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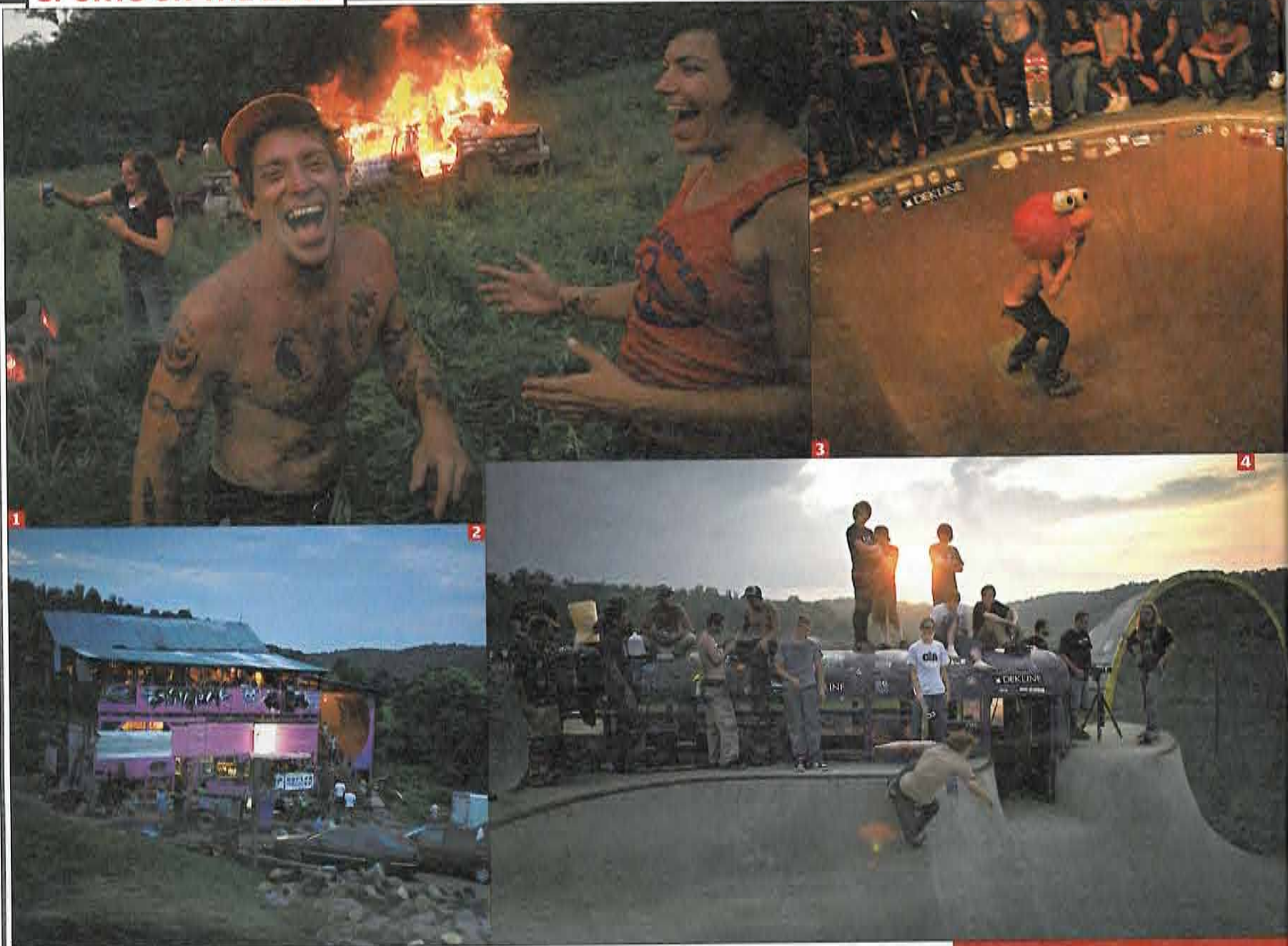
welcome to skatopia

Eighty-eight
acres of
anarchy in
the USA

By Mark Binelli
Photographs by
Travis Dove



Evan Hendershot, of Marietta, Ohio, lipslides at Skatopia's barn bowl. "He's a fucking ripper," says Brewce Martin, who founded the anything-goes skater haven. "He comes, rips and leaves."



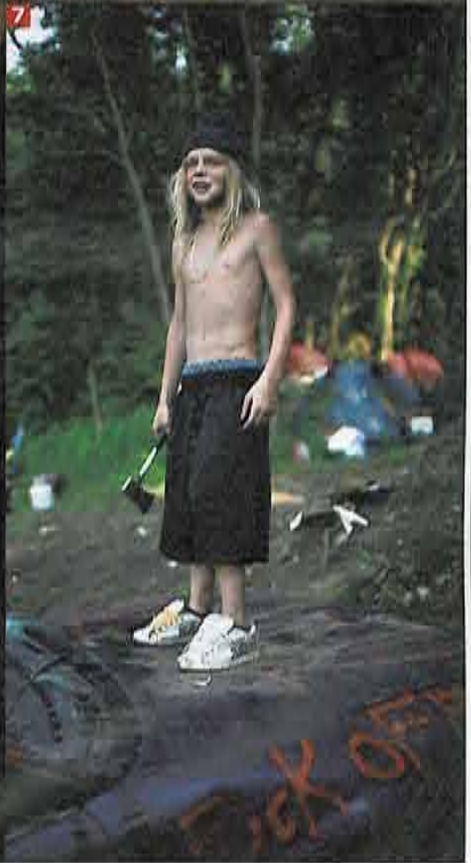
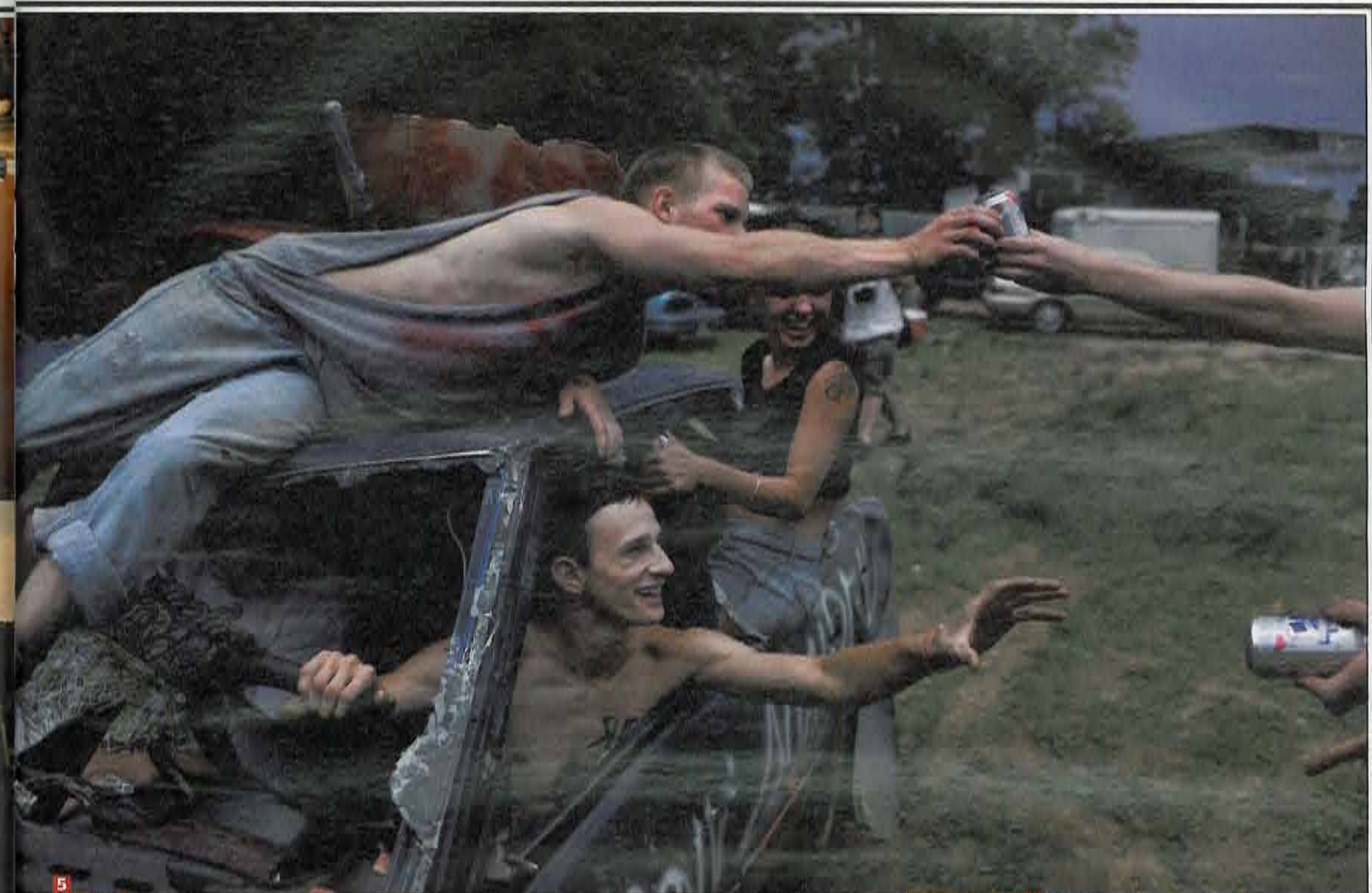
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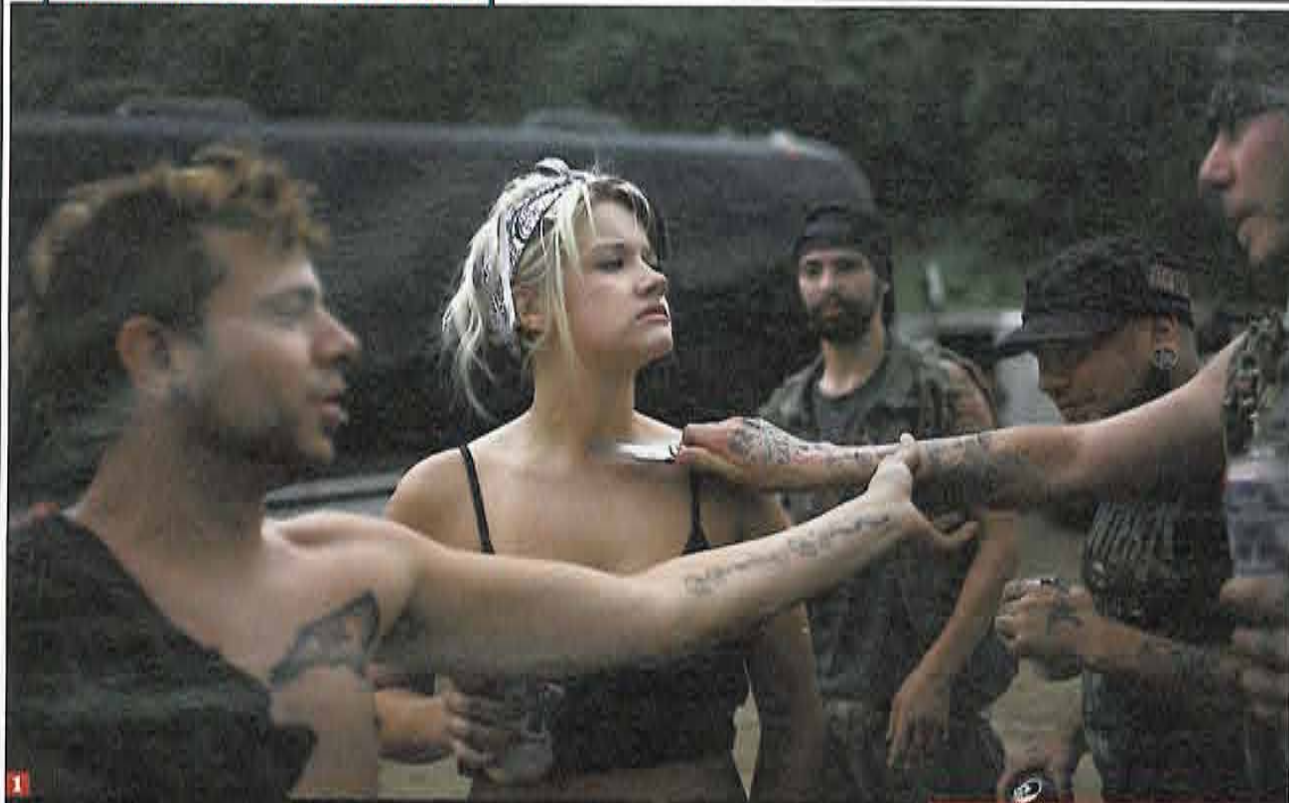
HE ROAD TO SKATOPIA IS BARELY TWO LANES AND OFTEN UNMARKED. IT WINDS PAST a field of sheep, a white clapboard church (Page Free Will Baptist), a yellow highway-crossing sign showing an Amish buggy instead of a deer. A handmade warning at the top of a steep dirt drive — “Skatopia Enter at Own Risk!!!” — lets pilgrims know they have arrived. They come at all hours, most any time of year, from as far away as Argentina, Japan, Finland. The gates are always open. ✚ On this particular afternoon, Brewce Martin, the voluble founder and cheerily autocratic ruler of Skatopia, is conducting a guided tour. Skatopia sits on 88 acres of hilly, forested land in Rutland, Ohio, an Appalachian town with a population of approximately 420, about 20 minutes from the West Virginia state line. Martin has been a skateboarding fanatic since he was a kid. That was in the Seventies; he is 42 now. Growing up nearby, Martin always dreamed of creating the perfect skate park. In part, his vision was simply architectural.

He loved the design challenge of building ever-more-elaborate ramps and bowls, and spent years doing construction work at skate parks around the country. But as with all other major American utopianist movements, there were deep philosophical underpinnings, as well. “There was a park called Skatopia in the Seventies,” Martin recalls. “You had to pay to get in. You had to wear full pads. You couldn’t drink. It was a good park. But there was no ‘opia’ to it.” ✚ Martin’s version of Skatopia is meant to amend all that. There is no admission fee. (Skaters are generally asked to perform an hour’s worth of work.) There are no safety regulations, and in fact, a certain amount of behavior that might be considered “unsafe,” like setting things on fire, is encouraged. (Though, as Martin’s 22-year-old son, Brandon, points out, “When we burn stuff, it’s stuff we have permission to burn. We’re not just gonna burn your car. I mean, that *has* happened here. But we didn’t do it.”) Drinking? Oh, yes. “Drinking and driving is allowed up here,” Martin tells me as he cracks open a Pabst and climbs behind the wheel of one of the many seemingly inoperable vehicles strewn across his property. This vehicle is, or was, a Jeep Grand Wagoneer, but it looks like something that was parked too close to a building destroyed by aerial bombing: All of the windows have been smashed, one rear door is crumpled shut, the interior and exterior are entirely caked in mud, and the front grill is gone, leaving the radiator completely exposed.

Skate-Punk Deliverance

Brewce Martin began building Skatopia in 1996. (1) Martin and his girlfriend, Amber Cavender, revel in the chaos of this year’s Bowl Bash. The main barn (2) houses a massive bowl (3), skated here by 18-year-old Josiah Renn. (Last year, Renn lived in a room under the bowl.) Also popular: the Lula Bowl (4). Andrew Frye (5), on the car’s hood, has been coming to Skatopia for five years: “This is my favorite place, ‘cause you can just do whatever,” he says. “You ain’t got to follow any skate-park rules.” Some visitor’s pass out (6): 13-year-old Nathan Priest (7) was kicked out after trashing a girl’s car: “You shouldn’t leave your car sitting somewhere with the back windshield out,” he says. “It’s called Skatopia. It’s anarchy here.”





1

Skate or Die

Pete Ager, the 26-year-old singer of North Carolina punk-metal band the Dirty South Revolutionaries, jokingly menaces his drummer's girlfriend with a knife (1). "That's something I do to get a rouse out of people," says Ager. "We were more than a little tipsy." If the mosh pit (2) gets dull, Skatopians add fireworks (3). Catching air at the Lula Bowl (4).

The Jeep does run, though, and soon Martin is gunning it up a dirt road. We fly past the Lula Bowl, named for Martin's deceased dog, who is buried beneath the concrete, and then we cut into the woods, where there is no road, and Martin, leaning over the wheel, dodges trees like he's playing a video game and not actually risking our lives, even though he hates video games, except perhaps Tony Hawk's Underground 2, which features an entire level set at Skatopia.

Eventually we turn onto a muddy path. Martin steers around a piece of metal. "There's that tailpipe I was looking for," he deadpans. We near the top of another rise, with a lovely view of the rolling foothills of the Appalachians. Martin nods at a mossy rock. "This is my spot, if I ever want to get laid," he says. "With the view up here, the girls feel like Genghis Khan is taking their village."

Martin has a compact, muscular frame. His family origins are Scottish, and he has reddish hair, cut short and messy. Today he's wearing a dirty Volcom shirt over a white T-shirt, gray work pants, muddy boots and a shark's-tooth necklace. He's missing a tooth of his own and has sideburns that end abruptly at the level of his mustache.

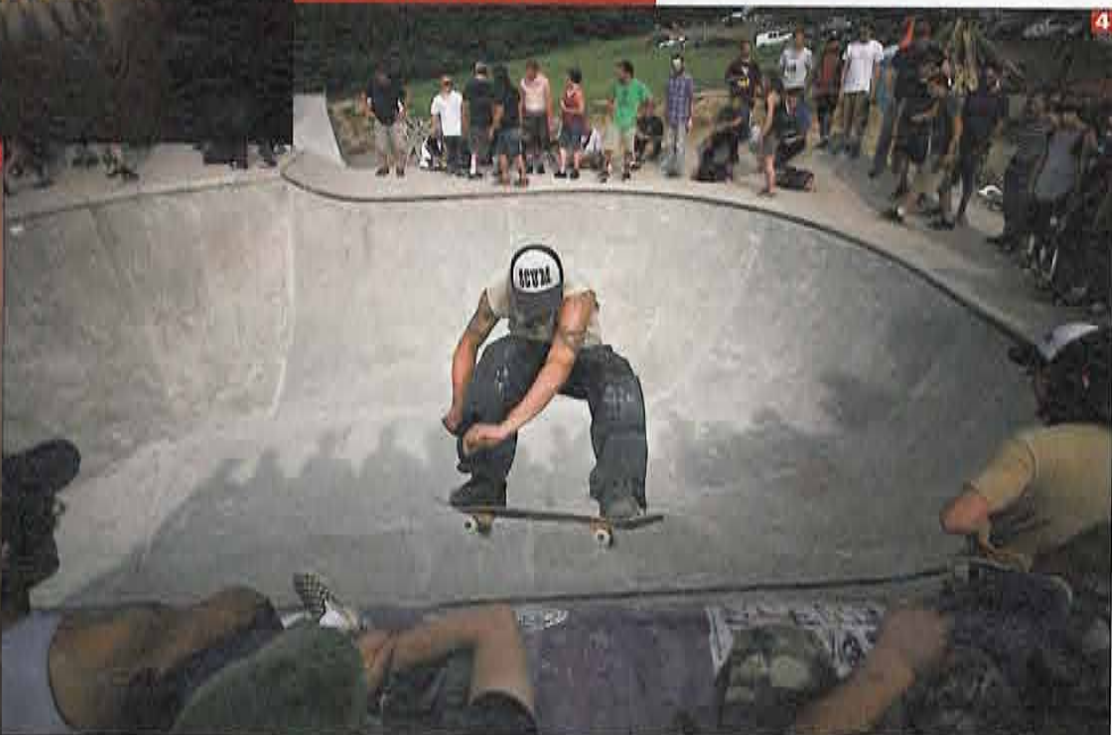
He bought the land in 1995, after he was evicted from an earlier Skatopia site in West Virginia. He and Brandon live on the property, in a farmhouse that doubles as the Museum of Skateboard History. Four of the rooms are largely bare, except for the walls, which have been paneled with hanging skateboards. The boards are arranged in chronological order, beginning with crude wooden models from the early Sixties, on through the changing styles that mark subsequent historical skateboarding eras like



2

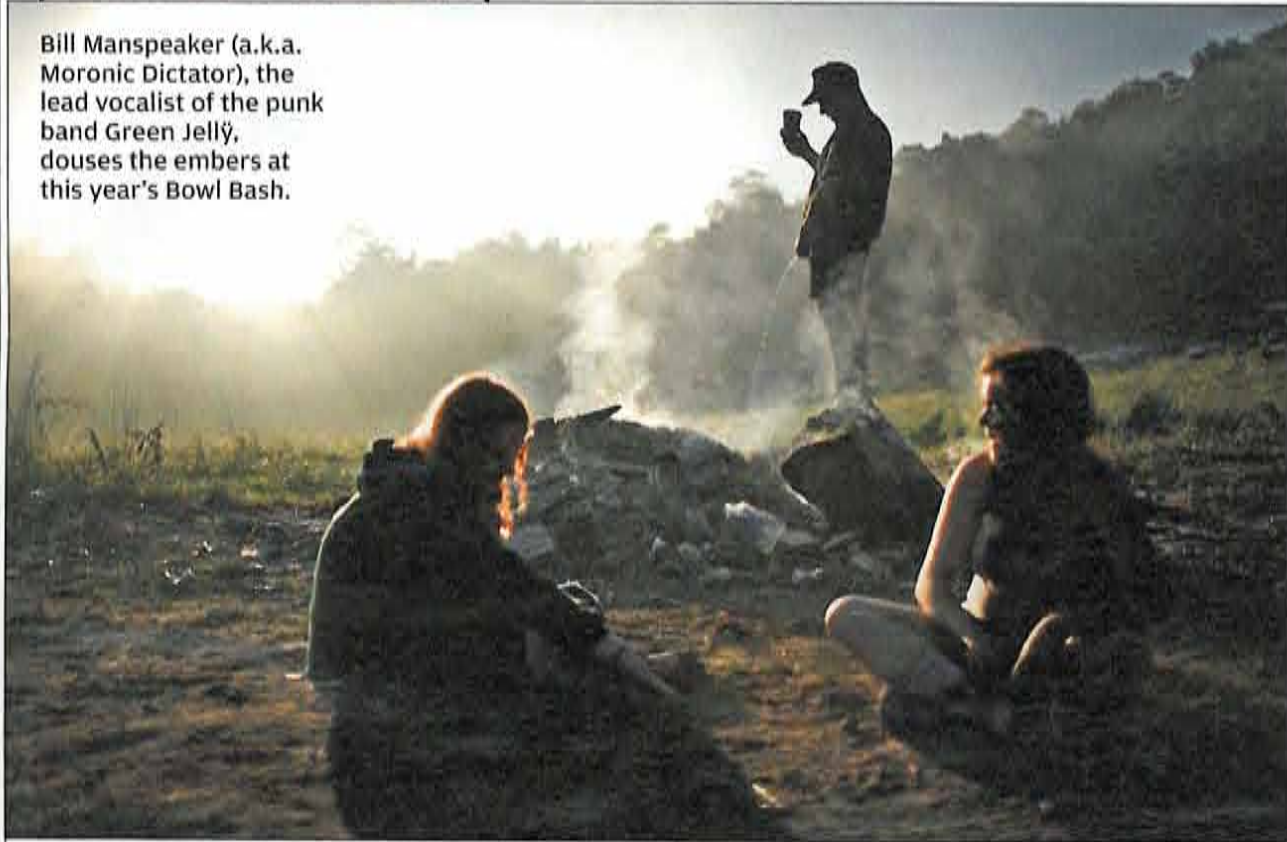


3



4

Bill Manspeaker (a.k.a. Moronic Dictator), the lead vocalist of the punk band Green Jelly, douses the embers at this year's Bowl Bash.



rings of a tree. Farther up the hill, there's a big pink barn housing two enormous bowls and a three-quarter pipe. Another bowl is tucked inside an old metal shed. The place feels like a cross between an elaborate folk-art installation and the set of one of those Seventies exploitation movies where marauding cannibal hillbillies set upon foolish interlopers who are looking for gas. Wandering around the property, we pass a gutted school bus and a row of wooden cabins with names like "Captain Creepy's" and the "Fatty Shack." A handful of guys with red eyes and some manner of facial hair sit on cinder blocks around a fire, drinking beers. Nearby, a couple of mangy dogs, one half-blind, root around some carpets piled in the weeds. The half-blind dog glares at me with its good eye.

SKATOPTIA HAS BECOME THE stuff of legend in the skateboarding underground. *Thrasher* magazine described the Barn Bowl as "a 13-foot bottomless pit" and pointed out that "the biggest menace of the bowl is Brewce himself . . . he literally mows down whomever happens to be in his path of radical." When Bam Margera and Tony Hawk filmed an episode of *Viva la Bam* here, one of the hosts warned that Margera and Hawk "have no idea what they're getting into. They're used to nice, glossy, safe ramps, X Games-style stuff. They're walking into the gates of hell." All of this promised gnarliness, of

Contributing editor MARK BINELLI wrote "Greenland Melting" in RS 1056/57.

"Everyone always refers to *Field of Dreams* when they talk about Skatopia," says founder Brewce Martin. "We like to show young kids that there's some hope for them."

course, remains incredibly attractive to skaters looking for an old-school sense of danger that's been largely subsumed as the sport has been co-opted and corporatized. "It holds a mythical allure," Hawk says. "There was no mass destruction during my visit, but the bowl was much tighter and deeper than I imagined. It was not easy to skate."

"My goal is to build a monument to skateboarding," Martin tells me, "so that a thousand years after we've done fucked everything up, some straggler will come upon this." Martin speaks in a raspy Southern drawl. He likes to compare himself to cult leaders and other outsized historical figures. Over the course of my visit, he mentions Charles Manson, Robin Hood, Socrates, Robert Mugabe, Pete Rose, Nietzsche and Stephen Hawking. (He says Hawking is a more appropriate comparison than Einstein only " 'cause he's in a wheelchair, and that's where I'll be one day.")

But in fact, Martin does possess a weird charisma. When I visit Skatopia, at least a half-dozen others are crashing on the property. Several seem perpetually drunk. They all perform various chores for Martin, mostly involving new construction projects. Martin calls

them his "minions." One of the minions, Clay, is tall and gangly, wears a Lynyrd Skynyrd cap and speaks in a Beavis-like monotone; the others call him "Clay Drunkenstein." Roger, another minion, has a long goatee and sleeps on a pallet in a creepy room under the barn. Roger knows Martin from West Virginia. He showed up at Skatopia drunk on Wild Turkey, after spending 17 days in jail, and said he wanted to skate, even though he'd never skated before. Martin padded him up and dropped him into a bowl. He immediately took a nasty spill and broke his femur. Before they drove him to the hospital, while he was still lying in a heap at the bottom of the bowl, he pulled a bag of cocaine out of his pocket and demanded someone cut him a line.

Martin says, "My dad's an engineer, and I have a huge math brain. I can take even the dumbest of minions and get them to turn out something. *Par exemple* . . ." He gestures at a garishly painted mobile home parked in front of the barn. A more recent project, back at the house, involved constructing a shower grotto entirely out of Jägermeister bottles.

"It didn't turn out the way I wanted," Martin says, "but now I know the possibilities of the medium."

THE MOST CONCENTRATED PERIODS of mayhem occur during the annual summer Bowl Bash, when hundreds of kids descend on Rutland for Skatopia's answer to Woodstock. The first Bowl Bash was June 1st, 1996; the first band to play was an all-gay punk band called Stupid America. The bands play in the loft of the barn. The kids, meanwhile, camp out on the property, skate, drink, shoot bottle rockets at one another, drive recklessly on dirt tracks and otherwise celebrate the fact that freedom's just another word for plenty left to burn. Occasionally events get out of hand. At this year's Bash, a drunk girl accidentally backed into a parked car, which prompted some kids to smash the windows of her car with rocks and their skateboards. By the time Martin arrived on the scene, the girl had beaten one of the boys with a two-by-four. She ended up abandoning the car. When the police came a few weeks later, someone had hidden the vehicle in the woods.

There's little tension between Martin and his neighbors. As in many relatively isolated communities, the right to do whatever the hell you want on your own property is sacrosanct in Meigs County, where Skatopia is located. Meigs is coal-mining country and has long been one of Ohio's poorest corners. But it's also attractive to hippies and dropouts looking to fly under the radar. Jefferson Airplane guitarist Jorma Kaukonen lives nearby, on his 119-acre Fur Peace Ranch. (Martin says he heard that Kaukonen forbade his daughter from coming to Skatopia.)

Martin and his younger brother began skateboarding in the early Seventies. His parents split up when he was five, and he grew up with his mother, an accountant, in Vienna, West Virginia, a suburban town just over the Ohio state line. In the basement of his childhood home, Martin built his very first skateboard ramp — "probably the first ramp in West Virginia," he says — by nailing some closet doors to a workbench and using linoleum to smooth the angles. Throughout his 20s and early 30s, Martin skated, took classes and worked odd jobs in places like Orlando. He also raised (and home-schooled) Brandon as a single dad. Brandon could not be less like his father: tall, skinny and bearded, he looks vaguely Amish, and unless directly engaged, he rarely speaks. "Brandon's an anchorite," Martin says. "He's my proudest accomplishment to date."

Back at the barn, Martin and Brandon climb up to the loft to demonstrate their skills. One level below, there's a stage and a stripper pole, operational during Bowl Bashes. "There been a lot of sluts on that pole," mutters another minion, a bearded mechanic named Nick who gets Martin's cars running, looks like Waylon Jennings and reeks [Cont. on 51]

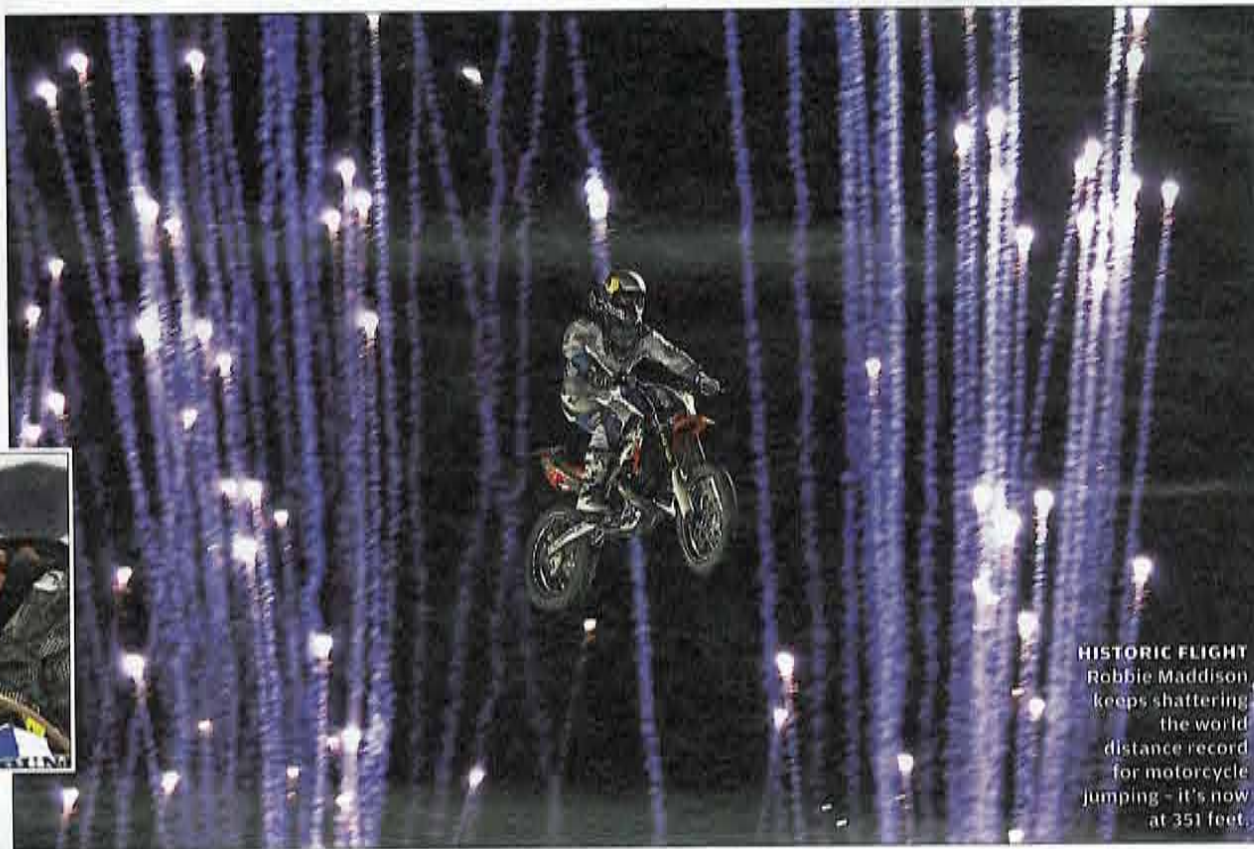
The New Daredevil

Meet the most reckless man to ride a motorcycle since Evel Knievel

By Josh Dean

ROBBIE MADDISON THOUGHT he was going to die. Which shouldn't have been surprising, since death is an occupational hazard for a man who makes a living flying over football fields on a motorcycle. Maddison — known to everyone as “Maddo” — had just launched himself off a ramp on his bike in an attempt to break his own world record for motorcycle distance jumping. He needed to soar 340 feet, but the instant he left the ramp, he knew something was wrong. “I realized I wasn't gonna make it,” he says. “I thought, ‘I can't believe I'm gonna die in front of 40,000 people.’ Luckily, I missed death by two feet. But that's a pretty life-changing moment.” Then, of course, he did the jump again a half-hour later.

As of last December, no one had ever jumped farther than 277.6 feet on a motorcycle, but Maddo — a rising star in the X Games sport of freestyle motocross (FMX) — just had a feeling it was something he could do. So on New Year's Eve in Las Vegas, he broke the world record live on ESPN, flying 322 feet in front of millions of viewers.



HISTORIC FLIGHT
Robbie Maddison keeps shattering the world distance record for motorcycle jumping — it's now at 351 feet.

“There are a lot of guys who do FMX, and a few who are serious about distance jumping,” says Bryan Stealey, managing editor of *Road Racer X* magazine. “But he's in a class of his own.”

Maddo, a 27-year-old Aussie, was a champion motocross rider in his youth, but by the time he made it to America, FMX was already a growing

sports phenomenon with established homegrown stars, and he felt the need to make his mark. His solution was to smash distance records. “Maddo is insane,” says Travis Pastrana, the seven-time FMX X Games gold medalist. “He has a set of brass balls that allow that guy to fly a motorcycle farther than anyone ever dreamed.”

“It's actually so intense it's sickening,” says Maddo, who is preparing to debut some never-before-seen tricks at this summer's X Games. “The feeling in the air is terrifying. Every time I get on the bike, I'm saying goodbye to everyone in my life, because I don't know if I'm riding away from it. I know on the next jump I could die — but I just want it.”

SKATOPIA

[Cont. from 48] of alcohol. He is sipping out of a plastic SpongeBob SquarePants cup bearing the message THIS IS THE BEST DAY EVER. A tattered American flag hangs over a severe-looking 13-foot-deep bowl. Graffiti covers the barn's exposed wooden beams: “Eatin' Ain't Cheatin',” “Hobbits Are Gay.”

Martin bombs straight into the bowl, crouching and reckless, occasionally losing his board when attempting a wilder trick. Amber, his pretty 27-year-old girlfriend, who is studying to be an anesthesiologist, looks on affectionately. Brandon, meanwhile, though also a powerful skater, has the opposite style: He barely bends his knees as he hurtles down sheer angles, looking calm and moving with the elegance of a skier.

Money is tight. Martin settled a civil case last November stemming from a 2004 bar fight. “Dude's girlfriend was dating me, I ran into him at the bar, and he was like, ‘Come meet me in the parking lot,’” Martin says. “Well, the exact words were ‘You wrinkled old man, come get what you deserve.’ And I was dumb enough to go get what I deserved, which ended up being a \$100,000 debit to my lifestyle.” One of the guys in the fight had a bat, but Martin relieved him of that and ended up putting two men in the hospital. He spent 45 days in jail.

Martin scrapes by, though: selling merchandise (and scrap metal) and cadg-

ing donations from ex-skaters. “There's a huge loyalty in skating,” he says. “The guilt is worse than Catholic if you leave.” There's also a Skatopia documentary in the works. “That'll end up being a great résumé piece for the filmmaker,” Martin says. “Meanwhile, I'll be here picking through the embers. Scavenging copper wire out of old houses like some hobo.” Up on the hill, some teenagers are skating the Lula Bowl. The only thing visible from down here is the bowl's cement ridge. Occasionally, a black-clad figure pops to the surface of the bowl. You can't see their skateboards. The boys seem to be floating. They look like kites.

There's an odd purity to Martin's vision. As he likes to say, he's figured out a way to replace money with work and to give visitors whose only knowledge of anarchy comes from punk-rock songs a

taste of the absolute freedom they think they want. “We just like to show young kids once in a while that there's some hope for them,” he says. “That people can live a dream, and you don't have to be rich. It's hard as hell to make a living out here. But as far as freedom goes?” Martin tosses a baseball to one of the dogs. “It's retarded,” he continues. “Everyone always refers to *Field of Dreams* when they talk about Skatopia. But I've always lived this way. Former girlfriends would tell me, ‘You're just gonna be a lonely old man with all this stuff. No one's ever gonna use it.’ And I'd say, ‘Bet not.’”

Amber comes by and says she has to head home to West Virginia. Martin asks if she'd like to go up to the woods first, to admire the view. She says sure; they excuse themselves and begin to make their way up the hill. **Q**

For more exclusive photos of Skatopia and a preview of the upcoming Skatopia movie, visit rollingstone.com/issue1058

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Welcome to Skatopia: Eighty-Eight Acres of Anarchy in the USA

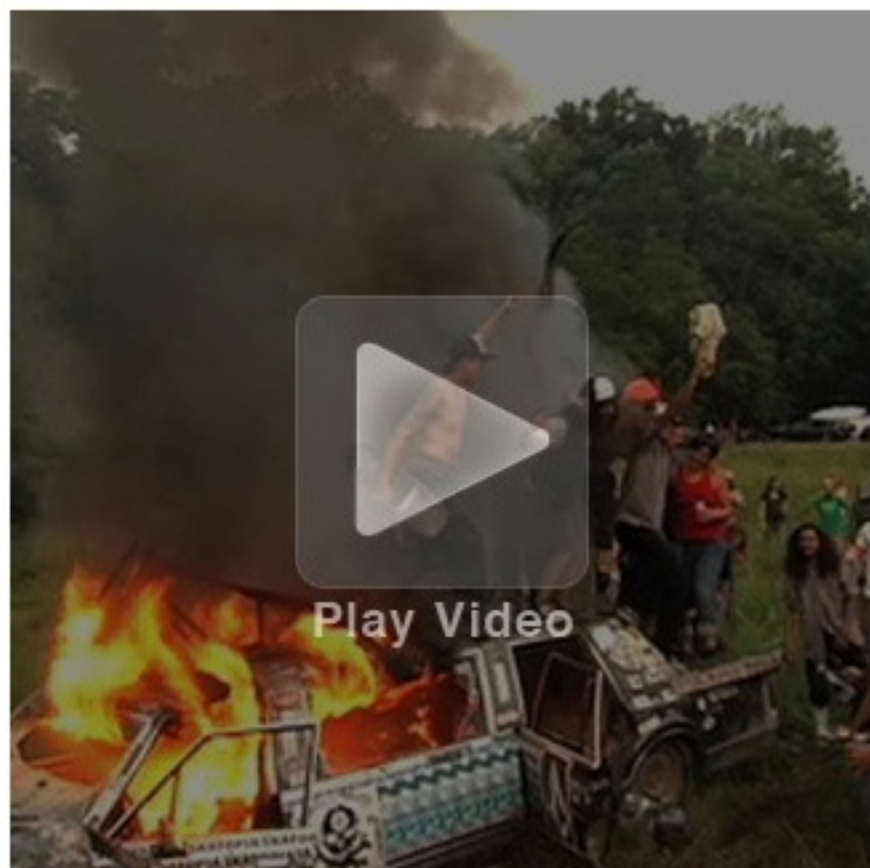
Behind the scenes at Brewce Martin's wild, massive haven for skaters in Ohio

Posted Aug 07, 2008 2:45 PM

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In Issue 1058 Mark Binelli ventures to Skatopia, a massive Ohio skate park that's the stuff of legend in the skateboarding underground. Click above for exclusive footage from the upcoming documentary *Skatopia*, which chronicles a challenging year in the life of the park's founder, Brewce Martin, and examines how he keeps the 88-acre skate haven running.

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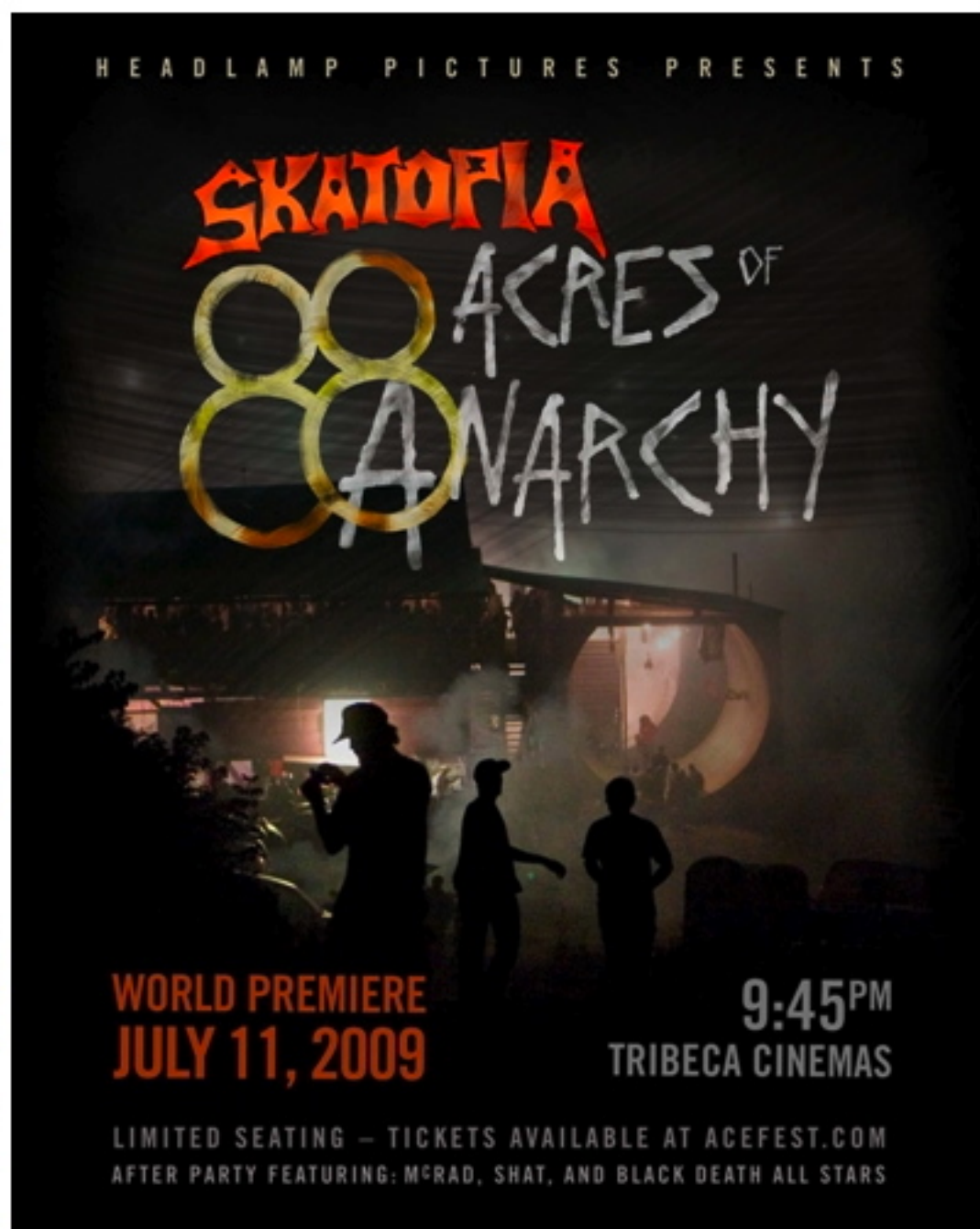
Skatopia 88 Acres of Anarchy NYC Premiere

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[Skatetopia: 88 Acres of Anarchy](#) will have its long awaited NYC premiere this Saturday, July 11th at [Tribeca Cinemas](#). Showing as part of the [Acefest](#), Skatetopia is about the Mad Max style Neverland for skaters in Ohio and the man insane and genius enough to lord over it: Brewce Martin. This is some amazing shit. Check out the trailer [here](#). Plus you've got free Pabst and McRad, Shat, and the Black Death All-Stars at the after party – what could be radder? Tribeca Cinemas is at 54 Varick Street. Full flyer after the jump. Get there early!



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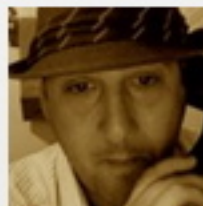
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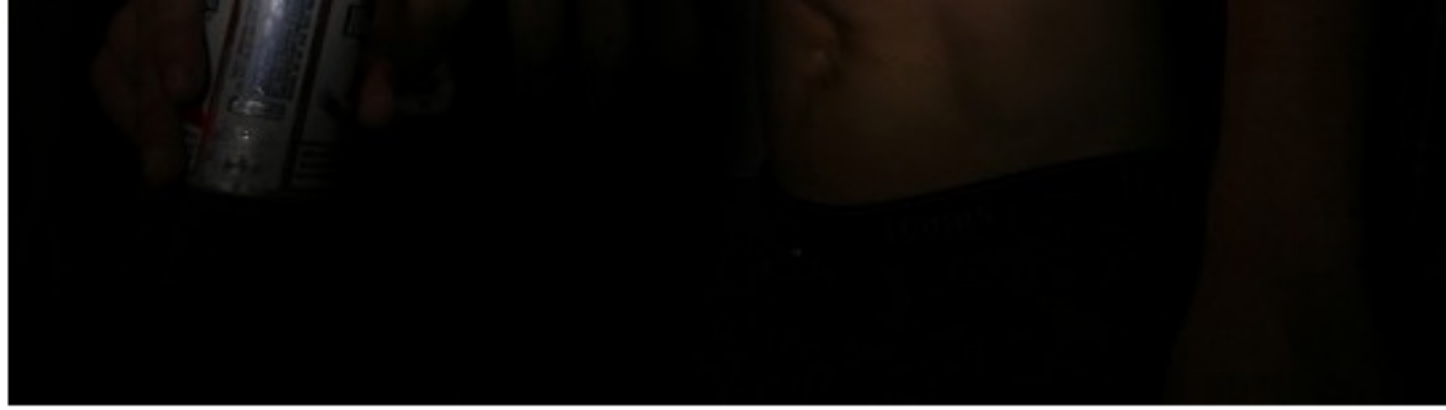
Jackthree

Last Saturday saw the New York City premiere of [Skatopia: 88 Acres of Anarchy](#), the story of Bruce Martin, the self-styled Jim Jones of the skateboard world and his quest to create his own personal skateboarding utopia. One of the craziest stories in skateboarding, Skatopia is a commune of sorts in the Ohio countryside that acts like a beacon to skateboarding's castaways, who come from far and wide to skate, party, and build what Martin hopes will ultimately be the raddest and biggest free skatepark in the world. Completely even-handed, the film illuminates Martin's genius as well as exposes some of his madness and is something that really needs to be seen to be believed. Just check out some of the photos from the premiere, you'll see. To peep the trailer go [here](#). Viva Skatopia!



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Skatopia the movie, in review

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[Skatopia, 88 Acres of Anarchy](#) premiered this past weekend in Golden, CO and both the film and weekend are to be remembered. It is a window into the skateboarding mecca in Ohio and filmmakers Laurie House and Colin Powers actually lived on an adjacent property for an entire year to capture the true essence of what can be described as a skateboarding sub-society. For the most compelling view of this place, check out the film itself. The images captured show much more than burning cars, raging parties and notorious reputation Skatopia has earned, but speaks to social dynamics of the sub-culture of the place, and a lot more.



Fool's Pipe, all in text photos [SkatopiaTheMovie.com](#)

Without visiting Skatopia, one can never truly know what to expect beyond the gates and separating fact from fiction is always a battle. The documentary provides the experience from the comfort and safety of your screen of choice and its a good thing, because not everyone has what it takes to survive the reality. Because Brewce Martin is the landowner and self proclaimed ring-leader, the story follows his life from Skatopia's and his own family's beginnings. Though he clearly has had a less than easy journey, the complexities of his personality are characterized by amazing leadership and meticulous planning, thus the amazing results. Powers and House did an excellent job capturing the personal elements to Brewce, and with power is strife, so there is an element of tragedy, and the end result, inspiration.





One of the guys mentioned a non-skateboarder claimed the film to be depressing. Herein lies a chasm between avid skateboarders and others who might think this way, and the mentality of community and devotion to our craft can override "common sense." We saw it as an inspiring story of building an empire, with your own rules, despite what an monumental feat running a self-subsiding,

free labor, skateboarding utopia. The elements that are viewed by outsiders as depressing, failed relationships, the roller coaster of funds, random violence are all a part of society at large. But the battles at Skatopia are fought with grinds and some other pretty creative means that simply result from human interactions, shared on the closest level; a sort of group survival to the fittest. Like any great leader, Brewce has his faults, but worse are those who disrespect his empire, because its not just his, its theirs too, with a responsibility, or maybe a gift.



Skatopia was built by the hands of travelers, some skateboard, some come to party, some just have no where else to be and this year's Build-It Bowl Bash will be as important as ever in pouring concrete. And the green plaid limo will be visiting cities across the Rockies wrapping up the summer and into the fall.

Golden



All photos by Eric Martin

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FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2009

FILM / SPORTS **Utopia Is a Matter of Taste: Welcome to Skatopia.**

POSTED BY JANE "THE INTERN" CARLEN ON FRI, AUG 14, 2009 AT 7:18 PM

If I took one thing from a preview screening of *Skatopia: 88 Acres of Anarchy* at Plan B this week, it's this: When it comes to utopia, there's a fine line between a place where everyone lives in blissful harmony, and one that's perfect to you. Generally, the latter type is abhorrent to everyone else.

This isn't news. I believe Plato first got this distinction down on paper, or clay, or whatever it was. When it comes to a ruling class, we're better off with philosophers than warriors, merchants, or slaves.

Brewce Martin, the founder of Skatopia, an 88-acre skate park in the boonies of Ohio, thinks we're better off with skateboarders. He founded Skatopia as a haven for skaters. It's unclear whether his ultimate goal is to maintain this pocket of anarchy, or fashion the world in his image (not that it necessarily matters, since he's always teetering on the brink of bankruptcy).

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The movie screens again this weekend at Seattle's [Skateboard Film Festival](#). If you can't make it, but want to know more, take the jump.

Given the history of skateboarders being shooed out of public spaces, Martin's passion to build a skaters' commune is understandable—noble, even. Martin attended city council meetings at the age of 12 to push for public skate facilities, and the fact that Skatopia has been around since 1995 is a testament to his energy, persuasiveness, and sheer force of will. He commands a small band of young wanderers and some free-thinking professionals. Together, they maintain and expand the park using concrete, rebar, and borrowed money. (I can't help but take this as a reminder of how easy it was to build things in the free-flowing credit markets of America's recent past. Yet even now, with Martin out since June due to a serious injury, Skatopia lives.)

The place is more than ramps and peanut bowls. It's like a counselor-less summer camp, where boys skate all day, drink, total cars, play with dogs, invite strippers over, and sometimes do chores. Whether or not you consider this a utopia is just a matter of taste.

Skatopian anarchy, led by Martin, is like the rule of an aggressive but friendly alpha-dog: The pack follows his lead in exchange for room, beer, and a place to skate freely. Their submission is voluntary, but there's no question that Martin's word goes, under threat of kick in the face. Even when he's jailed for a couple months for fighting, he delivers orders through his son, Brandon. His zeal is laudable, but his belligerence and philandering ways might make you cringe.

The park's primary money-maker is Bowl Bash, an annual skate festival. It's free to get in, but you have to cough up cash, booze, or be coerced to buy Skatopia merchandise to get out. Admittedly, Martin is selling out the Skatopia name to keep it going. He laments that he was *this* close to getting a Skatopia line at PacSun (i.e. the local mall), and his associate says he prefers to think of selling out as their best way of "not giving up."

Does selling the name mean selling out the idea? Not necessarily. The way Martin struts around, he makes it seem like preaching anarchy one minute and barking orders the next is the most anarchic thing you can do—adhering neither to a set order, nor a lack of it. If that's what you like, then be glad there's a place for you.



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371: Did you ever want to understand the problems of a 40 year old skate park/cult leader? Soon you can! : Skatopia The Movie coming soon.

July 14, 2009

Hi Jason!

I've got a sample from the upcoming documentary, Skatopia! It's absolutely insane what these guys are getting away with out in the mountains.. take a look and share it with your readers!



When you want to relax you might close your eyes and imagine a place that makes you happy, or calm; perhaps even try to fade away to an intangible state of utopia. Now, imagine that while attempting to center your chakra, suddenly a flaming mini-van pops into your cranium and scares the hell out of you! That's exactly what this "Skatopia" documentary did when I saw it. I have to admit though – it's pretty bad ass what these kids (and this 40 year old) are doing. They're one big bowl-skating, ramp-building, car-burning family in the middle of the Appalachians. It's not utopia, it's Skatopia!

<http://chunnel.tv/film-design/951/skatopia/>

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gilles peterson worldwide awards - london more » on 06-02-2010 12:00 am

la marathon - stadium to sea course more » on 21-03-2010 07:20 am

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It was only a matter of time before the words 'hillbilly' and 'skatepark' were meshed together in a timeless story of perpetual adolescence and backwoods abandon. Skatopia is a film about an Appalachian 'teenage skate cult' where skating, punk rock and hillbilly culture collide. The owner bought the farm (literally), 88 rural acres in Ohio, and made it into his own personal skate-punk utopia, somewhere where he could skate or die, with his multitudes of teenage friends and workers. They host punk rock shows, demolition derbies and light each others' cars on fire, however when the law and bills come in for a buzz kill, you see the 40-something, Brewce Martin, have to sober up and face the music. Even after being on the ropes financially and legally, his courage and tenacity are inspiring, even if flawed.

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It was only a matter of time before the words 'hillbilly' and 'skatepark' were meshed together in a timeless story of perpetual adolescence and backwoods abandon. Skatopia is a film about an Appalachian 'teenage skate cult' where skating, punk rock and hillbilly culture collide. The owner bought the farm (literally), 88 rural acres in Ohio, and made it into his own personal skate-punk utopia, somewhere where he could skate or die, with his multitudes of teenage friends and workers. They host punk rock shows, demolition derbies and light each others' cars on fire, however when the law and bills come in for a buzz kill, you see the 40-something, Bruce Martin, have to sober up and face the music. Even after being on the ropes financially and legally, his courage and tenacity are inspiring, even if flawed.


[Skatopia](#) plays next week as part of the Seattle Skateboard Film Festival (August 14-17). Showcasing films from everyone from Spike Jonze to Gus Van Sant, SFF is one of few festivals dedicated to the art of skate films. Just looking through the list of films being screened, the festival is obviously a creative launching pad for those passionate about the sport.

Skateboard Film Festival

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TeamJaded is Jeremy Lavoie and Abby Berendt Lavoie. We are San Francisco based filmmakers. This is our blog.

We like Documentaries, Skateboarding, Art, Music, Space, DIY, Social Progress, Social Media, and gnarwhals.

For bios, info, and reels head to JadedMultimedia.com

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forpublicoption: CA Senate ignores Arnie, okays single-payer health care <http://is.gd/7jdS2> 3 days ago via Seismic

AbbyMoriah: "Small acts, when multiplied by millions of people, can transform the world." -- Howard Zinn 4 days ago via Seismic

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jeremeylavoie: just ordered an HV40 from B&H, two years with the A1 and now we can finally capture video guilt free 7 days ago via web

jeremeylavoie: #whodat 7 days ago via web

jeremeylavoie: @WhitScott nah I hadn't seen that, but Juice does some good stuff. ...I should try

MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2009

Skatopians at the Gate



Skatopia's dictator and chief, Brewce Martin has been seriously injured "with major head trauma in a freak accident at a tire shop near Skatopia. Apparently, he was standing next to the tire mounting machine and it exploded. All we know at the present time is that he's in surgery to relieve pressure on his brain." (Taken from the Slap message boards.)

TeamJaded wishes Brewce well, and hopes for his speedy recovery.

I did a three day shoot at Skatopia when I worked for Current. The shoot took place during Skatopia's annual "bowl bash" when hundreds of hillbilly punks and skaters descend on Skatopia for a few days of complete mayhem. It was one of the most intense field production experiences of my life. I often liken it to shooting video in a combat zone.

TEAMJADED FLICKR



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Ty Evans talk at Walker Art
Center
Who needs reform?
Tales of Wonder

► May (8)
► April (4)

During my short encounter with Brewce at his "anarchist resort," he came off like a compete lunatic, but a lunatic who was somehow in control of what looked to me like utter chaos. He gave my co-producer Allison Muir and I the standard Skatopia hard time. He even went so far as to tell us that we could film, but we couldn't keep the footage. In the end he not only let us keep the footage, he even granted us a short interview, AND signed a release granting us permission to use the footage on Current TV ...thus proving that he was a stern, but fair dictator. (Most of the footage never actually made it to air, but that's a whole other story.)

...Seriously Brewce, get well man.

In other Skatopia news, the documentary "Skatopia: 88 Acres of Anarchy" is finally set to premier on July 11 at Acefest 2009 in NYC. The trailer looks amazing. Allison and I had the pleasure of working along side the film crew for the three days we spent at Skatopia. They told us they had been there for months, and were staying for a few more after we left. I couldn't understand how any human would volunteer for that, but I knew it was going to make a great documentary. If you get the opportunity to see it, don't pass it up.

Below is an old trailer. There is a new one [here](#). I highly recommend watching it.



Photo taken from Skatopia's myspace.

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Oregon: Lincoln City Skatepark



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Skatopia
Rutland, Ohio
[website >>](#)

Stuck in the craw of the Ohio/West Virginia border, Brewce Martin's Skatopia is 80-plus lawless acres of beer, mud, concrete, plywood and endless opportunities to get good and hurt on a skateboard. It's got a "no rules" atmosphere, not in the bumper sticker or T-shirt sense, but in a very real and scary way that reminds you of the benefits of civil society. Hillbillies, hessians, confused young women and fans of skateboard debauchery flock to Brewce's farm, only to be outdone by Brewce himself, a good-times juggernaut whose only requirement is an appreciative crowd. Skateable features include the "King Dong" ramp, a plywood and sheet metal monster that includes two bowls and a towering extension, the Barn Bowl, which drops 13 feet and is topped with pool coping, a wooden three-quarter pipe and two concrete bowls, one of which is indoors but (dumb luck) built over a natural spring which keeps it constantly flooded. The second bowl, arguably the best ride on the property, incorporates an abandoned school bus in its design and also boasts a cradle, snake section, concrete and steel coping and a cinderblock wallride over a door that only Brewce's son, Hellskull Martin, has successfully navigated. There's a D.I.Y. titty bar under the ramp, a never-ending supply of booze and fireworks, free camping and even one semi-operating toilet. Perhaps not the best park as far as terrain, Skatopia more than makes up for it as an overall experience. Get to Rutland and get ready to get freaked out.

In short: If you like deep bowls and getting shit faced, you could do a lot worse.

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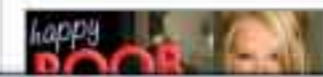
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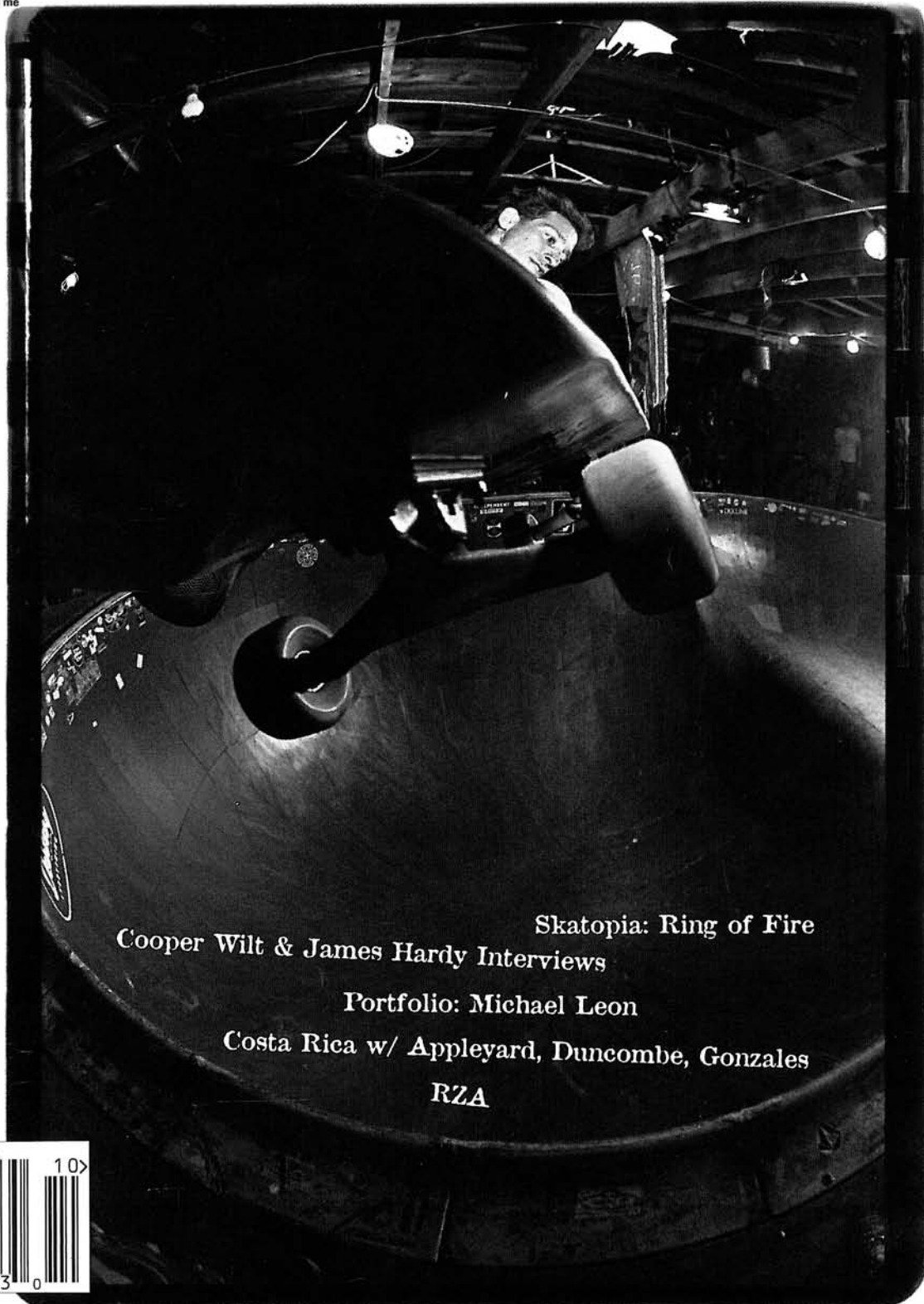
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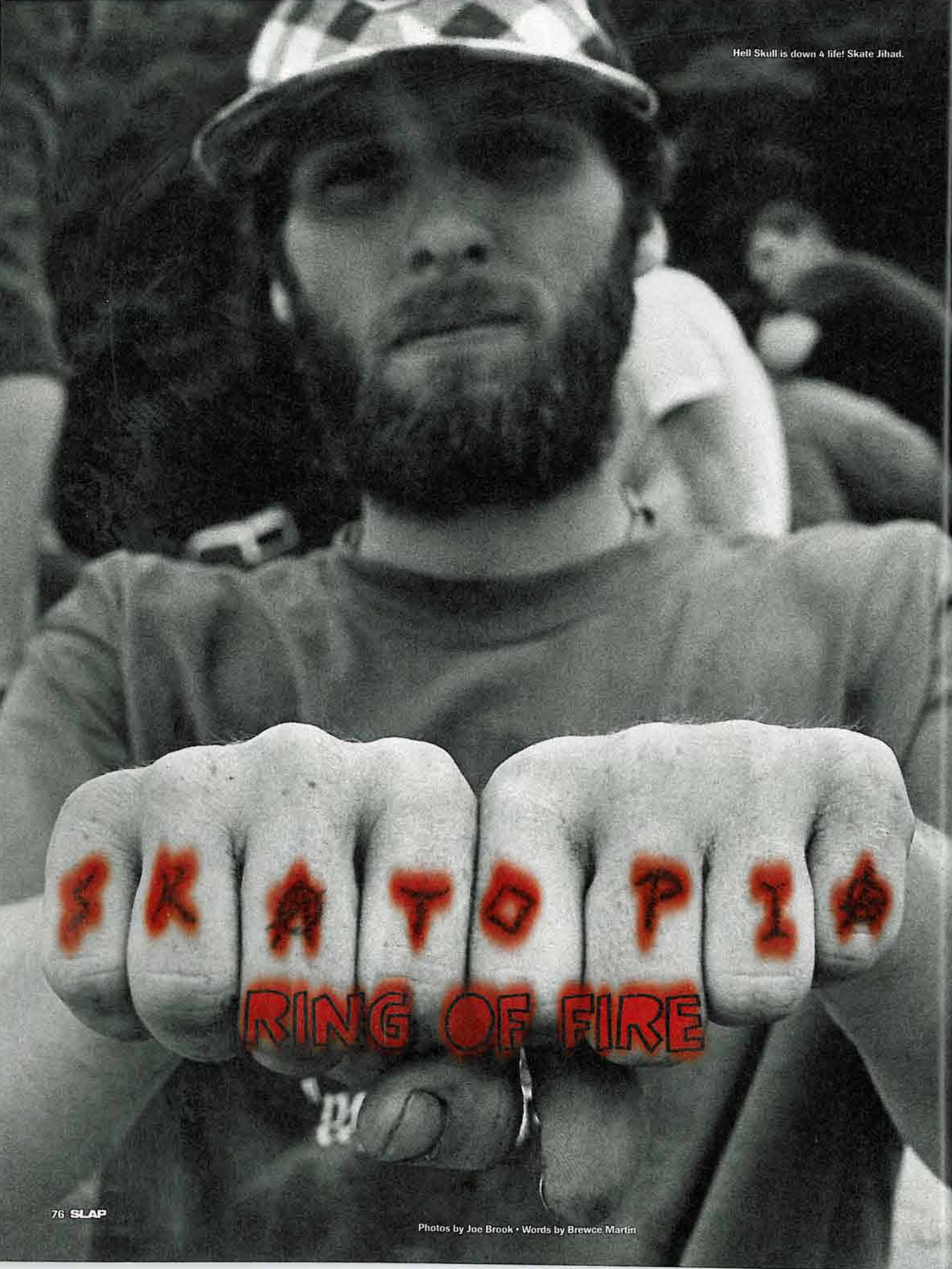
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BOWL BASH 13 went in the record books on June 13th and 14th, 2008. The gigantic carbon footprint left by 45 bands, hundreds of cars full of skaters, the burning limousine, and thousands of cheap Chinese fireworks was offset slightly by the recycling of 600 pounds of beer cans and 12 tons of scrap metal, thereby maintaining Skatopia's harmonious balance in the universe. Bowl Bash—Skatopia's non-stop showcase of music, skateboarding and freedom—will have you momentarily wondering whether you're alive or dead, but will leave you completely sure you're living.





MYTH VS. FACT:

Myth: I will burn your car.

Fact: You will burn your own car.

Myth: It's a sausage fest.

Fact: Your chick came without you.

Myth: It's 88 acres of anarchy.

Fact: It's a brutal dictatorship.

Myth: We will make you work.

Fact: We will make you work.

Myth: It's free.

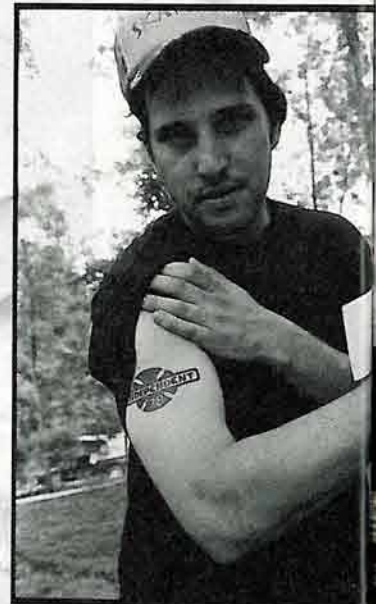
Fact: Nothing is free.

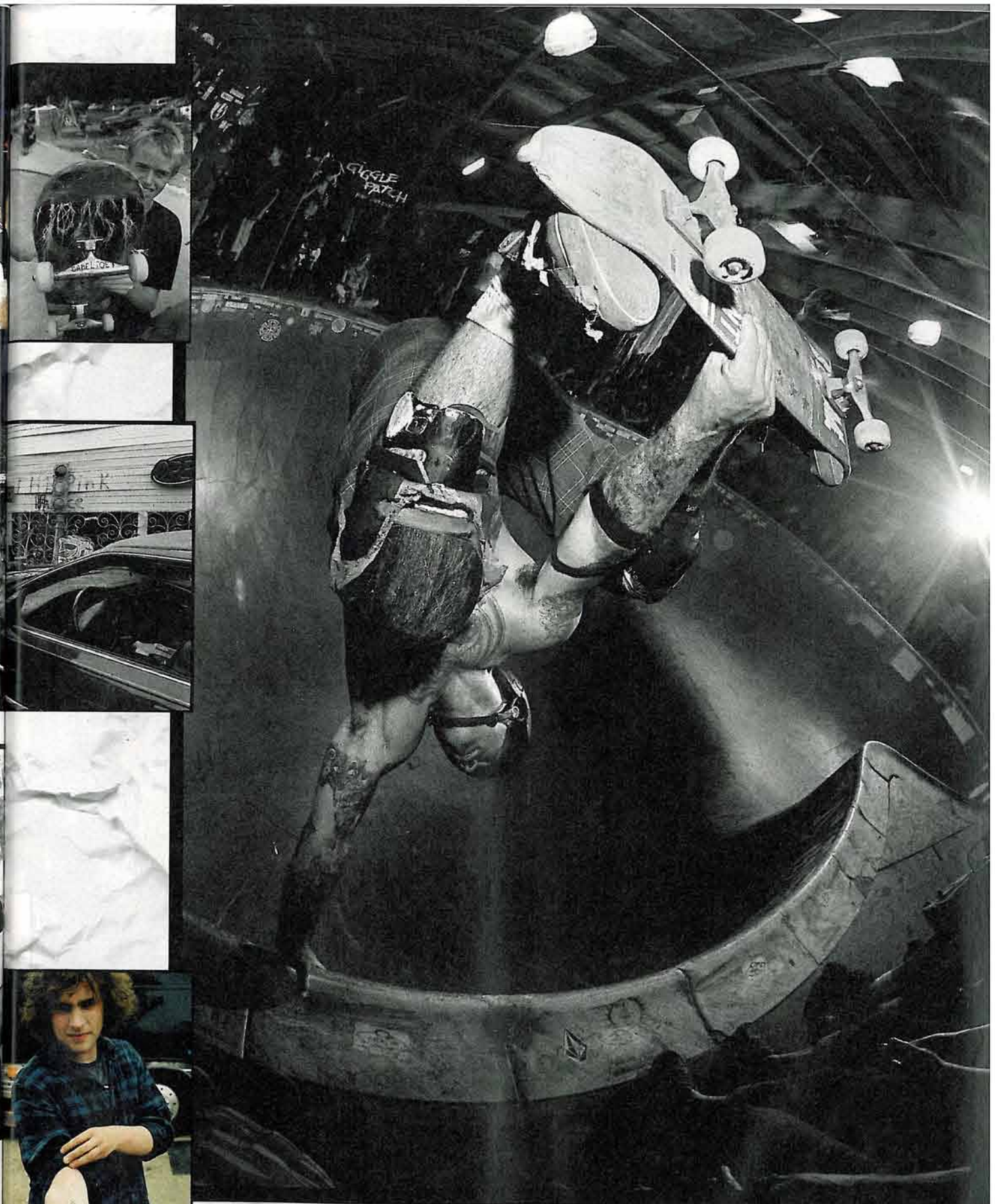
Myth: Anyone can come here.

Fact: Anyone except Jake Phelps can come here.

Myth: They'll put stuff in your drink.

Fact: Then we'll drink it.





Invert. Blood, sweat, and beers. Balls out.



NO KOOL-AID, NO
ATF RAIDS, JUST
HELL RAISIN'.



Darkness, frontside
over the gates of the
Lula bowl. Dedicated
to Lula, a dead dog
who is buried under it.





WHAT WHO WHY WHEN WHERE HOW:

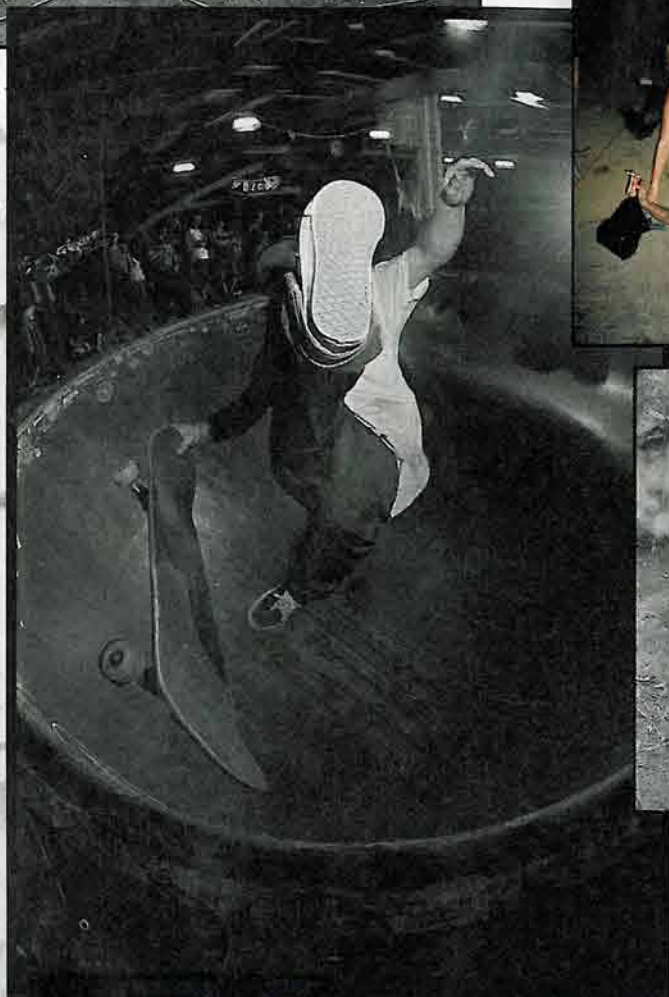
Bowl Bash 13! Thirteen years of un-Waco like behavior, no Kool-Aid, no ATF raids—just hell raisin', skateboarding, chicks with ticks, punk rock bands, and assholes from around the world gathering to revel in their freedom. You see, that's what Skatopia's all about: Celebrating the sport that gives us the freedom to express. Sure, there's burning cars, explosions, drunken skaters falling into the fire, women covered in mud, and plenty of shit talkin'. But don't forget skateboarding and good old fashioned punk rock. Why? Because skateboarders love to party! Especially when you can skate all night to live music, you don't have to worry about the cops, you get to hang out with chicks and just be yourself. Thanks to everyone for making this the best skate spot in the world. Now for this year's awards...



The Medal Of Honor:

This is the highest commendation we bestow at Skatopia, and this year's award goes to... Mark Scott and his band of Dreamland warrior skatepark builders. They single-handedly came in, tied rebar, finished concrete, skated and lived *every* moment to the fullest. Mark, Jack, Carl, Peter, Aaron and Tavita: You guys represent everything that Skatopia is about!



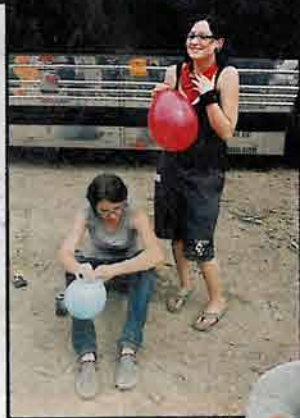


The Hard And Fast Award:

Nihilist. These guys showed up and turned Peter Hewitt into a magic snake, writhing uncontrollably on his back attempting to navigate their hard, fast, insane arpeggios. If there were more bands like this, there would be more riots for us to enjoy. Let it burn.

The Lewinsky Award:

This award is dedicated to the best president of all time, Bubba. To be considered for this award you must come from a state where overalls and daisy dukes are the cutting edge in fashion. This year's award goes to camp Arkansas—or should I say Gnarkansas—for relentless working, skating, and drinking all week long. Runners up for the Medal Of Honor, barely beat out by Mark and his men, this award was created specifically for you. Hold your head high, Gnarkansas.





Medal Of Shame:

As a proud member of the Independent team for 18 years, it is my duty to let you know how disappointed I am to award the Independent Truck Co with this year's Medal Of Shame. Twenty-one of the gnarliest skateboarders, and not one skated. The fullpipe left unslaughtered by Salba. The Big Bowl abandoned by Grosso, Hewitt, Partanen, Childress and Navarrette. Drehobl failing to fakie off the Purple Bus. No heelflip from Omar Hassan. Olson leaving before dawn. Shame, shame. We should have burned their car, but alas it was tucked safely away...at a hotel. (Insert picture of chicken here). At least they partied really hard...

Now back to the fun stuff.

The Jerry Springer Award:

Winning for an unprecedented six consecutive years, making Bam and his friends look like Tom Cruise and his friends, the camp where controversy is a way of life: Sleezy Skates. These guys know how to party. They own their own volcano, brought two cars to burn, there's always an extra skank, and 24-hours-a-day someone from Sleezy is skating somewhere. Lots of people claim to be sleezy, but very few actually live it. Matt, Henry and Corey, Billy and Mae, Pete the Pirate, Darren, Danger and Deathrock Dan, Castle, Will, and all you other Sleezy fuckers, GOOD JOB!



Red should get Gnarliest Human award. S.O.T.Y. 2009?





Hell Skull, cannon ball into the deep.



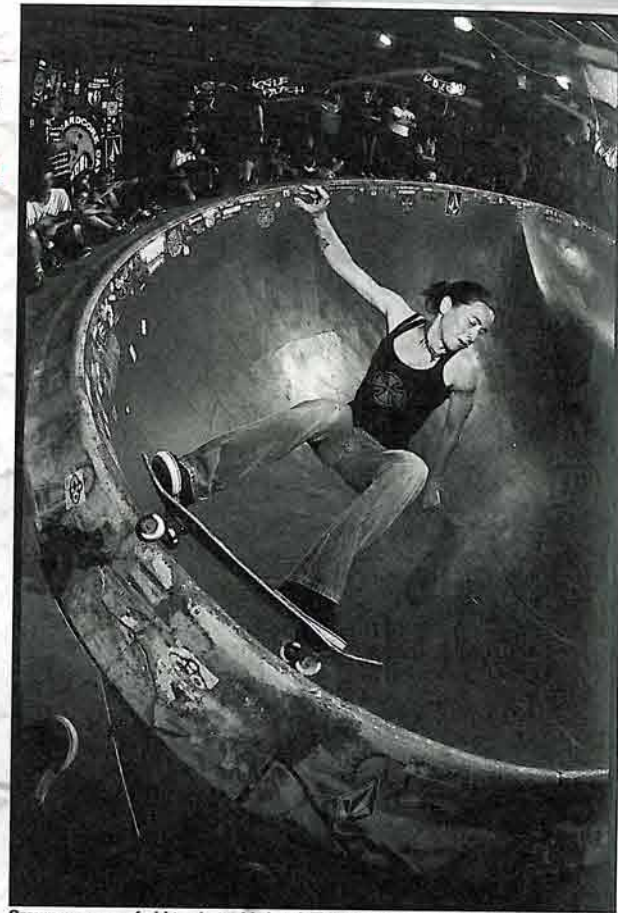
That concludes this year's awards. What a blast. So if you're thinking of coming to Skatopia and the question, "Will they burn my car?" comes to mind, the answer is yes. I will burn your car. What are you waiting for? Come skate!



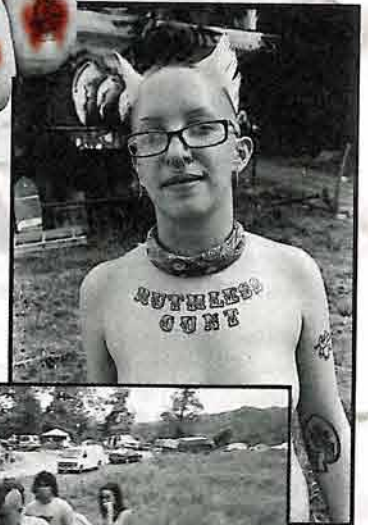


MYTH:
I WILL
BURN
YOUR
CAR.

FACT:
YOU
WILL
BURN
YOUR
OWN
CAR.



Grown men are afraid to skate this bowl. This chick puts the ginia in Manginia.





SKATOPIA

PERMALINK | 06.04.09

Utopie aus Schanzen

Zerstörte Autos, waghalsige Skateboarder und eigene Regeln: Skatopia im südosten Ohios ist für Eltern der absolute Alptraum und für Skater das Paradies. Brewce Martin hat sich in den

letzten vierzehn Jahren eine Welt aus Halfpipes geschaffen, die ihm ein Leben abseits der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft ermöglicht und zum Lebensraum für Gleichgesinnte geworden ist.

LINKS

www.skatopia.org

KOMMENTARE

KM42 REPORTAGEN

85-88: USA



KM42-NOTIZEN 15.10.2009 10:47



Die wunderbaren Steinmännchen bei Bad Tölz vom Medien überdrüssigen Rentner Karl-Heinz Fett: I soag nix mä!

[Video anzeigen](#)

HABEN SIE EINEN TIPP FÜR KM42?

1.SCHRITT: GEBEN SIE BITTE 'ORT, LAND' EIN, IN DEM SICH IHR TIPP BEFINDET
GEBEN SIE HIER ORT, LAND EIN [WEITER](#)

IHRE NEUESTEN TIPPS

- Duschanbe** von Haiko: Tadschikistan ist ein interessantes Land, sp...
- Kilimanjaro** von Sibylla Hübner: Kilimanjaro bestelgung...
- Pilanesberg** von Helmut Krämer: Pilanesberg National Park. schöne Landschaft...
- Bremen** von Ulla Herold: Maritimes Kulturdenkmal "Segelschulschiff De...



Erstes Interview mit Bill Watterson (Calvin & Hobbes) seit 20 Jahren



Robot-Lady fighting off Asmos



Danny Choos Cosplay-Gallery



Sabers Graffiti-USA-Flagg

Doku-Trailer: Skatopia – 88 Acres of Anarchy



(Youtube Direktsk8, via Testspiel)

Skatopia ist ein privater Skatepark bei Rutland, Ohio und der Trailer zur Doku über ihn ist voller Feuer, Zerstörung, Moshpits und Ramps.

Skatopia: 88 Acres of Anarchy is a feature documentary that follows one of skateboardings most infamous underground figures. Pro-skater Brewce Martin is the self-declared dictator of a rural Appalachian skate scene so extreme that MTVs bad-boy Bam Margera fled the property on his first visit.

Valentine's Day
It's almost here.

11 days 23 hours 25 minutes 16 seconds

Find a card now

AMERICAN GREETING

☞ The movie follows Brewce for a tumultuous year as he struggles to keep Skatopia afloat. Though he declares skating his prime directive, the film reveals a fiercely driven entrepreneur determined to achieve success on his own terms.

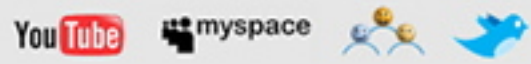
[Website zum Film](#), [Website zu Skatopia](#), Bilderstrecke beim Rolling Stone:
[Welcome to Skatopia: Eighty-Eight Acres of Anarchy in the USA](#), [Jeriko](#) hat einen Link zum Fotografen Matt Dove und dessen Fotoserie „Skate Rats“ über Skatopia

RENÉ • 10. JULI 2009 • MOVIES, DOCUMENTARY, SK8

1 Trackback

1. Skatopia – 88 Acres of Anarchy | Incubate Blog

4 Kommentare



88 Acres of Anarchy

Een jaar geleden berichtten we al uitgebreid over het meest beruchte skatepark ter wereld: [Skatopia](#). RELOAD presenteert tijdens het [International Amsterdam Film Festival](#) de Nederlandse première van de film *88 Acres of Anarchy* over dit legendarische skatepark in Rutland, Ohio. Skatopia is zowel skatepark als vrijstaat. Skateboarden is hier geen levensstijl, het definieert ieder aspect van het leven.

Filmmakers Laurie House en Colin Powers namen tien maanden lang hun intrek in Skatopia, inclusief hun baby en oppas, om hier de oprichter en zelfverklaarde 'Skatepope' Brewce Martin te documenteren. Het werd een film zonder happy ending. RELOAD was bij de première afgelopen zomer in New York en sprak de makers.

Hoe komt een keurig gezin uit Philadelphia terecht in Skatopia?

"Colin ontmoette Brewce vijftien jaar geleden tijdens het skaten. Brewce nodigde Colin toen al uit om een keer langs te komen bij zijn eigen skatepark. Dat is er nooit van gekomen en jaren later bedacht Colin ineens dat Brewce een perfect onderwerp zou zijn voor een documentaire. Brewce zijn leven is een non-stop rebellie tegen stereotypes en hokjesgeest. Ik belde hem op en sprak zijn voicemail in en maanden later belde hij terug. 'The party is in two weeks, come on down'. We kochten een oude camper, boekten een babysitter voor onze veertien maanden oude baby en gingen op pad."



- Peanut Butter Rail Jam (6/2)**
Trysil, Noorwegen
- Best Of The West (7/2)**
Skatepark De Veiling, Oostende
- Postman (12/2)**
Bibelot, Dordrecht
- Carnavaliimpics (12/2)**
World Skate Center, Den Bosch
- Rubbadub (12/2)**
Sugar Factory, Amsterdam
- Jay Electronica (19/2)**
Sugar Factory, Amsterdam
- Le People D L'Herbe (26/2)**
Melkweg, Amsterdam





Er staat een groot bord voor de poort met daarop 'Death to invaders'. Hoe werden jullie ontvangen daar?

"De eerste glimp die we opvingen van Skatopia was het moment waarop we het niet voor elkaar kregen om met onze camper in het donker het zandpad op te komen. Brewce vond het geweldig. Een nerdy documentairecrew vast op het zandpad. Gelukkig kregen we bonuspunten omdat we een lekkere babysitter hadden meegebracht. Het was een gekke ervaring om daar in het donker aan te komen. Overall liepen dodgy mensen rond, ze zaten in kleine rare ruimtes of hingen onder een paar van de weinige lampen. Iedereen was heel aardig maar er leek een soort van nare sfeer te hangen. Toen de volgende ochtend de zon opkwam verdween onze nervositeit. Het leek op een filmset van 'Mad Max' of een film van Fellini. Overall troep, rondslingerend ijzer, uitgebrande autowrakken en iedereen onder het stof en vies. Overall waar je kon kijken 'skatepark'. Het was veel groter dan we verwacht hadden."

Dat klinkt als de ideale omstandigheden om een film te maken.

"Haha. We hadden een camper voor vijf personen en al onze spullen, dus we leefden in relatieve luxe. Tijdens het jaarlijkse grote feest, de Bowl Bash, was het extreem warm, droog en stoffig. Skatopia ligt op een terrein van 88 hectare met in het midden een grote heuvel. Tijdens de Bowl Bash waren we continu bezig om vanaf de heuvel te bekijken wat we moesten filmen. Dat betekende om de vijf minuten naar beneden lopen en weer naar boven. Batterijen herladen, nieuwe tapes halen, eten en drinken, het was behoorlijk hardcore. We hadden allebei een camera met batterij en microfoon, geen productieassistenten of geluidstechnici. Wij waren net zo monomaan bezig met filmen als de skaters aan het skaten waren. Op die manier wonnen we wel hun respect."



Brother Ali (26/2)

Sugar Factory, Amsterdam

Meet The Streets (27/2)

Effenaar, Eindhoven

The Clipse (28/2)

Bitterzoet, Amsterdam

Eek-A-Mouse (5/3)

Tivoli, Utrecht

Fun Lovin Criminals (17/3)

Effenaar, Eindhoven

Best Trick Contest (26/3)

Skatepark, Amsterdam

NEWSLETTER

RELOAD komt wekelijks met een nieuwsbrief met daarin een selectie van het betere board nieuws, muziek en art. Uiteraard ontbreken de freestuff acties en verlotingen niet. Gratis en voor niets in je inbox. Aanmelden voor de newsletter doe je op **deze** pagina.



Reload issue 49 is vanaf nu verkrijgbaar! Reload reisde naar de westkust van Canada om te surfen met beren, snowboarden op Noboards en skaten met de mythische Deer Man of Dark Woods. Mocht je het vorige Reload Magazine gemist hebben, bekijk hem dan op **deze** pagina.





Brewce heeft zichzelf verklaard tot 'Skatepope'. Hoe was het om tien maanden met hem op te trekken?

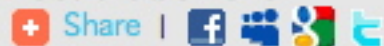
"Brewce kan als geen ander met mensen connecten. Mannen volgen hem, en vrouwen gaan met hem naar bed. Hij is een grote onuitputtelijke energiebron. Die energie gebruikt hij in grootse gebeurtenissen of voor destructiviteit, iets wat hij zelf als geen ander realiseert. We realiseerden, en proberen dat ook in de film over te brengen, dat de grootste creativiteit vaak ook een negatieve kant heeft vol met uitdagingen. Als je het een wilt, moet je het ander ook accepteren."

Hoe ziet de toekomst van Skatopia er uit volgens jullie?

"Brewce had een paar maanden geleden een ernstig ongeluk. Een vrachtwagenband explodeerde toen hij 'm aan het oppompen was. Brewce raakte ernstig gewond aan zijn hoofd en raakte in een coma. Inmiddels is hij weer bij bewustzijn, zijn vriendin Amber en moeder Pat verzorgen hem en hij gaat goed vooruit. Maar zijn revalidatie kan wel eens een paar jaar gaan duren. Brandon, zijn zoon, die opgroeide in Skatopia en daar ook thuisonderwijs kreeg, runt het skatepark nu."

Dit artikel is geplaatst op Wednesday, October 7th, 2009 om 17:42 en behoort tot de [Skate](#) categorie. Je kan de reacties volgen door middel van de [RSS 2.0](#) feed. Je kan [een reactie achterlaten](#), of een [trackback](#) vanaf je eigen site doen.

Deel dit bericht



Plaats een reactie

Naam

E-mail

Website

Plaats reactie

