Riedell has made some upgrades to its Silver Medallion models, adding a bit more padding thickness, changing the inside lining and adding synthetic lamb’s wool tongues. Skaters coming out of the old design and into the new have just loved them. There have been no complaints as of yet. My vote is “two thumbs up” on this particular model.

The Bronze Medallion offers the same relaxed forefoot design as the Gold Medallion but without the lace-lock system and roll-top edge. I still vote for the Gold Medallion.

The remainder of Riedell’s line is still pretty much the same – very good!

SP-Teri seems to be making a comeback with its new Zero Gravity model. It’s very lightweight, and comes with extra thickness in the ankle padding, a flex notch and low-cut back for better extension. I recommend this boot for younger and lighter-weight skaters, no matter their level of skating. This also makes an excellent boot for synchronized skating or ice dancing. Two thumbs up for this model.

Moving along to Jackson, there were not many changes that one would notice except for their 2010 Freestyle model. More padding has been added into and around the ankle area, giving it a bit more extra comfort and helping to lock down those narrow heels and ankles. The ProFlex model remains Jackson’s biggest challenge. Undergoing a third redesign, this boot system appears to be going through much more rigorous testing than ever before. Testing is due to end sometime in late spring or early summer.

Also new from Jackson is the Elite series, which features an anatomically designed footbed, offering improved shock dispersion and superior boot comfort. The major benefits of these are greater foot support, alignment and stability.

Once again, Klingbeil remains strong, especially with its lightweight design. Custom boots are its specialty, and its product quality is right there at the top. For those who may be looking for a Klingbeil stock boot, expect to be waiting about three weeks or so.

The review of Graf boots is short and sweet. There’s nothing really new this year that would set them apart from everyone else.

Harlick is steaming right along, having one of its best years ever. This is no doubt due to all the changes it’s made to its boots in the past year. Its new lightweight and rounded-toe pattern is able to fit a broader range of feet. Harlick hit it just right with the amount of support it has in each model. For those with narrower heels and ankles, no other boot can give you the fit and comfort that a Harlick can.

Blades

Right now the hottest blade on the market is the ultra lightweight Paramount. With its edge quality being far superior to all the rest, skaters from all over the world are finding out for themselves that the rumors they have heard about the Paramount blades were just that: rumors.

Ultima has a new Wilson Gold Seal look-a-like. One advantage it has over the Gold Seal is that the Ultima comes with EXT edge hardening. One question still remains, though – does it skate the same as a Gold Seal?

MK and Wilson still have a strong line with their Parabolics, which seem to be doing quite well.

Now for my product pick of 2006. It’s the flashing skate guards that light up when you walk in them. What an ingenious idea! They’re a bit costly, but really cool.

Have a great skate,

Mr. Edge