THE MONEY ISSUE

HANG WITH THE STARS, (TRAVIS PASTRANA, JAMES STEWART) GET PAID

PLUS

PAUL RODRIGUEZ / FRENDS / LYN-Z ADAMS HAWKINS

OLYMPIC HALFPIPE SHOWDOWN PART 2

A SLEDDER'S NEW ENERGY DRINK
IT'S A SHOCKER! PAGE 8

ESPN

ESPN.COM/ACTION SPRING 2010



KEN BLOCK IS ON A ROLL

NEXT UP:
WORLD DOMINATION



ESPN SPRING 2010

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NOW ON ESPN.COM/ACTION

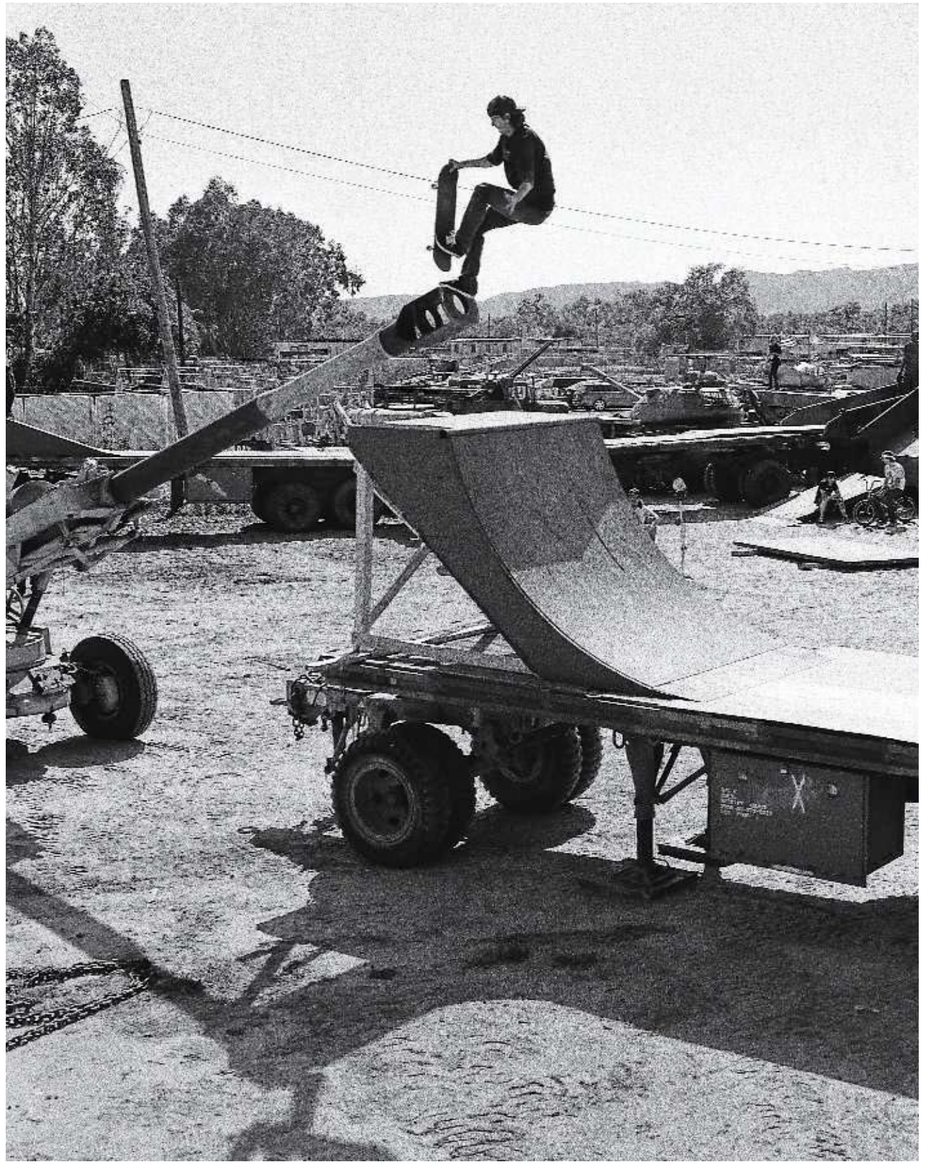
SPRING GEAR GUIDE
'Tis the season for bikinis, boards and bikes.

FMX GOES GLOBAL
Freestyle moto was born in the U.S., but riders now want to rule the world.

BOBBY BROWN'S BIG BREAK
The freeskier's Winter X hits have led to a platinum season.

COVER: CARLOS SERRAO; THIS PAGE: ATIBA JEFFERSON





THE MONEY ISSUE

X SPOT

MAJOR GRIND

SURE SHOTS

Clint Walker and Pat Duffy give new meaning to the term "base jumping." The street skaters tore up Camp Pendleton—a 125,000-acre Marine Corps base 38 miles north of San Diego—for an episode of Fuel TV's build-and-ride show, *Built to Shred*. Riding in an area where old tanks, transports and artillery wait to be spruced up for the base's museums, Walker (far left) rips a crooked grind on a forklift while Duffy treats a howitzer to a bean plant fakie. Who knew a busted Jeep could be the best seat in the house?

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DESIREE RONALD ASTORGA

ENERGIZE ME

AS SLEDDER GARTH KAUFMAN LEARNED, ALL IT TAKES TO MAKE A GOOD ENERGY DRINK IS A GREAT STORY.

While lying in a creek last spring, partially paralyzed for a few moments after being struck by lightning, pro snowmobiler Garth Kaufman didn't imagine that anything good would come of the incident. But it did. Kind of. When we heard his story, we naturally wondered: What does a guy who gets zapped drink to boost his energy? Turns out, Kaufman didn't have a drink sponsor. So, along with the folks at the Louisville-based beverage company Pro-Liquitech, we decided to help him create one of his own. To kick off the process, Garth sent us a list of everything he likes (and hates) about current energy drinks. Then Pro-Liquitech sent samples to Kaufman at home in Driggs, Idaho, so he could find a flavor, color and formula that were up to his standards. Finally, EXPN helped design a slick label, and—voilà!—Garth's Electricity was born. (In a limited run, at least.) -JACK NEUDORF



THE LOOK
When it came to the label, Kaufman wanted it "simple, recognizable and not too busy." He suggested a "Snowmobile Xing" traffic sign, like the one tattooed on his inner biceps. One of our EXPN designers used that template and color scheme as a guide for the Electricity logo.

THE PHILOSOPHY
Kaufman wanted a drink that would get him pumped and supplement a training regimen that includes weightlifting, road-bike training and pre-event focus exercises. "A big part of what I do is breathing exercises, holding a position for several moments," he says. "I wanted something that would give me energy, be nutritious and help me stay mentally focused."

THE FORMULA
Kaufman says the moments before he was blasted from his sled were "the most focused and adrenaline-filled" of his life. That's quite a statement from someone who makes his living racing a 450-pound sled at speeds over 65 mph. So, in addition to using components like taurine, caffeine and B vitamins, Pro-Liquitech created a "neurostimulant blend." That mixture consists of, in the words of technical director Kate Ratliff, "DMAE (dimethylaminoethanol), a naturally occurring substance that reportedly boosts the production of chemicals that carry messages between brain cells and muscles, and choline bitartrate, a nutrient needed to produce acetyl-choline, a major memory neurotransmitter." Whether all that science results in an adrenalized state of intense focus remains to be seen.

THE TASTE
Kaufman liked the raspberry taste of another energy drink but was specific about not wanting either an "artificial sugar taste" or a "jitters-and-crash" feeling. Pro-Liquitech consented and suggested using real sugar instead of the sucralose found in many diet drinks. The result was both tasty and, at 100 calories a can, satisfying.

THE COLOR
At first, Kaufman wanted the drink to match his orange racing gear. But when he saw a sample of an electric-green dye, his mind was made up: "It reminded me of the color of the lightning that day."

THE NAME
This one was a no-brainer. Just take what ran through Garth's veins and add it to his name. Besides, Garth's Electricity definitely rolls off the tongue better than Temporary Paralysis.



Think you deserve your own energy drink? We can't help you there (though Pro-Liquitech can!). But come up with your own name and concept for a drink and we'll award our three favorites a case of limited-edition Garth's Electricity. Shoot your ideas to **post@espnthemag.com.**

COURTESY GARTH KAUFMAN

FLIP THE SCRIPT

A BROOKLYN DUO PUTS A FRESH SPIN ON THROWBACK DECKS.

It would not be easy for, say, a court stenographer to combine his trade with a love of skating. A painter, though, is another story. Three years ago, Brooklyn-based artist Brady Dollarhide, a casual skater, teamed with friend Moose Huerta, an ex-pro surfer, to begin making skate decks based on the shapes and vintage art of the boards they rode in the '80s. "They started off as commuter boards," says Dollarhide, 35. "But then we started scouring old skate mags and videos to find shapes to reproduce." Instead of using big machinery, like other deckmakers, the duo crafts boards with hand tools. Dollarhide's studio is filled with everything from Bart Simpson-style small boards to oversize pool decks. But the two have learned that even if a board looks killer, it may not ride that way. "Some shapes need serious updates to make them viable for street skating," says Huerta, 31. By now the pair has found the sweet spot between form and function, though models like "Fishburger," "Iced Coffee" and "Rice & Beans" (above, and at bit.ly/bradyd) still have a cruiser feel. They're cheap, too, since the two give the boards away to friends instead of selling them. And that never goes out of style.

-MAX KLINGER





Dollarhide (in checkered shirt) and Huerta use a jigsaw to cut an outline for a new board. The next step: use a rasp to hone the edges.

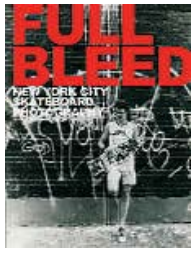


IMAGE CONSCIOUS

There's no disputing that New York City has long had one of the most influential skate scenes in the world. Want proof? The new book *Full Bleed* has three decades' worth of iconic photos—like the late Andy Kessler zipping through Manhattan—from more than 40 skate photographers. Look and learn.

COURTESY GARTH KAUFMAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRIS SHONTING



FOR LOVE OR THE GAME

WITH ELENA HIGHT

WHICH OLYMPIC SNOWBOARD TEAMMATE KNOWS HIGHT BETTER, BEAU GREG BRETZ OR BEST BUD LOUIE VITO? TO FIND OUT, WE GRILLED HER AND THEN QUIZZED THEM—BECAUSE PIPES MAY BE A HALF, BUT LIVES ARE A WHOLE.

ILLUSTRATION BY RAMI NIEMI

	FAVORITE FOOD?	VACATION DESTINATION OF CHOICE?	GUILTY TV PLEASURE?	WEIRDEST AUTOGRAPH REQUEST?
ELENA	Pineapple.	Probably Australia. I love the people. The whole country is pretty awesome.	Food shows. I really like *Ace of Cakes* and *Top Chef*.	A guy's nipple.
GREG	SCORE ✔ 5 Pineapple.	✖ 0 That's a tough one. Shot in the dark: Italy?	✖ 0 *Gossip Girl*.	✖ 0 Signing some girl's breast.
LOUIE	SCORE ✖ 0 Black cod. That's what she orders every time we get sushi.	✖ 0 Either Fiji or Indonesia. She's a big surfer and likes the beach.	✖ 0 *Gossip Girl*. Or maybe *The Hills*.	✖ 0 Either a girl's chest or forehead.

WINNER **BRETZ: 5 POINTS** GREG HOLDS HIS EARLY LEAD 'TIL THE END. PERHAPS AN UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE IS IN ORDER.



SHARK ATEXT

It's never comforting to know you're just 400 meters from a great white, but a well-timed tip could save lives and limbs. That's why, since May of last year, the Western Australia Department of Fisheries has been tagging sharks off the coast of Perth with satellite-enabled trackers. The tags allow officials to monitor the sharks' migratory and feeding habits and, thanks to underwater receivers, get text and email alerts when the predators swim close to shore. The tech tactic is a response to the country's long history of attacks; Australia has averaged at least one fatal encounter each year for the past half century, and the waters off of Western Australia are prime bitin' grounds. Since the bulk of the system was installed in December, no attacks have been reported off of Perth's beaches. So next time you're in the water and see a lifeguard on his cell, don't assume he's slacking. But you might want to inch closer to shore. -MAX KLINGER

74
SHARKS TAGGED OFF WESTERN AUSTRALIA SO FAR

MAKE-OUT LIST

'CAUSE ACTION-SPORTS STARS HAVE CELEB CRUSHES TOO!



HARLEY CLIFFORD 16 WAKEBOARDER

MEGAN FOX
"Simply put, she's hot. Just look at that scene in *Transformers* when she's bending over the car!"

VICTORIA O'DAY
"She's my girlfriend. And she's the hottest girl in the world."

SERENA WILLIAMS
"She's really cool. Plus I like tennis, and she won the Australian Open."

LAUREN CONRAD
"I saw her once in Reno but was too scared to talk to her. I did speak to her friend Audrina."

ADRIANA LIMA
"One of the most gorgeous women ever. I'll laugh at her husband [Marko Jaric] and say, 'You have no chance.'"



LYN-Z ADAMS HAWKINS 20 SKATER

E.T.
"So I don't have to carry a cell phone. Though I don't know how you'd make out with him."

HARRY POTTER
"It'd be magical. I'm not interested in the actor who plays him. I want the actual character."

ZAC EFRON
"Who doesn't want to be 17 again?"

TRAVIS PASTRANA
"I've wanted to attempt the Spider-Man kiss. We could try while free-falling out of a plane."

MICHAEL PHELPS
"Making out underwater could be interesting."

UPPER GROUP, BOTTOM ROW FROM LEFT: JON KOPALOFF/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY HARLEY CLIFFORD; LARRY MARANO/GETTY IMAGES; ALEXANDER TAMARGO/GETTY IMAGES; DIMITRIOS KAMBOURIS/GETTY IMAGES; LOWER GROUP: LEIGH VOGEL/GETTY IMAGES (ADAMS HAWKINS); BOTTOM ROW FROM LEFT: UNIVERSAL; DAVID SILVERMAN/GETTY IMAGES; JON KOPALOFF/GETTY IMAGES; GARTH MILAN/RED BULL PHOTOFILES; PHILIPP GUELLAND/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID FOLDVARI

SCRATCH

SCOTT MURRAY

WHERE DOES ALL THE MONEY GO? WE HAD THE FMXer BREAK DOWN HIS 2009 FINANCES.

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE BERTINO



IN IT COMES
MID-FIVE FIGURES

SPONSOR INCOME
I'm not financially sponsored, so this doesn't apply to me.

DEMO PAYMENTS
Most of my money comes from FMX demonstrations around the world. I'll do whatever tricks people want, including double backflips. Those are where the money is. I'll make about $50,000 a year doing these, even after paying my stepson, Josh Headford, who performs at the demos with me. He's a big up-and-coming rider.

PROVIDING INSTRUCTION
Since 2002, I've had a backyard course outside my house in Helps, Mich., which is about 125 miles north of Green Bay. During the summer of 2008, my friends and I turned it into a sick FMX complex with a foam pit, resi lander and fully lit competition course. I use it to teach everyone from quad dirt-bike riders to snowmobilers how to do backflips and ride ramps. There's no cost for using it. We just ask for donations so we can improve the compound. That brings in about $1,000 a year, all of which is used for new equipment and fixes.

STAGING EVENTS
Each summer we stage four Sick Air shows right on my backyard course. Riders from all over come and showcase all sorts of different styles and tricks. The shows draw between 600 and 1,200 fans, and between the admission, concessions and T-shirt sales, we make about $5,000 each time. The events have paid my way to the X Games for the past three years and are something people in my community look forward to.

CONTEST WINNINGS
The X Games are the only contest I do each year. I won the best-trick gold helmet at Navy Moto X in 2008 and got $25,000. Last year they didn't hold Navy X, so I didn't win anything.

OUT IT GOES
MID-FIVE FIGURES

TRAVEL EXPENSES
Since I drive to many of my demos, fuel is by far my number one expense. Between that, hotels and food, I spend $15,000 a year.

TRUCK PAYMENTS
I require a heavy hauler to pull my mobile landing to demos. Aquasun Motorsports in Florida modified an F-650 for me. It cost $115,000, but they hooked me up. I pay $12,000 a year for the loan.

TRUCK MAINTENANCE
I handle most of the upkeep on my truck, but I pay about $2,000 a year for oil and fuel filters, grease, tires, coolant and so forth. A local company just signed on to provide filters, which helps.

BIKES
A big chunk of my income goes toward my bikes. It costs between $5,000 and $6,000 to buy one, and they usually last a few years. Sponsors provide lots of parts, but there are still plenty of things I need to buy, including the bikes themselves and most of the same maintenance materials needed for my truck.

CELL PHONE BILL
It's about $3,600 yearly. I have a family plan, with four phones.

SHELTER
My father built the house I currently live in, and I added onto it to accommodate my family. So we own it.

MEDICAL BILLS
I can't get insurance, so these add up. I finally paid off my broken femur from 2004. That bill alone was over $15,000. I also see a chiropractor monthly, which costs $1,200 a year. But I just did a commercial with him and will get free visits going forward.

CLOTHES
Like most riders, I get a lot of clothing for free.

GEAR
My look is unusual—I ride in a full set of hockey pads and have custom jerseys made. The pads cost me $350, and my jerseys are $150. I get one set a year.

INCOME	
SPONSORS	$0
DEMOS	$50,000
INSTRUCTION	$1,000
EVENTS	$20,000
CONTESTS	$0
	$71,000

EXPENSES	
TRAVEL	$15,000
CAR PAYMENTS	$12,000
MAINTENANCE	$2,000
BIKES	$5,500
CELL PHONE	$3,600
SHELTER	$0
MEDICAL BILLS	$1,200
CLOTHES	$0
GEAR	$500
	$39,800

TAKE: $31,200



COURTESY SCOTT MURRAY

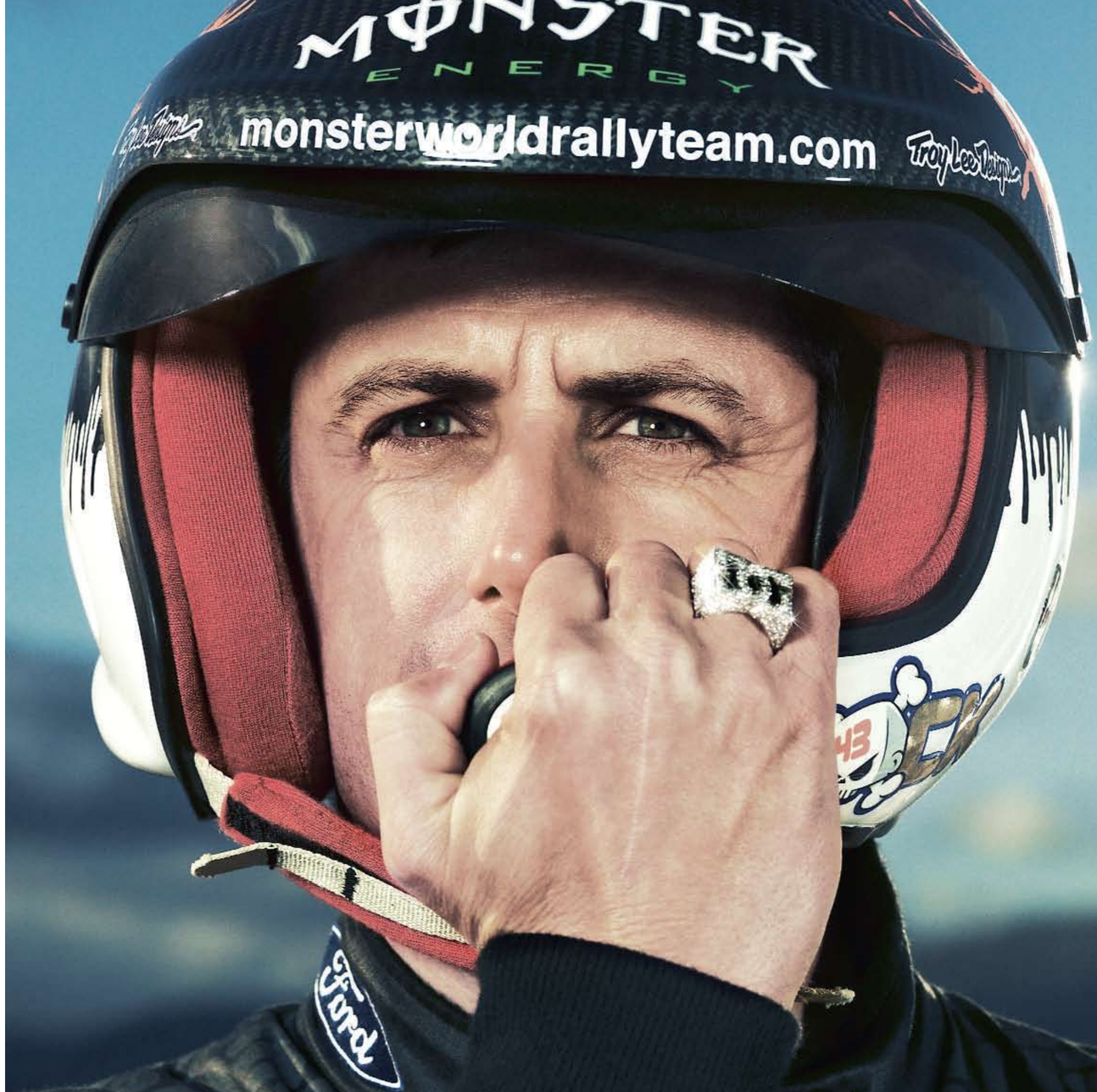
KEN BLOCK SETS TRENDS QUICKER THAN YOU CAN SAY GYMKHANA THREE...

BY ALYSSA ROENIGK

PHOTOGRAPHS BY CARLOS SERRAO

THE FAST LIFE

... AND THE DC SHOES GURU-TURNED-RALLY RACER HAS A NEW PLAN: EXPAND HIS EMPIRE.



"YOU SURE YOU'RE READY FOR THIS?"



BIO BLAST

NAME Ken Block
AGE 42
SPORT Rally racing
BASE Rancho Santa Fe, Calif.
BIG WINS Five straight 100 Acre Wood titles in Rally America—an event record
FAME CLAIM DC Shoes co-founder, star of Gymkhana web-video series

WANT TO CHECK OUT BLOCK'S NEW RIDE? GO TO ESPN.COM AND SEARCH: KEN BLOCK MAG VIDEO

You nod to your left, but you are not at all sure. Ken Block is about to take you for a spin in his one-of-a-kind, 'roided-up rally ride, the one specially modified for stunt driving. You buckle the four-way seat belt, pulling the straps so tight it feels as if you were wearing a 2,800-pound backpack. One last click and you are at Block's mercy. For the next 90 seconds, he is in total control.

He accelerates out of the start, and your helmet slams against the headrest; the car hits 100 mph before you can blink. Just as suddenly, Block slams his left foot on the brake, stopping inches before a concrete wall. Your stomach churns as he reverses, maneuvers around the wall and accelerates for 200 meters while slaloming through orange cones. His hands move quickly and precisely from steering wheel to gearshift and back. Block pulls a hard 180, then spins doughnuts around a van, so close you could reach out and touch it. He is no amateur, and this is no hobby.

The 42-year-old Block is the well-respected co-founder of DC Shoes, but he also happens to be a legit breakout star in rally racing. He has risen fast—from zero racing experience to World Rally contender in five years—for the same reason he's a success in business: He sees the world differently. When other shoe companies marketed their skate sneaks the same way they did their basketball high-tops, Block spoke directly to skaters. Where other drivers saw an unwieldy one-and-a-half-ton vehicle, Block saw a skateboard with a roll cage. Midway through his 30s he thought he could not only learn a sport but win at it. He has vision and creativity. And he knows how to sell.

In 2008, Block posted a four-and-a-half-minute revelation on YouTube. *Gymkhana Practice* featured him ripping high-speed tricks in a Subaru Impreza WRX STI on a vacant Orange County, Calif., airfield. Gymkhana is a mix of stunt driving, drifting, rally racing and performance art. The video was more than a driving show, though. It featured never-before-seen tricks, humor, multiple camera angles—just the recipe for a successful skate video. And it quickly blew up. "Did I realize the video would have some success?" Block says. "Yes. Did I think it would get 25 million views? No way." The next year, Block released *Gymkhana Two: The Infomercial*, in which he drifts over fluorescent light tubes, doughnuts around buddy Rob Dyrdek—who fires a paint gun at the spiraling car—and slides under an exploding semitrailer. The finale is a montage of DC gear. Only three viral video ads were viewed more often on the Internet in 2009.

Like all of Block's marketing forays, the Gymkhana videos are meant to grab the viewer, eyeballs first, then hold on for dear life. "Ken is a marketing genius," says Quiksilver president Bob McKnight, whose company purchased DC in March 2004 for $87 million. "He figured out the power of viral systems a long time ago, and he's on the same page as youth culture. He nails it every time."

PHOTOGRAPHED AT RYNOLAND, ANZA, CALIF.; THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: CHRIS GRAYTHEN/GETTY IMAGES; EA; NATE BRESSLER; B. LABAC PHOTO; REED SAXON/AP IMAGES

When Block and his friend Damon Way started DC Shoes in 1994, neither had a business degree or the slightest notion of how to write a marketing plan. What they did have was a product they believed was long overdue: a technical, performance-first skate shoe. They also had rock-star friends who were down to don the DC logo: skateboarders Danny Way (Damon's brother), Colin McKay and Dyrdek. "Ken is the absolute vision of DC," says Dyrdek. "He was the first person to use beautiful shots of shoes and black-and-white photos of skaters in campaigns. That broke ground in defining what is today a huge market in skate footwear."

Over the next two decades, DC became more than a skate brand, expanding into snowboarding, surfing, BMX and motocross. In 2003, it released its first skate video, *The DC Video*, still maybe the most glittery gem in Block's marketing crown. (See below.) But a legal battle with a former partner had left the company in financial trouble, so the next year, at the height of the company's popularity, Block and Way made the tough decision to let go. They had seen what Quiksilver had done with other brands, keeping the same management and objectives. It seemed the right fit.

Block became DC's chief brand officer and a multimillionaire and used some of the new cash to buy a custom-built, black Mercedes-Benz CLS 55 AMG. He spent more time with his wife, Lucy, and daughters, Lia and Kira. And he revved up a longtime fantasy. "Since we started DC, Ken had talked about wanting to race rally cars," Damon says. "That was a silver-lining by-product of selling the company. He had the room in his life to explore a passion he'd pushed aside."

So in 2005, at age 37, Block self-funded his first season on the Rally America circuit. He earned Rookie of the Year honors, finishing fourth overall. The next season, he signed with Subaru, becoming teammates with Travis Pastrana, an athlete DC had been sponsoring since 2004. "It was funny at first, when guys like Travis and Rob started seeing me as an athlete," Block says. "It felt awkward. I had to mentally make the shift from being their sponsor. That was hard."

Block's own sponsors—like Monster Energy—find his background as a businessman refreshing. He knows what they want because, for years, he was in their shoes. "Ken understands sponsors need to get value when they pay money for an athlete," says Mark Hall, president of Monster Beverage Co. Value means

BRANCHING OUT

SEVEN YEARS AGO, *THE DC VIDEO* INTRODUCED THE MEGARAMP AND CHRISTOPHER "BIG BLACK" BOYKIN TO THE WORLD. SIMPLY PUT, THE FILM'S INFLUENCE HAS BEEN MASSIVE.



THE DC VIDEO (2003)

- **MEGARAMP**
  - X GAMES DEBUT (2004)
  - JAKE BROWN'S FALL HEARD 'ROUND THE WORLD (2007)
  - DANNY WAY JUMPS THE GREAT WALL (2005)
- **ROB DYRDEK'S BODYGUARD, "BIG BLACK"**
  - EA'S *SKATE* (2007), *SKATE 2* (2009) AND *SKATE 3* (MAY 2010)
  - MTV'S *ROB & BIG* (2006)
  - MTV'S *ROB DYRDEK'S FANTASY FACTORY* (2009)
  - WORLD'S LARGEST SKATEBOARD (2009)











SHIRT AND TIE BY GUCCI

showing up for autograph sessions on time, attending sponsor appearances and scoring magazine covers. "He doesn't just deliver," says Hall, "He goes above and beyond." In person, Block is quiet and shy, but in front of a camera he can turn on the charm. "I never understood athletes who don't get that this is part of the job. Being a professional athlete is a privilege."

But it shouldn't be so easy. Block finished second overall in both the 2006 and 2008 Rally America standings and won silver at the X Games in 2007. In February, he took the Rally in the 100 Acre Wood for the fifth straight year, which propelled him to third place overall in Rally America. Along the way, Block has become the face of cool for a new generation of drivers, appearing with his car on the Discovery Channel show *Stunt Junkies* and the cover of *Snowboarder Magazine*.

In January of this year, Block left Subaru for Ford, a company banking that he will help them sell smaller, more fuel-efficient cars to the youth market. "Our first meeting with Ken consisted of our watching him on YouTube," says Jamie Allison, Ford's director of North America Motorsports. "It was love at first sight." Allison is already excited about plans for a summer web release of *Gymkhana Three*, starring the Ford Fiesta, Block's current Rally America model.

For Block, the change was his way into the elite, 13-race World Rally Championship, because Subaru had pulled out of the WRC a year earlier. As a member of the Monster World Rally Team, Block is the first U.S. driver with a multiyear deal to compete in the 38-year-

WHERE OTHER DRIVERS SAW A ONE-AND-A-HALF-TON VEHICLE, BLOCK SAW A SKATEBOARD WITH A ROLL CAGE.

old WRC. "I still can't believe Ken is a professional race car driver," Damon says. "It doesn't sound like a real story. It is truly remarkable."

And marketable. Which is why the WRC is pinning its hopes for U.S. expansion on the black-and-green fire suit of a 42-year-old SoCal skate-shoe exec. "Ken's arrival brings a Hollywood factor to the sport and a young profile in terms of his following," says WRC's global promoter Simon Long, who hopes to announce the addition of the first-ever U.S. stop on the WRC circuit within the next three years, as well as an official WRC video game. "He brings a sense of Americana and rock-and-roll. He has the X-factor, the charisma. He is going to change the way people engage with this sport."

And if the shoe fits …

WHIP-DE-DO! A LOOK AT BLOCK IN ACTION.



Block has a Ford for every event: the Focus (top) for the World Rally Championship and the Fiesta (all others) for Rally America.

BRIAN SCOTTO/MWRT

PODIUMS ARE GREAT, BUT THESE ACTION STARS HAVE A BIGGER GOAL: TO MAKE THEIR SIDE BUSINESSES BOOM.

MOVE AND SHAKE



FRENDS-SHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES (clockwise, from top left): Pearce, Davis, Lago, Luke Mitrani, Aguirre, Dillon and Jack Mitrani



BFFs

FRENDS

During halfpipe semis in Vancouver, eventual bronze medalist Scotty Lago looked into a camera and said, "Danny, Kevin, that run was for you." His words honored injured snowboarding pros Danny Davis and Kevin Pearce and captured what it means not only to be friends, but also Frends. The riding crew/company—made up of Lago, Davis, Pearce, Jack and Luke Mitrani, Mason Aguirre and Keir Dillon—operates under the idea that neither riding nor business is fun without your bros. That's the vibe at wearefrends.com, which will start selling ride-ready headphones in June. While Dillon sees Frends expanding into other products, he's mindful of maintaining core values. "We don't want kids to think we're cool," he explains. "We want kids to say, 'Those guys are as dorky as us, and they're having fun.'" In everything they do.

-STEVE MAZZUCCHI

THE ELEVATOR

LEANNE PELOSI, 30

Calling herself a late bloomer, Pelosi didn't start her pro snowboarding career until she was 24. But when it comes to building brands, the former *Transworld Snowboarding* and *Snowboarder Magazine* Female Rider of the Year is well ahead of the curve. Her two proudest business feats—MGT Snowboard Camp and Runway Films—both aim to advance women's riding. MGT, which she conceived during a business class at the University of Calgary, is a workshop that teaches women how to navigate a terrain park. Runway's videos showcase elite female riders (see 2007's *La La Land*, starring Jamie Anderson, Tara Dakides and others). The two projects are just a start. "I have a keen eye for ways to get women's snowboarding more exposure," says the Calgary native. "It's a passion that progresses naturally." An eager audience awaits.

-JAKE ZUCKER

JUMP STARTER

PAUL RODRIGUEZ, 25

"The Paul Rodriguez empire?" says the decorated street skater with a laugh. "It's just beginning. Hopefully." He's a bit further along than that. P-Rod's longtime sponsors include Plan B, Mountain Dew and Nike, with whom he has shoe and clothing lines. Two years ago, P-Rod, along with two partners, opened Primitive skate shop in Encino, Calif. The store's success has prompted the trio to open another outlet in Germany later this year. "We're not looking to expand too quickly," says Rodriguez. "It's easy to get spread too thin." That's an empire-building lesson he has spent the past half-decade learning. "You've got to know your limitations. For example, if I was running Primitive, we'd be out of business by now. I'm not good at everything. But at least I'm supergood at one thing." Make that a few things.

-TIM STRUBY

PHOTOGRAPH BY ATIBA JEFFERSON



PREVIOUS PAGE: COLE BARASH. SPREAD FROM LEFT: CHRISTY CHALOUX; JUN SATO/GETTY IMAGES

DROPPIN' KNOWLEDGE

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM ACTION-SPORTS LUMINARIES. STUDY UP.

MAT HOFFMAN, 38
BMX ICON; OWNER, HOFFMAN BIKES

Why did you get into nuts-and-bolts handiwork?
I've always had to design my own tools if I wanted to push my limits. During the '90s, BMX progressed faster than the equipment. Manufacturers didn't understand what we were trying to do with our bikes. After a few hospital visits, I began making my own—ones I knew I could trust.

What are you most proud of?
Dreaming my life, and then living it. I didn't develop my business for business' sake. It was always to improve my sport. You have to work hard to turn fun into work.

JAKE BURTON CARPENTER, 56
FOUNDER, CHAIRMAN, BURTON SNOWBOARDS

What do you wish you knew in 1977, when you started?
Back then, I thought I had to make 50 boards a day. But I sold only 300 the first year. I could have started slower, with lower expectations.

How have your riders influenced your company?
Craig Kelly taught me to talk to riders and get their input. That proved to be invaluable. Surround yourself with people who challenge you, change your mind when it needs to be changed and make up for your weaknesses. You can't have too much feedback.





THE GREEN WAVE

CYRUS SUTTON, 27

Known as one of his generation's most versatile surfers, Cyrus Sutton has made an even bigger splash off the water. The award-winning documentary filmmaker (*The Next Wave: A Tsunami Relief Story*, 2005) is also a photographer, blogger, board-builder, T-shirt designer and organic gardener. Sutton's interests may be varied, but his mission is focused: teach people how to spend less while surfing more. Central to that platform is his DIY-oriented website Korduroy.tv, where he posts instructional videos on everything from board shaping to cookie baking. Sutton acknowledges the vital role retail companies play in the sport—he used to be sponsored by Hang Ten—but he prefers a more grassroots approach. "I'm not against the commercialization of surfing," says the Encinitas, Calif.–based Sutton. "But people need to be reminded of the real reason we surf: the enjoyment of waves." -MAX KLINGER

PHOTOGRAPH BY MATHIEU YOUNG

DROPPIN' KNOWLEDGE

CIRCE WALLACE, 38

FORMER PRO SNOWBOARDER; SVP, WASSERMAN MEDIA GROUP

What's your primary goal for each of your clients?
To take advantage of every opportunity, even with athletes' side projects. Take Travis Rice. He wanted to make the best snowboarding movie ever. So I became executive producer on *That's It, That's All*. We made it the greatest snowboarding film to date.

Do you steer every client toward outside projects?
It depends on the athlete. If someone has a vision and goes for it, great. But it's a bad idea for an athlete who isn't committed, both heart and mind, to go into a side business.

DAVE MIRRA, 36

BMX ICON; OWNER, PRESIDENT, MIRRACO BICYCLES

What's the most important thing to remember when you start making money?
When you are young and wealthy, if you don't have good guidance, you'll pay for an education—whether you go to college or not. I tell athletes not to listen to all the advice they're given. Investigate. Read books. If I could go back, I would have put everything I made into guaranteed stuff, like CDs and tax-free bonds. I regret some decisions I made in real estate. I didn't know much about investing. I learned the hard way.



JON VELEAS

HIGHER LEARNING

FREESKIER AND BUSINESS MAJOR GRETE ELIASSEN SPENDS AS MUCH TIME CRAMMING AS SHE DOES CHARGING.

BY TIM STRUBY PHOTOGRAPHS BY ED MCCULLOCH



GRETE ELIASSEN CHARTS HER OWN COURSE.

Like many freeskiers, the five-time Winter X Games medalist spends the winter months perfecting tricks, like the 900 she nailed to win bronze in slopestyle at this year's Winter X, or filming in the mountains—her video *Say My Name* is due in October. Come summer and fall, though, she busts her butt as a full-time college student. Her commitment to academics is unique in action sports, a world in which athletes with degrees are the exception, not the rule. "I think to myself, *Should I be in New Zealand learning new tricks?*" Eliassen, 23, admits. "But going to college is something I'd always dreamed of." That's why, in August 2005, she relocated from Lillehammer, Norway, to Salt Lake City and enrolled at the University of Utah. "I needed a city that had a good airport, great snow and a university," she says. When she's not on the slopes, Eliassen can be found poring over schoolwork in one of the glass-enclosed study rooms in the campus library. Now a senior, she maintains a 3.65 GPA in business management. A look at Eliassen's classes reveals how she's become a high achiever on and off the mountain.

MARKETING

Eliassen's many selling points—slope skills, looks, a constant smile—have earned her several high-profile sponsors, including Oakley and Red Bull. Born in St. Louis Park, Minn., Eliassen has been on skis since she learned to walk. She split her childhood between the U.S. and Norway, the homeland of her father, Aadne. She began ski racing at 10, and while she showed promise—she picked up a handful of podiums on the Norwegian junior championships circuit—racing required a hefty time commitment. Eliassen just wanted to throw tricks in the park. So, at age 16, she switched to freeskiing, a sport that taps her creative side and allows for a flexible schedule. Spend any time with her and it's clear she's enjoying the ride. She is sweet and polite. Conversation flows easily. Her favorite movie is the love story *Tristan & Isolde*. She has a pristine image, which has been embraced by action sports powerbrokers. Case in point: Red Bull is funding *Say My Name*, only the company's second ski film featuring a female athlete.

BUSINESS STATISTICS

Face it: In business, numbers tell the story. Here are key facts and figures about Eliassen:

14 Tally of contest wins she's had since 2003, when she turned pro as a halfpipe and slopestyle freeskier. Included in the total are four U.S. Open and two Winter X Games golds.

10 Percentage of time she spent at home in Norway in 2005, her breakout season. She nabbed seven podiums, landed her first road gap and nailed her first 900 at a big air contest—all before heading off to college.

12 Inches she fell short jumping a river gap in Park City, Utah, last year. "I didn't have much speed," Eliassen explains. "But I thought to myself, *I'm Grete, I can do this*." She couldn't. She injured both ankles when she hit the edge of the far bank, and the pain prevented her from walking for a week. It was the first time she'd ever been laid up by injury. "I realized I wasn't infallible," she says.

2 Number of times Eliassen blushes when asked about her dating life.

ACCOUNTING

What makes a good accountant? The ability to crunch numbers is critical, but time management and attention to detail are important too. Throughout the year Eliassen juggles classes, homework, exams, sponsor obligations, photo shoots and, oh yeah, competitions. How does she manage? "I'm a Virgo," she says. "We're organized people." She's not kidding. Take a tour of her four-bedroom house in Salt Lake City. The rooms are tidy, and she doesn't even have a maid. The freezer is stocked with color-coordinated Tupperware, each container marked with a date and a description of the contents. A chalkboard in the kitchen reads: Days Skied. (She'd hit 41 by February, the midseason mark.) Atop the desk in her office sits her perpetually buzzing BlackBerry—her "best friend," she says—and a daily to-do list. The BlackBerry and the list are equally important, because no two days follow the same schedule. Eliassen's discipline extends to her study habits as well. She follows a strict regimen passed down from one of her professors: 50 minutes studying, 15-minute break; repeat; then 50 minutes studying followed by three hours off. The greatest testament to Eliassen's willpower? She's converted herself into a morning person. "I decided to take a 7:30 a.m. Principles of Marketing class," she says. "I'd sleep all day if I could. But I pulled it off."

BIO BLAST

NAME Grete Eliassen
AGE 23
SPORT Freeskiing
BASE Salt Lake City
BIG WINS 2007 U.S., European and Japan Open freeskiing champ
FAME CLAIM No female skier has more Winter X medals (five)

WHAT'S IN GRETE'S BACKPACK? GO TO ESPN.COM AND SEARCH: GRETE ELIASSEN MAG VIDEO



HEATHER ROUSSEAU/SHAZAMM/ESPN IMAGES



FINANCE

Eliassen can't name a single peer who combines college and competition. So why is she doing it? Simple: Action-sports athletes don't have pension plans. Success stories of former athletes such as snowboarder-turned-commentator Todd Richards or snowboarder-turned-agent Circe Wallace can happen, but there are no guarantees. "Action-sports athletes are simply independent contractors," Wallace says. "Most companies do not continue to support their athletes if they're unable to perform. Some athletes have injury clauses, but generally only for 90 days." At best, retired athletes may land a gig with a former sponsor. At worst, they could end up as backcountry guides or instructors. Regardless, every athlete needs a backup plan. That's why Eliassen is sketching out her future now, prepping for a postski career either with a nonprofit or in politics. But banking on the future isn't so easy in the present. "Sometimes in the summer, when I'm stuck in the library studying flash cards," she says, "I think school sucks. 'Normal' students don't understand why I don't have time to just hang out."

WHY DOES ELIASSEN COMBINE COLLEGE AND COMPETITION? SIMPLE. ACTION-SPORTS ATHLETES DON'T HAVE PENSION PLANS.

JAZZ APPRECIATION

Great jazz musicians are adaptable. They sound beautiful no matter the group size, playing style or venue. Eliassen doesn't play music, but if she could command an instrument the way she handles her skis, she'd be selling out clubs. "She's got a skiing talent for every condition," says veteran sports photographer Stan Evans. "She's like a Swiss Army knife." Sure, there are other riders who are better in specific disciplines, but there are few better all-around skiers. Whether she's heliskiing at Mount Baker in Washington or jibbing down the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in DC, Eliassen will kill it. "She's so incredibly versatile," says snowboarder Marie-France Roy, who taught Eliassen how to surf this past summer. Clearly her only limitation is time—or lack of it. If she has a spare hour, she'll drive golf balls—200 yards and dead straight—at Mulligan's golf course in Salt Lake. With a few free hours, she'll compose a rap tune, such as "Intermittent Wipers," which she penned with pal and fellow snowboarder Bev Vuilleumier, a.k.a. Notorious Bev. Give Eliassen a couple of weeks off and she'll visit the troops in Iraq or Afghanistan, a trek she first made two years ago. "I don't ever chill," she says with a smile. "There's too much to do in life." And for the time being, that includes a thick stack of flash cards.

Pay Check.

PHOTOGRAPH BY Ture Lillegraven

EXPN MAGAZINE PAGE 30

DON'T HAVE YOUR FACE PLASTERED ALL OVER SKATE GEAR? BIG DEAL. THESE FOUR TRADESMEN PROVE THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO MAKE AN ACTION LIVING.

FLIPCAM: Videographer Nigel K. Alexander shoots skater Ray Maldonado.

VIDEOGRAPHER

NIGEL K. ALEXANDER

Over the past 13 years, Nigel K. Alexander's camera has made top skaters—including P-Rod and Chaz Ortiz—look good. It's done the same for the 29-year-old director, who put together vids like 2005's *Forecast* and 2009's *Proof*. The Valley native was introduced to film by his father, Nik, who worked in production. Alexander now earns in the mid-five figures shooting for the likes of Fuel, Mountain Dew and Gatorade. "It's symbiotic: The riders need me, and I need them." And fans need both.

-STEVE MAZZUCCHI



MOTO X BIKE MECHANIC

SHAWN BELL

Shawn Bell (left) is responsible for ensuring that supercross star James Stewart's bikes perform perfectly. Cake, right? "His life is in my hands," says the 31-year-old resident of Haines City, Fla. "A flat tire or broken chain could end a career." Bell got into tooling after injuries ended his own riding career, and 16 years later he's still happy with his $40,000-a-year Team San Manuel Yamaha gig. He may work 12-hour days while jumping around the country to races, but the grind is easier working for "the best guy in the world," he says. Hey, all the more reason to keep that guy in one piece. -DAN REILLY

PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB CROSLIN

MARKETING MANAGER

STEVE BLICK

Steve Blick (left), who handles bike sports for Oakley, wears many helmets. He manages their sponsored riders (like Sam Willoughby, below), helps develop gear and promotes both to the media. It all comes naturally to Blick, a former pro and Mountain Bike Hall of Famer who now earns "enough to support my family in Orange County" by shepherding the next generation. But that doesn't mean he has hung up his pedals. "I ride my bike every day," says the 41-year-old. And not just for fun, either. "It's the 15-year-olds you have to connect with," Blick says. "And those kids can smell a fake." -S.M.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSE RIESER

PAY? CHECK.



RALLY RACING CO-DRIVER

CHRISTIAN EDSTROM

The economy may still be rough, but that's not why Christian Edstrom (left) is working two jobs. A management consultant by day, he just can't quit riding shotgun while Travis Pastrana rips around corners at 70 mph. As co-driver of the Red Bull No. 199 WRX, Edstrom's task is to take notes about the course and guide Pastrana as he flies through it. The gig yielded Edstrom $125,000 in 2007, when the duo completed the full 16-race circuit. This year, with fewer outings, he expects to make a quarter of that. But it's all still gravy for the 34-year-old, who finds just one fault with the job: "When Travis crashes, I go with him."

-PATRICK CAIN

3BR, 2BA, SHREDDABLE POOL

BY CARMEN RENEE THOMPSON // PHOTOGRAPHS BY ATIBA JEFFERSON

WHERE YOU SEE A CEMENT SWAMP IN A NEIGHBOR'S BACKYARD, DEAN DICKINSON SEES A PLAYGROUND. EXPN TAGS ALONG AS HE TURNS ABANDONED POOLS INTO BMX AND SKATE MECCAS.

The economic tumble certainly hasn't been kind to homeowners, but resourceful BMX riders such as Dean Dickinson have found a silver lining in the downturn. The 24-year-old rider has made the most of the financial fallout by sneaking onto the property of foreclosed homes to clean and ride swimming pools. It's not exactly legal, but Dickinson claims he's ridden about 135 pools and has just one trespassing citation to show for it. Dickinson lives in rainy Portland, where abandoned pools sometimes collect six feet of debris-and-dead-animal-filled water. He often roadtrips to drier locals, like Vegas or LA. "Anywhere I go outside Portland I think, this is easy," he says. We connected with Dickinson in Fresno, where he showed us how to ready a couple of permission pools—where the homeowner was cool enough to give consent.



1 GEAR UP

Some cracked pools need concrete filler, but this one requires only a pump, buckets, towels, shovels and wrenches. Dickinson and his crew (biker Chris Riesner and skaters Josh "Peacock" Henderson and Lincoln Nass) are anxious to test the pool's fast geometry and smooth shallow-end transition. Dickinson also notes that the coping doesn't stick out far, which makes airing easier.

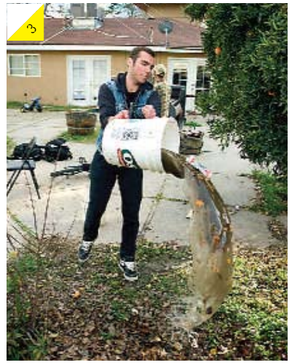


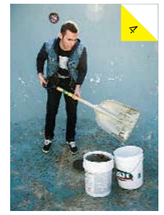
2 ADD SUCTION

The work begins when Riesner fires up a gas-powered Honda water pump. He vacuums sitting water, then dumps it where it won't flood the house or run back into the pool. If a loaner pump isn't available, Dickinson rents from the Home Depot for about $40 a day.

3 SCOOP

After pumping, Dickinson scoops out the remaining sludge and debris—in this case, beer cans—with a bucket. At the same time, his associates sweep and dry the pool's shallow end and deck.





4 LEAVE NO PUDDLE BEHIND

Next: shoveling. "A flat-bladed shovel makes it easier to get the last bits of water," says Dickinson. Finally, only leaves and slime remain—thank goodness. "In Portland," says Dickinson, "I've seen syringes, diapers, even car engines. People use pools as dumps."



5 CLEAR A PATH

Once the pool is empty, Dickinson dries the surface. Here, he uses a blanket he found in the yard. Then the crew uses wrenches to remove lights, ladders and handrails. "Most of this stuff gets in the way," says Dickinson. "But sometimes we leave them as cool obstacles."





6 INDULGE

It takes Dickinson & Co. just 45 minutes to turn the aspiring swamp into a shred-ready playground. The crew celebrates with a two-and-a-half-hour session, during which Dickinson pulls this smooth fastplant. Fresno's pools are less challenging to clean than Portland's, and that's the point: Less renovating means more riding.



ON THE FLY

DARIA WERBOWY

DARIA WERBOWY LOVES TO SHRED. NO WONDER *VOGUE* PAIRED THE CANADIAN SUPERMODEL WITH SHAUN WHITE FOR A SHOOT IN 2008. THESE DAYS SHE DITCHES HIGH-FASHION PHOTO OPS FOR HELI TRIPS AND SESSIONS WITH STOKED, A NONPROFIT GROUP THAT MENTORS AT-RISK KIDS. BEAUTIFUL, NO?

HOW DID YOU GET INTO SNOWBOARDING?
In high school I had a bunch of friends who went to the local golf course and built jumps. I would hang out and watch them hit little kickers.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST STRAP IN?
I was 16 when I started. I was at Blue Mountain, near Collingwood, Ontario. It was painful.

DO TELL.
When you start, it's easy to catch a toe edge and face-plant. It's called a scorpion when you fall on your chest and your boots pop over your back so your board hits the back of your head. I did a couple of those.

OUCH. YOUR SKILL LEVEL NOW?
Intermediate. I'm starting to get comfortable doing little tricks. But I have always been a speed freak. I rode with guys who were better than I was. It was about not falling too far behind.

WHAT TRICKS CAN YOU THROW?
I just learned backside 180s. I'd love to get on some rails, but I'm kinda scared of them.

SHAUN DIDN'T TEACH YOU ANYTHING?
No. We were supposed to link up and ride, but it hasn't happened yet.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE WORKING WITH HIM?
He was the biggest gentleman. He was opening doors and helping me up stairs. He's very chivalrous. I wanted a lock of his hair!

IS IT HARDER TO WALK A RUNWAY OR SHRED POWDER?
Deep powder, definitely. But I also don't think any snowboarder could rock four-inch heels on a runway.

WHERE DO YOU RIDE?
Whistler. France is pretty amazing too. I just went to the Alps for the first time. I would die to ride in Chile.

ANY RIDING TRIPS PLANNED FOR THE SUMMER?
I don't plan that far ahead!

-INTERVIEW BY TIM BRODHAGEN

BIO BLAST

BORN Nov. 19, 1983, Warsaw, Poland; moved to Canada at age 4
BASE New York City
SEEN Heating up ads for Versace, Gucci, H&M and Louis Vuitton

PHOTOGRAPHED AT STRATTON MOUNTAIN RESORT, STRATTON, VT.

PHOTOGRAPH BY CRAIG WETHERBY