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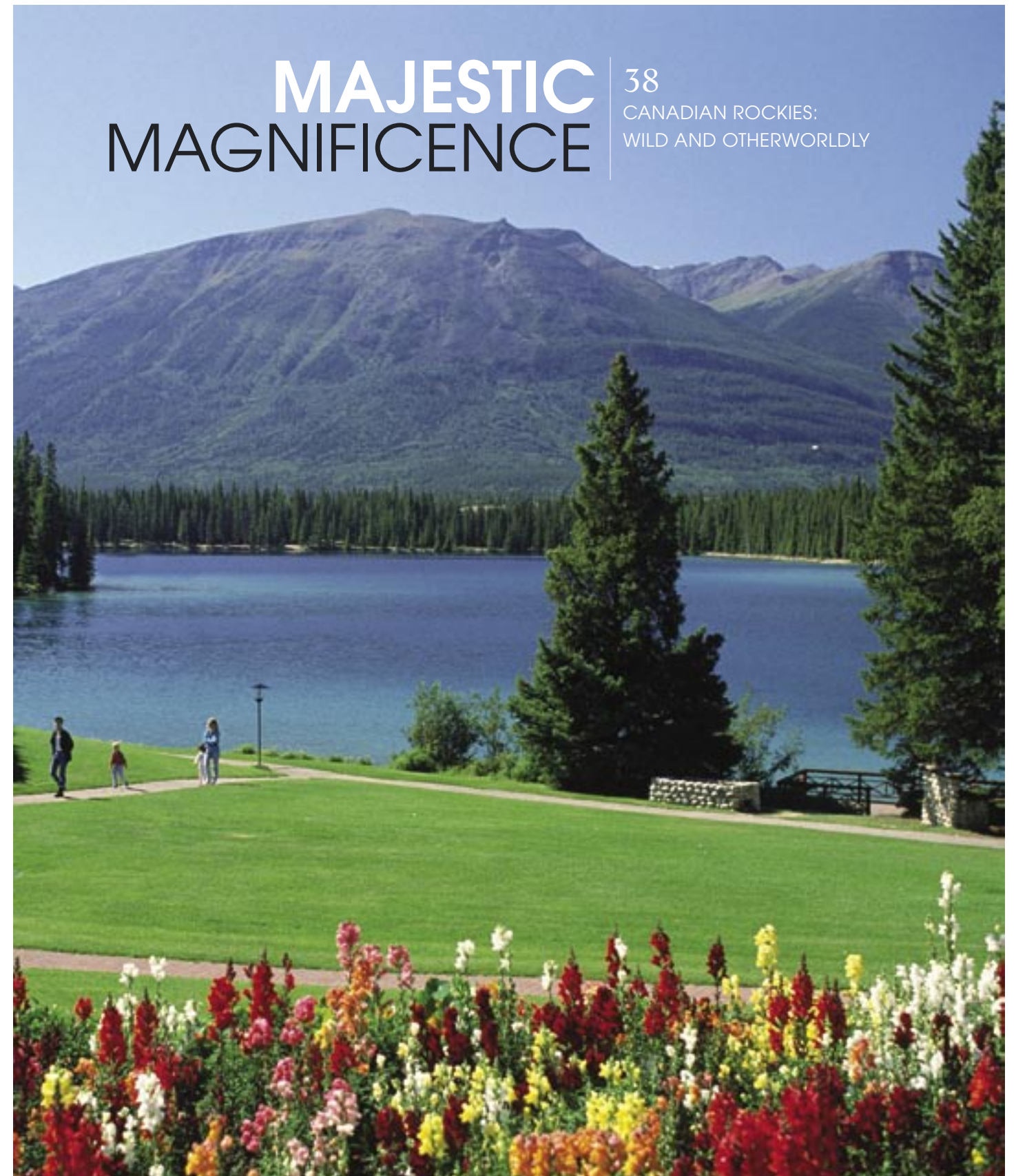
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American Lifestyle
magazine

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AFTER A LONG DAY OF RUNNING,
HE TREATS HIMSELF TO A MANI-PEDI.



What he lacks in grace, he makes up in style. Meet our puppy Pergo. The house is his personal track. Fortunately, our Pergo flooring is scratch and stain resistant. So it can handle anything this little bundle of fury dishes out. Whatever our pup manages to get into, the floors stay gorgeous. And that's more than we can say for the rest of the house. For a sample and all you need to know, pergo.com.



THERE'S ONLY ONE PERGO

**So we wear more color,
spice up our food, and
adorn our rooms a certain
way, consciously prodding
our own sense of nostalgia
and making what seemed
like a fantasy an
everyday reality.**

SPICING UP HOME INTERIORS

Article excerpted from *Latin Style* by Juan Carlos Arcila-Duque
(Thomas Nelson, 2008) Photography by Brian Park and Paul Wright

Each day here in America, the melting pot of ethnicity simmers on with new possibilities for culture. Technology allows us to experience every corner of the world in our own living room—we are global by virtue of our time. This social characteristic makes our choices more diverse and broadens our horizons when it comes to what is acceptable and viable in our homes. We travel to such places as Africa, India, or Thailand and return home yearning to again taste those flavors, to feel those sensations. So we wear more color, spice up our food, and adorn our rooms a certain way, consciously prodding our own sense of nostalgia and making what seemed like a fantasy an everyday reality. But even those whose travels are limited to the imagination can enjoy a bit of spice in their homes. With this book, I explore a new approach to Latin style, one stripped of cliché and defined by distinct visual and textural attributes that create very particular moods.

PUEBLO LIFESTYLE

Color finds its purest, most dramatic expression in the towns,

or pueblos, of Latin America, where the urban bustle converges with folklore and magic, and everything is illuminated by the art of exaggerated adornment. There are pueblos everywhere in Latin America—from San Miguel de Allende in Mexico to Lima and Cuzco in Peru, San Cristobal in Venezuela, Antigua in Guatemala, and the old city of Cartagena in Colombia. These places emanate a larger-than-life air of pageantry, a welcome sensory overload. The spiritual trinkets, crafts, baubles, and fabrics reflect the people's daily devotion to even the tiniest details of their beliefs—the organized clutter carries myth and lore, as the past and the present walk hand in hand.

The presence of Christianity underscores every moment of every day; the people express their faith in this principle through their devout religion and through their love of life, both of which are reflected, down to the tiniest details, in their homes. That love is also articulated in their robust cuisine, music, and arts, and in the sense of perpetual celebration.

RUSTIC ARCHITECTURE weathers the *strong sun*, which in turn, casts an **AFTERNOON SLUMBER** in the form of siestas. In Pueblo, even the **DETAILS** have details, as **TIRELESS** craftsmanship *reigns supreme.*"



Every moment is marked by jubilation—but with a certain air of tranquility.

Old houses with interior courtyards line irregular cobblestone streets, each balcony replete with a unique personality, flowers dripping forth with bursts of uncut color and spring-like urgency. Ancient churches with

gold altars are lavishly decorated. Rustic architecture weathers the strong sun, which in turn, casts an afternoon slumber in the form of siestas. In Pueblo, even the details have details, as tireless craftsmanship reigns supreme.

Legendary artist Frida Kahlo, the great muse supporter of the Pueblo aesthetic, was famous

for fusing realism, symbolism, and surrealism in her work. She brought a sense of whimsy and play to the style that very much gives shape and color to the Pueblo look today.

Another influential artist was the muralist Diego Rivera, Kahlo's husband, who was also a serious endorser of big, bold, unabashed

color. His work, like that of Kahlo's, was loaded with narrative and inspired much of the energy and passion evident in the Pueblo perspective. In this atmosphere, every object has a story to tell, and every day is exalted; people exist in a heightened state that seems possible only against such a fanciful backdrop.

The same energy also moved the legendary Mexican architect Luis Barragan, one of the most notable architects of the twentieth century, to pioneer a style that combined modernism with colonialism and pre-Hispanic architecture. Barragan was profoundly influenced by the European sense of minimalism, which he saw as a perfect match for his

own Latin American inclination to incorporate nature and authentic colors into design. The traditional layout of the Pueblo, as crafted by the Spanish, always included certain elemental characteristics, a common urban layout that prevailed from town to town. Always at its center was the church, the heart of the Pueblo, the axis on which life revolved,

and its surrounding plaza, the soul of the town, where afternoon strolls provided serenity. The Pueblo was always located in the vicinity of a river and was usually also surrounded by mountains, enhancing the air of sanctity and natural abundance.

Pueblo décor is an intricate fusion of mestizo, Spanish colonial,

and African influences, a stylistic mélange that emerged through the new racial iterations and flavors that arose after generations of different kinds of people intermingling. It is a style that consciously stays connected to the past through a glorification of the present. Simple wooden furniture is dressed up with flowers of all varieties in playful



Color, in essence, defines Pueblo style. It emerges in slabs of **INTENSE SATURATION**. Every **VIGNETTE** reveals some kind of rainbow, every color its **OWN STRAND** of personality in the genetic **makeup of THAT HOUSE.**"

patterns; rooms are stocked with colorful, glazed pottery; and kitchens brim with old wooden utensils worn from generations of use. Pressed glass and colorful embroidered cotton textiles are used generously, and polychrome wood keeps it all young at heart. Accessories show strong pre-Hispanic Indian influences, creating meaningful vignettes that reflect history, while the candles

and lace instill a sense of intimacy rooted in the present. Everything is consciously over-accessorized, generating a sense of abundance and joy. No color scheme is too outrageous and no tabletop too ornate, here in this world of elegant whimsy.

PUEBLO DÉCOR

The overall look and feel of Pueblo can be infinitely

vivacious and self-assured. The house exteriors combine a bold use of color against stacked stone, creating neighborhoods built on the basic premise of playful ornamentation. The entrance to every house boasts a unique individuality; one has a sense that if the door could talk, it would narrate a detailed account of the secrets that belong to the family behind its walls. Wooden blinds open

and close through the day, allowing life inside the house to flirt casually with the activity of the cobblestone streets below. Courtyards, fountains, and plants lend to the general enchantment, and the proximity to the mountains also fosters a sense of the divine.

Inside the Pueblo home, the feeling is one of bountiful whimsy, an atmosphere of frenetic

harmony, where it is somehow okay, and perhaps even encouraged, for objects and colors to clash—in fact, they come to life best when they do so, against a rich textile culture of natural fibers and hand-embroidered masterpieces. The consistent repetition of stripes and patterns throughout these elaborate pieces evokes the rhythmic nature of life itself, each stripe and each stitch a gesture of the artists, a sliver of their realities.

Color, in essence, defines Pueblo style. It emerges in slabs of intense saturation. Every vignette reveals some kind of rainbow, every color its own strand of personality in the genetic makeup of that house. Lively, unabashed green tones instantly bring to mind a busy street market and artisan culture in constant celebration of life. Colors reflect all the shades of bougainvillea, ranging from bright purple and hot pink to sunny yellow and flaming orange. The palette is also inspired by the fusion of desert and tropical climates. Vivid turquoise blues and spicy reds on tiles, pottery, and walls play against the earthy neutrality of terra-cotta floors, urns, and tableware. Fresh-cut flowers, magnificent little candies, and confections of all varieties create a sense of everyday abundance. The beauty of the Pueblo color palette is that colors don't necessarily have to work with one another to work with one another. The point is more to play with the edges of brightness and boldness, forging a mood of fun and festivity. The impact of the Pueblo color scheme is conscious—it naturally wants to be that vivid, as it takes its cues directly from the celebratory lives of the people and the stunning landscapes that surround them.

Tiny amulets, votive candles, and religious sculptures dress most of the Pueblo surfaces,

micro-objects charged with a sense of sanctity and tradition. In this atmosphere, the details gradually spawn a character that becomes the nature of that space. One senses that no space in the home is taken for granted—every little nook and cranny is visually accounted for.

A rich and earthy tactile experience exists in Pueblo décor, as textiles and embroidered fabrics essentially drive the home interiors, while materials such as stone, exposed wooden beams, painted wood, and rustic brick provide the foundations. Adobe brick, too, is a classic Pueblo building block and one of the most ancient materials ever used for construction. This natural material, shaped and then dried in the sun, originates from sand, clay, straw, and other fibrous materials.

In Pueblo, flowers and plants are also key textures, bringing every window to life and life to every window, and adding an organic burst of color everywhere they bloom. Extreme color is always a magnificent thing to behold—but when it comes in the form of a beautiful cluster of flowers, it can instantly light up any space. Rooms are detailed with white linen and woven blankets, and embroidered pillows lie strewn about. In the bedrooms, cotton sheets are embellished with ribbon or woven accents. Flat-weave cotton rugs and different-sized baskets add a cozy warmth to the living spaces, and multicolored hammocks hang casually in the gardens.

Perhaps the presence of religion and church in the Pueblo scheme engenders a feeling of celebratory gratitude, a profound appreciation for life that finds expression in lavishly set tables, energetic colors, and indigenous craftsmanship. [AL]



EVERYTHING BUT THE CHUCKWAGON

Recipes excerpted from *Cooking the Cowboy Way* by Grady Spears with June Naylor
(Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2009) Photography by David Manning

dutch's blue cheese and bacon burger with chipotle mayo

SERVES 4

NOTHING BEATS THE FLAVOR COMBINATION OF BLUE CHEESE, BACON, AND CHIPOTLE. YOU GET SWEET, SMOKY, TANGY, AND A LITTLE BIT OF FIRE, ALL IN ONE BITE. THIS IS A GREAT BURGER ANY WAY YOU COOK IT, BUT IF YOU USE GROUND SIRLOIN, YOU'LL TASTE THE DIFFERENCE.

ingredients:

BURGERS

- 4 (8- to 10-ounce) ground sirloin or hamburger patties
- Kosher salt
- ½ cup Chipotle Mayo (recipe on this page)
- 4 hamburger buns
- 12 strips thick-sliced bacon, cooked
- 1 roma tomato, sliced
- 1 small red onion, sliced thin
- ¼ cup crumbled blue cheese

MAYO

- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon adobo sauce from canned chipotle chiles
- ½ teaspoon freshly squeezed lime juice
- Kosher salt

cooking instructions:

- Prepare a gas or charcoal grill, or heat a skillet to medium-high heat.
- Season each burger with kosher salt, and cook for 4 to 5 minutes on each side.
- Remove the burger from the heat, and let rest for 3 minutes.
- Spread a thin layer of chipotle mayo on the top and bottom of each bun.
- Place a burger on the bottom bun, then layer the bacon, tomato, and onion on top, and finish with the blue cheese crumbles.
- Put the top bun in place, and serve warm.

to make the mayo (½ cup):

- In a bowl, combine the ingredients, mixing well. Season with the salt, and refrigerate, covered, until needed.



homeplace ranch apple muffins

MAKES 12 MUFFINS

BRAD MAKES MUFFINS AND COOKIES JUST ABOUT EVERY DAY AT HOMEPLACE RANCH, AND GUESTS CAN HELP THEMSELVES TO SWEETS AND COFFEE ANY TIME THEY LIKE. WE MADE THESE MUFFINS WITH FRESH APPLES FOR BREAKFAST; TRY GOLDEN OR RED DELICIOUS APPLES IN YOURS.

ingredients:

1 egg
1 cup milk
¼ cup vegetable oil
2 cups all-purpose flour
¼ cup sugar
3 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon sea salt
3 teaspoons ground cinnamon
2½ medium apples, cored, peeled, and coarsely grated

cooking instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 350°F. Butter twelve regular (⅓-cup) muffin cups, and set aside.
- Combine the egg, milk, and oil in a medium bowl by hand with a spoon or fork. In a large bowl, combine the flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon with a fork.
- Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients, and pour the wet ingredients into it, add the grated apples, and then mix just until all the ingredients are moistened.
- Spoon the batter equally among the prepared muffin cups. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of a muffin comes out clean.

For **blueberry muffins**, substitute 1 cup of blueberries for the apples. For **cranberry muffins**, substitute 1 cup cranberries and the zest of 2 oranges for the apples, and substitute ½ cup orange juice for half of the milk.



brunch casserole

SERVES 12-15

**YOU'VE NEVER HAD A BRUNCH DISH ANY RICHER THAN THIS ONE!
BE CAREFUL, BECAUSE ONCE YOU MAKE IT, YOUR FAMILY
WILL WANT IT EVERY WEEKEND.**

ingredients:

18 eggs, beaten
¼ cup unsalted butter, melted
1 cup sour cream or Mexican crema
1 cup milk
2 teaspoons salt
¼ cup chopped green onions
2 cups grated Pepper Jack cheese
½ cup crumbled queso fresco

cooking instructions:

- Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- In a large bowl, combine the eggs, melted butter, sour cream, milk, salt, and green onions. Stir well, and transfer to a buttered 9-by-13-inch casserole dish, and bake for 25 minutes.
- Cover the casserole with the Pepper Jack cheese, and bake for 10 to 15 minutes longer, or until puffed and browned.
- Remove from the oven, and allow to cool for 5 minutes. Top with the queso fresco.



pattie's pound cake with berries and raspberry-chambord sauce

SERVES 12-14

THIS IS BOB'S MOM'S RECIPE FOR THEIR FAMILY'S FAVORITE DESSERT, SERVED AT EVERY FAMILY GET-TOGETHER SINCE BOB WAS A LITTLE KID. YOU CAN TOP IT WITH ICE CREAM OR FRESH WHIPPED CREAM, WITH OR WITHOUT THE BERRIES AND SAUCE I RECOMMEND HERE.

ingredients:

POUND CAKE

- 1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- 4 eggs, beaten
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract
- 2 teaspoons almond extract
- 1 cup buttermilk
- 3 cups all-purpose flour, sifted twice

RASPBERRY-CHAMBORD SAUCE

- 1 cup fresh raspberries
- 1 cup fresh blackberries
- 1 cup confectioners' sugar
- ¼ cup Chambord
- 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

cooking instructions:

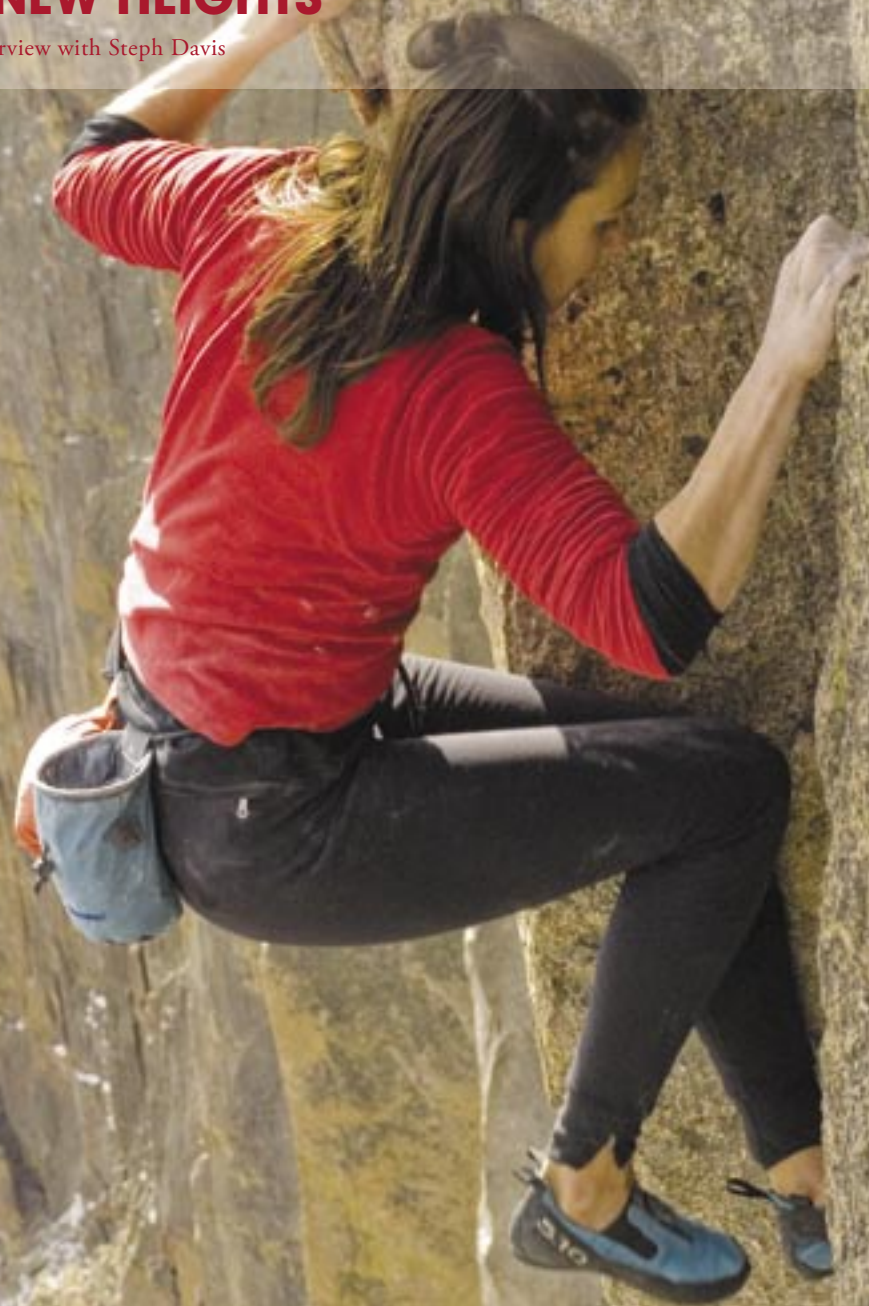
- Preheat the oven to 350°F.
- Butter and lightly flour a Bundt pan.
- Cream the butter and sugar together. Add the baking powder, baking soda, eggs, and extracts.
- Gradually add the buttermilk and flour, alternating a little at a time. Pour into the prepared pan.
- Bake for about 1 hour, or until the cake is golden brown.
- Serve with Raspberry-Chambord Sauce, and garnish with fresh raspberries and blackberries.

to make the sauce (2 cups):

- In a blender or food processor, process all the ingredients together, and then strain the mixture through a fine-mesh sieve to remove the seeds. Discard the seeds.
- Cover and refrigerate for 1 hour. If you like a fancy presentation, drizzle the sauce from a squeeze bottle to decorate the plate.

STEPH DAVIS: CLIMBING TO NEW HEIGHTS

Article based on an interview with Steph Davis



© B. Kimball Photo Imagery



WHERE DID YOU GROW UP? WHEN DID YOU START CLIMBING?

I grew up in the east coast, with a background of music (piano, flute, and singing) and lots of academics. I started climbing in college, and moved to Colorado and then Utah.

HOW DID YOUR PASSION FOR CLIMBING BEGIN?

When I started climbing at age eighteen, a big draw for me was spending time outside. The first time I went climbing, I got carried away by it.

WHAT DOES CLIMBING FULFILL FOR YOU?

Climbing gives a lot of satisfaction on many levels—physically, mentally, and emotionally. It also provides a way to continuously learn, and also to experience nature on a pure, fundamental level.

HOW DID YOU GO FROM LAW SCHOOL TO THE NOMADIC EXISTENCE OF CLIMBING?

I struggled for a while with trying to do what I thought was expected of me, but finally it didn't feel right, and I surrendered into the nomadic lifestyle of climbing.

TALK ABOUT THE TRANSITION FROM CLIMBING AS A HOBBY TO PROFESSIONAL:

It was a very gradual transition for me. When I was working as a climbing guide, I already experienced the difficulty of working at something that is also your favorite activity. It has its pros and cons, like everything, but at this point, I have spent most of my adult life in this career, and I appreciate it very much.

DESCRIBE AN AVERAGE DAY FOR YOU AS A PROFESSIONAL CLIMBER:

Climbing has a natural routine because it's very physical. So normally, I climb one or two days on, and then take a rest day. I am now equally as committed

to base jumping and skydiving, so I find myself rotating around more with these three different pursuits, which can be kind of a scheduling challenge!

TALK ABOUT THE RISKS VS. REWARDS OF CLIMBING:

Honestly, I don't find climbing particularly risky, especially compared to base jumping.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE ASPECT ABOUT CLIMBING?

Climbing makes me feel good, at a most basic and physical level.

TALK ABOUT SOME OF THE CHALLENGES YOU FACE:

Climbing can be very conditions dependent. It can often be too hot, too cold, too humid, too wet, too windy, which can lead to frustration when you're really excited to go climbing.

WHAT KINDS OF PLACES DO YOU ENJOY CLIMBING THE MOST? IN WHAT TYPES OF CONDITIONS?

I most enjoy climbing in beautiful places with relaxed situations—that is, not too many regulations or crowds. I also like to be high up. Conditions? Of course, not too hot, not too cold, not too humid, and not too windy.

WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO PURSUE FREE SOLOING? WHY DO YOU PREFER THIS STYLE OVER OTHER TYPES OF CLIMBING?

I find that I enjoy activities that demand pure, single focus. Free soloing is nice for that, and also because of the simplicity of being alone and not having a lot of equipment to deal with.

When fear does not cause trouble, free soloing is a very meditative, focused activity. I like doing things where I have to pay attention because the consequences are high.

NO FEAR



TALK ABOUT THE PROCESS OF FREE SOLOING:

Free soloing can be a lot of preparation mentally, if the climbing is hard, or a relaxed, easy outing if it's easy.

HOW DOES FREE SOLOING DIFFER FROM OTHER TYPES OF CLIMBING?

Falling is really not an option, so it requires total focus.

DOES TAKING AWAY THE ROPES, PARACHUTE, AND NET REALLY ADD THAT MUCH MORE TO THE CLIMBING EXPERIENCE?

When fear does not cause trouble, free soloing is a very meditative, focused activity. I like doing things where I have to pay attention because the consequences are high.

TALK ABOUT A SIGNIFICANT CLIMB IN YOUR CAREER:

Freeing El Cap in a day was very meaningful for me. Only one

other woman has done this, and I didn't think I was capable of doing it.

HOW DID YOU PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THIS CLIMB? WHAT KIND OF TRAINING WAS NECESSARY?

I actually trained on the climb, living on top of El Cap and climbing on the wall every day.

WHAT WENT THROUGH YOUR HEAD WHILE CLIMBING?

It was a long effort, over twenty hours, so I was in one of those long-push mentalities you get in the mountains. Not too much emotion, just taking each moment one at a time.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN AND TAKE AWAY FROM THIS EXPERIENCE?

I learned I can do anything I put my mind to.

DESCRIBE BASE JUMPING:

For a climber, standing at the edge of a cliff and actually jumping

off is perhaps the most alien, unthinkable action. It's amazing to have the freedom to do that.

WHY DID YOU BRING BASE JUMPING INTO YOUR ARSENAL OF OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES?

I suddenly felt the urge to skydive because I felt I was limited by the fear of falling, and I wanted to live through the sensation of falling, which to a climber would equal death. After I started skydiving, it was very natural to start base jumping from the cliffs I know so well as a climber.

DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE OF BASE JUMPING. WHAT GOES THROUGH YOUR HEAD WHILE JUMPING?

There is a lot of mental preparation before a jump. Fear is a major element of jumping. Once I actually leave the cliff, my mind snaps into the things I need to do in the next few seconds of time, reacting to what can

happen much faster than it seems. Things feel much slower during a jump than they actually are.

WHAT DO YOU ENJOY THE MOST ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE?

It gives an unbelievable amount of freedom, having the ability to fly or fall from a cliff and safely land on the ground.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO ACCOMPLISH THROUGH YOUR CAREER?

At first, I was only interested in learning and coming to an understanding of things I didn't understand in life. In the last few years, I've realized that I have a lot of ability to influence people through media and as a role model, and I can use this to help people and animals and try to effect some good. So things have been really exciting for me recently.

TALK ABOUT YOUR LIFE OUTSIDE OF PROFESSIONAL CLIMBING:

I spend a lot of time on the computer because I'm a writer, and also because I love the connectivity of the internet and social media. I feel a strong sense of community and try to stay connected with everyone. I also really like sharing stories with words, photos, and video, so I spend a lot of time blogging, which is also a part of my job. I love cleaning and gardening, and since I don't eat animal products or wheat, I cook a lot too. I like to live simply—not have a lot of excess stuff, no TV, don't really go shopping or things like that. But I seem to be very busy all the time. [AL]

ADVENTURES OF A STORM CHASER

Article based on an interview with George Kourounis
Photography by George Kourounis

Ever since I was a kid, I always had this amazing **FASCINATION AND CURIOSITY** about nature, and in particular, the extremes of nature. As I got older, I started rearranging **VACATION** days and time off to chase storms in my **SPARE TIME.**”



HOW DID YOUR CAREER GET STARTED?

You don’t often see someone with Storm Chaser and Adventurer as their job title. And that is what it says on my business cards. It’s so surreal. Ever since I was a kid, I always had this amazing fascination and curiosity about nature, and in particular, the extremes of nature. As I got older, I started rearranging vacation days and time off to chase storms in my spare time. It got to the point where if a hurricane was coming through, my boss would ask, “Why are you still here? Shouldn’t you be on your way to Florida?”

I developed a reputation for being the guy who was always in the right place at the wrong time. When most people were fleeing an area or evacuating, I was the guy driving into the evacuation zone. Of course, when I began, I was only doing it when I could afford to do it. It was a hobby back then. I would save up all my money, and drive to Arizona to photograph the beautiful lightning in the desert. Or I would take a couple of weeks and go chase tornadoes in Tornado Alley.

It started to become a part-time career when I began to generate some income selling video and photos to different news outlets and documentary film companies. I started doing more television appearances, newspaper articles, and magazine articles, and it attracted the attention of a television production company. We put together the idea for a TV program. In 2006, I was able to quit my regular job as an audio engineer in the film and TV business, and



thing I do is hop on the internet, see what volcanoes are erupting, where there is tornado potential, if there are any hurricanes or typhoons out in the ocean somewhere. I always have my finger on the pulse of the planet. I know exactly what's going on at any given time. I know where all the forest fires are, where all the recent earthquakes have been—anything natural-disaster related, I know about it.

HOW DID YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY REACT WHEN YOU DECIDED TO CHASE STORMS FOR A LIVING?

Well, my career was really a natural progression. At first, they thought I was a bit odd. But because it was gradual, because it started off as a hobby and slowly escalated over the years, I think I desensitized my family, and that really worked well in my favor. My mom's got a lot of gray hairs now, and certainly many more in the past few years since she's been hearing about my exploits. But by easing them into it over the years, now I can pretty much go anywhere, do anything, and no one even bats an eye. But I always promise my wife that I'm going to come back in one piece.

People think I am crazy—for obvious reasons. I get two questions a lot. People say, "Why do you do this?" Obviously, I am very passionate about it. The exploration side is so overwhelming to me that I just love to do it. And the other question I get is, "Are you crazy!?" I don't think I'm crazy; I don't think I have a death wish. If anything, I think I have a life wish. I want to be out there and experience as much as I possibly can and squeeze as many adventures in this lifetime as I humanly can.

People fall into two different categories when I talk to them. They either think I am completely

nuts or they think it's the coolest thing ever. And I leave that up to them.

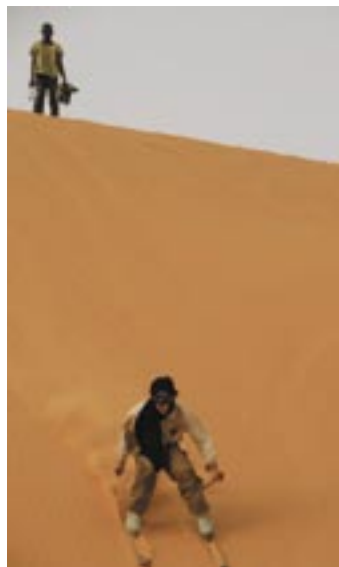
WHAT IS THE ALLURE BEHIND STORM CHASING AND EXPLORING NATURE'S MOST DANGEROUS PHENOMENA?

Certainly part of the draw is seeing Mother Nature in action at her most extreme. For example, when I was in Hurricane Katrina, I was in Gulf Port, Mississippi, where the strong part of the storm came ashore—that was the weak side hitting New Orleans, believe it or not. And I am standing in this hurricane, and it is blowing 120 or 130 miles an hour, and you feel like you are in a waterfall, but the water is moving sideways. The entire town around you is being ripped to shreds. And as dangerous and frightening as that it, all you can do is sort of close your eyes and feel the power of nature and just be in awe.

HOW DO THE BENEFITS OUTWEIGH THE RISKS?

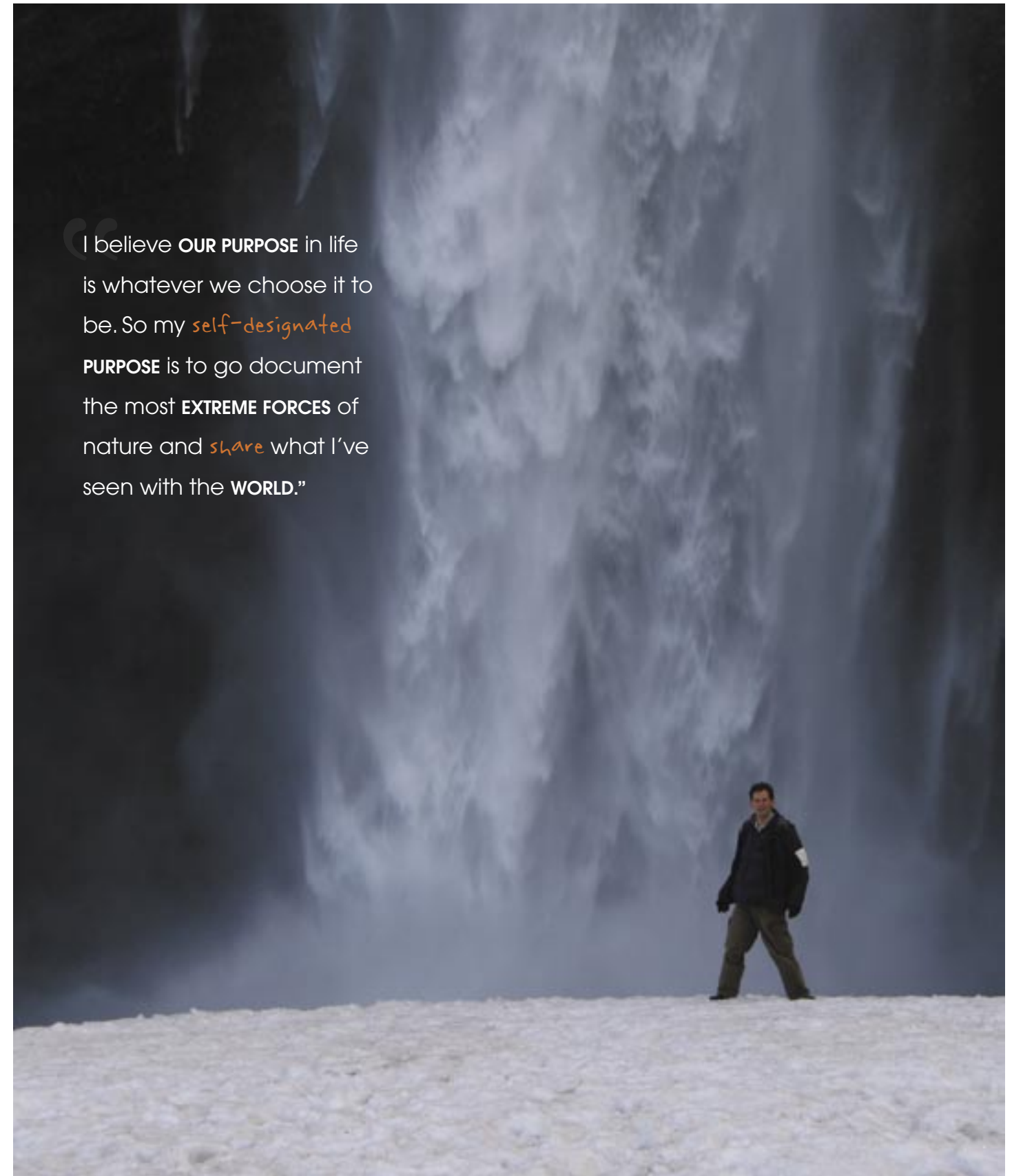
There is no photo worth dying for. I intend on doing this for many more decades. No storm chaser has ever been killed by the storm that they've been chasing, and I certainly do not want to become the first. It is my goal to stay out of the Darwin Awards. But of course there are risks involved. Being able to witness some of these amazing things—a mountain exploding and a volcano erupting with lava flying, a tornado touching down in a field, lightning striking so close that you can feel the heat on the side of your face—it is just hard to put into words how amazing it is. For me, it is worth the risk.

I try to do a very dangerous thing in as safe a manner as possible. Safety is always number one, but getting the shot is a very close second. I'll take risks, but they are calculated risks. A lot of what I do sounds more dangerous than



do this full time, which is just so amazing. For the past four and a half years, I've been traveling the entire world—going from India to Australia to Antarctica to the Canadian Arctic to all over Africa and Asia—and documenting the most extreme forces of nature. It has been the most marvelous, bizarre roller coaster ride.

I am seriously expecting somebody to pinch me and wake me up, and somehow I'll snap out of this dream vocation—which it really is. It's much more of a lifestyle than it is a job because it is so all-consuming. When I wake up in the morning, the first



I believe **OUR PURPOSE** in life is whatever we choose it to be. So my **self-designated PURPOSE** is to go document the most **EXTREME FORCES** of nature and **share** what I've seen with the **WORLD.**"

it is. The most dangerous part, I find, is driving—you're on bad roads, the wind is howling, the visibility is poor, and people are losing their minds because they are trying to evacuate out of an area. It becomes a real hazard.

WHAT IS YOUR PHILOSOPHY AS A STORM CHASER?

I believe our purpose in life is whatever we choose it to be. So my self-designated purpose is to go document the most extreme forces of nature and share what I've seen with the world. For me, there is no greater calling in life. So when I am doing it, I am fulfilling my deep personal purpose, and there is nothing for me that can be more rewarding.

DESCRIBE A TYPICAL DAY CHASING TORNADOES:

I wake up in Wichita, Kansas,

let's say, and start doing a morning forecast. We have to try and predict where the tornadoes will be long before any clouds have formed in the sky. That is very difficult to do, and it takes many years of learning how to forecast where you think the best storms are going to be.

Once the morning forecast is done, we'll grab a quick bite to eat and head out on the road to our target area. We are connected to the internet in the car as we're driving along, so we will look at the new computer model data, the new satellite images, and the new radar images coming from the National Weather Service. As we get into our target area, we will narrow our target down from, let's say, western Kansas to a few counties and then to just a town.



No **STORM CHASER** has ever been killed by the **storm** that they've been **CHASING**, and I **certainly** do not want to **BECOME** the first. It is **my goal** to stay out of the **DARWIN AWARDS.**"

By the time we get to our target, it is probably mid to late afternoon, depending on how far you have to drive. Typically, storms that produce tornadoes will fire up between five o'clock to nine o'clock. That is when the sun heats the ground, the ground heats the air, and it has been heating all day. Now we have the instability and the most potential for storms, so it works out really well.

If our targeting and forecasting are correct, then we will be right there, or really close by, when the best storms start to fire up. We see them on radar on the computer screen; we can see them visually in the sky. The hail is coming down. The lightning is crashing. We punch through the rain and chase the storm. We try and find the spot in the storm where there's most likely to be a tornado and hope that the road networks cooperate, and then chase the storm until it gets dark. If we are lucky, we'll see a tornado.

Of course, not every storm produces a tornado. If you are not patient and you frustrate easily, storm chasing is not for you. We spend many hours driving under crystal clear blue skies. Then we have a few hours of chaos and mayhem as the storms are firing up and we're driving like mad to get into position. The part that people see on television is the exciting part. They don't see the long hours of monotony. Sometimes you'll have an entire week where there are absolutely no storms to chase. It is not easy, and because it is not easy, when you find that tornado, that elusive diamond in the rough, then it is that much more satisfying.

DESCRIBE THE RUSH WHEN YOU SEE THE STORM UNFOLD IN FRONT OF YOU:

It is fantastic! These storms can grow to be twice the size of

Mount Everest. Some of them can be 60,000 feet high. And they are rotating like a top. Imagine that much energy being focused on this one funnel cloud touching down! When a tornado has touched down in a field, the rush that I get is like being at a race track and the gun fires. Of course, tornadoes don't obey the traffic laws or stop at stop signs, so we have to navigate a course to catch up to the tornado. We are trying to plot the best way to get to it and also trying to find a safe place, gauge the strength of the tornado, figure out if it's growing or shrinking, or if it's turning to the right or left. There are a million things rushing through my mind!

Of course, we're very hyper at that point because it is so exciting. And when the tornado finally lifts and it's all over with, we just let out a huge sigh. And then we look at each other and say, "Okay, what just happened?" We sort of forget what's happened over the past half an hour or so because there's been so many things running through our minds. It is overload for your brain. Many times, I've had to go back and look at the video to fully understand what has just happened. You have to rely on the video to be an extension of your brain.

CLOSE CALLS:

Oh, yes! I had one particular instance which is what I would consider a near-death experience. I was just outside of Oklahoma City at night. I knew there was a tornado nearby, and I was trying to find it in the inky blackness. The next thing I know, there were two-by-fours and pieces of siding flying right beside my car. I basically drove right into the edge of it! Luckily the video was rolling already, so I didn't have to think about that. But I had to turn and drive with the wind. All the debris was still passing me like I was

standing still. There were electrical transformers exploding right beside my car with these bright blue power flashes.

Then I had to find some sort of shelter, so I hid behind a shopping mall to put as many layers of bricks between myself and the tornado as possible as it's roaring right past me. You could only see it when the lightning flashed—absolutely frightening. It took ten or fifteen minutes for my legs to stop shaking. And then I looked at my chase partner at the time, and we were both okay. So we got back into the car and kept chasing it for another forty-five minutes!

You really are only allowed a small amount of time to react, and you have to be very good at thinking quickly and working under very stressful situations. It is the type of stress that most people don't experience. It is not the stress of your boss breathing down your neck waiting for the monthly report. It is the "Am I going to die?" type of stress. It is a special breed of stress.

DOES CHASING TORNADOES EVER LOSE ITS EXCITEMENT?

Chasing tornadoes can be very fatiguing. I typically do between four and six weeks of tornado chasing every year, and I really start to get tired at around three weeks. Especially if it is a mediocre storm season like 2009. I get so sick and tired of driving back and forth on these monotonous highways, chasing after rain showers and eating really bad truck stop food. It is a really bizarre, nomadic lifestyle that when it is great, it's really great, but when it's bad, it's not fun at all.

TALK ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR ADVENTURES:

In terms of tornadoes, the most spectacular thing I've seen was in

southern Kansas back in 2004. It was the last day of our chase, and we were able to witness about ten tornadoes touch down in the span of two and a half hours. It was just one tornado after another after another, and they were beautiful. They didn't do a lot of property damage, so we liked that. Most of them were out in empty fields. They were just so spectacular to watch, seeing these elephant trunks come out of the sky and watching them rip trees out of the ground.

Hurricane Katrina was spectacular in that it was such an overwhelming experience, both during the storm and after the storm. That will be permanently etched into my brain. Just seeing the raw, raw power of nature and what it can do is completely overwhelming.

Of course, I am obligated to say that getting married on the volcano was certainly spectacular. In 2006, we went to Yasur Volcano, which is in the tiny island nation of Vanuatu in the South Pacific. We got married on the crater's edge of the volcano as it was erupting! During the ceremony, there would be these explosions. Rocks would go flying through the air, the ash column would go up, and it would interrupt our vows. ::laughs:: Very symbolic of a marriage.

Two days before the wedding, I also repelled down the crater of this (very active) volcano. Things would explode every ten or fifteen minutes. And while I was down about sixty yards inside this crater, it had a very large eruption, and I literally had to stand my ground and look up in the air, and try and judge where the flying chunks of lava were going to land. I could hear them whizzing past me and impacting the ground. Scary! I was able to grab one of these lava bombs. I had thick leather welding gloves, and



I grabbed it. It was so hot that I could twist it like taffy. Eventually, it cooled and hardened into solid rock. Really unbelievable!

ARE THERE MOMENTS WHEN YOUR CAREER IS NOT FUN?

Oh, yes. There are many. It is still a job. Don't get me wrong; it's a dream job. But there are times when I am just sick of being away from home. I spend over 220 nights a year away from home, so I miss my wife. When I'm chasing these hurricanes, I am constantly soaking wet and miserable. It is very difficult and very draining for sure. When I am halfway up climbing a 12,000-foot volcano

and I have no energy left in my tank, and I'm just trying to push on, I think to myself, "What am I doing!?"

There are certainly aspects of my job that I wouldn't wish on my worst enemy. Less than a year ago in Kenya, I was in Kitum Cave, where several people have died from something called Marburg Hemorrhagic Fever, a very close relative to the Ebola virus. I was bitten by a bat in this cave, and bats have been known to carry the antibodies for this virus. So there I am in this cave in Africa not knowing if I have a week and a half before my internal



I was bitten by a bat in this **CAVE**, and bats have been known to carry the **ANTIBODIES** for this virus. So now here I am in this **CAVE** in **Africa** not knowing if I have a week and a half before my **INTERNAL ORGANS** liquefy and I die."

organs liquefy and I die. That is a very frightening thought.

But I love this job. I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world. The risks can be extreme, but the rewards are so many times worth the risk that I would certainly never consider giving it up unless I was physically unable. You'll see me wheeling myself out in a wheelchair into the eye of a storm some day. Strap a camera to my wheelchair, put a helmet on me, and I'm good to go.

WHAT TYPE OF STORM/NATURAL PHENOMENON DO YOU ENJOY EXPERIENCING THE MOST?

My bread and butter has been the tornadoes. That is where I got my start. Seeing a great tornado is truly spectacular. But they're like my kids—it's hard to pick one that I like more. There are certain volcanoes and caves, like Crystal Cave, that have been so amazing, and certain hurricanes that have been more dramatic than others. It is really hard for me to put my finger on any one particular phenomenon that I like more than the others. I think Mother Nature paints with a pretty even brush, as far as I'm concerned.

WHAT IS LIFE LIKE OUTSIDE OF STORM CHASING?

There is no life outside of storm chasing. It is indeed a lifestyle. My entire existence revolves around Mother Nature's whims. It is such an all-consuming lifestyle that I don't really need to do anything else. I love it so much. I've been able to take my passion and turn it into a career that doesn't seem like work. I consider myself to be retired four and a half years ago because what I do is not work to me. It is play. I get to go all over the world in over thirty countries—and I get paid to do it. It is awesome. It is not the right job for everyone, but it is the perfect job for me. [AL]



ART MURALS MADE OF PAPER SWIRLS

Article based on an interview with Yulia Brodskaya

A LITTLE BACKGROUND:

Yulia is a pretty common name in Russia (similar to Julia in English). My parents just liked it, so here I am. I was born in Moscow to a Jewish family. I went to an art school there and received my first degree at Moscow State Textile University, where I specialized in graphic design. From there, I moved to the United Kingdom to continue my education and get a master's degree. At the moment, I live in a small town close to London with my husband.

WHAT WERE YOU LIKE AS A CHILD?

I was very shy and quiet, and also self-sufficient. I spent the majority

of my time with my mother or grandmother, who both encouraged me to draw and paint and even sent me to a children's art school at the age of six. Now that I'm twenty-six, you could say I've had twenty years of experience in various forms of visual art.

HOBBIES GROWING UP:

I was all about drawing and painting, and making collages. I also went to dance classes for about one year. I really enjoyed the lessons, but to continue, I had to find a partner. Unfortunately, all the boys were already taken, so I had to leave the studio and focus on art instead.

HOW DID YOU GET INTO PAPER GRAPHICS?

I believe one of the main reasons I got into the paper craft is my love of paper as a material. I've always had a special fascination with paper. I would make origami, collages, and paper sculptures. I also collected various kinds of paper. In fact, I still prefer shopping for paper to any other shopping, and get excited about new, unusual sheets of paper a lot more than a new dress!

I studied graphic design for about five years, which meant doing all the work and assignments on the computer. During that time though, I was still making

collages and hand-drawn illustrations, just to do something different and have a break from the computer screen.

The paper graphics started about two years ago. I was planning to create a small brochure to be sent out to potential clients with some of my work samples, and I was looking for an eye-catching typographic image with my name "Yulia" for the cover. I created a number of hand-drawn variants, but wasn't thrilled with any of them. Then I remembered the "Quilling" technique (paper filigree) that I once used, quite a long time ago. The first "papergraphic" image I made



There is no room for error, so I need to have a very clear idea about what I'm doing from the beginning.



was "Yulia." It was a starting point for my experiments with paper. Ironically, the brochure with the work samples was never published because I really got into the "paper work."

TALK ABOUT THE PROCESS OF CREATING A PAPER GRAPHIC:

I begin with sketches and roughs—this is a very important stage because once I glue a piece of paper, I can't remove it (the glue needs to be strongly adhesive). There is no room for error, so I need to have a very clear idea about what I'm doing from the beginning. However, there is always room for experimentation with the actual paper. Sometimes it is difficult to see what will look good before starting the physical

"paper work." When the artwork is ready, it is photographed with different types of lighting, and the best high-resolution photograph gets reproduced.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN A PIECE OF ART IS FINISHED?

It's complete when I don't feel the urge to add more paper strips and nothing distracts my eye from the whole picture.

WHAT INSPIRES A GRAPHIC? HOW DO YOU COMBAT "ARTIST'S BLOCK"?

At the moment, I mostly work on commercial projects, thus all the inspiration has to happen around the brief. I often do some research, and this helps to overcome any creative blocks.



IS THERE A SPECIAL PAPER THAT YOU USE?

The main requirement for paper is flexibility—it has to bend and swirl easily. Bad quality paper simply exfoliates. Apart from that, I like to experiment with all sorts of paper and cardstock.

SHADOW SEEMS TO BE AN IMPORTANT ELEMENT OF THE FINAL DESIGN. HOW DO YOU SET UP LIGHTING TO ACHIEVE THIS?

This is true—lighting can make or break the paper artwork. I don't photograph the work myself; there are a couple of photographers with whom I usually work, depending on the project's needs. Usually I know straight-away what kind of lighting is needed, but it is always good to test other options and see what the professionals can offer.

WHAT WOULD YOU CONSIDER YOUR FIRST BIG BREAK? HOW DID YOU CELEBRATE?

Undoubtedly that was a Christmas issue of the *Guardian's* supplement, *g2*. I did the cover art and six more paper illustrations for the inside spreads. The *g2* art director, Richard Turley, was the first one to commission paper illustrations. I only had three and a half days for the sketches and “paper work.” I hardly slept while working on this commission, with the tight deadlines and stress. I didn't celebrate at all. When it was all over, I just wanted to sleep for a week!

WHAT DOES YOUR STUDIO SPACE LOOK LIKE? DO YOU LISTEN TO MUSIC WHILE YOU WORK?

The walls are off-white and absolutely blank—I see enough colors in front of me all the time! In my workspace, I have shelves with hundreds of paper sheets all arranged by color. I don't like listening to music while I work; I prefer listening to audio books.

I did the cover art and **six** more paper illustrations for the inside spreads. The *g2* art director, Richard Turley, was the first one to commission **paper illustrations**. I only had **three and a half** days for the sketches and “paper work.”



FAVORITE PIECE OF PAPER ART:

I don't play favorites with my work. Once I finish a piece, I move on to the next one.

TOUGHEST ASSIGNMENT:

The artwork for the *Guardian* was the most difficult in terms of deadlines. A recent commission for a Cadbury billboard campaign in Ireland was a tough assignment because of the complexity of the work—apart from the elements made of edge-glued paper strips, I also had to cover the whole background with flat cut paper. And the artwork is the largest in scale I've done so far. Basically all the projects with very strict deadlines are quite tough for me; I don't like to work under pressure.

DREAM ASSIGNMENT:

At the moment, I would love to bring some of my personal, self-initiated projects into life.



WHAT CAREER WOULD YOU HAVE IF YOU WEREN'T AN ARTIST?

A dancer.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE THINGS?

- *Hero (Ying Xiong)*, the movie
- Paper shops
- Gustav Klimt (artist)
- Watermelon
- Sweet cherries
- Ice wine
- Straw
- MP3 player
- Parks
- Theme parks
- Seaside/beaches (in the off-season)
- House parties
- Picking mushrooms in Russian forests [AL]

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CANADIAN ROCKIES: WILD AND OTHERWORLDLY

Article by Brian Oar
Photography courtesy of Travel Alberta

We were flying in a **HELICOPTER** next to roughly 10,000-foot-high peaks over **GLACIALLY** carved, impossibly blue lakes in the Canadian Rockies when the “Eureka!” moment **STRUCK**—this is what it must have felt like for Earth’s **PIONEERS**, the great explorers who **FIRST SET EYES** on previously uncharted territories.

Such were the simultaneous feelings of isolation, primal awe, and appreciation for unspoiled natural splendor which were awakened.

This planet’s magnificent gifts never cease to amaze, but refreshed appreciation was aroused during a recent visit to the Alberta province. Centerpiece to the visit was Banff and Jasper national parks. Banff is located about eighty miles west of



Calgary, and Jasper 250 miles southwest of Edmonton. The two parks are essentially next to each other, spanning roughly 8,000 square miles along the eastern slopes of the Canadian Rockies.

BANFF NATIONAL PARK

In the fall of 1883, Canadian Pacific Railway construction workers discovered hot springs in Alberta's Rockies. With that small natural find, the Banff National Park was born, Canada's first national park and the world's third. The area quickly gained notoriety across North America and Europe via the railroad, advertising a new, spectacular destination. William Cornelius Van Horne, the railroad's president at the time, famously said: "Since I can't export the scenery, I'll import the tourists."

Van Horne's vision became reality thanks to the region's unrelenting beauty and a series of grand hotels the Canadian Pacific built along the rail line under his guidance. Banff Springs Hotel was the first, and it was instrumental in founding a thriving tourist destination with luxurious accommodations and top-notch service. While the first hotel may have been slightly more than a cabin in those days, it did the trick and began getting people to vacation in the park.

By the 1920s, further development of roads, accommodations, and additional rail lines took the destination to new heights. Through these manmade achievements, recreational amenities joined the scenery as star attractions. Renowned golf course architect Stanley Thompson was selected to create the "world's greatest mountain golf course" at Banff Springs. Thompson's masterpiece has stood the test of time. *Golf Digest* magazine recently named the eighteen-hole Thompson course at The



Fairmont Banff Springs one of Canada's top twenty courses nationally (along with two other courses in Alberta's Rockies—The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge Golf Course, also by Thompson, and Kananaskis Country Golf Course by Robert Trent Jones, Sr.).

By the mid 1930s, the destination was attracting people for year-round activities. The area's snow, scenery, and terrain attracted the attention of winter sports enthusiasts from around

the globe. Early skiers climbed nearby peaks with skins, a small strip of heavy cloth attached to the bottoms of skis used to climb uphill, which were removed upon reaching the top of the mountain in order to descend. Later, modified Model T Fords and early model snow vehicles were used to access slopes until the first ski lifts and rope tows were installed in the late '40s.

Today, the town of Banff is a charming, modern, four-season

resort town, anchored by The Fairmont Banff Springs resort, which hovers castle-like over the town. Since the late 1920s to present, the historic hotel was leveled by a devastating fire and has undergone numerous renovations and expansions. In the past two decades, the hotel has reinforced its reputation as one of the world's most unforgettable and luxurious. With architecture modeled after a Scottish baronial castle—Van Horne was a Scot—the hotel exudes royal elegance.



Pictured Above:
Aerial view of Highway 40 in
Kananaskis Country

Pictured Right :
(top)

Icefields Parkway in Banff
National Park

(bottom)

Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge
in Jasper National Park





The Fairmont brand and service ensure that opulence and pampering await guests, particularly at Willow Stream Spa, which features rejuvenating treatments which draw upon the mountain's indelible energy. The spa's theme stems from the original hot springs, with mineral pools, cascading waterfalls, and relaxing massage therapies offered.

Great vacations engage all of the senses, and culinary delights are a primary key to this equation. The Fairmont Banff Springs boasts a plethora of casual and fine dining choices including fresh, local fare, and also exotic foreign cuisine such as the Samari Sushi Bar and Castello Ristorante, featuring authentic Italian dishes. Personally, I found the Waldhaus Restaurant and Pub the best choice for rustic ambiance and delectable foods. The "House in the Forest" is an authentic cottage-style building and was built in 1927, originally serving as the golf clubhouse. It's still in its original position—the edge of the course and the Spray River. After a delicious German or Swiss-accented meal, you can retire to the Wildhaus Pub, just below the dining room, for a nightcap, a game of darts, or a game of pool in a cozy bar setting.

JASPER NATIONAL PARK

The largest national park in the Canadian Rockies—Jasper National Park—spreads over a vast 10,878 square kilometers of mountain wilderness, dotted with snow-capped mountains all year round and anchored by a crystal-clear lakes.

Jasper is the wildest of the mountain parks and internationally-

renowned for wildlife viewing. It is home to some of North America's rarest animals including grizzly bears, moose, cougars, caribou, mountain lions, wolves, wolverines, bighorn sheep, and numerous elk and deer. It contains a superb backcountry trail system as well as the world-famous Columbia Icefields, one of the only icefields in the world accessible by road.

Banff National Park, Jasper National Park, and the third Fairmont property in the region—The Fairmont Chateau Lake Louise—connect via the Icefields Parkway, which happens to be one of the most incredible scenic mountain drives in the world. It is even better when you are traveling by private coach, where you can sip a cool drink, sit back, and admire the views without a worry of driving.

The Icefields Parkway—142 miles of unparalleled beauty—lies entirely within the Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks World Heritage Site, recognized by UNESCO in 1984 for its outstanding natural beauty and geological value. This road, a chain of massive icefields and rugged peaks straddling the Continental Divide, marks the high watershed point of where all water either flows east or west.

With a massive number of astonishing, diverse mountain peaks to visually savor, it is easy to be distracted with endless photo opportunities in Jasper National Park. The glowing glacial lakes at their foot add an enchanting accent to these surreal scenes. Glacial silt melts off the massive glaciers and deposit into the

lakes giving it an incandescence that makes the water glow a magnificent blue.

While authenticity and history define Jasper, one of the true highlights of the park is how The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge weaves modern civilization into the rustic look and feel of this mountain oasis. Located on the northern end of the Icefields Parkway, about 175 miles from Banff, it was built in 1915 in association with the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway. Originally, it consisted of just a few tents on the shores of the beautiful Lac Beauvert, from where loons are heard offering up their plaintive wails.

In the 1920s, eight log bungalows were built for guests, and expansion continued until now, when nearly one hundred lodging buildings await the choice and specific style and taste of virtually every visitor. This array of lodging choices and options make it a very popular site for weddings, too.

The Fairmont's brand of luxury proliferates, complete with modern rooms, superb service, and wonderful dining options. However, quite possibly the best way to experience Jasper Park Lodge is to stay in one of the signature cabins they offer, like the Milligan Manor Cabin located just off the first tee of the resort's renowned Stanley Thompson-designed golf course. Milligan Manor is perfect for wedding parties, reunions, executive retreats, and golf groups.

Cabins at Jasper are perfect for a catered barbecue where a professional chef will fire up a gourmet cookout with legendary Alberta beef, local fish, and a list of excellent side dishes all cooked to perfection. Served on a huge deck overlooking the golf course, the dining experience is sublime.

CANMORE

When the 1988 Winter Olympics came to Calgary, the small town of Canmore, a lovely fifty-minute drive from the city, made its mark on history when selected to hold the Nordic skiing events and build a world-class trail system to hold the events for the Olympic Games. It was this development that has helped propel Canmore as an outdoor enthusiasts' Mecca.

The Canmore Nordic Centre is home to training facilities to the Canadian Nordic Team and hosts many events, both in winter and summertime. Skiing, rock climbing, ice climbing, curling, golf at Canmore Golf and Country Club, and its *Cheers*-esque vibe are all big draws for this town. Ever visit a course where everybody knows your name? That's Canmore Golf and Country Club. Even the course designer, Les Furber, is a member. How often can you play and dine alongside the course architect?

Canmore's mountain scenery is jaw-dropping in its proximity and drama. The Bow River winds through the valley floor from its origin in the midst of the Icefields. One can take a peaceful, gloriously relaxing no-rapids raft trip down the Bow River from Banff to Canmore. Along the way, you'll get a sore neck craning up at the slate gray mountains which envelope it on both sides.

Two top-notch resorts are currently being rolled out in Canmore. Silvertip Resort is a 600-acre, master-planned development complete with more than 350 luxurious homes and condominiums inspired by early Rocky Mountain Chateau architecture and the old world towns of Europe. A popular site for weddings, Silvertip may be well into its evolution, but there are many big plans and additions to come.



Canmore's mountain scenery is jaw-dropping in its proximity and drama. The Bow River winds through the valley floor from its origin in the midst of the Icefields.

One of its current amenities is a golf course so garden-like and challenging that PGA Tour star Stephen Ames is a member. Beside golf, Ames is no doubt drawn by the culinary cornucopia offered at Rustica Restaurant—Silvertip's new steakhouse—which recently garnered the 2009 Wine Spectator Award for Excellence.

Three Sisters Mountain Village is another beautiful master-planned resort community across the valley floor from Silvertip. Its siren call is luxurious mountain living and endless four-season recreation. The resort sits at the base of three towering peaks of Three Sisters Mountains, and offers a complete list of amenities, including the highly rated Stewart Creek Golf Course. One of Stewart Creek's fascinating draws is the way old mine shafts were incorporated into the design. It's a well-kept touch and

piece of history which adds an authentic touch and character. A second golf course is planned, as is a multi-year community build-out.

KANANASKIS COUNTRY

Kananaskis Country is set in park land with huge swathes of preserved landscape as far as the eye can see, coupled with well-placed lodging, amenities, and activities. Facilities in Kananaskis include several campgrounds, a beautiful river, Nakiska ski area, which hosted alpine skiing and freestyle moguls skiing during the 1988 Winter Olympics, and thirty-six acclaimed holes designed by Robert Trent Jones, Sr. at Kananaskis Country Golf Course. After a golf round there, consider relaxing in the club's dining facility which hosted the 2002 G-8 Summit. If it's good enough for several of the world's leaders, it's good enough for most!

The Delta Lodge at Kananaskis is an excellent choice for accommodations. Chef Ian Riddick is perhaps one of the area's finest, and his enticing menu is on display at Grappa inside the lodge. With fresh ingredients picked and procured locally, Chef Riddick fuses the tastes of Alberta

with creative flair as he takes your taste buds through a journey of local veggies, fresh fish, and choice Alberta beef.

Other Delta amenities include an array of outdoor adventure activities, shopping, a tavern, yet more scintillating scenery, and comfortable, cozy rooms with luxurious linens, flat screen TVs, and internet access. The Delta is outstanding.

If you do make the journey to this wonderful lodge and area, you must consider a helicopter tour, particularly since there is a helipad located a short distance from the hotel, operated by Kananaskis Heli Tours. This is a high-adrenalin, unforgettable way to take in the entire lay of the vast area's land. Swoop around the towering tops of Mt. Kidd and Mt. Lorette with their sheer cliff walls, and get a bird's-eye view of heavenly valleys and jagged-edge peaks.

Whether you experience the region in whole or in parts, the Canadian Rockies is a bucket-list must for the uninitiated. Historic. Dramatic. Untamed. The Canadian Rockies have maintained their bounty and charm while carefully weaving in modern

conveniences and elegant lifestyle or rugged outdoor options. Something titillating awaits every discerning visitor with the rare common denominator of mountains which draw people from around the globe. [AL]

Places to Stay

Delta Lodge at Kananaskis
403.591.7711
deltalodge.albertanetwork.com
The Fairmont Banff Springs
403.762.2211
fairmont.com/banffsprings
The Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge
780.852.3301
fairmont.com/jasper

Things to Do

Travel Alberta
travelalberta.com
Banff National Park
banffnationalpark.com
Jasper National Park
jaspercanadianrockies.com
Kananaskis Heli Tours Inc.
403.881.2500
discoverkananaskis.com
Rocky Mountain Raft Tours.
403.762.3632
banffrafttours.com

Places to Play

canadianrockiesgolf.ca

Transportation

Luxury Motor Coach Charters,
403.678.2990
luxurymotorcoach.ca

Pictured Left:
Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge in
Jasper National Park





A TRIP TO THE ETHIOPIAN COUNTRYSIDE

Article by Karen Kazmer



As we drove through the beautiful Ethiopian countryside, dotted with coffee plantations, I found myself humming the theme song from *The Smurfs*. The little huts reminded me of the dwellings in the cartoon. The roofs are made of straw and make up about three-quarters of the exterior. The mud walls start right where the roof stops, giving it a mushroom-like shape. Sometimes the straw covers the entire house. The houses were adorable and so lovingly maintained.

I spent four months in Ethiopia working as a relief and development intern with an international organization and had the opportunity to move around the country, working on and learning about different programs. Seven of those weeks were spent in the rural district of Gambella, near the border of Sudan, distributing non-food items like wash bins, dishes, tarps for temporary shelter, and mosquito nets for 30,000 people displaced by

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meaning *queen of*
the land, and my

Nuer name

BECAME YAMAL,
meaning *peace.*"

flash floods. In addition to necessary household items, we were also responsible for getting clean water and health training into a number of households to prevent diseases.

One of the villages that needed supplies was very remote and only reachable by boat. The boat we took was about the size of four rowboats, and barely held the necessary supplies, plus five people. The trip took just under four hours (filled with crocodile sightings) to reach our destination, which was a small town of about fifty huts right along the river. When we finally pulled up to the village, the kids were clapping and cheering. I felt like a celebrity as they all ran to greet me when I stepped on shore. It was an absolute joy to deliver their supplies and provide them with a way to purify their water.

My time in Gambella wasn't all work though; I had the opportunity to experience the rich Ethiopian culture as well. I spent many hours getting to know my Ethiopian co-workers. Names have important meanings in Ethiopia. For example, I had co-workers whose names meant trust, sun, and landlord. When they inquired what my name, Karen, meant, I didn't have a satisfactory answer. So, it was decided that I needed an Ethiopian name. I ended up with two—one in the national language of Amharic, and one in a local language, Nuer. My Amharic name became Halibea, meaning queen of the

land, and my Nuer name became Yamal, meaning peace. Months later, I still get emails from my friends in Ethiopia addressed to Halibea and Yamal. I like having a name that means something.

In Ethiopia, being invited for a coffee ceremony is a sign of friendship or respect and is pivotal for Ethiopian hospitality. In a traditional coffee ceremony, the host grinds the beans (and may invite you to help) and cooks the coffee from scratch in front of you. It takes a while to cook the coffee, since it's done over a charcoal burner. Everyone drinks their coffee (with lots of sugar) and eats a snack of popcorn. I don't usually drink coffee, but it's quite good in Ethiopia. The only problem was the late night invitations. I'm not ashamed to admit that my usual bedtime in Ethiopia was shortly after nine o'clock. There's nothing to do after dark, so after a late dinner and socializing with the rest of the staff, it was usually bedtime. My room lights weren't bright enough to read by, so my options were to sleep or stare at the wall. And if I stared at the wall too long, I'd start to notice the giant spiders that were inevitably there. There's nothing quite like a caffeine jolt at bedtime to make for a pleasant night in rural Africa.

Wherever I was in Ethiopia, there was often a cook at the office to prepare meals and coffee/tea. One of these cooks was the sweetest, warmest woman. My favorite breakfast at home in the United States is oatmeal. I had seen oatmeal on a menu in Ethiopia, only it was called porridge in English. This cook found out I loved porridge, called *gumfo* in the local language, and was quite surprised to hear it was my favorite. In

retrospect, her surprise probably should have been a warning sign that we weren't talking about the same thing! The next morning, she brought out a bowl with what looked and tasted like uncooked dough in the shape of a giant donut, with oil and spices in the center. Definitely not oatmeal! Since she had been so sweet in cooking my "favorite" breakfast, I ate it and raved about how great it tasted, making a mental note to stick with eggs in the future.

My wonderful cook also gave me a farewell gift: a traditional Ethiopian scarf. It was mostly white, with purple and yellow stripes at the ends, and can be worn in many different ways—around the neck as a shawl or, like my host taught me, wrapped around my head. I proudly wore it my last day there, finally feeling like, despite my ghostly pale skin, I could almost blend in with the locals. Almost.

While I usually stuck out more than blending in, my uniqueness made it easier to make friends, especially among children. Kids would shout "sister" in their local language and run up to me to shake my hand. Wherever I walked, a group of children followed. They were very helpful—when I needed to buy soap and tissues at a local stand, where no English was spoken, the kids guessed what I was asking for based on my pantomime, and had the shopkeeper get it for me.

My time working in Ethiopia allowed me to not only see a beautiful country, but experience the beauty of the people and their culture as well. While my purpose for being there was to serve the people of Ethiopia, I found that I received so much as well, being blessed with many friendships that continue even now, though we are on different continents. [AL]





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