

**FRESHPAVED NOTE:** So, we're opening a longboard shop in New York City called Uncle Funky's. In our effort to offer the best selection, we've been talking to lots of different companies. It comes as no surprise that we are in the middle of a boom in the longboard market. New companies are sprouting up all over the world, and even in our own backyard.

Recently, I sat down with the owners and founders of three local New York City longboard companies to find out how they got into skating. Brian Petrie from Earthwing (earthwing skateboards.com), Mick Baldwin from Monkey Longboards (monkeylongboards.com), and Ryan Daughtridge from Bustin Boards (bustinboards.com).

All three of these guys share a passion for riding and bring their unique styles to the longboard market. Please enjoy some excerpts from a conversation with Brian, Mick, and Ryan. Hopefully, we'll continue to see more and more artisans joining the mix and pushing the envelope.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: BRIAN PETRIE, MICK BALDWIN AND RYAN DAUGHTRIDGE

# THE LONGBOARD BOOM

>> JEFF GAITES

PHOTOS: FRANCOIS PORTMANN

**Jeff Gaites (JG):** When did you get into skateboarding?

**Mick Baldwin (MB):** I first got into skating in about 1980. Basically, it was me and my mate. I had a pair of roller skates and he didn't, so he used to run along behind me. So we took the roller skates to pieces, put them on a plank of wood and we'd both have a skateboard each.

**Ryan Daughtridge (RD):** I got into skating around the sixth grade. My dad built a half-pipe in the barn, so I was the most popular kid in the neighborhood. I got out of skating for a while and was big into soccer. The longboard is what got me back into skating.

**Brian Petrie (BP):** I started skating in 1982, basically because I wanted to be cool and all those dudes

were tearing it up. They were making fun of me in the process, so it was a little hard to say no.

**JG:** Why did you decide to create your own longboard company?

**MB:** I got to a stage in life where I thought, you know what, I want a lifestyle that's a job, and this is where I am right now.

**RD:** Like Mick said, it's a lifestyle. It's the coolest thing I can imagine doing, so I'm trying to do it. We started making boards in 2001. I was working from Maryland. My cousins and I started it and we're all in it together. My dad had a big workshop in the barn and we always built everything with wood. Then, I got really into making boards in college, so

my apartment was the workshop. We sold a bunch of boards on E-bay and that's how we got started.

**BP:** I was snowboarding through the eighties and nineties. When I moved to New York I started to miss that feeling. I bought a Sector 9 Cosmic Rider and it changed my life. I just got curious. I started cutting up snowboards, making boards, and pretending I run a company until it came into fruition. I still don't know what I'm doing, and I'm in way over my head.

**MB:** I basically wanted a form of transport rather than taking the subway. So I bought a few boards, and thought that I could build better than that, and just got into it. Probably about a year ago, I didn't know what I was doing, didn't know whether I could

do it. But, I had it in there that I wanted to do it. So every day, I just foots my way through. I make a mistake, and it's a mistake I'm never gonna make again. You learn something new every day with it. Even though it's just a skateboard with wheels on it, it's still quite hard to do, and to do it right.

**JG:** When did you get into your shop?

**MB:** It was all done on a whim, really. I wanted to do it. The wife said, "Yeah, that's fine, you go ahead with that." So that was my little thing. I went out and got this workshop. Didn't know any customers, didn't even know if I was gonna make a board, or what it would look like, or anything. But over the period of the last twelve months, I'm right where I wanna be now, and I know I can do it. So, that's about the size of it.

**JG:** It's interesting that you opened the workshop before making the boards.

**MB:** If it would have been England, you could probably go out in your shed and do it. But, you don't have that luxury over here. So, I needed a shop before I could even cut a piece of wood. I could have been two months down the line, in over my head, in debt, and I'd have to give it all up.

**JG:** What kind of equipment do you have in there?

**MB:** I've got two routers, a jig-saw, a drill, and that's about it, really.

**BP:** That's all you need. I just bought a jig-saw that cost about \$150, but I still have a \$29 jigsaw. It's a Skill, that's my favorite. I have two other jig-saws, a band-saw, and all sorts of routers, grinders, and everything else. It's basically hooked to my ceiling hanging up because, as Mick said, we don't have the luxury of having any sort of space.

**JG:** So, your shop is in your house?

**BP:** Yeah, my custom stuff, where I do the research, is in my apartment. Everything is strategically placed. Living with my girlfriend, more or less, turned into the art of hiding my toys, and I have a lot of toys. I have tons of skateboards in weird storage boxes under each window. They're all stacked up. And tons of tools that are hanging on hooks from the ceiling. When you walk in you don't know there's a factory hanging over your head. At any moment, you can pull down tools and set them up to start working.

**JG:** How did you get into building the Earthwing boards?

**BP:** I kind of stumbled through it. I've always been a tinkerer, and I started working for shops here shortly after I moved to New York for college. I was a big snowboarder and usually got about one hundred and twenty days a year in upstate New York. But living in the city I was riding these street boards and kind of missing that feeling. So it wasn't such a leap from working in a shop and getting a bunch of "RTV" (Return to Vendor) snowboards. They say, "oh, just throw them out." So I had a stack of ten that they were throwing out one time. Of course, I took them home and started cutting them into skateboards like any red-blooded skateboarder would do with that kind of opportunity. As soon as you make that first board, you start getting creative.

**JG:** So, it's a discovery process?

**BP:** Right and then you learn more and more and just keep on building from what you've done.

**RD:** I agree, it starts to grow on you. As soon as you start making new shapes, you come up with ideas. Then, you can't stop drawing. One of my favorite things to look at is my college notes. They're all tagged with sketches and drawings of skateboards.

**JG:** Tell me about some of the more difficult designs you are working with and the process that goes into that.

**MB:** Well, I got a forty-eight and put it in the bath because I read something on Brian's website about



how he got started with a steam-thing, or what have you. I put it in the bath with boiling, hot water and I kept it in there overnight, kept topping it off every couple of hours with hot water. I pulled it out in the morning and put it on two normal cups that you have coffee in. Then, I put a bag of sand in the middle of it and I could see where it was gonna go. I left it there, and I kept spraying it with hot water during the day, so it was like soaking it back up. I don't really know whether that needs to be done, or not, I just enjoyed doing it, you know. Left it there for two

days, so it dried properly. Took the sand off, put it on the floor, turned it over, and "presto". You know, that's what I aimed for, and that's what I got. There's probably easier ways of doing it, but I didn't want to go out there and spend a thousand dollars on something.

**BP:** That sounds so familiar. Sitting all day at a skate shop and you're staring at these decks. It's already in your head that you want to make skateboards. You're constantly trying to figure out how to do it, so you start trying different things. **CW**