THE ROAD TO PNG

It's not just a mod. It's passion. It's life.



FROM THE AUTHOR

Before we begin

This book was not created to celebrate PNG's success.

It was created for those who have been with me over the years and supported this project.

I wanted to show you a little of the world you do not normally see - the roads, journeys, people, moments and experiences that shaped PNG over those ten years.



Every road starts somewhere.

CHAPTER 01

A curiosity that stayed with me



In the photo: I'm standing at the back. In front is the friend with whom I first began exploring the world of games.

I will not bore you with a story about a difficult childhood. Some things are simply mine to keep.
I want to tell you about something else - a passion that has been part of my life for as long as I can remember and eventually led to what PNG is today.

Because this story did not begin with graphics.

It did not begin with Euro Truck Simulator.

It did not even begin with trucks.

It all began with driving.

First virtually.

Later, in the real world as well.
It was the 1990s. Computers and games were very different then. Virtual worlds were much simpler, and imagination had to fill in many of the gaps.

I remember visiting a friend. His father would start games for us, and we could sit there for hours.
There was one thing, however, that we were not allowed to do.
We were not allowed to change the settings or move anything around in the menus.

And that was exactly what interested us most.

So we secretly tried to reach places the game was never meant to take us. At maybe eight or ten years old, instead of simply completing the next routes, we tried to find a way beyond the map.

We wanted to know what lay beyond it.

What was beyond the edge of the world the developers had created?
I also remember the moment when, in Rally Championship, we managed to find a route set in winter conditions.

To us, it was not just another stage.

There was something extraordinary about it. It felt as though we had discovered a place we were never meant to see.

Today it may seem like a small thing, but that curiosity stayed with me for years.
I always wanted to know how a game world was actually built.

Why does something look the way it does?

What is a road, building or landscape made of?

How did the developers achieve a particular effect?

And above all - could it be done differently?

Better?

More in my own way?

CHAPTER 02

First steps



One of the vans I worked with during that period.

At 16, I left Poland for Germany in search of a better life.

At the time, I had one goal above all.

I wanted to drive.

I wanted to become a driver.

Games, however, were always there in the background.
Around that time, I also started tinkering with some of SCS Software's early titles.

These were still very early experiments, but looking back, you could say they were a kind of prototype for PNG.

I created several road and building textures of my own, intended as an add-on for the Poland map being developed by VSM Team for 18 Wheels of Steel: Haulin'.

It was not PNG yet.

I had no idea where any of it might lead me.

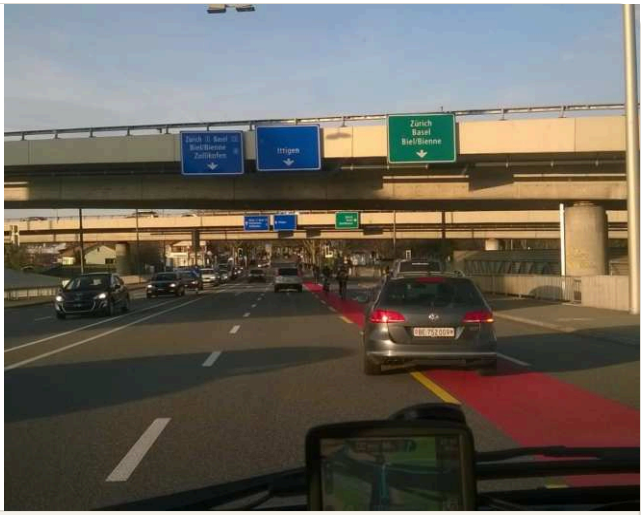
But the idea itself was very similar to what I do today.

Take the real world I knew and try to create my own virtual version of it.

CHAPTER 03

Real roads





Everyday work in vans - thousands of kilometres across Europe and places that gradually found their way into my private archive.

Over time, my work gave me the chance to see Europe from a completely different perspective.

I started by driving a van around Germany. Later came other countries - France, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands and many more.

I made a lot of
recordings.
I took countless photos.

At first, simply because I enjoyed documenting the places I passed
through.
But over time, I began noticing things I probably would not have paid so much attention to
before.
A road was no longer just a road.

Every country had its own character.

The asphalt looked different. So did the shoulders. Concrete. Paving stones. Kerbs. Road markings. Infrastructure.

Even things that were completely ordinary to most people began to interest me.

I started looking at them more closely.

Photographing them.

And later - just for fun - turning those photos into textures and bringing them into Euro Truck Simulator.

At the time I still had no idea I was doing something that would later become my work.

CHAPTER 04

This is how PNG began



First project logo.

At first, it was simply for
fun.
I had photos from the real world and tried to use them in the game.

It quickly became clear that making a good road texture was not simply a matter of cutting a piece out of a photo and pasting it into the game.

One of the first problems was pattern repetition.

A section of surface represented roughly eight metres of road. It was then repeated over and over.

If it contained a distinctive mark, crack, stain or other detail, the exact same element would appear again a moment later.

And again.

And again.

Instead of a real road, you ended up with a repeating pattern.

So I had to experiment.

Combine different photographs.

Shift elements around.

Remove distinctive features.

Mask the transitions.

And keep refining the texture until it stopped looking like a repeating image and started resembling a real road surface.

Over time, I became more and more absorbed by it.

The more material I had, the more things I noticed.

And the more I noticed, the more I wanted to recreate.

What began with a few textures gradually turned into something much bigger.

At times, it became almost
obsessive.
The hardest part was not even creating a good texture.

It was much harder to recreate the character of an entire country.

Euro Truck Simulator works in a particular way. A country may use only a few basic road surfaces, while in reality there are dozens or even hundreds.

It was impossible to bring everything into the game.

Choices had to be made.

Decide which surfaces were the most characteristic.

Which elements would make a player feel, after crossing the border, that they were somewhere different.

Sometimes two different types of surface had to be combined into a single material so that, within the game's limitations, the character of a region could still be preserved.

And I think that was when I began to understand that realism does not always mean reproducing everything exactly as it is.

Sometimes it means using a limited number of elements to create the impression of a real place.

CHAPTER 05

PNG and life beyond the computer



PNG was created alongside everyday life - on the road, between work and the next stages of life.

PNG was growing, but my life was changing alongside it.

It was a particularly intense
period.
I got married.

At the same time, my father died.

Later, I started a
family.
My son was born.

There were health problems too, and periods when I was struggling mentally.

I do not want to describe my private life in detail in this book.

I mention it for one reason.

PNG was not created in a vacuum.

It was created alongside everyday life - with all its good and difficult
moments.
Sometimes I could sit at the project for hours.

Sometimes for days and nights.

There were also periods when life required me to focus on completely different things.

But the project was always there in the
background.

Today, when I look back on all those years, I can see that it was not only PNG that changed.

I changed too.

And perhaps that is exactly why it is difficult for me to see this project simply as a product.

PNG stayed with me through successive stages of my life.

It did not exist separately
from that life.
It grew with me.

CHAPTER 06

It was never just textures



Over time, I began looking at roads not only as a driver, but also as someone who would later try to recreate them.

For someone who only sees the finished result in the game, many changes can look very simple.

A new road.

A new surface.

A better material.

Different lighting.

In reality, what looked like a small change could represent days or weeks of work.
A good example is normal maps, which allow surfaces to have a much more realistic structure.

Many roads in ETS were not set up to use them in the way I wanted.

Simply changing the shader or material was not enough.

It often caused new problems.

To achieve the result I wanted, thousands of models had to be edited.

One by one.

Model.

Material.

Test.

Correction.

Another test.

And again.

Sometimes I spent hours solving a problem that nobody would ever notice later - precisely because once it was fixed, everything looked the way it should.

And I think that is a huge part of this kind
of work.
Often, the best result is when the viewer does not think about the technology at
all.
They simply look at the image and feel that everything fits together.

But I never lacked determination.

If I knew what result I wanted, I kept looking for a solution until I finally found it.

CHAPTER 07

From van to heavy haulage



Moving from vans to trucks, and later to heavy haulage, was another stage that strongly shaped the way I looked at roads, work and travel across Europe.

At the same time, my work as a driver was changing.

I drove vans.

Later trucks.

And eventually heavy haulage.

They all had one thing in common - the road, and the chance to see Europe from a perspective you do not get from ordinary car travel.

There were many routes.

But one has stayed with me in particular.

2018.

At the time I worked for a transport company and was still relatively new there.

One day, I happened to overhear a conversation between a dispatcher and the fleet manager - the Fuhrparkleiter.

They were talking about a job to Sweden.

From what I heard, our company was not handling jobs like that at the time, so it would probably have to be passed on to another carrier.

Something clicked in me.

A light came on.

I wanted to go.

I did not think about it for long.

“I'll go. Don't give the job
away.”
And that is how one of the journeys I still remember today began.

Mercedes Actros MP3 V8.

Low-loader container trailer.

It was carrying equipment for wind farms.

Nine days on the road ahead of
us.
Germany.

Denmar k.

The Danish bridges.

Then almost all of Sweden.

All the way to Lapland.

It was a beautiful trip.

And on journeys like that, I began to understand more and more clearly how strongly the real world shaped what I later created at the computer.

PNG was no longer just a collection of textures.

It was becoming an attempt to recreate places I had actually seen.

Roads I had really driven.

Weather I remembered.

Colours.

Surfaces.

Landscape.

Atmosphere.

The real world was finding its way into the game more and
more.


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CHAPTER 08

When passion becomes work



Over time, I began organising trips specifically to see places for myself and collect material.

The project gradually grew.

There was more material, more ideas and more things to do.

And thanks to the people who supported my work, I eventually reached a point where I could work on it full time.
That was when N-ARTWORKS came into being.
The scale of what I was doing changed too.
Over the years I built up a huge library of photographs, recordings and reference materials.

Today, that means hundreds of gigabytes of data spread across several hard drives.

And most of it is not project files.

The largest part is made up of photographs and recordings collected during my travels.
Some are many years old.

Sometimes I took a photo without any specific plan for how I might use it.

Something simply caught my attention.

A particular surface.

A section of roadside.

A wall.

Concret e.

A road.

A piece of infrastructure.

Years later, it might suddenly turn out to be exactly what I needed.

A photograph I had long forgotten about would get a
second life.
But over time, something else changed too.

It was no longer enough to photograph whatever I happened to come across while working.
I began organising trips specifically to collect material for the project.

One of those trips was to the Balkans in 2023.



Slovenia.

Croatia.

Bosnia.

It was not a random destination.

This was before the Euro Truck Simulator 2 DLC covering those regions had been released.

I wanted to see them first.

Not in photos online.

Not in Street View.

With my own eyes.

I wanted to drive those roads myself and see the colours of the surfaces, the infrastructure, the roadsides, the vegetation and the overall character of those places.

Photograph.

Record.

Remember.

And then try to bring at least a part of it into PNG.

In a way, things were coming full circle on an ever larger scale.

At first, I photographed the world because I was driving
through it.
Later, I began driving through it partly because I wanted to photograph
it.

CHAPTER 09

I had no ready-made path



There was no ready-made path. There was curiosity, thousands more kilometres, and learning everything along the way.

There is one more part of this story that matters to me.

I had no formal education in IT or computer graphics.

I never attended a school that prepared me to create textures, build models or run a project like PNG.

I taught myself all of it.

Every new program.

Every technology.

Graphics.

Textures.

Modelling.

Materials.

Editing.

And later, whatever else the project required as it grew.

By trial and error.

By searching for information.

Test.

Mista ke.

Another test.

When I moved to Germany at sixteen, I did not have a plan for the next twenty years.

I knew I wanted to drive.

At the same time, I was spending more and more time at the computer, teaching myself things that were still just a hobby back then.

I had no teacher.

I had no school showing me what to do
step by step.
I had a computer, the internet, curiosity and enormous determination.

Friends sometimes looked at what I was doing and thought I was
strange.
At that age, most people had completely different interests.

After work, or between routes, I could spend hours on graphics, textures and one experiment after another.

I did not know where it would lead me.

I did not know that one day I would be able to make a living from it.

I did not even know whether any of it would ever be useful.

I simply kept doing my thing.

Almost as if some part of me knew it made
sense.
Today, some of the people from those years are still in my life.

Others are not.

Everyone went their own way.

Looking back, I think this is one of the things that matters most to
me in this story.
I had no ready-made path.

I had to build it myself.

CHAPTER 10

When passion meets business



Over time, the project became a job and a company, but at its core the same journey was still there.

As PNG grew, a question appeared that simply had not existed at the beginning.

How do I keep all of this alive?

The project required more and more time.

Equipmen t.

Storage space.

Software.

Travel.

More hours of work.

Over time, that passion gradually became a business as well.
And that meant confronting a completely different reality.

Knowing how to create was no longer enough.

There were taxes.

Accounting.

Documents.

Phone calls.

Costs.

Responsibility.

Things you never think about when you start making your first road texture just for fun.

Not every decision was easy.

Not every decision was understood
by everyone.
One of them was paid updates.

Looking back, I would probably do many things differently. But back then, I was learning as I went.

Just as I had once taught myself graphics, I later had to learn how to run a
business.
German bureaucracy could also be very demanding.

Problems with accounting, authorities or taxes could consume time I would much rather have spent on the project.

There were moments when I felt that instead of creating, I was solving problems I had not even known existed a few years earlier.

But that too became part of the
journey.
A passion that had once been something I did in my spare time became my
work.
And with that came responsibility not only for the project, but also for the company that had grown around it.

Over time, it was not only the project that changed.

I changed too.

At first, I focused mainly on graphics and textures. Later came other areas - materials, 3D modelling and increasingly complex elements of the world I wanted to recreate.

I learned much of it along the way, often simply because I needed to do something I did not yet know how to do.

The scale of the whole project was changing too.

There was a time when I knew practically every customer. I spoke to people directly, replied personally and handled many things one-to-one. With a smaller project, that was possible.

Over time, however, the number of messages, questions and responsibilities grew to the point where I could no longer work that way.

I had to learn to set boundaries and separate customer support from the rest of the work.
It was not easy.

There were also periods when I struggled mentally. Throughout all of this, PNG was being created alongside ordinary life - with its good moments and its much harder ones.

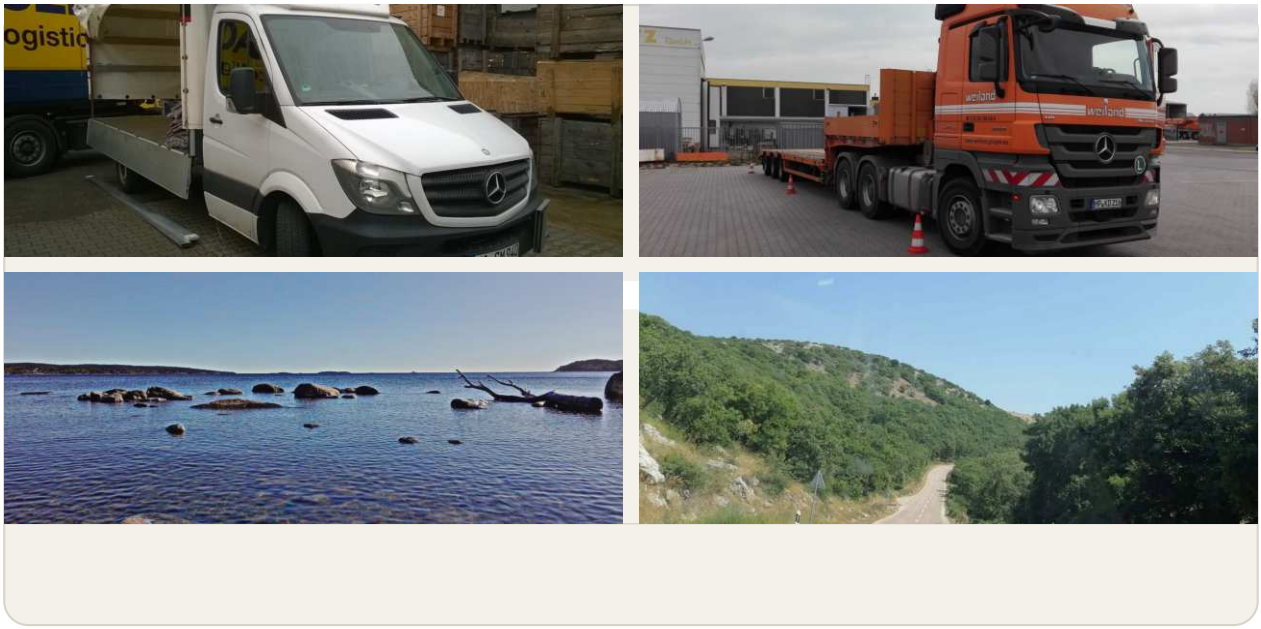
Over time, I also came to understand that growth does not always mean doing more.

Sometimes it means learning when to slow down, where to draw a line and what can no longer be done the same way as in the beginning.

Perhaps that is why, after ten years, I cannot see PNG as just a product.

CHAPTER 11

Ten years



When I look at PNG today, it is sometimes hard to believe how much happened over those ten years.
It is not really about the number of textures, models, updates or successive versions.
What strikes me most is how much life happened around it during that time.

Routes.

Countr ies.

Trucks.

People.

Family.

Good moments.

Difficult moments.

Hours in front of the computer.

Nights in parking areas.

Thousands of kilometres of roads.

Hundreds of thousands of photos and files.

Problems I did not know how to solve.

And then there were the moments when, after many hours, everything suddenly started working.
I do not want to turn these ten years into a monument.

PNG was never perfect.

I made mistakes too.

My ideas, approach and way of working changed.

Many things had to be fixed, rebuilt or started again from scratch.

But I think that is exactly why this story matters to me.

Because it is not the story of a finished product.

It is the story of a process.

A
journe
y.

CHAPTER 12 The journey came full circle



Real roads later became virtual ones. Over time, each began leading back to the other.

For years, I drove across Europe professionally.

From vans and trucks to heavy haulage.

Along the way I photographed and recorded the world around me.

Later, that material ended up on my computer.

Photos became textures.

Textures became elements of a virtual world.

And over time I also began travelling specifically to collect material for that world.

Real roads began to shape virtual ones.

And the virtual world became one of the reasons to discover more places in the real one.
And that, I think, is where everything comes full circle.
When I was a child, I tried to find a way beyond the map.

I wanted to see what lay beyond it.

What lay beyond the edge of a world created by someone else.

Years later, I was doing almost exactly the same thing.

Only this time, the map was real.

I travelled across Europe.
I looked.
I photographed.
I collected material.

I tried to notice the things most people drive past without a second thought.

Then I took fragments of that world with me and tried to bring them back to the computer.

That is why this story was never really just about a game.

It was about curiosity.
About discovery.
About the need to see what lies a little farther on.
About trying to notice things that usually go unnoticed.

And that is why "The Road to PNG" has more than one meaning for me.

It was my journey.
It was the roads of Europe.

And finally - the roads and surfaces I photographed, remembered and turned into textures over all those years.

Ten years have passed.

And when I look back at all of it today, I think the simplest words say it best.

It's not just a mod.
It's passion.
It's life.
It's PNG.



Ten years later, the most important thing is still the same: curiosity about what lies farther ahead.

Thank you for being part of this journey over the years.

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