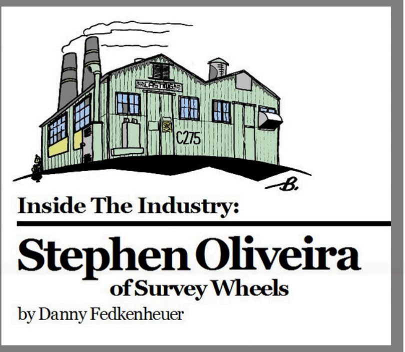
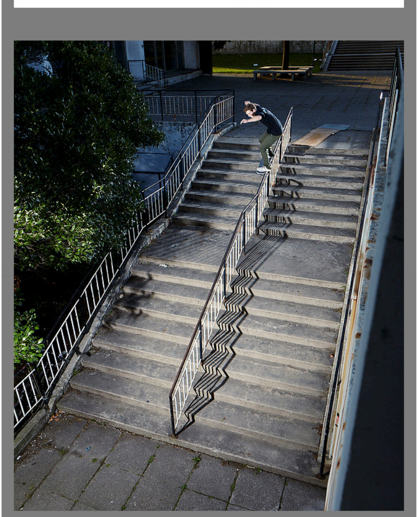
Inside The Industry: Stephen Oliveira of Survey Wheels

April 12, 2017 | Danny Fedkenheuer

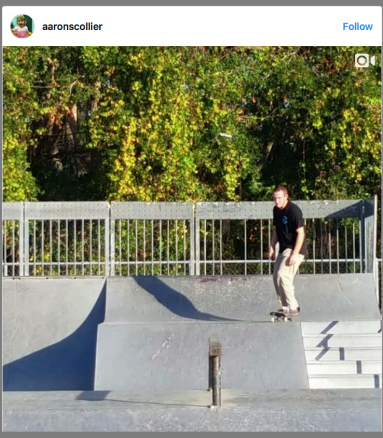




Among the masses of skate clips uploaded to Instagram on the daily, there is no possible way to skip through videos of guys like **Craig Clements** doing mind-numbing kickflip to feeble grind tre flips like this one: (And if you somehow had skipped this madness, I suggest checking out his new part in Elliott Vecchia's new video, *Drought*):

craiggclements
North Hollywood, California
Following

Keep scrolling, and you'll probably find a clip of **Aaron Collier** unleashing bigflip hurricanes on a bump to bar:



Beyond the undeniable amount of style in these clips, it's the creativity and damn-near masterful level of technicality in the balance of these tricks that set them apart from all the other daily uploads in skateboarding. To me, these clips stand out as some of the most innovative and gifted riders putting it down. Upon closer inspection, however, I realized that these Floridians are united in riding with an all-star lineup of other rippers from the Sunshine State as teammates on Stephen Oliveira's brainchild, **Survey Wheels**. From that moment, I knew I had to get the inside story.

PREMIUM GRADE URETHANE
SURVEY
MADE IN THE U.S.A. MMXIV
PHOTO: OLIVEIRA
MIKE ROSA
SURVEYWHEELS.COM
@SURVEYWHEELS

Oliveira's intent to recruit a team, *"built like a metal horse of Florida-based team riders"*, stems from an influence of High Grade Distribution brands from the early 2000s including Creation, Yellow Brand, and Satori. These companies sponsored talent such as Brian Delatorre, Brent Atchley, and Neen Williams as they sought to appeal to an eco-conscious market. However, it was Oliveira's work experience from Focus Skate Magazine, to the famed Berrics, to his current position at The Ride Channel, that has truly taken Survey Wheels from the drawing boards to the streets.

A six-year stint at Focus gave Oliveira everything he needed to get his feet wet in the industry, as he largely focused on managing and shaping the company's online presence. Their iconic cleanliness in terms of art direction also provided Oliveira with inspiration for his future venture. When Focus folded, Oliveira used his strategy of communicating personal value to Steve Berra and landed an internship at the Berrics, which he credits in helping learn how to properly lay out content. From this position, Oliveira moved over to Ride Channel where he says he has really figured out how to push out relevant online content. The challenge to this, as Oliveira puts it lies in the fact that, "The way the consumer needs content catered to them is constantly changing."

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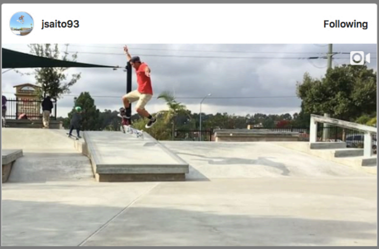
By the time that Oliveira transformed these years of industry knowledge and strategy into the formation of Survey Wheels, the venture was primed to succeed. At the moment, Survey Wheels thrives off the in-your-face style in which Instagram displays content. By capitalizing on a focus of where the consumer's eyes are at, Survey Wheels' team is hard to miss. This again is where Oliveira's team of hitters succeed in "sparking the stoke", and grabbing attention. Could you really scroll right past a clip of **June Saito** perfectly throwing big flips and backside flips, in and out of manuals?



Despite Survey Wheels' widespread success and attention over Instagram, Oliveira recognizes the reality that his follower count will be eventually rendered useless once the viewers transcend to the next hot platform. To survive the inevitable shift, Oliveira focuses on building a legacy out of Survey Wheels, rather than just a viral social media following. To that end, Survey Wheels are only available in select retailers, fostering grassroots relationships with certain local shop owners and creating a sense of exclusivity for the product. In Oliveira's own words, *"Relationships are everything, and if I can build a long-lasting relationship with a rad shop owner, I'd much rather have that than potentially ruin that over what could possibly be just a single sale to their neighboring shop."*

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Going forward, Survey Wheels strives to continue building their Florida-based legacy through the announcement of new riders, most recently including Mike Rosa. Also in the works is a potential collab with Upperhand Supply, and a new wheel with the always empathetic handiwork of Henry Jones. To keep up with everything else Stephen Oliveira has up his sleeves, join the masses by dropping them a follow on Instagram @SurveyWheels.

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