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## Andreas Wiig- A Quick Interview with the Backcountry Machine |

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Andreas Wiig is a driven, powerful snowboarder who's smooth style stands out on all types of terrain. Snowboarding first captured Andreas at a young age in Norway where rough snow and ice conditions did not deter him from learning, but instead pushed him to focus himself and thrive in any condition. Now, in his professional career, he takes snowboarding to a new level. He charges anything he is going to hit and does it with machine-like force and precision. Andreas spends time in both Norway and the US and continues to be an inspiration to many worldwide. If you aren't lucky enough to catch up with him on a snowboard, you may find him bartending in wild Alaska.



**Age:** 26

**Years Riding:** 16

**Home in the US:** Newport, my boardbag

**Home in Norway:** Oslo

**Sponsors:** Vans, Nitro, Rackstar, Electric, Protec, Heavenly at Tahoe, Raiden bindings, Vestal, Grenade, Active

**Music:** ACDC, The Cardigans, Buckcherry, Marion Raven, Royksopp,

**Favorite country you have visited:** Italy



Photo Credit: Mack Dawg Productions "Picture This"

**SBG:** What made you decide to take up snowboarding and how did you learn?

**ANDREAS:** I was alpine skiing in on the local hill when I was young. I was also playing around with a small type of plastic ski you stand with both your feet on. It was almost like a little snowskate. But, I thought snowboarding looked like way more fun so I wanted to try it. Even though almost no one snowboarded back then, I bought a snowboard and put the skis away for good. I grew up riding at a really small, icy resort where the slope was about a 1,000 feet long. I guess I learned a lot from doing that run over and over. I didn't have any trainers so I just learned from watching other riders and finding out for myself.

**SBG:** What was the first set of gear you rocked when you started riding?

**ANDREAS:** I bought a Craig Kelly 151 that was longer than me and just way too big for me! I think I was rocking Helly Hansen pants and some random jacket.

**SBG:** What change or advancement in technology in the snowboard industry do you most appreciate and why?

**ANDREAS:** When companies started making twintip-shaped boards (or close to), snowboarding took a big step forward. The riders got more technical and also started doing tricks

switch.

**SBG:** Least appreciate and why?

**ANDREAS:** For a while there was such a big hype about step-in bindings and a lot of people thought step-ins were going to take over the whole binding market. It just didn't look good at all, and it didn't feel good either. But nowadays it's a good alternative for rentals.



Photo Credit: Mack Dawg Productions "Picture This"

**SBG:** The strength and spirit of your riding will be what it is no matter what you're wearing. But, of all the looks that are out there amongst snowboarders, what patterns/ colors/ materials/ "look" do you most identify with?

**ANDREAS:** I like stripes a lot, especially sideways, because it's something I identify snowboarding with. I don't exactly know why, but I just do. I like wearing dark pants, black or grey, because I don't like it too much when the pants steal too much attention in photos. I also like plaid patterns, but in dark colors. Red is one of my favorite colors and I've worn red jackets a lot in the previous years. It looks good in photos, but at the same time you don't look like a construction worker.

**SBG:** You spent time riding big mountains this year in

Alaska- what were some of the gear-related preparations you had to make and were there any differences in preparing for Alaska compared with other backcountry experiences you have had?

**ANDREAS:** I went to the store and bought three things before I went to Alaska: Snowshoes, an Avalung and a harness. I didn't really need the snowshoes as much because we didn't really hike much. I could have brought them with me in the helicopter but it would have been one more thing to think about when we loaded and unloaded. The Avalung, on the other hand, was really good to have. Even though I didn't need it, I felt safer knowing that it would help me a lot if I would get buried in snow. An Avalung consists of a mouthpiece and a filter that you strap around your chest. If you are buried in an avalanche, the Avalung will transport the CO2 away from your mouth and over to your back. A filter catches up CO2 when air goes through it on the way out. I've been told that you can breathe four times longer with an Avalung when you are under the surface of the snow. We always wore harnesses when we were using the helicopter. Here is the reason why: If you fall into a crevasse or get stuck somewhere else, the helicopter can lift you up.



Photo Credit: Mack Dawg Productions "Picture This"

**SBG:** Any favorite travel stories from Alaska?

**ANDREAS:** Well, we played poker 21 times and I only won once. I guess that's not really a good story, but it was fun to play anyways. The funniest thing was the last day. We went to this random bar in the mountains and had some drinks and played some poker. As the night went on and things got more crazy, the bartender started partying with us. So after a while, Wille Yli-Luoma and I took over the bar and bartended the rest of the night. I don't think the drinks tasted as good as usual that night.

**SBG:** Your part in "Picture This" is magnificent! What were some of your goals for filming this past year and did you reach them?

**ANDREAS:** Thanks! I put a lot of effort into contests this year, but I was trying to film quite a bit in between. My goal this year wasn't necessarily to film a long video part, but to have a strong, short segment in the movie. The main goal was to get a trick I haven't done before, and I got it the last day we were filming, so I was really stoked on that.

**SBG:** What motivates you to get up and try again?

**ANDREAS:** You can always do the trick better, and that's one of the things that motivates me the most. It's just such a good feeling when you land a good trick and get it exactly the way you want. That is motivation enough in itself.

**SBG:** I recently attended a conference on climate change and the International Polar Year that focused on similarities between Alaska and Norway. Climate change is the new buzz in the snowboard industry, which also promotes the latest and greatest gear. Where do you see the line being drawn between consumerism and being ecologically sound?

**ANDREAS:** It's really hard to draw a line because consumerism is good for the snowboarding industry, but not good at all for the environment. I think people still should be able to buy new products without feeling bad about it, but at the same time think about which companies they are buying from. Companies have to focus on producing product in more environmentally friendly ways even though it might be

more expensive. Also, as gear is better quality nowadays than it used to be, people can use the equipment longer. But as I said, it's hard to know where to draw a line here. Snowboarding is dependent on the climate, and that has to come first in line for sure.

**SBG:** Have you noticed much change in climate from experience snowboarding in Norway?

**ANDREAS:** I haven't noticed too much of a change because the winter is really unstable in Norway anyways. It seems like resorts in lower elevations are having trouble with the snow conditions every year now.



Photo Credit: Mack Dawg Productions "Picture This"

**SBG:** If you can leave one footprint on the snowboard industry, what would it be?

**ANDREAS:** It would be cool to be remembered as a rider who helped the sport evolve and made a difference.

**SBG:** Thanks for your insight and time, Andreas! Wishing you many more good lines.