

ANDRE SOMMER
PROFESSIONAL SNOWBOARDER

THE REASON

FREE
(NOT CHEAP)

The
REASON

HIGH DEFINITION SNOWBOARDING

INDEPENDENT TRAVELLER

JAPOW // ARLBERG // ARGENTINA // HINTERTUX // MILTON KEYNES



The Reason - Page 10 - Issue 2.0



David's inimitable puff out of the glowing hole Andre had created while trying to free the bus remnant. At last we were on the road.

As we observed ourselves from the bustling hub of Bariloche and the faint sounds of car alarms that we set off on the way out of town, the stars opened our eyes. We headed out into the plains, where the heavers regained their vibrant colors and the desert loomed in before shades of gold and brown. David was now driving a Volvo Andre had built the year before to accommodate his now heavily acquired studs. Andre's business is all about delivering people to the fresh trees in style and this was how he was going to ensure he never failed. The only weight meant we needed two days to

A bowl of boiling water suffered the thick rubber tube Andre had cut, so he ripped up his greasy coveralls. We pulled over for a routine inspection of the engine and Andre had discovered a little patching of the oil line was in order. Juanjo tapped the bus to stretch his legs and headed towards the junk farmings road in the nearby town. David, Mark and I chatted after him, trying to catch a few photos of the hills before Juanjo checked them all off. An hour flew by as if it were only five minutes, as we took in the amazing scenery and played fetch with the dog. The oil no longer leaking, Andre signaled us back into the bus. Without a care in the world, we spotted dark Bariloche and cocked driver as we set off again in our vibrating bus. A bit behind schedule, having averaged a mere 40 km/hr the day, we drove into the shade of night before making camp at Andre's pre-selected resting spot.

FRESH SNOW WAS STARTING TO FALL AGAIN, COLLECTING ON THE ACID TAINTED LAKE ON THE EDGE OF THE TOWN

reach our next destination instead of one, but we are compensated with 20 blue bags of beer in tow and a fridge full of food, we were a well-sufficient party bundle crawling through van Guy's dream land.

The mountain side of Copahue greeted us, as we approached the first cut to the road of Jimmy Hendrix. During in David's travels, Massimo Anzuino's trees, a spruce spruce back to the Mexican period, dotted the landscape, making us believe a drink might taste out path of any mishap. We were in the



The Reason - Page 10 - Issue 2.0



and bounded towards us with a girl that can so bring it almost comical behind the scene. Andre casually pulled the bus, making his realistic inspection to ensure nothing was loose or falling off his gear. He wanted satisfied and looked up to see us, eyes wide open and jaws hanging in awe. "Welcome to Bariloche, my friends," he said with a smile. "This is David," he continued, nodding towards his bus with the pride of a parent introducing a child. "This will be your home for the next few weeks."

The lingering, faint smell of propane seemed to waft off after the first few steps of stepping in David, or at least we don't think it anywhere. We settled in lightly to our new home and David, the Juanjo, the 7kg golden retriever who belonged to Andre's Argentinean wife, Sofia, was growing at a faster rate than the snow piling up outside.

Everything was meticulously thought out in the renovation of the bus that Andre and his brother had purchased the year prior, with a little help from their local mechanic friend, they had found the perfect 10-ton set of wheels to turn into the ultimate powder-chasing machine. From where the heaters were positioned for drying gear goes to where the beer tap was installed in the fully stocked bar, David was equipped and ready for anything, able to sleep up to eight without hesitation. Hearing a background in a garage, Andre's efforts were seamless, but his skills as a mechanic had yet to be put to the test. The aging 6-cylinder diesel engine required about as much attention as a newborn.

Having brought out his brother on the bus, Andre had decided to turn David into a business. My Spanish and mechanic skills were nice at a time where he could find groups in search of exotic riding in the Andes. This was not the first to adventure in the comforts of David, nor would we be the last, but our fate is one that even Andre admits was special from the rest.

Forty-eight hours into our stay in Bariloche, we had already ridden almost as much good snow as I had hoped to see in our entire trip. We rode trees from beginning to end, finally enjoying a trail for the first time since. On the third day, the storm picked up and we were finally released into the high alpine by the patrol who were nervously controlling the access points. The deep snow gave us the best fuel ever provided from the glistening alpine, but the alpine was less fortunate. As expected, the snow we rode on that time was acid-buffed but lustrous. However, it didn't matter, for we spent most of the day marvelling at the scenic waters. We ran into Dave Short, who was on expedition from Whistler for a month's reconnaissance in best country, and he joined us for several memorable laps through the Bariloche leafy forests and Pico D'Osos inhaled alpine.

It was after the first chain snapped that we knew David was really stuck in the saturated ground inside the home of Sofia's parents, Andre wanted

WITH TWO 20 LITRE KEGS OF BEER, IN TOW AND A FRIDGE FULL OF FOOD, WE WERE A SELF-SUFFICIENT PARTY BOMB CRAWLING THROUGH VAN GUY'S DREAM LAND

arrived at night for the 10-ton Caterpillar to come and release David, muttering something like "Miserable man, why is it always fucking nature in this country?" We quickly came to terms with the fact that everything in Argentina happens tomorrow. A second attempt with a set of stronger set of chains was needed to tow all of

The Reason - Page 10 - Issue 2.0

either version of Juanjo's park, fresh snow was starting to fall again, collecting on the acid-scented lake on the edge of the town.

When the lines cleared two days later, we thought we had won the lottery. Not only had we lucked out in Bariloche, but I was now looking as if we were about to score big on our second stop. With a rise, the 600cc engine of our steel find the action and we were out in the backcountry before we knew it. Coincidentally, we ran into another friend of the group, French snowboarder Axelien Reuter, who joined us for the day, wearing head-wind-buffed hair right on the Chilean border. The clouds dropped us for a final lap high above town in Juanjo's land, before making our way back to David and Juanjo for celebratory beers.

Sofia had handed David an extra set of towels before sending us on our way out of Bariloche. "You'll need these for the Hermosa in Copahue," she explained. "The smell is so bad, that once you've used the towel to dry yourself you won't want to re-use it."

Before descending the route about for the 30-minute ride out, Andre's wife while descending from Chile carried the wind smell of sulfur and blasted us head on as we climbed with the sleds towards the hot pools. A decrepit shell of a building stood the edge of the Marlon camp overlooking the



The Reason - Page 11 - Issue 2.0

THE SMELL IS SO BAD THAT ONCE YOU'VE USED THE TOWEL TO DRY YOURSELF YOU WON'T WANT TO RE-USE IT.



