

TESTED ON TOUR SPLIT RAIL SKIS

By Craig Nicholson



Occasionally, a new after market product comes along that's a real game-changer. It's even more special when such a remarkable innovation hails from Canada – as is the case with the new Split Rail Dual Axis Snowmobile Skis introduced last winter. So let me say at the outset that Split Rail skis met and exceeded my expectations as a touring rider.

As regular readers of this column know, I'm not especially tech-savvy or much of a motor head, but I do know what feels right and what makes my riding more enjoyable and confident. What's more, I only write about products that I've personally tested all winter and that truly impressed me. So you can be sure that my Split Rail skis delivered all of this and more.

I put over 7,500 kilometres on them in every trail and snow condition. They consistently out-performed their promise. I have to admit to some initial concern about how this new concept would stand up over hard miles, but Split Rails proved to be both strong and durable.

I rode my 2011 Ski-Doo GSX SE 1200 4-TEC with stock skis for almost 2,000 clicks before switching to Split Rails so I would be familiar with its out-of-the-box handling. The difference with Split Rails was immediately evident. It became more pronounced after I made a few suspension tweaks to take advantage of their full performance characteristics. First, my sled felt more "planted", a new feeling of increased connection to the trail; plus, I had more control over steering and cornering. Second, the Split Rails made the 4-stroke engine weight at the front-end of my Ski-Doo seem to float over the snow. And third, any darting was eliminated.

Apparently, all of these benefits stem from the "dual axis" factor of the Split



Rails, where both skis have incredible flex along their full length, combined with new lateral motion derived from the independent, side-by-side flexibility inherent in their catamaran-style technology. With carbides on the bottom of each of the four separate ski surfaces (two per ski), my Split Rails cornered, well, like they were on rails.

I know from talking to other Split Rail early adapters that these skis do wonders for handling on Yamaha sleds. While I can't personally speak to their benefits on Arctic Cat or Polaris, I can testify about their impact on Ski-Doo snowmobiles with any of the various REV platforms...

In 2003, Ski-Doo changed the way we ride by introducing the rider-forward position. Its various newer configurations (XP, XR, XU) have further refined control and comfort. But until now, no one has come up with an innovation equal to that REV leap ahead when it comes to

improving how a sled makes first contact with the snow – under the skis. My take is that by making their own leap ahead, the new Split Rail skis round out and enhance the REV platform, allowing riders to optimize its total benefits for the first time.

That's a big claim and Split Rails are a premium priced ski. But if you're a serious rider who pays special attention to getting your sled dialled in perfectly to fit your own riding style, then it's very likely you'll appreciate the new opportunities that Split Rail skis bring to the equation. I think Split Rails are the real deal. As a game-changer, they will make other manufacturers rethink their own approach to snowmobile skis, and that can only be good news for riders like you and I.

If you want to get Split Rail skis for the coming season, order early because they sold out last winter. Check them out today at www.splitrailski.com