

SUMMER 2011

mountain life

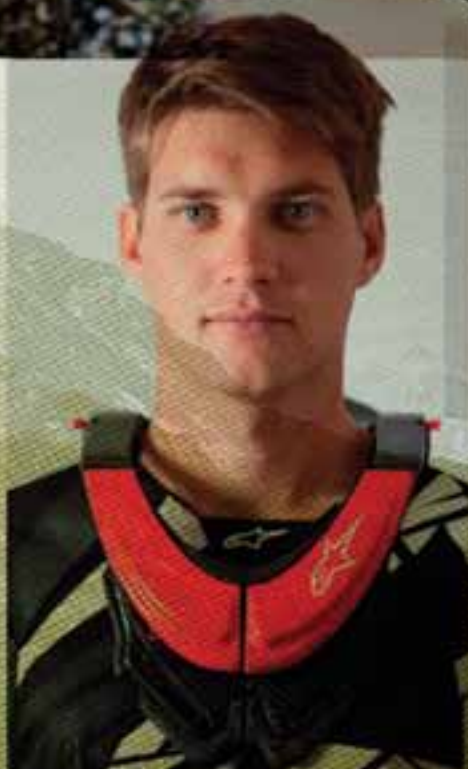
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Andreas Hestler on his Rocky Mountain Element carves up the Pseudotsuga trail in Squamish, Day 6, on his way to a stage victory.

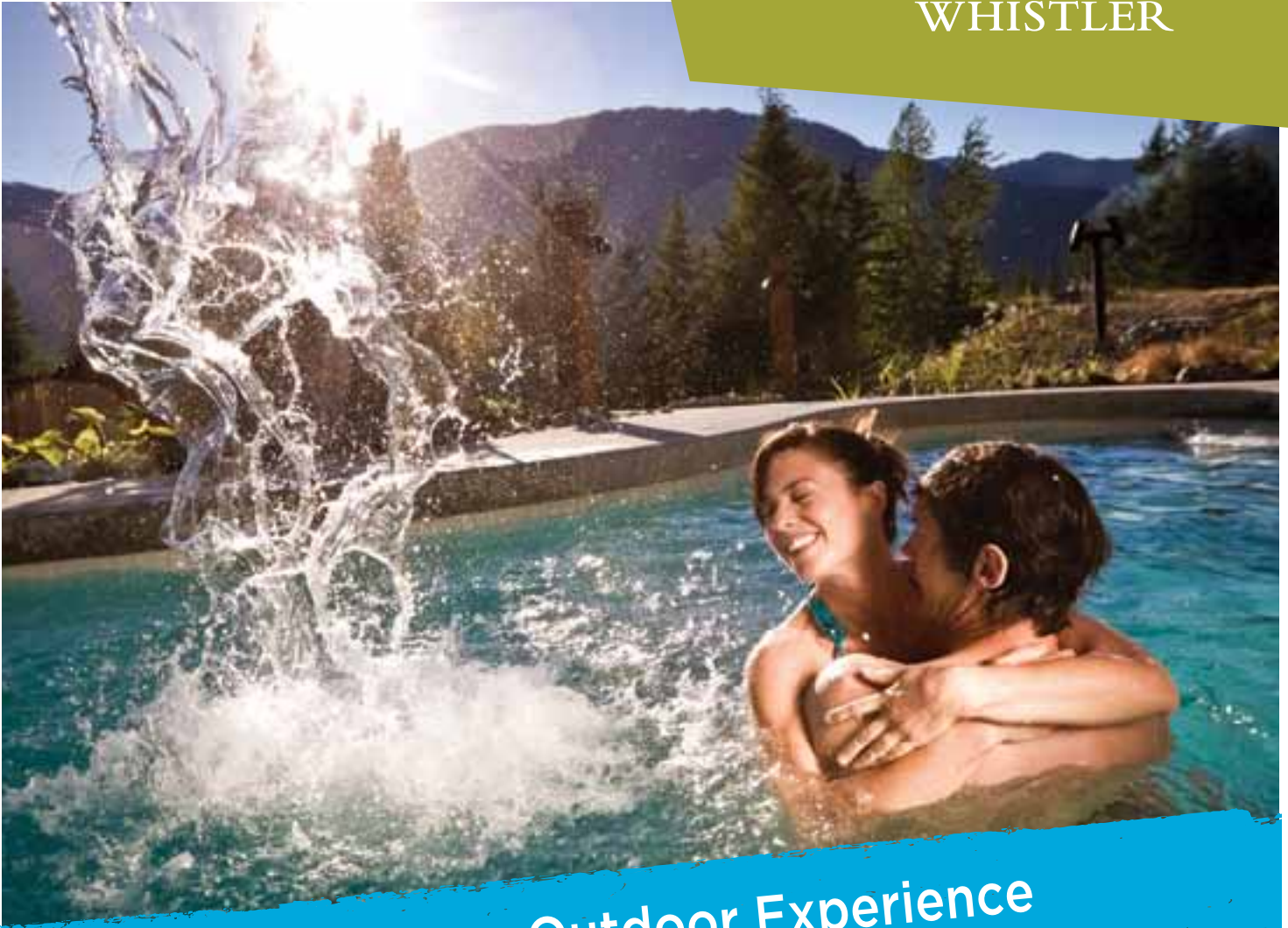
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Feet First

Summer is really only two months long, that's eight weekends. Factor in that we live in a coastal rain forest, and you're probably down to six. Then take into account some buddy or relative getting married when the weather is good, and there goes another one.

Five weekends, that's what's left. Ten sunny days within which you're supposed to fit the other ten months of daydreams and big plans. The camping trip imagined while leafing through magazines in the dentist's waiting room. The hike-in fishing expedition, the surf trip, all the BBQ invitations and countless beach and lake sessions conjured up in your mind to help you survive the cold, dark days of January. Five weekends, ten days – it's never enough.

Of course, the easy solution is to quit your job, hitch a ride on the wind, and let the warm summer nights decide your fate. It's a no-brainer right? You only have one life, why spend it slaving, nose to the grind? Time to make hay while the sun shines, seize the day, be the change, etc, etc, etc...

The other option is to learn to find the moments. Summer is all about the moments, those tiny details, lasting only a second or two, that quintessentially define what this season is all about. The last golden hurrah as the sun sinks into the ocean, the blanket of cool air as you cross over a creek, the beach– small bathing suits and large parties, or an owl hooting outside a moonlit tent.

These fleeting moments are what we remember when the rain starts falling again, what get us through the long winters. These tiny, perfect experiences– glorious, subtle, mind-blowing or ridiculous – these are what make a summer.

Five weekends is 86,400 seconds. That's more than enough perfect summer moments for all of us. ▯

- Feet Banks



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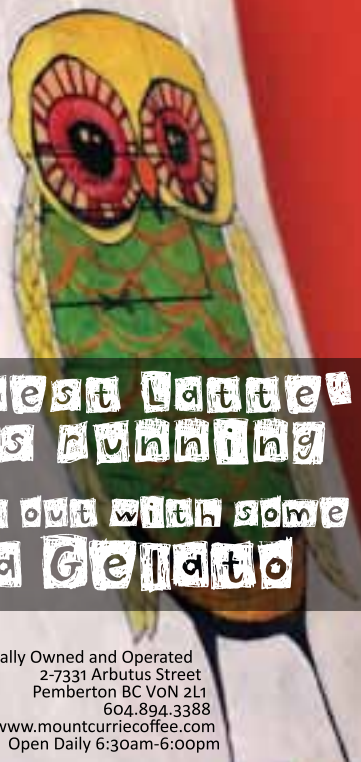
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Rene sends it. TODD LAWSON PHOTO

Parkour leaps back to its roots

In Hollywood these days, parkour is the new kung fu. But instead of karate chops and violence, parkour brings kongs, cat crawls, tic-tacs and dynos into the action mix. Famously delivered to the masses in the intense opening sequence of the 2006 James Bond flick *Casino Royale*, parkour is defined as the aim of moving from one point to another as efficiently and quickly as possible, using the abilities of the human body.

The sport has roots in French military training during WWI, but the contemporary version was "refined" in the alleyways and buildings on the streets of Paris and London. While today's parkour fiends are into wall-scaling and executing unbelievable, running gap-jumps with do-or-die consequences, local traceurs (parkour enthusiasts) are bringing the YouTube sport sensation back to its roots.

"What most people don't know is that the young men who gave birth to parkour actually did their training in the forest," says Parkour BC Director Rene Scavington. "If you dig a little deeper you'll find videos of people practicing in 'natural' environments. We love Squamish because the boulders offer a variety of diverse angles that you won't find on any structures in the city. Plus, the boulder fields are massive, so it's a place we can go and find something new with every single visit."

From the wilderness to the city and back again, parkour's evolution has reverted and reopened a new landscape of possibilities. Now one needs only shoes and a vivid imagination to create a motion masterpiece. Jagged city skyline or towering coastal rainforest, bring it on Mr. Bond. **Pkbc.ca**
—Todd Lawson

Solar-powered Internet in the middle of nowhere

It's a new age-old problem: How can you live in the middle of nowhere but work as if you never left the office? How can you spend all day in the mountains and rainforest, but still be able to file that TPS report at the end of the day?

For the 150 or so residents of the Bridge River Valley, one of the Sea to Sky's most remote and beautiful communities, that problem has been solved thanks to solar- and wind-powered internet towers that bring high-speed wireless to a bunch of people living at their own pace.

"Full-time population has been dropping steadily over the years up here," says Michelle Nortje, of Minto Communications. "The school is always in danger of closing from low enrollment but last year we had some families move up here just because they could work online. That saved the school."

The towers started as a volunteer project but soon the residents obtained government funding and things picked up steam. "This winter was a real test with all the wind and snow-load but everything worked fine," Michelle says. "The snow just slides off. Good thing, because it's my job to go up and shovel if something goes wrong."

For more info go to Mintocomm.ca or check out Southchilcotin.ca to watch daily timelapses of the area.

—Feet Banks





Above: PAT MONTANI PHOTOS. Below: RICH GLASS PHOTO.

Bicycles For Humanity

While North American mountain bike enthusiasts pine for the fanciest new frames with all the flashiest components, Whistler resident Pat Montani is looking the other direction. Back in 2005 Pat and his wife Brenda came up with the idea of shipping containers full of our old bikes to Africa and started Bicycles for Humanity.

"An individual or family in Uganda," Pat explains, "can do three to five times more with a bike. Sometimes these people are walking 10 kilometres just to get fresh water. A bike gets them there faster, allows them to carry three to five times more cargo – food, firewood, whatever. It'd be like someone coming up and giving you or me two pick-up trucks with endless fuel."

With 25 chapters set up across North America, Bicycles for Humanity has shipped about 23,000 bikes thus far. The containers are also full of parts and tools and become instant bike shops wherever they end up, creating employment and ensuring the bikes stay functional.

In May, the Whistler chapter of Bicycles for Humanity raised enough funds to send two containers (1000 bikes) as part of the Karamoja Bicycle Initiative working with cycling legend Paul Sherwin.

"We stay grassroots and 100 percent of the funds raised go to the cause," Pat explains. "It's a movement, it grows itself. I think people reach an age where they hit a wall between success and significance. Where they wake up and say, 'What the hell have I done with my life?' Old bikes that would be five bucks here at a garage sale, the old hard tails with Shimano gears, those are gold over there. They can run them for 40 years. Those bikes are survival."

Hit up Bicycles-for-humanity.org for more info or go to Mountainlifemag.ca to watch a video of Pat and the Karamoja Bicycle Initiative.

– Feet Banks



Japan's Got Style

The proof is in the toothpick. Japanese toothpicks have that little carved end, like they were painstakingly chiseled on a teeny tiny lathe. It looks both cool and sophisticated but, true to Japanese style, there is function behind the aesthetic.

Once the toothpick has been used, the end is broken off to show it is no longer clean, then the little end is used as a holder, to keep the dirty toothpick off the table. If their toothpicks contain this much thought and design, imagine how awesome the rest of Japan is.

The courage and resilience shown by the Japanese people in the days after a devastating earthquake hit their country last March is astounding and inspirational. Shortly after the disaster the community of Whistler rallied together and raised almost \$72,000 over two days but the Red Cross can always use more help with earthquake/tsunami relief. The worst of times can bring out the best in people. Redcross.ca

–Feet Banks

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Chromag Bikes

North Shore Billet's prototype all-mountain stem. STEVE FISHER PHOTO.

"...With a little help from my friends."

Behind an unassuming single door in Whistler's Function Junction, the Chromag Bikes warehouse combines a relaxing Rasta vibe with intense engineering excellence. With a warehouse crew of just three, founder/owner Ian Ritz has been able to make a big splash in a competitive industry. In two words, Chromag is all about relevance and quality.

Building bikes in a small mountain town isn't easy. Whistler is hardly an industrial hub, and dealing with distant manufacturers is a slow, expensive process. Thankfully mountain biking is a community sport, and some of Ian's friends are industry players too. And better yet, they're local.

As a previous owner of Evolution Whistler bike shop, Ian had seen plenty of mass-market products that just didn't work. He began dabbling with his own designs, and made a key connection with Mike Truelove, a frame builder with over 25 years experience welding for companies like Kona, Rocky Mountain and Brodie.

"I met Mike and got this idea going," Ian says. "A few designs quickly grew into a new company and we're still working together today." Ian left the retail world back in August 2003 to focus solely on Chromag. Mike Truelove's Squamish-based MT Metal Works helped develop those first Chromag prototypes, and today his skilled hands build four of the company's signature frames - the Sakura, Samurai, TRL and Kamui models.

Chromag's growth also triggered the symbiotic expansion of a nearby machine shop. Located just a few pedals away, Whistler-based North Shore Billet (NSB) is best known in the bike world for high-quality accessories like brake adaptors and derailleur hangers. NSB uses computer-guided CNC machines to mill products from solid blocks of metal, an ideal process for building strong, precisely shaped bike parts.

Owners Pete Hammons and Chris Allen are good friends with Ian, who once even pulled a few shifts at NSB to improve his designs and is now their biggest customer. Communication and quality control couldn't be easier.

"Ian will come up here for a coffee and drop in, see how things are going," says Chris. "We touch base on almost a daily basis."

On the surface, this is just a group of riding buddies that love to tinker with their toys. But like so many local success stories, these innovators and entrepreneurs are shaping the way of the future in their industry and have found a way to turn their passions into profits. Each has taken their own route, but by tapping into one another's skill-sets- both on and off the trails, these companies have found a way to make it big... all with a little help from their friends. **Chromagbikes.com**

- Steve Fisher



Pay Parking makes for good Bike Polo. RICH GLASS PHOTO.

Bike Polo rolls into Whistler

It was invented in Ireland in 1891 but in the spring of 2011 Bike Polo finally rolled into Whistler. And not surprisingly, it arrived under the feet of the Troutmen, a Whistler-born leisure club/charity tour de force.

"The freshly paved day-skier pay parking lots are perfect," explains Troutmen president and founder Sheldon Steckman. "They're huge and always empty."

Sheldon had been hearing about Hardcourt Bike Polo for the past few years and explains how he got the activity going locally. "I YouTube'd it, figured out how to make twelve mallets, called a few people and we went and played. It was easy."

While every city seems to have its own specific rules of gameplay, the Whistler bike polo-ers keep things pretty loose. "Don't be a dick is the main rule," Sheldon points out. "And if your foot touches the ground you have to ride out of the play and then come back. We played 5 on 5 and then 3 on 3, I think that is the best, less crowded. Our game quality improves every time."

The Troutmen International Club of Leisure is well known for cheeseburger picnics and swingbikes, bikes with independent, steerable back wheels. "They turn really well," Sheldon says of the hand-made swingbikes. "You can really outmaneuver, but a regular bike can sprint better. It seems like one swingbike per team might be the best configuration. That might be our niche – swingbike polo – but we are playing everything by ear. Half the time we can't even keep score because we're laughing so much."

The Troutmen are a registered club with Leagueofbikepolo.com and also rock their own site Troutmen.org

– Feet Banks

Correction

Last issue in "Siberia" we printed a couple photos of Craig Kelly that had accidentally been scanned backwards from the original slides. Craig is riding goofy in some shots and regular in others– oops. Our apologies to Craig's legacy and all his fans. We'll try to be more on-point in the future.

– Feet Banks

ADVENTURES UP BLACKCOMB MTN.

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SALES DESK: In the Carleton Lodge beside the Longhorn

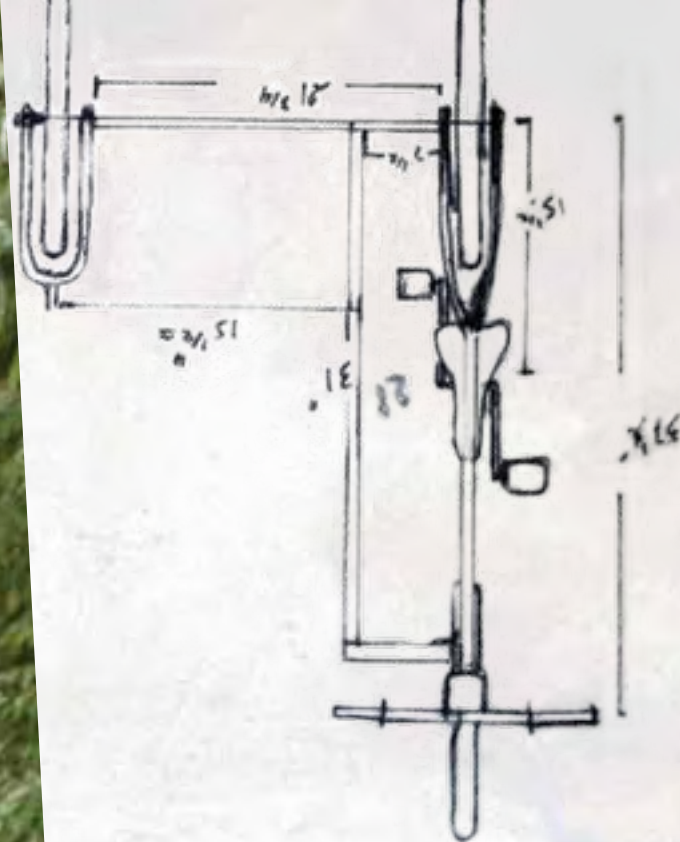
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DIY Sidehack

“Trust your pilot, respect your monkey.”

Story and photos by Brian Finestone

The potential for disaster kicks in as soon as the start-gate drops and four bikes carrying eight grown men come charging down the ramp. The first corner is only wide enough to accommodate a couple bikes and if two pilots don't ease off the pedals, they're going to stampede their monkeys into a pile up. Then the only race will be to see who can get untangled first and ride the rest of the track to the finish line. BMX sidehack racing can be one of those “Good idea, Bad call” sports, but damned if it isn't fun.

Finding a sidehack is not easy so building your own is a better option for anyone wanting to get in on the action. Parts are easy, but expertise is rare and to make my dream of three-wheeled glory come true I needed someone with welding and math skills. Welding wizard Anthony “Anto” Orts was recruited for the design and build. “I'm always open for a challenge,” Anto says. “I had to think about weight, strength, balance and wheel alignment. It was a cool project.”


My assembled pile of scrap aluminum, miscellaneous bike bits and three wheels didn't intimidate Anto nor did the looming deadline of a fast-approaching race for the 2010 BC provincial title. Anto finished the custom sidehack with a few days to spare, but first we had to test it.

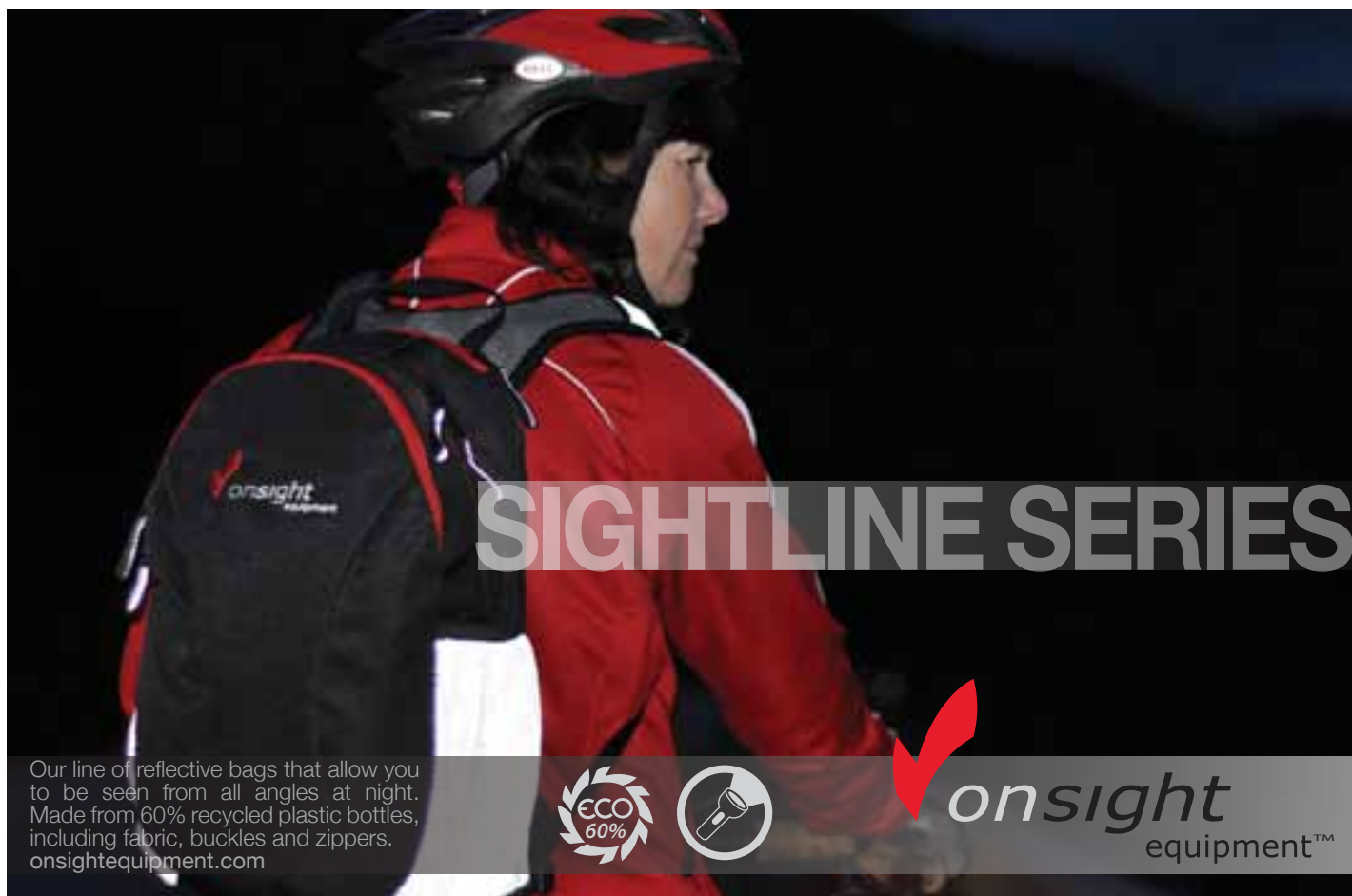
Piloting a hack is no easy task; it takes years to master the offset wheel's feeling and bizarre pivot point when making asymmetric turns. “I tried to pilot and ran off the track on every berm and roller,” says Marty Gautrey, BMX dad, chief bike-park builder and all around good sport, “but I wanted to be on the team.” Looks like I found my monkey.

Pilot and monkey need to work seamlessly together. The pilot handles all the pedaling and steering while the monkey adds momentum by pumping through rollers, popping jumps and doing critical leans in the corners. It's a symbiotic relationship and the races are won in the banked corners where pilot and monkey must have complete trust in each other as counterweights. Knowing your partner and the tricycle are integral in keeping at least two wheels on the ground at all times but the adrenaline and laughs that accompany two grown men drifting three bike wheels while sliding around a corner can't be beat either.

Originally cobbled together in the '70s for kids to mimic the antics of grownups on motorized sidecar combos, the BMX sidehack soon gathered its own momentum and a place on the newly formed American Bicycle Association BMX racing circuit (proof that humans will race anything). Sidehack racing is often seen as a sideshow freak act known more for NASCAR-esque pileups and rodeo clown antics but to the racers it feels akin to racing a gladiator chariot combined with a wobbly-wheeled shopping cart.

In our first season racing the Dark Love sidehack, Marty and I saw competition only a handful of times. But racing against experienced teams on factory-built bikes, we still rolled away with trophies at BC Provincial Championships and the Canadian Grand National Championships. “I don't care if we get beat,” remarked one rider in the gate at the ABA Grands. “I am just happy to have another team to race.”


For 2011 the Dark Love team is going to break out of strictly racing and make regular appearances at the skatepark and Airdome. Someone has to be the first to stomp the Sidehack Flip and Superman Sidehack. Are such feats possible? Surely. Anything can be done if you live by the age-old sidehack mantra, “Trust your pilot, respect your monkey.” 



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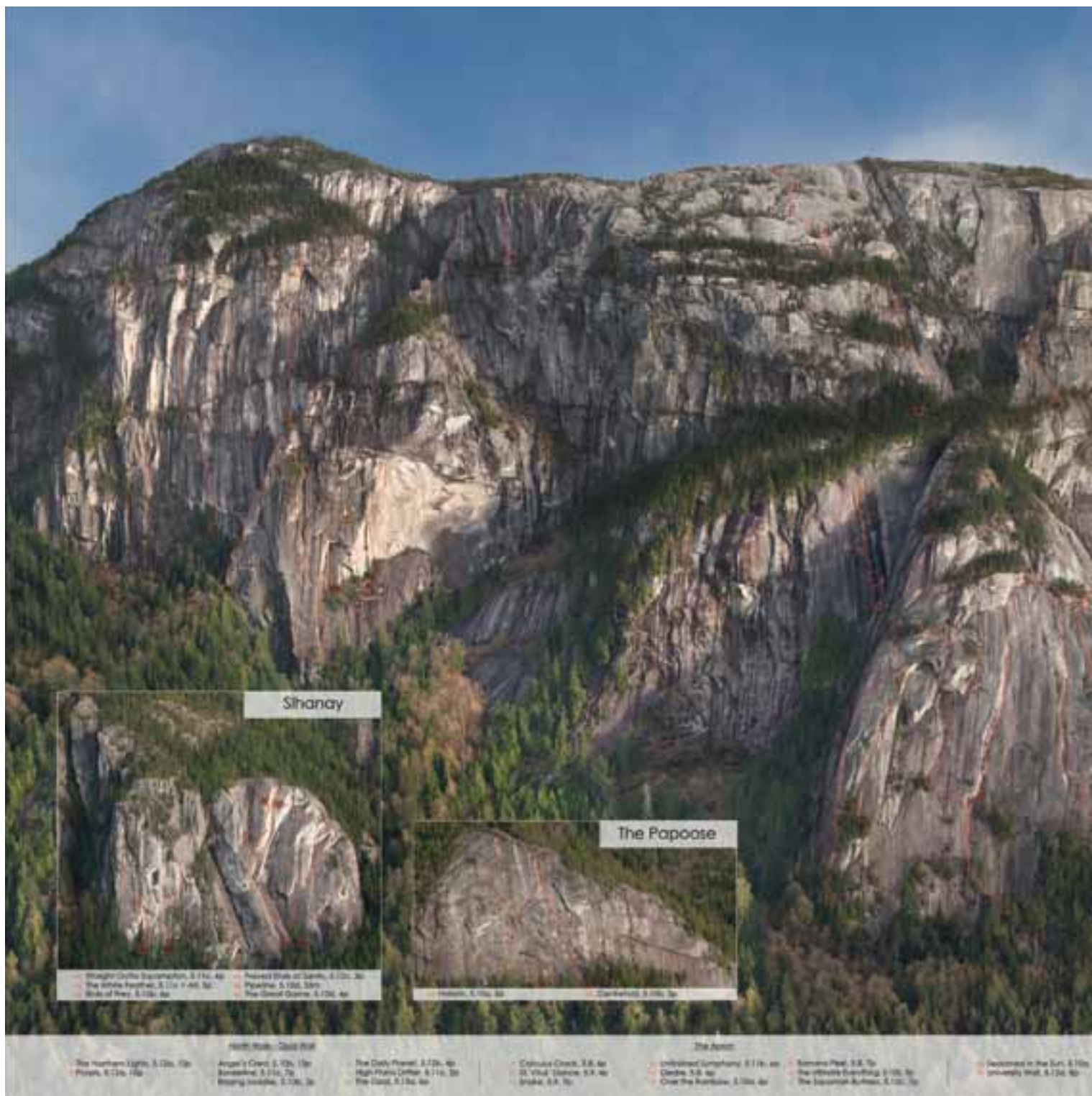


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50 CLASSICS, AND THE FUTURE IS OPEN

By Will Stanhope
Photo by Tim Tallevi

The 50 Classic Climbs poster is a high-definition reflection of the past, of routes established, well-known features and recognizable names. It's a full-scale look at the Stawamus Chief and the surrounding crags, some of the most impressive and easily accessed granite features in North America.

Rock climbing got kick-started in Squamish in 1959 when Fred Beckey, Hank Mather and Don Claunch established the now-classic multi-pitched Squamish Buttress. More than 50 years later, climbers are still scouring The Chief for new lines. Just last year, Canada's most prolific rock climber and Squamish local Sonnie Trotter partnered with American photographer Ben Moon to establish a variation to the upper pitches of the "Squamish Buttress". When guiding, Trotter

found that parties perpetually bottlenecked at the tricky 5.10c pitch near the top. So armed with shovels, pruning shears and a haul bag of motivation, he and Moon set out to 'garden' a few brand-new pitches to ease traffic on the much loved classic. The result, the cheekily named "Squamish Butt Face", is an easily accessible 5.9 route to the top of The Chief.

I find it delightfully ironic that Canada's strongest rock climber put in days of sore

50 CLASSIC SQUAMISH CLIMBS

Shannon Falls

- Laurel River Detachment, 5.10a, R
 - Morgan Canyon Falls, 5.11c, R
 - Hungry Wolf, 5.11b, R

The Island Trail - Haven Pitons, 5.10b, R - The Island Wall, 5.11a + A2, R - The Brown Channel, 5.11a, R - The Left Side, 5.10a, R - Climb Project, 5.10a, R - Peacock's Route, 5.10a, R	- Soapstone, 5.10a, R - Blank Canvas, 5.10a, R - Ruckelshaus, 5.11a, R - Millennium Putnam, 5.11a, R - The Outpost, 5.11c, R	The Cathedral - Freewave, 5.11a, R - Brothers in Arms, 5.10b, R - Ark Run, 5.10a + A2, R - Midnight Run, 5.10a, R - Cathedral Wall, 5.11a + A2, R - Callisto, 5.11b, R	The Subarctic - Sunken Stone, 5.10a, R - Shady Grove, 5.10a, R - A Canyon of empty stone, 5.9, R
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Photographer Tim Tallevi shot and composited over 300 images to produce the poster above. He worked closely with ACMG Rock Guide Eric Hughes, who has been climbing since 2000

At around 2 p.m. on a sunny summer afternoon, the sun hits the west-facing Grand Wall and provides me with my favorite time to ruminate on the possibilities. When the afternoon light

Buy the poster at any decent outdoors shop or hit up **50classicsquamishclimbs.com**

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DIPPER CREEK

LOCAL KAYAKERS DISCOVER AN INSTANT CLASSIC, FIVE YEARS IN THE MAKING.

By Feet Banks

There isn't as much untamed wilderness left these days, particularly in a zone like the Sea to Sky Corridor where committed adventurers are constantly exploring and pushing into the wild in search of the next big thing.

But four Squamish kayakers recently discovered and paddled what might be one of the most difficult and terrifying river runs ever, Dipper Creek.

"It is a Class V+, near the limit of what is paddle-able," says Bryan Smith, a local adventure filmmaker who first noticed the creek while aerial scouting the upper Squamish River in 2005. "Flying over, we saw these two big waterfalls that really hooked us. For paddlers, waterfalls are like what big couloirs are in the ski world, they get us fired up."

But the Coast Mountain landscape looks a lot different once you get back on the ground. "We had to keep the creek a secret for two years while we tried to figure out how to

Ben Hawthorne runs 'Big Dipper'. STEVE ARNS PHOTO.



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Bryan at his day job. NICK SOPCZAK PHOTO.

"THIS IS ONE
OF THE MOST
TERRIFYING
CREEK RUNS
EVER. PERIOD."
BRYAN SMITH.

get in there and if it was even possible," Bryan says. Along with friends/paddlers Todd Gillman, Shane Robinson, and Chris Tretwold, Bryan returned to Dipper Creek seven times over the next three years, bush-whacking, camping and scouting in order to determine how to access the creek, and if it was even possible to run.

"At first, every time we went up there we would cliff out on the river right. Dipper is a 600-foot gorge and that right wall is completely vertical," Bryan explains. "Then some logging activity opened up a road on river left and we got the access we needed to really get a look at it."

What they found was, "one of the most terrifying creek runs ever. Period." Bryan says, "It's a four or five kilometre stretch with fifteen waterfalls up to 70 or 80 feet. The creek is fifteen feet at the widest point and narrows down to just four feet of steep whitewater, and because of the huge gorge walls there are sections that are incredibly committing—when you're in, there is no backing out. We knew it was the next big thing but it was a bit bigger than we wanted to chew on. We leapfrogged down it, whoever was feeling good would paddle a section, but at one point we actually got scared and wigged out."


The crew packed up, got in the car and started driving home. "I'm 35 this year," Bryan says, "and I was thinking maybe we have to leave this for the next generation."

But on the retreat Chris Tretwold had a change of heart. "Chris said, 'turn around. I can rap down that one part and if that is what we are scared of I can get us around it.' We went back up, got through what we later called Vertigo Gorge, and it was amazing, we finished the run," Bryan recalls.

In the tight-knit whitewater community, Dipper Creek has become an instant classic, luring the most serious athletes in the sport to Squamish each fall to take a shot at the Sea to Sky's long-hidden gem.

"The thing about a run like this," Bryan explains, "is that once you get in the water and take the first stroke you are so acutely focused in the moment, that you get this overwhelming sense of calmness. All other thoughts disappear. There is no room for hesitation or fear, or you will fail. You're just thinking, I've got five strokes to the lip of that waterfall, right stroke, left stroke, ride that lip."

Dipper Creek is easy to get to and usually runs low enough late in September or early October to attempt it. But paddler beware, it's no joke up there.

"I have never been back," Bryan admits. "It's a classic discovery—to find new stuff is not easy, and we're proud to leave this mark on our sport. But I'm not sure I'm really ever interested in doing it again." 



Check out Bryan's video from the Dipper's first descent at Mountainlifemag.ca

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Get Up, Stand Up

**No bike?
No waves?
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Introducing the
Four Lakes
Paddle Trail**

By Jess Smith
Photos by Todd Lawson

There are few things more appealing than a surfboard, a bikini, beers and some great waves on a sunny summer day. But while Whistler is well known for enabling many recreational pursuits, we don't have a surf break. However, there is an inland solution to getting that summer boarding fix – just stand up.

The Whistler Valley is primo for paddleboarding. A pristine four-lake system and the swift-running River of Golden Dreams acts like a watery Valley Trail offering a longer, more peaceful, green-as-it-gets commute or just a sweet way to soak up some summer.

Traced back to ancient Hawaiians and Polynesians, stand up paddleboarding (SUP) gained popularity on the beaches and surf scenes of 1950s California. Today, a new variety of boards, available for calm-water cruising, have allowed non-coastal habitants the opportunity to take part in the exhilarating and social experience that those early wave riders coveted.

"Every lake has its unique qualities," notes Marie-Soleil Boisvert, a local SUP'er. "And they all line up so why not link them together?" Along with boyfriend Cory Leis, Marie-Soleil would act as our guide on the maiden voyage of the Four Lakes Paddle Trail, a day-long paddling/portaging adventure beginning at the southern tip of Alpha Lake and finishing on the public docks of Green Lake. Ace MacKay-Smith and Dave Heighway sign on as models/people-with-nothing better-to-do-that-day and armed with sweet oversized boards and 'longer than regular' wooden paddles, the six of us drop in at "The Point", a popular fishing spot on the southwest corner of Alpha, the southern-most lake in town. With some mid-May sunshine giving us a taste of the summer to come, our intrepid brigade set out to brave the until-recently frozen waters that lie ahead.

Quietly paddling Alpha Lake, with dogs on the beach and the mountains in the background, it's easy to truly appreciate the surroundings. Marie-Soleil points out that short, quick paddle strokes rather than long leisurely ones will help my technique and get me across this first lake quicker. At Alpha Lake Park we strap the boards to a two-wheeled compactable transporter and head up the Valley Trail to Nita Lake.

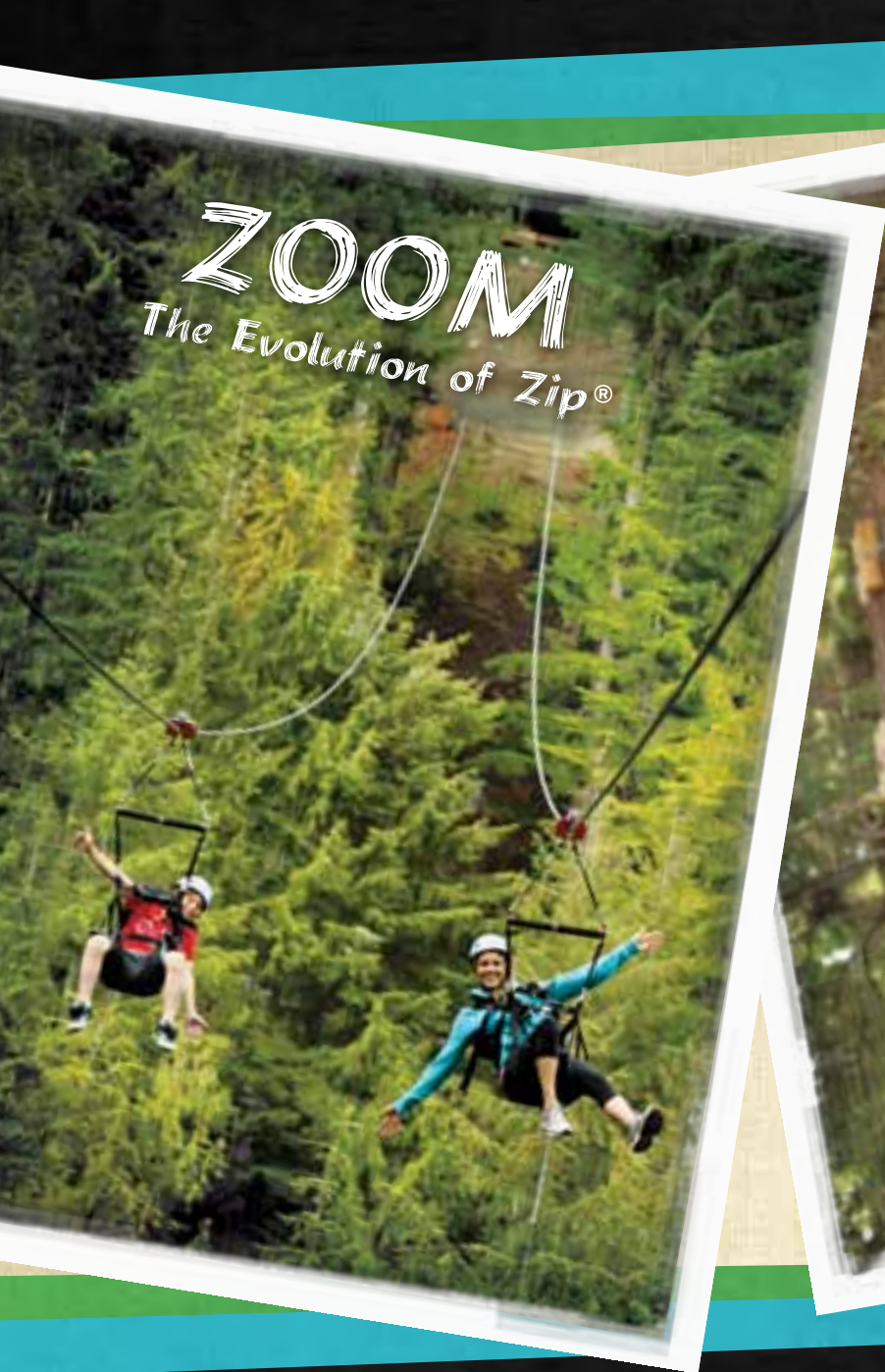
One of the smallest lakes in Whistler, Nita is also one of the coldest. No one falls in and, finding the rhythm, even us beginners make quick work of the calm waters and soon we're ready for our second (and final) portage.

The recommended route for the Nita-to-Alta Lake portage is to pull out at the far northeast corner of Nita, where the lake meets the Valley Trail. We do not do this. Rather, in order to get the requisite "train-track" photo, we claw up an unstable shale wall covered in mushy spring dirt before arriving on the tracks. Hilarious, but not recommended.



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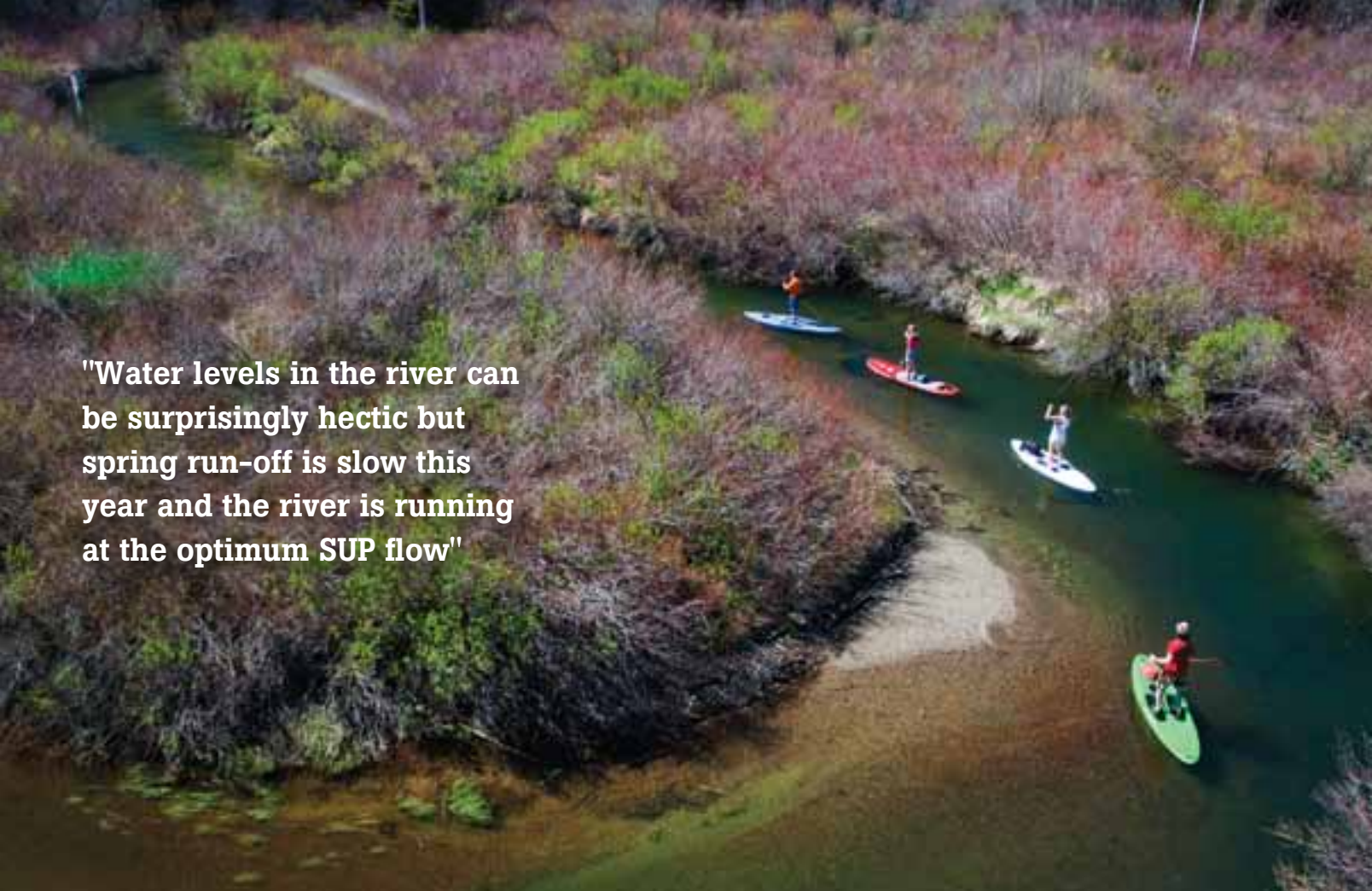
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"Water levels in the river can be surprisingly hectic but spring run-off is slow this year and the river is running at the optimum SUP flow"



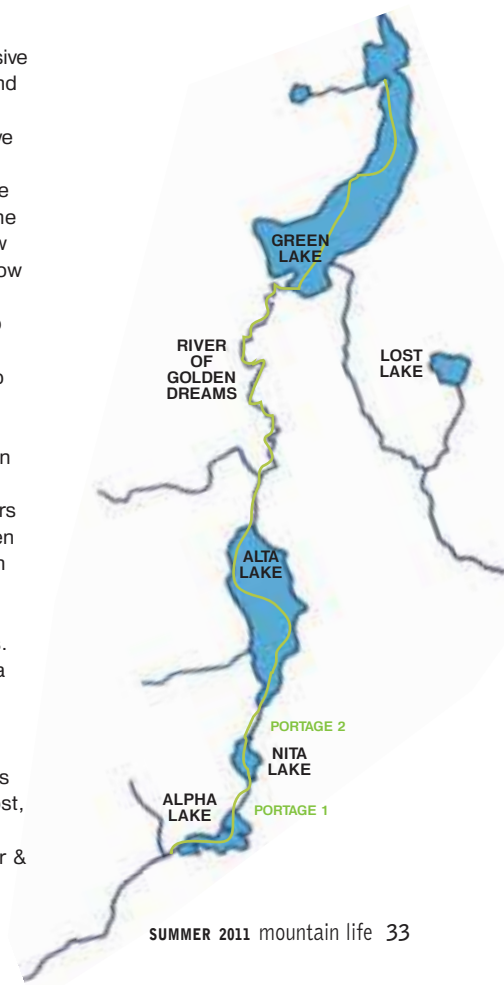
We convoy quickly to Alta Lake, a much more expansive body of water, where we compete with wind and waves and begin to learn the intricacies of this powerful yet peaceful sport. Standing up simply gives you a different perspective than that of a canoe or kayak.

After a lunch stop at Rainbow Park we slide into the current of the River of Golden Dreams. Water levels in the river can be surprisingly hectic but spring run-off is slow this year and the river is running at the optimum SUP flow for the five-kilometre meander out to glacier-fed Green Lake. On the river, all previously learned skills come into play. Tips include bending onto the knees if a rapid or small drop appears (the lower your centre of gravity is to the board, the more stability) and if you fall, aim for the water not the board– it's colder but it hurts less.

The river's gently sweeping bends and glassy-green water are almost exotically intoxicating– like walking through a forest but not making a sound. After two hours we gently flow out into the picturesque vastness of Green Lake. Ice cold to the touch, the lake radiates beauty with Wedge, Armchair and Whistler Blackcomb mountains looming over it. A quick 1.2km crossing takes us to the north end of the lake and our previously parked vehicles.

After 6 hours and 13 kilometers we're a little stiff, a bit burnt, but thoroughly stoked. The Four Lakes Paddle Trail is a perfect one-day mix of tranquility, scenery, camaraderie, exercise, adventure and accomplishment. We've covered almost every lake in Whistler. In the words of Ace, "The only one we missed is Lost Lake and it's lost, so..." 📺

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Free at Last

Rocky Mountain's pioneering
Freriders get their due

By Leslie Anthony

At the 2010 Interbike show in Las Vegas, the original Rocky Mountain "Freriders," Richie Schley, Wade Simmons and Brett Tippie became the first freeriders uploaded to the Mountain Biking Hall of Fame. As it should be, since they were the boundary-pushing architects of the mountain-bike freeride movement, a Kamloops-born trio whose efforts were responsible for everything from the creation and wild success of bike parks and events like Crankworx and the Red Bull Rampage, to the movies you watch, the photos you ogle, the bikes you ride, the way you ride them — even the clothes you wear when riding.

To put the fineness of a deserved point on it, the Freriders put the "mountain" back in mountain biking during a time when lycra-clad cross-country and downhill racing were the silly — but dead serious — *ne plus ultra** of a young sport that had already turned its back on exploring the edges of its potential. The Freriders' relaxed, balls-out credo and skillful style sparked a de facto worldwide revolution.

And yet the HOF induction got precious little press on this continent. Some local news, dribs and drabs on bike-oriented websites, but nothing in proportion to the magnitude of the boys' impact. Indeed living legends don't always fare well under the North American media's eternal scramble to erect the next hero. And yet in Europe, where historical influence is king and the Freriders remain identifiable, poster-signing heroes, they practically organized parades. Why? That's a good question. Or at least a good story.

The year 1996 may have featured the debut of Olympic mountain biking, but a contra-movement called "freeriding" was already taking shape in the hinterlands. Whistler-based cinematographer Christian Begin had traveled to Kamloops to film BMX champ-turned-offroad-mountain-biker Richie Schley for Greg Stump's Specialized-commissioned movie, *Pulp Traction*. Schley's pal Brett Tippie had begged his way onto

Schley & Tippie
1996

ERIC BERGER PHOTO.



Richie Schley
1996

ERIC BERGER PHOTO.

"We used to joke and dream about ripping up a mountain full of trails on our bikes like we did on skis and boards.

Eventually, one year, the Bike Park happened! And now there's parks everywhere—but the oldest and best is still in Whistler." – Brett Tippie

the shoot by dropping a mind-boggling line. Together with childhood buddy Craig Olsson, the trio showed Begin the goods and delivered Stump some wild but controversial footage. Controversial because it depicted some radical new ideas: no trails; descending natural terrain; man against mountain; erosion concerns by Sierra Club members made Specialized nervous enough to edit the freeriding in the final cut. But after *Pulp Traction* landed on a desk at Bike magazine things started to happen. Photographer Eric Berger — accompanying Begin on another mission to Kamloops for a new film (*Tao of Riding*) with Tippie and Schley — produced a cover story in Bike called "Sick," and the revolution was on.

The Olympics had launched mountain biking fully into the public eye: World Cup was booming, the industry, too. But some riders clearly just wanted to ride. No numbers, no comps, no spandex, no shaved legs — just flowing down whatever they found under their tires. The rebellion struck a punk chord, and after "Sick" dropped some insane photos on an unsuspecting public, and *Tao of Riding* took it to another level, Schley and Tippie were heroes. Together with Kamloops downhiller Wade Simmons they garnered the first mountain-bike freeride sponsorships from Rocky Mountain. Almost immediately, however, Rocky was at the centre of a copyright lawsuit by Cannondale over the word "freeride." An auspicious start for freeriding, but it got people's attention. To sidestep the terminology minefield, Rocky busted out a few afro wigs and ushered in the Foriders: three fun-loving, hard-riding guys with diverse backgrounds. A face for the off-trail descents, huge air, massive drops, and maximum style of radical freeriding. And the boys indeed had a wild ride with the whole thing.

"The Foriders helped raise awareness of freeride ripping for fun at a pivotal time," recalls Tippie, "and it had a huge effect, even promoting sales of big, full-suspension bikes."

The question was what were riders who weren't into downhill racing going to do with these bikes? If you live in Whistler you know what happened next.

...continued on pg 38



Wade Simmons
2005

JOHN GIBSON PHOTO.



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Wade Simmons
2005

JOHN GIBSON PHOTO.



Brett Tippie
1996

ERIC BERGER PHOTO.

"We were all over the ski hill shuttling and shooting for years and bugging friends who worked for Whistler to let us mountain bikers up the lifts," recalls Tippie. "We used to joke and dream about ripping up a mountain full of trails on our bikes like we did on skis and boards. Eventually, one year, the Bike Park happened! And now there's parks everywhere—but the oldest and best is still in Whistler."

More importantly, the Foriders were also the face of a new lifestyle involving road trips and big personalities, loose clothes and open minds. Photography and cinematography took off. Magazines and movie companies flourished. The usual paradox of non-competition competitions took hold. Critical mass tipped the whole thing into the mainstream and the rest, if you've ever attended Crankworx or the Red Bull Rampage, is ongoing history.

It may have been sick, but the Foriders re-democratized a sport. 

***EDITORS NOTE** – Generally, as a favour to some of our younger readers, we shy away from using Latin in Mountain Life. It is, after all, a dead language used only by priests, wierdos and scientists. Les Anthony is a scientist however, so we gave him a pass on this one. Ne plus ultra essentially means "highest point of achievement."

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Mike at work. RUSSELL DALBY PHOTO.

MIKE TYLER

Letting life fall into place

By Katherine Weed

"There is nothing more beautiful than nature," says 43-year-old carver/sculptor Mike Tyler as he scrapes and chisels at a massive eagle sculpture in his home-based Mount Currie shop. "I just stand out there and look around and go 'this is amazing'; it's what really drives me. Everywhere you look, the way a rock has formed or a tree has grown...I really try to mimic that beauty in my work."

Working mainly in soapstone and bronze, Mike carves with a unique vision and strikingly lifelike detail. "My style is different from a lot of people's," he explains. "I like to take animals and carve them within a natural setting. I don't want to just carve an abstract bear, I want to carve a bear so that it's represented in its environment." Indeed, one of his most magnificent bronze installations (found on Treetop Lane in Whistler) depicts a bear seated atop a waterfall, fishing for salmon. Another large bronze piece (found in Whistler Village next to Millennium Place) places a mother bear with her cub on a granite slab.

This naturalistic approach has been striking chords within the Sea to Sky art scene for the past ten years despite (or perhaps thanks to) the fact that Mike is totally self-taught.

"I didn't have any preconceived ideas about what was or wasn't normal," Mike says, adding that he never had any mental barriers because no one ever showed him how to "be an artist."

Instead, while working in construction in the late 90s he purchased a small piece of soapstone at a music festival and carved a bear. The piece received so many compliments he bought more stones and continued to carve, eventually taking his work to a gallery in Whistler, where the gallery attendant surprised him with a monetary offer.





"I remember going in there and the girl asked me how much I wanted for my work. Some customers in there at the time seemed really interested in what I had going on. And one of them said, 'wow, you're going to be rich.'"

Has this prophecy of wealth come true for the Ontario transplant who moved to Whistler in 1988 and lived in a van his first two summers in town? "Not in the way that guy meant," Mike laughs, "but yeah, I lead a very rich life."

To offset the "starving artist" effect while honing his craft Mike continued to work construction and eventually started up his own successful landscape design company. Mike's precision stonework, one-of-a-kind firepits, archways, rockscapes and interlocking brickwork adorn properties from Whistler to Vancouver Island.


This blend of skills means Mike not only has the ability to craft beautiful stone and bronze pieces but also the knowledge and experience to create an entire landscape within which his carvings can sit. Plus, landscaping with a Bobcat allows him to move and work with much larger pieces of stone as well as construct his own outdoor art installations.

"It's a nice combination," Mike says, "definitely a bit of a niche; there are lots of people who do bronze work and carving, and lots who do water features and construction, but very few who can do both."

The giant bronze eagle Mike is sculpting has wingspan over two meters and is one of his largest projects to date,

originally commissioned by a company in Squamish as a public art project. The deal later fell through, but after spending over a thousand hours painstakingly carving each individual feather ("So many feathers!" he exclaims), Mike couldn't bear the thought of throwing it all away. "I'd spent so much time and energy on that eagle that I couldn't just sit there and watch it deteriorate."

He's decided to finish the piece with the intention of creating a water feature display in the front yard of his property in Mount Currie, along with copies of his other bronze works, including his many salmon and his bears. "Things don't always work out the way you plan them," he shrugs, "but what are you supposed to do, give up?"

Mike Tyler's story is one of natural progression. This is reflected in his personality, his good humour, and especially his work. Mike isn't a card-carrying "artist" worrying about making a statement or embodying a scene. He's just a mellow, talented and creative person who "loves to get out of doors, work with my hands, and make things." The beauty around him inspires Mike Tyler to create more beauty. It's as simple as that. 

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Mike's eagle and other bronze carvings will be on display in Mount Currie at 2008 Highway 99. The eagle is presently for sale.



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Glory Holes, Helicopters and other tales from the Bella Coola Valley



Story by Feet Banks
Photography by Mark Gribbon

Sundown on the Atnarko River and it isn't one of those just-off-the-road spots. The bats are already circling above as we push through neck-deep grass towards the water, hoping for a few more casts before night settles on the Bella Coola Valley. Garrett Newkirk, a born-and-raised local, leads the way, whistling loudly every dozen steps or so. I can hear Mark swishing behind me. Behind him is nothing but bush, we hope.

"This is bear country, eh?" I ask. It seems like it would be.

"We're on a grizzly trail," Garrett says, flat calm.

"I forgot the bear spray." I'm almost expecting a 700-pound beast to immediately leap out and punish us, the tourists.

"I've got one in my pocket," Garrett says calmly, whistling once more before adding, "But only one."

The spot is bear-free and fantastic. The ragged, snowy peaks of BC's Coast Range tower over massive cedars on the western shoreline and pine-covered granite cliffs rise sharply in the east, the edge of the Chilcotin Plateau. The river is wide and clear and, like the rainforest that lines its shore, chock-full of life.

Throughout the year, nine species of sport fish live in the Atnarko – all five Pacific salmon (spring, pink, coho, chum, and sockeye) return each season plus two steelhead runs and year-round rainbow, cutthroat, and dolly varden trout. I get knee-deep in the clear green flow and fire a couple off with the bait caster, aiming for one of the big spring salmon surfacing on the seam of the fast water and the eddy.

The locals are out. Upstream a family of four packs gear into an orange inflatable raft and pushes off for home, a floating commute. Garrett runs into some buddies and they stand on shore and shoot the shit – talk of parties and work shifts peppered with fish tales. "So big it broke my rod" or "We were just donating hooks to the bottom." One of the nice things about fishing is that the stories often ring familiar regardless of where you might be.

My go-to fishing-trip buddy/photographer Mark Gribbon and I are never introduced or spoken to directly but the mood on the beach is friendly. No one seems to care that we're obvious tourists, perhaps because we don't hook into any salmon.

Three days later Mark and I skip the five-star dinner at the Tweedsmuir Park Lodge and return on our own to that same spot – again without bear spray but this time with fly rods. We have the beach to ourselves and I land the biggest trout of the trip. By this point, I'm totally hooked on Bella Coola.

* * *



Bella Coola. The words sound exotic and yet familiar. They slip from your mouth like a caught-and-released fish eases back into the river's flow. Bella Coola, the name, is magic.

Bella Coola, the town, is not as nice. It's literally the end of the road, a functional fishing/logging/farming settlement plunked atop a native village site right where Highway 20 twists into the Pacific Ocean after slicing across the Chilcotin Plateau as if shot from a bow.

Bella Coola the town is so small the red light district doesn't have any lights. In fact, the locals proudly point out that you can go 450 kilometres in any direction without ever seeing a traffic light.

But Bella Coola the valley, the rivers, the mountains, the everything-else, is almost indescribably awesome. This is the bush, the boonies, the real Beautiful British Columbia. A thick, unpopulated rainforest cut by twisting rivers and swampy deltas infested with grizzly, moose, deer, cougars, fish, and all kinds of history.

Bella Coola is where the mighty Pacific stretches her limbs with fjords bringing storms and salty spray in another 100 kilometres from the coast proper. It's where the Chilcotin Plateau, a massive empty swath of ranchland and burned-out or bug-killed pine forests, falls into the ocean and re-emerges as thick, tree-covered coastal mountains on steroids.

This is a place where you can watch the cycle of life happen in real time with every salmon run and it's the ancestral home of the Nuxalk natives,

a people world-renowned for iconic art, masks, and supernatural legends. The Nuxalk still teach the traditional language in schools that sit just a short hike from ancient petroglyphs chiseled into the mountains by their ancestors a hundred lifetimes earlier.

Bella Coola is also where Sir Alexander MacKenzie ended up when, using French voyageurs for muscle and Native guides for route-finding, he crossed the North American continent in 1793, the first white man to do so north of Mexico. From the last point of civilization the return expedition covered 3700 kilometres and took 117 days. That no white man has completed the same route since speaks to what kind of trip it was.

The Nuxalk welcomed MacKenzie and ferried him down the Bella Coola River to meet the ocean, completing his journey. Rumour has it they also helped old Alex escape certain death at the hands of the Bella Bella, a coastal tribe who were more than a little pissed off after Captain George Vancouver, the first white man anyone had ever seen, sailed in guns a-blazin' just weeks prior.

Before leaving, MacKenzie – just 29 years old at the time – mixed up some salmon roe and melted bear grease and left this message painted on a boulder: "Alex MacKenzie, from Canada by land. 22nd July 1793." Famed American explorers Lewis and Clark would not complete their transcontinental exploration and touch the waters of the mighty Pacific until December 1805.

Just a few days short of the 217th anniversary of MacKenzie's arrival Mark and I showed up searching only for fish and a bit of fresh air. We found both almost immediately, but of course we had a helicopter.



The second rule to learn when heli-fishing perfect little unnamed lakes up on the plateau is to let the pilot fire up the helicopter and give it some juice before anyone else tries to get inside. This way the wind from the rotors blows away the mosquitoes – nothing worse than a bunch of tiny buzzing vampires bouncing around the cockpit while you're window-shopping for the next untouched lake.

Another key trick is to carry a pump-action 12-gauge shotgun or something with similar stopping power. Bella Coola is prime grizzly country and all the signs on the rivers say the same thing: "If approached by a bear, reel in and leave the area. Cut line if playing a fish." Despite this, or perhaps because of the gun, it's easy to relax and enjoy where you are.

"Everything I really love in life starts with an 'F'", Peter, our pilot, tells me. "Family, flying, fishing, friends, food..." His rod tip suddenly taps out that telltale rhythm – fish on. This particular trio of lakes, sitting up near 5000 feet above sea level, are connected via a three-foot-wide, 700-metre stream that twists off to other nameless lakes stocked with cutthroat trout many years ago; Peter knows this because he fished them all "a while back" and pulled out some lunkers. "They were bigger then," he says, while playing what turns out to be a nice 14-incher. "Now they're really competing for food."

Snow-capped peaks fan out to the west, a breeze ripples the

perfectly blue lake and keeps the mosquitoes at bay. A helicopter, I still can't believe it, sits on the shore and I'm pondering the fisherman's dilemma—is it better to spend an afternoon catching a lot of regular sized fish? Or sit hours for one huge one?

On the flight out we pass over an enormous bull moose, zip up to 260-metre Hunlen Falls, touch down and catch trout on the only beach on Isolation Lake, and then bomb down the Bella Coola river just a few dozen feet off the water. The coastal rainforest has more life in each cubic metre than a tropical jungle but with the treetops towering much higher than the heli it still kinda feels like a Vietnam War movie. (Especially with Peter's early '70s classic rock soundtrack from an iPod patched into the on-board intercom system).

Heli is a far-out way to fish – it's totally surreal, absolutely addictive, and not as hard on the environment as it sounds. Peter and his company just won a Tech Green Award for running clean-burning Turbomeca engines in their A-stars. The emissions are much lower than most other turbine aircraft, not that you need to know that to sleep well after a day of aerial exhilaration.

The first rule of heli-fishing, by the way, is to keep your head down getting in and out of the bird. Staying low is a skill you need to learn before you're allowed to leave the ground. And don't start casting while the rotors are still spinning – heli-fishing is still fishing. You never want to be too eager.





Eager, patient, or in between – you don't catch salmon in isolated heli-accessed lakes so we're on the river, in a drift boat, and I could be about to die. Somehow the bait-caster reel is so tangled, and I am so piss-poor at operating it, that the thick, 25-pound test is wrapped not just around the rod and the oar but also through my legs and up around my throat. The lure is perfectly placed in the flowing waters of the mighty Atnarko though, and if a 30 pound spring salmon hits right now, I'm probably going to be asphyxiated, beheaded, dragged from the boat, or all the above. It's like a scene from the *Final Destination* movies. But I have no fear. Maybe because Garrett is laughing so hard or maybe because I've been casting for salmon all day, the last of the season, without so much as a nibble.

"We should probably be using bait bags," Garrett admits. Since we don't have any of the mesh, roe-filled sacks our best chance is to hit the salmon on the nose with the lure enough times that it bites out of anger. Or, if I live long enough to cut the bird's nest of line out of my reel, we could switch to the fly rods and catch some trout.

Mark and I make the switch but Garrett needs a salmon. For a local to go a season without hooking a spring is "like a winter in Whistler without getting fresh tracks off the peak," Garrett explains. He spent a few winters in our quiet mountain town, riding with Whistler Valley Snowboard Club and coaching on the national team before returning home to fish all summer and heli-board all winter. Aka – Living the Dream.

Garrett expertly steers us into a perfect little corner and beaches. Mark and I fan out, assessing the water (guessing mostly) while the river gently pushes past. Drift-boating is the opposite of a helicopter – low tech, silent, substantially cheaper – but the fishing feels just as rewarding. Life is good when it's simple.

By day's end Garrett ends up with a smaller spring (still at least 15 pounds) to salvage his season and Mark and I release a handful of decent trout. Plans are made to go out on the fjord in the morning. "If it's not too windy I'll meet you at the docks at 9," Garret says. "Take you out and catch some crabs." He pauses, hearing himself. "I better rephrase that, it's not like the Whistler nightclub scene. What I mean, we'll go crabbing." (Go to Mountainlifemag.ca for that story.)

* * *

The biggest fish of the trip hit on my third cast. This was sunset on the Atnarko and I had laid my fly right on the ripple, that ever-blending seam where the eddy melts back into the flow. The fly was brown with gold on it (I fish with colours not names) and I couldn't tell you where it was purchased but it was tied by a real professional – the barb was already tucked back when I pulled it brand-new out of the box.

The fish hit hard. A big strike is always a surprise, that's fishing, but even more so because although I am a skilled and life-long fisherman I have a lot to learn about flyfishing. We all do to some degree, I suppose, but me a little more so.

Fear rises alongside the excitement. Don't lose him, keep the tip up, let him run. I always consider fish as male – perhaps the idea of dragging a female in via hook through the face or throat solely for my own enjoyment is more than my psyche can handle.

The fish, a nice rainbow judging by the fight, dips in and out of the fast water using the current's drag to aid his fight.

Patience is key. A helicopter engine takes a while to warm up, a trout-and-eggs breakfast takes time to cook, and a fish will come to you when it comes to you. People have been fishing these waters for ten thousand years, no need to rush a process as old as civilization itself.

The fish and I, we give and take from each other for a while, long enough for me to notice the light reflecting off the water and the long shadows on the cliffs above. And that's fishing, that moment. Both exciting and calm, you're focused as all hell and the line's singing and the rod's bouncing but somehow everything is slowed right down and there's time to play and observe and to feel whatever it is that's missing in the rest of your life.

We dance slowly towards shore and then I have him in my hands, exhausted, shining, meaty and alive. A photo, and then with a simple tail-flick he's back in the flow and the moment is over.

You can get to that timewarp moment any number of ways – skiing in your slough, or maybe skydiving – but with the water running past your knees and the sun at your back, fishing is one of the purest, most primal things a man can do. You don't need a fancy helicopter or even a simple boat – all you need is some sort of line tied onto some kind of hook. Ideally with a little fake bug on there too, and a location like Bella Coola to toss it into. ■



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"Such was the depth of precipices below, and the height of the mountains above, with the rude and wild magnificence of the scenery around, that I shall not attempt to describe such an astonishing and awful combination of objects: of which indeed, no description can convey an adequate idea."

– Alexander MacKenzie, on first glimpsing the Bella Coola Valley from the edge of the Chilcotin Plateau, 1793.



Tweedsmuir Park Lodge

Beat Steiner doesn't fish. "In a fishing situation," he explains, "I'm pretty much always cheering for the fish." He doesn't hunt either, which makes it ironic that he's an owner of Tweedsmuir Park Lodge, hand-built in 1931 as a hunting and fishing retreat catering to royalty and distinguished guests ranging from Sir Edmund Hillary to Phyllis Munday to Lord Tweedsmuir himself.

Beat skis though, and the extensively restored timberframe lodge is now primarily known as the headquarters for Bella Coola Heli Sports, which he owns alongside Whistler legends Pete "The Swede" Mattsson and Christian Begin. With tenure over 1.3 million acres in mountains that can appease, inspire, frighten and impress any skier on the planet, Beat and the boys keep plenty busy all winter.

In the summer months the lodge caters to wildlife lovers (Bella Coola is one of the world's premier grizzly viewing spots in late August and September), roaming Euros seeking untamed wilds, and fishermen like us out for the time of their lives.

With private cabins accommodating up to 22 adults, the 60-acre lodge property is also home to 600 metres of Atnarko River frontage and a storybook-perfect fishing spot called the "Glory Hole." It's aptly named not only for the fish in the water but also the fresh club sandwiches delivered right to the beach by Carole, the lodge's head chef.

But, as Beat is quick to point out, there's more to life than purposefully torturing fish by dragging them around by their faces only to release them at the end.



And on our "weather day" Beat, the Swede and Christian load Mark and I into the chopper to hit one of their many pre-mapped heli-hikes.

This one is a high-ridge traverse across granite rubbed smooth by glaciers from millennia past. "I don't like a specific trail," the Swede bellows. "Up here you can go anywhere, you can practically roll a wheelchair."

It's the best part of hiking without any of the work. No boring switchbacks, no slash alder and no ever-shuffling scree slopes. Just hard polished granite and incredible alpine vistas. Sure, there are a few stretches that would be pretty dicey in a wheelchair but the hike winds through sun-warmed pools, massive boulders, lonely snowfields and steep ridgelines before climaxing with endless views of North Bentinck Arm and the town of Bella Coola, 5000 feet below.

And then the chopper arrives to shuttle you straight down to hit up the sushi restaurant for lunch. For a "weather day" it doesn't get much better than this.

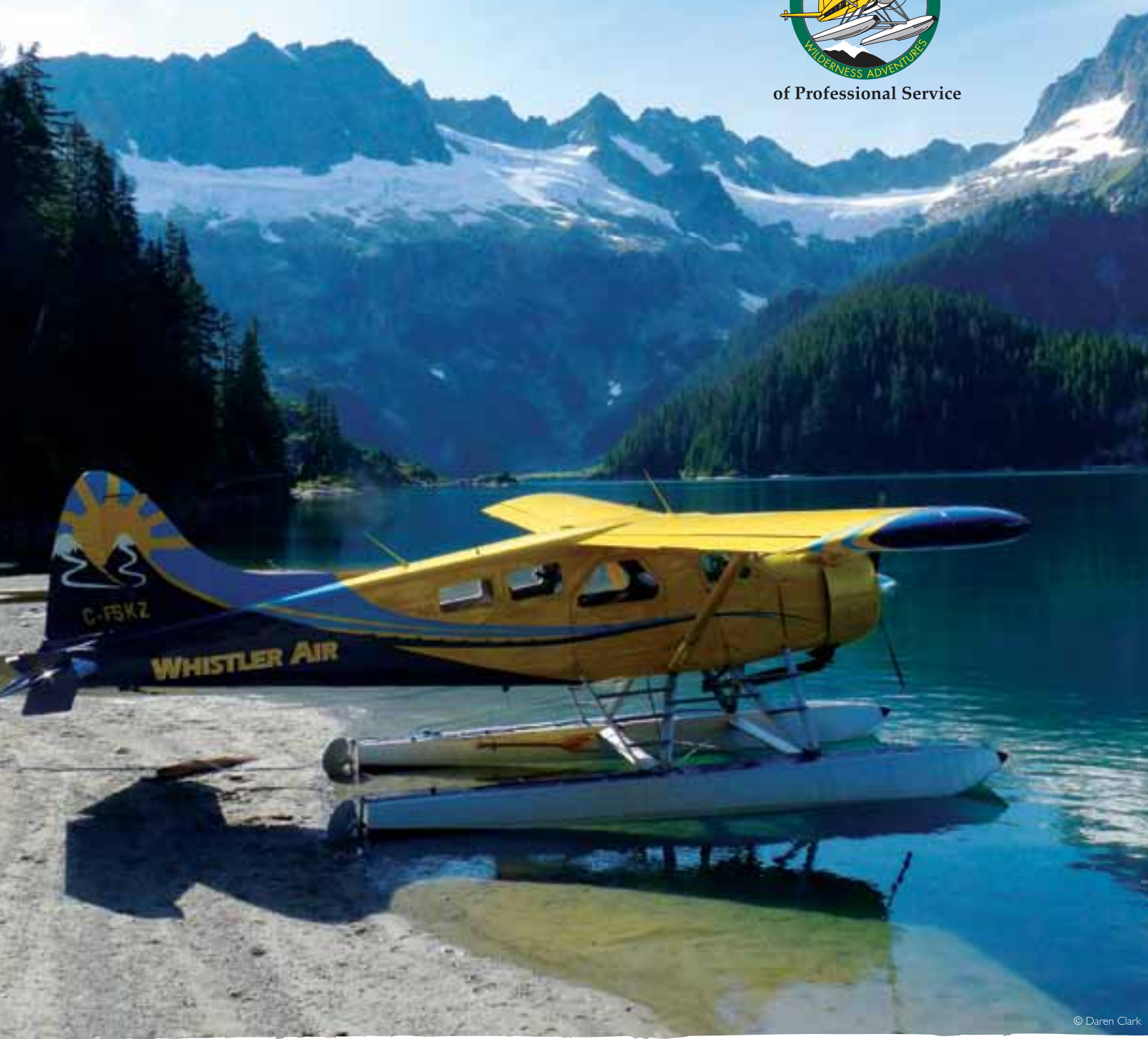
Tweedsmuirparklodge.com has all the info, photos, and directions you need to make your own dream come true in Bella Coola.

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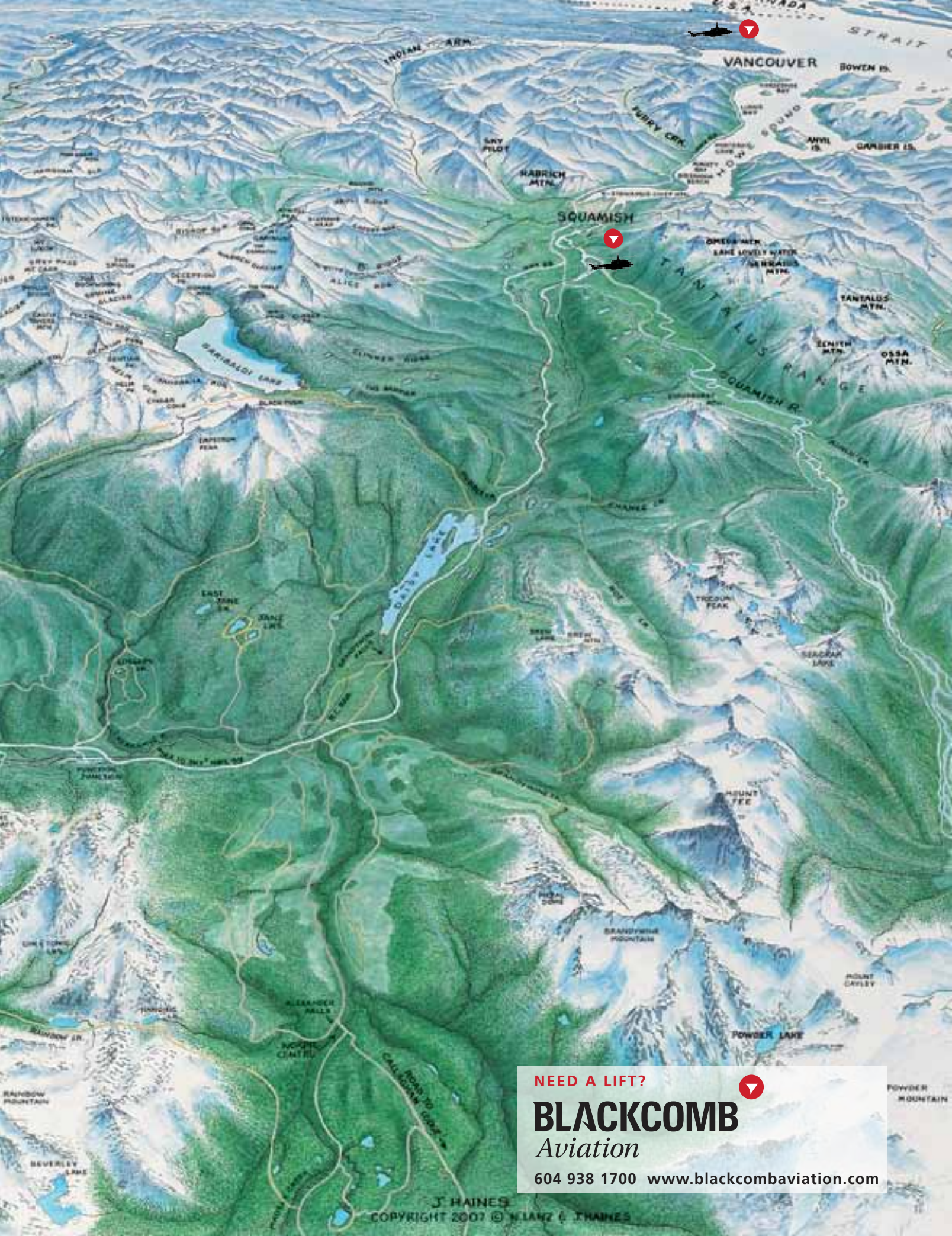
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GLIDING THROUGH **GWAI** GWAI THROUGH GLIDING

**A MODERN-DAY VOYAGE
THROUGH AN ANCIENT,
SACRED LAND**

By Todd Lawson

Photography by Todd Lawson & Jim Martinello





They're soft, almost a whisper, but the first words I hear outside the tent aren't kind on my ears. "A gale-force warning has been issued for Hecate Strait..."

Still groggy, I roll over and chase more sleep but my bladder has other plans. I peel out of a damp sleeping bag, put on some moist clothes and take a few steps into forest moss so squishy my feet sink up to my ankles.

The rest of our crew of six are huddled under a sagging tarp, listening to the Coast Guard weather report over the roar of pelting rain. I duck to join them, and their cups of cowboy coffee, just as the monotone voice crackles out a repeat of the spirit-dampening news.

"A gale force warning has been issued for Hecate Strait. Wind variable 15 to 25 knots increasing to southeast 25 to 35 late Friday morning."

Hecate Strait blows past the eastern edge of Haida Gwaii, an archipelago of approximately 152 islands off the North Coast of British Columbia. Because of the strait's shallow waters it is vulnerable to frequent storms and nasty weather – something we're not looking forward to.

Historically, the indigenous Haida people paddled massive war canoes across the Hecate Strait to plunder mainland coastal villages and capture slaves.





Feared as ruthless warriors who possessed skills of great seamanship, the Haida were the only tribe capable of crossing these dangerous waters. They knew every cove and bay, every tiny island and stretch of beach that rose from the thick Pacific fog. Their exquisite craft, hewn and carved from the gigantic western red cedar, were the crowning achievements of their culture and enabled the Haida to establish a civilization that was as much respected as it was feared.

Compared to the ancient Haida my companions and I look ridiculous and over-packaged. Our camp is filled with a plethora of accoutrements of our modern-day world – fancy stoves, lightweight tents, waterproof gear, cans of beer, matches and firestarters, maps, radios, GPS, and fast, top-of-the-line fibreglass kayaks that we most definitely didn't carve ourselves in the forest. But the technology means that despite never looking forward to it, we are prepared for turbulent weather and ready for battle out on the strait.

"Big Haida war canoes were manned by fifty or sixty soldiers," wrote Diamond Jenness (1886-1969), an early and influential anthropologist with the Canadian Museum of Civilization.


"They raided and traded up and down the coast...usually carrying a Shaman or Medicine Man to catch and destroy the souls of enemies before an impending battle; and the women who sometimes accompanied the warriors fought as savagely as their husbands."


Standing in the downpour, the only thing I'm fighting is the cap on the bottle of Baileys. I peer through the giant, moss-covered tree trunks that line our campsite and, seeing the wind sheeting across the Pacific, say what's on all our minds: "Looks like we won't be paddling today."

But what we lack in Haida skill and ferocity we make up for in luck. A few coffees later, amidst more ominous radio reports of high winds and big swells, a blaze of blue suddenly cuts through the clouds and within minutes

the ocean is glassy calm. We hit the water and paddle happily towards Gandll K'in Gwaayaay, the famed Hot Springs Island and one of several traditional "Watchmen" sites in the Gwaii Hanaas National Park Reserve.

Less than an hour later we're bathing in the hot, healing waters of one of the most scared places in Haida culture. Here we find the true essence of these sacred lands – no plastic, no concrete, no sign of man's unsightly touch. The ancient Haida undoubtedly soothed sore paddling muscles and healed battle-wounded bodies in this very spot.

We sooth only our souls and build excitement for the next eight days of adventure. In front of us is the calm Pacific, its gentle waves lapping at the shoreline as we relax among the rocks and water and hardy little trees, stunted by years of wind and salt spray. Stubborn, warrior trees gripping and clutching at the earth like they never want to let go. Neither do we. 



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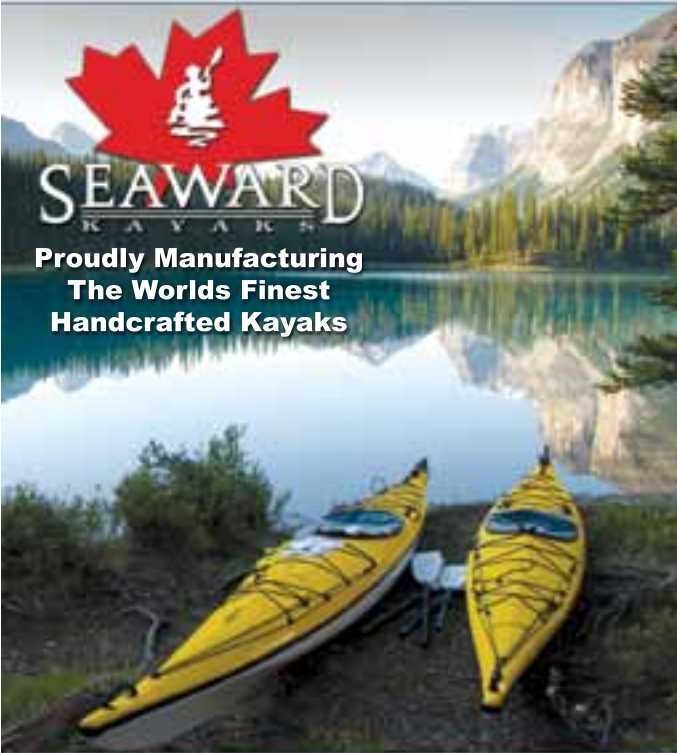
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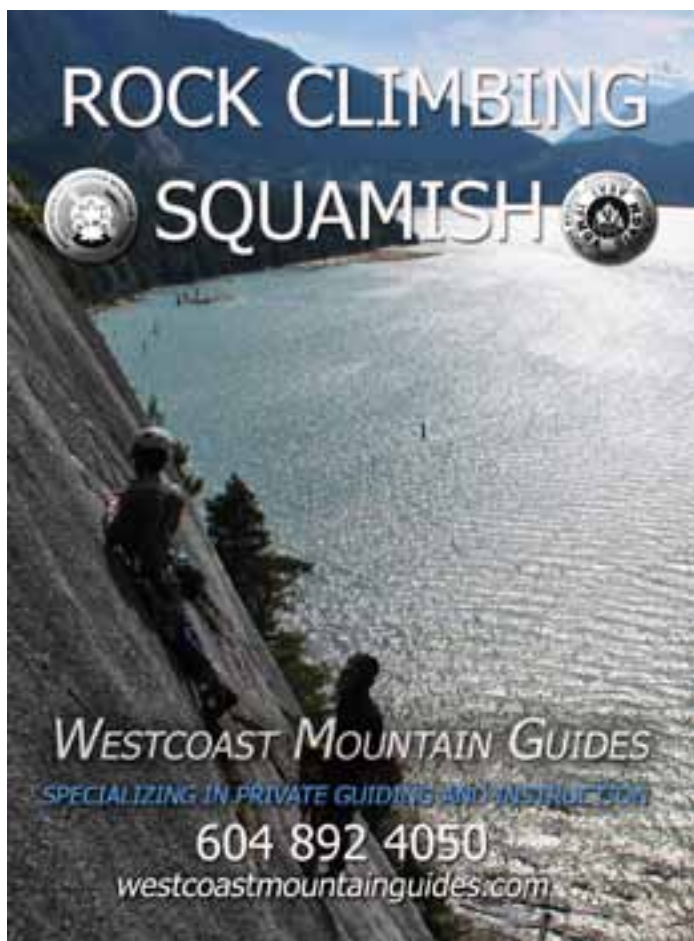
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Marc's fingers were cut up and mangled but his eyes were shining with excitement.



Left: Marc-André on "Freewill" 5.13C, Cheakamus Canyon. SCOTT PICK PHOTOS.

for freedom and sunny stone.) I finally met Marc in person one fine spring morning at Starbucks in Squamish. He excitedly told me that he had been trying the "Cobra Crack", a notoriously savage finger crack on the backside of the Stawamus Chief.

"But wasn't the Cobra wet?" I inquired. It had been a rainy spring and the Cobra is pretty damn hard at the best of times, let alone soaking wet.

"Yes. It was." Marc's fingers were cut up and mangled but his eyes were shining with excitement. This kid is serious, I thought.

Undeterred, Marc continued on his quest, eventually climbing a slew of hard traditional routes including "Bruce Lee vs the Kiss Army" and "69" (both solid 5.13 and run-out.) I belayed when he tried "69" on top-rope, and observed that both his shoes had holes in them. Clearly strong, bold and not sponsored, Marc was walking that fine line between another shift at the drywall site and taking another shot at the climb.

Now 18 years old, Marc has focussed his efforts on creating new routes. Putting up new lines is similar to manual labour on a construction site— it's dirty and solitary work— but also unpaid, far more dangerous, and can be addictive.

"You get to figure everything out from scratch," he says. "And you get to make the route your own and do it in the best style you can. The process is just really cool, from cleaning it and figuring out all the sequences, to finally completing it and leaving something for everyone else to try. It's really rewarding."

This past year, Marc has been attempting a wild line on The Chief, on the ultra steep and foreboding Zodiac Wall. It's a new route with not much protection gear to speak of, and when he finally finishes, it will be one of the hardest and scariest adventures on The Chief. Naturally, Marc is stoked for another round when the summer high-pressure settles in and the drywall dust just settles. I'm stoked, too. For the route, for Marc, and for the cycle of motivation that keeps things fresh and exciting in Squamish. ■

Marc-André Leclerc

By Will Stanhope

A couple of years ago I started getting frequent Facebook messages from an excitable kid from the Fraser Valley. His name was Marc, he was fresh out of high school and he wanted beta on everything from routes I had done, to routes I had my eye on, to routes I didn't have my eye on. Marc was stoked, that's for sure.

Later, I learned that he would slave away at job sites, hanging drywall to save his loonies

for climbing. Anybody who has dabbled in construction knows that there are few things more soul-crushing than drywall. "The sanding is the worst," Marc says. "Just getting caked in drywall dust and breathing that stuff in— its really bad for you, not fun. But drywall funded my move to Squamish, which makes it all worthwhile."

I started to like the kid even more (in my youth I also hefted my share of drywall inside soulless West Vancouver mansions while pining



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To Bee or Not to Bee

By Ace Mackay-Smith
Photos by Mark Gribbon

Beekeeping comes with sweet rewards, but how difficult is it to actually “keep” bees? It sounds a bit like herding kittens. Jenny Bubbs, a beekeeper and owner of Pemberton-based Bubbees Honey, welcomes me to her small farm with a smile and acknowledges the beautiful sunny day: “Better for bee watching,” she explains. As soon as she seals me in one of those nifty white suits it’s over to the hives for some up-close investigating.

After hibernating in a ball all winter, today her bees are hard at work. The hives look like little bee hotels and the bees are getting down to some serious housekeeping duties. The old saying ‘Busy as a bee’ seems pretty bang-on.

“The cleaning is done by female worker bees,” Jenny explains. Sound familiar? Wait, it gets better.

“The male drones have only one job – to mate with the queen. Other than that, they just hang out in the hive and eat. In the fall the females kick them out.” Not so different from us perhaps, but sure enough, there are dead bodies of many drones scattered in front of each hive.

Lifting the lid, Jenny sends a small puff from her smoker to alert the hive of our intrusion before carefully pulling out one of the vertically hanging combs. The construction is so perfect, beautiful. “Besides housecleaning the female workers also build the cells, collect pollen, and feed the brood and the queen.”

The queen bee rules all. Her majesty’s main job is to make babies and she generally mates only once, but with a dozen or so partners – usually drones from other colonies. Bees do it at elevation, high up in the sky. The virgin queen becomes part of a multiple-partner “mile high” club and then spends the rest of her time laying up to 1500 eggs a day in the hive’s cells. She is the only female who lays eggs (the workers are sterile) and she stores the extra drone sperm in her abdomen for the following years. This is necessary because the drones die after sex; the queen literally rips off their barbed penises when she’s done.

The heirs to the throne “come from the same eggs as the workers,” Jenny explains, “but a select few of these larvae get fed royal jelly, secreted from the workers’ glands. Then the first-born heir usually kills off the others and becomes the new queen.”

“I’m talking your ear off,” Jenny worries. Are you kidding? The bee drama is better than the movies. I could stay for hours watching this play out. Even within the working class, certain bees have very specific duties. We observe foraging workers returning with tiny yellow pollen sacs attached to their bees’ knees. There are maids, construction workers, nurses, royal attendants, nannies, air-conditioning technicians, undertakers, and even bouncers at the hive hotels. A wasp tries to sneak into a hive to steal some honey but the female bouncers boot him on his wasp ass – just another wannabee.

Bees worldwide have been dying from the mysterious Colony Collapse Disorder but keeping bees alive has other challenges as well. “You have to watch for mites,” Jenny warns. “Also bears, swarming...” Swarming!


I'm suddenly very glad I'm wearing the suit.

Jenny explains: "Once a hive reaches a certain capacity, which is hard to predict, the bees send out a few workers to scout a new location, usually a nearby tree. If we want to keep those bees we have to cut those branches and manoeuvre the swarm into a box, and then into a new hive." The old hive raises another queen and the story goes on.

"It's great for our garden, to have the bees," Jenny says; "guaranteed pollination." Bees move from flower to flower, collecting pollen (protein), then return later to gather nectar which gets regurgitated as honey (carbohydrate) into the combs. The pollen/honey feeds the bees but honey also benefits humans in more ways than one.

"Eating local honey is also great for people with allergies," Jenny tells me. "You're essentially eating and building immunities to all your local pollens."

Jenny keeps her bees happy, and only gets stung once a year or so. "We steal their honey, but we also leave them more than we take," Jenny says. "It's important in order to overwinter them properly and get them through the cold months." Most large-scale beekeepers feed their bees sugar water to achieve the same effect but according to Jenny, "you can taste the difference."

I unzip the suit and Jenny sends me off with a jar of Bubbees Honey and a totally new perspective. So many tiny mouthfuls regurgitated to make a whole jar of liquid gold. It might sound kind of disgusting but Jenny was right. This is the best honey I've ever tasted. 

Jenny and her husband Kyle harvest their honey in the fall and it sells out pretty quickly. If you are interested in Bubbees Honey find them on Facebook or go to Tiny.cc/bubbees




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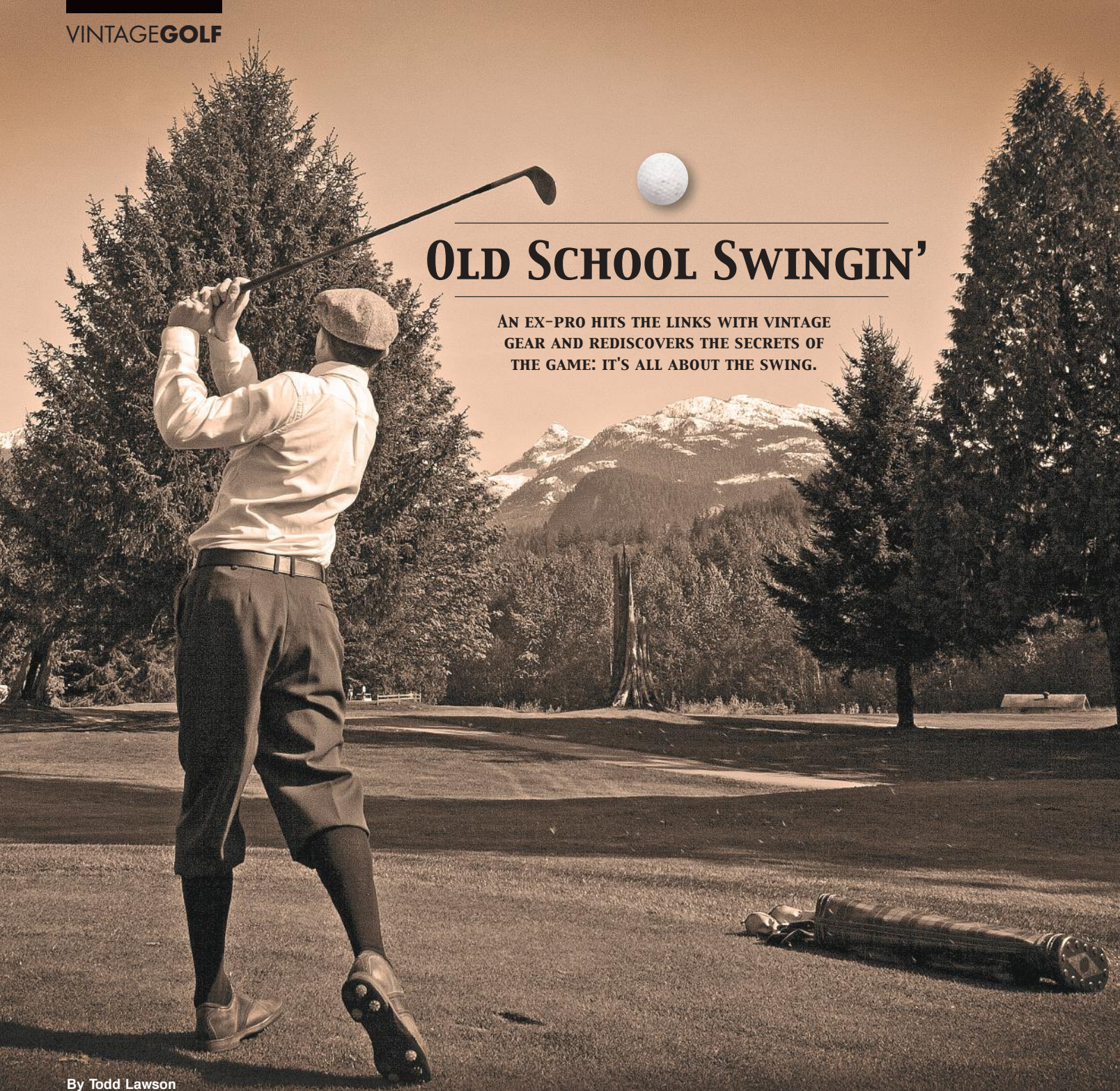
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OLD SCHOOL SWINGIN'

AN EX-PRO HITS THE LINKS WITH VINTAGE GEAR AND REDISCOVERS THE SECRETS OF THE GAME: IT'S ALL ABOUT THE SWING.

By Todd Lawson
Photos by Jim Martinello

THE SET-UP

I've been humbled by (and addicted to) 'the game' for more than 25 years, during which I've played thousands of rounds of golf. This past spring I came across a family heirloom – a set of 1940s forged irons that belonged to my late grandfather. The current high-tech battle for distance and accuracy supremacy in the golf industry is mind-boggling, but after sanding and steel-wooling 50 years of dust and rust away, I realized these prized pieces of family history weren't meant to be placed in a special glass case, they were meant to be played. But how

would I fare on a contemporary course? Could I emulate the great swingers of the golden age who relied on pure feel to get them around the golf course? "Swing the club, don't let it swing you," they used to say. Could I even *think* about breaking 80?

THE EQUIPMENT

IRONS: *Wilson Ryder Cup Model 2* iron with no grooves, just dimples hammered into the face. *Wright & Ditson Lawson Little* 'related irons' 3-9. Circa 1945. Steel shafts painted to resemble the old Hickory-style shafts. Three-inch hosel. Extra-long leather grips.

WOODS: 1-3-5 *Spalding Top-Flite* persimmon heads (circa 1958) with ceramic inserts, brass screws and steel shafts.

PUTTER: A blade-style *Wilson* with soft insert (definitely not vintage, but at least it looks like the blade putters of old.)

THE CLOTHING:

In order to look the part I sport wool 'plus fours', knee-high socks, button-up cotton dress shirt, tie with 'Vicious V' knot, wing-tip leather golf shoes and a wool golf cap from Tote's of London.



THE COURSE:

Squamish Valley Golf Club. May 20, 2011. Blue tees, 6,218 yards, par 72 (about the same length as a 1940s-era course).

THE GAME:

The clubs look funny to my eye and feel weird in my hands. The grips are worn and smooth. I snap-hook my drive into the big trees on the left, hit three more terrible shots and three-putt for double bogey. On the short, dogleg third hole I finally hit two good iron shots and give myself a chance at birdie, but leave it disgustingly short. First par of the day at least. I'm starting to feel better, but it doesn't last long. I sky my drive on four, skull my tee shot on five and can't get up and down to save my life. I'm six over after five and any hopes I had of breaking 80 are diminishing quickly.

But on the sixth tee box a light bulb goes off. "Just swing the club, don't try to hit the ball." Visualizing the tempo of Ben Hogan and the fluidity of Bobby Jones, I slow it down a notch and catch it between the screws, smack dab on the sweet spot. Bam! The feeling that runs from the wooden club head and into my hands is indescribable—no loud ping or smash like a new-age metal driver, just earthy purity. I manage to poke it 275 yards down the middle.


Striding happily down the fairway with my clubs in a bag over my shoulder, I imagine my ancestors playing on the classic links courses in Ireland. Then I hit another crisp iron shot followed by a little links-style pitch that runs just past the flag, but I miss the 10-footer coming back.

Stepping onto the next tee, I can still feel the sensation of the persimmon in my fingers. I hammer it down the left side, but the feel doesn't stay for the next shot and I hit it thin—on the dance floor but a long way from the band. I three-putt again and make bogey, finishing off the front nine with a total of 43 strokes.

On the back nine I make two great pars out of the gate but then the wheels come off. The whippy shafts and too-quick swing equal a few bad hooks and more skulled iron shots that sting my fingers. In a stretch of three holes I go triple, double, double. Not bad if you're drinking, but not so good for the scorecard. They say golf is a humbling game. No shit.

I need to get loosey-goosey again, to instill the old shot-maker's mentality into my brain. "Swing the club, stop trying to control it." On number 15 I just let it flow. Another smashed drive down the middle, a pitch shot to eight feet and finally, a circle on the scorecard—birdie. I finish par-birdie-bogey for another 43. A pleasing total of 86.

THE EPIPHANY:

I realize no matter what clubs you use, the game is played as much between your ears as in your hands. Think pure thoughts and you'll swing the club and *feel* the game like golf was meant to be played. No doubt I'll go back to playing with my modern-day gear soon, but I can still feel that old-school feeling in my fingertips. I hope it never goes away. 

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Harry, The North Face Store, Whistler Village. Whistlerblackcomb.com/store



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Trevor, Onsight Equipment, Squamish. Onsightequipment.com



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Jayson, Escape Route, Whistler and Squamish. Escaperoute.ca

EDITOR'S CHOICE JET BOAT THE GREEN RIVER

Life is always better on the water and Whistler Jet Boating owner/operator Eric Pehota is probably the most experienced jet boat pilot in Canada. A tour upriver with him is fun, exciting, and always guarantees a new perspective on the Coast Mountains. Whistlerjetboating.com

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Takeshi, Zett Physical Techwear. Physicaltechwear.com





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Bruce, FanatykCo Ski and Cycle, Whistler. Fanatykco.com



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Mark, Garbanzo Bike & Bean, Whistler. Whistlerbike.com/gbb



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Randy, Giant Bicycles. Giant-bicycles.com

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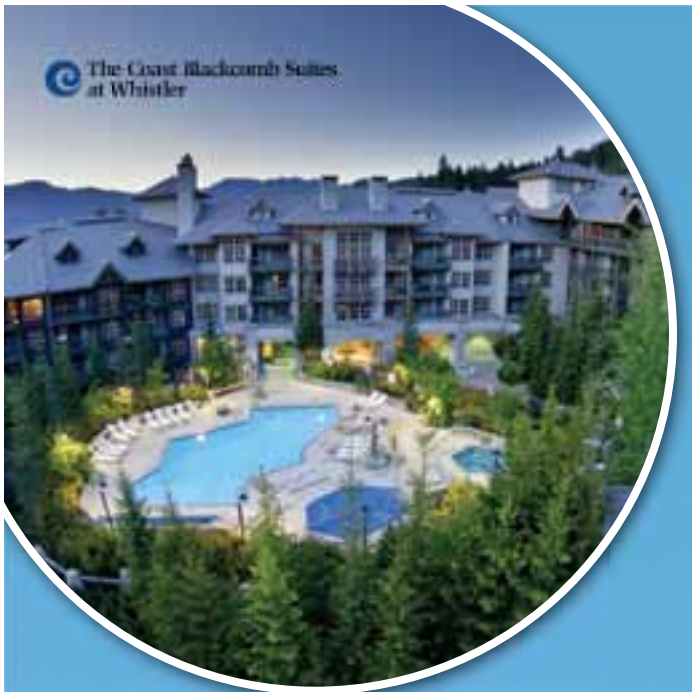


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Summer Stuff

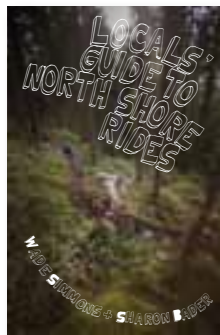
We all know the world will end if we don't continually consume new products at an incredible pace. In a part of the world where many of us are gear obsessed– to the point where our Zen-seeking sojourns into nature could be eclipsed by an ill-timed equipment failure, we buy a lot of things we really don't need. There's a 'not good for the planet' story here that will be saved for another time because this is a gear guide after all. We've all experienced that moment of euphoria when a new gear purchase lives up to the hype. So, if we must consume, we may as well consume cool stuff like this.

- Feet Banks



LIGHTFOOT GAS LIGHTER (\$2)

Sure it's just a regular old lighter, but Lightfoot Gas in Lillooet, BC, is a must-stop for anyone coming over the Duffy Lake Road, one of the most scenic (and sometimes gnarly) drives in the province. If you flash this lighter at a party it means you've lived through blind-corner passes, extended "No-Stop" avalanche zones, and probably ground your teeth down to angry nubs while following someone with Alberta plates. These lighters are like scout badges – you earn them. Lightfoot Gas also sells great soups and bannock, a type of Native fry-bread that will sustain any serious road tripper for hours.



LOCAL'S GUIDE TO NORTH SHORE TRAILS (\$24.95)

By Wade Simmons and Sharon Bader

It's always been easy to get lost riding the legendary misty rainforest trails on Vancouver's North Shore. But times are changing thanks to this dandy little trail guide put out by Wade Simmons and Sharon Bader. Wade needs no introduction (but see page 35 anyhow) and Sharon has been President of the North Shore Mountain Bike Association for the past five years, which means she knows the zone like a Smurf knows the blues. This book is more informative than your big sister's diary – you get maps, GPS points, descriptions and general local know-how. But fear not, Wade and Sharon aren't idiots. They also know what stuff to leave out of the guide so as to preserve some of that true North Shore adventure. Plus partial proceeds go to local trail builders. Mtbtrails.ca



SNOW PEAK HOZUKI LED CANDLE LANTERN (\$89)

Putting a candle (even one mostly enclosed in metal and glass) into a nylon tent is kind of asking for it. Yet everyone has used one of those smoky old candle lanterns at some point. Next time you see me, ask me about the time I seared my thumb like a piece of Hawaiian Tuna sushi on one of those things while trying to prevent a serious flare-up. The same trip, I managed to slosh camp fuel in my eye and had to put my whole head in the river and look upstream for a while – good times. Now you can change your luck with this thing. It's safe, throws more luminance than the old style, and when you blow on the lantern the light flickers like a candle. You can even "blow" it out when you need to make your romantic moves.

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By Feet Banks

Heavy metal music kicks ass. Heavy metals, the actual metals, are not always so awesome.

Metals like cadmium, lead, mercury, aluminum, and plutonium are too dense for our bodies to efficiently metabolize and can accumulate inside us. Excessive concentrations of these heavy metals can be toxic, causing all kinds of problems in our nervous systems, organs, and general well-being – everything from Alzheimer's and autism to hair loss, arthritis, cancer, schizophrenia and growth defects.

No problem right? Heavy metals have been around forever and we're all still alive so as long as we stop putting handfuls of roofing nails in our mouths, we should be okay... Well, not exactly.

"These metals can be found in the air we breathe, the food we eat and in the household and workplace," says Jenn Keirstead, a registered holistic nutritionist. "We ingest them from car exhaust fumes, non-stick cookware, smog pollution, fungicides, and even cleaning supplies. I think it's so gnarly that we can actually go and buy products with a skull and crossbones label and keep them in our homes. Many of us are exposed to toxins every day without realizing it."

Some of the food we eat also contains heavy metals from pollution and pesticides through the process of bioaccumulation, where the stored toxins and metals work their way up the food chain, growing in concentration along the way.

Of course, some metals are beneficial to us. "We do require varying amounts of some heavy metals," Jenn explains. "Iron, cobalt, copper, manganese and zinc are essential. However, excessive levels can be damaging. It's a fine line."

But the fine line is difficult to walk because it's becoming increasingly difficult for us to avoid heavy metals. Got fillings in your teeth? Remember leaded gasoline or paint? Ever cooked with aluminum foil or inhaled tobacco smoke, eaten from a tin can or drank water that ran through a copper pipe, used cosmetics or swallowed food grown with phosphate fertilizer? Those are only a few of the many ways heavy metals can enter our bodies.

A group called Environmental Defense Canada (EDC) recently found cadmium and lead in all kinds of foods, from raisins to beef to muffins to salad oils. The EDC say that much of it comes from industrial pollution ending up, via precipitation or runoff, in the soil used to grow food or livestock. And while levels are usually below the acceptable levels set by the World Health Organization, no one is sure what the long-term effects are.

Since avoiding heavy metals seems pretty much impossible these days, the best bet is to try cleansing them from your system. Jenn has laid out some ways for us to do just that:

1. DRY SAUNAS are incredible for removing fat-stored toxins & metals out of our cells and organs.

2. CARDIO – breaking a sweat through hard physical activity brings in oxygen to our cells; which has an alkaline effect and kills bad organisms/bacteria that generally thrive when our intestines are compromised.


3. LEMON WATER – lemon and lime enzymes bind to heavy metals and flush them out. Drink a full glass of room temperature lemon water every morning before you eat anything else.

4. GREEN FOODS – kale, dandelion greens and nettle are super detoxifiers.

5. FIBRE – binds to "bad-guy" bacteria in our colon and scrubs it out along the way. Top sources include ground flax seed (a little goes a long way, don't heat it), adzuki beans (chew all beans well), and beets.

6. NATURAL ANTI-CARCINOGENS like garlic, onions, oregano, cayenne and turmeric.

7. SUPER-FOODS like parsley, cilantro, spirulina and blue-green algae can cause our cells to open up and excrete toxic heavy metals.

So kickstart your heart, run to the hills, suck lemons and eat your greens– you'll soon be a metal master in every sense. 

Get more healthy living tips by searching Jenn Keirstead: Holistic Nutrition Counseling on Facebook or going to Jenniferkeirstead.com

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DAVID BUZZARD PHOTOS.

ALICE IN ECO-WONDERLAND

Green-renovating the future

By Kate MacLennan



The window above Alice Kerr's kitchen sink says a lot about her lifestyle choices. Outside, residential Whistler moves in its mellow rhythms. Whiskey Jacks flap from branch to branch amidst the conifers while Blackcomb's Excalibur gondola glides noiselessly past.

Inside on the windowsill sits a tiny clock that's green in both colour and function. A zero-energy timepiece, it runs on water and lemon juice. Environment – inside, outside, and protecting it – matters to Alice Kerr.

"I know that green's a popular brand right now, but I've always been somewhat green," Alice says. "I've driven a hybrid for years, and have always recycled." She pauses. "Then again, we're all hypocritical in certain ways."

Alluding to the countless flights she and her family have taken over the past 23 years between their home in Ontario and their ski-in/ski-out townhouse in Whistler, Alice says, "It's probably too late for us oldsters – we're all toxic. But this is where my grandchildren sleep and play, so we did this for them."

The "this" she refers to is the recent, extensive renovation on the Kerrs' Whistler property, an overhaul designed to accommodate her family on a more permanent basis (the Ontario house is up for sale, and BC will be their new home base).

Choosing Douglas fir floors made from wood salvaged from Stanley Park after the 2006 windstorm and kitchen and bathroom tiles made of recycled glass, Alice also banished electric heating from the new home base in favour of natural gas. The walls received a fresh coat of low-VOC paint, and new carpet in the bedrooms is wool with hemp underlay. In a bold move (almost blasphemous for a ski town) the Kerrs even disposed of the large hot tub that once sat on the deck. "It was a nasty beast, filled with chemicals. A real energy monster," Alice recalls.



"Organic mattresses and low-VOC paint are not marketing gizmos.

The project became greener as it progressed, but keeping it on track was often a challenge. "I love my recycled glass tiles, but found out after ordering them that they were manufactured in China," Alice says, "so suddenly the carbon footprint on them increased. You have to know what questions to ask. I did a lot of the footwork myself and learned as I went."


"Alice did a lot of the research," corroborates David Girard of Peak Ventures, the carbon-neutral, Whistler-based contractor that the Kerrs enlisted for the renovation. "And she did a great job. Her place is absolutely eco-elegant."

The Kerrs also worked with Cabin Fever Interiors but it may be Rick Bowerman, a handcrafted furniture and cabinetry designer, who truly cemented the home's earthy-chic aesthetic.


Designing all the cabinetry in the Kerrs' home, Bowerman also constructed an eye-stopper, eight-foot-long dining room table from a single piece of maple. The table, which comfortably seats up to 12, is salvage timber from the Sea To Sky Highway expansion for the 2010 Olympics. Appropriately, the tree once stood just north of Squamish at Alice Lake. Bowerman also crafted a sideboard and counter for the Kerrs' powder room from the salvaged wood.

Once she'd begun with a green theme, Alice found she couldn't help but continue. Much of her bedroom furniture is made of reclaimed peroba and sustainably harvested mahogany. All her mattresses are organic, and the living room couch is covered in natural linen with soy-based fire retardants. She installed low-consumption, dual-flushing toilets and an instant hot-water system to avoid using excess energy boiling water. One of Alice's more personal touches is a rack of hooks installed in the downstairs bathroom, each with a little name tag attached above so that her children can keep their towels straight when visiting, thereby saving on washing loads.


Although Alice likens a big renovation to childbirth ("once it's over, you try to erase it from your mind," she quips), it's clear the process has changed her as much as her home. "I have 20 years of wonderful, pre-reno memories of my kids growing up here, but I needed to make a place that they'll want to come to for the next 20 years," she says. "Organic mattresses and low-VOC paint are not marketing gizmos. We need to pay attention to these things in order to understand the planet we are living on and might have the ability to change for our children and grandchildren." ■



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Contemplating the Perfect Butt: DIY Pulled Pork

By G.D. Maxwell

As the saying goes, you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. You can, however, make the most exquisite sandwich — pulled pork — out of one of the meanest pieces of pig on the market: pork butt.

Summertime is barbeque time and barbeque in Sea-to-Sky country reaches its apex on the August long weekend when Dusty's, at Whistler Mountain's Creekside, hosts the Canadian National BBQ Championships. More than 50 teams of competitors will stay up all night smoking impossible cuts of meat to impress a ragtag collection of judges and tickle the tastebuds of a couple of thousand people waiting impatiently for samples of the best BBQ they've ever eaten.

But a pulled-pork Jones can't wait, so here are the choices: Eat out or tackle this porker yourself. Eating out is instant gratification but making your own will keep you in sandwiches for weeks.

Where to start? With the best. Bob Haselbach's been wowing judges and taking home ribbons for his pulled pork since he started competing on the barbeque circuit in 2003. His Creekside restaurant, BBQ Bob's, will satisfy that quick fix. But he's happy to share some secrets of the smoke for those who want to roll their own.

Cool. Where do we start? "Start by having

good pork," says the Sultan of Smoke. "A good butt (the pig's upper shoulder; not what you're thinkin') will weigh around nine pounds and have a smooth, white fatcap." You'll probably have to ask the meat guys at the grocery to order one for you.

Good pork: check.



"Start by having good pork," says the Sultan of Smoke.

"Rub it down with regular, prepared mustard; it gives the rub something to stick to and creates a flavourful bark on the finished product," says Bob. "Rub" as a noun is the blend of salts, sugars, peppers and aromatics you apply to the outside of the meat. You can make your own rub or buy one some smokehead's already perfected.

Rubbed pork: check.

"Let it sit for 24 hours then put it in a 200°F smoker, fat side up. I use a combo of cherry, alder and apple wood for a perfect

smoke." Oops. A smoker? Real barbeque needs real wood smoke, long cooking times, low temps. The simplest Weber kettle works wonders. A gas BBQ (forgive me) might work if you're careful and I've even known people who pulled it off in their oven with a tray of wood chips and a forgiving landlord.


One way or another, this piggy's got to smoke for, oh, 14-18 hours and reach an internal temp of 185°F to 190°F. That's the magic mark where collagen and other connective tissue, of which there is mucho in a butt, melts into ambrosia and everything becomes tender and juicy.

Smoked to perfection: check.

Let it sit for half an hour and then pull it apart like the savage you've become. The tender meat will fall into sinuous shreds and you'll end up with a big bowlful of almost perfect pig. Almost?

"Mix in maybe half a cup of finishing sauce. I use apple cider vinegar, brown sugar and maple syrup — you figure out the proportions," Bob hints. "Toss in a bit more rub too; it's an amazing flavour boost."

Pulled and finished: check.

Put it on a plain white hamburger bun, top with coleslaw — or not — sauce on the side, and then... and then... contemplate perfection. Or if that seems like a major pain in the butt, go see Bob.  The Canadian National BBQ Championships happen July 29-31 at Dusty's Creekside.



Smuggler's Choice

Sea to Sky's best house-made artisan food stuffs

By Lisa Richardson

That little beagle at the airport is endearingly cute until he sits down by your suitcase and won't be shooed away. Damn sniffer dogs.

Drug smuggling is rarely a good call but some people get so attached to their special culinary treats they'll risk the wrath of Customs, the long arm of the law, and the twitchy nose of the hound, to get them across the arbitrary borders of the modern world. The underground is full of tales of sneaky edible contraband smuggled into Canada, including a week's supply of English breakfast sausages, Cadbury's chocolate, baked beans, Vegemite, and an entire wedding cake.

All this has me wondering—what locally produced foodstuffs are so good that people would smuggle them out of the region? (We'll leave the 'how' and 'where' up to you.)

Saucy

While I respect the raw-foodists and their commitment to blending dandelion weeds into healthy quaffable concoctions, I am of the school of thought that greens are simply a vehicle by which to consume salad dressing. The ultimate sauce-off is between Sushi Village Salad Dressing and Whistler Cooks' best-selling miso honey cilantro sauce. Me-so addicted.

Sweet

Pure Bread Whistler is butter Nirvana—the place cream dreams of ending up when it first begins to churn. As for whoever said 'Man cannot live by bread alone', they'd never tasted a loaf from Paula and Mark Lamming's oven. But bread is hard to smuggle (and hard to resist devouring within 24 hours of purchase.) For long-haul flights the Pure Bread masters also offer more enduring treats, like the hot chocolate on a stick, which skewers a block of creamy chocolate ganache with a house-made vanilla marshmallow.

Savoury


This summer, Max and Jenna of The Food-Lovers Cooking Company are opening their own farm-to-table bistro at the Pemberton Valley Vineyard, complete with Locavore* Store, where, following a brunch, lunch or dinner from their seasonal menu, you can stock up on home-grown preserves, natural meats, cheeses, crackers and confections. Their "Herbes de Pemberton" salt, a mix of lovage, hyssop, oregano, verbana, chive & sweet cicely is fundamental to serving up a 100-Mile Caesar, and their grainy mustards change up according to the chef's whim. Sausage smugglers should stock up on Maxim's natural meat sausages, made from 100% Pemberton Meadows Natural Beef. These snags, a local's favourite, are so addictive that even vegetarians have been known to indulge.

Stiff

If you've taken the tour of the Schramm Vodka distillery in Pemberton, you know that the copper-still evokes Willy Wonka's chocolate laboratory. Well, the Oompa Loompas (artfully conducted by Tyler Schramm) have been busy concocting a host of new treats for grown-ups—a range of pure organic flavour extracts for baking including vanilla, Ceylon Cinnamon and Pemberton Coffee, as well as limited batches of gin, a coffee liqueur, and seasonal fruit liqueurs featuring local fruits and berries from North Arm Farm, the Hare Family Farm, and Small Farm. Plus, of course, their award-winning potato vodka— is that suitcase clinking?

Sticky

Steve Fecho, a farm kid from Saskatchewan, now heads up The Cup Bistro and Deli in Squamish where he makes everything from shepherd's pie to cabbage rolls and Irish lamb stew to yogurt and fresh-from-scratch-daily soups. Smuggler's choice is their house-made peanut butter—the only way to make an authentic Squamish Bar (the Nanaimo Bar's nutty cousin.) Bien hecho, Steve Fecho. Well done.

So this summer, when someone asks if you have anything to declare, tell 'em loud and proud: "I declare myself a locavore." Unless, of course, their partner is a beagle and they're snapping on little white rubber gloves. At which point, you're on your own. 

* Locavore - someone who is interested in eating food that is locally produced. Don't worry, our photo editor didn't know what it meant either.

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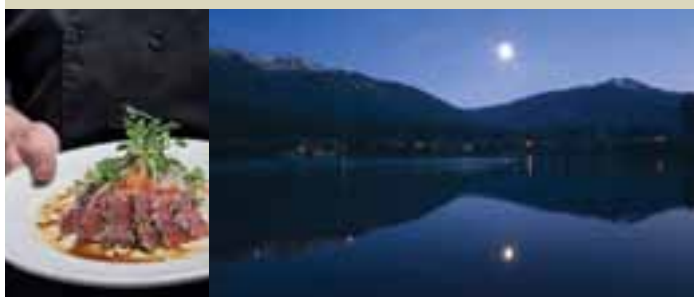
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