

Tom's Musings — What's on the Menu?

My customers are usually master skiers, high school racers, or collegiate racers. In most cases, these skiers own three pairs of skis or less. Here at Finn Sisu, my main focus has always been to find the broadest range structure for below freezing, man-made or natural, transformed or new, somewhat humid or dry, snow. Within those parameters I still offer specific grinds and suggestions on hand structure options. But for those skiers in the Upper Midwest with a limited quiver of skis that want the best bang for their stonegrind buck, I've focused on finding an effective universal grind.

With the new machine, the 2015–2016 season was spent learning what it could do; what a particular stone offered; what diamond bit to use and why. But, most importantly, my time was spent learning how to use the touch screen computer to input an array of data and have it result in an intended grind. With the old machine, I was accustomed to using knobs, springs, and sounds to create grinds.

The last two seasons I've experimented with over 40 different structure ideas. That work has resulted in two slightly different structure shapes. Incrementally changing the depth, width, and length of the etched pattern, along with the speed at which the ski passes over the stone and the feed wheel pressure, are what make the difference. Continuing to play with those values and others has produced varying structures for those two shapes. From on-snow testing, eight of those have consistently performed with enough promise to warrant use. Four of those have ended up regularly on customer skis. And out of those four, two qualify as a universal grind—the "CU1" and "CU2." The other two are specific snow grinds—the "MPW" (for temps just above freezing) and "CU1 Cold." In addition, I have also found my old "uni" grind on the new machine for those that know and understand its range. The grind menu remains a work in progress, but I will provide something more detailed soon.

This is a fluid process and I enjoy that.

— Tom Novak, Head Stonegrinder at Finn Sisu