



The Rollerblade Diaries: Getting To Know The World's Best Skates

Having never roller-bladed before, I did a little research ahead of the game to see what I might be in for. What was mostly discussed was the need for a smooth track or surface to skate on — as the vibration from the small wheels on inline skates might rattle you up a bit. Living in the Adirondacks is certainly no plus — all we have here are hills and mountains and rough surfaces, save for the interstates and you wouldn't want to play in that sort of traffic. I spoke with a friend of mine who I thought might be interested in the experience and he told me that he bought a pair of good inline skates, but wound up giving them away as there were no smooth paths to skate down.

I first spotted Landroller skates on Cesar Millan's show, *The Dog Whisperer*. Cesar makes it look very exciting and easy as he is pulled across Los Angeles by his pack of trained and untrained dogs. I

figured if Cesar is using them, they've got to be good, and although it was a silly way to judge, I came out a hundred percent right. Now, remember, I've never set foot into a rollerblade before, so I was pretty nervous. Visions of a concussion and lots of bandages danced in this head. I received my Landrollers by post and immediately tried them on. I was the only one in the office at the time, so I figured no one would mind and certainly no one would see me fall. To my surprise, they were pretty easy to get used to right away. In fact, the company says that novices have a far easier time getting used to them than a regular inline skater might. Much to my surprise and dismay, a young sales girl showed up at the office and the last thing I wanted her to see was an uncool aging editor fall on his butt trying to help her. Thank goodness I was behind the reception desk and she couldn't see, but I felt my skeleton wobbling back and forth

inside me like a pole with a spinning set of dishes on top — ready to fall with one false move. Luckily, I made it through that one. She must of thought I was pretty tall.

The next test, still alone, I decided to let my two black labs pull me across the hardwood floor as fast as they could for about forty feet. I stood at one side of the room, braced myself with leashes in one hand and two dog biscuits in the other. I threw the dog biscuits across the room, the dogs went running after them and there's me cruising behind them just like Cesar Millan! Too bad I didn't learn how to properly stop first. My first thought was where am I going to find a new Braided Ficus to replace the one I just demolished?

It's funny how the eye plays tricks on you and you don't readily notice a simple incline over the course of a hundred yards, but I found out all about it as I practiced in the parking lot. I tried looking as cool as I

could — and there are some great pointers on various rollerblading sites on the web that you should read first before attempting to rollerblade for the first time and be sure to always wear the proper safety gear. Now that I was a parking lot pro, I decided to find some great rollerblading venues to really give my Landrollers a whirl.

The first place we tried was the Warren County bicycle trails in the town of Queensbury, New York, just south of the Adirondack State Park. Crossing streets at this level of experience was not my cup of tea, but we found a great little stretch of paved road that looked like a scene from an Andrew Wyeth painting. Smooth sailing and lots of fun — all the time I was thinking what a wonderful exercise program this would make. When we reached the end of what was about half a mile, it was time to turn around — unless we wanted to skate along with automobile traffic. We didn't. But the whole trick of the eye incline thing came into play going back and it felt like I was going fifty miles an hour. My partner Erin, who was also using Landrollers for the first time was behind me doing a much better job at slowing down. Ever see *The Incredible Shrinking Woman* with Lily Tomlin? There's a scene where she is gliding along at high speed on a slippery bar of soap — that was me. All I can think about was Eddie Murphy's Aunt Bunny falling down a flight of stairs, "*Help me Jesus! I'm falling down the stairs!*" And what would I do to stop? And where was Erin? Did she fall down? I have to admit, I did panic and went off the paved path onto the thistle bushes where I can safely fall. But after much practice I got to be good enough to take it to a whole other level. Of course Erin did much better than I did — save for all her laughing at me.

Before we begin this beguine, you should know a bit more about the revolutionary Landroller skate. Here's is a bit of info direct from Landroller's PR people: "Boardwalks, bike paths, streets, country roads, cobblestones, single track, sidewalks, skate parks — LandRoller conquers them all. LandRollers have a patented, angled, out-of-line wheel configuration that dramatically improves and expands the skating experience for both novices and experts. They are called "out-of-line" because the wheels touch the ground on both sides of the centerline of the boot. The large wheels roll over obstacles that hinder and cause safety and control issues in traditional inline skates, and are angled to

maintain the same low center of gravity as a traditional skate. This radical configuration improves stability, maneuverability, safety, ride smoothness and braking. From the first time you lace up a pair of LandRollers and begin skating, you'll notice the balance, responsiveness and performance of the skates. You will also quickly find out that you can go almost everywhere you please because surfaces don't limit the route, fun or workout that can be experienced with a pair LandRollers."

Geared with more experience. We decided to take Landroller on the road to a few rollerblading hot-spots as well as some we made up as we went along. Our first destination, Boston: The Esplanade, a 17 mile stretch of land along the banks of the Charles River. This was a delight. The weather was perfect, the views sensational and there are plenty of other roller-bladers to watch and catch some good tips off of. Wearing Landrollers are a great conversation starter, all sorts of people ask questions about them and admire the unique design. Okay, you'd get the same response riding a unicycle down the Esplanade, but you won't look as cool. So if you like meeting people, Landrollers are almost as good as a cute little puppy to attract members of the opposite sex into an engaging conversation. Not me, though, it was all business.

Our second destination: The Riverside Park Promenade along the Hudson River, N.Y.C. We're talking the Henry Hudson Parkway on one side of you and the Hudson River on the other. And if you are feeling a little extra frisky, you can rollerblade all the way downtown via the paths along the Westside Highway. There's plenty of rough patches here and there that would certainly deter the average inline skater, but with Landroller, we found them not to be a problem at all. New York City is my town, but it isn't as mellow and laid back as Boston. As you rollerblade by, bums still ask for money. "Mister, I can't even stop good, are you kidding?" One homeless person decided to run along side of us in hopes for some spare change. There are lots of characters to see and once you get comfortable with it you can bring along a backpack with a pair of sneakers and walk over to Chelsea or the village for a nice lunch while you are there. ☸

—Anthony Sapienza

Get a pair of Landrollers for yourself at:
www.landroller.com



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From Joseph Buberger Studios

Each 8" x 12" Sculptured Sunray is available as a limited edition photographic art print processed from the artist's original photographic negative and matted on acid-free museum board.

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—Joseph Buberger

www.sculpturedsunrays.com

A woman is posing on a beach, wearing roller skis and knee pads. She is wearing a black tank top with the LandRoller logo, denim shorts, and a black helmet. The background shows a sandy beach, a clear blue sky, and some distant structures.

LandRoller.

Best Skates on the Planet!

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