fingers.

- Replace lenses when cracked or severely scratched.
- Avoid wearing goggles on your forehead or hat when not in use; keep them in their bag inside your parka.
- If iced on the inside, put the goggles inside your parka until they've thawed, then shake them dry.



KID-TESTED SKI EQUIPMENT means performance, comfort and durability. Photo courtesy of Raichle Ski Boots, Head Skis and Tyrolia Bindings. Photo by Dave Lokey.

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