

MADE FOR SKATE

SHOE REVIEW

HIBITAT DANNY GARCIA!

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Habitat's history regarding skate shoes is rather short: First collection in spring 2010, first pro model in summer 2011 for Guru Khalsa. That's it. Even more surprising is that Habitat managed to release solid, well-designed shoes, with good craftsmanship, right from the start. The teething problems that many up-and-coming brands have to deal with weren't an issue at any point. Also, the rather unique and uncommon strategy of starting with just a very small team of then-amateurs, with the idea of letting the brand grow with the team, proved to be successful. After Guru, the next pro team member to get his own model for Habitat footwear, Danny Garcia, did so in November 2011. Whether this turns out to be another step in the right direction for the still-youthful brand can be read in the following review.

DURABILITY

The Habitat Garcia has a weakness regarding durability that should be mentioned right from the start: the missing extra layer of vulcanized rubber in the toebox area of the sole is a flaw that influences the life span of the model in a major way. It means that it is not the upper material that gets worn down first but the sole. This uncovers the sensitive stitching beneath, which is then ripped through quickly. On the other hand, the upper, and especially the one-piece front area, is more durable. The design of the sidewall panel, which sets the overlap-

ping area with the toebox panel towards the heel of the shoe, means that the connecting stitching stays intact during the whole lifespan of the shoe and prevents those layers coming apart. The laces are protected in a similar way. Due to the position of the eyelets towards the collar and the fact that it just features 3 lace holes, the laces stay intact for a long time and ripped just once during the test. The bottom part of the sole is also very durable and the deep pattern means that there's still profile left even in the most stressed areas, which is an indicator for long-lasting grippiness. All in all, the Habitat Garcia is only averagely durable because of the previously mentioned weakness of the front area, which reveals the internal stitching after some time. Apart from this flaw, the model proves to be rather durable for a vulcanised skate shoe, mainly due to the smart paneling and positioning of the lace holes that keep sensitive areas away from the contact zone between shoe and griptape.

CUSHIONING

Although the Habitat Garcia is a very thin vulcanised model, with a clear focus on boardfeel, it features adequate damping abilities thanks to the removable insole, which is about 1.5 times thicker than most other insoles. You have to keep in mind though that it can only cushion landings up to a certain degree, so it is not suited for harder impacts. All in all, the Garcia is mostly recommended for low-impact skating, like ledges, curbs and miniramps.

FORM

The toebox area of the Garcia features a clearly visible peak around the big toe, while maintaining a rather round, basic shape. The form helps produce a great flick, giving great control over kickflip-tricks especially.

BOARDFEEL

Due to the very thin sole construction in the toebox area, the Habitat Garcia provides outstanding boardfeel. The removable insole is also kept thin in that area to keep the amount of material between board and foot as small as possible. In the heel area, which only affects the boardfeel in a minor way, the thicker insole provides enough cushioning to prevent injuries.

GRIP

A strength of the Garcia is its very grippy sole, as you'd expect from a vulcanised shoe. The sole feels "glued" to the griptape. Additionally, the white side area turned out to offer more grip than average, which contributes further to the easy and very controlled flick offered by the model.

COMFORT

The Habitat Garcia offers average comfort. On one hand, it is unable to protect against hits of the board due to its very thin construction, but on the other, it is very soft and pleasant to wear. As can be seen in the cross section, the inner material wrinkles slightly with wear, but this this didn't decrease the comfort in any major way though. Due to the short tongue, centering straps are unnecessary; it didn't show any tendency to slip to the side. The lack of straps helped increase the simplicity of the inner-lining construction, which combined with a clean craftsmanship, makes the interior even more comfortable.

STABILITY

As with many thin, vulcanised skate shoes, the Habitat Garcia features only minor stability and support. The long collar design and the low cut around ankle and heel reduce the support of the model and its heel-lock capabilities. Furthermore, as already mentioned, the Garcia is a very thin model, so the side-walls tend to stretch with wear and get softer. However, this can be partly catered for with tighter lacing. Consequently, the shoe is not suited for people with weak or damaged ankles from former injuries. On the other hand, if you are seeking a lot of freedom of movement in the ankle



area and don't find the support offered by a shoe that important, you should definitely have a closer look at the Habitat Garcia.

SUMMARY

The Habitat Garcia is a boardfeel-focused and simple vulc model that, except from weaknesses in the areas of durability and support, satisfies with very good grip, great shape and outstanding flick.

