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THE CLASS

Getting Dirty with Parlor Skis

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On the east side of Boston, tucked deep within a series of industrial parks, an unassuming warehouse sits alone at the end of a parking lot trying its best to blend in. With almost no windows and blank, concrete walls, it does a good job.

The doors open, and clouds of sawdust rise in the air among whirring woodworking machines and the sharp smell of fiberglass. Stacks of wooden planks line the walls, under a sign proclaiming, “Ski Days Are Precious, Make The Most of Them.”

The warehouse is the headquarters of Parlor Skis, who run an immersive, four-day crash course that allows customers to build their own skis from the base up. They call it “The Class,” and any interested snow junkie can walk into the warehouse on a Tuesday, empty-handed and empty-headed, and by Thursday walk out with a new pair of custom skis—and the knowledge to build them.

“Ski building is really difficult,” says Mark Wallace of Par-

“It’s a little bit of a fluid process,” Wallace says, “it’s getting to understand who that skier is, how they ski, what their style is, and how they want to interact with the slope. Then we create the ski to match those needs.”

With the details dialed down, for night one of The Class it’s time to put hands to wood. And glue. And edges.

“They actually participate in every element of the build,” says Wallace. “They physically pick up the wood, they select all the wood for their core, they apply the glue, laminate it, and surface the whole thing. After that they pick their edges, glue them onto the base material, and go through the whole layout process.”

The second session is “layout night,” where the fledgling ski builders mix the epoxy, choose their top sheet and lay it over the core, and then slide the whole thing into the press. With that, they have a finished ski.

And by the time they’ve made it through the gauntlet of