

TIM ALTIC

ON FIRST DESCENTS, BEING TOO AGGRESSIVE FOR LEATHER, AND FOLLOWING THE PATH OF BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS. AS TOLD TO KELLEY MCMILLAN

After a career as a professional roller skater, Tim Altic landed in Telluride, Colorado, in 1979. He'd left the smooth sidewalks of Venice Beach behind, but he brought his roller-skating expertise to skiing. His claims include developing a new telemark stance, creating one of the world's first plastic telemark boots, and notching a first descent in Bear Creek, Telluride's prized sidecountry zone. These days, when Roller Skater Tim, now 55, isn't ripping Telluride's vert ramp on eight wheels or skiing bumps on Gold Hill, he's traveling the world with his new lady, building skate parks with his company, Alltec Skateparks, and studying the "secret science of cement."

I grew up roller skating. My parents roller skated. I think I was conceived after my parents went roller dancing. Naturally, as a human being, I was born a roller skater.

With telemarking, it's the same natural ability as with roller skating: to walk around and be on these sliding surfaces, which make you go really fast. I love movement. I can run, glissade, ski down a mountain, or skate, and I'm dancing.

My first year telemarking, I ripped my ski boots apart. I was much too aggressive for leather. So I took my roller-skate boots apart. Then I took apart my ski boots and put them together with an ice-hockey boot and put a plastic and a Vibram sole on the bottom and molded it all together and made my own telemark boot. This was the first plastic telemark boot. It was the 1980-81 ski season.

I saw the old telemark style in the bumps—it was really spread out and "get low"—and I tightened that up. And really, nobody was doing that then—a parallel stance like that in the moguls.

I just always wanted to tell the truth and have it documented: I was the first person to ski down Bear Creek in the middle of winter. It was I who had hiked it during the summer, talked about it with [long-time Telluride local] Hugh Sawyer, and really put the whole route together—Regular Route-Traversal into Contention.

I became interested in cement through skating and building skate parks. I found that there are secrets—that the Chinese used boiled-down sticky-rice water for their cement mixes—but you have to be initiated into the Masons to learn any more.

These sports attract like-minded people. These intense individuals are really fun. These people are really out there. It has to be spiritual. We are more than just these people doing extreme sports. We have a connection to history and to the future.

It is not often I run into a girl that has me on her mind. Right now, I am busy enjoying this state of affairs. I am only another dude with not enough money. So I must follow the path of beautiful flowers that I walk right now. My girlfriend and I are kindred spirits.



Ben Knight

» Skiing is like meditation for Telluride's **Tim Altic:** "I need this sort of thing to give myself the space to think and to feel spiritual."