





DREW B.

The ride for Nova Scotia's prince, Drew Bezanson, just keeps getting better. His tireless work ethic and seemingly endless stoke have carried his young career to new heights and wild places. In just the past few months, Drew has ridden bikes everywhere from the lovely island of Puerto Rico to a US military outpost in Bagdad to a barge off the coast of Miami. In the early days of 2011, Drew's efforts were acknowledged once again as ESPN's online BMX page announced that he was the most downloaded BMX rider on the internet in 2010. Given the BMX subculture's even higher than normal affinity for online video oggling, this is an impressive achievement. Then this Jan-Feb issue of Ride BMX offered the world a taste of Drew's sheer madness as he stomped a frighteningly enormous truckdriver off the now legendary Enarson Gap in Arizona. Additionally, the issue featured a whopping 13-page interview with Drew, giving readers a taste of the new heart and soul warrior of his sport. Says bonafide hall-of-fame rider Corey Bohan, "As much as any other BMX rider out there today, Drew is the guy that is going to lead BMX into the future - and do it the right way." The world at-large was treated to another taste of Drew's talents recently, this time at The Simpel Session in Estonia, the contest season kick-off which features the world's very best park riders. Drew dazzled the crowd, and record-breaking live internet viewers worldwide, riding his heart out to a first place finish.





JOHNNIE PAXSONI

The latest snowboard season has been good to Oregon native, Johnnie Paxson. On the heels of his remarkable video segment in "The Arena", Johnnie was sought out by the international all-star game of snowboard films known as Absinthe. He began shooting with them in January, and has more recently been sharing his time between Absinthe and his snowboard company Rome, as well as shooting a "cameo" in F.O.D.T's "Familia 2" for a total of three segments. No stranger to the urban landscape and venturing more and more into the backcountry, Johnnie's journeys have carried him from Buffalo, NY to Estonia to Salt Lake City to Minnesota and Mt Baker already this year. While his airline miles rack up, his highly-regarded work ethic never downshifts. In its celebratory 200th issue which dropped in December, Transworld Snowboarding named Johnnie one of "6 Riders to Watch this year." Well guess what? We're watching.





MIKEY RENCZ

If recent cover photos were what counted in a "who's the best snowboarder" contest, Mikey could challenge nearly anyone today. Granted, he received a quality cross-ice pass for a one-timer on this one from none other than the Wayne Gretzky of shred, Terje Haakonsen. With that assist, Mikey bagged yet another cover last month, giving him a proverbial hat trick in just a little more than 12 months (the others being the Snowboarder Photo Annual and SBC). To know Mikey is to know a guy who always seems to be in the right place at the right time, following some inate sense of karmic intuition to get the goods. But that's not the only secret of his success. The big nights at Garfs have become the anomaly for Mikey these days. He's more of an up at 6am, sled and truck already gassed, pieps strapped by 6:20 than he'd ever take credit for. Mikey learned from the best in the game along the way, and our bet is that he's making them proud, day in and day out. Lookout for Mikey later this year when the Burton movie drops. It should be bananas.

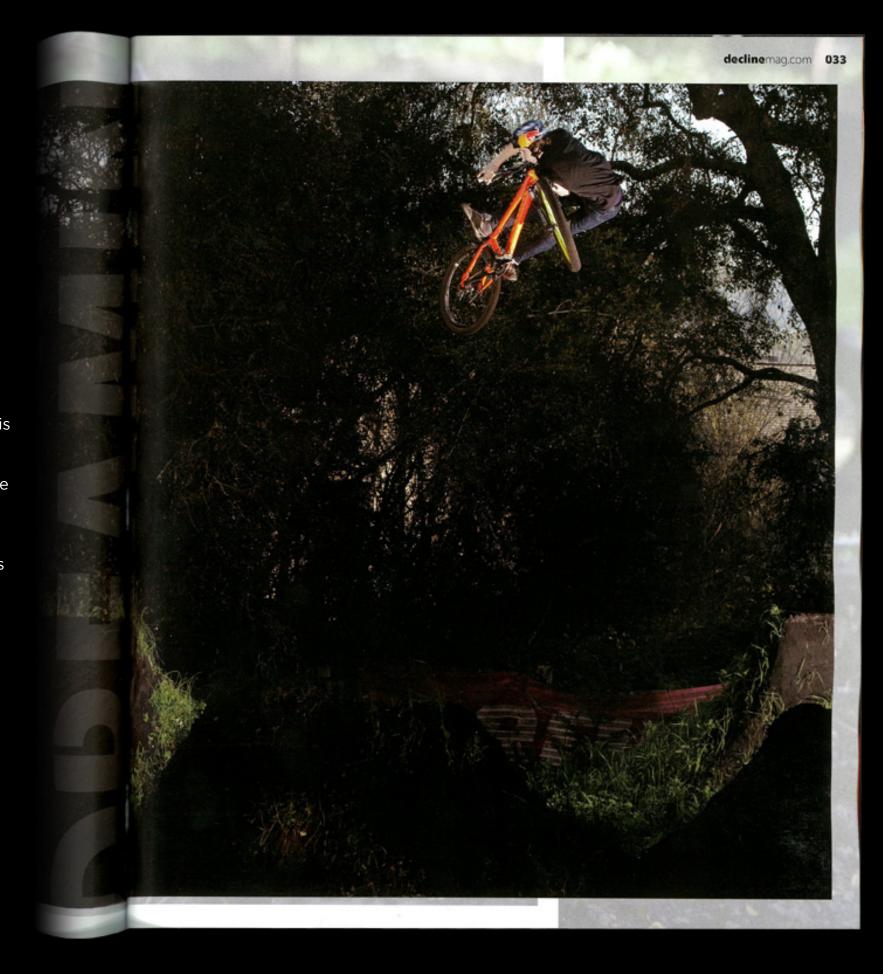
Afrequency The Snowboarder's Journal.

Interview Jeremy Jones And the Art of Saying No
Travel Bohemian Rhapsody Michigan Hospitality in the Last Place on Earth
Photo Essay Jeff Curtes Sounds of Kootenay Silence
Travel Montana On the Powder Trail of Lewis and Clark



BRANDON SEMENUK

As any athlete who suffered a broken collarbone would, Brandon Semenuk welcomed this "off-season" as an opportunity not just to heal completely, but to become even stronger. One of the most focused and dedicated riders out there, Brandon spent the last four months training like a prize fighter. He built an even stronger body mass to fend off future injuries, at the same time as he crafted a couple new jumps and trails (kind of like the one to the right from Cali that he's slaying). For Semenuk, the ability to innovate in the sport of mountain-biking is paramount. His photo and video content offer the outlet to try new things, while contests give him a chance to prove them. As the 2011 season starts to unthaw, the 20-year old British Columbian has put together a vigorous agenda aimed at shaking up his sport once again. That schedule kicks off next week with a Trek Bikes shoot on the island of Maui, where Brandon will undoubtedly continue to make his mark in mountain-biking, and hopefully smell a few of those lovely flowers, too.





DEVUSI WALSH

Well, for starters, its Devun. So, what's the question again? Oh right - how has the season been? Devun kicked off the year on a series of ride-along days with DC Snowboarding across North America. Despite generally frigid conditions, he and his team treated thousands of happy kids to a chance to ride with their heros. It was also a chance for Dev to give his new pro model a chance to ride something other than three feet of fresh pow. In January, Devun headed to the SIA show and subsequent Transworld Awards to high-five some industry heavies and celebrate his signing as Captain of the new Arnette snowboarding team. As we cruise through February and March, Devun is doing what he always does: sticking giant tricks with style that we all wish we had, stacking footie for his new webisode series on www.polar-opposites.com, and cranking photos that we'll be able to view shortly. If you'd like a taste of what's to come, check the new "This is Snowboarding - Volume 2." We hope you'll join the hundreds who "liked" and not the handful of people who accidentally ticked the wrong box.





SEAN PETTIT

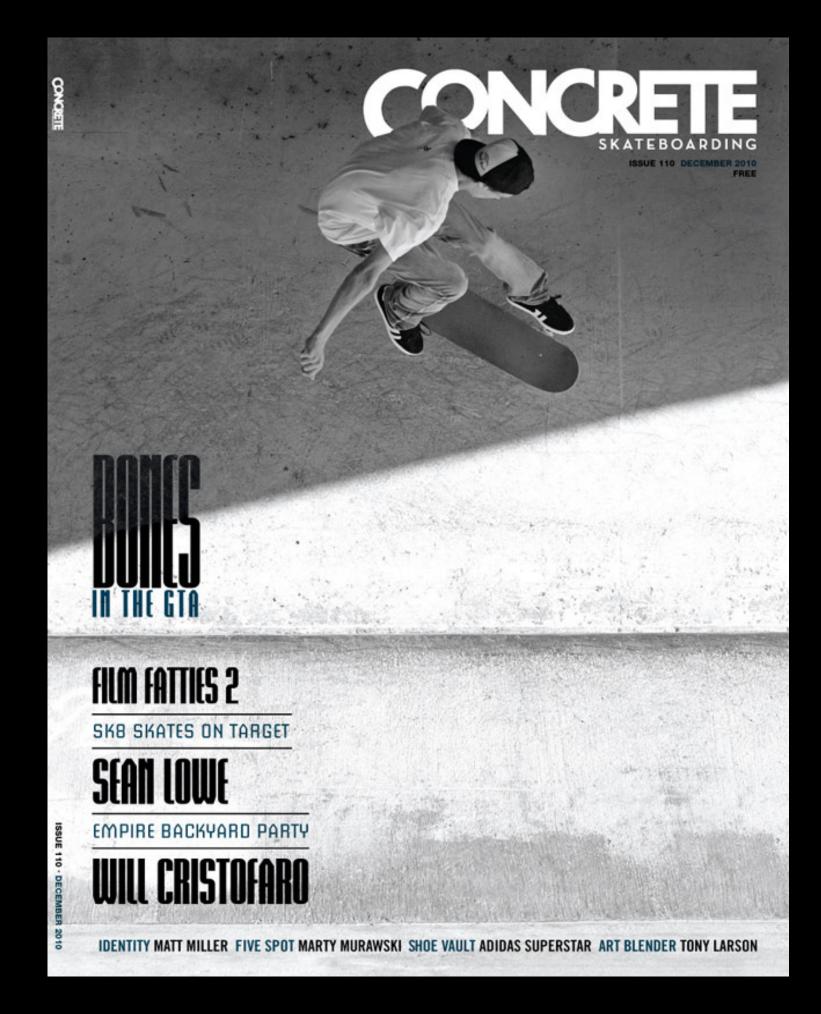
Sean Pettit has had a big year. He's won the only contest that he entered, Red Bull Linecatcher, by a country mile. He's signed a great renewal with one of his oldest sponsors, Oakley. He's signed on with new world-class brands like Contour and Dalbello. Yet none of it seems all that crazy. It all seems like it was just the steps that we all expected him to take. Because even though he's only 18, Sean has already set an incredibly high ceiling for himself. Covers of world-class magazines (ahem, to your right), closing video segments in award-winning films like Matchstick, winning comps, top-notch sponsors, the list goes on and on. So when Sean's name wasn't called again for the Powder Magazine Skier of the Year Award - when he merely won the actual "Best Powder Segment" he could have been a little dismayed. But it didn't appear that way at all. After the show, Sean cruised around outside the awards venue, laughing with friends, talking to girls that he was both familiar and unfamiliar with, and seemed to behave as if the awards in his hands had the same weight as the prior year. And maybe that's just it. Awards aren't always what matters the most.





RYAN DECENZO

Looking back on Ryan Decenzo's rookie year as a pro, you kind of wish that there was a way to gamble on action-sports. After all, what kind of odds could you have gotten that he would finish Top 3 at X Games (as an alternate), Top 10 on the Transworld Exposure Meter (6th for the year), crush Dew Tour finals (2nd), and bang out a couple of ridiculous segments in TW's "Hallelujah" and the new Bones video. He was skateboarding's Allen Iverson in 1997, making new moves on old stars, putting huge points on the board night after night. And while Ryan would probably prefer to be compared to a Moto X star (his dad races for fun on the weekends, and says Ryan can hang just fine), there's a certain Iversonian method to his madness, charting his own course as he goes along - offering starting lineup strength on all his pro teams. Then this cover dropped. No, its not Transworld or Thrasher, where he's felt at home before. But a lesser-known publication from Canada called Concrete Skateboarding. Still, the photo is a dazzler, shot by Ryan's friend and original Canadian Embassy chairperson in So-Cal, known as Mikendo. And if this one is all in a standard day's work, maybe Ryan's layups are even starting to feel like dunks.





SCOTT DECENZO

The latest superhero, Scott Decenzo is widely held as one of the most promising amateur skateboarders in the world today. At 21, he's already reached remarkable heights, achieving multiple magazine covers (here on his 2nd shared Thrasher cover), super legit video parts (Plan B's Vamdalism), "Hall of Meat" awards for putting it all on the line, and top international sponsorships with companies like Circa, Plan B, Red Dragon, Indy and Arnette. "Scooter" as he's known to his bros and family, combines technical wizardry with street sensibility every day that he skates. After the better part of 2010 saw him in his home-away-from-home in Huntington Beach, California, Scott spent the past few months back home in his native Vancouver. That gave him a chance to reconnect with his roots, get some awesome sessions in with the old gang, and appreciate what 300 days of sunshine/year can mean for one's skate career. Look for Scott this year out on the road wherever AMs congregate. He'll be the guy charging everything, everywhere, even on his skateboard.





BOBBY BROWN

It would be difficult to find an athlete with higher expectations placed upon them heading into the 2010-2011 season than Bobby Brown. In his previous season, the 19 year-old Colorado native had made history at Winter X Games 14 with his dual-golds, and carried that momentum to subsequent Dew Tour and Euro X podiums, the AFP title, and an earth-shattering Triple Cork with MSP. Bobby trained ceaselessly through what little off-season he had, pushing himself to new physical limits. As the 2010-2011 contest season got underway, he lived up to promises he had never made, going 2nd at the Dew Tour at his home mountain of Breckenridge, and then 1st in a remarkable post-practice injury performance at the Killington Dew Tour. By the time the Winter X Games was upon him again, Bobby seemed to be on every poster, jumbotron, and computer screen in the action-sports nation. No one wanted to see another set of double-golds more than he did. As his fanbase swelled to new levels, Bobby attempted to block it all out, to forget his ailing season injuries, and emerge as champion once again. But if his sophomore year proved anything, its that Bobby isn't always perfect either. Battling through tremendous pain, he finished a remarkable 2nd place in X Games Big Air and 4th in Slopestyle. Chin up, and learning new lessons in perseverance throughout, Bobby wrapped up this season's Dew Tour with an incredible performance at Snowbasin in Utah, taking home his first Dew Cup Title. This is the people's champion, and he's not about to stop.





SEB TOTS!

(Editor Note: would you, reader, notice if we bumped this font down to a four-point in order to say all that should really be said about Seb here?)

Its been almost five years since Sebastien Toutant shook up the core snowboarding contest world (yes, that terms exists in this context, thank you) by winning the notorious Empire Shakedown at his native hill of St. Saveur, QC. At that time, industry execs were running around yelling, "the future is here." Given that history, what did Seb's rookie year at this year's Winter X Games 15 actually mean then? Was winning a gold medal in Slopestyle and a silver in Big Air the equivalent of shaking the same earth that contained the snow globe he shook up in 2006? Could be. For his part, Seb didn't seem as shocked. Going in, he believed that he had a great chance to qualify strong, and he did, reaching a best-in-history score of 97. Prior to his first run in Finals days later, he said, "I think if I can land my best run, then maybe no one else can beat it." That also turned out to be the case. Some were shocked, and caught off-guard, if pleasantly. Others who have been following Seb for years, or even just for this season would simply bare witness again - as we had during his earlier season wins at the O'Neill Evolution in Switzerland or the Oakley Air and Style in Beijing. In fact, Shaun White himself came away as a new fan noting to a couple million Facebook and Twitter fans, "Slopestyle today at X Games was insane, level of riding was all time. Congrats Seb Toots!" So Seb, welcome to your new universe. We've been expecting you.

