

# Brand Focus - Endeavor Snowboards

Endeavor Snowboards celebrate their 7 year birthday this year. In that time, Endeavor have forged themselves a reputation as the brand at the forefront of the snowboard artwork movement, and as a brand that creates a product that rides great. Started by Max Jenke, an ex-pro rider and Whistler Wildcat, turned business man with a team that reads like a who's who of BC snowboarding royalty, Endeavor was always going to succeed. Snowboard Review spoke to Max about this years range, the ever changing challenges of manufacturing snowboards in 2009 and the Whistler Winter Olympics.



**We've had the Endeavor catalogue for last 3 months at least, and it's made great reading. One thing we all agree is that there's something about the artwork on Endeavor boards that makes them stand out; every board seems to have a different philosophy behind the artwork. How important is theme and reason behind the artwork and how do you source the artists to do it?**

One of Endeavor's main points of difference from other brands is our graphics. It's one of the reasons we started Endeavor – none of us really liked the graphics of the boards we rode and thought we could do a better job designing them. I definitely take on the role of a curator – I love being creative and working with talented artists to make our graphics. It's definitely not as easy as doing up some artwork and throwing it on to a board template. We always try to come up with a theme or story that the graphic is based on...makes it more interesting for us and the kid on the shop floor. We work hard on formatting the

graphic to fit on a snowboard – a long rectangle is definitely very unique. As far as finding artists, a lot come to us by way of referrals from other artists and sometimes through the artists themselves hitting me up on email.

**Endeavor's HQ is based in Vancouver and you're BC born and bred; do Endeavor boards use locally sourced materials and do you produce your boards in a local Factory? How does your manufacturing set-up make a difference to the quality of the end product?**

When Endeavor first started, it was key for us to be built locally as it taught us how to make snowboards. When I was in high school, I worked my summers sanding topsheets at Option Snowboards (who I rode for at the time) so I knew my way around a factory. But it wasn't until we were producing the boards under our brand that I really needed to understand everything. A lot has changed over the last seven years since we started out. The expenses of running factories in North America have definitely increased and it has forced many factories to close their doors. We made the decision to move our production to Asia three years ago after bouncing around in Canada and Austria and dealing with high warranty rates. Our current factory never ceases to impress me with quality and delivery. Our warranty return rate is less than 1% now and we always have our product on time and at the right price.

**Some manufacturers distribute board production between a number of factories world wide. Back in the day Burton were using a handful in Austria like Elan and GST to produce their boards. Does Endeavor use one factory or spread production between a number of factories.**

I tend to put everything into one place I'm comfortable with. Managing factories is difficult as it is and I would prefer to build one very solid relationship with them rather than spreading ourselves thin. It is risky but we're not at the level we need to be diversifying. There's also logistics to consider and working with one factory makes it a lot easier on us on the paperwork front. Ocean freight is so cheap that it's often cheaper than trucking it from Austria to England!

**As the Olympics are on their way to Vancouver this coming season we weren't entirely surprised to see that this years 'Colour' has got an Olympic theme. What does the Olympics mean to Snowboarders in BC and do Endeavor plan on getting involved?**

I think the Olympics are an exciting time, especially for Vancouver. A lot has gone into infrastructure and the city is looking good! Although there is always controversy over something so mainstream, I think the Olympics is positive in the fact it is bringing more awareness and hopefully more participation to the sport of snowboarding. It's definitely

the most sought after event to watch after Ice Hockey – I've yet to score a ticket. On a local scene, I don't think it is affecting much except fewer days on the hill in February! It's pretty tough to get involved in the Olympics, but we'll be doing a couple of parties at our office during that time.

**2010 is definitely the year of reverse camber, it appears that nearly every brand has jumped on the bandwagon and will be featuring at least one rocker in their line-up for next season. Considering Rocker technology is still really fresh to snowboard design, how long have you and the Endeavor team had to develop your own brand of rocker technology and what sets your rocker apart from the technology used by other brands?**

Endeavor has five rocker boards in the line up this season – we've added one to five of our series in one specific size. Our reverse camber board is meant to be a really fun, easy-to-manoeuvre snowboard, perfect for those who are learning or who want a board to play around on the hill with. Snowboard technology is pretty standard in the industry now, so we went with a rocker design that best represents what this board is about.

**Having been a pro rider and member of the infamous Wildcats you've had plenty of experience riding at a very high level; do you think this benefits the product? Can we assume you get the final say?**

It definitely does help, but the result is an opinionated product! Same goes for graphics I guess. Everything at Endeavor gets my final say so everything that hits the shelves is what I think is the best. Luckily I have some amazing people helping me with a lot of input on how we can improve things. From Scott Serfas, undoubtedly one of snowboarding's top photographers, Rob Dow, an industry veteran with top selling pro models on Option, Vans, and Silence, to our crew of friends and team riders – everyone's feedback is appreciated and incorporated into our design process.

**As we're a board review website our readers will probably want to know a bit about next season's range of boards; can you talk us through which boards would suit which type of rider and why?**

First off, all of our boards are freestyle / freeride decks and vary by materials used and flexes. They all perform very well and our entire team runs them. For example, one of Johnny Lyall's favorite boards last season was the Guerrilla 157, which is our price conscious deck.

**Board for beginners**

Any of our reverse camber decks are great for beginners because they are really easy to turn. They come in a Colour 151, Live 156, Next 159, and Boyfriend 148. Not wanting to spend a lot, go with Guerrilla, Colour, or Boyfriend (for the ladies).

### Board for all-mountain freestylers

For the backcountry riders, the Next, BOD, and Diamond (for the ladies) are our directional powder killers. Stiffer flexes, aggressive sidecuts, and carbon for pop, these are your weapons.

### Board for parks riders

Boyfriend (for the ladies) Colour, Live, H5, and the Roots are all twin boards, meant for destroying tables, rails, and transition.

### Board for rail riders and street jibbers

Definitely the Colour and Boyfriend series, although the Live and H5 hold their own.



