PRESS RELEASE
Begles, January 3, 2023
https://zufo.ski/

zUFO wins a "CES Award 2023" for its patented ski boot concept



zUFO, a startup supported by Unitec incubator, is developing a patented concept of eco-designed ski boots made in France. The company announces that it has won a "CES Award 2023" prize in the "sustainability" category and awarded by the eponymous trade show held each year in Las Vegas. zUFO tackles the unsolved problem of ski boot comfort and offers a concept without a hard shell or hook to replace current technology which has evolved very little in 50 years and suffers from a lack of innovation. His mission ? Providing comfort to 135 million skiers thanks to its precise and comfortable exoskeleton. The zUFO ski boot is still in the development phase. Tests in ski resorts and fundraising are planned for 2023 to launch industrialization and marketing in the winter of 2023-24.

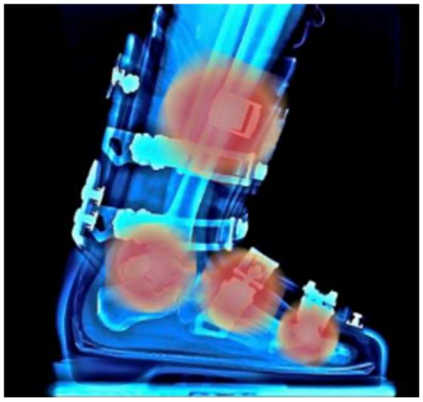
THE COMFORT OF SKI BOOTS: AN UNSOLVED PROBLEM TO DATE

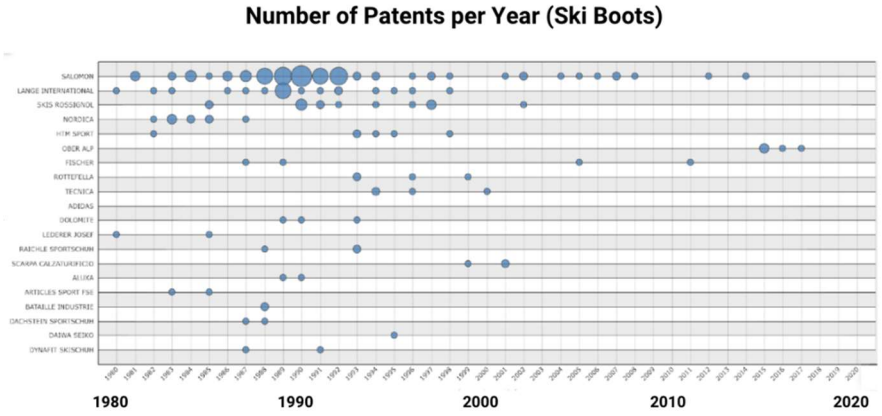
In the 1970s ski boots with plastic shells appeared. This technology was disruptive at the time: we went from leather shoes that did not support the lower leg to technology that retained the ankle thanks to a rigid shell. This technology has evolved little since then and this status quo shows a flagrant lack of innovation (see graph of patent filings since 1980 below).

The problem of the comfort of ski boots is multi-factorial:

- Putting on and taking off are complicated
- As well as walking to get to the ski lifts
- Pain persists during skiing (too tight or floating foot, rubbing at the ankles or tibia, compressed kick, etc.)
- The skier is often too hot or too cold in his boots

Nevertheless, the ski boot market represents 3 to 4 million pairs sold per year for 135 million skiers worldwide. This market is stagnant or even in slight decline, except for ski touring boots which today represent 20% of pairs sold, whereas their market share was less than 5% 5 years ago.





A NEW APPROACH TO SKI BOOTS: ZUFO TECHNOLOGY

Rather than improving a 50-year-old innovation, Hervé Fredouille, engineer and founder of the start-up, started from scratch by building the new zUFO concept based on the functions that the ski boot must hold during practice but also the ergonomics needed before and after practice.

zUFO is composed of an exoskeleton which provides the mechanical function of the ski boot (transmission of forces between the body and the ski) and a textile part which provides the waterproofing function as well as the thermal function (keeping the feet dry and provide thermal comfort).
zUFO is a modular ski boot: it is made up of a dozen modules that can be assembled and disassembled without special tools or glue, and was born eco-designed.
This eco-design is based on the development of four items:

- **Versatile boot**: Design a multi-use shoe (piste skiing + ski touring) putting an end to the specific segmentation of leisure equipment and avoiding the multiplication of products on the market,
- **Materials and durability**: Choose the right materials (recyclable, biosourced, etc.) and work on a design allowing an extension of the lifespan of the shoe (durability thanks to the replacement of defective modules),
- **Local fabrication**: Modular architecture allows fabrication and assembly of modules close to their place of use,
- **Optimization of the use of a product leaving the factory**: Develop a new vision of the market allowing to offer products in a logic of economy of functionality and/or new business models with limited impact (sale, rental, subscriptions, etc.).

The zUFO project is supported by ADEME (French Environment Agency) and is one of the 27 winners of the Perfecto 2022 Call for Projects, which aims to bring out an offer of products, services and processes with a lower environmental impact, thanks to an eco-friendly approach. design.

For all of these features, the company received the "**CES Award 2023**" - an international distinction that will be awarded in Las Vegas during the CES (Consumer Electronic Show) to be held from January 5 to 8, 2023.

"We are honored by this prize which represents for us a first step validating these 3 years of R&D. We are looking towards 2023 with many projects including fundraising which will allow us to continue the development dynamic, increase our community of testers and expand the team with - in sight - the industrial launch of zUFO" **indicates Hervé FREDOUILLE, CEO and founder of zUFO**.

« CES Innovation Awards »

The CES Innovation Awards program, organized by the Consumer Technology Association (CTA)®, is an annual competition recognizing outstanding design and engineering in 28 categories of consumer technology products. An elite panel of expert industry judges, including members of the media, designers, engineers and more, review designs based on innovation, engineering and functionality, aesthetics and design.

The Consumer Electronics Show, or CES, has become the most important show dedicated to technological innovation in consumer products. It is held annually in early January in Las Vegas and is organized by the Consumer Technology Association.



ABOUT zUFO

zUFO is the brand operated by K2i company created in January 2021. K2i works mainly by subcontracting to seek out specialized skills of the French Ski Industry but also high tech specialists out of « traditional » Ski Industry.

ABOUT UNITEC

Unitec is one of the main support structures for start-ups in the Bordeaux region (France). It has contributed to the creation of 588 start-ups in the region. With a team of 11 start-up managers, Unitec advises on three sectors, digital, life sciences, engineering sciences, by supporting from the idea to the creation of the company (incubator), in its structuring and its development (incubator), in its strategic growth (development) and in its scaling up via the UP GRADE Nouvelle-Aquitaine accelerator. In 2021, Unitec supported 156 start-ups and posted a sustainability rate of the companies monitored of 86% at 5 years. www.unitec.fr

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