

Recent Yeti new addition-

1)- Hi John, Tell us a little about yourself, where are you from & what gets you out of bed in the morning.

I grew up in the woods of Northern Michigan, and I got into mountain biking back in the late 80's by a strange set of circumstances – I won a GT in a random department store drawing when my name was picked out of a huge barrel of entrants. There were old jeep trails in the woods behind my house, so I started riding those and was hooked right away.

These days, I do trail rides a couple of times a week and usually either do DH runs or a dirt bike ride on the weekends. I've got a couple of cool dogs, a great girlfriend, and I feel fortunate to have a job that I really enjoy. I'm a pretty big sports fan – mostly American football and hockey, but I also play soccer in a rec league and love watching the English Premier League games they show here in the US on the weekends.

2)- Have you always worked in the bike industry? What stepping stones has it taken to get you in the door at Yeti?

My path to working in the bike industry is just as random as how I got into riding mountain bikes: I actually went to law school and was a corporate lawyer for a few years, but when the consulting company I was working for bit the dust during the dot-com collapse, I was out of work and racing DH a lot that summer. Turns out, Dave Weagle was traveling to a lot of the same race, and we started hanging out a bit. Dave had this idea for a bike/components company and asked me if I wanted to be his partner in it. I never expected much out of it, but he and I founded Evil Bikes and E13 components in 2000, and they both grew like crazy. Dave and I parted ways in '07, and I sold my interest in the company shortly thereafter.

After a couple years of screwing off and taking it easy, I eventually got back into the bike industry with Race Face as their marketing manager. I was with Race Face for less than a year before that whole thing unraveled in the winter of 2011 (glad to see they're back and doing well now), and I got a job with Yeti just 2 weeks after that. It's been a wild ride.

3)- What is your Job at Yeti, and what does it involve?

My official title here is International Sales Manager. I handle all sales outside of the US, and I help with marketing a bit, too. My days are generally spent emailing and calling our distributors all over the world, taking orders, and generally helping them and their customers. I also pitch in on marketing meetings, and I try to keep on top of the online forums when I have time.

4)- The SB-66 & 95 are 2 very new suspension designs, are you riding anything else you can't tell us about? Or anything you can tell us about;) ?

We'll be sticking with the Switch Technology for the foreseeable future. The bikes ride amazingly well, and we're learning that the technology is very adaptable to different platforms and travel configurations.

5) - Colorado is filled with amazing riding, I never knew what buff singletrack was till I came over, tell us the best place you have ridden in Colorado so far?

Because I travel so much for work, I'm probably not the best guy to ask about good riding around here. That being said, our the epic ride on our Tribe Gathering last year was truly epic – it was a ~30-mile section of the Colorado Trail from Kenosha Pass to Breckenridge that really blew my mind.

6)- What was the last bike you rode and where were you headed?

My Yamaha WR250F on a 50-mile trail ride at Rampart Range. :) The last 'pedal bike' ride I did was just a quick lunchtime rip out of the office here. I was on my SB66A (built up with a 1x10 drivetrain, 36 160/120 Talas, and most of an XTR build), and I rode one of our favorite loops – Apex.

7)- I see you on some of the MTB forums, do you find these are a useful tool to keep up with Yeti's customers?

Definitely. I think sometimes, working in the industry, some people forget that ultimately, our paychecks are paid by all the super-passionate enthusiasts who participate on these forums. I learned this lesson first-hand back in the early days of Evil/E13 when Weagle and I didn't have any money between the two of us. We spent as much time as possible participating in online discussions, and we felt like the people on those boards really became the foundation of our business.

I think some industry folks get a little intimidated by participating on the message boards because honestly, it can be very brutal sometimes, and it's easy to take the bait from some troll, reply with a 'screw off' sort of attitude, and come across like a real a-hole. I do my best to be polite/professional, but sometimes I get a little rankled by the negativity. In the end though, it's worth it in my opinion.

8)- Yeti is well known for its fast racers, got any good riding tales from riding with the real fast guys?

I've done a couple rides with the race team around here, and they always destroy me. I see them at the start of the ride and again back at the office afterwards.

My favorite pro-rider story though is from a Whistler trip a few years back. I was up in the Garbanzo area and trying to get up the nerve to ride one of the steepest, sketchiest trails on the mountain: Goat's Gully. As I was entering the trail, I stopped and looked behind me to make sure I wasn't going to hold up a faster rider. At that trail head, you can see back up the mountain at least a few hundred meters, and it was

all clear. As I started picking my way down into that section, I got to the first corner and suddenly heard someone right on my tail. As I pulled over to the side, Chirs Kovarik came by me at this speed that I just couldn't comprehend. You've got to understand: Goat's Gully is basically carved into the side of a cliff, it's all off-camber, and if you crash in there, you're going to rag doll about 100 feet down through rocks and trees. Kovarik not only made up the several hundred meters of open space on me in a few seconds, he passed me like he was riding down the sidewalk, then pulled an insane manual at the steepest/craziest spot. I was just in awe of the whole thing. It made me realize that these world-class riders are just on a level that's inconceivable to the rest of us mortals.

9)- What is your favourite place to ride a bike?

Definitely Whistler. I've been at least once every summer for the last 7 years, and I'm already planning a 10-day trip for the summer of 2012. For anyone who's never been up there, the best way to describe it is to say that you'll hear tons of stories about how great it is, but the stories don't do it any justice at all. It's actually better than anyone could describe.

10)- Whats the coolest thing about being at Yeti ?

I really like the heritage that the company has behind it, and I love the direction we're going with the new technology. I remember when Evil and E13 really started taking off, we had customers showing up at races with our logos tattooed on their legs, painted on the hoods of their cars, and shaved into their heads, and I was always really proud of how passionate our customers were about our brand. Yeti has had those types of customers for 20+ years, so it feels really great to be apart of something like that once again.