

RIDE CULTURE 08

we n r i d e d r i v

YETI



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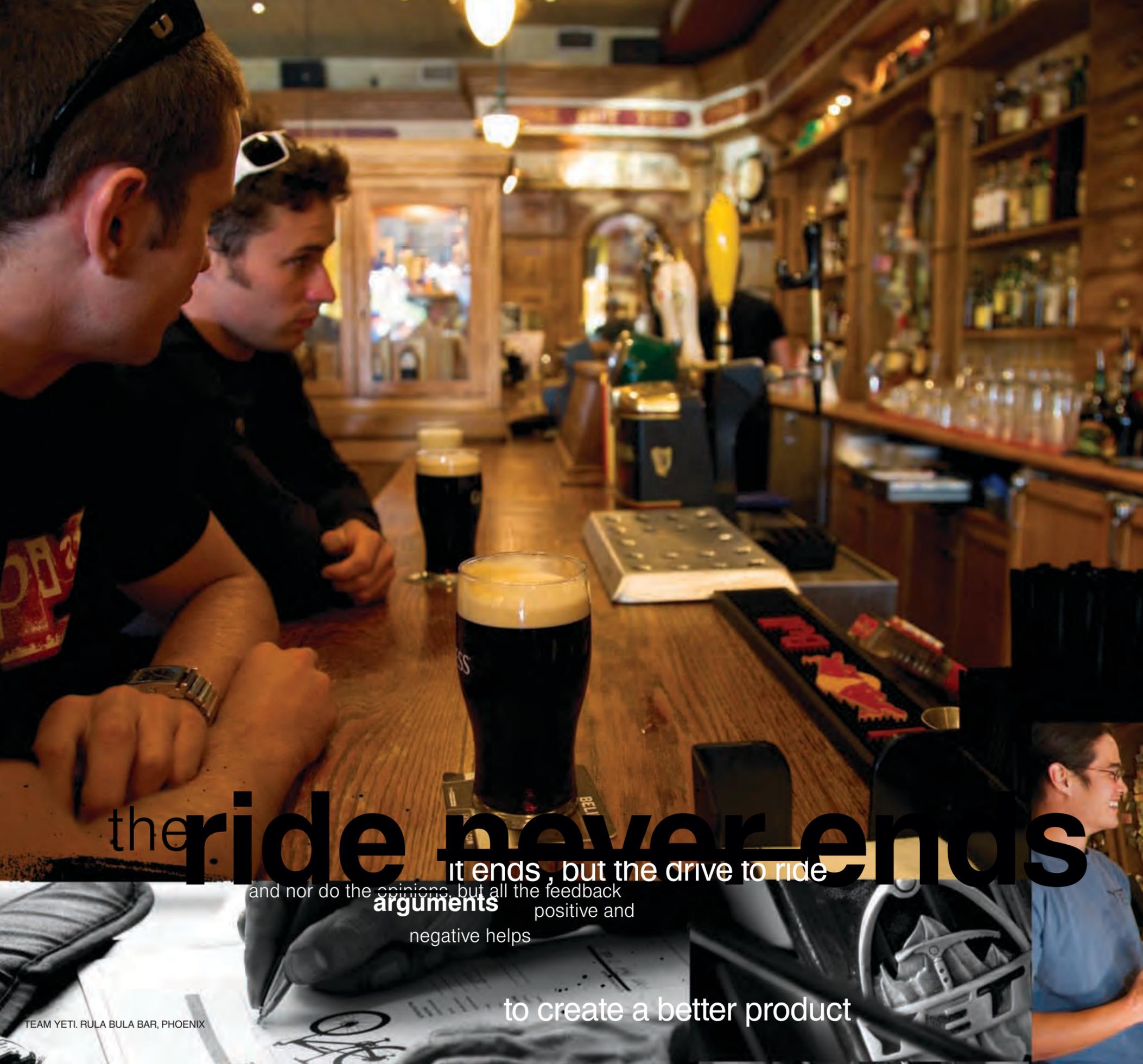


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OUR **inside**
ISSUE 01 / 2008 **RIDECULTURE** 2008

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the ride never ends

it ends, but the drive to ride
and nor do the opinions, but all the feedback
arguments positive and
negative helps

to create a better product

4 minutes

STEVE "HOOG" HOO- GENDOORN

Interview by: Craig Grant

There are several new additions to the Yeti line this year. The 575 re-design, AS-R full carbon and the new AS-R 7. What were the goals coming into '08 for the development of the Yeti lineup? The goals? We were looking to improve our entire line. We looked at it platform by platform. Our AS-R has been in the line for quite a while and it has performed very well but we felt it could be even better. Over the past five years we have made tweaks to make it more efficient - carbon chainstays, carbon seatstays, Ti hardware and lighter tube sets. We kept the suspension hard points the same since they are perfect for that bike (according to our riders and Paul Rowney, ex-Yeti Factory Team rider and all around mountain bike badass).

The AS-R Carbon was created as the ultimate race bike. By merging our proven suspension with carbon we were able to create something really special.

Then, we took a look at our 575 platform which had improved over the years but needed to be updated. When we first designed the bike, the long-travel lightweight fork category was just starting and 125mm was the standard travel. Now, the fork travel is 140mm - 160 mm, so we adjusted the geometry to accommodate for longer forks. We lowered the bottom bracket and slackened the head angle to 68.5 degrees to make it handle better with longer travel forks.

We also wanted to visually change the look of the bike. On the original design, people would look at the knuckle and smaller tubes and peg the bike a cross-country bike. So we redesigned the bike with hydro formed tubes and made the head tube more stout. The weight stayed exactly the same but we were able to stiffen up the front-end considerably and the rear-end is hugely stiffer. Hugely... if that's a word.

The goal for the AS-R 7 was to create a very versatile all-mountain bike... more on that later.

The rebuild on the front triangle is definitely beefier, so you offset that with the full carbon being lighter than the rear. Overall as a unit is it lighter? Now the front triangles are very close in weight. The swing arms are the same, but a little lighter. The carbon seatstay is much larger and cross-sectioned with added material for the bridge. Before it was just two aluminum tubes so that's why the weight was a wash. Keeping the weight the same was a goal as well as stiffening the frame up and improving its look. A little jacked up? A little beefier? A little steroid bike.

The full carbon AS-R has a fixed carbon seatmast that has to be cut to riders' specifications. What was the motivation for this type of installation? It's a pretty extreme type of setup. We wanted to make a full-blown race bike with no compromises and going with the full carbon pillar, or seatmast, achieved a stiffer front end and better power transmission to the pedals. The overall goal was to be stiffer but also lighter. We know that racers, especially cross-country racers, will do whatever it takes to save grams or improve efficiency. So we thought the extra hassle of trimming the seat pillar to the correct length and pressing in bottom bracket cups is worth it. Cross-country racers really appreciate that level of detail.

So you just had the hard core XC geek in mind when you designed that bike? Absolutely. We had Bubba in mind. ▶

ess with





The new AS-R 7 is super lightweight for a 7" travel bike. What is the intended use for such a ride? Initially when we came out with the 575, we were the first ones with a lightweight efficient bike that could climb and descend really well. We've just taken the 575 and grown from that platform. Component and suspension manufacturers have pushed the market - there are lighter wheel-sets, forks and shocks that can handle the abuse so we feel there's a market out there for a lightweight, long-travel bike like the AS-R 7. We see it every day on the terrain we ride here in Colorado. We're excited about building a 7" bike that people can ride uphill at 30-32 lbs and descend down bigger stuff than you can on the 575.

So no 30-ft hucks? No, you'll walk away.

What was your motivation for having a pivot on the axle of the AS-R 7? By putting a pivot on the axle we are able to isolate the caliper reaction forces during braking. The brake mount position on the chainstay directs these forces into the main pivot, thus eliminating any rotational forces on the chainstay. In conjunction, the axle pivots inhibits the transfer of these forces to the seatstay.

(Break) Water filtration guy enters and geek filtration banter ensues...

The 303 DH employs linear pivots that slide to activate movement of the rear wheel rather than the traditional rotating pivots. What was the motivation for the development of such a different suspension concept? Every suspension system is driven either by arcs or compound arcs. With a single pivot your rear swing arm's moving through a fixed arc. You take a multi-linked system - like a DW link, VPP or some of Giant's designs, and you've got a compound arch driving your travel - your wheel path - and two links driving a main link called a swing arm. A main link drives your wheel path so you're always constrained by what you want your wheel path to be with your leverage ratio. We wanted to make something that gave the freedom to dictate your wheel path and leverage ratio any way you want.

So independent of each other, would you say? Definitely independent of each other but also with a wheel path that is very tough to reproduce with traditional linkages. In order to duplicate our design with links, you'd need a lot of them and they'd be really big to get similar characteristics to our 303. They'd have to be mounted at the front wheel *(laughter)* so the rails gave us the freedom to get the wheel path and the leverage ratios the way we wanted.

What is in the pipeline for '09? Any details you can leak to Yeti freaks? Maybe about a new rail bike or some carbon tidbits? We're planning on all that stuff. There are

many rail bikes we're working on. The nice thing with rail technology - the linear technology - is that it opens up all sorts of windows and applications. Stretch has some cool ideas, completely different from what I've thought of in the past. As far as for next year, We'll hopefully have at least two, maybe three [rail bikes] that we'll be testing. Not sure what we'll actually release for '09, but we'll be riding them.

So the first glimpse people might see is maybe at Sea Otter? Maybe Sea Otter. I'm sure you'll see it around in the Mountain States Cup.

You just mentioned Stretch. Now you have another engineer to bounce design ideas off of? How has that changed your design workflow? It's huge, especially this time of year. As a small company, we all have to wear a lot of hats and that can cut into design time. Stretch is full-time design, which is great. It's something we haven't been able to do for the last three or four years. So just having somebody on the box with a big monitor working all of the time is huge. And what's cool is that he is really smart and thinks through things before he gives an opinion. If he thinks I am wrong, he calls me on it and then we come up with the best solution.

What are Peter's (Stretch) main tasks in comparison to your primary duties? He's much better with details than I am. *(Laughter)* He gets his own projects of course. For instance, he did the ARC-X 100 percent. He's working on the BMX "Grubby" Graves 100 percent and he's working on a new suspension bike to come maybe at Sea Otter.

Gravity? XC? Downhill? Can you give us a genre? I'd call it gravity. I end up dragging him into my projects all the time 'cuz I don't always have the time to finish the details on a design. He is great at hammering that stuff out.

Why don't you have the time Steve? Maybe you can give people a glimpse into everything else you do at Yeti. Sometimes I pick up beer. I make coffee in the morning. But I also do the financials... or at least I audit the financials. We have a full-time accountant and an assistant accountant, so I really just need to oversee the financial side and do a lot of planning. I also work closely with operations, forecasting and scheduling. I spend a lot of time working with our key vendors because there's a lot of communication for specifications, quality and everything you can imagine about making a bike. Plus all the day-to-day business crap that you get stuck doing. Ideally, I'd like to spend six hours a day designing in a perfect world. I couldn't do it full-time. I'm not that personality.

SO JUST HAVING SOMEBODY ON THE BOX WITH A BIG MONITOR WORKING-



ALL OF THE TIME IS HUGE.

On an average day how much time do you spend strictly on design? I got to work on Solidworks yesterday for the first time in about three weeks and I spent two hours in it.

As a side note, what's the longest you can go with out being interrupted by someone if your door is open? Boy, it's less than an hour easily, unless I get here at 6:30 in the morning. Then I get an hour and a half, two hours easy. That's work time.

Your primary design tool, besides a pen and paper, is Solidworks. I often hear you talking at your computer (my desk is down the hall). What is your greatest frustration with the application and why all the name calling? *(Laughter)* Greatest frustration. It's kind of self-inflicted pain by design practices. But nothing's perfect. With Solidworks, the capabilities are huge. We can design tubes, like on the 575, and make cool parts we couldn't even come close to in the past. With the carbon frame, the first size took me 80-100 hours to design and the other two sizes took me eight hours and then one hour for the final size. That's powerful stuff. It works well when you know how to work it. The hardest thing Stretch and I do is figuring out suspension.

What do you mean by that? Say we have a new platform to do, like the AS-R 7. We determine what we want it to be and how we want to fit it into our line. We create the geometry, determine the bottom bracket height and decide what fork (length of travel) will be used on the bike. Most importantly, we have to define how we want the suspension to behave. We decide whether it's an air shock or a coil shock and then create an ideal leverage ratio based on those parameters. It takes a long time.

So after we decide our design direction, the product scope, and how to make the suspension work, we work on making it look cool. It doesn't matter if it's the best riding bike in the world - nobody's going to buy it if it doesn't look cool.

No argument on that one.

Way back in the day before the wife and two kids you worked as an engineer in the ski industry. One - do you ever get to ski anymore, and two - why is the bike industry better than the ski industry? Number one, no, I do not ski anymore. I don't know which industry is better, they both have a great lifestyle and cool people.

When is the last time you skied? I skied last New Year's Eve, Christmas break last year. But when I ski, I ski at Steamboat with the family. My parents, sister, brother-in-law and kids. So it's really not considered skiing. The last time I skied that I would call skiing, would probably be five years ago.

Five years ago. Where was this? It was probably Mary Jane. **Hitting the bumps? Or was it a powder day?** That's my main thing. Probably bumps. Actually, I take that back. The last good day of skiing was with Conroy where he polluted my Pathfinder on the way home.

Where did you guys go? Was it Winter Park again? We went to Copper. That was three years ago. We had 15" on top of 12" and it snowed all day so at the end of the day we probably hit 22" on top of 12" from the previous day. And it was one of those days where it doesn't matter. You have no friends. You're not waiting. I actually had a buddy who flew in to go skiing and after the first run, I didn't see him 'til the end of the day.

Was he like beginner level? Yeah. From Wisconsin. *(Laughter)* The only reason I remember was because we stopped for some food on the way home because there was a huge traffic jam up to the tunnel and Conroy blew down a burger, with onions, and a couple of beers. His GI tract did not work well with that. I had to sell the truck. *(Lots of laughter)*

So it was like the Seinfeld episode? It was. It was full-on. I got in that Pathfinder a year later and turned on the heat - the first cold day, and it came right out of the seat. Horrible.

All right, second half of the question. Your experience in the bike industry versus the ski industry, having worked in both. Both industries are great to work in. The bike industry seems to have more compatibility requirements. We always have to design around component clearance and function. For instance, when we design a rear swingarm we are looking at crank, front derailleur, brake, tire and wheel clearance - to name a few. With ski there are not many clearance items of concern, but there is also the whole are of flex and profile. Sort of like the art of suspension with mountain bikes. Both industries are about going fast, that is what counts.

You started growing your hair out to donate to "Locks of Love" to help kids suffering with cancer. Now that the donation has been made, why grow it out again? What ever happened to clean cut Steve? Yeah, clean cut Steve is dead. *(Laughter)* I'm afraid of scaring my kids if I got a haircut. I'd come home and they wouldn't know who Daddy is.

So you grew it out for that and it's just kinda stuck? Yeah, it's kinda stuck. Well it's been getting shorter. I don't know. Have you seen my passport picture? I guess I could bring it back to my youth.

You are big into fishing and take frequent fishing related vacations. Where is the best place you have ever cast a line and what was the biggest thing you reeled in, even if it was a tire or something? *(Laughter)* That's a loaded question. The best place I ever cast a line? Focus... We're talking about fishing right?

Um, definitely the best place I fished was up in the Quetico in Canada. Not necessarily because of the fishing, but just because of the environment.

You're in a park in your canoe. Nobody's around. Nobody can call you. There's nothing. You're camping, you're canoeing, you're fishing. That's it. And that's the best ever. You can't even carry a beer. You can only bring the doctor.

For those who don't know, what is the doctor, Steve? The doctor is any fine single-malt scotch. Any year will do but the doctor can cure anything - mental, physical or emotional. Any ailment is cured by the doctor. It's the only one I trust.

Do you have a personal favorite? Well my staple is Dr. Livet. [Glenlivet, 12-year] Actually my favorite doctor of all time is probably 18-year Glenlivet, but it doesn't matter. If you get into a discussion with the doctor, it doesn't matter how old he is or where he's from. By the end he's the best doctor you've ever met. *(Laughter)*

And the second part is what's the biggest fish you ever reeled in? It's just different. Up in the Quetico, in my canoe with an 8-pound test I caught a 43" northern pike, which probably came in at 25-28 pounds. So that was big for the scenario. Being in a canoe without a net. I got a picture, for sure.

I've also caught a blue marlin in Hawaii that was probably 150-175 pounds and some good king salmon up in Alaska. The biggest I probably caught there was 35".

Was that on the trip with Big Joe? Yeah, it was on the trip with Big Joe. Joe killed it. [Joe is another Yeti employee who loves to fish and is a doctor expert]. Yeah, there are a lot of similarities between Joe and I. The funny thing is that up at the camp in Alaska, they thought we were brothers. Big Joe can definitely play the part.

You've also taken trips with Joe to Cabo. And that was what type of fishing? Tuna? Some striped marlin that time of year, but we did catch some tuna. And the sun. You catch some sun and a buzz. ■



doctor WHAT IS doctor?



I PREFER GLENLIVET 12YR

303 DH

The 303 has taken on a new look with hydroformed tubes and a swanky new paint job. The official DH rig of Yeti / Fox Racing Factory Team, the 303 has seen a myriad of team-inspired improvements.

Most significantly, the frame weight dropped to 12.5 lbs, lightening it by a full pound. The front triangle sports 7005 series aluminum with a hydroformed top tube and front rail mount. The hydroform tubes are lighter and more durable than the monocoque tubes we have used in the past.

The machined parts, including the stabilizing link, rail / car carriers and eccentric mount, have all been optimized as well. The optimization was a result of a reduction in overall material mass while maintaining strength. Along with the weight reduction, the functionality of the parts has been improved. For example the "H" link, one half of the stabilizing link, now fully encapsulates the bearings it holds. This reduces dirt infiltration and eliminates any shifting of the bearings.

To top it off, the production bikes will feature the factory team white and turquoise graphics. White just looks fast. This is a DH rig at its finest.

For more info and the specs check out the website:
yeticycles.com





A S R 7

In Golden, Colorado, we have number of trails that are littered with rocks and boulders. We have learned to clean most of these trails on our 575's but at the end of each ride we were left thinking – what if we had a longer travel version of the 575? Still light enough to climb well, yet brawny enough to take on the toughest descents. Our goal - create a bike with 7 inches of rear travel and make it less than 7.5 pounds. Here's how we did it.

First, we went with a single-sided chain stay. Why? We knew that we wanted a specific chain stay length and travel. Those parameters could not be changed without adversely affecting how the bike rode. Long-travel bikes create a lot of technical issues – most notably fitting a crank, front derailleur, chain, chain stay and pivot all in a very tight area. We could have wedged all those things in a traditional frame but ultimately the design would be compromised. We had a better idea – eliminate the chain stay, create custom parts to keep the derailleur out of the way and use carbon parts to keep it stiff and strong.

On the rear of the bike, we added a direct axle pivot. Essentially, this allows the rear wheel to pivot around the axle and simplifies the structure. It also isolates the brake force so braking doesn't adversely affect the suspension system.

We designed the front end to use the new tapered 1.5" forks. The new configuration allows us to use a fork steerer that is 1.5" at the base to handle the big loads and 1.125" at the top to keep the weight down and also allow you to run standard stems.

For more info and the specs check out the website:
yeticycles.com





PROTOTYPE

FIVE SEVEN FIVE

We took our best-selling bike and made it better.

The 575's legendary efficiency and light weight often has people scratching their heads and comparing it to a 5" travel bike. In reality, this bike can compete with any 5" bike for weight and efficiency and still battle it out with 6+" bikes on the downhill.

How did we do it? First, the front triangle features a hydro-formed top tube with an octagonal cross section that has increased rigidity over previous models. The rear triangle is full carbon with a bridge between the seatstays. Not only does it look great, it provides a noticeable increase in rear wheel stiffness. It is also available with a carbon/aluminum rear triangle which adds a little weight to the frame and takes some load off the pocket book.

The seatpost diameter has been ramped up to 31.9mm to give it a more robust power platform and allow the use of a seatpost dropper (the crew here at Yeti favors the Maverick Speedball). The butted head tube is designed to handle long travel forks (140-160mm travel). The dogbone has been redesigned to couple the stiffness of the front and rear triangle and features a larger bearing outer diameter to handle the load.

On the suspension side, no need to change perfection; the suspension hard points and pivot locations remain unchanged. This ride is better than yours. You just have to try it to believe it.

For more info and the specs check out the website:
yeticycles.com





AS-R CARBON

Pure. Race. Purpose-built.

The suspension properties and geometry are based on the very successful AS-Rsl platform. By using high-modulus carbon fiber, sculpted into stealth-like shapes, we were able to increase the stiffness and tune the handling to be an amazing performer on the trail.

The front and rear triangles are constructed entirely of hand-laid carbon fiber with co-molded aluminum lugs at the bearing and pivot connections. The carbon dogbone helps create the ideal shock rate and provides a solid connection between the front and rear of the bike. The bottom bracket is a press-fit-style instead of the traditional threaded cups. This reduces weight and adds another level of stiffness.

One of the most striking and unique features of the AS-R Carbon is the seat mast. In our testing, we found our integrated seatmast greatly improves the power transfer to the pedals. The seatmast is cut to a rider's spec and the clamp allows up to +/- 1 inch of adjustment. This is a full on XC race bike. It comes in the turquoise/white paint and the raw carbon with a clear coat for protection.

For more info and the specs check out the website:
yeticycles.com





AS-R ALLOY

The AS-R platform has been continually improved since its inception in 2001. Our racers have been instrumental in the development of the AS-R - from the major suspension and geometry redesign in '03 to the material refinements in '04, '05, and '06 - the AS-R is a study in refinement.

New for this year is a refined tube set with a bigger cross-section to increase rigidity and create a ride with an overall stiffer feel. The seat tube has been bumped up to 31.9 mm to allow a stiffer seatpost/frame connection. The custom forged/machined knuckle has been whittled down to reduce weight and its unique configuration allows for amazing stand-over clearance.

Ti fasteners and custom-machined pins show amazing attention to detail.

For more info and the specs check out the website:
yeticycles.com





A R C



A R C - X



4 C R O S S

You need a couple of different tools to be a World Cup 4x racer. For the buttery smooth World Cup courses, most of our racers will run the DJ. When the going gets rough, the 4x is the way to go. This purpose-built bike has been in our race team's quiver since its inception as a special projects bike over four years ago. Why is this? Because it is one hell of a fun bike and is at home on all types of terrain. The progressive 3.25" of travel is stiff on the takeoffs and gives you a bit of cushion if you misjudge a landing. Perfect for any type of riding from jumping to railing a berm.

For more info and the specs check out the website:
yeticycles.com





DIRT JUMPER

The main change on the DJ was not to change. Jared "Grubby" Graves has been railing this bike on the World Cup circuit for the past two years with great results. When a rider of Jared's caliber says he likes something, you keep it that way.

The DJ is sporting the team graphics for 2008. In addition, we have finally released the long-awaited horizontal dropouts. Now the DJ can be turned into a single speed bandit in no time flat. The dropouts have a tension adjustment and wheel-base tuning.

For more info and the specs check out the website:
yeticycles.com



THE KILLING TIME

Clay may be the hardest working filmer in the biz, or the laziest, depending on what time of the day you see him. Clay travels extensively throughout the year filming the best riders in the world—the racers—and has been doing it for some time now. The agenda he keeps is dictated by the racing schedule.

This schedule consists of action-packed segments of riding where filmer and photo jocks alike have a fleeting moment to capture the action and then wait... wait until the next round of practice, qualifying, finals or even the next event. This hurry up and wait schedule creates a day filled with periods of downtime, anticipating the next opportunity to fill the tape reel, not to mention the time wasted in airports traveling from venue to venue.

So if you have seen Clay shirtless in the pits, capturing footage on his laptop, or trying to scam on the few girls that surround mountain bike racing, don't call him lazy. He hates that rep. It is just Clay killing time. The point is that, over time, Clay has found the most effective tactics to deal with the inevitable downtime. His methods may range from finding the most effective way to spend time at the airport lounge, finding the best places to eat, and to steal internet at a venue site between practice runs. We have compiled Clay's tips to aid us in those moments of what to do when there is simply nothing to do.

CLAY'S
tips for surviving the circuit





+ Stealing internet is a crucial skill for killing time. The best place to steal internet is most definitely at a coffee shop. The best method is to observe a local coffee joint, not Starbucks (I hate Strabuckites), and see how many laptops are open. That is the indicator of a strong wireless signal.

As you enter the coffee shop, first put your stuff down in a prime seating location and then order. This is a key tactic if there is a long line. If you omit this step, by the time your order is up, all the seats would be taken. Then you are relegated to a rickety table on the patio; not big time.

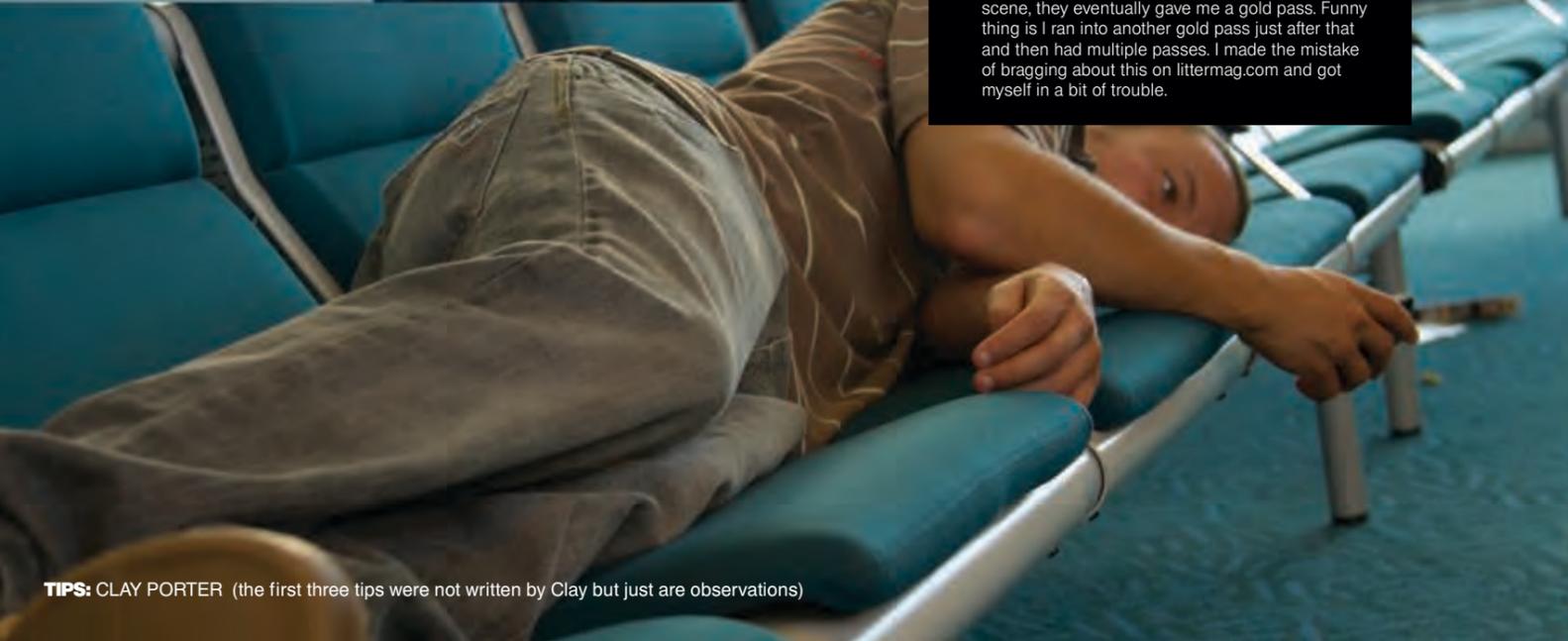
When you order, choose something that will take a long time to consume. For me that is usually coffee and a muffin of some sort. This works out for two reasons. One, I am not a big coffee fan so the sipping goes slow. Two, overall I am just a slow eater. The long consumption time will give you plenty of time to surf the internet and to check email.

+ Make sure you latch on to a few key factory teams. This is crucial because buying food for every meal can get expensive while on the circuit. You need to subsidize the budget by getting free food and beverage in the pits. The best method is to get to know the team managers, as they usually buy the goods, so when you swing by their pit you can just grab what you need like you belong. For example, if Team Yeti is running low on water and sandwiches I can jump over to Iron Horse and see what they have to offer. If they are low, I head over to GT and ask Jill for some Red Bull. It is also best to make sure you befriend teams that travel to all venues worldwide to help maximize free-loading.

+ Getting media passes. The best way to score a media pass is to say you work for a magazine. Telling the media desk that you are a freelance mountain bike documentary filmmaker does little in the way of getting your name on the list.

So I give them my Decline magazine credentials. I write an article or two for the large format mag, calling it work is a stretch, but I have a business card. After seeing the business card and the Lowepro pack, it is usually not an issue gaining access. This has to do with the fact that most media desks do not bother with verifying your credentials.

This year I did run into an issue with this method at Crankworx. They refused me a gold pass which was the highest level of media access. Not use to being rebuffed, as I made the "18th most influential person in mountain biking", according to Decline magazine, I resorted to throwing a fit. After I made a scene, they eventually gave me a gold pass. Funny thing is I ran into another gold pass just after that and then had multiple passes. I made the mistake of bragging about this on littermag.com and got myself in a bit of trouble.



+ If you have an injury of some sort, milk it. My friend just broke her leg and said that going through security was a breeze. She got to cut the line and got through in no time at all. Now obviously, this only works if you have an injury, but if you're like most of us and you're late for your flight, generally they'll let you cut the line to make your flight. Speak up.

+ Buy a PSP. This is more a tip from Justin. Purchase a PSP (Playstation Portable). Justin says they rule and from what I can see they do. It's like having a Playstation for the plane. You can also watch movies on them. And like the iPod, make sure the thing is charged.

+ How to avoid excess baggage charges. It is the unknown demon paying for excess baggage. Don't get me wrong, sometimes you have to pay. But most of the time you can get away with it. For starters, bikes and bike boxes fly free on most airlines or you can get vouchers from USA Cycling. This being said, pack extra stuff in a bike box instead of in a bag and it will fly free. They don't have to know it's not a bike in there. The point is bags cost money, boxes don't. Also, see if the airlines charges excess fees per piece or by weight. It's not a bad idea to travel with an extra bag. If they say you are overweight, just take some stuff and pack it in your extra bag. Excess baggage is a tricky one because not only does it vary airline to airline, but also from airport to airport. The best airport for dealing with excess in my experience is Denver and the worst is London Heathrow, especially given the bad exchange rate between the British Pound and US Dollar.

+ Euro food at race venues. One of the reasons I hate the food in Europe is that it is never convenient, and it always takes forever to get served. It's hard to get something quick to eat. You always end up sitting in a smoky restaurant with slow waiters. The Donner Kebab Shop in Schladming is one of the few exceptions to the above. Kebabs are quick, tasty and cheap. I had three in one day multiple times, and Justin had four in one night.

+ Eating at the airport is a fact of life when traveling the circuit. The food is usually never good, but there are exceptions, here are two.

Andale Mexican Restaurant (San Francisco International Airport)- Mexican food rules and it especially rules when you find a Mexican restaurant in an airport because usually you're coming from a country that doesn't have good Mexican. And I mean every country outside the US and Mexico. We ate at Andale coming back from Whistler. Healthy, fast and good, it was just as good as Chipotle and Qdoba.

Taco Bell (Denver International Airport)- When Justin eats at a fast food place you know it has to be halfway decent. This year we flew back from Schladming, sick of kebabs, and we knew we wanted Chipotle. Since there wasn't a Chipotle in the airport, we needed something to tide us over. So we did what any person needing Mexican would do: stop at Taco Bell on the way. Luckily for us, there is a Taco Bell minutes from the baggage claim at the Denver airport.



FILM COLORADO Spring



Words by: Craig Grant

During a break in the race season, just after Whistler and before the Snowmass National, I helped Clay assemble his dolly apparatus at Yeti. For those who don't know what a dolly is, it is essentially a rolling platform that allows video geeks to get better shots. In Hollywood, they have purpose-built machines. In the bike business, we have contraptions like this.

We hit the Home Depot for base materials and assembled the \$500 dolly wheels Clay purchased from a distributor in Australia. We had it built in a few hours. Jared and Justin felt that Clay was taken by the seller down-under. It is a sore subject with Clay so don't mention it.

We just needed a chance to test the apparatus. As always, Justin was up for some DH runs so we needed to decide on a location. Justin had been hanging out with Cole Bangert, riding at his house in Twin Lakes near Aspen, and had done some early in-season DH runs as well as down in Colorado Springs. So we got in touch with Cole to set up the details and decided on shuttle runs in the Springs.

Colorado Springs is Colorado's second largest city, but it feels more like a town - no buildings are taller than a couple of stories and it sits right next to the Rockies, giving it a small town feel.

The prime riding area is nestled in a canyon called the Garden of the Gods. This area is also home to RockShox development headquarters.

We met at the local Village Inn at the base of Garden of the Gods for some breakfast and to assess the day's plans. We accomplished little more than enjoying a cheap breakfast and the beauty of six separate checks without even asking.

We double-checked the gear and automobile situation, and headed up the canyon for some shuttle runs. The dirt road up was surprisingly well maintained and my beat-down '96 Grand Jeep Cherokee had very few issues with the braking bumps. Cole was rocking a God-Bless-America-oversized-four-door-super-duper-pickup-truck. It was loaded to the hilt with bikes and riders; a fairly amusing sight swerving up the hill.

From the top of the shuttle run it was a bit of a traverse to the ►



ING



trailhead. Normally this would not have been an issue on foot or bike but we had to lug Clay's dolly. We should have planned for this, but we didn't. The dolly was not so much heavy as it was awkward. After watching Clay struggle with the dolly, everyone commented on the best way to carry it. We ended up lugging it up the trail sherpa-style while trading it back and forth. Teamwork.

The plan of attack was to film most of the singletrack trail, primarily the top two-thirds that had most of the high speed run-ins. Most racers don't particularly look forward to filming - pushing up the hill and riding the same line over and over is tedious but that's the nature of the beast to get the right shot. As a photographer, I enjoy tagging along with Clay (my second favorite filmer) because the repetition gives me many more chances to get the shot; a much enjoyed luxury that you don't get at races. Justin and Cole were good sports during the filming and did not complain even once, I think.

As I mentioned before, the dolly is essentially a rolling system for the camera. You lay down a track of two PVC pipes, lay the plywood platform with attached rollers on the pipes and presto! The platform slides back and forth on the track.

The first shot took longer than usual to set up as Clay was adjusting to his new dolly system. The PVC tracks need to be parallel on a fairly even slope and loosely secured with rocks and debris. Once the platform was rolling well we tried a few test runs and got down to business.

This was Clay's first real experience with the dolly and he liked the results. The dolly gave a different angle on the riding and allowed Clay to have smoother run-ins and fade-outs, matching the gliding style of the pro riders.

He had Justin and Cole get up to speed and pin it through the turns. It's all about the turns. The top riders have a certain subtlety about changing direction at top speed that looks so effortless but is hard to duplicate. As they turn the bike and rail around the corners, it just looks like fun. Fun that only a select few really enjoy on a continuous basis. We all experience a few seconds of this feeling once in a while when we enter a turn too hot and make it out thinking, that was fast!

The mood was relaxed as we moved down the trail and collected shot after shot - or track as Justin calls it. Just a nice day in Colorado. For the hours of footage Clay captured that day, you may see a few fleeting seconds of footage in his next film. This is the nature of both still and motion capture. Hours upon hours of time on the hill to capture a single moment.

As we neared the bottom of the trail, there was a decent sized gap jump that we made Justin and Cole hit more times than they would have liked. Not that the hit was that scary, just that they were getting a little tired and this was the middle of the season. No one wants a stupid injury. Clay and Justin discussed (or argued) the best angle for the shot. Justin wanted a head-on view, but Clay wanted a backside angle. Clay decided on his version of the shot. Big surprise. I set up for a shot on the opposite side to get a three-quarter angle on the jump, unavoidably in Clay's frame. Hey, maybe I will be in the next film.

That was the last set-up for the day. We packed up and headed down to town for some grub. Chipotle burritos for all. A day of filming in the bag and hopefully a few bangers (good photos or video clips), as Clay calls them. ■





WHISTLER THE AIR UP THERE

The coastal mountains in British Columbia are like no other place on earth. Throw in some of the finest trails ever designed for biking and you have a recipe for pure bliss. Team Yeti spent 10 days at Whistler after the Crankworx Festival and rode just for fun. We coined it “team building” so the boss could write it off.

words by: craig grant

FER



Didn't think I was afraid of heights
that was until i rode this upper lift with the bar down, camera bag
open on my lap, and shooting one handed

Whistler is the ultimate destination for every mountain biker no matter your discipline or riding ability. The mountain has something for every rider, and at the end of your stay, you will be a better rider for visiting. This even includes our team riders. The excited feeling from waking up every morning to decide what terrain to ride, all the while thrilled by the various trail choices, is amplified when in Whistler.

Whistler is much more than world famous A-line. The upper mountain is littered with some of the most unique technical trails you can find. The lower half is a mash-up of tech trails, jumps and some skinnies. The varied terrain is what makes it so enjoyable and even after more than a week, we didn't ride every run. You find yourself getting addicted to certain runs and just hitting them over and over again. But that is part of the fun – it leaves an excuse to come back each year and hit the runs that eluded you on previous trips.

In addition to the epic terrain, Whistler has an atmosphere like no place else. Besides an A-hole or two on A-line who think they are the best rider(s) in the

world, everyone seems happier. Maybe that is because most are on vacation, but it is more than that. Everyone seems happier because they have been killing it on their bikes. And knowing tomorrow they will wake up and repeat the process all over again, as long as they are not too worn out from the day before, is enough to keep anyone in a good mood.

This was not our first trip to Whistler but every time we get up there we are grateful for the killer trails and awesome people.

Our time off was mixed with testing suspension, joyriding, photo ops, and just kicking back. Testing was first on the agenda and took about three days. Fox went the whole nine yards: telemetry and data acquisition, prototype products, new compression valving, etc. Testing is pretty technical stuff, but it boils down to this - they did a bunch of runs on the same trail, switching out parts systematically. The testing was fairly worthless for photo ops but allowed me and Damion to get in some much-deserved riding.

Damion, our team manager and mechanic, travels to destinations and races throughout the world each year. So he has gotten used to the travel but his increased work responsibilities have allowed less and less time on the bike. So D takes full advantage of his free time at Whistler and with the riders done each day by 3 p.m. for testing, he used all available daylight to ride and wear me out.

I'm not saying that Damion is not a good riding buddy, he is; but he is more of a tour guide to the mountain. He knows his way around almost as well as a local and let me know if a gap jump or something stupid was coming up. Thank God most of the doubles in Whistler are properly built and have the gaps filled in. My preference is for technical trails. Maybe it is my east coast upbringing or because we ride a lot of technical trails in Colorado, but we were able to find plenty in Whistler... and anything else we wanted to ride.

I really enjoyed the trails off the Garbanzo lift: Goats Gully, In Deep and No Joke. Sometimes during our rides, D would ride close to my rear wheel and

push me through a section faster than I would have gone solo. This was nerve-racking at times but D is a solid rider – he pursued wrenching and team management over a pro downhill career. After a couple days of riding with Damion around Whistler, I felt more confident on the bike and a bit better at jumping. I was progressing, although I think I would need a whole season to feel confident popping off the lips.

It seemed as soon we settled into our routine of testing and riding it was over. The Fox crew had to pull out to another event so we had a great Yeti / Fox team dinner. Special thanks to Fitzy for picking up the bill

With the testing out of the way, the rest of the week was all about team building. No really. Employees, managers and racers hanging out together all day, every day. Oh, and Clay was there as well, but without a bike and proper gear. For the second half of the trip, the main item on the agenda was to take photos and capture some video. Something that is tough to do when everyone just wants to chill out or ride. Damion even tried to arrange some









hang time is pure bliss, if you can get there. And Jared can.
for us mere mortals boosting a jump this massive is not a



Reality
red bull elevation last set at sundown





last Call 10 days seem so short in BC

heli-biking, but Bossman nixed that idea. I am guessing the answer might have been different if he was along for the ride.

Letting racers loose on the trails in Whistler is a unique experience. There are a whole slew of videos with locals and top backcountry riders spinning and flipping over the terrain, but racers have a much different riding style. No doubt they still like to jump and float a whip, but they hit the trails as if it were one big racetrack. Pinned, smoothing out the terrain and using every inch of the trail, they made it look so easy. You set them on the most varied terrain in North America and they still will find a flat turn to drift. Drifting for fun. No pressure. Just rallying all around the mountain, especially the tech trails on the upper side, Joyride and Whistler Downhill on the bottom half.

We got Jared and Justin to slow down for a moment or two and have them hit some cliché Whistler lines and let the trigger finger go on the camera. Although these spots have been shot before, it was still fun to capture our riders in these locales with BC as the backdrop. Maybe next year Bossman

will okay a heli trip. For as much of a hard time as I give the riders for hating photos, they were good sports and took time out of their day to get it done.

Jared left a little early for a BMX thing but not before he hit up the elevation jumps. He sized these up earlier in the week, commenting that he had to hit them before he left. Although racers are not known for flips and spins off jumps, they will hit any line and throw down a little steeze just the same.

The jumps are a massive set of doubles located just above the lower lift. Created for a BMX event, the lips and landings are steep and tall. The jumps have more of a boost style. They throw you skyward more than out. Jared took his Yeti hardtail to the set one evening before sunset, and with Clay commandeering a truck to film the set, went about de-constructing the lines.

The jumps had varied lines but all led to one massive booter at the end. It took a couple of runs-ins and pullbacks on the final jump, but once he felt

ready Jared sent it off the last set. It was fun to watch and I could never imagine attempting such a jump myself. But damn, I bet it felt good.

This routine of riding and photo time continued throughout the week. In the evening we hit up a local joint for dinner. More often than not it was Splitz (best greasy burger and fries in Whistler). After dinner we'd go to the only liquor store that served cold beer, and then we'd head back to the sick condo and watch "Entourage" Seasons 1 and 2, and half of Season 3. We peeled ourselves off the couch to go out for sushi and to hit a local bar an evening or two, but it was about riding and recovering in style more than anything else.

If you have never been to Whistler before, put down this catalog right now, call a couple of reliable friends and book your trip. You won't be disappointed. ■



Kokanee and Entourage
Just wanted to thank all the Kokanee for getting us through the wee hours of the morning and the *Entourage* season 2 and 3 for the morning after.

I especially enjoyed season 3 episode 4. The one where Eric is all depressed after breaking up with his girlfriend but meets the Perfect 10 model at the party after the Lakers game. Nice.

Down Time

what do the worlds best riders do with a week off mid-season?

WORDS BY: CLAY PORTER

THEY RIDE



Usually, I am traveling the race circuit capturing the riders as they burn in runs but, once in a while, we get some down time. And for the first time in recent memory, it wasn't in the Yeti Factory in Golden, Colorado, it was in France.

Located in the French Alps, the small town of Morzine is surrounded by some of the most spectacular and visually-stunning trails in the world. It's neighboring town, Les Gets, was also home to the World Championships in 2004. Simply put, this area of the world bleeds mountain biking. This week was all about relaxing, taking it easy and getting some good shots of the boys having fun. I captured the riders in a relaxed environment as they enjoyed singletrack, good cooking and a few beers.

When you're stuck in a routine of race, race, race, ten days off seems like an eternity. What to do? Once we had all answered our emails, we did what any group of people fascinated with bikes would do, we rode.

Jared and Justin rode while I set up a zip line. The zip line is a tricky apparatus. Setting one up involves lots of work and time but I was up for it, and with help from our Kiwi friend Jason, we got it operating before too long. There was a rather steep downhill track in Morzine that Jared and Justin had been hammering runs on all day and had a particularly cool ending section. The trail was perfect for a zip line shot: a super-steep straight section with a setup jump followed by a step-up.

After a day of setup, I was flying through the air, camera in hand following Jusso. While I worked on setting up the shot, Jared and Justin rode. Gone were the race jerseys and instead it was T-shirts and shorts. Gone was the race taping, instead were flowers and clean mountain air. It was refreshing to be completely away from a big city and surrounded by all that Morzine had to offer. It was going to be a good week.

Once the stepup cable cam shot was in the bag, it was on to find some other trails that Gary Perkin (a.k.a. Flipper) could shoot with his digi camera. Flipper is one of the world's best mountain bike race photographers and was staying with us in Morzine for a few days to get some shots for the catalog. We found a super cool moss-covered trail that Flipper knew would be killer for some shots. After the photo shoot, Jusso decided to jump in the freezing cold lake beside the trail. The lake looked cold. Straight up, it was freshly melted snow he was jumping into. Boy were his popcorn teeth chattering after that one.

All dried off, we went to a restaurant near the lake for lunch. I'm about as American as they come. And true to my American roots, I like to drink Coke. Coke in Europe is not cheap, generally about €3 for a 10-ounce bottle, the equivalent of about \$4.50. After three Cokes and a whopping \$13.50 "bar tab",



we were out of there. All of us were settled in the car when we realized D was lagging a bit. The always sophisticated D was finishing off the bottle of wine he had purchased. Not sure what that cost D, but he seemed pretty content. ▶





A week off in Morzine France.
Does that sound like a job? Probably not, but for these fortunate riders and our company it is work.





I think Jared and Justin trained for the rest of the day. Justin rode XC and lifted weights and Jared did sprints. Again, even on a week off, the boys were hard at work training. Now D decided that it was time to borrow Damion's (the owner of the chalet we were staying in) mini bike, and go for a ride while Jared and Justin trained. None of us were there, but it turns out D went down and came back bruised and wounded but otherwise in good spirits.

Over the years of riding downhill (D is the 2003 Semi-Pro National Champion, and beat Cody Warren and Duncan Riffle for the title) and subsequently crashing, D's fingers are very dis-jointed and the wreck on the mini bike didn't help. Luckily D's crash was the only injury in the ten days, not a bad track record considering the boys rode every day. Moral of the story kids: a bottle wine and mini bikes don't mix.

We stayed in an amazing chalet which was owned by one of Justin's friends from New Zealand who now lives year-round in Morzine, France. The biggest thing that I remember about Kiwi Damion, other than he was a super cool guy that we all got along with great, was that he was an amazing chef who cooked for us almost every night. The way Kiwi Damion runs the chalet is that he cooks for his guests six nights a week and takes the seventh night off. On the sixth night he prepared for us a five-course meal. Definitely not what were used to but much appreciated. It was probably one of the fanciest meals I've ever eaten. There was all this stuff to cleanse your pallet and about 12 different utensils. We were all a bit out of our element, but the food ruled.

We were in Morzine during what's called the inter-season. This means it is in-between winter and summer. For those mountain dwellers in the states, it was slack-season. None of the lifts



Clay has been working on his zipline technique for around three seasons. It has been a trial and error process over the years. But his skills on the line and his equipment have improved every year.

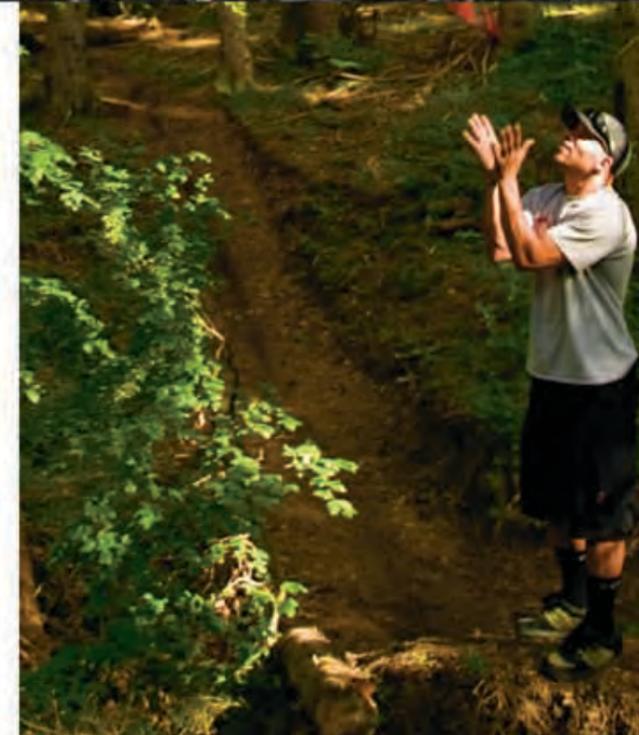
It is still time-consuming to set up, but outcomes are more predictable. You can ask Mr. Smith about a separated shoulder in Squamish, BC caused by an early version of the Clay zipline setup.

were running and the only people in the town were locals, so nightlife was pretty much non-existent. We ended up eating at some horrible pizza place (it probably wouldn't have been that bad if we weren't used to Kiwi Damion's cooking by now) and then went to a local bar that was packed. Actually, I lied, it wasn't packed at all. We were the only ones there except for two random 10 year olds who were playing video games.

We're all racers, even though D and I don't race anymore, and we all have a bit of a competitive side so instead of video games with the kids we headed immediately to the pool table. It was on. Justin and I on one team and D and Grubby on the other. To say I suck at pool is an understatement. Good thing we were playing against Jared and D. Jusso and I simply slayed them and I nailed two of my best pool shots ever. Oh big time.

We awoke one morning to find snow on the mountains surrounding the chalet. Kiwi Damion said that it would be dumping all day, so we went outside to check it out... with downhill bikes, of course. Hey, when you want to ride, you want to ride, right?

As we had expected, it was snowing hard at the top of the mountain but that didn't stop Jared and Jusso from riding in the snow. They tested their traction limits, made a mockery



To see the video sequence of Justin busting the gap jump, go to: yeticycles.com



a little downtime is good for the soul and the tan lines. But stay too long and you forget that it is a season of work... if you consider riding work.



out of Mother Nature and then headed back to the chalet.

When we weren't riding, we were getting in a bit of T.T. in the French Alps. That's tanning time. You got to be careful of B.T. though, that's called burning time. Not big time.

After time in the sun there were some P.M.D.'s going on. That would stand for Personal Maintenance Day. Grubby coined that one. A P.M.D. is basically taken after a long travel day, or when you're just plain dirty. It's like the full-works at the car wash: shampoo, conditioner, soap and some sort of lovely smelling body wash to freshen you up. It's also nice to get in a shave, since you rarely have time for that when you are racing. With the T.T. and the P.M.D.'s we showed up to Champéry as one of the most well-groomed teams on the circuit. There is a first time for everything.

The best thing about hanging out in Morzine is that we had time to relax. When you're traveling every week, dealing with lost baggage, delayed flights, sleeping in a different bed every night, it's nice to mellow out for a week and just chill. We had time to play pool, indulge in a P.M.D., get a bit of T.T., ride mini bikes, set up zip lines and just do nothing.

Morzine was definitely a highlight of the season, mostly because it wasn't action-packed. Thanks to Kiwi Damion, Jason Marsh and to the nice woman who made my spaghetti carbonara at the little restaurant in Les Gets. It was really good and nearly on par with Damion's cooking. All in all, Morzine was a good time with good mates and I look forward to my next visit. ■

OUR COLLABORATION



Jim working on a proto 40 RC2



words by: steve hoogendoorn

with Fox has created an environment where both suspension and frame manufactures work in conjunction

The collaboration between Yeti and Fox is the result of a common mission: to create a better ride. Each company is committed independently to create the best products on the market. Our expertise in frame design and bike "feel" merged with Fox's vast knowledge of suspension technology create the best suspension product. This helps push the needle from good to great.

At the center of our development efforts is the Yeti / Fox Racing Shox Factory Team. Together we push our racers for more information, make them endure long test sessions and constantly build and refine products to improve their performance. If they win, everyone who rides our products wins.

Our race season starts out in March with a covert test session somewhere in North America. Yeti and Fox congregate in the desert to test and tune the latest Yeti frame designs with Fox suspension technology. Contrary to what many may think, it is not an excuse to go where the

sun is shining and take endless shuttle runs. The runs are endless but the setup and data recording is extensive and tedious. The whole gamut of settings and rates is tested and detailed information is collected both qualitatively and quantitatively that will be applied in the upcoming race season.

This information is directly related to future product direction for both companies. Run consistency is paramount and the racer's feedback is the needle on the compass. To really understand how important riders are to our testing efforts, we have a unique process for selecting riders. First, they have to be world class fast. Second, they need to be great testers. If a racer cannot close the developmental circle for us, they will not fit into our program.

The second major test session happens later in the season in Whistler, British Columbia. The same due diligence will be applied and more marks will be posted on the map. This continuous commitment to testing and development

pushes the envelope and keeps our racers and products at the top of the game. It is clearly not the easy or cheap route. To Yeti and Fox, it is the only route.

This collaboration allows us to push through design iterations at a staggering rate. From just a phone call and an email, we can have custom-tuned shocks built and sent within a week. That, coupled with our local trails and employee talent pool of pro and semi-pro riders, allows us to make decisions that can take our competitors months or even years to make.

It goes beyond just having product shipped to our factory. Chris and I (co-owner's of Yeti) make frequent trips out to the Fox headquarters for ride sessions. On the latest trip I tested new revs of air shocks for the 575. These new revs were the result of our discussion with Fox about the need for more mid-stroke compression on long travel trail bikes like the 575. The new air shocks delivered on the promise. They provided a more even-keeled ride and did not wallow on g-outs and rider-driven forces. We were able to improve on an already killer setup. We live for that...

The development methods may vary but riders are always core to the process. Having a company that is committed to racing and a product development team working with us gives us amazing horsepower for a company our size.

So here's to the crew at Fox Racing Shox - Bob, Mario, Fitz, Jared, Elayna, the entire engineering crew, and our man Mike V. who keeps us dialed at the races - we couldn't do it without you. ■



< Nate. Working the service center



Signing autographs for the fox crew



Jared losing in ping pong >

Fitzy, our man on the inside >



to Build the best ride **Riding** you need to be dedicated to testing

~~we set off for the desert~~ with Fox to perform specific suspension and ride testing

this is our process

Making great bikes takes a lot of testing. We are fortunate to collaborate very closely with Fox Racing Shox on all of our suspension designs. Each year we do a several testing sessions to get our new and current product dialed in. This past year we headed to the Arizona desert in early March to dial in our riders and prepare for the season.

Why Arizona? Well, for starters, the snow pack in early March in Colorado is about 20 feet deep. We would happily head to Watsonville, CA to sample the trails surrounding the Fox factory but they are too buffed out to really punish and test the limits of a long travel DH rig. So we split the difference and headed to the South Mountain trail network just outside of Phoenix.

Phoenix is a large city but the urban sprawl outside the city is where most of the population lives. Our test sessions took place on South Mountain, so we rented a small suburban house nearby. The lodging was tight but everyone had a bed, except Clay and his roommate Duncan (Team Giant mechanic).

On the first day of testing we decided to set up shop in the Boy Scout lot of South Mountain. As we started to set up, a park ranger pulled up. Both crews looked at each other and we had a distinct feeling we might be upsetting Johnny Law. We didn't have a permit (don't think we actually needed one) and were guilty of being mountain bikers, so we expected a reprimand even though the lot stood empty.

Mountain bikers can sometimes get a bum rap from local land managers, but the ranger was incredibly nice. He was also part of the trail building crew that was responsible for building these epic trails. He asked us if we needed anything and if we had any suggestions on the trails to send them his way. Good way to start...

Our traveling circus consisted of a trailer with the full awning setup to shield us from the brutal desert sun. It takes a while to get the rig dialed but it is always worth the effort. In a perfect world we would have done some research and known exactly where to ride for the day. We didn't and guessed which trail would have the most technical terrain and longest stretch of downhill. To this day I am not sure which trail we rode. It had an easy access point in a small turnabout at the top of the trail. The first stretch of trail started with open, fairly smooth terrain and halfway down turned technical with one sharp switchback after another. The trail ended right in the Boy Scout parking lot. Perfect.



Phoenix and surrounding areas all have an eerie symmetry about them. We stayed in a suburban neighborhood of Phoenix where all the houses looked stamped out of a widget factory. Even on trash day, everyone had an identical trash container and positioned them in the same spot.

words by: craig grant



1 Ross "Crusher" Milan taking a break from testing his 303 DH. You know he is used to the 30 sec 4-Cross. 2 Prototype goodies for factory riders, must be nice. 3 Fitzzy collecting the data from the session. 4 Making the necessary tunes to keep the bikes dialed.



Having performed testing with Fox in the past, the riders knew what to expect. They were asked to hammer the same run all day long - after each run Fitzzy (Mark Fitzsimmons, head of race product development at Fox) and Mike VanLinden (Tech/Race Support) would collect rider feedback, make changes and send them out again. Fox refers to this technique as bracketing, but to me it looked more like very scientific trial and error. The Fox crew was calling the shots during this part of the testing. They came equipped with all suspension goodies and started going over the ins and outs with the riders.

The first thing that caught the riders' eyes was the multi-colored anodized caps that adorned dozens of damper units for the 40 RC2. They had silver, black, gold and blue knobs. Mark explained that it helped identify all the different compression set-ups they had created back at the factory. I know there was a sound engineering reason for what they did but I couldn't stop thinking how damn cool it all looked.

Jared immediately took to the gold color, or as the Aussies say it, "goooooold". Grubby's BMX bike, which he had been riding all winter, was decked out with several gold anodized parts: Chris King

hubs and headset, titanium spokes that have a gold hue and a gold seat collar.

Amused but undeterred, Mark emphasized that the colored caps were specific to the set-ups and he would not change a cap just because someone liked the color. These colored indicators also decorated the Pro-Pedal knob and Boost Valve of several rear shocks, indicating that these rear shocks had also been set up at the factory with different compression setups.

Since the Fox boys had put so much effort into the compression setups on the fork and shock, we knew this would be the focus of the testing session. The plan was to start testing with the fork damper units and then move on to the rear shocks as the fork became dialed in.

After each rider was set up with a damper unit, the forks sag and rebound was set, and Damien shuttled riders to the top of the hill. I stayed at base camp for the first few runs and snapped photos of Fitzzy and Mike doing their thing. The first run took longer than expected. As the trail and shuttle route became more familiar, riders started coming down in regular procession. Upon returning to the lot after each run, Fitzzy jotted down feedback and

comments on his clipboard and the necessary changes were made to the bikes. Then back up the hill again. They continued this until everyone was satisfied with the information collected.

On Day two of testing, Fitzzy added another element to the test - rear shocks. In addition to the anodized colored cap indicators, Fox had placed small stickers that read factory prototype on the forks and shocks. The stickers had the Fox logo and important tidbits of information printed



the racers would like to think it is all for them but it is really to make the ride you buy better.



Colors equal tuning options

LISTA
MAKING WORKSPACE WORK

DHX SMALL PART

our Purpose

was to dial in the race bikes
what we came away with were settings and fine-tuning for production bikes -

making your ride better



Quick damper change for 100MM



Mike keeping it dialed



< Jared crashed here



on them. The unique set-up of each rider was recorded on the outside of the fork. Really factory and really cool.

Suspension set-up relies heavily on making sure the bike feels balanced under the rider. We spend countless engineering hours making sure our linkages and geometries deliver a predictable and balanced ride. The final step is tuning the suspension elements to work in conjunction with our design. Spending a few days in the desert with the best suspension guys on the planet makes our bikes and racers faster.

Since we were testing front and rear suspension on the second day, the turn-around time in the pits was a bit slower. But our riders were in the groove so they actually got in more runs than the day before. Jared was the only one to go down all day, so while he was slowed a bit, he still got his runs in.

All of the information collected on-site would be taken back to the Fox and Yeti camp to be analyzed, argued about and translated into design improvements. The process is expensive and tedious at times, but critical to understand the nuances of suspension that move a product from

good to great. Both Fox and Yeti have solid riders on staff who can test product in the early stages of design but world caliber riders bring something entirely different to the test session. They can push harder, ride faster and do things most of us only dream of... they can put more into a product in a couple of days than most of us can in a season.

Our last day was pretty short as we had gotten through most of the testing the day before. So we left the desert thirsty and stopped by this little Irish pub for lunch and beers. The pub turned out to be a nice spot and a gem for photos. I snapped a few pics of the team together at the bar. We were a little worried about catching this moment on film because TJ is underage but he was only drinking milk so all was good.

After we kicked back a few Guinness's and loaded up on fish and chips we left to head back to winter in Golden. It was a test session and it was hard work but I gotta admit, it's tough to beat the sunshine and 75 degree weather in early March. ■

the dust settled and we analyzed the data, and learned even more about our rides and suspension

A lot of companies talk about testing, but few actually do it. We know of one that backs up the talk with proof and your looking at it



D Smith handles the pits and flips shocks

GLOBAL TEAM
TEAM YETI/FOX

To see the video of the Yeti-Fox test session, go to: yeticycles.com

RACERS AND DIRT JUMPS AFTER



WORDS BY CRAIG GRANT
NOON OFF



You think it would be easy on a day off to get five racers organized to go dirt jumping. You would be wrong. One rider needs to hit the trainer, the other packed up all of his socks and another could not find his flats or shoes. Then you need to get them in the car with all their gear, water, etc. This could all make one Yeti employee/photographer/designer with a short fuse go nuts. Where is Damion (team manager)? Partly it did, I raised my voice, got a little ticked but eventually got everyone in the truck. The funny thing is once you get them where they need to be, it's all good. No complaints - just riding and having fun. That's how it went down one afternoon at the Fix dirt jumps.

For video of team Yeti hitting the dirt jumps, go to: yeticycles.com





The Fix is a local bike shop in Boulder, CO, run and owned by riders with a bias towards gravity. As much as a bike shop, the Fix is a hangout for local riders and young groms, some barely with their training wheels off. Not to say some of those youngsters are not rippers, most are better than me at jumping. In the back of the shop is a dirt jump setup that would make anyone proud, named the "Fix Testing Grounds". Thankfully the Fix has these groomed dirt jumps open to all comers, even us Yeti folk. After a stressful morning, the team Yeti riders got just what they needed - a little playtime on the dirt. Thanks to all the riders/employees at the Fix for having such a sick place to ride.

for info on "the fix" jumps, go to: fixbikes.com





jared graves
justin leov
tj sharp
ross milan
rich houseman

factory team

interviews by: craig grant

five interviews with



JUSTIN LEOV. MT. SAINT ANNE, CANADA.



JARED GRAVES. VIGO, SPAIN.

U areed

Sock height perfect >

Comments

on his BMX/Mountain mix, sock height, proper 4x-course construction and more.

Graves

You recently got back from a BMX race held on the Olympic track in China. How did you fair? I took third and I guess that's how I fared.

You had to travel all the way to China. How did the culture and environment differ from that of European and US race scenes? China is definitely a crazy country. It's a totally different way of life. It's pretty much stinking hot everyday and kind of a messy, smelly country. But it is very interesting to see how the people get around. For sure, it was a good week.

What did you make of all the hackey-sack action going on in the Far East? Well hackey-sacks... pretty much at any time of the day if you looked out our hotel window you'd see at least one person playing hackey-sack by themselves or with a group. There was one lady kicking and kicking a sack around. I thought I'd start counting and see how many kicks she could do but I gave up at 500. Yeah – that's just how it was.

So based on your performance over in China, what are your chances of making the Olympic team for BMX? They're very good. Things are looking pretty much as good as they could be at the moment. Keeping my fingers crossed.

Have Mom and Dad received the news that you may be considered to be an Olympian? How did they react? They're always on top of things. They knew as soon as I did. They were watching it live on the Internet, so they saw a good result on the actual Olympic track. It was always gonna be huge for the selection, so I am pretty happy to have pulled off a good race there.

Is Mom going to come to the Olympics in Beijing if you make the team? Oh – everyone'll be there.

Who's everyone? Mum, Dad, my brother, his wife, Jess, I'm sure some more friends from home. The whole family, I don't know. Whoever.

There'll be a whole Grubby contingency over there? For sure. They're going to wear their tee shirts and everything.

Based on your success in BMX this year we (Yeti) have decided to make you a prototype in your pursuit of Olympic "gooooold", mate. How has your feedback shaped the 20? Does having a ride made just for you make you feel big-time? That's always big-time, you know. Any Yeti is big-time and Yeti's customs are extra big-time. You might even say it's huge-time. Yeah, so it was great. I picked all of the geometry myself, which is what I like and what I was comfortable with. Everyone who had a part in getting it together did an awesome job. It was just right – perfect – from my first ride on, so it's been quite big-time.

You came in second overall in 4x last season on the World Cup circuit. This season you were looking for the overall victory. Unfortunately some bad luck did not allow you to contend for the overall. What are your feelings on the 4X World Cup series this year? Yeah it's been pretty frustrating 'cause I know I'm in a lot better form than I was in last year and just nothing seemed to go my way. I crashed out at a couple of races and the drama that most people know about kept me from getting the results I should have. But that happens and it'll all come back at some stage. I feel confident in my riding so that's the main thing.

What would you like to see in the World Cup 4X courses next year? If you were to design a course what would you put in it? I definitely would put in a longer straight to get everyone a bit more sorted out in the beginning. The passing should be done further down the track. It seems to be the setup of







the courses this year: short first straights, tight first turns and that's where all the action happens. Try to let everyone get a little settled in first and then try and have an opportunity to pass later on in the track. Just let everyone get out clean on the first straight. Just more or less different. It doesn't have to be BMX-y. You can build different obstacles. I'd really like to see starter sections as something you can come into flat out and lean back and hang on to. That to me is what 4x should be like. The course at Whistler last year was a pretty good course. It had some different features in it. I really enjoyed that course and all that sort of stuff.

You have a particular style when it comes to your riding kit. Sock height, goggle straps and peak shape seem very important to you. Is having your kit right an important part of feeling good on the bike, or it is just about looking good? I'm just a big believer in if you look like a bogan, people will think you're a bogan on the bike. So if you can look the part then all that sort of stuff helps getting in magazines and help you get sponsors. I just try to make sure my gear looks as good as it can. Make sure you're comfortable obviously. Just make sure you look good.

For those that don't know, what is a bogan? A bogan is a person who is basically a bit of a derelict and doesn't have much of a clue. Bogans are commoners in Australia. You see 'em walking around with very short shorts and cowboy boots. They just got no style sense at all and they couldn't give a shit about any sort of fashion sense at all. They just drink beer and Bundy and hang out with their mates.

Speaking of short shorts, what do you consider short? ATK [at the knee] very bad, looking at you Keith Darner. He's getting there though. He's working on it. He showed me some pretty sweet new shorts he was rocking at the Yeti Tribe Gathering in Crested Butte last weekend, so he's definitely getting there. ATK's not so good. Some people are trying to bring back the short shorts theme and I just think that's gay.

So on the homefront, back in Australia, you recently purchased your first home. Give us some details on the new digs. Location, back yard plans, square footage? What are we talking about here? We're talking about a nice little property on the outskirts of Towoomba, Mt. Ruskell area. About two and a half acres. It's got a triple garage. Quite a nice, fairly new house.

Not planning on buying a lawnmower 'cause the whole yard's gonna be built. Pump track, dirt jumps, little technical lines, anything I feel like digging really. Haven't done too much planning but pump track, dirt jumps, little 20-man sleigh track would be nice. Most of the property is on a little bit of a downhill.

So Jess is back there furnishing the apartment with your gold card. What's the most expensive item she's laid down so far? She's good with getting deals so she's pretty careful about that sort of stuff. We like to save our money where we can. She's got good style sense and she's been decking it out pretty good and finding deals as well. So I think the most expensive item we bought was a \$4,500 bed, so that's quite big-time. And the fridge, I'm not sure exactly what the fridge cost, but I know it was up there, so it's quite a bling-fridge.

Are we talking stainless steel? It's a? What do they call it? It's not stainless, it's better than stainless whatever it is. It looks like stainless, but it's expensive as shit.

So besides sleeping in your \$4,500 bed this off-season, any plans, trips, vacations or rest planned? We'll do a bit of rest first. Rest, digging, some trips away with Jess, then get back into some training by late October for a good Australian BMX season. January, February, March for BMX will follow that. And then we got the start of mountain bike season from there. Just resting for a while and relaxing, spending some good quality time at home and not living out of a suitcase for a little while. ■



J Justin

Explains
his passion for ice cream, his new Mac book, *Entourage* season 2 and more.

How would you describe your '07 season? It was definitely a progression from the start of the season. I think the training that I did and have been doing is just making me stronger and stronger. As my confidence increased I think my racing results have also gotten better and have been building to a stage where I've got the ability to keep it going. My collarbone injury late in the year put a damper on things but now I am racing in New Zealand and feeling good.

What was the prize money you won for your first National win at Snowmass, CO? Were you disappointed? I was a little disappointed just for the fact that they didn't even give us prize money. *(Laughter)* They made us fill out a tax form and said they were going to send it to us so who knows what I won and who knows if I'll even get it, so it was definitely disappointing.

You had an injury late in the season. Can you comment on how it put the rest of your season in a bit of turmoil? Yeah, breaking my collarbone was definitely a setback and kind of put a damper on my hopes for World Champs and World Cup finals for which I was hoping to get a solid result for Yeti and my sponsors. I decided to sit them out and just concentrate on recovery. I may as well finish now on a high note riding well, and put a plan together for next year and come back even stronger.

Okay. On a lighter note, you and Jared had a running bet this year tagged "The Jared vs. Justin Runtime Bet." Explain what the bet was all about and who won. Yeah, basically Jared started this bet with the first (downhill) race of the year telling me how much he was going to beat me by in qualifying and then how much he was going to beat me by in the finals. So it kind of turned into a bit of a competition.

After a couple of races we made it sort of official. Basically how it works is you take your qualifying time and your race time and you add it together for the weekend. The maximum time you can beat someone by is 10 seconds and so that kind of helped out if anybody has mechanical or crashes. I mean it's just 10 seconds for the weekend. But yeah I'm pretty glad to say that I didn't do the last two races of the year and I still had 43 seconds on Jared. *(Laughter)* Smoked him this year.

This is your second full season with Team Yeti and having D as your mechanic. Could you describe your relationship with Damion and maybe a little interesting story you have about him. Or not... *(Chuckles)* I've gotten a lot closer to Damion this year. As a friend we're much closer this year and we've had some pretty good laughs. I actually spent a lot of the time in-between races while I've been in Colorado staying at D's house so I got to see a bit of his lifestyle and realize what sort of night owl he is. He's the kind of guy that starts work at midnight and works through the early hours of morning as opposed to the guy who wakes up at 7 a.m. and puts on his suit and tie and gets off to work.

On our latest trip to Whistler, Damion brought along HBO's Entourage and we watched too many episodes. Who is your favorite character and exactly how many episodes did we put down that week? Um okay. Let's see. We probably put down. What did we have? I think we had Season 2 and Season 3. It might have been just Season 2. Anyway we put down pretty much the full DVD set which was four DVDs, probably six episodes on each. So a good amount. Um as for my favorite character, that's a tough one. They're all pretty good. Probably Ari

< don't pronounce the "v"

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though. I think he makes the whole show. His quick wit is really what makes *Entourage*.

You've been involved with Fox this year and we did a couple test sessions from the early season session in Arizona to later in the season at Whistler. What did the testing process entail and what was your involvement? Basically we showed up and they had a bunch of new products and ideas. They each gave us one thing to test at a time, so you're not biased about something. We just worked our way through doing runs on the same course and tried out each product. With each run you'd notice stuff and you could comment on exactly what you thought and they would also test to see how much travel we were using. We'd go through the ideal setup and shocks.

By the end of the testing session you'd have a pretty good setup, a pretty good understanding of what's going on with the product, and more ideas for them to go away with and work on.

Observing you during the test sessions, you were definitely more involved than some of the other riders and racers that were there. What intrigued you about going over the setup process with Fitzy. Was it curiosity in the science of tuning or were you just trying to get the best racing setup? A little bit of both. I mean the more you put into it, the more you'll get out of it. And you know racing the better setup is only gonna help you as opposed to hindering you. I see that I might as well put in 100 percent because they took the time to be there and I actually really enjoyed it. I didn't think I would be that good at testing but once I got into it I found that it is actually quite easy. It's quite enjoyable and it's helping both Yeti and Fox develop products.

In that respect, what kind of feedback did you actually give them? Basically, they would ask questions like "could you feel feedback in your hands? Was it diving in corners?" Questions similar to that, but mainly what the fork was doing at the start of the trail gives you a good starting point. How does the fork feel on the small bumps? And then I hit medium bumps and I'd make a note in my head of what the fork was doing. And when you hit the drops and the hard hits where you bottom out your fork completely, you need to give them feedback on that as well.

It's basically the transition between each stage and how the fork feels overall. You've got to listen to exactly what your bike's doing as opposed to thinking about your lines... and you know how a racer thinks about terrain. They just see the lines and don't think about their bike too much. So you've gotta switch off and really listen to what your bike's doing.

On a lighter note, word on the street is that you have an addiction to ice cream and you can put it down quick. What is your favorite flavor and how long does it last in the freezer? Oh damn, that's easy man. My favorite flavor as of this year is cookie dough ice cream. We don't have it at home. This year at Whistler I went through a two liter container in a day and a half. So, yeah, I obviously don't buy it every day or every week, so it gets eaten pretty fast.

Doesn't last long. Watch your cookie dough around Justin. As you sit across from me I see you got your new blingety-bling Mac Book in your hand. Your previous computer was a Dell (Windows OS). How has moving to the Mac improved your life, or has it? Oh, definitely. It's like the difference between a Toyota and a Ferrari. *(Laughter)* It's so much easier to use and it's just better and smaller and it fits in my bag. It's just a better computer and I'm way into it compared to my Dell.

So you'd say all those non-Mac users out there should make the switch? I'd say big-time. Make the switch. ■





tj

Talks about

his hair length, being a student, digging trails and more.

S

sharp

You made the Worlds Team for the good old US of A for the first time last year. What was your experience like at Fort Bill, attending such a massive race? The scale of the race is pretty incredible. I hadn't been to Europe so experiencing a culture that's more accepting of cycling was pretty unique. Also just everything boiling down to race day. There were tons of people everywhere and crowds we would typically see only at a much more formal American event.

Talk a bit about your preparation leading up to the race. How did your preparation differ from other races? That definitely made it really interesting because this year Worlds fell during the second week of my fall semester in college. I was going to the biggest race of my life and the week before I hadn't touched my bike. I was trying to prepare in all of my classes to be gone for a week but I knew I would come back and be behind. It was pretty stressful but I wasn't too worried about it. During the summer I lived in the mountains near a downhill track so I was able to put in a good amount of training, even before I started school, so I had a solid base.

Was Damion there to ease any of your nerves or was he just adding to it? I didn't really talk to Damion about it.

You didn't talk to Damion during the race? (Laughter) You kind of put me in a corner here. No comment.

You took last spring semester off to concentrate on racing. Has it paid off in your opinion? It did. I noticed a difference at the beginning of the race season. I was a little more comfortable on my downhill bike. Surprisingly, I thought I'd have more free time, but I kept just as busy in that time off without school. It turned into a pretty busy schedule riding my bike which was good. It did help during the season.

Let's talk a little bit about your college (University of Colorado, Boulder) life. You recently got a new pad for the fall semester. One of your roommates is David Camp, a fellow Colorado thrasher. Do you have any special plans for the crib? Pump track? Foam pit? Big welcome block rager? New pad's good. Dirt jumps have been installed which is not to say they've been ridden but they've been installed. Other than that, the dog controls most of the backyard. I guess our biggest plans are the garage right now. We're setting that up. We've been making some bikes in there. We just got a MIG welder. We're pretty stoked on that.

Making bikes? Homemade Dave and TJ specials? Is that what we're talking about here? Yeah Dave Camp makes his DC specials. I have yet to produce my own but it's in the works as we speak. **You have big plans to build a TJ special?** Yeah. For fun. To do it out of steel the material cost is \$150, so compare that to any market downhill bike price and you may as well build one just to look at it.

Is Dave also a fellow mechanical engineering student? Dave is in his senior year of mechanical engineering. **And you are in your?** Junior year.

Due to the lack of females in the engineering school, have you been tempted to transfer to the party-all-the-time business school? (Laughter) You know engineering school hasn't done me wrong in that respect so I don't know. You just gotta think outside of engineering. You don't have to actually move. You just gotta think outside of engineering. Be assertive. Act stupid.





When was the last time you found yourself at The Sink? I've never been to The Sink. The place in Boulder? I'm sure when I'm of age it might fit into my category pretty well from your description.

So you don't have a fake ID, and your age is? Age 20.
When's the birthday so everyone can send you a card? May 15th. Just send those to Yeti.

You had mentioned living next to DH trails at Sol Vista Basin this past summer and spring, and putting in some serious shovel time building up the trails. Riders have been pretty stoked on what's being built. What's your role in the development of the trails and have you met or exceeded expectations in your first year of building? For our first year of building, I think we slated to put in just a downhill track and a family track. We ended up putting in three downhill tracks, a family track and a slalom track. The opportunities there have been pretty good. We've met and exceeded our expectations for the summer and that's given us a future at Sol Vista Basin.

What's your direct role up there in the building? The situation up there is evolving as we speak. Last summer it was more or less three guys with some shovels building trails and for the upcoming season, we've been hired on as part of Sol Vista's staff to make a mountain bike park with all the concessions you would normally associate with that, including longer running service times, a bike shop and staff on-hand. Riding up there, we also help with development camps and get people on demo bikes.

So you guys have parlayed it into a full-time job? We have. Matt Thompson and Steve Wentz have been forerunning that effort this fall and I'll be back there in the summer helping with trail crew stuff. I'll be traveling more. They need me to stay at the basin this summer.

You mentioned a couple of your co-workers, Matt and Steve, who were also your roommates. Who were all of your roommates/co-workers and what were some of their bad habits you had to deal with this summer? This summer I lived with Steve Wentz. He's my boss, who invited me to work with him. And then Mike Moga is from former Team Big Crank. It was actually a really good fit; we all respected each other pretty well. I guess some weird habits were when Steve would wake up really early which didn't really matter cuz we'd be asleep.

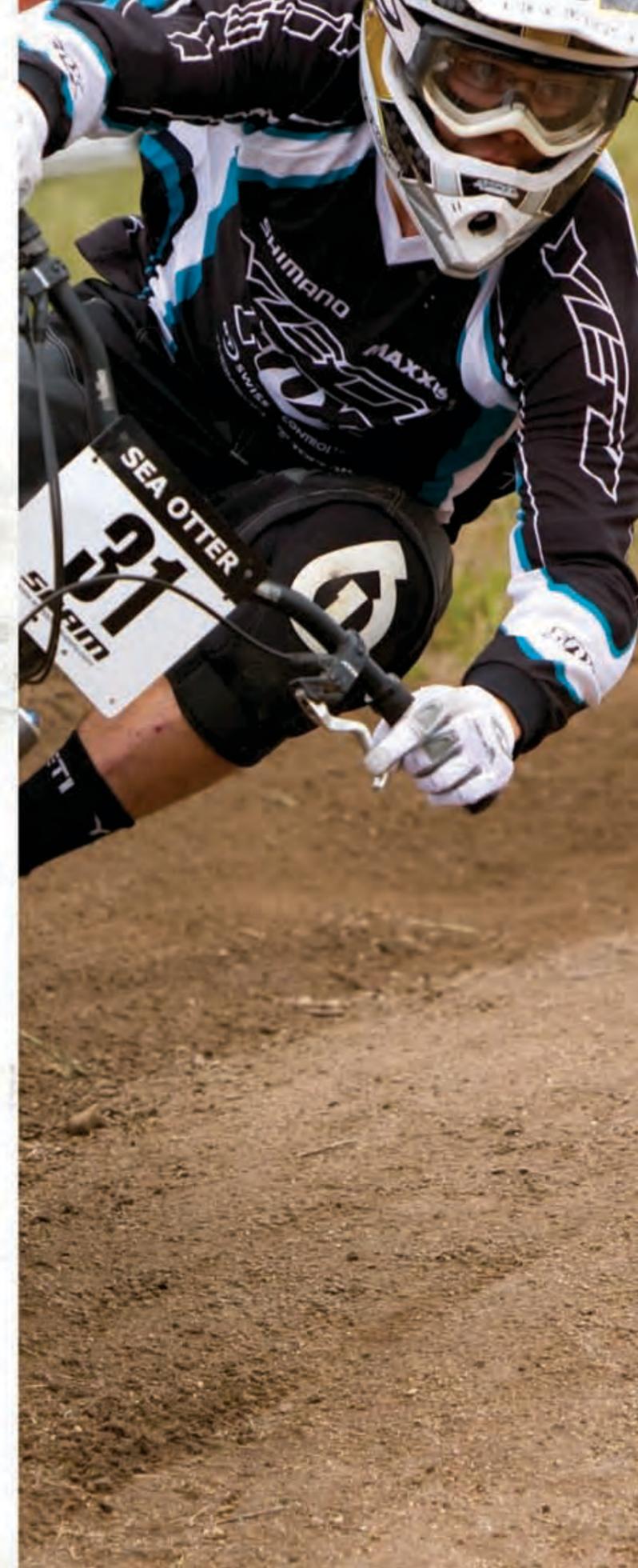
What's really early for a college student like yourself? He was usually up at 6 or 6:30. **What was your general wake-up time?** I usually tried to be out of the house at 9 or 9:30, usually whenever the bacon started frying. I was in the loft so that was my wake-up call.

You've been growing out your hair for some time now. It's shoulder-length. What's the motivation for growing out the coif and has it helped with the ladies? No real motivation. I guess the biggest motivation would be the lack of motivation to cut it. I don't know. It's something different.

Long coif and spectacles. Looking more sophisticated. I just hate contacts.

We have to talk about that for the upcoming season. The glass under the goggles is not a very pro look. Was that this year? I didn't have contacts there [Sea Otter]. I usually wear contacts for riding. Now I know not to ride in glasses under the goggles.

So we've established that the long hair is because TJ doesn't like to make small talk with a barber. Yeah, well I've never actually been to a barber so maybe that's it. My mom used to always cut my hair. ■





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ROSS

Comments

about being a dad, working at Yeti, and beating up on Jared.

Milan

Besides rockin' the race scene all summer, you work at Yeti full-time. What is it like working at the same company you race for? Totally different. You know racin's racin' and workin's workin. It's a great job and environment. I get to experience my life's passion – bicycles – all day, everyday, whether it's riding or working' on them. I really enjoy giving somebody the opportunity to get satisfaction out of their day by ridin' a bike I built and escaping into the woods.

What does an average workday at Yeti for Ross look like? At the beginning of the week we have a production planning meeting for the week. Our week is pretty much laid out from the beginning and then we tackle everything we need to do. Everyday we're building bikes, receiving bikes for inventory, getting bikes ready for paint, shipping out bikes, assembling and prepping. We all wear a lot of hats here so it's cool. It changes everyday.

So your primary duties would be building bikes, putting them together, and getting them out the door to the customer essentially? Mmmhmm. And taking care of the warehouse.

Keeping the concrete fresh and clean? That's right.

We have a separation of concrete and carpet. If you have a desk, it's carpet. If you're in the back, actually doing real work, that's concrete. This is true.

At lunch the factory closes from 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. for riding trails near the office. What are those mid-day rides like? Our lunchtime ride is a lot of fun. It's great to have a break right in the middle of the day to get your frustrations out and lose yourself out in the woods. Especially with your co-workers. It's always nice when you're having a bad day to put someone else in the hurt box. *(Laughter)* It makes you feel a little bit better.

How long does the lunch ride really last? We have an hour and a half window. You know sometimes we take a little bit more than that. It depends on how frisky we're feeling at the beginning of the ride. Typically all of our rides around here are just over an hour.

Some might not know that you have a little whipper-snapper of a son. Tell us a little bit about him. What's he like? Does he take after his father? Oh Buster. Andrew. He's definitely the joy of my life.

How old is he? He's three and a half now and he's a runner. He's got a lot of energy and he loves to make people laugh, make me laugh especially. Happy, happy kid. He loves to play on playground stuff. Climbs the monkey bars all by himself and swings across. He plays a little tee ball every now and then, and we play catch. The kid's pretty good.

So tell me a little bit about his ride. Does he take after his father and manhandle his trike? No trike. Got him on a real 12-inch jobber. He's got the training wheels. He's still cruisin' around. He's not quite ready for it. He likes to run more than he likes to ride bikes right now. Yeah it's his deal.

Does he have a pair of little Nike kicks that he gets to put on for special running days? Yeah little dance slip-ons. Those are his hot ticket shoes. They're lightweight and breathe well. Good traction for running up the slides.

You race a full national schedule in the summer, work full-time and have Andrew. What's the most difficult part about balancing all that? Finding enough time for everything. You know obviously the kid comes first. We definitely have a lot of time together during the off-season as much as I can. During the summer when I'm in town I try to do things with him. And then when I'm out I'm trying to win races. That's about it.



What's the last thing you guys did together as a father-son duo? We go to the park a lot together. Last weekend I took him swimming at the old rec. He loved it. First time down the frog slide. Been a bit scared of it lately.

What's the frog slide? Just a big frog in the middle of the kids' pool. You climb up the ladder and shoot out his mouth and slide down his tongue.

Let's throw in a couple bike questions since we are a bike company. You made the Worlds Team again for 4x. What was your experience like at the big show this time at Fort Bill? The show's pretty spectacular there. There were a lot of people. The track was really good and I felt really strong on it, felt I was right with those guys. I had a new outlook. I wanted to be on the box and I felt I had a good chance for it. Things didn't quite come together but I still enjoyed the experience and learned a few things about people I'm gonna race against next year.

Your main focus is dual and 4X, but how many runs have you gotten on your 303 this year? This year? Shit. A few? You know I raced three downhill races this year.

Which were those? Can you name 'em? Uh yeah. I can. Ohhh four. Sea Otter Classic- the winner of that race was on a DH bike; Angel Fire, New Mexico, Telluride- got on the box there, lost by three one hundreds of a second; and Snowmass Mountain States Cup.

Let's talk a little bit about your helmet paint jobs. Pretty crazy paint job on your full face 661 helmet there. It's a bit different than most on the circuit. Describe what the design is all about and if you want to give a shout out to your painter. My helmet painter's pretty sick. He actually paints cars and custom hot rods, stuff like that. He's an air-brusher and he's able to make these scary-looking skulls that are almost pressing through flesh. I don't know how it is, but the helmet's black with a candy turquoise something or other that has the skulls. It's pretty cool, kinda dark and scary, something you don't wanna crash. It's too nice. That's one of the reasons I have really nice paint jobs so I don't land on my head. Shit man, if you were to buy one of these paint jobs it would probably cost three grand.

Your nickname is Crusher. What's the story behind it? What do you mean! It actually came from Jeff Abrams and Robin Baloochi. We were at the Angel Fire Mountain States Cup Race. I think it was in '02, a long, long time ago. I guess I was breathing a little hard in the gate or something. I don't know. They got all scared. So they're like "Crusher". And then, for some reason, it stuck. I did win the race. I don't think I was really contested the whole day.

So you're saying Robin Baloochi doesn't have much for you? Yeah.

You're a Coors Light man. How many different ways can you order a Coors Light? Well... you say "tap the Rockies, how 'bout a bullet, Coors light, and, the usual."

Do you consider yourself a meat-head? What? What do you mean? (Laughter) Is that a TJ question here? Can we get bench press numbers? How many guns you may own? A varsity jacket somewhere? I do have a varsity jacket still in Mom's closet at her house.

Is that a yes or no to the question? To a meat-head? I don't know how I can define meat-head. I don't personally believe I am, but I might be able to see how some people can. You feel offended that TJ is asking you that question? You know. No. TJ's all right. Old Jangles.

Anything you wanna say to your fans out there? Do I have any? ■





rich Discusses his passion for carne asada burritos his new house in so cal, working at sponsor house and the history of "big time".

houseman

If you were given 100 words to describe your racing in 2007, what would you say? My 2007 season was short but sweet. It started off with me rehabbing my shoulder, then I slowly came back to race solid all year in the 4X and DS events. Actually, my first race back I had a chance to give ol' Grubby Graves a run!

How often do you highlight your hair? Do you have adequate space for all of your hair care products? Is bathroom time ever an issue with you and your wife? Lani from Hairy Situations hooks it up! I really don't use that much hair care products. There's never any issues on bathroom time!

What do you think of the portion sizes in Europe? Tell us something that is a must have when travelling overseas? Portions aren't really the issue over there, it's the product! No Burritos! No Carne Asada! No Big House! The only must-have for Europe is a plane ticket back to SoCal. After doing the World Cup series for a few years, I'm more than happy to stay in the states!

It seems that there is a rise in the number of severe injuries occurring within our sport. Have you got any constructive advice on preventative measures which fellow riders could take to avoid such injuries? My first opinion is that riders should train and be in good enough shape to prevent many injuries. But the emergence of devices like the Leatt Brace is good for the sport. I think we all should wear more protection when doing downhill runs. Myself included.

If you had a perfect run on a perfect course, where would you be, what challenges would you overcome and which trophy would you lift. I'm not really searching for the perfect run on the perfect course. I'm not convinced that it's out there. But, I'm always striving to go fast and win on any course or trail I ride! Trophies? I sort of like those big winning checks!

If you could choose three songs to accompany a section of you riding on a video, what would you select? Ask Clay Porter. He's better at that than me. I really don't know what I'd choose.

How would you spend typical day training? This is a two part question for me. First of all, it's been a number of years since I've actually had typical training days. My current job at Sponsor House tends to eat away on



that time. But, if I had a typical day it would go like this: wake up, eat big breakfast, road ride mid morning, lunch, then ride trails/DH/4X till dark.

How do you prepare mentally before a race, what strategies do you tend to adopt to help you focus and do you have any quirky routines? After years of racing, I've had lots of practice with my race routines. Mentally I'm usually real calm during race day, I tend to be a little on the quiet side. My race strategies usually will be based on that particular course, or the weather that day. I definitely go through the same exact routine every time before I race; but nothing to quirky or weird. Having clean or new goggles always seems to be a must for me!

Explain your passion for Carne Asada Burritos? I grew up in Washington state, where there wasn't all that good Mexican food. But when I moved down to SoCal I was spoiled with some of the best Mexican food in the world! Carne Asada Burritos just represent home to me!

How is your new house? I've been super busy since buying my new house. I didn't realize how much work was involved just on the day-to-day stuff. I'm definitely really stoked on it though, having my own garage is so good!

History of "Big Time"? I first heard Paul Rowney say it my first year on the Yeti program. It became our saying that whole year, in fact I was pretty much sick of it after that. Then I was in Mt. Saint Anne the next year and after partying pretty hard all night, I must have said it 1,000 times. For some reason, it just sort of stuck with me after that. But, mainly it was everyone else saying it to me, rather than me saying it. I'm officially over it!

How is it working at Sponsor House? I've been working with Sponsor House since 2004 and it's been one of the best jobs I could ask for. It gives me the opportunity to stay connected to the industry, along with helping countless riders across the country. I've been fortunate enough to have years of sponsorship experience that I can pass along. Sponsor House has allowed me to continue racing while building a future for myself after racing.

Why Yeti? Dedicated staff, race proven technology, committed race Program, good teammates.

What are your aims for 2008? Which podiums do you plan on stomping on top of? I'm still ready to race in 2008! It sounds like there's a few more slaloms next year, so I'll be stoked to race those. Plus, I finally got a 303 that fits perfect! 2008 might end up being a transition year for me, in terms of what I'll be doing after racing. I never really plan to quit racing, and I plan on staying connected through my various outlets within the industry.

Steve Peat is working towards setting up a DH Academy in the UK. It is probably a long way off for you to be thinking of retirement plans, but if you could put something back into the sport, what would you do? I actually feel that I've been giving back to the sport quite a bit over the last five years. Peaty included, he's the right type of guy to make things happen in the sport. I've helped teach clinics with EC, I've done some clinics of my own, and I've also helped tons of riders across the country through Sponsor House.

As the racing side slows down, it will open up some other time to get more into Team Houseman stuff! Retirement seems like such a heavy word, and really I don't plan to ever retire! I'll be shreddin DS/4X/DH/XC trails for as long as I can! The Yeti program has always supported me, so hopefully I'll be producing some young talent out of the Yeti / Team Houseman camp soon! ■



interview

DAMION "OREGON" SMITH

Interview by: Damion Smith

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How's it going there, Damion? Guys here in the office haven't seen you too much. What have you been up to lately? Well I just got myself a little bachelor pad down in the city so I've been hangin' out there. I'm doin' my thing, just relaxin'. And I gotta little place up in the hills (Winter Park) so I'm gonna try to spend some time over there and do the same.

Rumor has it that while on the circuit, you like to party, hang out, drink some beers and enjoy some female company. Have you been doing a lot of that lately? Female company? I like all company. And yeah I do like hangin' out, havin' beers. I like to work on relationships. Talking with the sponsors, riders and random strangers... you never know. I could be like some managers and not take advantage of that time, but that's just not me.

When I manage my team, I want my riders to have the utmost confidence in me, knowing that I will get the job done. As do I. I want to give the riders the same in my mechanical ability and let them know that everything's gonna be okay. So we agree.

So when you're on the road, traveling with the same three guys, for six months out of the year, tell me what the vibe's like. The vibe's good. It has to be. When I'm hangin' out with three guys, we're good friends because we've been doin' it for two years now. We have a good time and the vibe is good. There's gonna be times when people's feet are stinkin', people are pushin' and shovin' in crowded little Euro rooms, but that's that. Vibe's always better when we're winnin' though.

Do you have any good stories from hangin' out with these guys on the road for six months? We have all kinds of good stories. One that comes to mind is from Spain. Someone said something about a bachelorette party. So we went and checked that out. It ended up being a show where all the girls were guys. And yeah. Yeah, (*nods*) they were all guys.

All right let's just get back to some basic interview questions. So what's your diet consist of when you're on the road traveling? I think my diet's pretty good. I mean, I'm not overweight or anything. I eat your basic American meal. I love Burger King, Wendy's, Jack-in-the-Box and even McDonald's, but I try to stick to McDonald's only in Europe. Sometimes when I wanna eat healthy and I'm in California, I hit up an In-and-Out.

So tell me, do you have a belly button? What! I thought we were doin' basic interview questions. (*Shakes his head*). Yes I do, but mine's just different.

Well let's get a little bit of background from you. How did you become Yeti Cycles Race Team manager? I used to race for RPM Cycling – Keith Darner's program and a grassroots Yeti team. And then I was the mechanic for Yeti Cycles and Paul Rowney was the manager at the time. I learned from Rowney everything on how to be a great manager. That's for you, Ice Man.

So were you any good at racing? Yeah I was okay as a racer, made it to the semi-pro ranks. And I was good enough ▶

views





to take the National Championship away from Duncan Riffle in 2003.

Cut to footage of Damion on winner's podium receiving National Champ race jersey (wait this is a catalog, see: yeticycles.com/video).

That's ironic because in 2005 didn't you work for Duncan Riffle as his mechanic? Yeah. Yeah I did.

Okay Damion why don't you tell us some personal information about you that most people might not know. Most people already know this about me, and that is I'm a pretty private person. I just don't really care for the idea of someone thinking they know me. I would rather someone feel like they don't know me at all, so for the most part I just keep most people guessing. But I will tell you that I really like the color "grey". Is that personal enough?

Hmmm... right? Well I guess that is why it's hard for you to answer any questions straight up. Maybe this once you can tell us some "kind of" personal information. That way we can get slight glimpse of how deep and complex Damion Oregon Smith really is. No need to be a smart ass... Guy!

You're right, I can be a bit of a smart ass sometimes. Seems to get me in trouble quite often. But please, do go on. A few things I will tell you about myself that might surprise you...

I have 12 brothers and sisters.

I'm a Gemini. I usually take longer to get ready when going out than most girls. I once worked as a dispatcher for a call girl service. I'm a big fan of independent films. I really enjoy clothes shopping. I have a large collection of leather bound books. I have a broad musical taste that includes folk music.

I'm married.

Italian food is my all time favorite to eat and to cook.

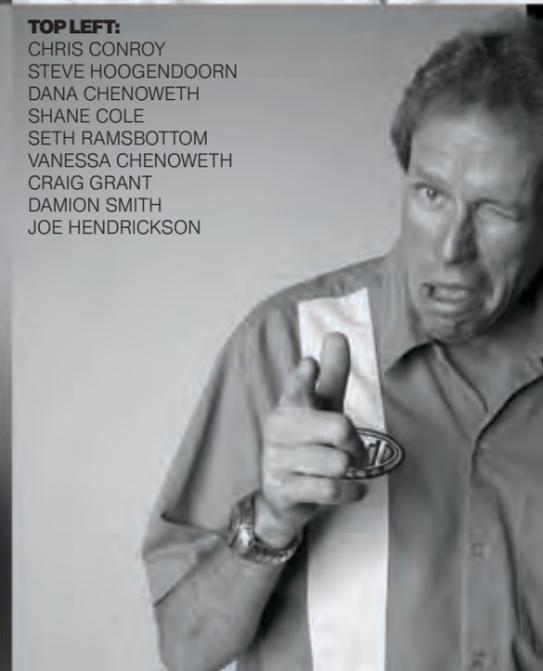
I'm very intrigued by modern technology advancements and architecture. I really like the color grey.

Ya I'm pretty sure you told us that last one already... Guy! I guess I did, didn't I. And just so you know I was just messing with you on some of that stuff. Two of them were complete lies.

Nice? Well it looks as though this is as much as we are going to get out of you for an interview. So in closing do you have any words of wisdom or advice you would like to give? I have lived my whole life with a few things in mind. Number one, "everything happens for a reason", two "it'll all work out" and three "live everyday like it's the last." ■



our crew



TOP LEFT:
 CHRIS CONROY
 STEVE HOOGENDOORN
 DANA CHENOWETH
 SHANE COLE
 SETH RAMSBOTTOM
 VANESSA CHENOWETH
 CRAIG GRANT
 DAMION SMITH
 JOE HENDRICKSON



TOP LEFT:
STEVE SALETNIK
ROSS MILAN
SHAWN BRUNNER
PETER ZAWISTOWSKI
RICH ARVIZO
CARRIE SAMMONS
PHIL CRAMER
ANTHONY SLOAN
SETH MUKAI

the bikes always ~~change~~ **continuously improve**

you will notice "it" in our bikes

but it is the people and their ideas that create a great company, here at Yeti we have a culture-
driven by this culture ■

contact



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