

LIVE YOUR BEST LIFE

16 HABITS THAT MAKE  
YOU SMARTER, FITTER,  
HAPPIER

LIVE  
BRAVELY

# Outside

PERFECT  
SUMMER GEAR

BOARDSHORTS,  
SUPs, SHOES,  
SUNGLASSES,

AND THE  
WORLD'S  
COOLEST  
FLY ROD

+

EXCLUSIVE


THE  
MYSTERIOUS  
SYNDROME  
DESTROYING  
ENDURANCE  
ATHLETES

## THE POWER OF Obsessions

How  
CONRAD  
ANKER  
Risky It  
All to Chase  
a Dream

+

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO  
*Running*



NEWS FROM THE FIELD

# DISPATCHES

## Blood, Sweat, and Cheers

TOUR OPERATORS ARE STANDING BY TO MAKE YOUR DREAM VACATION OF PAIN AND SUFFERING COME TRUE

by Berne Broudy

**LAST YEAR,** David Crane went on a four-month holiday. But instead of renting a beach house in some off-the-radar Costa Rican town or spending the summer surfing and doing yoga in Bali, he traveled to Sudan, met up with 36 other cyclists—clients of the Toronto outfitter Tour d’Afrique—and rode 7,500 guided miles through nine countries, camping in the bush each night until he arrived in Cape Town, South Africa. “I loved it and hated it,” says the 20-year-old Crane, who lives in New Jersey. “It was incredibly painful. I dreaded getting on my bike most days. But at the same time it was uncomplicated. All I had to do was wake up and ride.”

Cross-continental bike excursions, jungle survival camps, guided ultraruns: agony-inducing holidays are currently one of the travel industry’s hottest trends. “The number of people seeking physically, mentally, and emotionally demanding vacations is on the rise,” says Shannon Stowell, president of the Adventure Travel Trade Association.

A mountain biker wearing a red jacket, blue shorts, and a white helmet is riding a trail through a rocky landscape. The trail is a narrow path of grass and dirt, winding between large, grey, rounded boulders. In the background, there are rolling hills and mountains under a cloudy sky. The overall scene is rugged and scenic.

*07.15*

Riding New  
Zealand's  
South Island  
with H+I  
Adventures



Riding the Silk Route



Snorkeling in Antarctica



Sailing Tierra del Fuego

## First Look

### HURT SO GOOD

FIVE TRIPS TO HELP YOU FEEL THE BURN

### BELIZE DESERT ISLAND SURVIVAL

After a week of training, swim to shore following a faux helicopter crash, then hunt for food, build shelter, desalinate water, and survive until you're "rescued" from a Belizean desert caye. \$2,272; bushmasters.co.uk

**DIFFICULTY** X X X X X  
**RISK** △ △ △ △ △

### CYCLING THE SILK ROUTE

Pedal 7,600 miles across Asia, spending over four and a half months on the ancient silk-trade route from Shanghai to Istanbul. Tour d'Afrique says it's the longest, hardest, highest, hottest, and coldest commercial expedition ever offered. \$21,300; tourdafrique.com

**DIFFICULTY** X X X X X  
**RISK** △ △ △ △ △

### THE GREENLAND CROSSING

Traverse 335 miles of glaciated Greenland interior for a month on cross-country skis, towing all your gear in a sled, sleeping in a tent, and keeping an eye peeled for polar bears. \$16,667; mountainguides.is

**DIFFICULTY** X X X X X  
**RISK** △ △ △ △ △

### KILIMANJARO STAGE RUN

Go on an eight-day, 162-mile "fun run" around Africa's highest mountain, visiting local communities along the way. \$2,125; nomadicexperience.com

**DIFFICULTY** X X X X X  
**RISK** △ △ △ △ △

"Carnival cruises and Cabo aren't cutting it like they used to."

Driving the craze is a desire for so-called type-two fun—experiences that have you cursing your creator but are ultimately rewarding. Travelers can do everything from circumnavigate Spain's Sierra Nevada on a mountain bike with Scotland's H+I Adventures to trek for 25 days in Bhutan with Seattle-based WanderTours. "It's partly about one-upmanship," says Michael Sadowski, a social-media specialist for Intrepid Travel, an Australian tour operator that has seen increased interest in its multi-month hikes in places like Nepal and Peru. "People want to do something they don't see on their Twitter feed four times a day, even if that means being uncomfortable."

But it's about more than bragging rights, says Euan Wilson, owner of H+I, which leads long-distance mountain-bike trips. It's about seeing a place in an interesting way and pushing your limits. "People want an adventure, not just a holiday," he says. "It's not uncommon for a guest to be out of his comfort zone and already planning another trip that's just as hard."

Back in 2002, Henry Gold, who founded Tour d'Afrique, was looking for an adventure of his own. Now 63, Gold had spent a decade working on development projects in Africa

but wanted a new challenge. So he and a friend decided to lead a bike tour from Cairo to Cape Town. After an article appeared in Canada's *Globe and Mail*, more than 30 people joined him for the 120-day, ten-country ride. TDA was born.

"On the first tour there was never enough food, water was scarce, and there were bouts of diarrhea," says Gold. "The riding was hard every day. But no one quit."

In fact, one-fourth of those clients returned for another four-month expedition, this time with a support truck, a medic, and a basic camping setup. Many among them have since embarked on what TDA calls the Seven Epics—rides across the seven continents. (At press time, Gold was developing a fat-bike journey for Antarctica.) Like other operators meting out punishment for pay, TDA's participation rate is growing, by roughly 15 percent annually. Intrepid has seen a 195 percent increase in clients on its Everest Base Camp hike, and Trek Travel's Avid trips, big cycling expeditions across the U.S. or following the Tour de France route, are growing by roughly 20 percent a year.

"When you choose this type of experience, you transcend your limits, venture into the unknown, and amplify your life," says Gold. Sure, he sounds like a motivational speaker, but his clients tend to agree. Shirley Frye, a

57-year-old former bank CFO from Massachusetts, who rode TDA's Trans-Oceania last year and will pedal its South American Epic in July, says all that suffering allows for a level of immersion that other trips can't offer. "When it's really tough, physically or emotionally, you go beyond what you believed you could do," says Frye. Plus, it makes for a story that none of her friends can match.