

# **Trials & Trails with Kenny Belaey**

*March 14<sup>th</sup> 2009 Maui, Hawaii*

*By Hans Rey*



I just finished a fantastic week in the middle of the Pacific Ocean with the current UCI #1 ranked Trials rider in the world, Kenny Belaey from Belgium.

We were actually filming a 30 Min. TV show for Kenny's TV series on the Extreme Sports Channel. Kenny had asked me to take him on some epic mountain bike rides - adventure style; while he planned on taking me trials riding and blowing my mind with some incredible moves. Well, let me just say, 'he succeeded'.

Its amazing how trials has developed and evolved over the past two decades, not only the bikes, but the techniques and levels of difficulty are unbelievable, levels I would have never dreamt off, even 10 years ago. The level is so incredible that many of the lines and moves, cannot be done on foot, without a bike!!!!



Kenny used one of my GT Force bikes for the adventure rides, while he rode his Monty trials bike the rest of the time. I brought my GT Sanction freeride bike and my signature 'Zaskar Trials' bike.

The locals were stoked we visited their turf, the guys from Crater Cycles and Maui Cyclery were cool and very helpful in showing us the best spots. It was also good to visit suspension guru Paul Turner in his island home.

All the stills were taken by Erik Aeder, a renown Hawaiian surf and underwater photographer, while Stijn Lammertyn captured some sweet HD footage.

The Skyline trail starts at the very top of Haleakala Volcano at over 10,000ft/ 3000m elevation!!!! It looks like you are on the moon, actually NASA astronauts prepare themselves there for moon trips. The clouds just added to the mystique, as we hammered through them. The top part is on super sharp volcanic rock, it feels like riding with flat tires. After 100 feet of riding I already had a bloody leg from a big rock that hit me: "Ahh, that's why the locals wear sheen pads". Half way down the mountain, it starts to get green and you leave the old 4x4 road for some sweet singletrail. We had lots of fun and Kenny proved that he could hold his own on a proper mountain bike.

Another highlight was riding the ancient "Kings Highway" through the lava fields along the coast on the south side of Maui, that was the day when I accidentally ruined the lens of the video camera by spaying it with the sharp lava rocks.

Personally I was super stoked to ride to Jaws beach, the legendary spot where tow-in surfers like Laird Hamilton have surfed some of the biggest waves ever, when the conditions are right waves get up to 70feet tall. By the way, for all the light weight cry babies out there; Laird trains with 50 pound weights on his mountain bike.

Other typical Hawaiian rides included jungle trails by exotic waterfalls and through lush forests, especially when one finds a vendor that sells fresh pressed sugar cane juice at the trail head.



Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> or Big Friday was a day I won't forget soon and maybe one of the best locations I have ever shot at? We were heading to the "Blowhole" for some natural waterworks, but didn't know that it was trials paradise, endless sections with rocks and a fun technical trail leading down to the water. From sunny skies to big waves, we found everything we could have wished for, with the exception of a Hula girl. As the day went on the waves got bigger and bigger, at one point huge ones were breaking on the cliffs and splashing water 25 feet high through the air, we were trenched wet and my bike wasn't too fond about the salt water, but our cameramen were. It all seemed pretty safe, until you stand there enclosed by a curtain of white wash and the sea's roaring at you. Well, let just say I'm glad none of us got swept into the water and shredded to pieces on the sharp volcanic rocks.

Kenny pulled some mind blowing moves on his trials bike, it is amazing how he combines pure power with finesse and precision. Many of his moves would have serious consequences and he makes it look like the easiest thing in the world.

Over the years many people have asked me who would or could be the next 'Hans', I never knew what to reply, well, let me just say, this kid is not just a 8 time World Champion, at the age of 26, but his talents go beyond his bike handling skills.

Aloha

***Hans***

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