

## Fiberglass in the Sheets: The Brian Petrie Interview

Contributed by easyrider2004  
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Maybe you've seen the killer-looking, hybrid wood and carbon longboards in Concrete Wave or the Silverfish Longboarding forums. Brian Petrie is the brains, labor and stoke behind Earthwing Skateboards, out of New York City. He's stoked, he's committed to the longboard scene and he's got a vision for the future of skateboarding.

Now, our roving correspondent, MarkGrimace, bring us this interview with the man. They talk about the origins of Earthwing, the Friday night sessions in Brooklyn and pie. Check it out!

How did you get your start skating?

As far back as I remember, I have always had a skateboard. I specifically remember when I directed all of my attention to skating, though. It was the summer of 1981, and I was 6 years old. There were these punk kids doing full-on downhill slides in front of my house, and I was amazed with it. I was also terrified by them. I took my little plastic banana board out of my garage, and started rolling around my driveway, inching my way closer to the action when one of these dudes looked over and yelled "what the \*censored\* are you looking at, bighead?" I remember thinking, "I want to be that guy." From then on, I just always had a board with me. I am proud to say, my first real deck was a Skull Skates.

How and when did Earthwing Skateboards get started?

Earthwing started while I was working for a shop in Manhattan shaping broken snowboards into little sprinting decks. After running out of snowboards, I started making cores, and glassing them in my apartment. Most of my time was spent researching materials, and just trying to make molds. I was wanted to figure out how light I could make a sprinting deck. My goal was to make a deck that would be like the bikes that the messengers ride here, just light, efficient, and quick in traffic.

Your slogan or credo is "You deserve more" explain what that means to you.

Well, if you look at bikes, golf clubs, snowboards, tennis...whatever...fishing poles... They all have the high-end, and way high-end products available. Why in the world is there no \$600 longboard deck out there? They are mostly all the same, and the goal is to hit a certain price-point. From a business point of view, it doesn't make sense to produce it, but from a skater's point of view, we do deserve more. Look at the \$17,000 Serrota road bike, or that new 1 million dollar Bugatti car! We just deserve a choice. We deserve more, just like those other industries.

What is the scene like in NYC?

NYC is awesome, especially for diversity in skateboarding. You have a ton of dudes that began skating again after they moved here and needed to get around. It's typical. They get that bug again and, next thing you know, they are skating all the time with a different deck for everything. It all surrounds the actual act of skateboarding, not the newest skateboard costume from the latest video, or the new shoe that promises really big air. Most of these guys could care less about any of that. They are all little creative weirdos that can make up their own minds. There is no one-upping each other, or out-cooling each other. It's all like an unspoken brotherhood. You always find yourself skating through the streets, and you may play cat and mouse with some other skater for a few blocks, having fun, and never see them again. It's a 24 hour-a-day thing. Someone is always out "searching for Animal Chin".

Where do you see the skateboarding industry in 10 years and where does Earthwing fit in?

I see skateboarding being more creative with its applications. I see a much wider range of materials, flexes, and price-points. I see boards made for the rider's height and weight. Why in the world does every street skater seem to ride a 31.5" street deck when one kid is 5 feet tall and the other 6 feet tall? It doesn't make sense to me. Earthwing will not be the biggest company out there. Earthwing will be pushing the boundaries and setting standards. I hope to continue breaking speed records, and finding out the best way to make a skateboard with materials found on the planet Earth.

Is this your fulltime job?

No, not yet. I own a dog-walking company. "Only in Manhattan", right? It gives me the time and money to research this stuff, and I get to skate all day. Plus, animals rock! Humans could learn a lot from them.

Tell me about the first deck you ever built.

The first deck was a vertically laminated balsa core between 3 micro-ply of baltic birch on each side, laminated in s-glass. It was a 36" sprinting deck made for pushing through distance.

Who is your support group?

My lovely girlfriend Angela. She knows more about my skateboard technology than anyone at this point. She is the one that has to listen to me at 3 in the morning with some crazy idea. She is the one that had to put up with me sanding fiberglass dust onto the sheets of our bed, and worry about me getting into my next big accident.

You run a Friday night rip&hellip;tell us about it and how it came about.

It was just obvious. There are so many skaters here, and we needed a weekly get together. Prospect Park in Brooklyn has a perfectly wide, nicely paved hill, and it's empty at night. During the day, it's mobbed, but seeing as a body is found there every now and then, people don't usually hang out after dark. Finding a hill with no cars in NYC is like finding a pile of gold, so we jumped on it. The races are so much fun, and we needed something like that to look forward to every week. We are out there like a pack of Hell's Angels every Friday night.

You use some interesting materials in your decks tell us something about them and why you use them.

They all have various wood cores like balsa, birch, poplar, and maple. The composites are; graphite for its light weight, and stiffness. Kevlar for its abrasion resistance and strength for street decks. Fiberglass, and thermoplastic for its cost, and it's easy to work with. Going from one-offs to full production is pretty crazy, and it is very detailed. It has been taking forever, but I assure you that it will all be worth it. I promise that by spring time, I will have the full line ready to sell. I just want to do it right, and amaze.

Do you have any advice for aspiring skateboard builders?

Just start throwing trucks on planks to get started. Your curiosity will lead your direction. Don't try to make anything you can go buy somewhere. When I was in school, I put some wheels on 2 lunch trays glued together as a joke. I had so much fun on that thing. Just try stuff. The stranger, the better. When you get going, solve a problem. Fix something that pisses you off. Take an idea and improve it.

Who do you see riding your boards?

Anyone who does not need convincing. I don't want to have to "sell" my boards. You either know exactly where I am coming from, or you are blissfully unaware. Either way, you will get what you want out of skateboarding, and that's the way it should be!

What or who inspires your boards?

All of the NYC Broadway Bombers, the bicycle industry, the daggers, and Michael Brooke/Concrete wave, for the infectious inspiration, and hope he gives us all. He reminds us that we are not alone.

What's your everyday personal set up?

My 35.5" street/sliding deck. You can still cook on it, but you can also jump over garbage, hit curb cuts, pop flips and rip slappies. It's an all-in-one.

Describe your ideal session.

NYC without the cars. Right after September 11th, there were a few days with absolutely nothing. It was very surreal, and creepy, but the skateboarding was amazing.

What is your favorite type of pie?

Day old pumpkin pie.

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Special thanks to our man in Paradise, MarkGrimace for an excellent interview! Check out Brian's boards, and order your own, from [earthwingskateboards.com](http://earthwingskateboards.com) .