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PSIA Telemark Team member Jim Shaw

LINDA GUERRETTE

# Why NTN Technology is a Game-Changer

By Jim Shaw

**A**dvancements in gear and technology over the past several decades propelled telemark from its historic roots as a method of transportation into a modern sport. Through this rapid evolution, telemark skiing maintained its distinct style

and movement patterns – but the way skier’s step into their bindings has changed. The most recent technological evolution involves boots and bindings – and it’s truly transformational. There’s no question that New Telemark Norm, or NTN, is taking over the sport. Here’s how you can educate your students about this telemark game-changer.

If you enjoy touring, most NTN bindings have a free-pivot tour mode for increased uphill efficiency. “Tech toe” pin holes borrow technology from alpine touring systems to let you attach into a pin binding system, like 22 Designs’ Lynx, for a frictionless and lightweight touring set-up. Other bindings, like 22 Designs’ Outlaw X, have a free-pivot system and will work with any NTN boot.

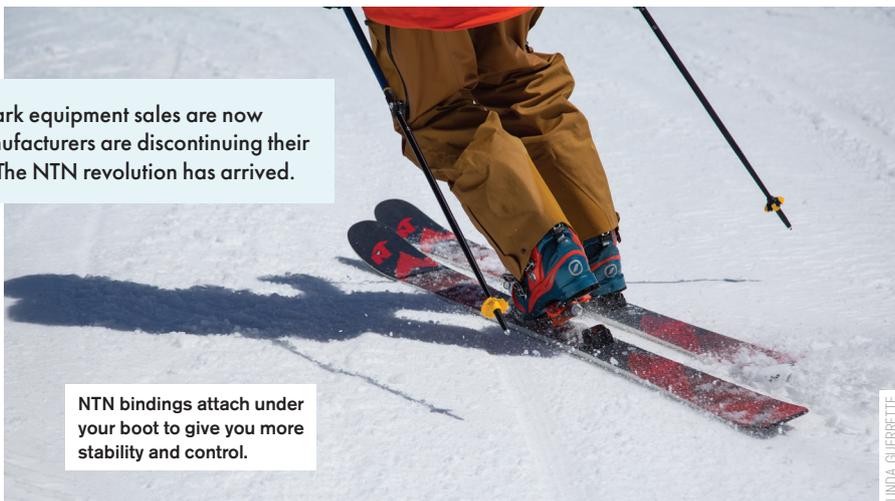
**IN THE ARTICLE**

- ▶ Thanks to NTN boots and bindings, learning to telemark ski is easier than ever.
- ▶ NTN binding systems offer more accuracy and control, making telemark skiing more enjoyable.
- ▶ Now is the time to educate your students on NTN binding systems.

**WHAT’S SO SPECIAL ABOUT NTN?**

The NTN boot is similar to its 75mm predecessor in that they’re both plastic boots with a tall cuff for solid downhill performance. The main difference? You can step into your bindings, so you don’t need to bend over to clip in or adjust cables. The NTN binding system will also release if you take a tumble, and most NTN bindings give you the option to add brakes, meaning you no longer need a leash to prevent runaway equipment. Another benefit of the NTN system is that the binding attaches under the foot of your boot to give you more control on the descent.

75% of telemark equipment sales are now NTN and manufacturers are discontinuing their 75mm styles. The NTN revolution has arrived.



NTN bindings attach under your boot to give you more stability and control.

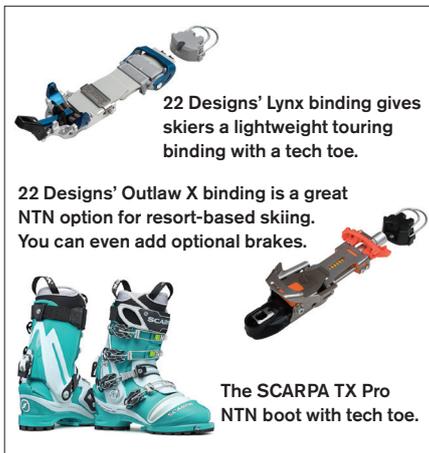
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## FROM PINHEAD TO NTN CONVERT

Thirty years ago, telemark skiers referred to themselves as “pinheads” a nickname that came from how the tele boot attached to the binding. A system of three pins on the underside of the boot toe locked the boot in place when clamped down.

Technology has progressed season to season. Equipment like cable bindings, compression springs, and plastic boots were all part of tele skiers’ search for more accuracy, control, and enjoyment when descending. With the development of the NTN boot and binding, pinheads are now in step with step-in bindings and brakes... just like their alpine counterparts. But – like telemark skiers through the ages – we’ll always have the freedom of free heels.

– Jim Shaw



22 Designs’ Lynx binding gives skiers a lightweight touring binding with a tech toe.

22 Designs’ Outlaw X binding is a great NTN option for resort-based skiing. You can even add optional brakes.

The SCARPA TX Pro NTN boot with tech toe.

### WHY SHOULD YOUR STUDENTS CARE?

The sensation of tele skiing is one of softness, with all of the joints free to move through a greater range of motion. It’s a beautiful sport, and your role as an instructor is to educate your students and help make learning to tele easier and more fun – to create lifelong adventures through education.

The NTN binding system lets your students step in, just like they would with an alpine binding. And brakes mean they don’t need to attach their leash. NTN systems are easier to use, more convenient, and give skiers more control over their skis. What’s not to love? So, it’s time to educate your students so they can make the decision of what’s best for them. Will

they choose NTN? To me, it’s a no brainer. NTN has changed the sport! **32**

Based in Winter Park, Colorado, **Jim Shaw** is a two-term member of the PSIA Telemark Team (2012-16 and 2021-23) and a telemark and alpine examiner in PSIA-AASI’s Rocky Mountain Division.

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