

It is by no means safe to ride in a car with Diogo. Notice that we're driving in the median on the freeway and heading straight for a barrier. Diogo was not concerned; his mother, seated next to him, was.



DIOGO CANINA

words and photos **Walter Pieringer**

Four years ago, Diogo Canina was a country boy living in a small town named Amparo in Brazil; now 24, he's a contender in the Dew Tour, living in Greenville, and riding for Diamondback and Vans. I'd say he's done quite well for himself, both personally and professionally. He's not what you think of when you picture a typical Dew Tour athlete, and maybe it has something to do with how hard he's worked to end up where he is – from building his own spots in his hometown to learning English to his first – and solo – adventure to the USA, he's put forth a lot of effort. The result? A humble, good-natured young man who also happens to be one hell of a bike rider.

RIDE: Where do you live these days?

DIOGO: For the last two years I have been living in Greenville, North Carolina, but every year I stay in Brazil for at least three months.

How do you like living in Greenville compared to Amparo?

Both cities are kind of small, and you can go wherever you want on your bike, which I love. But besides that and some other little things, they are a lot different. We don't have a massive university in Amparo, so you know all the girls and whether you should hit on them or not. There are hills everywhere in Amparo, and it's always good to go up to one of those and chill with friends, when in Greenville it's either go to a f—ked-up bar with a lot of stupid people smoking in your face or get stuck at someone's house. Greenville is the place that I wanna be right now, though, and Amparo is my home, even though I think I will never permanently live over there again.

So do you miss home a lot?

It's always hard when you leave the place that you're born, build all your friendships, and have your family to support you whenever you need it, but I guess the biggest difference to me is the fact that I don't feel as confident over here as I do when I'm in Brazil. It makes sense; speaking English for me will never be like Portuguese, so no matter how hard I try I will never be able to express myself the way I really want to, so a lot of the time I just choose not to try. Plus getting hurt over here sucks! Getting hurt is always a nightmare, especially when it's something serious, so I always end up going back to Brazil to recover.

Growing up in a small town in Brazil, how did you get into bike riding?

I have been riding for so long that I don't even know my life without having a BMX bike to go places or ride with my little crew. When I was 13 a skatepark was built in my hometown; at that time, I had no idea what BMX even was, and it stayed