

words Dan Kostrzewski

In mountain towns, a solid shop centers the local scene as a gathering place, market, and classroom. A place to flex a few boards, get a second opinion about stance width, and trade closet theories about meteorology. When looking for the unofficial snow report, when faced with a sidewall delam, or when ready to plunk down a paycheck on a new pair of bindings, there is only one logical place to go. The town shop, in a very democratic way, connects us all with snowboarding.

In Bozeman, MT the shop of record is World Boards. Famous throughout the Northern Rockies for their inclusive attitude, loyal pro team, and clever stickers that have emblazoned racks, towers, and boards from Park City to Whitefish — World has cultivated a cult following. The converted house is a retail fixture on West Main Street due to its solid history of supporting the local scene, and the staff's well-deserved reputation for knowing the products they push. Even before it was recognized as the *Transworld Business Shop of the Year*, the word of World's employees held serious sway with everyone from traveling pros to snowboard industry big-wigs.

Like pets and children, a good shop reflects the personality of its owner; and the first thing you notice when you meet World's owner Jay Moore is how positively stoked he is about all things sideways. Whether talking his way into the sold-out Sundance premiere of "Dogtown and the Z Boys," cracking jokes at hour four of a tedious Burton softgoods presentation, or listening to his unofficial judging critique in the grandstand above the Olympic halfpipe, being around Jay indelibly infects you with his stoke.

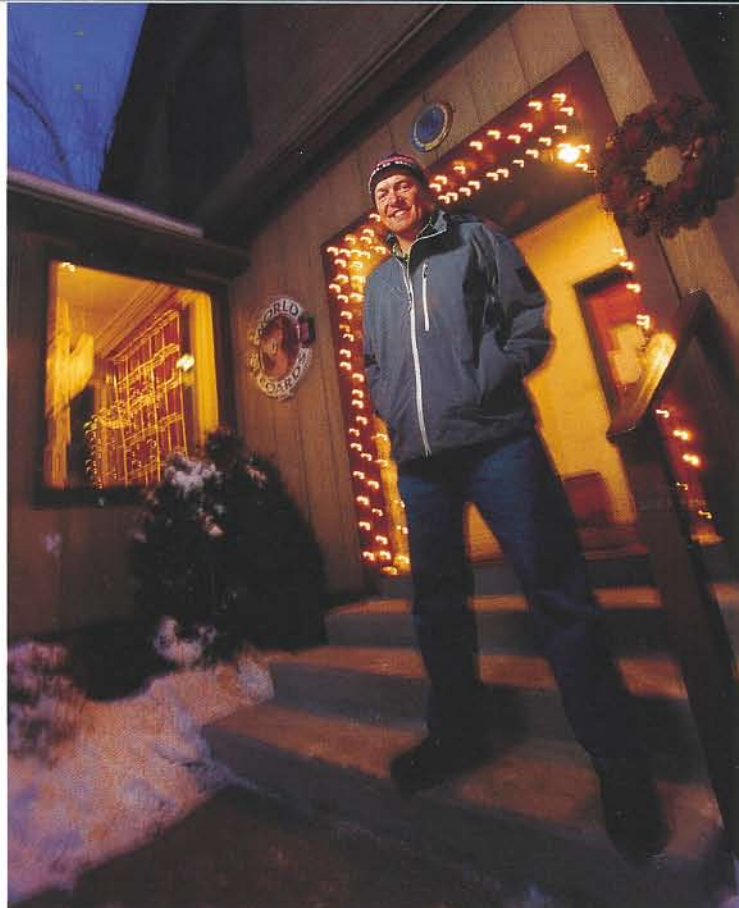
Jay's roots in sideways sports run deep. As a native Californian, his skate addiction started during the pool era when he and his brother would, "go watch Steve Alva and Duane Peters and all those old-school guys skate." In 1976, Moore turned his natural interest in carpentry toward ramp construction. His first backyard halfpipe was profiled by Lance Mountain in the Ramp Locals section of *Transworld Skateboarding's* second issue. Jay recalls, "It's funny, Lance Mountain credits me as being the first person ever to use Masonite on a skateboard ramp."

Jay continued constructing in his backyard, building what wound up being called the Eagle Rock Ramp. He recollects, "It was in all the magazines for a couple years. Daily sessions with Christian Hosoi, Lance Mountain, Eddie Reategui, Tony Magnusson. It's kind of funny if you look back at who's been there. A lot of pros, if not most of them, skated it over the years. *Thrasher Magazine* called it the reigning god of ramps in '86. We had pro contests in it, we threw some of the first ever skateboard jams. It was like a skateboard Mecca."

In 1989, Jay and his new wife Lori relocated to Montana. He remembers the transition as a skate-culture shock. "When we moved here, skateboarding was as dead as it gets in Bozeman. It became obvious to me that winter in Montana was long, and winter was snowboarding. It was like wow, this is a great place to ride there's nobody here and there's soft snow everywhere. And you have the mountain to yourself."

That same season, Moore talked the ski school director at nearby Bridger Bowl into hiring him as their first snowboard instructor. The resort had almost no exposure to the sport, but Jay was persistent. Initially, Jay wanted to teach because, "it was more like an excuse to stay out on the snow and make a job out of something that was fun."

His teaching career lasted three seasons. In 1993, he and fellow instructor Ian Ford decided to buy out the inventory of a struggling, chronically cluttered shop and try their hand at the retail game. He flashes back to the day the idea took hold: "Ian Ford and I were at the Banked Slalom



at Bridger. We were waiting in line for our turn and he said, 'We need to start a snowboard shop.' And I laughed and then hesitated and went, 'Whoa. This could work'."

He says the start up was an exercise in blind faith. "Man, talk about not knowing what to do. I didn't know anything about paying taxes, payroll, business license...we just opened the doors. But, back then if you paid COD, anybody would ship you anything. I learned by doing and hard knocks."

Jay says the shop survived because, "We were totally passionate. We were riding, we'd close the store on powder days and wouldn't open it. We were in the core of the scene here and I think we had respect from people."

He stereotypes the original founders and employees as being, "tech weenies, but we'd use the stuff. Kind of like a Tom Routh or a Mike Olson-type. You're not, like, an incredibly talented rider, like you're not going to the Jamie Lynn level. But you can hold your own because you've been riding for so long and you're actually interested in how to carve better. You're actually interested in the thing being lighter and stronger. A lot of it was into the cause... you know, try to grow snowboarding."

Jay feels passion is the reason the store's feedback is respected in the industry. "It's literally blood, sweat and tears," he summarizes. "Being in the trenches for lots of years. If somebody asks me an opinion on a product, I've usually ridden it myself or know someone who has. Or, if someone asks me a trend, my region's different than everywhere else, but at least I have cold, hard facts because I own the store."

Jay also recognizes that the feedback loop is an important part of snowboarding's progression. "I realize I'm only in this little corner of the US, kind of no man's land up in the mountains, but it's viable because we have opinions about why this board's good or not, because we broke it or these boots hurt. We're using the stuff. If you're literally plugged in and aware because it's what your daily-ness is, then you have opinions because you're sick and tired of this or that, because you've been through it so many times."

"I think there's always something to be learned — and I include myself in that loop — from anybody, whether it's a kid or a sales manager of some big

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