

Anthony De Rocco

Anthony DeRocco is Vice-President of research & development for K2 Skis and Snowboards in Vashon Island, Wash. He has played a key role in the development of the K2 Four (America's best-selling ski) and the K2 Clicker snowboard binding.

Born: June 20, 1962 (age 35)

The Wonder Years: "I was always a tinkerer. When I was 16, my older sister totaled her 1972 Datsun. I bought the car from the insurance company, found a new front end at a junkyard, taught myself how to use an arc welder and torched together a new car."

The Left Brain: "I got a master's degree in mechanical engineering at the University of Washington, and worked at a few other places, including Boeing, before I was hired by K2 in 1990."

The Right Brain: "My Dad's a clown. My brothers are clowns. So's my uncle. We perform every year at Seattle's Seafair Festival. My father taught me how to turn on a smile pretty fast. It helps at work."

The Right Stuff: "Several of our skis, including the Four, use a Piezo module, originally developed by NASA to reduce wing flutter in military planes. It converts vibrations to an electrical energy, which is dissipated when it runs through a resistor circuit. In skis it reduces vibration to increase stability."

Shape of Things to Come: "It's an exhilarating time to be in ski design. Shaped skis have revolutionized the sport, and there are no rules anymore."

Labor of Love: "I ski and snowboard more than 50 days a year and constantly see people using products I developed. My friends say, 'You call that work?!' This job is a dream come true."

—Reade Bailey