

HEIERLING SKI BOOTS

During the Olympic Games in St. Moritz (1948), even the French team (under Emile Allais) had special braze-reinforced Heierlings. Many racers trusted the brand: Among others, they helped the U.S. and the Swiss team to win six medals at the 1960 Olympics of Squaw Valley and four of Innsbruck Games in 1964. In the 80s, Heierling sold up to 260'000 pair of ski prompting the Salomon Company to buy the business. However, the traditional business remained and specialized on custom made ski shoes. With the money reha made with the Hawk shoes develop for Atomic, they bought the brand back from Salomon. The son, Hans-Martin Heierling launched the plastic Templast, which maintains the properties of the shoes from -20 to +15 degrees. Their most sophisticate and expensive model is presently the Heierling H1, design for racing. The firm is still a family-owned business with headquarters in Davos.

HISTORY THROUGHOUT THE YEARS

1883 Franz Heierling opens a shoe-making business, along with a shoe store, in Davos-Dorf. At that time Davos was an up-and-coming destination for foreigners, particularly those seeking to recover from TB. Davos was developing from a small mountain village to a world-renowned health resort. Franz Heierling had 2-3 employees and most of his work consisted of shoe repairs and various types of custom-fitted shoes.

1885 - The first skis were brought to Davos from Norway. A young local from Davos tried downhill skiing for the first time, under Norwegian instruction. Franz Heierling produced the first ski boots, based on a sample of the Norwegian Lauper boots.

1910 - 20 Davos continues to grow as a skiing resort and the first ski club is founded. Hans Heierling I (1891) enters the family business and is the first to produce special sewed ski boots. Heierling already makes specialized ski boots, with a high shaft, for ski-jumping. All ski boots are made by hand, as there is no actual production of ski boots, yet. During this time, Heierling employs 3-4 employees.

1925 - 30 The first cable cars are built in the alps and Davos-Parsenn is known to skiers across the globe. New bindings, such as those from Huitfeldt and Alpina, require new types of ski boots. In particular, boots with stronger soles are required. Rubber soles are mounted on boots for better grip.

1934 - 39 Heierling becomes a specialist in custom-made ski boots. After the introduction of skiing techniques with more forward lean and rotation of the body, boots are also introduced with long lacing and higher heels. This fixes the instep into place better and allows a more optimal forward leaning position. The boot shaft is reduced to the minimum height of 12cm. Internationally famous ski racers, such as Walter Prager, Martin Fopp and Jack Ettinger, are wearing custom-fitted racing boots from Heierling.

1941 - Hans Heierling II (1925) begins as an apprentice in the family business. Heierling continues to produce ski boots, despite the outbreak of WWII, and continues to improve the boots, this time with instep lacing and straps. The company employs 3-4 people.

1948 - During the first post-war Olympic Games in St. Moritz, an increasing number of ski racers come to Heierling for fitted racing boots, which have become well-known. Emil Alias, the 1938 world champion, has Heierling outfit his entire team with boot shafts with brass

reinforcements and double-shafted, double-laced, boots. The new boots are a great success, as previous designs held the foot in place in the ankle area. As these new, taller and stiffer boots allow much better edge grip, they are adopted by many racers. Heierling employs 4-5 people.

1953 - After Hans Heierling II obtains his master craftsman's diploma, he takes over the business from his father and concentrates his efforts on the development of new ski boot models. The first models with buckles, developed by Hans Martin in Zurich, are built.

1956 - Racers wearing Heierling boots start to win Olympic medals. Boots are still made by hand in the workshop in Davos. There is no serial production, yet. 6-8 employees work at Heierling.

1959 - Heierling moves to a new shop, with adjacent offices, to the building Alpenluft, in Davos-Dorf. The workshop is now in the renovated barn next door.

1960 - Almost the entire Swiss National Ski Team, as well as the USA National Ski Team, are skiing with Heierling racing ski boots. At the Olympic Games in Squaw Valley, racers wearing Heierling boots win 3 gold and 1 silver medals, as well as 2 4th placed spots. Heierling has definitely become a success in the ski boot industry and now employs 10 people.

1961 - 62 At the current location, Flüelastrasse 4, new buildings for living and the business are built.

1964 - Ski boots with buckles are a big success. At the Innsbruck Olympics 95% of the racers are wearing buckled boots. Two gold and 2 silver medals are won by racers wearing Heierling boots. Small-scale serial production is started. 2500-3000 pairs of boots are produced annually by hand. The well-known US ski racer, Bud Werner, organised the export of Heierling boots. Employment at Heierling is up to 18 employees.

1965 - Heierling begins large-scale production of a second ski boot model. Customers' demands for less expensive boots necessitate the production of boots for the middle price segment, in addition to the exclusive, hand-made racing boots. The new model is very successful, with 6,000 pairs already being produced.

1966 - 68 Serial production is increased, with export to new markets like Canada, Japan and England joining the already successful markets of USA and Switzerland. The first models with injection moulded plastic soles and shafts are produced. Approximately 15,000 pairs are produced.

1968 - The workshop is enlarged and renovated. Heierling has 26 employees.

1972 - The first steps from leather to synthetic have taken place. In addition to ski boots made with plasticized leather and injection-moulded soles, Heierling also introduces the first full-synthetic boot, Hot Shot. This is the first custom-made ski boot with a foam-liner. Once again, Heierling is able to bring a ground-breaking product to market. Heierling discontinues making leather shoes and closes its shoe store.

1974 - The use of synthetics in ski boot-making continues to increase. The new twist closure is well-accepted by customers and determines a new direction in ski boot-making. Heierling begins to make hiking boots.

1975 - 76 In cooperation with Weinmann, Heierling develops the Snowbird Line, produced in Singen. This product is launched successfully world-wide under the brand name Heierling (System Weinmann). Production in Davos is stopped and moved to Yugoslavia, Italy and Singen, Germany.

1978 - 80 Annual production increases to 45,000 pairs of ski boots and 12,000 pairs of hiking boots. A new warehouse and logistics are built up. A cross country skiing line is introduced.

1982 - Weinmann begins to brand ski boots with the twist closure under its own name and Heierling is now the agent for Switzerland and Lichtenstein. Hans-Martin Heierling (1964) is studying orthopaedic shoe-making, thereby being the 4th generation to ensure the continuation of the Heierling business.

1983 - Thomas Heierling opens a new company called Sportschuh-Fitting-Center, at the same location as Heierling AG used to be. This business reactivates Heierling's original core business – making custom-built ski boots. Again, foam-liners are used.

Heierling AG now produces 90,000 pairs of ski boots, 160,000 pairs of cross country ski boots and approximately 15,000 pairs of hiking/leisure boots annually.

1984 - 87 Hans-Martin Heierling, now finished with his studies, also starts working at Sportschuh-Fitting-Center and the brothers Thomas and Hans-Martin Heierling form a general partnership. The Fitting Center has an increasing number of non-racing clients. As well, many ski racers take advantage of Heierling's know-how and get their boots fitted here. Lighter, cold-resistant synthetic materials are increasingly used and rear-entry boot models are introduced. For various reasons, sales of models with the Weinmann twist closure are decreasing. Big changes in the winter sporting equipment market are creating a highly competitive environment and making the sale of serial-produced goods increasingly difficult.

1994 - 97 Heierling AG is bought by Salomon. The last ski boot to carry the name Heierling is produced in Montebelluna in 1997. Subsequently, Heierling-branded boots are no longer manufactured.

2000 - 04 The Heierling brother's Fitting-Center is becoming increasingly well-known and acquiring a growing customer base. The Heierling Salomon Racing Center is established. The success of the "golden age of Heierling" returns and World Cup athletes from various nations win medals while racing with boots fitted by Heierling.

2003 - A licensing agreement for children's ski boots is negotiated with Alpina. The Be3 Flexi children's ski boot, with I-Flex technology, is introduced (see video) and Heierling is back in serial production.

2005 - 10 A licensing agreement is negotiated with Atomic. Heierling co-develops the Hawx I-Flex Technology by Heierling, together with Atomic, and continues its long-standing tradition of innovation.

2013 - Hans-Martin Heierling develops and launches the Swiss made HEIERLING H1 ski boot. New technologies such as the temperature resistant material Templast including a shock-absorbing wedge produced from Swiss ash are being introduced.

2014/15 - The HEIERLING H1 ski boot is being introduced by leading retail stores in Switzerland, Austria, France and the United States.

Heierling is dedicated to continuing its 130-year-old tradition of excellence in boot-making. Heierling is still a family owned business in its fourth generation located in Davos/Switzerland.