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MAGAZINE™



DAILY GRIND SKATERS AROUND THE WORLD OWE TEMPE'S SITE DESIGN GROUP

By Tyson Vilhauer
December 23, 2006

SITE Design Group isn't just changing the face of skate park design, they reinvented the concept.

Picture yourself a mayor or county commissioner with a multitude of miscreant youths running rampant in your municipality and you need a solution to keep them occupied (which means mostly abstaining from sex and drugs and more sex in order to be re-elected). Build the town a pool or a community center? No, the community pool is where pedophiles hang out and community centers always end up smelling like nursing homes anyway. Plus, those come with maintenance/building costs and frankly, the constituents would rather have roads, methadone clinics and libraries. You need something that will entertain the youth and requires little maintenance. Suddenly, the heavens open, a beacon of light shines down on you and some creepy voice from Field Of Dreams says, "If you build it they will come." You think to yourself, "But baseball is boring." And then it comes to you. Build a skate park instead.

Talking to the crew at SITE Design Group (SDG), it's quickly apparent that these guys are serious about skating. "Mike built his first skate ramp at 12 years old and has been building them ever since," says Bryan Moore about company founder Mike McIntyre.

When most people were thinking about getting driver's licenses or prom dates, McIntyre was wondering who would show up next at the park he built in his parents' backyard (Tony Hawk and Steve Cabellaro were regulars). After skating — not literally — through college at Cal Poly, McIntyre emerged with a BA in landscape architecture. A few years designing plazas and making them skater friendly (without his superiors knowing) and SDG was soon formed. Now McIntyre has hired the some of the best minds in the skating industry who all have an appetite for bigger and better designed parks.

SDG is no mom and pop operation. With offices in Tempe, San Diego and Tokyo, these guys are big time. "We're worldwide, building projects from South Africa to Europe to North America at any given time," says Moore. He goes on to add that 90 percent of the parks that SDG builds are for cities/towns and municipalities since that's their main focus, "but we did just build a 60,000-square-foot private park in Grand Cayman," Moore adds.

Breakthrough designs are what keeps this company ahead of the curve. Moore found that some of the best areas to skate were not actual parks but plazas and urban areas, which has since become one of SDG's newest concepts. It wasn't long after that SDG was working with pro skater Rob Dyrdek, his company DC Shoes and the city of Kettering, Ohio.

As for the future of SDG, Moore says, "Everyone stay tuned. We broke out with the skate plaza and we've got a great new design team with some new great things up our sleeves." According to Moore, it's all about staying fresh. "Inspiration comes from the people who skate for SDG," he says.

Skate on over to www.sitedesigngroup.com