

Portrait: Andi Ashermann

contest **KILLER**

andreas **WIIG**

IN 2007 ANDREAS WIIG STEPPED UP and won a string of major contests with robotic consistency, but he's no automaton. Robots don't think about style, they don't set goals, and they definitely don't have pop star girlfriends like Marion Raven. But Andreas is just that good—and he is single-handedly pushing the sport of snowboarding every time he drops in at a contest.

As a young snowboarder growing up just outside of Oslo, Norway, Andreas looked up to Daniel Franck and Terje Haakonsen like we all did, yet the rest of us were never quite able to emulate them so well. "They were big in the whole world so they were huge back home," he said. "I met Daniel once, on the chairlift, but I've talked to him now about it and I don't think he remembers. He probably met a million kids."

Most of those kids just probably never took the initiative, or had the skills, to make their dreams happen. After some success on the Norwegian contest circuit, Andreas saved up enough money to move to the United States in 2001, quitting school to do so. Once he arrived in California it may have been fate when he drifted a little too far to the right on a jump in the Mammoth park, crashing into Mack Dawg filmer Nathan Yant. Despite his bloody nose and Yant sustaining a weeklong limp, the collision resulted in an opportunity to film, and his riding earned him a small section in the film *Stand And Deliver*.

Now at 26, the American lifestyle suits Andreas well. He lives in Southern California, and only spends summers in Norway. As someone who is always striving to succeed, he appreciates the American standard of being the best: "Sometimes back home it's kind of like people want you to be more equal," he says. "And over here if you are doing something pretty good people support it a lot. It's really cool." That drive and determination translates well into competitions, as does his precise riding and technical prowess. Setting and achieving goals is another of Andreas's strong points.

After winning the Vail Session and Slopestyle

and Best Trick at the Winter X Games last year, "Mandreas," as he's known, became the contest rider to watch. "I feel like it was the season of my dreams come true. It's a pretty big difference from getting a lot of second places to getting a lot of first places," he says. "I was just really stoked to think that now I am able to think back on my career and I won't think that I was the one who almost made it."

Andreas has definitely made it in snowboarding, and last season was long deserved. "I feel like he got ripped off so many years that it's about time he's winning all the contests," fellow Scanner Jussi Oksanen said. "He can pretty much do anything he puts his mind to; whether it's a contest or filming he's always going for it and trying some new shit."

Definitely not satisfied with the status quo, Andreas's running goal is to learn and film at least one new trick per season. But when you're stomping frontside 1260s in contests, what's left? Last season it was a double cork frontside 1080, the final trick in his section in MDP's *Picture This*. Maintaining strong contest finishes and filming a full part is not something many riders accomplish, but for Andreas, it all goes together. "I think when you're doing contests you get more focused and you become a better rider so when you're filming you can get some shots faster," says Andreas. "I don't think it's about getting the most days in front of the camera, it's being on it while you have the chance."

Andreas can seem overly serious or focused when he's competing, and for good reason: He wants to win and he will put everything he has into it—because that's what makes him happy. Yet the reward for him is more than the money or the fame. "It's just the feeling you get when you actually learn something new," he says. "It's almost like a relief, because you can work on one thing for so long and you just don't get it how you want it. And then finally, when you get it, it's just such a good feeling. I think that's the main thing that drives me." —**Brooke Geery**

Andreas Wiig, once again widening the gap between himself and his competitors. X Games, Aspen, Colorado. Photo: Tim Zimmerman.

