

## BUY YOUR SKIS AND BOARDS LOCALLY

Supermarkets – that's where this first "...in the backcountry" starts. Why? Well, we're all aware of campaigns to buy locally produced food. Yet, recently, consumer preference for the quality and authenticity of food from farmer's markets, etc) has seen a wider range of UK produce, helping our food industry regain its strength. How does this relate to snowsports? The similarity between the two industries' is in their reliance on the loyalty of their customers. Tribe wants to spread the word – like our good friends at Dark Summer – that buying in Britain is good, not just for UK snowsports companies, but also for UK snowsport enthusiasts.

And, we can prove it...

British equipment shops are now among the best-staffed and stocked wintersports outlets in the world. The major retailers take staff training extremely seriously and product knowledge tends to be as good or better than most stores in the Alps. In addition, buying your gear in the UK comes with the security of customer-friendly return policies, guarantees and fit-adjustments. Occasionally things go wrong, but they go wrong everywhere – the advantage of buying your gear in the UK is that you stand a better chance of having your problems resolved than you do elsewhere.

One reason for the better quality of service is our UK retailers have to work harder for their sales. In a snow resort, it's not tough to find a ready market; in the UK it remains a challenge.

UK retailers need to deliver consistently excellent product range and service just to encourage you through their door.

The historical argument was that it's so much cheaper abroad. Again the UK industry has addressed this.

Price-match policies operate in some outlets and, even where they don't, there has been a major effort to ensure UK prices are competitive with their European counterparts. Sure you might find something cheaper in Andorra or Bulgaria, but these days you're unlikely to do so elsewhere in Europe.

Our final reason for Buying in the UK is this – we all love snowsports. We want to see it thrive

in our country. It already is to a strong degree. Dan Wakeham, Chemmy Alcott, Lesley McKenna and Jason Schutt are no longer anomalies in snowsports. That Brits compete at the upper echelons of skiing or boarding is just accepted these days. Yet we are a sea-locked non-Alpine country with the least reliable snow record outside the Equator. We're a lowland country, yet our travelling snowsports community has greater economic impact on the European snow industry than any other.

To see snowsports continue to grow in the UK, our industry needs our support. We need to buy our gear over here; we need to test skis at SNO!zone; we need to turn up at UK indoor or dryslope events. The more we do, the more that critical mass keeps rolling and UK snowsports tips over into a mainstream leisure activity. And that is the key. The more revenue that comes into the industry from the outside the more we all enjoy the benefit.

So the final word, buy your gear in the UK. Get great service, great product range, competitive pricing and what's more you're helping support your own industry and therefore yourself.

That way, we're all winners.



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# IBC - snow + rock?