G3 SYNAPSE 101 vs. SEEKr 100 Review

Why this review?

If you're like me, you have looked at all possible reviews online (GearLab, BackcountryCanada, Blister, Freeskier), manufacturers' write-ups-promotional descriptions, and whatever Videos can be found…still there are missing pieces or blanks you're trying to fill in. Performance in soft snow? Well, any ski performs well in soft snow from soft Spring Snow to Powder. But what about gnarly conditions? Really Hard snow- Firm snow, Wind Firm, Chunder, Mashed Potatoes, Chowder, and Icy Conditions, the types of snow encountered during backcountry trips or sidecountry trips in early season, mid-season, and Spring season. You would like a ski to inspire confidence and reliability in these poor snow conditions on steep terrain to moderate terrain, and not give you scary moments. So is it all the ski, or how the skier–user skis it, or the snow conditions or some combination?

All sports suffer the same dilemma, the latest and greatest ice axe is not going to instantly make you climb Grade IV ice with sketchy sections and overhangs if you are only climbing Grade III, a new more expensive bow is not going to make you spot on 100% of the time at 30yds if you're only a 50% shooter at 20yds, and the latest and greatest ski is not going to make you instantly handle deep wind sculpted powder in Haines, Alaska or a hairy really hard snow to icy ski descent…a lot of variability and success is with the user, i.e. US. We all know what "user error" refers to, and this applies to skis and skiing

Maybe the worst information I found in ski reviews are thought of as "subjective reviews", Oh 'it's a locomotive that rides the rails through big turns with a rock-solid power,' 'the ski wants to shift straight into overdrive when it hits the snow', 'when you're riding the chair you can almost feel the ski chugging in idle with incipient horsepower beneath your feet,' 'a sleek salmon or a muscular swordfish.' How helpful is that? Are we talking about skis?, are we even on the same planet? The best information I got was from watching whatever videos of the skis in action, but sometimes more of the focus was of the skier and not the ski, even the still pics were useful…what I was looking for was how they were skiing the skis (using the skis) in different conditions and different terrain…did they modify their technique, adopt a slightly wider or narrower stance, more or less edge control, or point them down and swing side to side?

So I made a video review, a series of videos with little or no editing in various conditions to show the skis strengths and its weaknesses, or maybe it's the user? And I have the following writeup of what I was experiencing. Let me know if you found this helpful .

Review

Hi, my name is Douglas and I own a pair of G3 Synapse 101 skis from the 2016-17 season. They were the beginnings of G3's transition in manufacturing a new generation full carbon backcountry ski. After a lot of searching I did find some reviews of the Synapse with video footage, but mainly the vids showed the ski in powder conditions, with no footage in poor snow conditions nor much in text. As I tried to make some comparisons and draw insights from the new G3 lineup, at first I thought the Synapse was close to the FINDr 102, but it was lighter and more surfy shaped, and the more I read about the SEEKr, the more the Synapse and SEEKr had in common than the other G3 skis, that the Synapse 101 could be the precursor to the SEEKr 100.

Similarities: in construction both skis are all carbon, the lightest ski in the G3 lineup (Flyride construction-Synapse, Flyride plus-SEEKr), in profile and shape both skis have slight camber, early rise tip and tail, very agile-surfy, very playful, 130-101-118mm-Synapse, 132-100-120mm-SEEKr, radius 15.2-18.7m with 16.4m at 175cm Synapse 101, and 14.5-20.2m with 18.3m at 178cm (16.4m at 170cm) SEEKr 100. A difference in shape is the beginning of the tip of the ski, the first 2-3inches, the Synapse has a more tapered tip or nose to give it a surf inspired shape, and the SEEKr has a more blunt tip-nose. Aside from this and cosmetics you might not be able to tell the skis apart. A difference in construction is with the sidewalls, the Synapse has ABS, the SEEKr polyurethane, this is a new material G3 has found to significantly reduce chatter and dampen the ski. Many other manufacturers-brands come with ABS sidewalls, I began to wonder how the Synapse performed in hard-firm snow, where chatter would become an issue, and began the process of searching out ski reviews and brought me to this point.

As I mentioned I own a pair of the Synapse 101 and skied them some last season, but spent time on them this season. They continually surprise me in ALL conditions. They are really, really playful-surfy, agile almost effortless in fresh snow conditions and ski 10-12" powder well. Here they float and dart side to side almost effortlessly in mid to deep snow. Now most any wide-shaped ski these days skis powder well, but few reviews show the ski (not the skier) in hard and poor snow conditions. As mentioned the Synapse is a full carbon ski so it is really light, explaining the effortlessness of skiing in new and deep powder. But ABS sidewalls may not be the best dampening material, so I wanted to explore the issue of chatter?! And I wanted to provide insight on how the ski handles hard-poor snow.

I believe you can make any ski chatter given enough speed, torque in turns, and hard-firm-icy snow conditions. Remembering my all metal Hart Camaro skis at 205cm given the right factors it would chatter. So was chatter present with the Synapse skis, could I make these skis chatter with the right factors? What did I find? In a phrase user-error! Once I widened my stance and stopped skiing the Synapse as a parallel ski (admittedly old school) everything changed. Negligible to 0 chatter, improved control, better turns with less skidding, and more edge engagement. Yes, I know wider planks should be skied this way, not as narrow waisted skis

from yesterday, but changing technique takes time, and has to be unlearned. So once I began this and skied the ski as it is meant to be, the Synapse skied well, in control, turns were spot on, there was less skidding more edge contact, and as long as speed was not full bore chatter was 0 to negligible. The video shows the results on really hard-firm snow, with spots of choppy snow.

Other points, I skied in a slightly forward-charging position (face-head downhill, shoulders downhill), avoided getting in the backseat, and found the sweet spot so I could drive these skis in the hard-firm snow at speed. As my son says "ski it like a champ!" A whole lotta fun, I had a big smile on the whole time, maybe not as much in the new-deep powder snow but the smile was there. The Synapse skis really kept surprising me. They raised my confidence in hard-firm snow conditions and will give me the confidence and reliability I want in steep ski runs at resorts or backcountry. In soft snow conditions the Synapse 101 ski incredible, some of the tightest, quickest turns with little or no effort, where the skis bite into the snow and hold their edge so I in turn can hold my line. This is true for new wet snow and for soft spring snow.

Overall, the Synapse 101 is an incredible ski, able to handle whatever snow conditions you throw at it, as long as the same can be said of the user, and it kept surprising me in All Conditions. The new SEEKr should even be more fun and inspire that much more confidence with a material that dampens chatter better than that in the Synapse. I am excited to try my Synapse 101 skis in steep spring snow here in the northeast, and would be more so to try out the new SEEKr skis. I think G3 has engineered a fine product and ski lineup that will set the bar for all backcountry skis to meet. Thanks G3, for pushing the envelope and continually exploring new designs, shapes, materials, constructions…this is what we would like all companies to do. Have a lot of brains in R & D, along with a ton of creative energy, and never, stop exploring. Keep up the exceptional work!