Why I ONLY use Scarpa boots for all my mountain adventures, from summer hikes to high altitude expeds:

1. NO BREAKING IN: You can literally use them straight out of the box. For our expedition to Patagonia in 2013 – The Wall of Paine – my Phantom Guides (now Phantom Tech’s) and my Charmoz HD’s (Scarpa’s lightweight winter boot), arrived at my house the day before I flew out to Chile. In Puerto Natales I put the Charmoz boots on for the first time when I hiked to BC at the start of a 4-week expedition. I used the Charmoz for all the long approach hikes. And the Phantom’s every day on the wall from aid climbing, to trad rock, and ice/mixed climbing. Same for a new pair of Phantom Guides I used for my speed ascent of the North Face of The Eiger with Calum Muskett in sub 8 hours. I have never got a blister from any pair of Scarpa boots I have worn.

2. SUPER TECHNICAL: Since I got my first pair of Phantom Guides/Tech’s, I have climbed hard ice (WI6+), hard mixed (M7), alpine mixed (ED+) and Big Wall artificial (A4). I use the Phantom Guides on all technical terrain, especially on technical ice throughout our alpine winters here in the Ecrins Massif, since 2005. I feel comfortable, secure and in control when wearing Phantoms. Just as an example of how good technically they are, last summer 2020, my mate Rick Allen invited me to the Valais alps for a 2-day mixed snow/ice alpine route. I packed my Phantoms as usual. Only issue was that Rick’s mixed alpine route turned out to be a three-day technical rock ridge involving climbing up to E1 5b or Fr.6b, a six-hour approach and an all-night hike out. My Phantom’s dealt with it all brilliantly! This winter I was trialling a pair of Phantom 8000 boots for an attempt on K2 this summer (2021). I used my Phantom 8000’s to climb multi-pitch French Grade 4 and 5 ice climbs involving long approaches in deep snow and they coped perfectly with it all.

3. LIGHTWEIGHT YET WARM ENOUGH: I suffer from cold feet and yet hate excessive weight. I find as long as I choose the correct Scarpa boot for the activity I am doing, they always keep me comfortable and safe on the climb. Scarpa Phantom Tech’s have kept me warm on Big Wall belays in Patagonia in sub-zero conditions, on alpine winter ice climbs, and on techie alpine speed climbs. I use my Phantom’s because despite being a full spec tech boot, they are more than light enough for the challenge.

4. HARD WEARING: My first pair of Phantom Guides lasted a full 2 years of continuous abuse – expeds, ice/mixed/artificial/alpine climbing, trekking, and snowshoeing. I live and work in the Alps and used them literally every month of the year pretty much. The only bad wear has been on the sole unit below the toe. This section got worn down on a Big Wall exped whilst jumaring for hours each day. My Charmoz are still going strong since 2013!

5. COMFORT AGAIN! Winter 2016 I did a new 17-hour alpine route in the Ecrins Massif where I live. 17 hours of non-stop climbing, stomping and post holing – no problems whatsoever. January 2017, I managed to crack a new alpine icefall in full Scottish Spindrift “burial” conditions. But this time with an arthritic right ankle and heavy build-up of calcification from an old injury. As ever my Phantoms provided the comfort I craved for during the long approach, on the climb and on the walk out. In March 2019 I had my right heel bones (Calcaneus and Talus) fused together with two x 3-centimetre-long screws. Six months later I was back to climbing 4,000m alpine peaks again using Scarpa boots and wearing crampons most of the day. Amazing! Especially as I am now 60 – an age when everything aches! So, for you young guns no worries!

My advice - if you really want to guarantee your mountain adventure get a pair of Scarpa’s – their boots always deliver. And as any guide will tell you, being good on your feet is the key to successful climbing.