

## B.C. Innovations: The Landyachtz Interview

Contributed by easyrider2004  
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Our "correspondent from Paradise", Mark -Grimace- Spironello, comes to us now with an interview with Tom Edstrand and Mike Perreten, the pair of elementary school buddies that formed Landyachtz while in college together. He asks them about their backgrounds, their motivations and importantly, about their favorite type of pie...

So, grab a seat, hug your Landy and click through to read what these guys have to say!

How did you get your start skating?

Mike: My first memories of skateboarding are from when I was 10 years old. I remember staying at my cousin's house and tick-tacking around his neighborhood. I thought he lived in the best place on earth for skating because it was so flat! I grew up in a really hilly neighborhood on the North Shore of Vancouver and it was just to gnar for a ten year old kid to skate. Although I don't live in that neighborhood anymore, it is now my favorite place to go longboarding and is only like a 10 minute drive from our factory.

Tom: I started skating around 1985. I have 3 older brothers. They were into skating, so I wanted to skate, too. We built a half pipe in my neighbor's backyard and made launch ramps that we would put at the end of our driveway and try to pull methods and judo airs. We had some good hills, as well, where we would go do powerslides and have Chinese downhills.

How and when did Landyachtz get started?

Landyachtz started when we were at University on Vancouver Island. I had just moved to Victoria to start going to school and Tom was living just down the street. We were friends in elementary school but had gone to different high schools and hadn't seen much of one another since we were like 12.

Anyhow, to make a long story short, when I got to Vancouver Island I had a pretty sweet longboard I'd made while living in Whistler and was using it to get around campus. Back then, in 1997 I think, I was ridding one of the only longboards on our campus, and people would constantly stop me and ask me where I bought my deck. As Tom and myself had mutual friends, we started hanging out. Tom had just gotten back from California, where he had seen some longboards and he wanted to make one. So, basically, Tom and I decided to start making boards designed to ride the roads we grew up on. When we were growing up, Tom was always the kid that could draw better than the rest of the class and I was always pretty handy at making things. So we started making boards with the idea of making the best boards. Tom was taking an entrepreneurship course and used the course to draw up a business plan for Landyachtz. That first year, we were going to University making boards in Tom's basement for ourselves and some friends. That summer, I went back to framing houses in Whistler and Tom took up a graphics job at a sign shop in Vancouver.

With about 6 weeks left before university started up again, we got a great opportunity where we had access to use the old Blackcomb ski club cabin. It was a perfect place to make longboards. The wax room had 8 workbenches and, because it was summer, it was totally empty. That's where we made the first boards with the Landyachtz name on them. The best part about the shop was that it was located at the top of an awesome hill, which we got to ride at the end of everyday. For the next few years, while we were completing school, our shop moved several times until we ended up at our current factory in North Vancouver.

What is the scene like in Vancouver?

The scene is pretty cool because it is so diverse. I mean, there are so many riders from all walks of life in Vancouver! It's pretty nice. There is a big community of longboarders in Vancouver and I'd have to say Bricin Lyons is a big part of that as he is so passionate about putting on events for people to enjoy. I think the last time Bricin put on a Seawall cruise there were over 200 longboarders! The racing is pretty popular in BC as well. There are currently 4 BC races; Attack of Danger Bay, Sully Challenge, Vernon Downhill and the Island Adventure Games. The Attack of Danger Bay race is going into its 5th year and has become one of the biggest races in North America.

Tom: Not only do you produce "race" Boards, but you produce racers. What do you think was the secret behind your success last year on the circuit? And what was your most successful race set up?

In 2004, I kept getting to the finals but I couldn't win. I drank a lot of beer in the off-season and put on about 10 pounds. I got my first win at the start of the 2005 season. Once I got the monkey off my back I got some confidence and the wins just seemed to happen. I ride a Carbon Evo with either Jimz or Bear trucks and Abec 11 90mm Flywheels or Landyachtz Hawgs, depending on the road.

Tom, where do you see the skateboarding industry in 10 years and where does Landyachtz fit in?

I can see the skateboard industry being really healthy in 10 years. Gas prices are only going to increase in the near future and more and more people will be living in cities and skating is choice in cities. Not only does skateboarding/longboarding make a lot of sense for transportation and recreation, but it really brings recreation and enjoyment to everyday life. For example, it's a lot more fun to pick up a jug of milk or a six pack of beers on a skateboard than walking to the store. I'm sure people will be buying and using skateboards in 10 years and consumers are going to demand good quality gear, so innovative and functional products will do well. We are going to continue to innovate and bring new ideas into skateboarding because we ride ourselves.

Mike, tell me about the first deck you ever built.

The first deck I ever built broke pretty quickly. It was the summer before we started Landyachtz and I was framing houses in Whistler. I was working with Rob LeBlanc. He brought his longboard to work one day, which was like a vertically-laminated hardwood speedboard with Indy 215s and 70mm Kryptos. I took one look and I was like, "that's dope I want to ride one". So, I asked my boss if I could use some scrap from the site and make a board. He said, "sure!" and I made like a 40 inch pintail, put some old trucks on it and put on some new 70mm Kryptos.

I took it for a rip and it either snapped and I bailed or I bailed and it snapped. No major harm was done, so I made another board, glassed it up and took it to University with me. It's still a nice board 9 years later.

Who are your support groups?

Mike: My family, friends, the whole Landyachtz crew and especially my fiancé, Karolina.

Tom: What Mike said, minus the fiancée and add my girlfriend, Sharlene, and all the Coast Longboarders.

Who do you see riding your boards?

All kinds of people, from top racers to beginners male and female. Longboarding is like a lot of other sports, where people of all levels can have a good time.

What or who inspires your boards?

Mike: The desire to make improvements.

Tom: Sometimes ideas for graphics come from really weird places. I got an idea for a graphic from chocolate bar wrapper once. Constantly riding and testing our products often gives us ideas for new products.

What're your everyday, personal set ups?

Mike: My favorite set ups are the Drop Wedge with the 85mm Hawgs, 78a in the back 80a in the front; The Allstar with the 74a 68mm 3DM wheels and 150mm R2s, I like this board for steep carving runs with big slides; For a speed board I like the Evo with Gumballs.

Tom: Drop wedge for carving; Slip for sliding; Evo for bombing and Dingy for messin' around. Can't choose just one!

Describe your ideal session.

Mike: My ideal session would involve carving and sliding my super loose, Drop Wedge down a bunch of my favorite runs, several times until my legs are all jelly-like, and then enjoying a couple cold ones.

Tom: I love Carving, Bombing, Sliding & playing longboard hockey. They're all ideal. The best sessions are when I feel I progressed in some way afterwards.

What new products have you got in store for us this season?

We are coming out with a bunch of new wheels and some new decks, including a sweet, water-resistant epoxy-coated slide deck called the "Slip". Probably the most exciting thing we are doing right now is our new Bear trucks. The big thing with the Bear trucks is that they have thicker and stronger 10mm axles. With the bigger wheels and burlier decks out these days, we have been having a tough time dealing with the fact that if you slide wheels bigger than 83mm, the truck axles can bend pretty easily. As we sell and ride boards specifically designed to run big wheels, these new trucks make a lot of sense for us.

As the longboard market continues to grow what sets Landyachtz apart from the competition?

Mike: When we first started making Landyachtz, we wanted to make innovative boards that work better. That same drive and philosophy hasn't changed.

Another thing that makes Landyachtz unique is our background and environment. We grew up in possibly some of the best longboard terrain on the planet and we have been making boards to use the environment we live in. We originally incorporated the business in Whistler where our first full time workshop was located. We have developed and grown in an environment where we go skiing and snowboarding for recreation and I think that comes through in our boards. I used to ski race full time from when I was 16 until I was 20 and I averaged 200 days per year skiing during that time in my life. I still love to ski, but I can now have as much fun longboarding for a day as I can on the ski hill. For me, that same kind of enjoyment from longboarding wasn't possible with the kind of skateboard equipment that existed 10 years ago.

Tom: Innovating not imitating.

What is your favorite type of pie?

Tom: Meat.