

# Rack it up this ski season

By Julie Landsdown



Kayaking is my main love but winter brings its own excitement and as a keen snowboarder I always look forward to the opportunity to hit the slopes.

After last years' fantastic snowfall I'm even more determined to get to the white stuff this coming winter. With so much gear in tow I decided it was time to check out my snowboard/ski carrying options as my car is always filled to the brim. Wet boards and bindings are not a good idea inside your car so a roof top option was much more sensible.

All the main roof rack manufacturers have designed solutions for carrying your skis or snowboards and offer different options depending on how many you wish to carry and what sort of budget you have in mind. On

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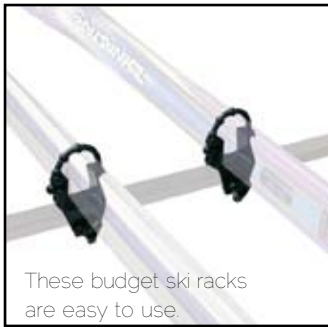
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These budget ski racks are easy to use

closer inspection the cheaper ski/snowboard carriers are definitely designed for the budget conscious. Simple looking and heavier (without aerodynamics in mind) we found that the two board options were a tight squeeze and wouldn't necessarily fit every width of board. There are also uplifted versions that accommodate boards or skis with bigger bindings which was good. The opening button was small meaning gloves

practicalities and the budget in mind. They too offer a basic carrier but it was the 'Fatcat' 4 & 6 that impressed us the most. They have the lowest profile of all the carriers and look very smart. The universal mounting meant it adapts to most roof bar shapes (without the additional cost of an adaptor) and the supersized button was the easiest to use with gloves on. The integrated binding lift meant you could extend the height up or down depending on what you were carrying and what binding size they had. Locks were included and in all we thought it offered good value for money without compromising on design.

We found the bonus with any of these ski/snowboard carriers is that you can also use them for transporting your fishing rods. Great in my eyes, as I'm tired of that fishy smell in my car.

With winter just around the corner it's time to get organised and get ready for the next ski season. Check out all the options and get advice from the staff at the Roof Rack Centre to see what will work for you.

had to be removed in order to open the carrier. They clamp on to square roof bars and if you have an aero bar you need to buy an additional adaptor. They weren't the quickest to take on and off as a result. They are lockable, however, and would do the job but other options were more appealing and for a bit more offered better value for money.

The aluminium ski/snowboards carriers were definitely more stylish, lighter and had better features. Notably we liked the Rhino-Rack Series of ski racks that would adapt to pretty much every shape of roof rack bar with adaptors and could extend in height by 35mm giving ample clearance for large bindings. Their 554 series was great for four skis or two snowboards and was easy to set up and use. However, Thule's Xtender 739 ski rack was a great idea, taking up to six skis or four snowboards. The large button made it very easy to open with gloves on. It was light and its main feature was that it slides out over the side of the car for easier loading and unloading. Me being short this was a great idea and meant my clothes didn't get dirty on the side of the car. It had the height clearance for my bindings and it was more aerodynamic, which is good on the fuel bill. We were very impressed with it.

However, the new Yakima ski racks that have just arrived in New Zealand offered a more funky design option with the



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