

Here is Alain Bertrand's excellent "Quick sum" of 2011 Interski at St. Anton. Alain is our new French friend from Chamonix, a wonderful spirit he is! - Cookie and PJ



Quick sum up of the 2011 INTERSKI - per Alain Bertrand

Freeskiing: we all ski the same but we do not teach the same, neither do we talk the same. The Austrians, in particular, talk a lot, I mean even male men, and once they have taken hold of the mike, their hands are glued to it and their feet nailed to the stage. As a whole it was valuable training in patience, tolerance and philosophy. In order to remind us of their difference, the French made an attempt at speaking something akin to English, which, with the help of some guessing and divination, added to their claim at cuteness.

Carving: Most Europeans and the Japanese are still stuck in it neck deep. The French don't even quote it. Americans and Canadians are halfway through the ford, on their way to discard its school value, still shy to admit to it. Considering that carving has acquired the status of a sacred cow, we are probably wise to evolve away from it slowly, resorting to contrived terms such as "slarving", "brushing", "skidding", which all mean getting out of the groove's rails, flattening the skis and allowing them to slide sideways, which, as far as I know, is -sideslipping-. It reminds me of my daughter running up to me: "Daddy, Daddy, I'm a little pregnant!". Sorry, you are or you are not. As long as you slide sideways, narrowly or widely, it all amounts to healthy sideslipping and there is snow flying behind your tails.

I hope that by the next Interski, in Argentina, the matter will be clarified enough, so that no professional can say anymore: "Please improve my carving, so that I can check my speed". (In case some people have not realized yet, the purpose of carving is speeding.)

Children ski school: the Austrians in St Anton enjoy the most ideal set up, it's better than my Panda ski school's in Chamonix, and naturally I hate them for being better! Jealousy is my claim at humanness.

Worshops: As I'm still plagued by an incapacity at ubiquity, I couldn't attend them all. PSIA delighted me with our acknowledgement that flat skis pivot better and sideslip-brake better than edged ones. As we are still under the spell of carving, that came to fashion as a result of equipment evolution, we pretext "Rocker skis" to introduce pivoting and sideslipping as the new trend. It is true that "Rocker skis" make it easier for beginners. But the basic law of physics – FRICTION- is all what it needs to make our point, be it on "Rockers" of "WC racing" contraptions.

The Canooks were full of pep and fun, making their point at EMOTION being the core of skiing appeal. I wish they went to the core of the core, that is our conquest of –GRAVITY-, recognizing that skiing is a controlled fall, but a protracted fall from the top of the hill to the bottom, and that, as we overcome our loathing for slipping into emptiness, we expand our limits and allow the universal might of gravity to ooze into our belly, turning ourselves into a supernova floating atop our planet earth's snow. Paul Jones, from Jackson Hole, even spitted out a shameful word, a word I had never dared utter in front of my stocky fellow sportsmen: "Spirituality". He deems that if skiing can reach at the heart, it could go all the way to the brains and lead to a comprehensive approach to the meaning of life and wisdom. But this is another story, it took me no less than 120 pages to expound in my book GLEE. Thanks to you Paul, I don't feel alone anymore.

The French told us to meet at the top of the lift. French born, I should have understood, but due to Alzheimer, I got it wrong enough so as not to find them. From what I heard they offered a professional mix of avalanche safety, relaxed deep snow skiing and champagne. I heard the report just after the champagne!

Demos: The Swiss, the French, the Austrians were very professional. But the day was carried all categories by 5 sturdy skiers (which nation, I do not remember) ripping down the demo slope. When they took off their helmets and flew in the wind beautiful long hair manes, there was a burst of applause. I didn't check, but I'm sure they were no tranvestites.

As a **Conclusion**, we, PSIA, are the best in the world just the same as most other nations' delegations know they also are; but, as Peter KRAY and John ARMSTRONG wrote in the last issue of 32°, our open minds keep us curious of new ideas and different ways, which is the good old American tradition that keeps us ahead of the pack.

Special gratitude goes to Karen HAGAMAN who kept toiling at home for us having a ball in Austria, and to Marie-Claire DEMELBAUER who never tired of helping, solving, translating, always on the frontline. Heart rending : aside from the ?????Chinese Ski Association rep, Thomas LI, there was no Chinese team. The time will come if we try harder.

Alan, from home sweet home with all his furry dogs, high-tailing cats, mischievous horses and single-minded ladies!

In Chamonix, January 23d 2011