

MANUFACTURING PROFILE:

BENNETT TRUKS

CW: How did you initially get involved in making skateboard trucks?

Mr. Bennett: Christmas of 1974, Santa brought my son, Brian, a skateboard he had asked for. The next morning he's out in the street with the other kids in the neighborhood. Soon, he's back inside saying his board, "doesn't turn". I figure no problem, I can fix that. I adjusted the trucks as best I could and sent him back out. Again, he's back, "it still doesn't turn." I tried again and realized the problem was simply a short wheelbase steering system on a long wheelbase vehicle. I wondered why no one had designed trucks specifically for a skateboard. Soon I wondered, "Why don't I do it?"

CW: What was your background?

Mr. Bennett: My formal education was architectural engineering, and I was always mechanically inclined and curious about how things worked. So I did a lot of research into steel alloys, rubber compounds, thermoplastics, aluminum alloys and the foundry casting industry. At the time, the aerospace industry was in a deep slump, so I found the companies with the expertise, machines, and production capacity to produce the trucks I had designed.

CW: Why trucks as opposed to trucks?

Mr. Bennett: I thought it was a unique spelling of a word and perhaps it would set me apart from the generic roller skate trucks that were so prevalent. Besides, look at how much ink and typing strokes it has saved over the years. [laughs] I should get a medal for being one of the first "Green" operations. [more laughs]

CW: The plastic base plate thing must have been a horror, yes?

Mr. Bennett: In the beginning, I did everything I could to build a lightweight / heavy-duty truck that addressed the skating style of the day. I probably made a mistake by declaring the baseplates "Unbreakable," but did replace every single one sent back. There were several variations and I had to design them so they'd work with a variety of hole patterns.

CW: As I understand it, you eventually replaced the nylon baseplate with an aluminum base plate—but not many made it into circulation?

Mr. Bennett: Yes, as the production date for the new Vector series approached, I switched to the new Magalum baseplate on the Hijacker and Pro trucks as well. When the Vectors went into full production, I discontinued the Hijacker and Pro models so I could keep up with demand for the new trucks, and especially the Vector Stak+Trak model, which I loved for its adjustable tread width, which was intended to be the companion to the Alligator wheels. It also addressed the issue of wheels with different bearing cage locations. Most were back-set, some were offset like the Alligators, and some were even center set.



Mr. Bennett

