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PIONEERS ON SKIS:

ERLING STROM'S ASSINIBOINE, B.C.



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SAGE CATTABRIGA-ALOSA // HAINES, ALASKA // PHOTO: MARK FISHER

ONE SKI AT A TIME

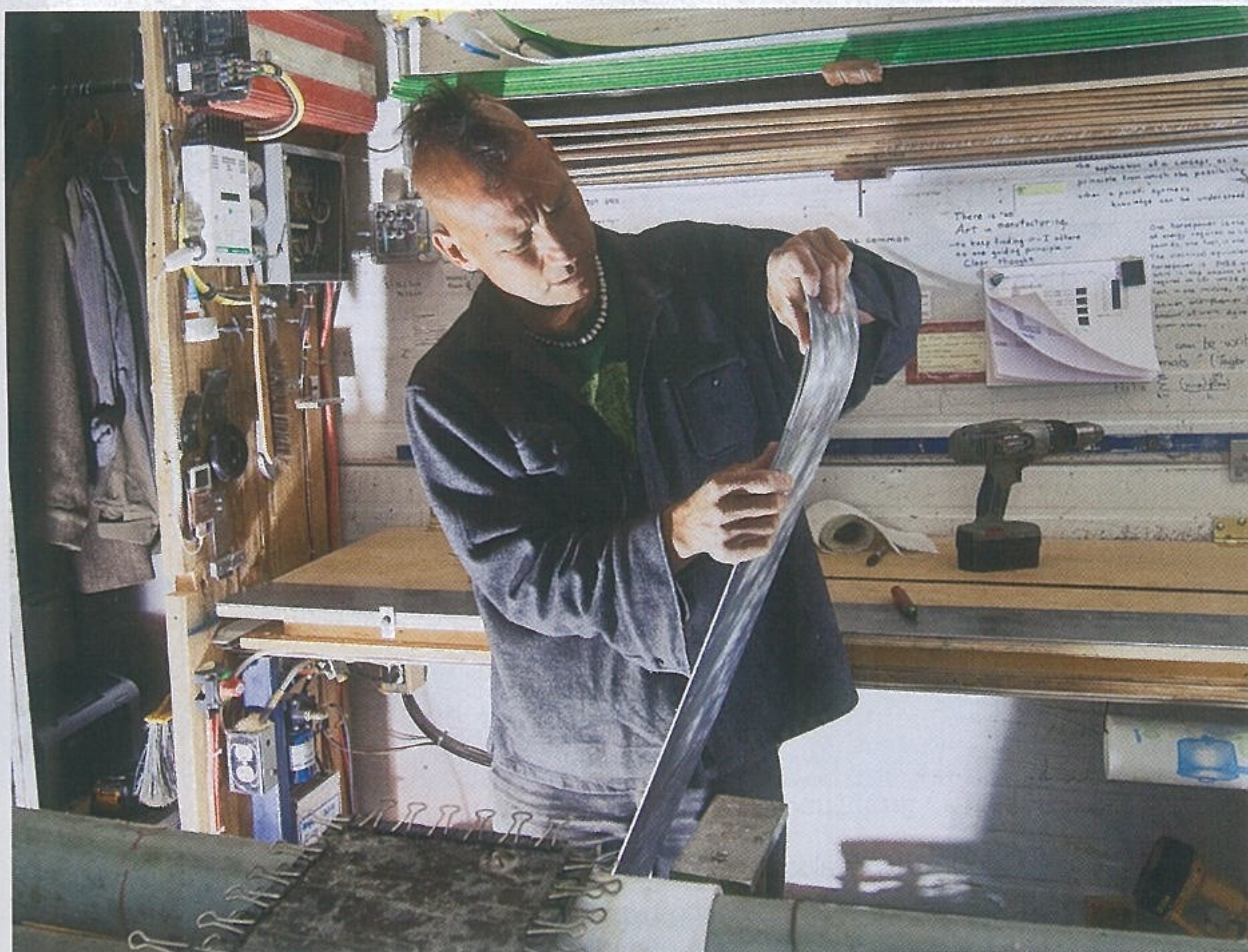
CUSTOM SKIS FOR \$333

PHOTOS BY CHRISTIAN PONDELLA

Michael Lish builds fully custom skis from a small, solar-powered trailer and sells them for just \$333 per pair—less than half of what most mass-produced models cost. And his customers are able to build what they want—custom lengths, widths, rocker, camber, taper—almost anything is possible.

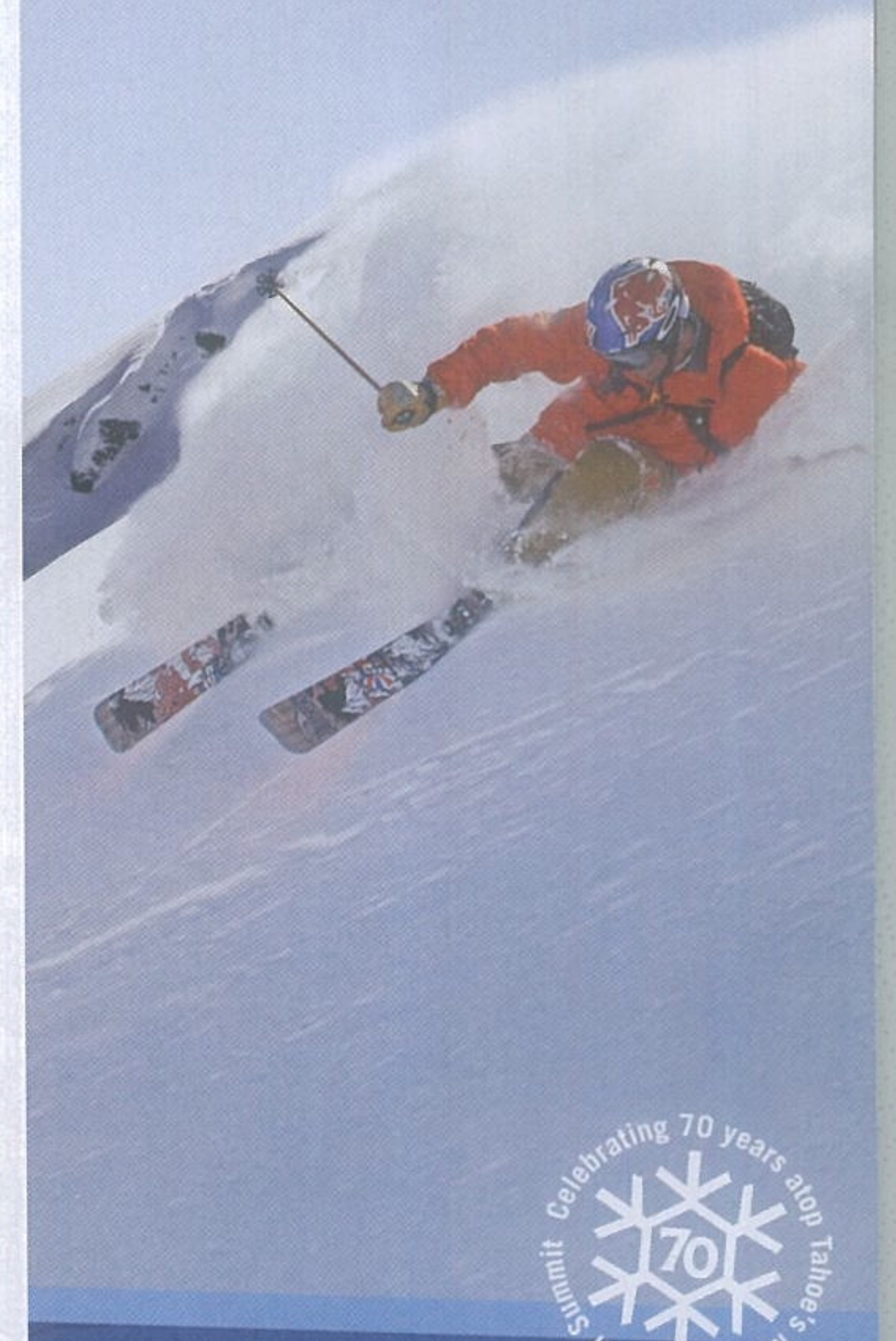
But *how* can Lish build skis for that price? Materials cost about \$65/pair, he says, including a few ounces of generator fuel to supplement his solar array. He has no fixed costs—no rent, debt service, advertising, or distribution. Originally, he planned to produce three pairs per day, figuring about three hours of labor for each. But as his orders have grown from a few per week to over a dozen a day, he's had to rework the process for improved efficiency.

Lish is transparent about his tooling and construction methods on his website at 333skis.com. And he has shown other budding ski builders how his shop works, with the hope they'll start their own businesses. More than anything, Lish wants skis to be built by local builders, wherever they might be. "Let's not be stupid consumers," he says. "All we're trying to do is claw back market share from Chinese manufacturing. Let's bring it back—one ski at a time." —**Lance Riek**



Lish dishes on custom skis.

Trailer Cash: 333 Skis' production facility.



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