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# FROM TO MUSTANGS

## X GAMES

### A SKATEBOARDER GOES RACING

Text and photography by Michelle Hurni

Bucky Lasek gets some practice on the 3.048-mile Miller Motorsports Park outer course in Tooele, Utah.



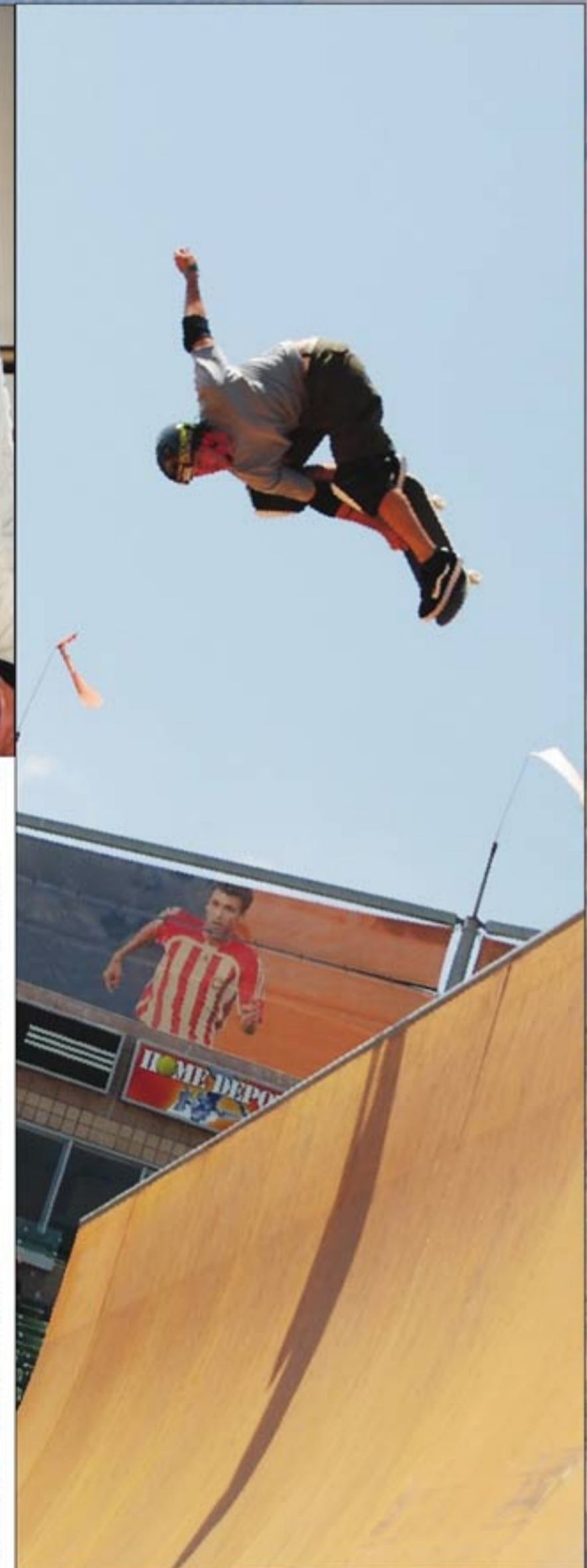
A RockStar, Bucky pushes his skateboard sponsors from on the track.

Bucky Lasek is one of the most innovative vert and bowl skateboarders on the planet, but his love of musclecars supersedes that talent. His day job is spinning his body and flipping his board on a vert ramp in front of crowds of screaming fans at the X Games and other major events. Between major events, however, he spends time at Miller Motorsports Park, racing Mustangs. This is a superstar-turned-weekend warrior who's just one of the guys.

#### Muscle Dreams

Before he could even drive, Bucky's dream was to have a musclecar with Cragars. He thought he could put the rims on any car and it would be sick. For a guy who has since won every major award in skateboarding, it may seem odd that he still doesn't have that musclecar.

Well, it's because he just can't make up his mind whether he wants a daily driver to take to the track or a cruiser. He does know it'll be a 1966 or 1967 Mustang fastback. For now, he's satisfying those dreams by



In the air during practice on the Vert ramp at X Games 15.



2006 Mustang GTs lined up and ready for the final at the Ford Racing High Performance Driving School.



It's not time to get serious...Yet.



Bucky crosses the finish line in second place on August 23.

getting behind the wheel of someone else's 2006 Mustang GT.

Bucky's history on the race track dates back to 1993, three years after he turned pro with Powell Skateboards. He started by taking his personal cars to the Summit Point track in West Virginia, now noting, "I've always been a car enthusiast, but when you're 18, you can't afford to race."

He transitioned to shifter karts for eight years, then took a race course through the Skip Barber Racing School to earn his professional open wheel Grand Am race license. His first real race was the Toyota Pro/Celebrity, which he won as a celebrity in 2006. He entered again the following year as a pro and finished second. Through that race, he developed a relationship with Dan McKeever, director of the Miller Performance Training Center in Tooele, Utah, outside of Salt Lake City. The school was just taking off, and Bucky got in on the ground floor as a celebrity spokesman.

Now in its fourth season, the Ford Racing High Performance Driving School offers a complete package, from a basic driving school to a racing program. They have 80 Mustangs, and allow a maximum of 12 students in their local race series, where Bucky is getting his seat time, and winning.

Driving the 2006 Mustang GTs in the Miller Mustang Challenge, Bucky says, "I can't believe how well-balanced and bulletproof those cars are. They have great torque, and the weight-to-power ratio is perfect." It's a challenge Bucky is up for, and he calls racing in the series a vacation from his very successful skateboarding career.

### The Big Transfer

Success appears to come easy to Bucky. He won three of the four Mustang Challenge races he entered in 2009 and finished second at the fourth. He admits both skateboarding and racing are hard, saying, "You can't jump in and be at the top level. I think I clicked on it because my heart was in both of them."

Bucky's 20 years as a professional athlete transfer over to the track in the form of mindset. "You can relate to doing certain tricks on a skateboard

to certain turns. You initiate the same way, entering, exiting, braking, gas. It's a lot of visual."

When he gets behind the wheel and is told the limits of a car or curve, he'll bump right up to them without holding back. "I definitely think the mindset of being a professional skateboarder has helped me learn the limits of what you physically can and can't do. Being the adrenaline junkie that I am, I'll jump right up to that level."

With Bucky and other action sports athletes coming through his program, McKeever says, "the big misconception is, they're crazy; they aren't crazy, they're good. You've got a guy who's at the absolute top end of his sport, and when he comes here, it's fun for him to excel at something and still learn."

### Celebrity Perks

His celebrity status has taken him behind the wheel in many forms, including the Gumball 3000 rally, an established feature on the pop culture calendar which Bucky calls "a party on wheels." The annual race has an entry fee hovering around \$120,000 to enter, and he's done three, one in Europe and two in the U.S., courtesy of Gumball.

On the upper end of the age range for vert skating, the 36-year-old is not slowing down, and racing helps him keep that drive alive, on the ramp and on the track. Of his time behind the wheel he says, "It's making me a happy person. I need a break from skateboarding once in a while."

(Bucky Lasek is a Baltimore, Maryland native who lives in Southern California with his wife and three daughters.)



Cruising the Park course flat bottom during Park Elimination in X Games 15, held in 2009.



Ben Crosland leads from start to finish in the Mustang Challenge event on August 22.



Here's Bucky on the homestretch.



Bucky earns the silver medal in Vert at X Games 15. His run included technical board slides on the coping.