

# TRAILRUN

VOL.3. ED12 // AUTUMN 2014 // AU/NZ/ASIA



CAUSE TO RUN // SHOT OVER MOONLIGHT // FASTPACKING //  
HIMALAYAN HUSTLE // KABUKARI - TRAIL SAMURAI + JAPAN ON TRAIL //  
NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS // STORM ON MAKORAKO // TRAIL PORN //  
TRAIL GUIDES // GEAR // VICTORIA MITCHELL //

**+  
ULTRA  
PROTECTION  
SERIES**

**DEFY  
COMPROMISE**

UNRIVALED PERFORMANCE + SUPERIOR PROTECTION



NEVER  
STOP  
EXPLORING



LACE UP FOR ANY TERRAIN AT [THENORTHFACE.COM.AU](https://www.thenorthface.com.au)  
CALL FOR STOCKISTS: 02 8306 3311

# TRAILRUN

**Editorial**

Australia Editor: Chris Ord  
 New Zealand Editor: Vicki Woolley  
 Asia Editor: Rachel Jacqueline  
 Minimalist/Barefoot Editor: Garry Dagg  
 Associate Editor: Tegen Angel

**Design**

Jordan Cole  
 Craft-Store.net

**Contributing Writers**

Tegen Angel, Kellie Emmerson, Ashley Lofton, Martin Cox, Alan McCubbin, Richard Bowles, Stephen Kernaghan, Alistair McDowell, Lyndon Marceau, Vicki Woolley, Rachel Jacqueline

**Senior photographer**

Lyndon Marceau  
 www.marceauphotography.com

**Photography**

Shaun Collins / Cabbage Tree Photography, Tegen Angel, Markus Karjalainen, Bernie Kwok/ Vibram Kong Kong 100, Dale Smalley, Gavin Hansford, Nil Bohegas@RevistaTrail.com and Julia Derrick, Craig Kolesky, Nick Muzik, Nic Davidson, Alistair McDowell, Vicki Woolley, Agurtxane Concellon, Kai-Otto Melau, Jim Pollard, Phil Beeston, Michael Leadbetter

Trail Run is published quarterly  
 Winter / Spring / Summer / Autumn

**Editorial & Advertising**

Trail Run Magazine  
 10 Evans Street,  
 Anglesea, Vic 3230  
 Email: chris@trailrunmag.com

**Telephone**

+61 (0) 430376621

**Founders**

Chris Ord + Stuart Gibson + Mal Law  
 + Peter & Heidi Hibberd

**Publisher**

Adventure Types  
 10 Evans Street  
 Anglesea, Victoria,  
 Australia 3230

## FOUNDATION SUPPORTERS (the Yay-sayers)

Running Wild nz [www.runningwildnz.com](http://www.runningwildnz.com)  
 Salomon au [www.salomon.com/au](http://www.salomon.com/au)  
 Sea To Summit [www.seatosummit.com](http://www.seatosummit.com)  
 Brooks / Texas Peak [www.brooksrunning.com](http://www.brooksrunning.com)  
 The North Face Australia [www.thenorthface.com.au](http://www.thenorthface.com.au)  
 La Sportiva / Expedition Equipment [www.mountainrunning.com.au](http://www.mountainrunning.com.au)

## COVER PHOTO

TRM Associate Editor Tegen Angel flies through the trails on Mount Baw Baw, Victoria.

BELOW: Josh Coleman Watson climbs hard through Leura Forest, Blue Mountains, NSW.

BOTH IMAGES: Lyndon Marceau Photography / [www.marceauphotography.com](http://www.marceauphotography.com)

## VISIT US ONLINE

[www.trailrunmag.com](http://www.trailrunmag.com)  
[www.facebook.com/trailrunmag](http://www.facebook.com/trailrunmag)  
[www.twitter.com/trailrunmag](http://www.twitter.com/trailrunmag)

**DISCLAIMER** Trail running and other activities described in this magazine can carry significant risk of injury or death. Especially if you are unfit. Undertake any trail running or other outdoors activity only with proper instruction, supervision, equipment and training. The publisher and its servants and agents have taken all reasonable care to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this publication and the expertise of its writers. Any reader attempting any of the activities described in this publication does so at their own risk. Neither the publisher nor any of its servants or agents will be held liable for any loss or injury or damage resulting from any attempt to perform any of the activities described in this publication, nor be responsible for any person/s becoming lost when following any of the guides or maps contained herewith. All descriptive and visual directions are a general guide only and not to be used as a sole source of information for navigation. Happy trails.

**ADRENALINE RUSH!**

**ADRENALINE ASR 10**  
 The 'Go To' Trail Shoe For Every Turn!

**BROOKS**

©2013 Brooks Sports, Inc.  
[BROOKSRUNNING.COM.AU](http://BROOKSRUNNING.COM.AU) [f](https://www.facebook.com/brooksrunningau) [i](https://www.instagram.com/brooksrunningau) [y](https://www.youtube.com/brooksrunningau) [t](https://www.tumblr.com/brooksrunningau) [p](https://www.pinterest.com/brooksrunningau) [l](https://www.linkedin.com/brooksrunningau) [y](https://www.youtube.com/brooksrunningau) [t](https://www.tumblr.com/brooksrunningau) [p](https://www.pinterest.com/brooksrunningau) [l](https://www.linkedin.com/brooksrunningau)

6

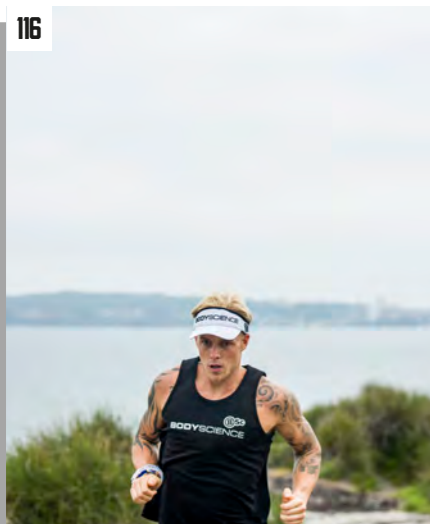
## REGULARS

6. Editors Columns:

- 6. Australia - Chris Ord
- 8. New Zealand - Vicki Woolley
- 10. Asia - Rachel Jacqueline

104. Rich's Rant:  
Richard Bowles gets angry

116



## TRAIL MIX

- 20. Event Preview  
Cape Brett Challenge, NZ
- 22. Event Preview  
Hubert 100, South Australia
- 24. Event Preview  
Wilson's Prom 100, Victoria
- 26. Event Preview  
The Hillary, NZ
- 116. Trail Porn  
So dirty, it'll blow your mind

14

## REVIEWS

- 14. Now's a good time to buy...  
all the good gear
- 108. Shoe reviews  
A pro, a wildhorse, a wave rider  
and one for the trail

130



## TRAIL GUIDES

- 130. Mt Coo-Tha  
Brisbane, Queensland
- 132. Kauaeranga Valley  
Nth Island, NZ
- 134. Marysville  
Victoria
- 136. Oparara Valley  
Sth Island, NZ

28



## INTERVIEWS

- 28. Dreaming of Dirt  
Olympic hurdler Victoria Mitchell

52



## FEATURES

- 34. Shot over Moonlight mountain marathon gone wrong
- 42. Japan Special Singletrack Samurai Kabukari + Japan trail heros
- 52. Himlayan hustle Martin Cox goes gonzo in India
- 64. Fastpacking light and long on trail
- 72. Cause to run Ryan Sandes, Sam Gash and running for reason
- 80. Storm on Makorako even the pros need rescuing
- 88. Nutritional Supplement Running on 'shrooms + periodisation + reviews



# DESIGNED FOR FREEDOM

Go there, faster. Everything we make is designed to enable greater freedom of movement in the mountains. The result is lightweight, ergonomic gear for the most liberated trail experiences.

See more at [www.salomon.com/au](http://www.salomon.com/au)  
For your nearest stockist, free call 1800 651 872



# TOMORROW'S RUN IS NOW



## DEAR 39-YEAR-OLD SELF,

YOU'RE EIGHTY YEARS OLD NOW AND IN HINDSIGHT I CAN TELL YOU ONE THING: TRAIL RUNNING SAVED YOUR LIFE.

At the moment, as you near your fortieth birthday, you just think it's something you stumbled upon and through; something that weaves symbiotically between your personal life and working life.

It all started when you had to write a profile. Remember? Hah. Running with Dean Karnases to get an interview. He said it wouldn't hurt you to run your first-ever marathon on zero training. He was so wrong. Asshole. Couldn't walk for weeks. Shot knees. No fun.

At that stage you hadn't run since high school. And it showed. You thought you'd never run again.

Nevertheless, the pain faded (as it does) and the experience sparked something. This very magazine to be specific.

Of course, you had to run that Oxfam 100 before the idea really firmed. You really should have trained for that, too, idiot. Dragged in by an old high school mate who assured you that you could finish with only a few 7km runs a week "and a bit of footy training. That's all I do," said the six-time Oxfam finisher. Prick. Remember the shin splints? The hallucinations so bad at 90km that as you ran past your childhood home in Warburton, you didn't even recognize it?

Two painful experiences. And it led you to where you are. An addict. But you know there are worse things to be hooked on (remember the Dandenong years: mantelpiece of booze and drugs inhaled on dangerous 'rubber band' binges that led to a car crash). Yes, most certainly there are more dangerous addictions. You were lucky to escape one for the alternative.

And while your only Class-A indulgence now is a predilection for higher quality wine

(shiraz if anyone's buying), you're still not very good at putting in the training yards. A word from the future, you'll never be great at the training consistency thing. But don't sweat it. Leave the run-fast stuff (and your guilt) to the A-Types. Don't mock them for it, though: appreciate them for their prowess and work ethic. And then go run in mountains when you can, for the love, for the whim, not the win. (Because I can tell you categorically from where I sit in the future, you never win anything). But the fact that you get out there, irregularly, for the love, does save your life. I promise you.

In fact, every moment on trail adds to it in some way. And so every moment on trail has worth.

Remember the times where the pain was so great that it turned to some kind of bliss? Remember the times where you threw up – making the moment seem no better than a teenage (or Dandenong) binge drink session? Remember the times you couldn't be bothered? And you felt like a failure for not having the same determination as everyone else on Facebook touting their 5am, fifty kilometre taper run? Don't stress. Rather, remember the times when you did get out there. Here: remember the nothing-special run that was February 11th 2014. A night run. No reason (apart from you were scared about having not trained for the Shotover Moonlight Marathon in New Zealand ten days ahead, knowing that once again...you were undercooked beyond rare). You were ambivalent about getting out. But you were depressed. Couldn't pinpoint why. You felt lonely; empty; and guilty for feeling so. Moaner. You have a habit of that, by the way. Stop it. This, despite the amazing kids, amazing wife, amazing life. Fact was, you were just down. There was only ebb, no flow. But a bright moon and a sweet, sultry breeze dragged you out. Up over cliffs then onto

Urquhart's Beach. Then single trail to Aireys Inlet. Spiderwebs everywhere. Headlamp on, tunneling through heath, feeling guilty for ruining the spiders' architecture, occasionally stopping to admire them at work, spinning, cat ching, creating. Remember you stubbed your toe. Again. Frustration. You felt good, then sick. Fire road didn't help. Then singletrack back into town. All alone. No one about. A roo. A moth. The spiders. Always the spiders with their eyes reflecting back your headlamp beam, creating a carpet of stars on the ground.

You didn't check the time, the distance, nor your pace. You just ran in the bush.

Pegging home at close to midnight, you showered, kissed your daughters fast asleep, and lay down. And finally for the first time that day you smiled.

You do that many times in your life. Run that gamut. Out run the black dog.

And while the running isn't free of ramifications (your wife will occasionally resent the time, your kids will ask why you don't play with them instead of run, you will have injuries, and your fetish for shoes will cost you dearly), the trails will give more than they take away.

Mainly they give you freedom. From the ebbs. From addictions that cause more harm to you than running ever could. And the freedom to have energy to actually play with your kids more. To be in better moods and argue less with your wife. To have the energy to put more into family life. Into work. Into Trail Run Mag. Into smiling.

I tell you this as an old man. You in forty more years. A you that needs you to keep running. So I (that is, you) can smile more now. Now being then. And now being the future. Now being always.

*Your in-the-moment editor,  
Chris Ord  
chris@trailrunmag.com*

# THE FLIP SIDE(2)



WE'VE ALL HAD THOSE RUNS THAT ARE JUST SO DAMN GORGEOUS YOU CAN'T HELP WELLING UP WITH EMOTION. BOYS, GET OUT YOUR HANKIES, COS THIS EDITORIAL STARTS OUT THE TRAIL RUNNERS' EQUIVALENT OF A CHICK FLICK. STICK WITH IT, THO, IT GETS DIRTY IN THE MIDDLE, AND THE ENDING IS ALL SUSPENSE.

Every now and then – and usually when least expected – you stumble upon a jewel of a run. Organising a complex week-long point-to-point fast pack, I was convinced to spend two nights in Karamea, upper West Coast of the South Island, assured that there was gorgeous running to be had. With 100km down and another 100km to go, I had planned and prepared for a gentle, relaxed 12km recovery run, with moderate expectations. Then Vicki Quinn and I jumped out of the bus and into the Oparara Valley...like stepping into Trail Heaven. Somehow we whiled away 30km and 6 hours exploring caves with rare spelungulae, posing for dramatic photos under limestone arches, running weightlessly over mossy trail barely tread, ogling ancient gnarled trees dripping lichen. We didn't so much run the trail, as be embraced by it...

*[Theatrical pause for effect... harps fading into the background...]*

I can't help think the Universe had some hand in the timing. It's our nature to explore – and extend – our physical, mental and emotional limits.. yet sometimes the line that separates disaster from adventure is extremely fine. Some call it 'luck' (good or bad), some call it 'ignorance' and some call it 'learning' –

whatever: the same natural forces that cosseted us in the Oparara Valley spent the next 48hrs administering a whupping we are unlikely to forget.

*[DUM-DUM-DUM-DUM - cue suspense building...]*

The stories of our Old Ghost Road misadventure – and that of another Kiwi adventurer, Alastair McDowell – are on pages xxx and xxx. As we push our trail running boundaries into longer distances, faster times or more remote locations, Al's story is a good reminder that - regardless of skill or experience – we must respect the challenges we set ourselves. Trail running simply comprises too many variables: even a two-hour run in ideal conditions can become a six-hour crawl with a badly sprained ankle and no cell phone coverage.

Sooooo... I'm mindful of safety. A great friend recently had occasion to use the emergency blanket that he has diligently carried for years. As he hauled it out, it delaminated and disintegrated before his very eyes! Let's do regular gear checks (you will spend half-hour cursing me as you try to refold the blanket into that infuriatingly small plastic bag). I've used my first aid kit a dozen

times: on running buddies, race competitors, random trampers – I would not leave home without it... but I sometimes forget to replace items I've used. Chuck in extra food, and check the location and quality of water stops in advance. Stuff in an extra wind/waterproof layer - even on warm days, shock, drying sweat or (heaven forbid) nightfall can suddenly leave you very cold. Night runners usually have a few extra batteries... but a small lightweight hand torch can be a lifesaver if you trip and smash a headlamp bulb.

Man up (no-one has to know!) about your skill level, especially if venturing overnight, into remote locations or when bad weather looms. Do you have – more importantly, can you use – a map, compass, GPS? Formulate an emergency plan with your buddies – it's too easy to rely on cell phones but coverage may not play ball. Throw in one piece of identification, and always, always leave an intentions plan with a contact (especially if running solo): as someone once told me – “If nothing else, it narrows down the search area”.

I don't want to put you off, or teach Grandma to suck eggs. But then... I don't want to read about you in the newspaper, either. **RUN**

*Your be prepared NZ editor,  
Vicki Woolley*



# TRAILNESIA AND OTHER (TR)AILMENTS

## Pain cave /peɪn keɪv/ (noun)

A dark, sombre place of pain and suffering, probably caused by excessive running, a screwed up nutrition plan and bad pacing strategy.

WE'VE ALL BEEN THERE. THAT PLACE WHERE YOU SWEAR ON YOUR MOTHER'S LIFE THAT AS SOON AS YOU FINISH YOU WILL NEVER RACE AGAIN. BUT YOU KEEP GOING ANYWAY. OUT OF STUBBORNNESS. COMMITMENT. AN UNWILLINGNESS TO QUIT.

And then you see the finish line – at last. You hurtle your aching body towards it. The excitement begins to well up from somewhere deep; your eyes get a little wet. Finally you cross the threshold of arbitrary space where you will finally allow yourself to stop running. You stretch out your arms above your head. I DID IT! You think to yourself, while simultaneously swearing under your breath: Never. Ever. Again.

Then you pick up your pack. Get some warm clothes on. Crack a beer and share pain cave stories with your running buddies. Suddenly, the burden of your lonely tales of suffering is unloaded. Intricate details of the race are aired, discussed, shared, resolved. By day three post race – after you've lost the awkward shuffle – you find yourself signing up again.

What is it that is so addictive about the sport that, despite rational thinking, we find ourselves coming back, time and time again? A sport where journeys to the pain cave abound. A sport that invokes some of the most incredible smells to waft from our flesh (I like to call it 'eau de ultra'); mangles our toenails; grates the skin off our feet; chafes our nipples,

underarms and inner thighs; summons some of the most incredible bowel movements and leaves your face sandpapered in salt? If trail running was your partner in real life, we'd have a domestic abuse case on our hands.

So what is it, exactly, that keeps us coming back, time and time again?

Here's my theory: Trail-nesia. A temporary loss of faculties caused by excess endorphin production causing our minds to glaze over the bad and only focus on the good.

It's one of many (tr)ailments that come with the sport. There are plenty others.

Schizotrailnia is another favourite: the condition given to those moments in trail running where you seem to adopt a new personality as two voices play out in your head – the good and the bad – and an entire conversation unravels between the two. I had a friend that even gave her knee a name while competing in the Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc a few years ago. Rupert was not cooperating at the time. The IT-band friction was becoming unbearable. For 60 kilometres she argued with Rupert. Needless to say, Rupert was in a lot of trouble – how dare he hinder her efforts at UTMB of all races? Eventually she triumphed over Rupert, finishing with a smile on her face.

Garminosis (similar to Stravanosis): a nervous condition caused by an obsession with recording running times, location and splits, as well as bagging as many course records as possible. It's an all too familiar ailment striking

even the most humble of runners.

The list goes on. For a sport heralded for its mentally soothing properties, it does seem a little ironic just how mental the sport can become.

But let's go back to trail-nesia – what really is at the root of it all? While we can get carried away and run ourselves silly at times, at its core, trail running takes us back. To nature. To our roots. To the simple. To what matters: Gratitude. Appreciation. Happiness. Good people. Goodness.

Along the way it uncovers new parts of the world that we haven't explored – both the world around us and our own internal landscapes. Granted, there may be a little suffering to be had before we get there, but through running we get there nonetheless.

So enjoy the ride, my fellow trail slayers! No matter how crazy, sometimes pathological and non-sensical. Enjoy it. But don't forget the treatment for your ails is always the same: Rest. Recovery. Time off. Sunday morning sleep-ins. Space to remember why you love in the first place, and space enough to fall back in love all over again, time and time again.

Happy trails.

Your forgetful Asia editor,  
Rachel Jacqueline

Reviewer: Chris Ord

# CAMELBAK ULTRA LR HYDRATION VEST

HERE'S AN INTERESTING ENTRY to the hydration pack market, in that employs a variation on the design of the bladder itself. Taking lead from (perhaps) the hiking pack market where weight tends to be directed to flow through the hips, rather than pull on shoulder straps, the bladder flares out into wings wrapping around the hip flanks, rather than being the usual vertical design of regular hydro packs. The 'Lumbar Reservoir' leaves less pressure (if any) enforced by the water weight on your back and shoulders, instead letting your central core and hips take the load. It takes a little to get used to the feeling - more so because your shoulders and back feel so 'free', and the Lumbar Reservoir hugs the hips tightly, like you have small monkey cuddling you from behind. After wearing for a while, it does become the norm, and in fact noticeably more comfortable.

An easy-access rear zip flap makes gaining entry to the bladder for refilling quick and easy and the now common Camelbak solid round lip of the water refill opening is a blessing in terms of no splash re-fill.

Although billed as an Ultra pack, the LR's carrying capacity for gear is perhaps more restricted to either marathon distances or ultras where mandatory gear

isn't over burdensome, as the rear storage - a V-shaped open topped, stretch mesh pocket - is limited to perhaps your wet weather jacket, maybe a light mid layer, and not much else.

Any other gear to be stowed must fit into two front strap pockets, which are stretchy and quite large, or two small velcro pockets on the front strap. These are small and more for your electrolyte tabs and small bits of nutrition.

Using one of the front pockets for a Camelbak Podium Chill bottle worked

well, although the angle it sat at was slightly off and movement was a touch more than preferred.

The vest itself is super comfy on torso, with velcro adjusters at the rear and adjustable front straps enough to personalise the fit closely.

Camelbak's proven straw and on/off bite valve system work a treat.

An ideal vest for mid to longer day runs (15km-60km) where the mandatory kit extends to no more than wet weather, first aid, phone and nutrition. **RUN**

## VITALS

Hydration Capacity:  
Lumbar (2 L)  
Total Capacity: (3.28 L)

**\$280** RRP AU

[www.onsport.com.au](http://www.onsport.com.au)  
[www.camelbak.com](http://www.camelbak.com)



Reviewer: Vicki Woolley

# OUT THERE AS-1 PACK

FAST PACKING is the name of the multiday run game, and Out There is a step ahead. We trialled its 30+10kg AS-1 pack over a week and found it as close to perfect as sweet singletrack on a sunny day. The foam padded air mesh harness is super comfortable: despite launching straight into 10-hour days fully-laden and straight out of the cellophane, there was no chafing, pack rub or muscle soreness from pinch points.

The pack weighs just 1.2kg - midrange for a light hiking pack - and is fully adjustable, including a floating hip belt to accommodate smaller frames. The shoulder tension adjusters did tend to slip and required knotting: however, the ripstop nylon and mesh construction is robust, and this pack's biggest selling point is the careful consideration given to layout. Clearly it has been designed with speed and efficiency in mind: four shoulder strap pockets, two removable front pockets, six side pockets and multiple accessory loops meant the day's requirements can be stored within easy reach, significantly reducing time spent taking the pack off and rummaging around inside. Elasticated closures add to the economy because returning bottles/packages to their place on the run is effortless. A pack that takes self supported multiday distance running to the next level. **RUN**

*NOTE: there is now a recently released AS-2 available.*



## VITALS

**\$169** US

[www.outthereusa.com](http://www.outthereusa.com)  
[www.peakadventure.com.au](http://www.peakadventure.com.au)



NOW'S A GOOD TIME TO BUY

Reviewer: Vicki Woolley

# RUNNING SKIRTS

PLAYING IN THE MUD may be a game for (tom)boys, but girls can do it with a bit of style. Enter The Running Skirt Shop: with hot new patterns like Candy Stripe and Urban Night, ditch the boring black shorts and set a unique trail trend of your own.

There are a range of Runningskirts options: briefs, shorts, triathlon or Capri – and they have just introduced an ultra swift athletic version in performance featherlight eyelet mesh for go-faster types. The sizing varies a little between styles. For example the skorts are slightly longer than the brief version, with the tri skirt being the slimmest fit.

Looking good is just the icing on the cake – the real beauty is in comfort and durability. Loving the fit and ease of movement, we tested our Black Noir athletic skort version over 400 rugged kilometres; although it gave a little over time, the unique polyester/spandex outer stood up to some serious bush bashing. Described as a 'super duper sweat wicking blend' the nylon/spandex undershorts remained comfortable and odour resistant over long days, while chafing became a distant memory.

And the word on the QT is that they will be introducing a line of running dresses.... oooh, the bush has never looked so good... **RUN**



**VITALS**  
\$79.95-\$119.95 NZD  
www.therunningskirtshop.co.nz

**VITALS**  
\$119.99 RRP AU  
www.salomon.com/au

Reviewer: Kellie Emmerson

# SALOMON FAST WING JACKET



THIS ULTRA LIGHT JACKET was tested as the weather swiftly closed in amongst the snow gums near the summit of Mount Baw Baw. It was the perfect option as the wind picked up and the daylight faded.

The jacket is not seam sealed, hence not a great choice for the full on wet and not an option to appease race event directors with strict waterproof jacket standards, but its ClimaWind ripstop polyester offers wind-resistance whilst staying breathable.

The elasticized waist fits snugly over the hips. Thumbholes add comfort and help the sleeves to stay in place, keeping your arms toasty, whilst underarm holes and a zip-front enable cooling as desired. A watch window allows you to check your pace and distance without pulling sleeves up, too – a nifty addition.

There is a double pocket on the right hand side, the smaller of the two perfect for an ipod/smart phone with a

strategically located hole just for your earphones. The colour of the jacket (as tested) matches nicely with the darkcloud/scoreblue ¾ tight, and small reflector panels (6) enhance visibility in low light.

The jacket comes with a stuff sack, but it is not connected to the jacket – and so easy to lose. But it works, compacting the jacket down nicely to fit into the palm of your hand or into a limited space run pack.

At only 100 grams, the Fast Wing is a great warm-up jacket or back up plan if you are unsure of the weather. Given most run outings – particularly in shoulder seasons (Spring / Autumn) – can be changeable but not necessarily extreme, this would become an oft-worn and super comfy bit of kit and so a valuable addition to the clobber closet. **RUN**

## NOW'S A GOOD TIME TO BUY

Reviewer: Chris Ord

# LOWE ALPINE LIGHTFLITE 14 PACK

YOU MAY (OR MAY NOT) have noticed that we're fans of adventure running here at Trail Run Mag: big beefy and often multiday runs in wild terrain. The kind of runs that don't just require a bit of extra 'she may not be right' kit, but demand it. First aid, cold weather gear, wet weather gear, food, ample hydration, EPIRB, GPS, compass, beanie, gloves, maybe even a tarp for bivvie time. The regular vest-style run packs just won't lug that kind of load.

That's where a pack like the LightFlite 14 comes in. You'll never wear it racing the short and fast efforts that nary need a bladderful of hydro and a mobile to Facebook your friends. But missions that need you loading up the clobber for a serious wild run need extra space and a design that eases that extra burden on your back as much as possible, and this pack keeps you as comfy as can possibly be in that context.

The gapingly huge main compartment opening makes gear access quick and easy, with a separated hydro compartment and snap-clip loop for hanging whatever brand bladder you so choose to stow. The zips are sealed, too, keeping as much water out as is possible.

Off the back, there's a quick access zip pocket up high and a securable bungee strap that can secure loose jackets or warms. Each side has huge stretch pockets for more quick access – great for stuffing food. On the comfy hip flanks,

there are zip pockets ideal for gels, mobile phone, tabs and small snacks. I found them placed ever so slightly too far back, and the waist belt was a little high. Those critiques will be entirely dependent on your body shape, however.

The dual front pockets are shaped for drink bottles, however they give more lateral movement (technical term: jiggling) than is preferable. This is due to their single-spine connection to the shoulder strap, a Velcro detachable number. I think the designers should have committed, attached permanently

and with more attention to bottle movement (and the reduction of).

Aside from this one major issue, the LightFlite proved a comfortable performer in the wilderness, and with a slight reconfiguration of the bottle holders would be a sensational mid to long range run pack used for anything up to the point where you needed to carry more than a compact bivvie and base supplied for overnight. **RUN**



**VITALS**  
**\$89.95** RRP  
[www.intertrek.com.au](http://www.intertrek.com.au)  
[sales@intertrek.com.au](mailto:sales@intertrek.com.au)  
02 9417 5755

# OUTDOOR RESEARCH HELIUM II JACKET

Reviewer: Chris Ord

**VITALS**  
**\$229.95** RRP  
[www.outdoorresearch.com](http://www.outdoorresearch.com)  
[sales@intertrek.com.au](mailto:sales@intertrek.com.au)  
02 9417 5755

WE'LL SAY IT: there's not nearly enough availability of Outdoor Research (OR) gear in this part of the world. It's undeniably quality kit and the OR Helium Jacket has garnered a quality reputation overseas for good reason. It's a bit of gear that delivers on promises and matches need.

This is the second iteration of the Helium, with slight upgrade modifications. You have to remember that this particular product is all about going as lightweight as possible – 180gm – while maintaining the water protection. So forget about carrying space – there are no side pockets. Just one chest zip for absolute essentials. The rest of the design is about maximizing the H<sub>2</sub>O resistance while staying on target for a super featherweight and highly packable product. We're a size no bigger than a small point-and-shoot camera when packed into itself (using a pocket integrated inside the jacket).

There's always a trade-off when you're attempting to be the lightest product on market of course and this jacket won't outperform bigger, heavier, tank-like waterproof jackets. But then you can't actually run in those. Protection is on the higher end of the scale, however, and you'd need to be caught in a pretty big and extended downpour to really feel the drench. Fully taped seams help the protection cause. What doesn't is the wrists – elasticized and for a thin

wristed runner, I found the breeze, let alone the water access was a downside that couldn't be negated. Some sort of adjustable strap or thumb loops would have helped here.

The downside to deleting things like extra zips is no capacity for features like pit-ventilation, meaning you can get the moisture build up inside if a heavy/easy sweater.

The hood offers a decent verandah, but the single adjuster is, like the rest of the jacket, minimal in offering.

Comfort is middling – it's not built with soft and stretchy fittings to make you purr like a cat: again, it's built to lessen where possible the effects of gravity on your body. That said, it's not uncomfortable, either, the slimline fit a snug one.

The fabric is fairly durable in the context of being lightweight, with 100% nylon with 2.5 layer 30D Pertex Shield ripstop with a clear laminate. You need to be careful with care, as that laminate can wear easily.

Overall this is a jacket for those willing to forgive a little performance in the chase for minimalism and weight loss, and is for light and fast adventures. Like trail running. **RUN**



## EVENT PREVIEW

IMAGE: WWW.CAPEBRETTCHALLENGE.COM

# CAPE CRUSADE

CAPE BRETT  
PENINSULA, NZ

**F**ANCY A ROMP THROUGH history? Billed as the 'toughest race in the North', the 40km Cape Brett Challenge is fast becoming a benchmark event with 40km, 17k and 13km options that cater for novice to elite cadres.

Navigating the coastal path and exposed to the relentless Northland sun, you traverse the seven peaks of Rakaumangamanga – said to represent the seven waka (canoes) of the Great Migration. The turnaround point – the lighthouse at the end of Cape Brett Peninsula – is one corner of the Polynesian Triangle, marking the final destination of the earliest navigators from Taiwan thousands of years ago.

Stomping across the decades, you depart Rawhiti (30min from Russell in the picturesque Bay of Islands) and run past Whangamumu, New Zealand's last remaining shore-based whaling station. The out-and-back ridge run affords spectacular views of the Bay of Islands, Cavalli Islands, Whangaruru and Poor Knights. Don't let the 400yr old Kauri trees distract you from scanning the ocean for abundant fish and bird life, dolphins and seals, which are often seen close to shore.

With over 2250m of ascent along the relentlessly undulating and predominantly exposed ridgeline, course records for the 40km confirm this is not a race easily run: Vajin Armstrong holds the men's at 4hrs10m, while Sarah Kleeman is fastest women at 5hrs13m. The shorter options include a loop to Whangamumu whaling station and spectacular Toroa Bay, and a 13km Kauri Ridge loop.

**EVENT** Cape Brett Challenge  
40km, 17km, 13km

**DATE** 26 April 2014

Rawhiti, Bay of Islands, North Island, NZ

[CAPEBRETTCHALLENGE.COM/](http://CAPEBRETTCHALLENGE.COM/)

TRAILRUN

# CONQUER NEW TERRITORY



## SUUNTO AMBIT2 R THE GPS FOR RUNNERS

The fresh Suunto Ambit2 R White comes with a fit designed for women. Heart rate and running features with Suunto Apps make it easy to keep track of your performance. Full route navigation allows you to discover new trails with confidence!

[www.suunto.com](http://www.suunto.com)

**SUUNTO**

# HUBERT'S HUNDRED

FLINDERS RANGES,  
SOUTH AUSTRALIA

**W**E LOVE IT WHEN WE stumble across a new event that looks to be an icon in the making and this one's a doozy. Say hello to the inaugural Hubert 100, Australia's newest 100 mile event. Yup, a new miler! Starting at the impressive Wilpena Resort in the Flinders Ranges, and 340km (or 5 hours' drive) north of Adelaide, the event will trace the Heysen Trail all the way to the township of Hawker, passing through some impressive if brutal desert countryside en route. It is the longest measured footrace in South Australia and Australia's only 100-mile desert ultra. The Flinders Ranges through which the race travels are one of Australia's most ancient landscapes, moulded by hundreds of millions of years of geological activity, and also home to some of the most spectacular outback scenery in the country. The course will cover trails throughout the Flinders Ranges and will feature gruelling mountain climbs and technical descents along with some flatter sections giving runners some relief as they tick off checkpoints at every 20km. The event takes its name from the South Australian 20th century explorer, Sir Hubert Wilkins, who is famous for quoting "adventure is just a word used to disguise a series of unplanned

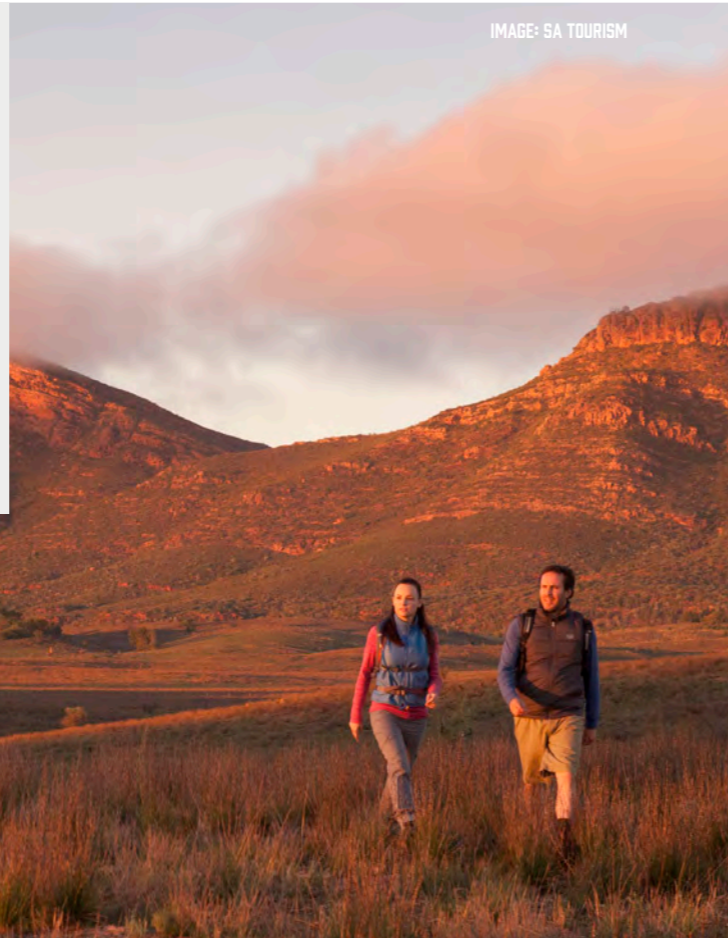


surprises". To negate some of the nastier surprises and given the remoteness, this event does require 'buddy running', with a partner runner being assigned if you do not have one. There are qualifying standards for the 100 Mile only (minimum one completed 100km or +120km achieved in a 24 Hour event in the past twelve months).

**EVENT** Hubert 100  
160km (100 miles), 100km, 50km  
**DATE** 3-4 May 2014

[YUMIGO.COM.AU/HUBERT/](http://YUMIGO.COM.AU/HUBERT/)

IMAGE: SA TOURISM



The official jacket of the Buffalo Stampede



**OR** OUTDOOR RESEARCH  
DESIGNED BY ADVENTURE

## THE HELIUM II JACKET

Built for rainstorm protection, the Helium II is lighter, more breathable and 30% more waterproof than its predecessor. An ultra-compressible piece you'll never leave behind. The Helium II is so light (180g), and packs down so small, you'll forget it's in your pack until you throw it on to ward off a sudden downpour.

Compressible to the size of a muesli bar and completely waterproof and windproof, the Helium II doesn't waste space or add more than a feather's-worth of weight.

Available in Men's and Women's specific models.

To find your closest Outdoor Research stockist email [sales@intertrek.com.au](mailto:sales@intertrek.com.au) or call 02 9417 5755



Click the jackets to see the full colour range

# EVENT PREVIEW

IMAGES: TOURISM VICTORIA

## GOING TO THE PROM

WILSONS PROM,  
VICTORIA

**T**HIS IS ONE OF THOSE RUNS you'd line up for (but better be prepared for). And you may have to line up: it has a Parks-imposed limit of 80 entrants. But like the iconic Cradle Mountain Marathon, this one is special enough that you'd wait up until the wee hours should the RD decide to open entries online at 3am ('cause trust me, that's when RDs work 'til). Wilson's Promontory National Park offers some of Victoria's most spectacular running through a coastal wilderness paradise. For sheer beauty, this event is well under-rated - perhaps because it has been beset by fires and flood, but the landscape has recovered and the beauty pervades, so it's worth getting along for its 10th outing. The run encompasses single track, rock, fire trails and beaches with approximately 10km on sealed road. Depending on tide movements

it may be necessary to wade across a creek at Oberon Beach. The Prom 100 is not for the feint of heart either, as it is totally self-supported and there are no support personnel or equipment out on course. Creek water fill-up anyone? It's an arduous undertaking with constant climbs that take a cumulative toll and as a promontory jutting out into Bass Strait, weather conditions can be unpredictable, cold, wet and windy. The run will start and finish in the dark. It's a helluva sell, but some of you trailites like that kinda thing... worth the get-along.

**EVENT** Wilsons Prom 100  
44km, 60km, 80km, 100km

**DATE** 3 May 2014

[RUNNINGWILD.NET.AU](http://RUNNINGWILD.NET.AU)

TRAILRUN

# BIGFORESTRUN

MAJESTIC TRAILS. POWELLY TO WARBY

Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> April 2014

**42km + 18km option**



The Yarra State Forest is an undiscovered trail running paradise, just over an hour from the Melbourne CBD.

Towering trees, lush undergrowth and great single trails all add up to make BIG FOREST RUN, a trail running event not to be missed.

Brought to you by the team who operate the BIG RED RUN. We know what runners want and are excited about delivering a well supported awesome new event to the Victorian trail running community.

Check out the event website for all details.

[www.bigforestrun.com.au](http://www.bigforestrun.com.au)

**BIGRUNEVENTS**  
OFFROAD • OUTBACK



# HILLARY HAUL

HILLARY TRAIL, NTH ISLAND, NZ

**O**PENED IN 2010 THE 75KM Hillary Trail connects a network of existing tracks in the Waitakere Ranges (west of Auckland City) into a physically demanding 3-4 day tramp. Or... if you're one of the growing community of trail runners that call the trail their second home, a one day run, brutal as that prospect may be. That community led by the likes of Shaun Collins, our own Vicki Woolley, Mal Law, Steve Neary and all those listed at [www.lacticturkey.co.nz/HillaryTrailHonoursFinishers.htm](http://www.lacticturkey.co.nz/HillaryTrailHonoursFinishers.htm) (check it out - impressive achievements here) have completed all sorts of feats on the track including supported, unsupported, night run and 'double'. The great man after whom the trail was named, Sir Edmund Hillary, would approve, no doubt. Sir Ed himself said "In some ways I believe I epitomise the average New Zealander: I have modest abilities, I combine these with a good deal of determination, and I rather like to succeed." He could have spoken for all trail runners, Kiwi and

otherwise. And hence the pull of the Hillary Trail for so many today. As a regular runner of the Hillary Trail, Shaun Collins from Lactic Turkey Events couldn't resist the urge to organise an event along the Trail. He had a false start, but after much determination and energy and form filling and badgering, it was born, The Hillary, the trail event that nothing was ever, really, going to stop. This one is destined to be a pearler icon. Do it. (But don't underestimate it...).

**EVENT** The Hillary

80km/34km/16km

**DATE** 29 March 2014

[THEHILLARY.CO.NZ/](http://THEHILLARY.CO.NZ/)



INTRODUCING



nanopro™  
MEMBRAN®

The Super Mica Jacket

Featuring Marmot's new NanoPro™ MemBrain® Waterproof and Exceptionally Breathable Technology. NanoPro™ MemBrain® is up to 140% more breathable than our previous technology.

WHAT GIVES YOU LIFE?

**Marmot**  
FOR LIFE

# DREAMING OF DIRT

WATCHING 3000M STEEPLECHASE RUNNER, VICTORIA MITCHELL, BURST AND BOUND AROUND AN ATHLETIC TRACK, HER TRADEMARK PINK HAIR A FLASH, IT'S HARD TO TRANSFER THE IMAGE TO THE RUNNING WILDERNESS OF TRAIL. BUT THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT THE 2008 BEIJING OLYMPIC GAMES COMPETITOR HAS PLANNED POST RIO, AND IF HER RECENT DEBUT TRAIL WIN IS ANY GUIDE (SHE BEAT THE BLOKES), HER FUTURE IS BRIGHT ONCE SHE MOVES FROM STADIUM LAND TO SCRUBLAND.



**YOU'RE A STEEPLECHASE runner, used to stadiums and manmade surfaces, hurdles and pools underfoot...what made you want to trade that clinical environment for a dirtier one?**

It was actually by accident but a blessing in disguise. David Chamberlain from DCRun was getting a crew together to have some fun and run together at Sydney Trail Series at Manly Dam. I ended up running the 8km and actually became the overall winner and smashed the record by over 2 minutes. So that was a bonus!

**First impressions?**

I didn't really know what to expect at all, I thought it would be like running in Centennial Park, Sydney, maybe but this was far more technical than I imagined. But I loved it.

**Was there any trail magic that lured you more than the bright lights of Olympic stadium tracks?**

The narrow, winding single track makes you feel free/alive and brings out your animal instincts like you're chasing people or racing as fast as you can through the bush. It keeps you on your toes, on the edge and in the moment. Always thinking about what's coming up, what's next, where to step, dodge, turn and your next foot placement. Whereas track and road can be what I call 'mind-chatter': relentless and repetitive movements.

**You smashed Sydney Trail Run Series at Manly Dam recently – what other events are on your calendar?**

For now my focus is on prep for the (steeplechase) Nationals and then I have Commonwealth Games to focus on before the Rio Olympics. In the short term I'm not sure I'll make the next Sydney Trail Series but I'll definitely be back for more at some point to try and set more records. I'll also find some trail to whet my trail appetite wherever I happen to be training around the world.

**Your specialty distance is in the 3000-5000 metre range... do you think you'd ever tackle an ultra?**

For sure, I'd love to take trail a bit further, although after Rio of course. Most likely something like The North Face 50km and just try and go as fast as possible the whole time. It would be a great challenge to push my body that far and see what happens.

**The crowds and hoopla of the Olympics is a long way from the solitude of trail (even at trail events!)... what was that experience like for you?**

It was a definite highlight in my career and an unforgettable experience as my first Olympics. Being surrounded by other athletes and the atmosphere within the camp is exciting to be a part of. I shared a room with Lisa Corrigan, and Sally Pearson and Tamsyn Lewis were in our unit so we would support each other at events – it was like a big family. I ran 16sec off my own PB so that was disappointing but I learnt a lot from my experience.

**So before you set the trail world alight, Rio is the main target?**

Yes, I even have my Rio 2016 screensaver and phone case as daily reminders of my goal.

>>





**What happens between now and then?**

The Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh, Scotland, are in August. I also have Nationals before that, which I need to qualify or place top two to make the cut. And there are a few races leading up.

**We'll take a punt and say that steeplechase isn't the most lucrative sport for an athlete – any other gigs on the side?**

I'm a trained Sports Kinesiologist and Run Technique Coach for DCRUN. I also work at Shoeologist and Barefoot Inc. specialising in helping people with minimalist shoe needs.

**So shoes do you prescribe yourself?**

Well, I'm sponsored by Nike so I do all my training in Nike Free 3.0 and Nike Victory 2; race road in Nike Fkynit; and track in Nike spikes, of course. But now I'm hooked on trails I'm keen to get some of their new Nike Terra Wildhorse trail shoes [Ed. See review in this edition]. I also train three times a week barefoot on the oval when doing my group, one-on-one and sprint sessions.

**Any stand out trail runs come to mind that you've done?**

I would have to say the Ferny Creek trail in Melbourne is a standout for me it has a mix of everything it's mainly a bush trail but I can go fast and admire the scenery all at the same time.

**What do you think about when out on the trails?**

When racing at STS, I was thinking about other runners and whether I was gaining on them or them on me. Other than that mainly foot placement and my next line. Pre-empting my next move over a log, down a step, avoiding a rock all ensuring I wasn't losing any speed. **RUN**

**FULL SPEED  
NEVER RUN ON EMPTY**

LEARN MORE AT [CAMELBAK.COM/RUN](http://CAMELBAK.COM/RUN)

**CAMELBAK® GOT YOUR BAK**

**MARATHONER™**      **ARC 2™**

**ARC QUICK GRIP™**

**CAMELBAK® RUN COLLECTION**

However you hydrate, We've Got Your Bak. The CamelBak® run collection ranges from handheld systems to hydration vests to keep you hydrated no matter how far you need to go.

**onsport .com.au**      enquiries@seatosummit.com.au      **SEATOSUMMIT**  
seatosummitdistribution.com.au 08 9221 6617

**the running company. geelong**

**RUNNERS UNDERSTAND RUNNERS**

SUCCESS • EXPERIENCE • COMMUNITY

Expertise to find the right shoe for you!

OPEN SEVEN DAYS PER WEEK! M-F 9:30-5:30, SAT 9-5 & SUN 11-4  
SHOP 2 / 226 PAKINGTON ST, GEELONG WEST | (03) 5242 8150

**f** /therunningcompanygeelong      [www.therunningcompany.com.au](http://www.therunningcompany.com.au)

A SHOT OVER  
MOONLIGHT

WORDS: Chris Ord  
IMAGES: courtesy ActiveQT and Matt Wong Photography

# I'M NOT A PIN UP BOY

FOR JACK SQUAT. BUT IF I HAD TO BE NOMINATED FOR SOME POSTER OR ANOTHER, I'D BE THE TEAR-STAINED FACE OF THE 'TRAIN NOW OR FEEL THE PAIN LATER' POSTER CAMPAIGN: A MESSAGE BROUGHT TO YOU BY YOUR FRIENDLY ASSOCIATION OF SADISTIC RACE DIRECTORS.

There's me on it, staring back at you a broken mess, looking rougher than a dissected lungful of tar, living proof of what happens when you ignore valid health warnings.

I can't count the number of times I've headed off to some trail run event or other, scared down to my compression socks, knowing deep in my being that I'm breaking the two golden rules of trail running: respect the distance, respect the mountains.

*"R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Found out what it means to me..."*

Or does a bastardised Britney Spears sing it better: *"Oops, I did it again, I didn't train all that hard...I'm not...that...intelligent."*

And here I am doing it again. Not only am I not respecting the distance, I'm being more than insolent to the elevation gain: 2300 metres in 42.125km.

You'd think the prospect of running the Shotover Moonlight Mountain Marathon one of the toughest mountain runs going would scare the enshrined PFFFF (preparation

prevents piss poor performance) message into my skull, which I'm beginning to realize is as thick as the Middle Earth bog that this part of the world sometimes portrays.

It all starts innocently enough: watch the Shotover promotional video and it's all sunshine and runners floating along razor-edge ridgelines, smiles on faces as wide as the valley floor below. The terrain featured is Ben Lomond Station, a 33,000-acre private sheep near Queenstown, New Zealand, which was once one of the richest gold diggings in the country with a bigger population than Queenstown at the time. In its day, the valleys here heaved with miners sluicing their way to fortunes, or else breaking backs and spirits in the attempt to find the gold. Part of the attraction of trotting through the terrain is in fact the man-made history that is buried in its tough soils, some of which remains in the form of old huts, discarded dredges and rusted mining equipment.

Back to the future and Ben Lomond's grasses shine velvety on the computer screen, its crinkled mountain edifices look perfectly fashioned, as though JR Tolkien's imagination and finessed the delicate contours into existence, rather than some freak of geological nature. Enticing enough to enter. There's no visage of the effort it takes to ascend those ridgelines and the power of that sun to suck

you dry and spit you out at the woolshed finish. But the breezy dream is enough to get you to the start line, set on water-smoothed pebbles aside the Shotover river, and somewhere below the Pipeline Bridge from which thrill seekers usually get their five-second rush. As the Haka starts to bellow through the chasm, there's adrenaline pumping, alright, but we all know it has to somehow fuel us through 42.125km and a range of big mountains, and all without that rubber safety rope. Like a first time jumper, I'm screaming my head off. On the inside. Outwardly I'm all smiles and joviality – wouldn't want to drop the game face, especially as many of my mentors and heroes are toe tapping the start line nearby. As the Haka reaches its war-cry crescendo, I feel a hamstring ping. Or was that a heartstring? Too late, the blower has gone, regardless of whether my gasket of manliness has or not. I run.

Getting to the Shotover Moonlight Mountain Marathon was an adventure in itself. Sticking with the theme of a false sense of security, we chose to stay the night prior at Moonlight Lodge, a cocoon of comfort with fluffy pillow bedrooms, and a crackling fireplace with expansive view over the dramatic landscape, the only inkling of environment being a howl of wind outside (you're protected by double glazing, not to worry). The chef >>



<<  
plates out a five-star dinner of Monk Fish Curry, salmon and herbed chicken with Moroccan cous cous and Italian salad. The fact that this location marks the halfway mark of the marathon distance run is obliterated from minds by the double choc pudding desert. At the time, I remember thinking: this is how trail running ought to be. To be sure I savored the experience I ate until I felt sick. Which then reminded me of trail running at the pointy end of a mountain effort.

The plan was always conservative. Well, apart from the helicopter ride to the start – there's nothing conservative about a helicopter ride, but I am now of the express opinion that I shall not, ever, sign up to a trail run unless I can be helicoptered to the start line. It is the only way. Anyway, once on the trot, I reminded myself of the lack of hours spent training on the trail and the almost zero hours on actual hills, let alone mountains. First half, half pace, I told myself.

I fell in step with one of those heroes (don't tell him that lest the man will start to believe his press clippings): Mal Law. A one time editor of this very magazine, Mal is Mr. Trail Run in New Zealand and through his High Five-o Challenge for Mental Health, soon run ridiculous amounts of mountain marathons. Fifty. In a row. This is a training run for him, literally.

Of course had I remembered that fact, I might not have fallen into step behind him. But as we rose on a scree slope from the Shotover River, there we were, the veteran legend and the idiot optimist in lock step. Whatever made me think I could keep pace with Mal – let alone maintain it for the length of the race – I do not know. I mean, last year this bloke ran every single day. Of the Year. I have never in my life (despite best intentions) run every single day of one week.

Yes, what I lack in nous and talent I make up for in sheer effusive will. Others – like my wife – call it stubbornness.

Yet I felt good. Nay, I felt bloody great. The sun cast the swaying fields and the first Stoney Creek Siphon drink station in a golden hue. Mal was letting his arms out, flapping like a bird released, whooping it up as he scorched along the old water course, once a gold miners artery of hope now a trail runner's vein of singletrack dreams. We passed a runner on a downhill hop, before Mal – who can run and talk in rhythmic cadence and with ease as he swings those elbows of his in idiosyncratic turkey fashion

– put a hush on as we started an ascent. Eventually, we rounded back onto a water race, following the contour for easy running that led to a valley and a false sense of security. The legs were good. The energy was high. I'd chugged liquids and eaten food, and I'd managed to delude myself that Mal's pace could be my pace. I was illusion of course, but one I was seduced by as I edges past, climbing a roped rock section. Traps for young players is what I guess Mal would have been thinking as he looked upon my heels and caught waft of my overconfidence.

A brutal climb pocked with tussock grass rubber-banded us back together as we marched to the highest point of the race.

These 'Mal' moments were a long time coming for me. It seems nearly every man, woman and dog with an interest in trail running and with a beating heart has run with Mal at some stage or another during his public career as a trail running fundraiser. However, the Tasman Sea had kept me and my co-editor apart except for Skype sessions where we'd drink red wine together, clinking glasses virtually over the Internet. Like so many others, I'm grateful to the man for his energy and passion, which, at the end of the day, this magazine would not exist without. So to share a very real mountain path with him was, along with that peak, a high point of the outing.

Of course all the Ying of a high point will never stave off the Yang of a low point. And mine was coming. Albeit not before that optimistic/idiotic part of me came in to play. Shovelling a banana in I role-played a King of the Mountain moment ("I'm a trail runnnnnner!" as I emulated Mal and spread the wings, gliding off the peak and across a spur). Now, the use of the word 'bomb' is more than pertinent to the phrase 'bombing down a mountain'. It's fun. And that's the trap. You forget that bombs explode. Just like legs.

I bombed down the face of the mountain, with only a slight niggles questioning: why was Mal holding back? I hit a dirt road link, and pressed on, unwarranted confidence creeping in. I can now imagine a knowing smile likely crept onto Mal's face behind. He would have known that the fuse had been lit in the sinew of my calves. I was about to blow up.

Rising up another climb presenting yet more glorious views, I spotted another Kiwi trail guru ahead: Anna Frost. Nursing injury, she was

>>



## SHOTOVER MOONLIGHT MOUNTAIN MARATHON

February 2015

[www.activeqt.co.nz/events/shotover-moonlight/race-information/](http://www.activeqt.co.nz/events/shotover-moonlight/race-information/)

## MOVESCOUNT

Check out the run [www.movescount.com/moves/move26623635](http://www.movescount.com/moves/move26623635)

&lt;&lt;

cruising not racing, out for a meander to cheer runners on. And so here presented the second, perhaps fateful downfall.

I resisted the urge, but I'm a bloke. And if blokes are honest, even happily married ones like myself, put a woman in front of you and there's a natural – you could say caveman – tendency to puff the chest. Stand taller. Wick the eyebrows. Check you don't have nose hairs protruding. All that stuff. It's instinct. The trail running equivalent is to pick the pace up. No matter how tired. Spring on the front foot. Own that mountain. Raaaaaaa!

That's what I do. My cadence ticked over in fury as I high fived Anna, bounding like a mountain goat in heat, like I hadn't just run 18km.

Absolutely unimpressed (we're talking about someone who hangs in mountains with the likes of Killian Jornet and Antony Krupicka) Anna yelled pointedly: "You got a lot of ground to make up!"

As soon as I bounded out of sight the gas came off, but only a little. Then it struck. The electrical pulse in the calf. A little lash of a whip that said in a menacing southern drawl: boy, you're goin' too fast.

Suddenly there was a battle raging between testosterone and fear.

In a section of forest, Mal latched back on to my heels. His rhythmic run has reeled me in.

We reach Moonlight Lodge – roughly half way. Mal barely stopped, he's in and out before I had time to unhook my hydro bag for a refill. By the time I plodded off, he'd breached the viewpoint that scans the remainder of the course, and off down to Ben Lomond Lodge. It was the last time I'd see his face until the finish line.

The signs of how it was going to play out were ominous. A bloke the size and shape of a bodybuilder passed me looking strong. He would have been carrying double my

bodyweight around the course, but he was going like diesel. Like Mal. Like all those passing me. One lesson may have been to train more. The other lesson was pace and the maintenance of it, rather than spurt-and-go rushes brought on by lulling declines and sightings of blondes on course. The double-barreled lesson: in the mountains consistency pays, complacency slays.

I struck a deal with myself: time did not matter anymore (I'd been hoping for a six and a half hour finish). Survival did. Slow. Steady. Walk if I had to. But hold the cramps at bay.

My comeuppance was a blessing in the short term: I stuck in second gear and enjoyed the seven kilometer ridge run, technical as it was, across the Point. The legs stiffened but sat on that hairline between forward motion and failure.

Dropping off the Point, I spotted Mal about a kilometer ahead and with readjusted KPIs, I judged I was actually doing well to be within a Haka roar of the man.

Dropping into the Moonlight River Valley, my optimism once again created a false sense of reality. I was convinced that we were done with hills and thus I was on track to knock this thing off. A trail leading up from the river dispensed with that idea, and awakened the devil within my calves. Sefferstown Hill may only be 220 metres above the river, but it's a climb done in little more than one kilometre.

Steel claws wrenched into my legs rendering me stationary. I'd read somewhere that, while correct electrolyte balance and more pertinently that old chestnut training will keep the cramp dogs at bay, you can trigger a release simply by the taste of salt on the tongue. I owe a huge thanks to the runner who passed me with a bag of salted chips at hand. It worked. For an entire 100 metres. Thankfully he left that chip packet at the checkpoint ahead, and the neural messaging the chip crumbs triggered saw me through to the

abandoned Seffertown village site on to the final valley floor.

The next five kilometres was bearable, despite each of what must have been twenty ankle-defying river crossings. These are the same rivers that were panned extensively for gold, their banks the scene of many a triumph and likely a few more tragedies. At this point I didn't care less for their legends, nor if there was a ten pound nugget glinting at me from the babbling waters at that moment. I just wanted to lie down in the woolshed finish and feel suitably sheepish.

Passing through an old tunnel, originally built to divert the water so a river bend could be scoured, I too felt scoured out from within. The rational self knew there had been metaphorical nuggets of gold in them there hills. But my legs were nothing but lead and my calves felt like ten miners' picks had hacked into them.

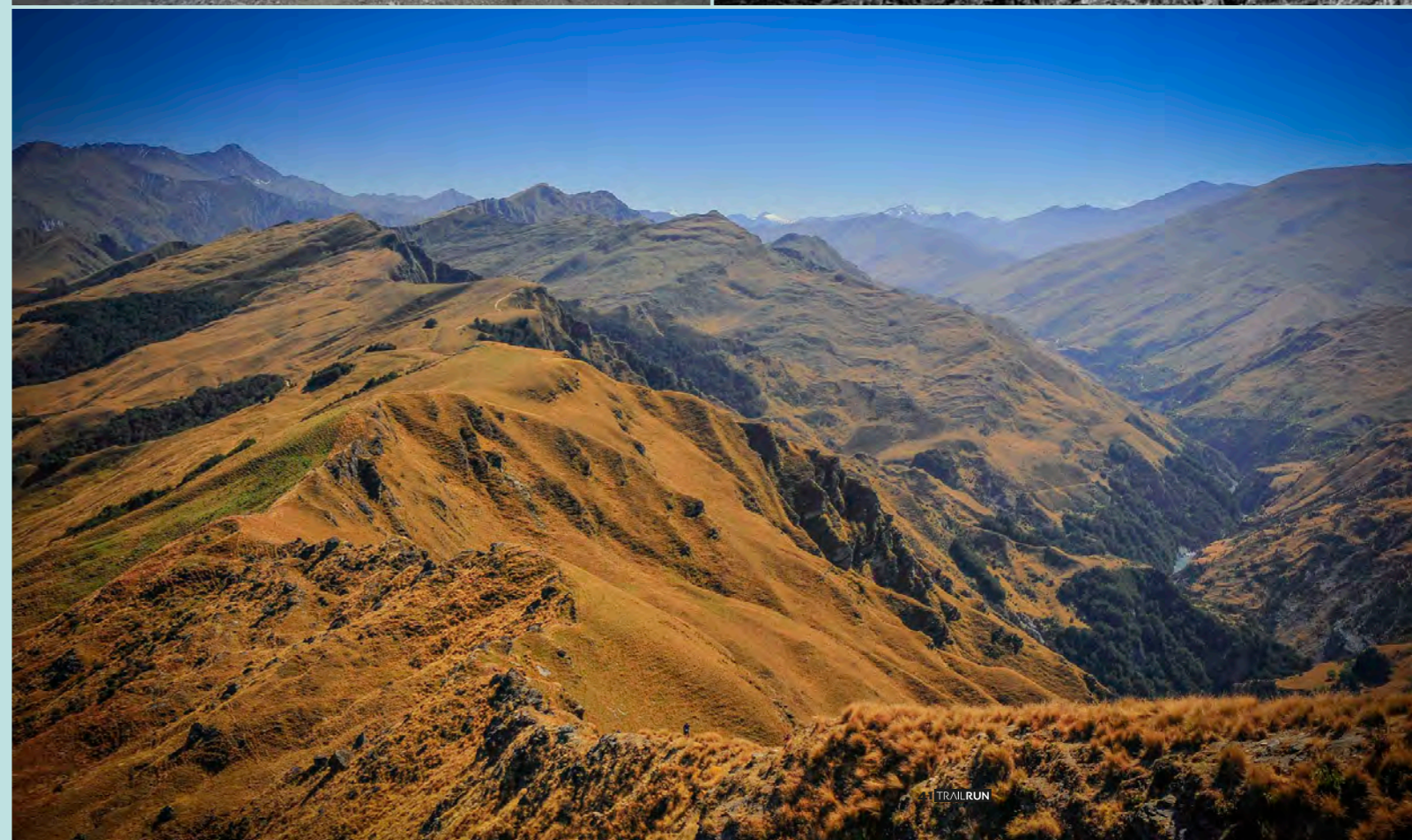
I limped across the line, I'd like to say to some kind of mid-pack glory, but the truth is I fell like a wounded, beaten, and broken goldfield soldier and promptly succumbed to cramping for the next hour or so. It was an inglorious way to finish a glorious day in the mountains, the dull ache of each step over Ben Lomond Station already gone, replaced by the excruciating pain of muscle contractions that made my face contort to horrendous proportions and my inner strength crumble to the point of screaming: "Medic!"

Inglorious indeed.

I'm just hopeful that someone took a photograph. It would be a shame to waste an image that may, if used judiciously on health warning posters, be ugly enough to scare trail punters into training, should they ever want to run in mountains. **RUN**

## VIDEO

Check out a short clip of the Shotover Moonlight Marathon at [vimeo.com/87436485](https://vimeo.com/87436485)





TSUYOSHI

SAMURAI

TRAIL

KABURAKI

## WHO'S WHO OF JAPANESE TRAIL RUNNING THE WOMEN

**Hiroko Suzuki** (Salomon) is the Japanese female pioneer for ultra distance races over the world. Her track record includes being the age group winner of the 2006 Western States (18-29 female) and 4th in the 2012 Tor des Geants in Italy. She was the 5th woman in the 2013 UTMF and 2nd in 2012.

**Yumiko Ohishi** (La Sportiva) had a great year last year, winning the 2013 Izu Trail Journey 71K Hasetune Cup (she also won in 2011) as well as the Kanna Mountain Run and Walk 2013 (40k).

**Hitomi Ogawa** (Patagonia / Vasque) was 3rd in the 2013 UTMF and 5th in 2012. She won the Shinetsu Five Mountains Trail in 2012.

**Naomi Imaizumi**, a proven triathlete (winning Ironman Japan 2007 and finishing 16th in Kona in 2008) has recently turned to the trails with success. She won the 2013 Shinetsu Five Mountains Trail, the Madarao 50k and others.

**Mitsuko Sato** (Asics) although 51 years of age, she still leads several women's races winning the Hasetune in 2012 and finishing 2nd in 2013.



**E**MBRACING THE ANCIENT ART OF BUSHIDO – THE SAMURAI WARRIOR MINDSET ESPOUSING PATIENCE, FOCUS AND PRESENCE – JAPANESE RUNNERS HAVE PROVEN TALENT OVER LONG DISTANCES. AND AS THE NATION TAKES TO THE TRAILS, THEY ARE BECOMING A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH GLOBALLY. BUT AMONG THE COUNTRY'S TRAIL RUNNING SAMURAI, NONE ARE MORE NOTABLE THAN TSUYOSHI KABURAKI.

KABURAKI SAN IS UNDOUBTEDLY ONE OF THE ISLAND NATION'S BEST RUNNERS AND A LEGEND AMONGST THE GROWING LEAGUE OF RUNNERS THERE. HE'S FAMOUS FOR WINNING THE MOUNT FUJI CLIMBING MARATHON ON MULTIPLE OCCASIONS AND IN 2005 TOOK THE TRIPLE CROWN: WINNING THE FUJI RACE AS WELL AS OTHER FAMOUS LOCAL RACES KITA-TAN AND HASETSUNE ALL IN THE SAME YEAR.

He's completed the famous Ultra-Trail du Mont Blanc a whopping five times, with four top ten finishes. In 2009 he placed third in the famous European mountain race – and only two months after finishing second in the Western States 100 Mile Endurance Run.

But ask the ever-humble and kind-hearted Kaburaki san about his achievements and what makes him "great" and you won't get a straight answer. The legendary runner, tall and wiry, shies at the thought of being heralded amongst

the greatest. Instead he focuses on the bright future of Japanese trail running. Like Yoshikazu Hara's historic win at the 2013 Ultra Trail Mount Fuji over an exasperated Julien Chorier and Sebastien Chaigneau.

"It demonstrates the level of Japanese trail runners to the world, which encourages me," says Kaburaki san, flashing a toothy grin. "Up until now, trail running has been one of the minor sports in Japan. But I would like to see that change. I would like to see trail running become one of Japan's cultural activities in the near future."

Indeed, the creation of the Ultra-Trail Mount Fuji - where the duel amongst Hara and Europe's finest runners played out - has been one of Kaburaki-san's most impressive achievements to date. His contributions to the local community don't stop there – he also produces local races the Kanna Mountain Run & Walk, Mt. Hotaka run and advises on more than a dozen trail races in Japan.

The UTMF dream began in 2007 when he >>

<<  
 first took part in the UTMB and wondered whether holding a similar race along the ancient trails of Mount Fuji would be possible. Five years later, the dream finally came to life - but not after another significant stumbling block: in 2011 the Tohoku earthquake and subsequent tsunami forced the cancellation of the race.

Since then, it's taken only three short years for the UTMF to evolve into Asia's number one and most challenging 100-miler. In 2014 it will be one of only two Asian races on the newly created Ultra Trail World Tour calendar (the other being the Vibram Hong Kong 100).

"I'm very glad UTMF is held in Mt. Fuji - my favorite place," he says, recalling his first experiences running there as a 28 year old. "Moreover, it's a good opportunity to unite trail runners from around the world, helping to popularise the trails in Japan."

Like many runners before him, Kaburaki san's journey to legendary trail running status began on the road in high school. For twelve years he pounded the pavement, until back injuries led him to seek out the trails. He never looked back, using the roads merely as a training tool when he couldn't make it to his beloved turf.

For years the talented runner wore two

hats: that of a world-class trail runner and a dedicated public official. But he always had a dream to run professionally, freeing up his time to commit to his passion.

"I always had a dream to challenge myself in an international-level race," he explains. "After work I used to train up to midnight. It was so hard to manage to make time for training on weekdays."

During those days he would run to work during the week. He used to climb the 32 flights of stairs in his office building. And on the weekend, he would escape to the mountains to train.

"I made a furious effort at that time."

In early 2009, Kaburaki san finally took the plunge: he quit his government job and pursued his dream of being a professional trail runner with the support of The North Face. It was his best year yet, with the top place finishes at WSER and UTMB.

On the trails is where Kaburaki san has had the greatest highs and the greatest lows. His favourite moment, even now, is his first ever trail race, he says. "I will never forget the feeling of running through the beautiful trees and trails."

"To me, trail running is like dancing... I watch out for the steps and sidestep twigs or pebbles. I feel that trail running unites me

>>

## DISCOVER JAPAN'S TRAILS

Keen to sink your teeth into some Japanese trails? Did you know some 140 trail and mountain races were held in the picturesque country last year? We caught up with Koichi Iwasa, creator of the Dogsorcaravans.com Japanese Trail Running website for his top picks of races worth the visit.

**1) Ultra Trail Mt. Fuji**, is perhaps the big trail running event in Japan, offering 100 mile and 88km distance for 2,200 runners.

[www.ultratrailmtfuji.com/](http://www.ultratrailmtfuji.com/)

**2) Izu Trail Journey**, 70k, is still young event but well organized and seeking global market. [Ed: Unfortunately, the event had to be cancelled this year as there was too much snow on the course, but fingers crossed for next year]

<http://izutrailjourney.com/>

**3) Fuji Mountain Race** is the oldest in Japan, 66th this year. This is an all-ascent race to the summit of Mt. Fuji with around 2,500 runners.

[www.fujimountainrace.jp/forms/top/top.aspx](http://www.fujimountainrace.jp/forms/top/top.aspx)

**4) Hasetune 71k** is the "Japan's Championship" of trail running, now in it's 21st year.

[www.hasetune.com/](http://www.hasetune.com/)

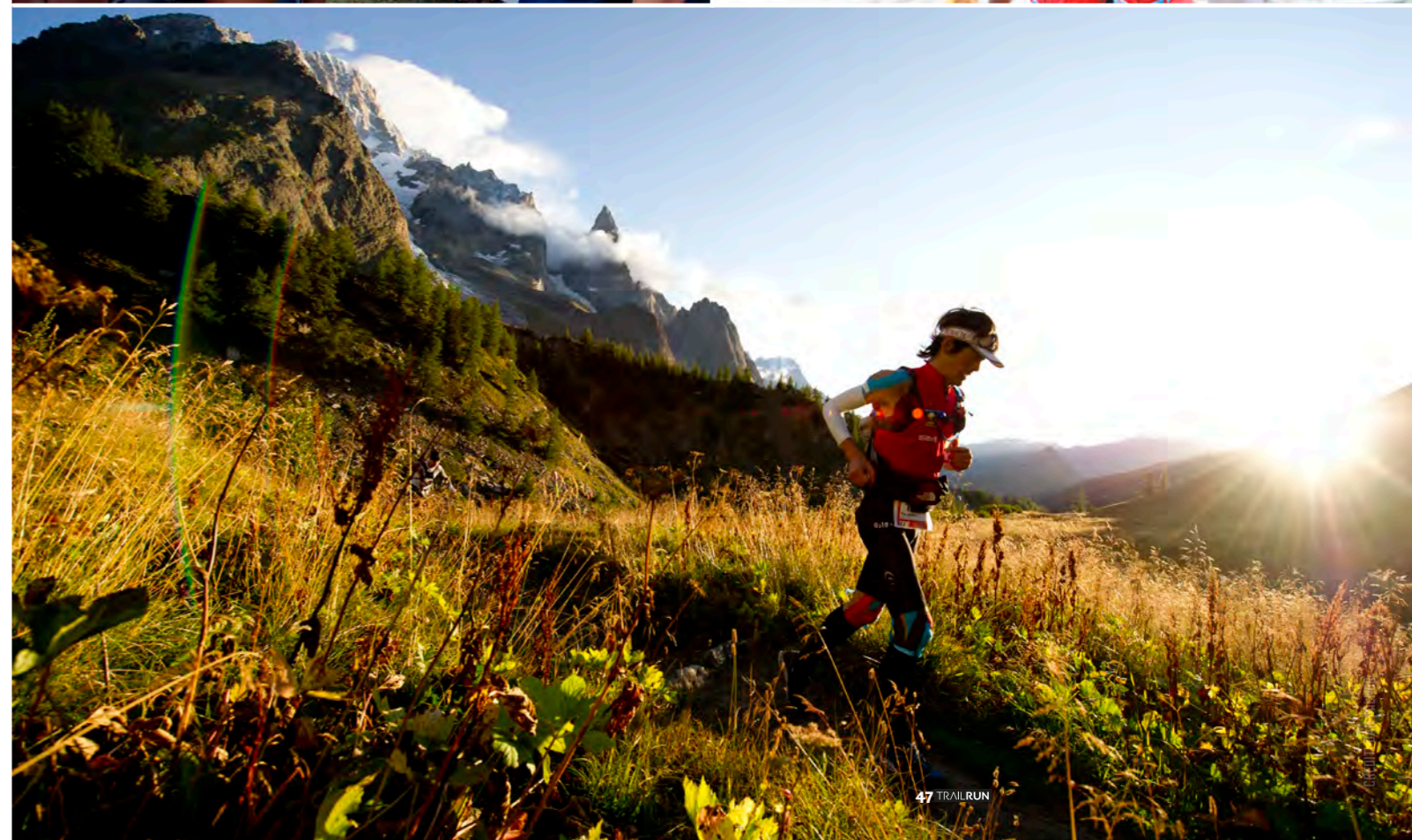
**5) Kitatan 44k**, one of the classics is in its 15th year this year. Along with Fuji Mountain Race and Hasetune, it is considered one of the top three events in Japan.

[www.k-y-trail.com/kitatanzawa/index.html](http://www.k-y-trail.com/kitatanzawa/index.html)

**6) Shinetsu Five Mountain Trails (SFMT) 110k** is young but classic. Runners are limited to 400, and its style is quite similar to US races. Patagonia and Hiroki Ishikawa hosts this event.

[www.sfmt100.com/index.php](http://www.sfmt100.com/index.php)

>>



## DISCOVER JAPAN'S TRAILS. CONT

7) **Kanna Mountain Run & Walk**, 40k, is famous for its superb hospitality in a small village.

[www.kanna-mountain-run.com/](http://www.kanna-mountain-run.com/)

8) **OSJ Ontake Ultra 100k & 100m** is runnable ultra marathon on gravel road.

[www.powersports.co.jp/osjtrail/13\\_ultraontake/index.htm](http://www.powersports.co.jp/osjtrail/13_ultraontake/index.htm)

9) **Mt. Hotaka Sky View Ultra Trail**

One of the oldest mountain races in Japan offering beautiful ridge trails and stunning views. Runners are required to carry a 10kg pack to simulate alpine climbing in high mountains. It will be revamped to modern 115km ultra trail event next fall.

<http://yamadanoboru.com/about.html>

10) **Kobo Trail Koyasan and Yoshinoyama** are home to active monastic centers founded twelve centuries ago. New running race goes through Kobo Trail, which connects two centers and is named after the priest Kukai (posthumously known as Kobo Daishi). Since part of the route is for pilgrimage, runners are asked to put on whitish shirts to show respect for them. Inaugural event hosts 55.7km and 42.4km races in June.

[www.okuyamato.pref.nara.jp/kobotrail2014/](http://www.okuyamato.pref.nara.jp/kobotrail2014/)

11) **Three Peaks Yatsugatake Trail**

If you want to try big vertical gain in middle distance, this new Skyrunning style event should be your pick. Yatsugatake mountain range sits in the centre of Japan and is famous centre for outdoor activity. The 38 kilometre race starts at 1000m and ascends to 2500m in 15km. The 2nd edition is scheduled in June.

<http://trail38.com>



I LEARNED THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN A RACE LIKE THIS IS CONCERN FOR OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM. SELF-SERVING PEOPLE MAY NOT GET GOOD RESULT IN OXFAM TRAIL WALKER.



FEATURE JAPAN TRAIL SPECIAL

## WHO'S WHO OF JAPANESE TRAIL RUNNING

### THE MEN

**Yoshikazu Hara**, was the famous winner of UTMF 2013 and Taiwan's Soochow International Ultramarathon 24hrs in 2013. Though a skilled road runner (having represented Japan at the world and Euro 100k world champs and with a win in famous local race, the Lake Saroma 100k in 6:33:32), he is still relatively new to the trail scene.

**Shunsuke Okunomiya** (Montrail/Mountain Hardwear) recently placed 7th in the Vibram Hong Kong 100. He is famous as the top contender of Japan's most prestigious Hasetune 71k for long time and was 7th in UTMF 2012. He was 13th in Western States 2011.

**Kenichi Yamamoto** (Houdini) 3rd in the 2012 UTMF. Two-time top 10 in UTMB and winner of the 2012 Le Grand Raid Pyrenees; Ronda dels Cims 2013 (170k, race in Andorra Ultra Trail), 2nd.

**Shogo Mochizuki** (La Sportiva) 4th in the 2012 UTMF. He is strong in super long, multi-day races, having twice won the Trans Japan Alps Race (TJAR) 450km foot race though Japan Alps, in 2010 and 2012 (TJAR is bi-annual event).

**Minehiro Yokoyama** (The North Face) is veteran trail runner have placed 6th in UTMB 2009 and 6th in UTMF in 2012.

**Tsuyoshi Soma**, three times straight winner of the Shinetsu Five Mountains 110k and two times winner of Hasetune Cup.

**Koiji Yamaya** was 8th in 2013 UTMF and 6th in 2012.

**Dai Matsumoto** (Salomon) is a mid-distance (Skyrace) mountain race specialist. In 2013, he won Fuji Mountain Race, Three Peaks Yatsugatake, and 2nd in Kinabalu International Climbathon.

**Toru Miyahara** (La Sportiva) is a strong mountain runner who surprised US runners with his win at Pikes Peak Marathon in Colorado last year. Three times winner and CR holder of Fuji Mountain Race, and winner of STY 2012.

**Yoshihito Kondo** (La Sportiva) 2013 Winner of Kita-tan, Izu Trail Journey, Kanna Mountain Run & Walk (40k), 4th in Kinabalu 2013. He also has the FKT in Mt. Fuji quintuple climb from five trail heads.

younger and he will be the first to admit it. Although he still runs, his main focus these days is promoting the sport in the region.

That's not to say Kaburaki-san's competitive days are behind him. In 2013 he won the Bighorn 100 Mile run in 18 hours and 51 minutes - only 15 minutes off the course record set by Mike Woolf. "The longer and the more gruelling the race, the better."

In July he will return to the US to run the Hardrock 100, followed by the Grand Raid Reunion in October. He claims he is getting stronger. "I think I am evolving day-by-day physically and mentally.

"I will continue to challenge the limit of human beings," he says. Spoken like a true trail warrior. **RUN**

*Huge thanks goes to Koichi Iwasa for his input in this profile. Visit his website at [www.dogsorcaravan.com](http://www.dogsorcaravan.com) to learn more about Japanese trail running.*

<< individually, and me with the environment."

His lowest moment in running, ironically, was during one of his greatest running achievements at the 2009 UTMB. "There was so much pressure. Japanese TV station NHK were featuring me and I felt compelled to get a good result." With a third place finish it worked, at least.

Despite his many individual's successes, Kaburaki san says the hotly contested 2012 Oxfam Trailwalker (where the French Salomon team set a new course record) is among his most memorable. Together with fellow The North Face athletes, Ryan Blair, Stone Tsang Siu-keung and Jay Kiangchaipaipana, the team finished in third place.

"That was a very significant race for me," he recalls. "During the race, we had a few challenges. But the strength of the team combined led to a good result.

"I learned the most important thing in a race like this is concern for other members of the team. Self-serving people may not get good result in Oxfam Trail Walker."

At 44, Kaburaki san is not getting any

IMAGE: MT BULLER, AUSTRALIA / WWW.MARCEAUPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



COMING

SOON

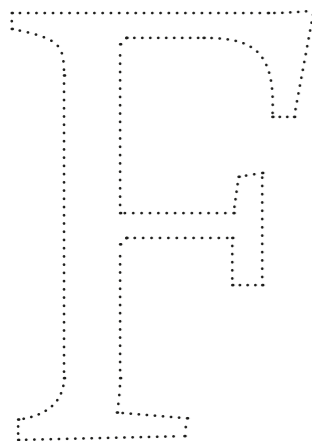
EAST TIMOR >> PATAGONIA >> PERU >> JAPAN >> UNITED KINGDOM >> USA >> LARAPINTA TASMANIA >> ALPS >> GREAT OCEAN WALK >> EUROBODALLA >> CAPE TO CAPE >> GRAMPAINS

TRAIL RUNNING TOURS COMING SOON. REGISTER YOUR INTEREST BY EMAILING YOUR CONTACT TO [TOURDETRAILS@GMAIL.COM](mailto:TOURDETRAILS@GMAIL.COM)

WORDS: MARTIN COX  
IMAGES: NIL BOHEGAS@REVISTATRIL.COM  
AND JULIA DERRICK

ENJOY THE BEAUTY  
OF THE HILLS

"MY WAY OF JOKING IS TO TELL THE TRUTH.  
THAT'S THE FUNNIEST JOKE IN THE WORLD."  
- MOHAMMED ALI



FROM THE MOMENT I FIRST SAW INDIA UP CLOSE I KNEW I'D MADE A HUGE MISTAKE. I'D BEEN TRAINING AND RACING UNDER A CURSE ALL SEASON. THE TRAINING HAD BEEN MURDEROUS, THE RACING PLAGUED BY MISFORTUNE. THE HIMALAYAN 100 WAS ONE LAST FUTILE EFFORT TO SALVAGE SOMETHING MEMORABLE FROM THE SEASON.

One hundred miles over five days in Darjeeling. Something was positively guaranteed to happen. And it did, but it wasn't what I'd expected. On paper it was a dream vacation. In reality it quickly became a vicious, health-ripping ordeal, a holiday from hell. And now, three months later, as I try to write the story of the race, I still feel hungover, I'm still reeling on the brink of a nervous breakdown. I'm still waiting for India to clear from my lungs. After seven days in India you feel like you've been there for seven years.

*Thursday 24th October 2013*

Delhi is by common consent the world's most polluted city. The air hangs yellow and heavy with diesel fumes, charcoal smoke, and humidity. The sun resembles a pale white ghost. It's no place for an English mountain runner. So what was I thinking? What kind of sick and twisted impulse, what rancid karma, had caused me to come here? Queen Victoria had never bothered to visit India, so why should I? The poverty, the sweat, the frustration, the religion, the corruption, the toilets. But it was also a place I didn't want to end up regretting I'd never seen.

As soon as I arrived at The Hotel Ashok I should have stocked up on cakes from the small patisserie in the lobby, called room service and had my fridge filled with beer, located the movie channel, and retired to my two-hundred-dollar-a-night bed. And I should have stayed there until it was time to leave for the mountains. Instead, I was drawn into a false sense of security by the group of

runners warming up in the lobby. I downed a cappuccino, changed into my vest and shorts, and followed them outside in search of suitable training grounds.

They all were in Delhi for the Himalayan 100. There was Jethro, who was fanatical about diet and body hair and had just quit smoking. He had all the gear and no idea or, as he once observed, "Sticking feathers up your butt does not make you a chicken."

Jackie's old man had run the event the previous year and the twisted bastard had insisted she experience the full horror of it first-hand this time around. Hers was one of those fine little love stories that make you smile at night in your sleep.

Jesus, a gloomy, polo-shirted Mexican, suffered from shin splints and would win a special medal for picking up the most litter during the race.

And there was Jim, a wild-looking banker. He was twitchy and nervy the whole time he was there, like he knew it could all get much worse at any moment. He spent that long week churning around in a sea of horrors and came to despise The Mahatma almost as much as I did.

Spying some greenery amidst a confusion of blue tarpaulin shacks, we darted across a gridlocked dual-carriageway, scattering on the other side to avoid a tribe of stray goats. A man lay dead by the side of the road. Someone had carefully covered the body with sheets of newspaper. We leaped across an open sewer, a small stream of water the colour of chai flowed past sluggishly, bubbles sparkling in it. Two children were splashing about in the brown water.

I had been in prime condition when I arrived, healthy and eager to discover India, but after a few easy warm-up laps of Nehru Park I was reduced to a wheezing, weak-kneed wreck. "How could anyone ever live in this place?" I wondered as I slunk back to the hotel with the others and completed the run on a treadmill in an air-conditioned gym.

>>

A MAN LAY DEAD BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD. SOMEONE HAD CAREFULLY COVERED THE BODY WITH SHEETS OF NEWSPAPER.



MY WHOLE BODY WAS VEGETATING,  
 LIKE A FETUS IN A JAR.  
 I DOUBTED MY ABILITY TO  
 SURVIVE THE NEXT DAY'S STAGE

<<

I awoke the next morning with a rattly, chesty cough and looking like the portrait of Dorian Grey. Usually I'd take a week off running until whatever was making its home in my lungs went away. However, circumstances were far from normal and from now on there was no turning back. I was fucked but I'd have to ride it out. I ate a large breakfast and returned to the gym for another treadmill session.

*Sunday 27th October 2013*

Ground zero. The squalid village of Maney Bhanjyang (2150m). We arrived sometime around 7am, after a spine-cracking, stomach-churning two-hour bus ride. There was no frenzied pre-race press conference, just a madness of another type. Car and bus horns bellowed and wailed like lost cattle. A band played a random collection of tuneless instruments including bagpipes, bongos, trumpets, accordians, and sitars. The melancholy notes from a pair of snake-charmers flutes competed for attention. Tibetan dancers in spectacularly hideous devil masks jumped around to the music. Bemused villagers and excited children were held back by bored-looking soldiers wearing in helmets and carrying long white riot sticks. It was not a good scene to confront feeling as feverish

and weak as I did.

The previous two days of travel had been a fiendish ordeal as my condition slowly deteriorated. This awful spate of sickness was enough to put the fear of God in a man. And, I noted, this cheerless place wasn't in anything like close proximity to the Himalayas. It wasn't even in the foothills. It was more like the foothills of the foothills, the dark heart of a colossal and gloomy jungle, the first step up from the swampy wastelands of West Bengal.

I was queuing for the bathroom when a sad and hopeless beggar limped up to me and held up strange gimcracks for sale, pleading for money. Then a little girl rushed up to me and wrapped a white prayer scarf around my neck. Then somewhere in the thick of all this theatrical chaos a fat man in a tracksuit waved a green flag and off ran 50 runners on stage one, up and up through the trees into an impalpable, fog-soaked sky and a shadowy world that was brown and wasted.

Twenty-one miles (34km) and four hours later I completed the stage. It had been rough going thanks to the miserable disgrace of a cobbled highway upon which I had to run. The 'road' was built by the third Aga Khan in 1948 to give him access to his Himalayan hunting lodges - he had simply dumped a bunch of rocks out of a helicopter and then neglected it for 65 years and it was a curse to all who attempted to traverse its crumbling, degraded

surface. It would have been cruel to have forced a mountain goat to meander it.

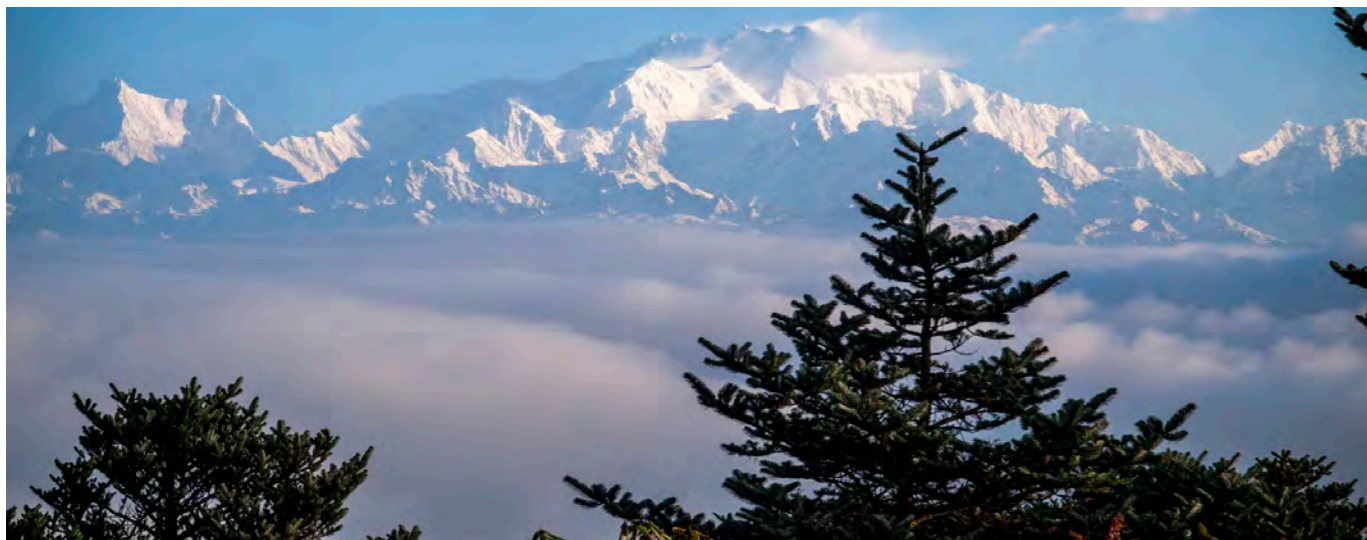
I outpaced all other traffic to a staggering degree and was regularly brought to a standstill by the jeeps and trucks that crawled up and down the narrow, boulder-strewn road. Above 3000m my lack of acclimatisation made things even trickier. The air was heavy and thin and breathing was like trying to suck air through a bent straw. I resorted to the wizard sticks on the steepest hills in a desperate attempt to maintain some kind of headway.

The sepulchral hill station of Sandakphu (3600m) was our home for the next two nights. Even now, the sight of these words on paper sends a shudder up my spine, long after I have escaped and moved on to other ordeals. I finished stage one just as it started to rain. It came in heavy and cold and reduced the others to various states of misery, hypothermia and despair. More dead than alive, many of them went straight to bed without eating or even changing out of their soaked clothing.

Our race director, The Mahatma, had secured the only decent hotel in town - a fine Sherpa inn with a well-stocked bar and large restaurant. The runners were treated like lepers and forced to squeeze into a tiny concrete kitchen and eat their meagre rations standing up. Sleeping arrangements were

>>





<<  
 equally cramped and sparse. That evening I braved the fog and lashing rain and made my way up the hill to The Mahatma's place in search of warmth and alcohol. The Mahatma's people were far from happy to see me enter their inner sanctum and the muscles in the backs of their necks visibly bunched up when I appeared. I gave them my best thinking-of-kitties smile and explained that I was thirsty and needed a drink, but their mood was ugly. By intruding on their turf I'd somehow filled their hearts with hate.

"Sir, you are in the wrong place," someone said. "Show me your passport."

"Get out of here you freak", another added. And with that I was pushed out of the door by Monkey Man, a hairy psychotic with a beer belly, weasel teeth, and a Himalayan 100 baseball cap. I'd liked Monkey Man at first, he'd told a string of increasingly hilarious dirty jokes on one of the deathtrap bus rides that had got us to the start. But now I wanted to kick him the balls like a mule and gouge out his yellow teeth with a chisel. My temper was hovering dangerously on the far edge of control. This barren mountaintop was suddenly like a prison I felt compelled to escape.

Had The Mahatma not confiscated my passport before the race and locked it up in his safe back at Race HQ, it was at this point that I would have ran back to Maney Bhanjyang, hired a taxi to Delhi, and put some serious air-miles between myself and this whole doomed civilisation.

The combination of a bad chest and the passage from sea level to 3600m in two days had left me feeling very out of sorts. My head was pulsating violently and I ached all over. My fingers and toes were numb, my eyes red and sticky. My whole body was vegetating, like a fetus in a jar. I doubted my ability to survive the next day's stage, so in utter

desperation I tracked down the race doctor. The Doc sported a bushy moustache and went very quiet whenever you questioned him about medical matters. Since day one he'd been dishing out Diamox like candy without any allusion to the side-effects, so I hoped he'd have something potent to combat my chest infection. Steroids perhaps. Or brandy, antibiotics, and a shot of adrenalin. The Doc gave me some valerian root to chew on, a foot massage, and a lesson in mind-cleansing meditation. The treatment did nothing to help clear my chest but it made me sleepy. I don't recall going to bed that night, but in the morning, there I was, still in Sandakphu, still feeling like shit.

Monday 28th October 2013

A thick swirling fog covered everything. It was cold and windy and the wind picked up a fine grit that would turn my face pink and swollen as if with sunburn. I fuelled up on sweet black coffee, it was all I could keep down. My stomach felt like a tree was growing inside it. I felt a tremendous distance between myself and everything real. As I stood shivering on the start line I heard an airplane passing overhead and wished I was on it. Stage one hadn't been great, I'd walked way too much for my liking. But this was the day my race went to hell in a handbasket, the day my hopes for a respectable time for the hundred were crushed.

I came out of the blocks like a hyena on speed and instantly regretted it. Attempting to run the first hill resulted in delirium and flashing white lights. My heart felt like it had flatlined. Yet my brain was apparently still functioning on some basic motor survival level and I had enough animal strength and detached intelligence to get away with it. I quickly evolved a foolproof plan: walk the hills, then run like a doomed rat down the other side

and pray that by some miracle my body didn't register the temporary change in pace.

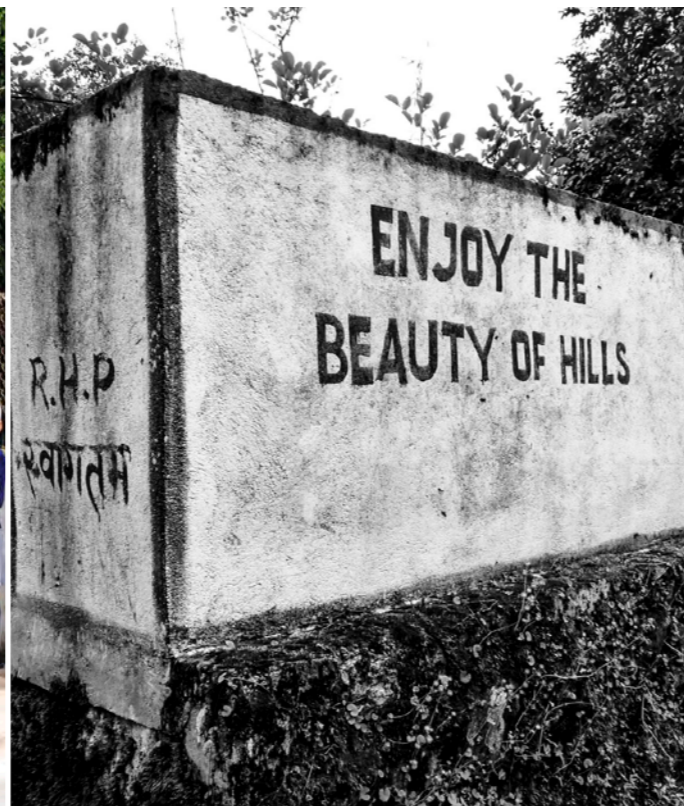
The stage was a miserly ten miles out and ten miles back along the Nepalese border - I would run the same ten miles again to begin stage three. The border was marked by a rusty barbed wire fence and clusters of unamused soldiers. They appeared from behind rocks when least expected, damp roll-ups clenched tightly between blue lips, ill fed, underclothed, holes in their boots, and armed to the teeth with a weird variety of weapons. The 1947 Kalashnikov seemed popular. Some carried ancient looking bolt-action carbines. There were shotguns, M16 rifles, submachine guns, and all sorts of side-arms. One fellow carried a sword with a very long, curved blade.

On the whole, stage two was an out-of-body experience and only sporadic memory flashes of it remain. At one point the sun poked its head through the cloud. My eyes were swollen almost shut and the sudden appearance of the sun left me stunned and helpless and writhing on the ground in agony like a sick mole. I also remember a soldier riding up to me on horseback on that misty battlefield to ask if I didn't want to take his ride for a spin. I have to confess I've never been on a horses back and I declined his offer. He galloped off waving his pistol in the air, firing off a couple of rounds.

Tuesday 29th October 2013

The day dawned fresh and crisp for stage three (28 miles / 45km). There were big white clouds in the sky. Everyone appeared to be in a good mood, ready to soak up the Himalaya's special vibrations. Shortly after the start, the cloud sunk into the valleys and Kangchenjunga appeared like a vision. I stopped running and fumbled in my backpack for the camera, then remembered that I'd had it stolen four days ago at the airport.

>>



<<  
 Those miles – contouring around and traversing the crest of the Nepalese border – were the only miles of the race that I enjoyed the running and got to appreciate the scenery. With the sun on my back my spirits rose a notch. I felt strangely normal and fully cranked, like a recharged battery. I managed to run the first ten miles 30 minutes quicker than I had the day before. The role of a dozen double-caffeine Espresso-flavoured gels may also have played a part in my renewed morale. I had to slow down only once, and that was to tip-toe around a herd of yak. The yak is the meanest son of a bitch in the Himalayas. He owns the trail and is not to be crossed. If spooked he's likely to take off like something shot out of a missile-launcher and crush anything and anyone in his path. He'll snap your bones like toothpicks. If the yak ever develops a taste for human flesh we will all be in trouble. Probably the only thing more dangerous than a stampeding yak is an incensed yak-herder.  
 After a couple of hours on the ridge, the course plummeted a vertical mile into thick, steamy jungle. The descent was steep and

treacherous, a one-foot wide muddy trench for much of its length, with many big steps and small bluffs. It was the sort of track where you'd expect to come across more skeletons by the side of it than people actually on it. I leaped over leveled tree trunks like a big kangaroo. Every so often the drop was so steep and so fast that I got an eerie sense of freefall. The difference between surviving and wiping-out on a downhill like this is simply a matter of conditioned reflexes. The trick is to go faster and faster until the thrill of speed overcomes the fear of falling. There were several small villages towards the bottom, the track ran right through people's front yards, but I hardly noticed them. I was feeling very much in tune with the thing at this point, my brain was humming. And then it all evaporated and fell apart. The finish line was rumoured to be at the bottom of the descent, on the other side of a long bridge across a gorge. The rumours were wrong. There were another six mountainous miles of pot-holed tarmac remaining.  
 I'm going to digress for a moment. The Mahatma was an untiring, untreatable snob. His mouth ran like jelly. His race briefings

were some of the lamest and silliest swill ever uttered by man or beast – tortuously long lectures regarding his awesome array of virtues and his vast wisdom of the known and unknown universe. Crucial information about the race – such as the start time, route profile, location of aid stations, arrangements for drop-bags, description of the terrain – became lost in a confused tirade of frenzied gibberish and smug self-congratulation. Safety briefings were unnervingly sketchy and mostly boiled down to the following:  
 Walk Don't Run. Look Where You're Putting You're Feet There May Be Snakes. Do Not Flaunt Your Wealth. Do Not Tip The Helpers. Give Your Money Directly To Me.  
 It was for this reason that I was totally in the dark as to where stage three finished. Those final miles were the toughest of the whole race for me. I was all out of gels, ragged from the descent, and cramping badly. The road was busy with jeeps ferrying people around and donkeys carrying big loads. Having to repeatedly adjust my line to avoid the traffic was agony. On the last big hill a group of school children walked past me giggling.  
 >>





THE MAHATMA'S BEADY  
YELLOW EYES PEERED OUT  
AT ME, GLASSY WITH  
TERROR AND BATSHIT CRAZY.

&lt;&lt;

I felt very foolish. I felt like crying. Had there been a stand at the side of the road selling coffee and doughnuts, I'd have abandoned there and then. But there wasn't, so I got my shit together as best I could and closed the thing out. I'd been brought me to the brink of hysteria, yet by the time the other exhausted runners started staggering across the finish line like stroke victims, I had binged on several bunches of miniature bananas, paid a small boy a small fortune to bring me a pineapple daiquiri (he could only find beer, but that was okay), and was over the worst of it.

*Wednesday 30th October 2013*

The final two stages were an anticlimax. 13 miles (21km) and 17 miles (27km) and tarmac every step of the way. A quick glance at any trekking map of the region would reveal a vast network of exciting, interlinked single-track. So why was I running a half-marathon on the road through a dark jungle and then getting the bus back to where I started? The Mahatma had no answer. He never did. All I wanted to do was find out where the guy was coming from, but despite numerous requests, he wouldn't answer my questions, and I had many questions to lay on him. What's your real name? Is The Doc a doctor of medicine or an animal doctor? Where do I go to drink snake venom shots? Where can I hire an elephant? Where do I go to play poker with a gorilla? Why I have I been in Darjeeling for eight days without anybody offering me a cup of tea? Have you ever had sexual intercourse? Have you ever climbed a mountain? What happened to all the t-shirts I gave you for the helpers? But The Mahatma didn't do small talk. He wanted to seem inscrutable but succeeded only in appearing like an imbecile.

So to stage four. The sky was a gray, wrinkled blanket. It was a warm, hazy kind of day and there was a lot of easy running. My mood was mean and jangled, I was red-eyed and feverish still, but anybody could be a runner on a day like this. I cruised the stage in 80 minutes with the what-the-hell kind of indifference of a man moving in a hard straight line towards a known horizon. I'd

had enough. I wanted out. While waiting for the others to come in I dozed on a deckchair by the side of the road, fending off the flies and waves of strange memories.

Good news, though. We were no longer in Sandakphu. We were now residents of the grimy, backwards village of Rimbik (2000m), and there was no prohibition in Rimbik. For those last two days I was as contented as a snail. I could go out for a shave and relax and get drunk. At the guest house where we were billeted there were two brands of beer available - 4% and 8%. I sat on the balcony of my room overlooking the town and drank and rested and waited for something to happen. Nothing did. What a blessed relief.

*Thursday 31st October 2013*

During the pre-race briefing, The Mahatma had been very specific on the danger of tigers in the region.

"Forget about tigers," he reassured us all. "You will never see the tiger that kills you."

The only wildlife I came across were the ubiquitous crows and dogs, but on stage five I heard animals of all shapes and sizes whisper to me from unseen places in the impenetrable riot of vegetation that bordered each side of the road. Just another feature of the mad black hole into which I had descended and feared I might never climb back out of.

My central memory of that last day of the race seems to hang on one stark and menacing moment. It was early on in the stage and I was tapping out six-minute kilometers on a smooth uphill stretch of tarmac. Because of the drop in altitude I didn't really notice the grade of the hills anymore except with pleasure. A jeep slowed to a crawl right alongside me, the window wound down, and The Mahatma's beady yellow eyes peered out at me, glassy with terror and batshit crazy. He said nothing and let his gaze bore into me for several minutes, like an animal peering out of a forest on fire, or like he was looking upon a demon escaped from hell. Or perhaps like he were the demon, trying to think up something that would bring me to my knees. I couldn't decide which. Then he grunted something at his driver and sped off up the road in a cloud

of diesel fumes.

I still don't know what to make of that, I really don't. And I've thought about that moment a lot. I was doing a painstaking thing with style, making an art of the thing, and he loathed me for it, because he lacked the faith to believe in his own powers, because he knew in some nervous corner of his heart that to do such a thing took an innate strength and a discipline he would never understand. Maybe that was it. From the very beginning The Mahatma had gone to great lengths to point out that this wasn't a race and that running up the hills just wasn't appropriate. His constant mantra was "Slow Is Good." I had come to think that my only reason for being there at all was to show him that "Fast Is Better."

The maddening image of The Mahatma staring me out stayed with me for the rest of the day. The only way to whip it was to hang on until evening and banish the ghosts with beer, let the alcohol seep through my system and turn the bad thoughts into good ones.

*Sunday 3rd November 2013*

It had been a cruel oddity of a race. Weird and frenzied in some moments, slow and dirty in others. Looking back, it had all been fake, a money-spinner, a choreographed affair, hollow at the core. My only real feeling for India was one of absolute and visceral aversion. Too much had happened in those eight long and degrading days and I never did get to really enjoy the beauty of the hills.

Or was I missing something crucial? It had been 73-year-old Jed's seventh Himalayan 100. Everything about Jed was old apart from his eyes and they were the same colour as the sky and animated and undefeated.

"If it gets your blood racing then it's probably worth doing", he explained to me. And bearing this in mind, I tried to compose a fitting epitaph for the race on the long flight home. Yet there was no escaping the dread that rattled within my chest; and no escaping the echo of Mr. Kurtz' final cry from The Heart Of Darkness:

"The Horror! The Horror!" **RUN**

Read more of Martin's mountain tales at: [martinashleycox.blogspot.com.au/](http://martinashleycox.blogspot.com.au/)

FEATURE



TRAILRUN



FAST  
FORWARD

On the rebound from injury, TRM's New Zealand editor Vicki Woolley, downshifts the speed a notch for some fast packing fun, but discovers the balance between light and fast can be a precarious one.

WORDS & IMAGES: VICKI WOOLLEY

TRAILRUN



DOZEN TRAMPERS SAT ON THEIR PACKS, CHIN IN HAND, STARING ANXIOUSLY THROUGH DRIZZLE AT THE SWOLLEN RIVER. PERIODICALLY SOMEONE WALKED OVER TO CHECK WHETHER THE FLOW HAD DROPPED AGAINST A STICK POKED INTO THE GRAVEL BED. ON THE OPPOSITE BANK A LOCAL FARMER STOOD BY HIS AGEING TOYOTA, CATCHING OUR EYES AND SHAKING HIS HEAD EMPHATICALLY: “NO!” HE SIGNALLED. “DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CROSS”.

Another half hour ticked by. Not a great start: my companion and I had 40km of trail to run to reach our hut by nightfall: the first 20km was uphill, and the bus had dropped us around 6km short of the trailhead as the preceding day’s storm had washed out the ford pan. Patience wore out at midday and we prepared to brave the raging torrent, when the Toyota came barrelling across the river in reverse. We threw our packs on the flat-deck, leaped after them and ten minutes later were jogging up Heaphy Track, Kahurangi National Park!

A big week lay ahead. Keen to take trail running to the next level, a friend and I had decided to explore the notion of ‘fast-packing’ – essentially self-support, no-drop multiday runs where the pace is tempered by bigger than usual run loads on your back. We had booked flights into Nelson and out of Westport six days apart. Between the two lay some 220km of mixed running: the well-groomed Heaphy Track is one of NZ’s nine Great Walks, while the Old Ghost Road is still under construction, and includes a gruelling 26km unformed section. We planned for ‘relaxed pace’ 40km days with plenty of photo stops, mixing things up with a combination of hut overnights and day runs in Nelson, Karamea and Westport.

Google ‘fast-packing’ and you experience the internet version of an uncomfortable silence, so our preparations were largely informed by tramping websites, adventure-racing friends and personal experience. Packing was complex as every item placed into our 30litre packs was carefully assessed

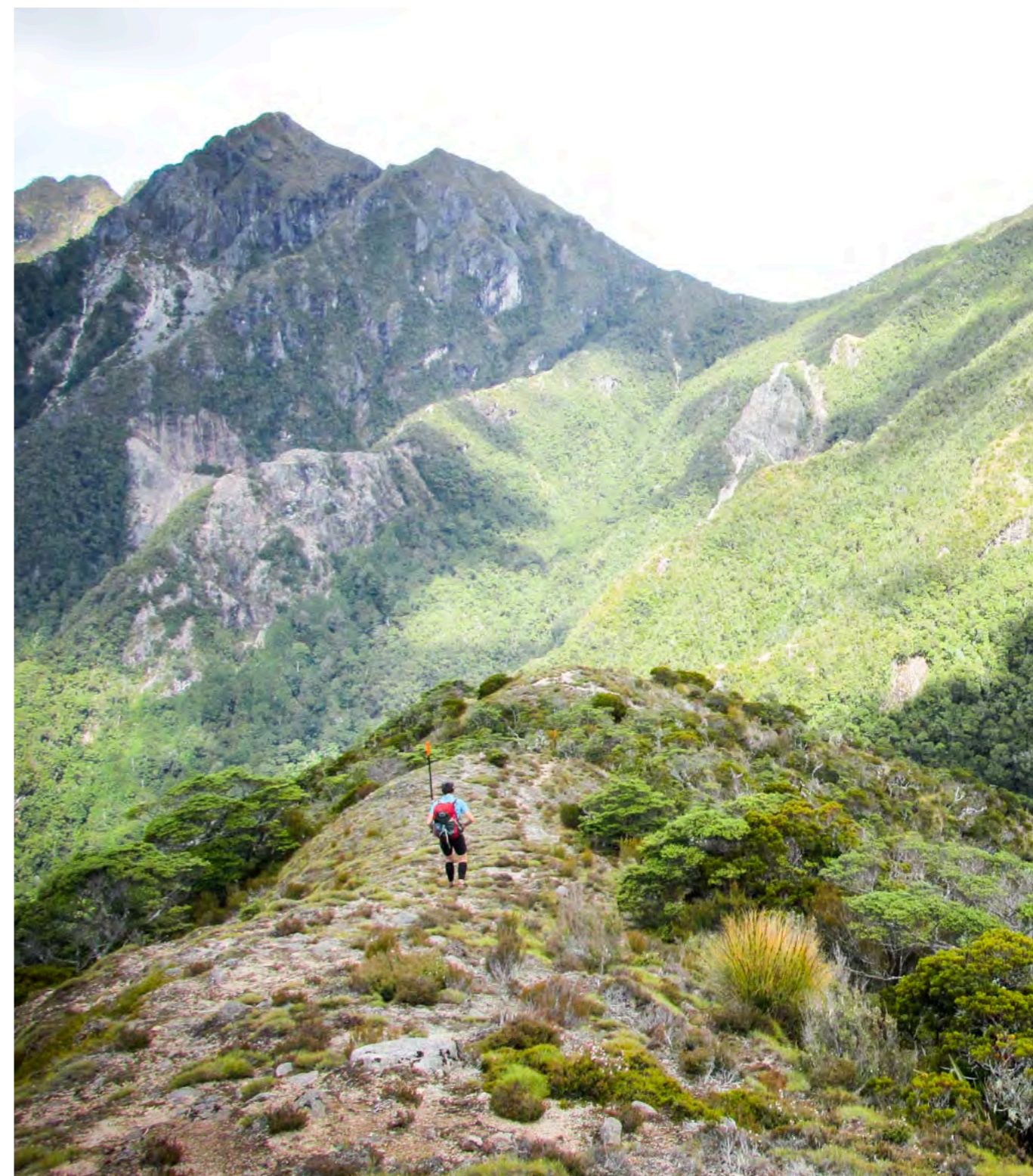
for inclusion. We were determined to mitigate risk as much as possible so included robust first aid, emergency and repair kits, and warm clothing. Food was a critical component: anticipating eight-hour days, we packed for ten-hour days. Yet this was ultimately a running adventure... the trade-off between packing light to maintain speed and efficiency while staying true to a self-supported ethos was to haunt me later in the trip.

We set off up the 80km Heaphy with a mixture of excitement and trepidation. The first 5km saw us adjusting to the unfamiliar pack-weight and settling into a steady rhythm as the track morphed into a gradual but unrelenting climb through solemn and ubiquitous red (black) beech. Despite the late start we made excellent progress to Flanagan’s Corner, the highest point on the Heaphy at 915m. Maintaining a steady jog across Goulund Downs with its striking subalpine colours and flora, we flew past the famous Tree of Shoes and reached James McKay hut after 7.5 hours, just as heavy rain set in. A delightful discovery while researching the trip was Backcountry Cuisine’s flameless heater packs: these chemically activated single-use packs enable double-portion dehydrated meals to be cooked without stove, fuel or billy cans, and weigh less than 100g. A hot substantial meal made for a welcome change to trail staples of muesli bars, gels, sandwiches and scroggin.

I was keen to try out a new ultra-lightweight sleeping bag (Macpac Escapade 150) and a top tramping trip: laying my running skirt, shirt and bra under the sleeping bag to dry overnight was enormously successful, and the addition of clean socks made for a comfortable start to the second day.

The Heaphy is rocky and heavily gravelled: the hard surface and additional 10kg pack weight gave us both impact-soreness in our feet, and I regretted leaving the Hoka One Ones’ (see review in this edition) at home. I had borrowed a pack that performed brilliantly with a comfortable harness and abundant side- and front-pocket storage that

&gt;&gt;



<<  
 significantly reduced time spent removing the pack to rummage around inside. The addition of a pack liner would have made unpacking/repacking at the huts easier, rather than multiple dry bags packed into waterproof snap lock bags. A very pleasant surprise was the absence of chafing, blisters or muscle strain from carrying the larger pack-weight: the next morning we headed down through stunning kahikatea and rimu forest, skirted two enormous rata and skipped out through nikau to the wild west coast with relative ease.

The Heaphy Track proved a good - though rather gentle - warm-up for the second stage of our fast packing adventure. Bolstered by some TLC from Rongo Backpackers and an absolutely glorious day running around Karamea's ancient forests and limestone formations, Day Five saw us trotting confidently out of Seddonville toward the 80km Old Ghost Road. Winding alongside the Mokihinui River and up along the Lyell Range, the track is currently under construction as a multi-use mountain-bike and tramping track, estimated to open in the first half of 2015. 24km at the Seddonville end is complete, and another 30km at the Lyell end: between Mokihinui Forks Hut and Ghost Lake Hut, the track is open but described as "Route-finding: suitable for fit and experienced trampers only". Unfortunately this phrase has been over-used as a standard Department of Conservation (DoC) caveat on many tracks throughout New Zealand and has rather lost its validity with Kiwi trampers and runners. (Note, however, that the official Old Ghost Road website accurately articulates the trail status,

and should be the first point of reference).

It began beautifully: for the second time in 48hours we felt we had fallen into Trail Running Heaven. Cut into sheer shale cliffs suspended above the mighty Mokihinui River, the track affords dramatic views, abundant birdlife, a beautiful rimu glade and the odd unperturbed goat. Many river crossings are unbridged, and the unexpectedly high volume of summer rain did present us with apprehensive moments at some fords!

Beyond Mokihinui Forks Hut - currently given over to the track workers - gravel petered out and the track became muddy and rooty, but still runnable for another 8km. We welcomed the softer and more technical surface until abruptly beyond Goat Creek hut the trail simply.. well.. stopped.. at the foot of a steep climb through dense forest. A single orange triangle stared unblinkingly at us, and after ten minutes of going back and forth, the lack of an alternative forced us to accept that we had hit the 'unformed' section of track.

For 13km we struggled to make headway on an uncut and unformed route, navigating by markers alone as we plunged through rotten logs, skidded across slips and pulled ourselves up impossible gradients, bush lawyer and a myriad of spiky scrubby shrubs tearing at our legs. A navigation error cost us an anxious hour, and as the last of the sunlight began seeping out of the sky, we contemplated the possibility of a night in the bush in real earnest. I became uncomfortably aware that while I had emergency gear, I hadn't actually thought through an emergency plan. Although we had a map and compass, I had

>>

# HEAPHY TRACK PROVED A GOOD - THOUGH RATHER GENTLE - WARM-UP FOR THE SECOND STAGE OF OUR FAST PACKING ADVENTURE





<<  
 not set my GPS to display current elevation: this rookie mistake coupled with the density of the bush that engulfed us made it difficult to calibrate our exact location.

After bashing over a couple of severe bush clad ridges and stumbling across a long, ancient slip, we dropped down into Stern Valley and began running harder – consequently falling more – as darkness descended. Just as our bunkmates were climbing into bed, we burst into the hut, relieved and exhausted after a 12-hour day.

A short and sleepless night followed: with the daunting prospect of another 13km of ‘unformed’ trail awaiting us, breakfast was a silent affair and we launched back into the gloom at dawn. It took nearly 6 hours to struggle up Stern Ridge with its gnarled, thickened and stunted manuka trees, and along bouldery Skyline Ridge – at 1456m the highest point on the track with spectacular 3600 views – reaching Ghost Lake hut and the start of the formed track just after midday. Never have I been so happy to see gravel and benching.

We set off down towards Lyell with the nagging sense of having avoided a major mishap more by luck than good management. Another navigation error – the combination of my enthusiasm to visit gold mining ruins and the use of a new Topo map that has

perhaps been produced prematurely – cost us another hour’s delay. We had not anticipated 12-hour days and finished the trip with only two gels each uneaten: a little too close for comfort had we been forced to spend an unplanned al fresco night.

The learning wasn’t ours alone. A newly established shuttle operation was scheduled to collect us from Lyell, and we were one of Hike’n’Bikes’ first clients. Having waited an anxious two hours for us to emerge during which they feared the worst, Jess and Jason spent the time compiling a list of comfort and emergency supplies and refreshments to have in the van, and formulating an emergency strategy.

After a short run around historic Denniston on our final day, we took up residence in Westport’s coolest cafe, The Townhouse, to mull over an epic week as we waited for our flight home. We discussed a learning curve with a trajectory resembling the space shuttle’s launch, toasted our success and pondered future adventures. I am confident that I understand this particular game, now: the ability to overnight in huts means we can extend ourselves into more remote locations; yet the necessity to travel light compromises our safety. It’s an interesting juxtaposition of challenge and risk. How far do you go? How fast? How light? How long? All I know is ... I want more. **RUN**

RUN IT:

[GREATWALKS.CO.NZ/HEAPHY-TRACK](http://GREATWALKS.CO.NZ/HEAPHY-TRACK)

[OLOGHOSTROAD.ORG.NZ](http://OLOGHOSTROAD.ORG.NZ)

[HIKENBIKESHUTTLE.CO.NZ](http://HIKENBIKESHUTTLE.CO.NZ)





RYAN SANDES



SAMANTHA GASH

# WE RUN CAUSE WE CAN



# You run. Why?

IT'S A QUESTION THAT  
 DRAWS EVERYTHING FROM A  
 BARRAGE OF CLICHÉS TO  
 BLANK, HAVEN'T REALLY  
 THOUGHT ABOUT IT STARES.  
 FOR OTHER IT'S MORE A  
 QUESTION OF WHY NOT? WHY  
 WOULDN'T YOU? BUT THAT'S  
 ALL INTROSPECTIVE. WHAT  
 ABOUT TURNING THE LEGS  
 OVER TOUGH TERRAIN FOR  
 SOMEONE ELSE'S BENEFIT?  
 TRM'S ASSOCIATE EDITOR  
 TEGYN ANGEL TALKS TO A  
 FEW WHO PUT IN THE PACES  
 TO RAISE MONEY OR  
 AWARENESS FOR CAUSES THAT  
 OFTEN HAVE NOTHING TO DO  
 WITH RUNNING OR TRAILS  
 AND EVERYTHING TO DO WITH  
 COMMUNITY AND WONDERS:  
 ARE TRAIL CREW MORE  
 ALTRUISTIC THAN ROADIES?

FOR SOME, THE QUESTION OF WHY THEY RUN IS PRETTY STRAIGHTFORWARD: IT MAKES PEOPLE FEEL BETTER, TO GET FIT, IT'S A FORM OF MEDITATION, WE LOVE THE FREEDOM IT GIVES US. FOR OTHERS, IT'S AKIN TO ASKING "WHY IS THERE SOMETHING RATHER THAN NOTHING?" OR "DO WE HAVE FREE WILL?," A GREAT UNANSWERABLE.

Others take it up to escape one bad habit or another and ironically find that running is often just as addictive as the demon they're running away from. Some people are highly competitive, some deeply spiritual and some see running as their ticket out of abject poverty and hopelessness.

In my experience most people tend to run for personal reasons: it's about the individual. I run because it makes me feel free/peaceful/healthy/fit/strong/swift/because I'm physiologically predisposed to it.

"Running can be a completely introspective and individual activity," says Samantha Gash, "It is a way for people to step outside their chaotic lives and do something purely for themselves."

Look a little closer at the pop-history of running as an element of human life, however, and it would seem that running is inextricably linked to transcendence of the individual; to reaching beyond ourselves for something more socially concerned.

For example, The Running Man theory argues that the physiological characteristics that make us the best distance runners in the animal kingdom, such as our thermoregulatory capacity, our plantar arch and our ability to uncouple our gait and respiration, are thought to be adaptations that evolved due to the

conditions required for persistence hunting, wherein hunters work together to literally chase an animal until it drops dead.

The marathon was founded in commemoration of Pheidippides, a herald who dropped dead at the feet of the Athenian council after running himself to death for a cause. Terry Fox ran 5,373km over 143 days – on the one leg cancer had left him – in order to raise money and awareness for cancer research. Puerto Rico held the first known "walkathon" in 1953 and in 2012 Pat Farmer finished his mind-blowingly epic 21,000km run from Pole to Pole, raising \$100,000 for Red Cross clean water programs.

Australian ultra trail runners Matt Bell and Jamie Smith continue to raise money for the Melbourne Royal Women's Hospital under banner of The Milk Run, Shane Hutton raises funds and awareness for Parkinsons' Disease Research under his The Ultra Life banner and Dean Karnazes' charity Karno Kids has raised over a million dollars for causes such as Childhood Obesity.

The list goes on. If you spend any time in the running community, particularly online, you'll find no shortage of highly motivated people raising money and awareness for charitable causes. How do you explain the apparent dichotomy of such a seemingly individualistic activity like running becoming such a powerful force for selfless, community-focused, positive change?

Is this charitable ethic shared by both road and trail runners alike? To get some insight into this apparent dichotomy, I approached two people who've actually been out there, pounding the trails, for positive social change. I asked ultra trail runners Samantha Gash and Ryan Sandes a handful

>>



<<

of questions to try and get some insight into the relationship between running and philanthropy.

Sam Gash, like Ryan Sandes, made a name for herself when she became the youngest person, and first female, to complete the Racing The Planet Grand Slam (all Four Deserts) in a Calendar Year. In 2011 she raced La Ultra and a 250km multistage race in Nepal and backed it up in 2012 with a solid list of placings in Australian and New Zealand races and a 379km solo supported run across Australia's Simpson Desert to raise money for Save the Children.

Sam has been involved in the League of Extraordinary Women, Co-Founded "Ultra Spirit" to raise money for Turia Pitt and Kate Sanderson and has often campaigned for improved conditions for Australian Indigenous communities.

Now Sam is busy training for an enormously ambitious project: to run 2,350km of South Africa's Freedom Trail over 32 days with UK runner Mimi Anderson. The aim is to use funds raised through this project to educate communities about the realities of menstruation, to minimise school absenteeism as a result of the taboo surrounding menstruation and to establish a social enterprise business employing disadvantaged South African Women to manufacture feminine hygiene products, thereby increasing the availability of these items and continuing the process of community education.

Ryan Sandes is a familiar name to most in the ultra and trail running world. The South African first made a splash Down Under after coming a close third behind team mate Kilian Jornet in the 2011 TNF100, following up with a win in 2012 and an unfortunate DNF in 2013. He was the first person to win all of the 4Deserts races, won Leadville in 2011, came first in the Vibram Hong Kong 100 and second at Western States in 2012 and in 2013 won Trans Gran Canaria and the Patagonia International Marathon.

Ryan is currently promoting, and participating in, the Wings for Life World Run, the aim of which is support research for curing spinal cord injuries and he is also an

ambassador for the JAG Foundation and the Laureus, both of which aim to use sport to promote social change across Africa and the world.

So is there a difference between road and trail runners when it comes to supporting a cause? While road running and road events have been popular fairly consistently since the 70s, trail and ultra running as organised sports is a relatively new thing. The growth of these sports is amazing, with new events regularly hitting our calendars. Sure there are exceptions: Cradle, Bogong to Hotham, Western States, Leadville and the Spartathlon are now all in their 30's and Comrades will celebrate its 100th birthday in 2021. But how many of the races on the AURA calendar have been around more than 10 or 12 years?

The explosion of trail running represents a shift in the culture of running that de-emphasises competition and draws attention to wider range of experiences.

"I think trail running is a lot more about being out in nature and enjoying our incredibly beautiful environments. It is not about running a specific time or the destination but rather the journey to get to the end destination" says Sandes, which would seem to fit well with the impression that trail and road events differ philosophically.

Sam suggests that the feeling "that there is a less 'competitive' element to trail/ultra events, than is found in road events." might be due to the fact that in "an ultra/trail event compared to many road events, the pool of 'competitive/elite' runners is smaller."

Sam isn't suggesting that this small posse of competitive trail runners are so caught in competing that they forget about the experience, even in events like UTMB, Western States and local races like The North Face 100 and Tarawera, which attracting strong, highly competitive runners. Rather, for Sam, "a trail/ultra event is not just a place where I go to compete against others, but it is an outlet where I learn about myself, gain perspective on what is important and hopefully come out a better person for having that experience."

The argument is that the same motivators are pretty consistent across the entire community of trail runners.

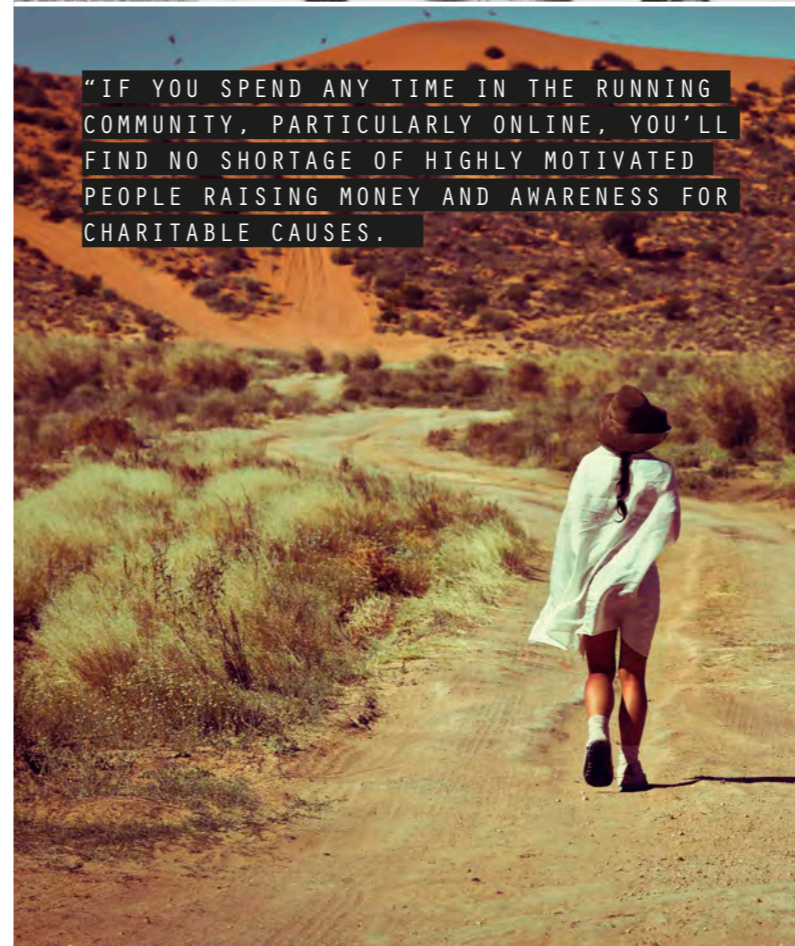
These are feel-good discussions and it's nice to sit navel-gazing, dreaming of flowing single track and sweeping mountain vistas, but we still can't seem to get away from talking about running from the perspective of the individual. The feeling that the individual experience is notably different between trail and road running seems obvious. If running is self-focused then running remote trails for hours on end, often with no one to talk to but yourself, surely can't be any more social? But does this affect our community ethic?

Statistically speaking, it seems that there are more participants in charity-focused road races than there are trail runners in existence, but I'm not convinced that's a fair measure given the relative youth of the sport. While it would take all the Oxfams, WildEndurance and Big Red Runs in Australia to match the level of participation of just one Run For the Kids, I could easily rattle off the names of a dozen trail runners who've taken it upon themselves to embark on epic missions in support of charities. Simply put, while the individual experience is different, I don't think there's much difference between road and trail runners when it comes to giving.

So how about an explanation for why such a solitary sport like running has proven such a powerful tool for supporting the underprivileged, at-risk, downtrodden people and places in our world-community? Eloquently, Sam argues: "Whilst the venture of running can be solo... I believe using 'running as the vehicle' to support a charitable cause requires [...] collaboration with others, and the ability to be able to share some part of your experience with others."

A tolerance for adversity, an ethic of perseverance and the need for disciplined self-empowerment that are demanded of runners seem to reflect the traits required to stare down poverty, drug abuse, environmental devastation and pervasive diseases like AIDS, cancer and heart disease. Sport in general, and running in particular, are incredibly effective metaphors for the miseries of humanity. We train hard, study our battlefield and opponents, knuckle down and through determination and hard work we overcome all odds.

>>



"IF YOU SPEND ANY TIME IN THE RUNNING COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY ONLINE, YOU'LL FIND NO SHORTAGE OF HIGHLY MOTIVATED PEOPLE RAISING MONEY AND AWARENESS FOR CHARITABLE CAUSES."





"SURELY RUNNING ACROSS CANADA ON ONE LEG WITH A CANCER-RIDDLED BODY IS NO LESS IMPRESSIVE THAN RUNNING POLE TO POLE, JUST BECAUSE FOX STUCK TO ROADS?"

<<

When I asked Ryan his thoughts on the power of sport to affect social change he quoted Nelson Mandela:

*"Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire, it has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope, where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than governments in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination."*

But what of the difference between trail and road running? Fundamentally, it doesn't much matter. The difference, as suggested, is in terms of realised outcomes.

"Mass participation events get a lot of media attention and create a lot of hype," says Ryan, "And if this is channelled towards a specific cause it can be very effective. Getting high profiled individuals involved with these events also creates a lot of awareness."

The fact of the matter is that trail events, so far, have attracted a lot less coverage and participants than road events. In terms of sheer numbers, road clearly has greater leverage when

it comes to facilitating awareness and financial support.

When we step away from organised mass participation events, however, the boundaries between road and trail strangely blur. Suddenly the surface we're running seems to matter less. No one gives a shit whether Pat Farmer, Jamie McDonald or Pacharo Mzembe, Ray Zahab, Kevin Lin or Charlie Engle ran on road or trail. They care why they did it and what obstacles they overcame. It's the cause (marketing skills) and subjective difficulty that matter, not the terrain.

Who am I to say that one runner's Leadville is a worthier cause than another's Run for the Kids. Surely running across Canada on one leg with a cancer-riddled body is no less impressive than running pole to pole, just because Fox stuck to roads? The trooper who finishes a miler in 45hrs is an absolute legend in my mind, even if the winner crossed the line in less than half that time. At the heart of it, "people often need a reason to push their own personal boundaries, so if you are running for a cause it keeps you motivated," says Sandes.

Whether you're on trail or road, a sprinter or an ultramarathoner, a solitary strider or a groupie, a runner or a surfer, I'd say it's more about the cause and how dedicated you are,

not how you get there. While "Running ... has become that vehicle to support causes that I care deeply for..." says Sam, "I think you can do that in many other ways."

And maybe that's the point of this whole thing. Could it be that running is one of the truly profound pursuits of humanity, one that thoroughly realises human potential; where thorough and unbridled expression of the ego is in no way distinct from, never mind opposed to, the needs of the tribe.

Maybe any attempt to distinguish between running as an egocentric pursuit and running as a means to a charitable end is a waste of everyone's time? Sam describes the experience of running the first of her 4Deserts races as "So far out of the realm of what I knew, that it took so much of my energy just getting to the start line and not combusting after the first few days of running."

The same strength of will and robust flexibility that got her through these early challenges are likely to see her safely through 2,350km of the Freedom Trail. It's an individual's battle with hardship, suffering and illusory limitations that gives them the power to shoulder the burden of those unable to do so. The two are by no means mutually exclusive. **RUN**

## CAUSE THEY WANT TO

**CHECK IN AND SUPPORT A FEW OF THE BIG AWARENESS RAISING RUNS...**

**Samantha Gash:** Freedom Run for women and health, focusing on the establishment of a self-sustainable business enterprise that will help keep young African women in school and work. [freedomrunners.org/](http://freedomrunners.org/)

**Ryan Sandes:** various runs and initiatives for the Jag Foundation [jagfoundation.org.za/](http://jagfoundation.org.za/) and Laureus [laureus.com/](http://laureus.com/) which between them help support disadvantaged kids and encourage all kids into healthier lifestyle habits via sport. Plus he is an ambassador for [wingsforlifeworldrun.com/en/](http://wingsforlifeworldrun.com/en/) happening across the globe 4 May in support of spinal cord injury research.

**Shane Hutton:** Tassie Traverse for Shake It Up Foundation and Parkinsons Disease [theultralife.com.au/tassie-traverse.html](http://theultralife.com.au/tassie-traverse.html)

**wildplans**  
Trail Running Expeditions

LARAPINTA  
PATAGONIA  
ECUADOR  
JAVA



UNIQUE  
TRAIL RUNNING  
DESTINATIONS  
PROFESSIONAL  
WILDERNESS  
GUIDES  
BOUTIQUE  
SERVICE



## STORM ON MAKORAKO

KIWI TRAIL RUNNING DYNAMO ALISTAIR MCDOWELL AND HIS MATES ARE YOUNG, FIT, AND ARE ACCOMPLISHED OUTDOORSMEN WITH LOTS OF BACK COUNTRY EXPERIENCE. SO WHAT COULD GO WRONG ON A WINTER TRAIL RUNNING MISSION ON MAKORAKO? AS IT HAPPENED...

“THE DANGER OF AN ADVENTURE IS WORTH A THOUSAND DAYS OF EASE AND COMFORT.”  
- PAUL COELHO

**S**UBMIT. THAT WAS IT. MY FINAL YEAR ENGINEERING REPORT FINISHED, DONE. I WAS PSYCHED. IT WAS TIME TO HEAD TO THE MOUNTAINS TO BURN OFF SOME LOOSE ENERGY IN THE HILLS. MATT AND I MET UP WITH KRISTIAN IN TAUPO. WE WERE BURSTING WITH EXCITEMENT AT THE PROSPECT OF THE GIANT MISSION THAT WE HAD LINED UP. USUALLY ATTEMPTED OVER A FULL WEEK, WE PLANNED TO CRAM A TRAVERSE OF THE NORTH ISLAND'S TWO MIGHTIEST RANGES INTO ONE A WEEKEND: A FAST-PACKING TRIP TO THE HIDDEN JEWEL OF THE KAIMANAWAS, MAKORAKO, AND ACROSS THE WINDY TOPS OF THE KAWEKAS. THE KAIMANAWA-KAWEKA TRAVERSE. THE KKT. GLORIOUS.

We noted the less-than-ideal forecast, deteriorating in the Saturday afternoon, but we backed our fitness and navigational skills to traverse the exposed tops before noon, and

weather the downpours in the lower valleys. We packed accordingly, adding extra layers and a light tarp to our light loads, in case we should have to wait out a swollen river. You never know what can happen in the mountains.

Friday 8pm, Kaimanawa Road. The clouds were ominous. Somewhere behind layers of thick, dark cloud was a full moon, but you'd have never known. We glimpsed a flash of lightning just as we pulled off Desert Road, and began the epic traverse...

Climbing up hundreds of metres through dripping bush by headlight warmed us up for the tops, but it was deceptively wet work breaking through fresh windfall. Once on the tops, our hot sweat was chilled instantly by the roar of the northerly wind. We negotiated the familiar Umukarikari ridgeline in darkness and a pace of urgency, following the reliable stream of reflective orange markers in utter tunnel vision mode. At Waipakihi hut, a pre-midnight brew steamed us warm as we peeled off damp running gear. The mattresses flopped around the blazing fire; we eagerly awaited the 4am alarm.

It felt like a momentary lapse in time when the alarm sounded. Outside the hut, darkness hung heavy with drizzle. I shivered at the prospect, but a wave of excitement followed and wiped any thoughts of the impending cold. A bag of wet protein oats and coffee dregs woke us to the challenge ahead. Intense. On the trail, thick fog and darkness obscured any sense of direction we could gather. The groove of a muddy bush track guided us away from the hut and higher up to faint goat trails on the Junction Top spur.

Dawn was slowly pushing through the fleeting mist as Matt confidently navigated us down the opposite side of the range, following steep fingering spurs to the start of a bush track to the Rangitikei River. His Russian balaclava and chest-mounted map exalted his leadership. The 'trail' soon disintegrated into horrendous bush bashing over piles of fresh storm debris and thick overgrown beech. We desperately tried to conserve energy, though it was exhausting work. Horror stories flashed >>



<<

through my mind of Marcus Bai and Craig Thompson's failed attempt in this exact location. We were determined to avoid a similarly depressing fate.

A steep-sided stream eventually gave us fast travel to the Rangitikei River. We jogged to make up lost time. Matt reminded us that this river represented total commitment to the mission. It was only 7am, the journey was still young. But we had to decide now. Low in the valley, the wind and drizzle was light, as forecast. We hoped for similar conditions on the tops. This was it: we were in deep. It was flowing calmly, but waist deep in the centre of the channel. Cold. Though the morning's bush-bashing ensured we were thoroughly soaked, it hardly made a difference.

Onto the tops again. Our task was now to navigate the length of the Te More range, a classic slice of the Kaimanawa Ranges – barren and exposed to the elements. Once on the Island Range, we would travel east across Te Wetenga, and descend a long spur into the Mangamaire Valley, leading towards to the Kawekas by the end of the day. It was difficult to navigate, made even harder by the low visibility, and sleeting rain. It was essential to keep moving to stay warm; stopping for just a minute or two to check the map or set a bearing would bring on a nasty chill.

After an hour's travel on the ridge, we re-entered the bush and began to descend. Something was wrong. We quickly retraced our steps back to the ridge crest. Our first navigational error, we concentrated harder on the contours. Every vague feature was checked on the map. However, the winds were picking up, which limited time checking the map to a brief few seconds. Decisions needed to be made fast. We climbed to a crest on the ridge, which

we believed to be spot-height 1699m, and immediately turned north towards Te Wetenga.

Something didn't feel right, but there was no time to think as 80 km/h gusts buffeted us unsteadily on our feet. Our pace slowed as scree turned to scrub. Through a brief clearing in the mist, a river valley appeared alarmingly close. We were far too low, and had turned off the wrong spur again. We sought shelter from the gales, and now the decision to abort the mission was obvious. The challenging navigation and weather had overwhelmed us and gave us no choice but to turn back, and return to Waipakihi Hut.

However, retracing our steps was easier said than done. After hours exposed to soaking rain and strong winds, we noticed in each other the early stages of hypothermia. Rushed and poor decisions, slurred speech, shivering and lagging behind. It was early afternoon, eight hours since we had set off.

'Stop and find shelter, think...' was the outdoors wisdom seeping into our thoughts. Sheltered beneath the tarp in the bush with hot drinks, we reassessed our situation and closely interrogated the map...where exactly were we?

We quickly packed up into wet clothes and set off for Waipakihi, feeling better for the

rest. Half an hour on, and our situation once again became desperate. Features were not lining up with our estimated position, and visibility closed in further. Following the ridge further seemed pointless now that we weren't sure if it would take us to the Rangitikei. It was dangerous wandering any longer in the torrents. Our task was now very simple: find shelter, and fast.

A spur running off the main ridge offered tall beech forest with enough space between the trees to make a camp. Despite our plan to stay in a hut in the Kawekas that night, I was glad to have brought my hiker-fly tarp as an emergency shelter. Propped up with a pole and tied down tight, we were able to construct an excellent bivouac. Rain flowed straight off without pooling. Now the dreaded emergency survival bag: Matt and I had one to share.

The following sixteen hours were the most uncomfortable, claustrophobic, and cold that I've ever endured. The thick plastic was great for containing our combined body heat, but as the hours dragged on, we were soaking each other and our light down bags in litres of sweat. The puffy down had become a soggy wet suit. Roots and rocks dug into our

>>

**SOMETHING DIDN'T FEEL RIGHT, BUT THERE WAS NO TIME TO THINK AS 80 KM/H GUSTS BUFFETED US**

<<  
cramped and aching bodies; foam roll mats were an indulgence that we had no space for. Every movement was awkward, and no amount of squirming was enough to find any comfortable position to lie in. Just one sniff of our brewing stench made me gag. We were literally incubating in our own body odours. It was a true test of endurance, if ever we had asked for one...

We dazed through the night, debating about our options for escape. The waist deep Rangitikei would be a raging torrent now, as the rain bucketed down with increasing strength onto our tarp. If we were to find the banks of the Rangitikei the following day, with more rain forecast we predicted the rain would only drop enough by Monday. This would require a second emergency bivvy, by the river or on the steep banks of bush. The valley was steep, we could imagine no good camping spot from memory. Add to this, we now had no dry clothes or sleeping gear – the only way to stay warm was to stay in our emergency plastic sacks.

Our only option of escape would be to spend another 30 hours more in our bags till Monday arrived with promise of clear weather. If we did eventually make it out, a difficult and committing prospect with high risk of hypothermia, it would be Tuesday at the earliest – we'd have been long overdue and many Search & Rescue teams would have been

deployed on our case.

It was by this logic that we decided to activate our emergency personal locator beacon. The decision was made, we regretted it instantly, but knew it was the only choice. Matt flipped the antennae, and pressed the button. The display began to flash with bursts of white and red strobe light. We propped it up at the head of the tarp, and lay down to wait...

Many hard, painful hours later, light broke through the mist. And the rain continued. We were all thoroughly depressed, and had no idea how long we'd be waiting. The choppers also needed a weather clearance to fly. Bordering on paranoia, every sound of the bush sounded like the whirring of chopper blades. Wind through the beech, a waterfall across the valley, even silence spun its tricks. At 8:30am, the rain petered out for a short time and again a dreamy noise rose above the wind. We stopped breathing to listen closer into the sound. 'That's not the wind. That's mechanical...'

We rushed out of the shelter and climbed above the bush-line, dragging reflective foil and bright clothes behind us. The sound grew louder, and echoed off the valley walls, giving us no clue where it was coming from. Kristian had brought binoculars, and spotted a group of men in orange overalls on a range a few kilometres away. At last the hovering beast came into view, coming close, then flying away. It was frustrating and desperate thinking the chopper had not seen us. I emptied deafening lungfuls through my whistle while flailing the ripped foil above my head. Through the binoculars, Kristian spotted the SAR ground crew tramping along the ridge towards us – surely they had seen us. It was a dramatic scene as the roaring pulse of the rescue helicopter lowered from above, perched against the hillside, and a seriously clean-shaven steel-jawed air force crewman leaned out to beckon us aboard. We were thrown into our seats as

>>

JUST ONE SNIFF OF OUR BREWING STENCH MADE ME GAG. WE WERE LITERALLY INCUBATING IN OUR OWN BODY ODOURS.



<< the chopper spiraled up and away from the range... the ordeal was over.

We were ferried back to a field near Turangi, and casually debriefed by the SAR crew. They were satisfied that we were well equipped and made a legitimate decision to activate the EPIRB. Even so, we were disappointed in ourselves: how did we go so wrong?

We realised that the major mistakes were all made in the rushed planning stage. Such is often the case with spontaneous, excitement-fuelled missions, planned only two days earlier. We should not have attempted such an ambitious traverse over such remote terrain with the given forecast. We overestimated our ability to cope with the challenging tops navigation in atrocious weather and low visibility. We should have taken a GPS as well as map and compass. The tarpaulin gave us shelter, but effectively soaked all our dry sleeping gear.

Overall, we were pretty stoked with how we dealt with our survival situation. At no point did we lose complete control of the situation, and at no point was there anything tenser than

constructive discussion within the team, even in high winds, cold and rain. After the trip began, our decision making was generally good with the proviso that we should have turned back much sooner. We were well equipped with emergency kit, including an emergency shelter, extra clothes, cooker, sleeping bags, bivvy bag and EPIRB. We made it back in good physical condition; no one ever became seriously hypothermic or injured.

The KKT is a true epic, one of the last remaining 'barely conquered' tramping feats in the North Island. We were humbled by the power of Mother Nature, and rightly put in our places. We have huge respect and gratitude to the Turangi and Taupo SAR teams and the Greenlea rescue helicopter. New Zealand adventurers are lucky to have such an effective emergency service at call for emergencies such as these. And we will be back, albeit on a sunnier weekend. **RUN**

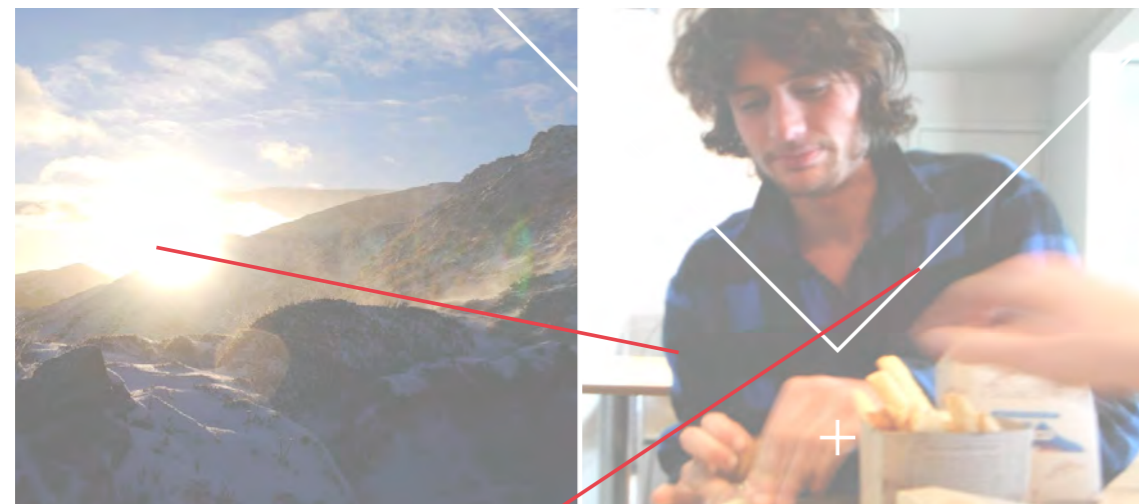


READ MORE OF ALISTAIR'S ADVENTURES AT:

[WWW.ALASTAIRMCDOWELL.BLOG-SPOT.COM.AU](http://WWW.ALASTAIRMCDOWELL.BLOG-SPOT.COM.AU)

GET TO KNOW LANDSAR:

[WWW.LANDSAR.ORG.NZ](http://WWW.LANDSAR.ORG.NZ)



**NEW!**

**High Performance Nutrition**

You're out on the trail, you're surrounded by nature's best. It's raw and real and you love it. Your mind turns to your energy levels. You know you need fuel to perform. You think of the cheap and nasty gels in your fuel belt and immediately feel sick. You wish there was a real food alternative. Now there is. Our products make the most of nature's cupboard and contain only real food - nothing artificial. Head to our website [www.runnerskitchen.com.au](http://www.runnerskitchen.com.au) to see our fantastic product range and place your order.

RUNNERS KITCHEN IS 100% AUSTRALIAN MADE AND OWNED



[runnerskitchen.com.au](http://runnerskitchen.com.au)



+

|||

# NUTRITION.

|||

THY SHALL EAT WELL

---

ALWAYS

---

+

**NUTRITION:** IT'S ONE OF THOSE TOPICS, LIKE POLITICS, RELIGION AND SHOE SELECTION, THAT ALMOST ALWAYS ENDS IN A DIFFERENCE OF OPINIONS. HERE TEGYN ANGEL 'DISCUSSES', RICHARD BOWLES RANTS, RACHEL JACQUELINE TAKES MUSHROOMS, ALAN MCCUBBIN GETS SOME REGULARITY AND THEN WE REVIEW A FEW NEW TO MARKET OPTIONS FOR THE SHOPPING BASKET.

Nutrition is one of those topics, like politics, religion and shoe selection, that almost always ends in a difference of opinions. In the 14 years since I became interested in sports and health I've seen countless websites and commercials and read countless articles and books advocating what often seemed like contradictory approaches to fuelling our bodies. Unfortunately, the majority seem to adopt the modern definition of diet: "a special course of food to which a person restricts themselves, either to lose weight or for medical reasons: I'm going on a diet, rather than the stricter, traditional definition: "the kinds of foods that a person, animal or

community habitually eats: a vegetarian diet."

Whereas the former more often than not implies a discrete period of restricted, targeted or healthy eating, the latter refers to an ongoing, lifestyle choice. In popular usage, most people seem to think of a diet as something they take up for a while to lose some weight, reduce their cholesterol, change their pH, detox and so on, before returning to their normal way of eating. Some diets, though, do argue for the modification of habits, like the Paleo movement, Gluten free or Slow Carb.

Yet regardless of the differences in approach, whether short or long term, high fat/low fat, high carb/low carb, high protein/low protein, dairy/non-dairy, animal/non-animal, grain rich or grain averse, we can, fortunately, find a few rare gems of agreement: eat more greens; eat less saturated fat; exercise more and burn more calories; eat more omega-3 fatty acids; avoid highly processed foods. Beyond these (and no doubt a few others) you can generally find a doctor or nutritionist to support just about anything. Add in the variables of sports performance and endurance, and things start to get heated and chaotic.

If you take a little walk through most of the running training and event groups formed on Facebook, it shouldn't take you too long to find questions about nutrition. How we go about feeding ourselves during training, racing and recovery, brand debates, health versus performance, supplementation, tips and tricks for preparation and consumption and questions from amateurs and professionals alike. We see athletes and events sponsored by nutrition companies (e.g. Hammer and Endura), we study how and what the pros eat (is Kilian sponsored by Nutella?), we're on the lookout for the next big thing (Vitargo, Tailwind) or that little trick that'll give us the edge (Chia, Piñole, Iskiate, Beet Juice, Kale, Turmeric). Do we carb load, or carb restrict, drip feed or calorie deprive, add or restrict protein, hi-GI or low-GI, drink as much as possible or measure our intake, use products or keep it natural, whole foods or liquid only?

There's an oft-cited get-out-jail-free card used to escape a debate that's going nowhere: that all training and nutrition is an Experiment of One, to use what you've found works for you and take the advice of others with a grain of salt. **RUN**

# SHROOM TO MOVE

## RUNNING ON MUSHROOMS

“W

Words: Rachel Jacqueline  
Images: Markus Karjalainen

*“What if there was a way to improve your running without doing a thing?”*

I was intrigued. I was in training for the biggest event on my racing calendar, the Vibram Hong Kong 100. Training days were long and hard, recovery time always too short and the odd cold often niggled. The prospect of a helpful (completely kosher, of course) nudge towards my goal was welcomed.

Tapping into the ancient wisdom of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), my friend Mikko asserted, would help me to run faster, harder and longer than ever before he promised. More specifically, he was talking about mushrooms.

*“Mushrooms?!”*

Mixing fungus and running is not as strange as it first seems. In 1993 female Chinese runners astounded the world by breaking numerous world records at track and field under their controversial coach Ma Junren. Their secret weapon? A powerful tonic of turtle blood and, wait for it, caterpillar fungus.

“Caterpillar fungus”, otherwise known as cordyceps, is essentially a fungus-infected-caterpillar plucked from rocky mountainsides 3,000 metres above sea level in Tibet, Nepal, and China. Chinese legend has it that 1,500 years ago herdsmen discovered their miraculous properties after observing their

yaks more energised after eating the infected caterpillars.

Applied to the endurance athlete, cordyceps are touted for increasing lung capacity, enhancing oxygen uptake, improving stamina and combatting the onset of exercise-induced fatigue.

“Not only do cordyceps boost your adenosine triphosphate (ATP) and VO<sub>2</sub> max levels so that your body can produce more energy and recover faster, they also balance your body at a cellular level, giving you extra strength to fight against stressors,” Mikko explained. I first met the Hong Kong based Fin while trail running and would often marvel as he plowed up the hills ahead of me without breaking a sweat. Mikko first discovered the magic mushroom four years ago while he was living and working in Shanghai. Intrigued by the prevalence of the use of TCM there he started investigating and trying it out on himself.

“I think it’s the single most effective supplement for an endurance athlete I’ve ever tried...The caveat is that it doesn’t work after a day or even a week of use. You have to take cordyceps daily for extended periods of time to see the difference.”

Mikko is not the only successful athlete to worship the herb - vegan super athlete Rich Roll is another evangelist. He claims cordyceps are at the heart of his top performances over the years and his new nutritional supplement >>



“ REISHI IS SOMETIMES REFERRED TO AS THE ‘ELIXIR OF LIFE’ AND THE ‘MUSHROOM OF IMMORTALITY’.



« brand, Jai, includes cordyceps in their mixtures.

The success of his own mushroom experience led Mikko to co-establish Four Sigma Foods with his friend Terro. FSF specialise in super foods and medicinal mushrooms – in other words, bringing the wisdom of the east to the west.

So why are cordyceps so good? Cordyceps are a type of adaptogen: a natural substance which enhances and normalises the body’s functions, helping it to cope with pressures placed on it. TCM are full of them.

More scientifically, one of the reasons behinds the fungus’ claimed success is, as Mikko pointed out, its effect on ATP, the important energy triggers and regulators in our cells. Without ATP, cells have no energy to repair, reproduce, or function. Metabolic processes that use ATP as an energy source transfer it back into the cells, so ATP is continuously being recycled in the human body

In just one day, we turn over the equivalent of our body weight in ATP - though our body only contains on average about 250 grams of the stuff. That’s a lot recycling. Cordyceps help to increase the production of ATP to aid this process.

Another mushroom to add to my arsenal

according to Mikko is Reishi – one of the “superior tonics” listed in the distinguished book of TCM medicines. Reishi is known for promoting health and longevity and its use dates back more than 4,000 years.

“Reishi is sometimes referred to as the ‘Elixir of Life and the ‘Mushroom of Immortality’. It helps to strengthen immunity, reduce stress and improve sleep - it’s a great all rounder that everyone should take.”

Reishi is prized for its cardiogenic (heart-stimulating) properties. It is also claimed that the herb improves blood flow and oxygenates the blood, making it a popular natural remedy to alleviate high altitude sickness. Combined with anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, the herb makes for an excellent performance enhancing supplement for athletes.

Despite these claims and their common usage in TCM, admittedly science supporting the use of such adaptogens to enhance sports performance is thin. A study, published in the 2004 Chinese Journal of Integrative Medicine, found cordyceps improved oxygen uptake, aerobic capacity and resistance to fatigue. Thirty seven healthy, elderly Chinese men were studied; some were given placebos while others were given cordyceps and their exercise performance was tested before and after six

weeks of treatment.

More recently, a study published in the 2011 Journal of Ethnopharmacology found cordyceps improved the exercise endurance capacity of rats by activating the skeletal muscle metabolic regulators, increasing blood flow and also increasing glucose and lactate uptake.

But that’s it for cordyceps – mice and old men.

Although reishi, or at least the extract *ganoderma lucidum*, has been more widely and successfully studied, again the testing of its application to sports performance has been limited. One study, reported in the 2009 Journal of Experimental Gerontology, found Reishi improved mitochondrial function in aged rats. Mitochondria are the cellular sites of ATP synthesis that provide “fuel” for our muscles. The antioxidants contain in Reishi function to help reduce oxidative stress in the mitochondria by neutralising the buildup of free radicals that can decrease the rate and efficiency of ATP synthesis. But again – that’s it.

Interestingly, independent testing by the Australian Institute of Sports conducted in 2010 on cordyceps (and their commonly used ally, *rhodiola rosea*) led them to classify them as having “no meaningful proof of beneficial effects”. Reishi never even made the cut for

>>





“ SO WAS THAT JUST A MEASURE OF MY IMPROVEMENT IN RUNNING, OR THE SHROOMS? WHO KNOWS? BUT WHAT STRUCK ME WAS JUST HOW GODDAM GOOD I FELT.



testing. According to the AIS's rather cynical sounding website, it would likely fall into the same category.

So, does it actually work?

Despite the inconclusive studies, I wasn't going to let the possibility of a training elixir go to waste. So for a month I took reishi and cordyceps everyday. I took them as part of a tea infusion created by Four Sigma Foods, although it's possible to take them in a pill supplementation form.

The result? Bingo. A month later I ran a personal best over a technical 19 kilometre race, an entire 13 minutes faster than the last time I'd run the course. Of course I was training a helluva lot during that time, but the race was run only two weeks after running the 100 km Oxfam Trailwalker (in sub-16 hours, no less). That's a pretty quick recovery if you ask me.

So was that just a measure of my improvement in running, or the shrooms? Who knows? But what struck me was just how goddam good I felt. I was running to my absolute max, but felt I had the energy to sustain it. I was, literally, flying along the trails. There could have been several other factors, of course. But it was a feeling, I'm telling you. My energy just seemed limitless. I ordered more and waited patiently by the post box.

Fast forward a month and the day of

reckoning was before me: the Vibram Hong Kong 100. I was tingling to see what was possible. (Admittedly, my supply of herbs had been cut off during the previous month, so I wasn't taking it as regularly as I had previously, but I was still rearing to go!)

And then the day was...average. I felt tired. I know one should feel tired running 100 kilometres, but the pizzaz I felt just a month earlier seemed non-existent. Was it just a one-off I wondered? Regardless, I plugged along, hoping my magical mushrooms would eventually set in.

To speed things along a bit, at the 80 km check point a friend supplied me with a reishi tea. Boom! From out of nowhere, I felt an energy surge that I hadn't felt had all day and I powered to the finish. At that point, any doubts I had shrooms vanished. That stuff is liquid gold.

Looking back I was emotionally exhausted, overworked and more than likely, a little overtrained leading up to Vibram Hong Kong 100. At the end of the day, no amount of supplementation is going to help you if you're nutrition is out of whack, you've not trained enough or if you're not well rested.

So many of us need not look far to improve our running. Sleep, reducing stress and eating a healthy, balanced diet will work wonders. Many arrive at the start line dehydrated and often lacking in essential nutrients such as iron and

vitamin D. Bringing one's health to optimum levels by following a healthy diet and lifestyle will do more for the body than any unusual ancient concoction.

Above all, there are no shortcuts to success. Ma Junren's army of Chinese runners lived a bleak existence running 350 kilometres per week at high altitude. For hard work, it seems, there is not substitute.

But if you've got that down pat, a few extra mushrooms and you may just fly too. **RUN**

*Disclaimer: although my first box of reishi and some sachets of cordyceps were supplied by Four Sigma Foods, I eagerly went back and bought my own after my experiences. I am now a convert. [www.foursigmafoods.com](http://www.foursigmafoods.com)*



WORDS: ALAN MCCUBBIN  
IMAGES: LYNDON MARCEAU / MARCEAUPHOTOGRAPHY.COM

# PERIODISATION

**TIMING IS EVERYTHING**

# H

HAVE YOU GOT BIG PLANS FOR 2014? BIG RACES, BIG ADVENTURES OR A BIG STEP UP IN TRAINING? MANY OF YOU HAVE A TRAINING PLAN SPECIFICALLY DESIGNED TO HELP YOU ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS. BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR NUTRITION PLAN? DO YOU EVEN HAVE ONE?

It continues to amaze me how much athletes will invest in perfecting their training schedules, clothing and equipment, leaving absolutely nothing to chance. Yet when it comes to what they eat and drink, many runners, even at the elite level are happy to go with the flow, eating whatever comes their way. Experience tells me that the majority of endurance athletes in Australia eat pretty much the same every day of the week (with some minor additions around training), without stopping to think about whether or not their nutrition is suited to their training plan and racing goals.

Over the last five or so years, sports scientists and dieticians have started looking a lot more closely at how nutrition can complement training cycles, goals, and racing schedules. Periodised nutrition is the approach I take with my clients, their feedback and performance improvements to date tells me there's something to it.

### Macrocycle

A training macrocycle typically refers to an athlete's plans for an entire season, and how training changes at different times of the year in order to arrive at key races in peak form. In endurance sports this usually commences with a base phase, where runners increasingly go for longer durations, but at a low to moderate intensity. The goals of this phase are to build base endurance fitness, not to hone top end power or speed.

This is the phase of training where it may

be most appropriate to achieve (or get close to) the specific body composition goals you have for the season. For example if your aim is to drop some excess body fat, then this is the time to do it. The reason for this is simple – research in the last few years has shown that base endurance adaptations can be achieved without perfect nutritional preparation for each session, so restricting energy (and particularly carbohydrate) before long but only moderately intense training sessions is not a problem. So during this phase don't be too concerned if you're heading out for a long run without a full tank of carbs – even if you have to run slower to get through the session you'll still get the same benefit (ie. adaptations happening in the muscle afterwards) as you would have running harder with extra carbs on board.

The next phase of the cycle is where the intensity ramps up, and where nutritionally supporting your training becomes much more important. A lack of carbs going into a big hill or speed interval session could likely leave you struggling to produce the speed, the heart rate and the lactate that you've aimed for. If the whole purpose of a training session is to adapt to better tolerating high intensity intervals but you can't achieve the intensity, then what's the point? So in this phase I'd be paying much more attention to ensuring that you're well fuelled up with carbohydrate prior to important training sessions, but you can potentially still skimp on the carbs prior to other sessions (which I'll explain in the microcycle). I would not specifically aim for significant weight loss during this period. Hopefully you've already achieved close to your race weight in the earlier cycle – this phase is all about having enough energy to get the most out of your training.

In the lead up to an important race or series of races there's often a taper period of a week or so (depending on your schedule) where the

>>

“ PERHAPS EVEN MORE OF A CHANGE IN MINDSET FOR ATHLETES IS THE PERIODISATION OF NUTRITION AROUND A TRAINING MICROCYCLE.

<<

training volume drops right down and runners “freshen up”. Again you need to think about your nutrition during this time – if you keep eating the calories you were during your big training block then it’s likely that you’ll be susceptible to gaining back some weight during the taper. Again it’s about matching your nutrition to your training schedule and goals. Of course the day or so before a race there may be some carbohydrate loading involved (depending on the demands of the race), but that’s a story for another day.

Finally, when racing is over for a while and you’re taking some much needed time off (or if you have a significant injury during the year), there’s the significant possibility of body fat gain if you fail to adjust your eating. Different coaches have different philosophies on this, and different athletes have different experiences when it comes to gaining weight and the losing it again following some down time. Some people use a 5% or 8% rule (aim to gain no more than 5% or 8% of your competition weight during the off season). Again it’s probably the carbohydrate that needs to be modified during this time (carbs provide 50-70% of the total energy on the average person’s diet), but fat and alcohol that was restricted during the season can also creep in here and needs to be watched closely.

**Microcycle**

Perhaps even more of a change in mindset for athletes is the periodisation of nutrition around a training microcycle. The microcycle usually refers to the pattern of training over a

one-week period, fitting around work, study or other commitments. Periodised nutrition extends this concept so what you eat also matches the microcycle. Nowadays any sports dietitian worth their salt will provide their clients with a 7-day eating plan, built specifically around their training schedule.

There are several potential benefits of adjusting your eating according to your training schedule. Firstly, by providing the appropriate amount of carbohydrate before the longer or harder sessions, you’ll be able to maximise your performance in those sessions and achieve the desired intensities (assuming this is the goal of the session). But by reducing the carbs and total energy on the rest days (or even lighter training days) you can help reduce the total energy eaten across the week. This can help enormously for those struggling to balance the need to reduce body fat whilst still having enough fuel to get through their bigger rides.

Secondly, targeting protein particularly after tough training sessions (and at regular periods over the day) ensures optimal recovery and adaptations occur in your muscles as a result of training. This is a rapidly evolving area of sports science, but for some more general information check out the previous piece on recovery eating in TRM Ed #4.

Thirdly, using these principles athletes can fill their lower energy days with higher fibre, lower calorie foods. This not only provides variety, but can help prevent hunger on those days when you’re eating less calories.

Periodisation of supplements?

Some sports dietitians are also now looking at the periodisation of sports nutrition supplements and ergogenic aids as well as food.

Some supplements are used to achieve very specific goals (eg. beta-alanine for improving high intensity performance), and so it makes sense that their use is targeted towards the training sessions that have the same goal. This requires a bit of planning however – whilst some ergogenic aids have the intended effect from a one-off dose (eg. caffeine or pre-cooling with slushies), others can take several days (6 days for beetroot juice) or even several weeks of use (beta-alanine) to realise their potential. The one-off dose supplements can therefore be built nicely into a microcycle, but others need to be used throughout an entire macrocycle, and often commenced ahead of the cycle.

**Summary**

Because most athletes have different goals, different training schedules and different nutritional needs, there’s no one formula for building an eating plan that optimises a runner’s training. But using both the macro and microcycle principles described here can certainly guide you as to how to change up your diet to maximise the results you get from your training. As a dietitian I generally work with clients to build a 7-day eating plan that’s based on their goals and training schedule for the current macrocycle, then review and adjust the plan each time the client receives their training plan for the next phase of the cycle.

Remember that nutrition can play an important role both in the physical performance given during a training session, as well as the adaptation that the body makes after the session is over. By matching your eating to your training you can get the most out of 2014. **RUN**



**ALAN MCCUBBIN**

Is the President of the Sports Dietitians Association of Australia and Director of Next Level Nutrition. He advises all types of athletes from beginners to a swag of professionals, including in the trail, endurance and adventure running space. [www.nextlevelnutrition.com.au](http://www.nextlevelnutrition.com.au)

NUTRITION.  
 THY SHALL EAT WELL  
 ALWAYS

# RICH'S RANT

FOOD FOR THOUGHT



# S

OPINION: RICHARD BOWLES

SALTED CAMERAL, CHOCOLATE FUDGE OUTRAGE, WITH SOME ESPRESSO-LOVE SOUNDS LIKE AFTERNOON TEA AT THE HILTON. BUT STRANGELY ENOUGH THESE ARE ALL NAMES OF SPORT GEL FLAVOURS. NOW, AS MUCH AS I LIKE A CAPPUCCINO AND CHOCOLATE FUDGE POST RUN, THE THOUGHT OF THOSE TWO WHIPPED TOGETHER INTO A STICKY GEL FOR CONSUMPTION HALFWAY THROUGH A LONG RUN MAKES MY STOMACH CHURN.

Welcome to modern day scientific sports nutrition; an industry that in 2012 saw A\$235 million in protein powders alone according to [www.companiesandmarkets.com](http://www.companiesandmarkets.com).

So what's changed in the world of off road running? Is it better or worse than the mountain men (and women) of the past?

It was the barrel chested, hairy plumbers, and crack-showing builders from the tough north who graced the fells of the UK back in the day. Where strawberry banana and mango passion gels wouldn't have been seen dead in the villages where these burly mountain runners were raised.

These men were on diets of good old fashioned Sunday roasts, Friday fish and chips and ploughman's lunches most days of the week. Now combine that with a couple of pints of strong ale pre-run and a half dozen pints post-run in the local village pub and it paints a very different picture than that of High Tea at the Hilton.

A couple of British ales and a bag of pork scratching's pre-run is what I consider a real hard-core runners diet, and an explanation as to why these mountain men have features bigger than Desperate Dan.

As hard-core as it may be I can't stomach the running foods of the mountain men of the past and I use gels myself as it's a more convenient way of carrying energy. Well, more

convenient than trying to pack a cheese and pickle sandwich and a bag of crisps (chips) into your packs side pockets for a snack along the trail, and whist I take the more traditional gel flavours, like lemon and lime and good old fashioned plain, I don't think cheese would go down too well mid-ultra. I feel that super-scientific claims, flashy packaging and flavour's that sound like desserts out of a Jamie Oliver cookbook don't quite fit the great outdoors ethos. Does that mean we need a damper and billy tea flavour? Hmm. Packaging that's made with a gumtree leaf? If a stiff mug of billy tea got a drover to cover the great plains of this country for months at a time, could it takes us through the vigour of a trail run?

There are many legends of the mountain runners who hold some of the fastest ascents of cloud popping peaks without a ground trail to follow or trail marker in sight, and yet they still hold on to their records to this day. No maltodextrin, bee extracts, low sugar, high plant based whatever. Just good old fashioned English fare. Baked pies and tarts and everything made with a magic ingredient called lard!

A north English guest house owner in the village of Keswick, Bob Graham was one of those legends. In 1932 he set a record of summiting 42 peaks in the Lake District including 910m peaks Skiddaw, Helvellyn, Scafell and Scafell Pike. He did this on his 42nd birthday traversing all peaks in typically vile English weather in just 24hrs, and held on to that record for a further 28 years. Today many attempt the challenge that's still to this day considered extremely hard and most fall short. Are they lacking fried breakfasts and homemade Victoria sponges?

With this in mind why is it that we get caught up in the latest of sports research and glitzy claims? Seems like you can stuff your face with grandma's Yorkshire puddings and apple >>



NUTRITION

THY SHALL EAT WELL


ALWAYS


Agree with Rich? Or want to tell him to step down from the soapbox? Have your say on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/trailrunmag](http://www.facebook.com/trailrunmag). Richard Bowles is an adventure runner extraordinaire - rather shy and retiring as you can tell. Check out his ongoing global adventure runs at [www.richardbowles.com.au](http://www.richardbowles.com.au).

pies and gain some profound advantage in running strong and fast up and over mountain trails in all manner of elements?  
 There are some great trail runners in the sport today but are their supposed potent concoctions gaining them any advantage over the likes of Bob? I'd say "no" in the context of the situations they ran in.  
 As I mentioned before, I use gels with success, it's also convenient to carry gel pouches, power bars as well as electrolytes mixed in with you water, but is it worth the supposed researched expense? After all is there really any science in sugar and salt or as its marketed 'electrolytes'?  
 It's an industry that is racking in billions of dollars globally each year. World class athletes are supplementing themselves with the various products out there, continually pushing the boundaries of sport. Surely if science has anything to do with it then it should be better, right? Surely if the elites are

consuming these products they should be making a difference? But, there is something about the diets of the past and the results they produced that intrigue me?  
 Then there is the beer. I like the idea of sipping a few ales, chomping on salted peanuts and throwing some darts after a gnarly mountain ascent. But it would have to come in the form of a frosty run to its summit, and not some 20 degree's run around the state forest that see's the best of us all doing each weekend. Surely beer is in every bush runner's nutrition plan anyway? The great outdoors and ice-cold beer go hand in hand, every town close to the trailhead has a pub, heck Australia has pubs off the beaten track its part of our culture. So why don't we embrace it pre trail run? Would it see us summiting 42 peaks in 24hrs?  
 Either way these guys ran some serious mileage in some pretty tough conditions with nothing more than running shoes and a packed lunch? How did they do it, if what we have

today is at the cutting edge of science? Just how did they drag themselves up and over some of the most rugged landscapes with some of the world's worst weather?  
 Cast iron Stomachs? Hard training? Or was there a magic formula and some method to the madness?  
 Perhaps you are caught up in the science of gels and their dessert menu flavours? Or you're sprouting hair from your nostrils with beer nuts in hand? Perhaps you're the naturist, running on tea leaves and damper? Either way, you have to pay credit to anybody willing to bust a mountain climb up along a dirty trail whatever the diet. Leave your post run protein drink at home though, you should be off to the pub, to gain that real advantage! **RUN**

PRODUCED BY 

42KM  21KM  
**surfcoast**  
 TRAIL MARATHON  
 TORQUAY - FAIRHAVEN  
 28 JUNE 2014

WELCOME TO THE COAST.  
 ENJOY YOUR RUN.

SOLO / TEAMS OF 2 . 28 JUNE 2014 . [WWW.SURFCOASTTRAILMARATHON.COM.AU](http://WWW.SURFCOASTTRAILMARATHON.COM.AU)

ENTRIES OPEN 31 MARCH

# AMAZEBALLS



**VITALS**  
 3-pack (45 balls) **\$60**  
 1 pack (15 balls) **\$30**  
 Reviewer: Chris Ord

AMAZEBALLS. IT'S A WORD – AS SUCH – THAT ONLY ROLLED INTO THE COLLINS ONLINE DICTIONARY, AS RECENTLY AS 2012: “AN EXPRESSION OF ENTHUSIASTIC APPROVAL.” TO URBAN DICTIONARY READERS IT’S: “BASICALLY BEYOND AMAZING. BEING SO AWESOME THAT A REGULAR WORD CAN’T DESCRIBE YOU.”

And now it moves from adjective to noun, as a nutrition product. But does the noun live up to the adjective? Are Amazeballs amazeballs?

My first encounter with the globes of nutritional goodness was at Duncan’s Run 100 in Gippsland, presented in the competitor pack. But you know what they say about not risking new things, untested in training, on race day? So I pondered and left that ball alone. Result, courtesy of what was obviously a deficient nutritional strategy in the first place: dry wrenching up as a I neared the finish line. Would an Amazeball, taken earlier on, have made any difference? Hard to scientifically quantify (as is any nutritional ‘test’ in the field and unfortunately Trail Run Mag does not employ a gaggle of white coated dietary boffins with spreadsheets and control measures. Yet.)

Whatever the cause of that close call upchuck, I was intrigued enough to try the Amazeballs in training and then in the competitive field at Shotover Moonlight Marathon, a brutalish 42km mountain run in New Zealand. I got the balls in early and consistently. And they went down easily. In training I’d established that of the flavours I had – Original and Hint of Choc (there is also peanut/honey), I’m a sweet tooth and thus leaned toward the choc. The original has more of the raisin-aftertaste, it having plenty of dates, sultanas and raisins. Then there’s the oats, honey, nuts, rice, cranberries and coconut, along with spices, vitamins and a

pinch of salt.

What I’m driving home here is the all-natural ingredients.

Now, some like the idea of stuffing scientifically, lab-originated foods into their stomach while running, the quick ingestion nature an attraction. Rightly or wrongly, I like the idea of putting real food in my mouth and actively seek out real food nutritional solutions that work while on trail. I still reckon you can’t go past bananas as top of the taste tree.

Here the taste is absolutely ‘real’ and not synthetic, the mouth feel being a perfect balance between the dryness of oats and nuts and moisture content brought in by the berries and raisins. Warm your balls up prior to eating, ahem, for the best mouth feel. The coconut taste certainly adds to the digestibility – although as pointed out by the inventor, Tara Martin from Runners Kitchen, some runners have had issues with the coconut flakes being too small and causing coughing fits if inhaled quickly and unfortunately. Not what you want when running. She’s working on a new recipe as I write so the coconut taste and benefit remains but the flakes are less problematic.

So, all natural equals a big plus in this reviewer’s estimation. The convenient packaging of these balls is another benefit – the natural ball packaging that is. Perfect bite sized servings. Whack them in a ziplock and they are as handy as you like.

As the Runner’s Kitchen website notes regarding the digestion and energy performance: “It has been common for runners to use a carbohydrate only solution, as this provides the body with a quick energy burst. Dietetics teaches us about the glycemic index (GI) which is a measure of how rapidly the energy in carbohydrate is accessible by the body. Common carb solutions (such as gels) are high GI and so give the runner an instant

hit to push you on when you start to feel sluggish. But they don’t necessarily provide you with enduring energy.”

This is where I believe these natural nutritional solutions come to the fore – on longer runs, where a more measured, longer lasting output of fuel within the body is essential if you don’t want to go on a rollercoaster ride of nausea and energy ebb-flow. The ingredient mix, it is claimed (and I concur), delivers both short and long term release of energy. Anecdotally, that is exactly what I experienced at Shotover, getting the product in to me early – along with bananas and electrolyte solution, had me maintain what seemed like a more consistent energy output and I definitely lasted longer before I bonked (it still happened – there is no substitute for training).

That extended stretch of ‘energy time’ is measured against past runs where I only had the bananas and electrolytes, and lost performance earlier.

Mixing fruit, nuts, grains, honey and spices into an all natural nutritional product for endurance sports is not ground-breaking in itself of course – however getting the balance of ingredients right to deliver taste benefits along with an appropriate serving size, is. Also, the fact that it is Australian made, and the inventor is here, receiving and responding to feedback and adjusting her product constantly and quickly, means that of all nutrition products on the market, this one is more than likely to get it right. And with a growing movement toward natural foods, Amazeballs fulfils a niche of matching that requirement to the supply of energy needed to conquer the long runs, both in training and competition. The only negative is that I keep mistaking them for good old fashioned rum balls and eating them for fun rather than on the run. Maybe, with a little rum added, they’d enter the realm of SuperAmazeballs... **RUN**

# RECUPER8

**VITALS**  
 2.5kg \$45  
 5kg \$79  
 7.5 \$115  
 10kg \$149  
 Reviewer: Tegyn Angel



MANUFACTURED BY AUSTRALIA COMPANY BULK NUTRIENTS, RECUPER8 IS TARGETED AT THE ENDURANCE COMMUNITY. BULK NUTRIENTS PRODUCE ALL ITS OWN (PACKAGED) PRODUCTS RATHER THAN OUTSOURCING AND SELL FACTORY-DIRECT, WHICH KEEPS PRICES REASONABLE.

Recuper8 is all about satisfying a whole flock of nutritional demands in one hit. Protein, carbs, electrolytes and BCAAs are all included, the idea being to provide a one-product solution to fuelling and hydration. For simplicity this is awesome as it means there aren't ratios, gels, bars, or pill counting to worry about. For accuracy and flexibility however, some might find this problematic. If the ratios don't work for you, e.g. you want more carbs or less protein, you can't change things up to suit, or if you want take on more electrolytes and less fuel on a really hot day, you're limited.

The carb spectrum is good, including a balance of maltodextrin and glucose. This mix of medium and short-chained Carbs should provide sustained energy and increase total carb oxidation. Chloride, potassium, magnesium and sodium are all added to cover the electrolyte spectrum and keep us hydrated.

Some research suggests that the inclusion of whey protein, because of its high levels of glutamine, is better suited to recovery and not intra-event use (due to the release of nitrogen during glutamine metabolism). That said, Bulk Nutrients refer to research that suggests glutamine has the ability to reduce blood ammonia levels, the latter being detrimental to performance. Unfortunately I'm not familiar enough with the science to argue either way.

One interesting addition (which I've not seen in other products) is citrulline malate, which may help to "reduce muscle soreness, increase BCAA absorption as well as increasing muscular endurance [and] reduc[ing] the sensation of fatigue. Impressive claims not scientifically tested in this review.

Available in Tropical and Orange-Mango, Recuper8 is more reminiscent of hydration formulas than traditional carb/protein products, but I found this a relief. The Orange Mango taste bring on thoughts of icy-poles. I preferred the taste of Tropical, which in my opinion tastes more natural. While most testing has been done in runs of around 2-3hrs, I used it in a very hot and hilly race knocked off in 6 hours. While it's certainly better cold, even warm and at an increased concentration (1 serve:600ml water) I found the taste and consistency fine and didn't experience any reflux. It definitely copes better with the heat than something creamy like Hammer's Café-Latte Perpetuem.

In terms of practicality, Recuper8 mixes better than any comparable product I've used. The powder is so fine that mixing it in a standard drink bottle, even at double concentration, is easy. Compared to Hammer Perpetuem, or even a simple hydration formula like Endura, Recuper8 is a dream to prepare. In fact the only issue, aside from being incredible sticky, is that it mixes so well it's relatively easy to shake into foam. I found that adding the powder, and then topping up the bottle (i.e. not leaving air space) reduced the foam significantly.

The recommended serve is 2 scoops, or 80g, per litre of water to be taken every 1-2 hrs. This delivers roughly 1250kj or 300kcal through 59g of Carbs and 14.5g of Protein. This is equivalent (if serving sizes

are adjusted) to the same caloric intake as Hammer Perpetuem, through slightly lower Carbohydrates (54g: 51.5g), significantly lower Fats (2.5g: 0.1g) and significantly higher Protein (12.7g: 7g) than Perpetuem delivers.

One serving per litre of liquid, however, means a whole lot of liquid so for shorter events, getting enough calories in without getting a gut full of fluid is going to be difficult, particularly for running events.

Some sources suggest that the approximate maximum amount of water the body can absorb during intense exercise is about 600ml p/hr (see Waterlogged by Dr Timothy Noakes for the best treatment of hydration I'm aware of). While this approach may seem straightforward and may be familiar to users of Perpetuem, the fact sheet for Recuper8 recommends 1000ml of fluid per dose as the ideal osmolality which, in simple terms, means the ideal concentration for rapid absorption. Therefore, upping the concentration may interrupt or slow down this process. I can't validate this and haven't noticed any issues in practice, but it's worth considering for ultra events.

In spite of maintaining consistent energy levels, you can feel hungry when only consuming Recuper8 during a run. This appeared to come and go during the longest test-runs. Perhaps a bar or something solid on-hand to help with satiety would be a good idea for ultra distances.

Recuper8 appears to be scientifically sound and well considered, offering a one-product solution to race and training fuelling and the value for money is excellent - much cheaper than equivalent solutions from more popular brands if you allow for the fact that you're getting carbs, protein and electrolytes. **RUN**



## TAKE OUTS

### SALOMON SENSE PRO

**Great for:** groomed, dry singletrack, fast trail, low-tech racing, everyday training trails, gravel city trails and a smattering of pavement

**Not-so-great for:** super technical conditions.

**Test Conditions:** moderately technical single track, dry fire trail, 50km+

**Tester:** Tegyn Angel, Associate Editor, Trail Run Mag

**Tester Mechanics:** mid-foot striker with masochistic hobbit feet

## VITALS

**\$179.99** AU

Information online at:  
[www.salomon.com/au](http://www.salomon.com/au)

# SENSE AND THE CITY

## SALOMON SENSE PRO

IT'S HARD TO THINK OF TRAIL RUNNING WITHOUT A HUGE SALOMON BUBBLE FLOATING THROUGH YOUR SKULL. ITS ATHLETES REGULARLY DOMINATE ENTIRE PODIUMS AND THEIR GEAR IS TRULY UBIQUITOUS. AS A BRAND, THEY'VE GOT A REPUTATION FOR PRODUCING EXTREMELY GOOD KIT, HAVING THE RESOURCES TO RAPIDLY DEVELOP AND RELEASE A MULTITUDE OF NEW ITERATIONS AND FOR INVESTING A HELL OF A LOT OF MONEY IN THE SPORT OF TRAIL AND ULTRA RUNNING.

The original red and white S-Lab Sense, "Kilian's Shoe", was a bit of a game-changer for their shoe range and has spawned a whole family of Sense shoes. In terms of positioning, the Sense Pro is a slightly lighter (500g vs. 540g size 10.5US pair), slightly thicker, slightly flatter (22-17mm vs. 21-15mm heel-to-toe thickness), slightly faster version of the Sense Mantra 2.

Like the Mantra 2, the Sense Pro is labelled Citytrail, meaning it fits into the door-to-trail category of shoes for those who want the same pair of shoes to perform reasonably well both on and off road. The Sense heritage gives it a little bit of ground feel and reasonable grip, enough to perform

“ THESE SENSE PROS (HAVE) BEEN DE-TUNED AND STANDARDISED TO A DEGREE TO BETTER SUIT A GENERALIST TRAIL RUNNING POPULATION WHO DON'T NECESSARILY LIVE IN THE PYRENEES

well in less technical trail races. The shoe is clearly built to see it through a lot of training kilometres, with a fairly stiff ride, low profile lugs, a rock plate running through the midsole and vinyl covering key abrasion areas of the breathable mesh upper.

The fore and midfoot volume is quite low and I found the heel to be quite narrow, particularly where the fairly rigid heel cup gives way to foam toward the top of the shoe. While I really love the Salomon Quicklace system and the Seamless fit and Sock-like (their words) tongue/upper, in general the European fit (and extremely bright colourways on this model in particular – hello bright blue, green or yellow) and 20mm stack don't work for me as a runner, with a caveat that I tend towards minimalist models and often wear Vibram Five Fingers casually, so I am used to being closer to the ground.

Just as a highly tuned Ferrari is quite touchy to drive, wild stallion like (so they tell me) – and let's face it a Ferrari's performance capabilities are in general not actually able to be fully utilised by your regular driver without an F1 title to their name – so

too were the original Sense, developed specifically for Kilian's foot and running style, perhaps a little too racetrack tuned for the average punter. Just like the Toyotas and Fords of the world developed 'supercars' a notch (and price tag) down for the general driving public, so too have these Sense Pros been de-tuned and standardised to a degree to better suit a generalist trail running population who don't necessarily live in the Pyrenees nor run Kilimanjaro tail to top return in seven and a half hours.

So if you're a slimmer footed trailite looking for a light yet durable hybrid shoe that'll do most things well, over a variety of training and racing conditions, and aren't too fussed about minimalism or platforms, (and don't mind bright colours) the Sense Pro is highly capable performer worth a slot in your shoe cupboard. **RUN**

SHAUN COLLINS, CABBAGE TREE PHOTOGRAPHY



**TAKE OUTS**

**HOKA ONE ONE KAILUA TRAIL**

**Great for** Technical, wet terrain where good grip is needed.

**Not so great for** Flat fast clean trail.

**Test conditions** Technical single track: steep, rocks, roots, mud.

**Tester** Vicki Woolley, off-road ultra-marathon runner.

**Tester mechanics** Neutral runner, mild heel-striker, lightweight (53kg).

**VITALS**

**\$199** /AU

Further information at:  
[www.hokaoneone.com.au](http://www.hokaoneone.com.au)

**ONE FOR THE TRAIL**

HOKA ONE ONE KAILUA TRAIL

HOKA'S. RUNNERS LOVE 'EM OR HATE 'EM: THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE ANY MIDDLE GROUND. UNFAIRLY DUBBED 'CLOWN SHOES', THEY HAVE ACQUIRED A REPUTATION FOR BEING PREFERRED BY MATURE AND INJURED RUNNERS. SO HERE IS A WEE SURPRISE FOR YOU: THE KAILUA'S ONLY HAVE A 5MM DROP. YEP, THAT'S IN THE MINIMALIST RANGE. WOULD YOU LIKE ANOTHER SURPRISE? THE SHOES WEIGH IN AT 260G - THAT'S ALSO IN THE MINIMALIST RANGE.

So how come they 'look funny'? Bucket seat heel and midsole pockets are recessed into the shoe for stability, it is the outsole wrapping around the heel that gives the shoe its blocky look.

Determined to come back with a definitive love 'em or hate 'em position, I chose highly technical, demanding terrain and inclement (verging on extreme) weather for our first outing. Immediately we hit the trail my feet settled back into the shoe. They were cushioned: I expected that. They were springy: expected that, too. What I didn't expect was that they were nimble and grippy, with rubber

**THERE IS NOTHING NAMBY-PAMBY ABOUT THE CONSTRUCTION WITH STURDY UPPERS AND DECENT SOLID LACES ADDING TO THE DURABLE FEEL.**

soles and 2mm lugs sticking to every up/down I threw their way. Ok, so they struggled on near-vertical, wet limestone... but anything except an octopus would have done the same.

The Kailua has a narrower outsole than the Stinson, which I appreciated on the steep, technical terrain where catching a root would have made for a nasty fall. The shoe really came into its own on long, rocky descents where the additional cushioning gave my knees and quads an unexpected holiday.

A worsening gale provided ample opportunity to ascertain the closed-mesh upper drains quickly and easily (and the shoes dried completely overnight - another pleasant surprise!). The moulded tongue keeps out debris with its high ride and snug fit, yet is thin

enough to not irritate the ankle. Round laces are a little disappointing as they tend to slip, but they are at least long enough to be creative with knots and tucks. And the heel-loop makes removing the second shoe a dream when they - and your socks - are encapsulated in sticky mud: shoe manufacturers take note.

The Injected High Resilience EVA midsole was too firm for my liking, and full-foot ground contact required a bit of adjustment - but on hard-surface ultras or long runs with a lot of descent, I would appreciate the stability and cushioning this shoe offers without compromising on weight.

The result? Lots of surprises. I'm (definitely) going to go with... love 'em. **RUN**

# RISING STAR

MIZUNO ASCEND 8



THE ASCEND IS A GREAT ALL ROUNDER SHOE WITH A BIAS TOWARD TECHNICAL TERRAIN, PROVIDING A SMOOTH RIDE ALONG THE ROCKIEST OF TRAILS. ON TEST IT WAS PUMMELED ON EVERYTHING FROM MELLOW RUNS ALONG MEANDERING RIVERBANK ROUTES TO HECTIC PUNCHY HILLS AND SLIPPERY DESCENDING SINGLETRACK. THE UPSHOT WAS HUGE CONFIDENCE IN THE MULTI-ANGLE GRIP THAT THE ASCENDS PROVIDE IN DIVERSE CONDITIONS, ALLOWING A GO-FASTER APPROACH.

As a tending-to-minimalist runner, the Ascend is a lot 'more' shoe than I'm used to running in, however it is a deceptive shoe in that it doesn't feel bulky on foot at all. It provides good cushioning, while allowing better than you'd think ground feel, so the body can compensate and react to the terrain.

On the road, I do a lot of running in the Mizuno Wave Rider (a neutral shoe), and even though the Ascend provides mild support I didn't find it over-correcting nor did the support noticeably impinge on natural foot strike.

Handling the shoe you realize that it isn't as stiff torsionally or through the toe box as similar shoes from other brands. This shoe

does slot into the 'traditional' category in that it is a 12mm heel-to-toe drop. I would usually choose a more minimal trail shoe for shorter, faster runs... but this model definitely helped stave off tiredness on the long kilometer outings without feeling like a big, bulky, beast.

The Ascend utilizes Mizuno's unique Wave technology by providing good placement for the foot while scattering point-of-impact forces, for a cushioned and stable run. The heavy-duty X-Outsole pattern offers ground-hugging traction as you rip through the trails without making the shoe feel hefty or dull. The Ascend is quick to respond, with plenty of protection particularly around the toe-cap.

The mesh-upper keeps feet well-ventilated, allowing water to flush in and out and has an X-shaped overlay for lateral support over rough terrain, without restricting the natural movement of my foot. The AP+ midsole offers amplified rebound, without sacrificing responsiveness or added weight.

Overall, the Ascend8 delivers a smooth ride by providing you with a great all-rounder trail shoe that provides minimal support, so can be used by neutral runners or runners that have slight pronation. The Ascend isn't too much for the simple trails but has the grip and cushioning you need to tackle technical trails in wet or dry conditions. **RUN**

## TAKE OUTS

### MIZUNO ASCEND 8

**Great for:** great all-rounder designed to endure kilometres

**Not-so-great for:** short, sharp and faster trail runs

**Test Conditions:** tested on anything from fire trails to dusty, rocky descents to slippery muddy ascents

**Tester:** Ashley Lofton of Running Fit. NOTE: Ashley is a Mizuno brand ambassador

**Tester Mechanics:** a bit of a hybrid gait, right foot is neutral and left foot slightly pronates,

### VITALS

**AU\$180.**

Information online at:  
[www.mizuno.com.au/running](http://www.mizuno.com.au/running)

“A GREAT ALL ROUNDER WITH A BIAS TOWARD TECHNICAL TERRAIN, PROVIDING A SMOOTH RIDE ALONG THE ROCKIEST OF TRAILS”

# THE WILD ONE

NIKE WILDHORSE



LET'S CAVEAT THIS REVIEW: I'M AN AIR JORDAN TRAGIC. I GREW UP IN AN ERA WHERE IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE A PAIR OF AIR JORDAN'S ON, YOU SIMPLY DIDN'T EXIST, AS THOUGH THE BASKETBALLER'S SIGNED-OFF FOOTWEAR HAD A MAGIC POWER TO UNCLOAK YOU FROM TEENAGE INVISIBILITY.

So while I never spoke it, I admit to an inner yearning that one day, Nike, the big boomer of running shoes on road (and basketball court), would one day get its swoosh dirty. I even sent copies of the original Trail Run Mag hardcopy to Nike Australia offices in the hope it would spark some kind of fraternity. They ignored me like I was ignored by the school basketball coach all those years ago. Severely. I didn't hold out much hope.

So my dreams of a return to adolescent footwear that matched my adult sporting tendencies faded and I parlayed that energy into purveying brands that did have the smarts to go wild.

And then, without much warning (or local fanfare it must be said), there they were: Nike Wildhorse. Dedicated Nike trail shoes. Could it be true? More importantly, would they stuff it up? In trail land, it's easy to look like a trail shoe but perform like a brick.

All I can say is, the most famous #23 (MJ) backed the right horse way back then, and the trail world may just have to swallow a big brand getting it smack on today, despite our tendencies to tall poppy anything tainted by the brush of mass commercialism.

Yes, on trail, these shoes did everything right. The grip is reminiscent of what I consider the best grip in the market in the

Saucony Peregrines. They are aggressive and grippy enough to plant your foot firmly and confidently on any surface, yet not over-lugged, which can get annoying when the terrain is harder and smoother. The heel has reverse-oriented lugs down the middle giving excellent traction on the down. A 4mm drop (23-19mm heel-to-toe) is nearly flat and close to the ground, and with a fairly spongy heel that softens to a neutral drop.

Where the Wildhorse really stand out is in their perfect balance of cushioning, trail feel and protection. On the forefoot, it almost feels like – dare I say it – a concave cushion of air, which for a mid-fore foot striker is a dream. Yet at the pointiest end of ground impact, that ebbs to good trail feel, quite quickly, allowing good reaction to terrain. It makes for a nimble ride. Yet the sponge-like cushion doesn't seem to adversely affect stability, as many cushioned shoes do. The ride remains confident.

Up top the shoe locks your mid-forefoot snugly, adding to stability while being absolutely comfortable with enough give. A gusseted tongue prevents small debris from working into the shoe. The single layer ripstop upper was also extremely breathable, although the evacuation of water from river stomping was slower than some.

The foot fit is what I'd say is midrange – it's not slim yet not boxy, although upfront there is enough room if you have a bit of a flanged forefoot, and the toe guard doesn't look beefy, but does keep your pinkies well protected.

These could be rated as a perfectly balanced shoe: lightweight and nimble enough for racing, comfortable enough for long training sessions, and stable enough for technical terrain. Another prime balancing act: the price

(\$170) is pretty economical up against most competition at this performance end.

There is another Nike trail model on market in the Kiger. Top end trail runner Chris Wight, who also works at shoe retailer The Running Company, explains the variance between models: *"Kiger is the premium trail shoe...but in my mind there is no better between the two. Kiger is softer underfoot and in the upper. It's the most comfortable trail shoe I've worn and feels amazing to run in. That said, the lock through the midfoot and the tread isn't aggressive enough for more technical trails and that is where I'm loving the wildhorse. In the wildhorse I think you get a more locked down feel through the midfoot and better traction. I'd definitely feel comfortable in the Wildhorse racing (something like) Bogong to Hotham and it's looking like my Buffalo Stampede shoe at present."*

The only question mark is long-term durability over super tough terrain. This is where the Saucony Peregrine's fell to pieces. Can Nike up the ante? Stay tuned, an extended rough and tumble Alps session is still to be undertaken in these. But for now, Nike's Wildhorses are absolutely worth saddling up. **RUN**

“ THESE COULD BE RATED AS A PERFECTLY BALANCED SHOE: LIGHTWEIGHT AND NIMBLE ENOUGH FOR RACING, COMFORTABLE ENOUGH FOR LONG TRAINING SESSIONS, AND STABLE ENOUGH FOR TECHNICAL TERRAIN.

## TAKE OUTS

### NIKE WILDHORSE

**Great for:** nearly everything – techy, rough, smooth and dirty.

**Not-so-great for:** river crossings and durability is still to be tested over time in the roughest of conditions.

**Test Conditions:** Technical and non technical single track with a smattering of fire road, 80+km

**Tester:** Chris Ord, Trail Run Mag editor

**Tester Mechanics:** mid foot striker, tends to more technical style running routes.

### VITALS

**AU\$170.**

Information online at:  
[www.the-running-company.com.au](http://www.the-running-company.com.au)

TRAIL  
PRESENTED BY BROOKS  
PORN



JIN CAO CELEBRATES MT. GAUSTA,  
ON EUROPE'S BIGGEST MOUNTAIN  
PLATEAU, IN THE SALOMON X  
REID HARDANGERVIDDA, NORWAY.  
[WWW.XREID.COM](http://WWW.XREID.COM)  
AGURTXANE CONCELLON




STIAN VIK BIRKESTRAND METERS AWAY FROM THE FINISHLINE OF THE SALOMON XREID HARDANGERVIDDA, A 123KM RUN IN REMOTE NORWAY.  
WWW.XREID.COM  
KAI-OTTO MELAU





DARREL NELSON TAKES IN THE 'URBAN TRAILS' OF MANLY DAM / BANTRY, NSW BAY  
LYNDON MARCEAU  
MARCEAUPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



TRM ASSOCIATE EDITOR TEGYN ANGEL FLOATS THROUGH THE SNOWGUMS OF MOUNT BAW BAW, VICTORIA, AUSTRALIA, AT THE BROOKS TRAIL RUN FESTIVAL.

 LYNDON MARCEAU  
 MARCEAUPHOTOGRAPHY.COM  
 TRAILRUNFESTIVAL.COM.AU



BIG MOUNTAINS, BIG CLIMBS AT THE MOTATAPU ADVENTURE RUN, A 49KM TWO PERSON TEAM TRAVERSE OVER 2790M TOTAL ASCENT, NORTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND.  
 MOTATAPU.ORG.NZ  
 JIM POLLARD

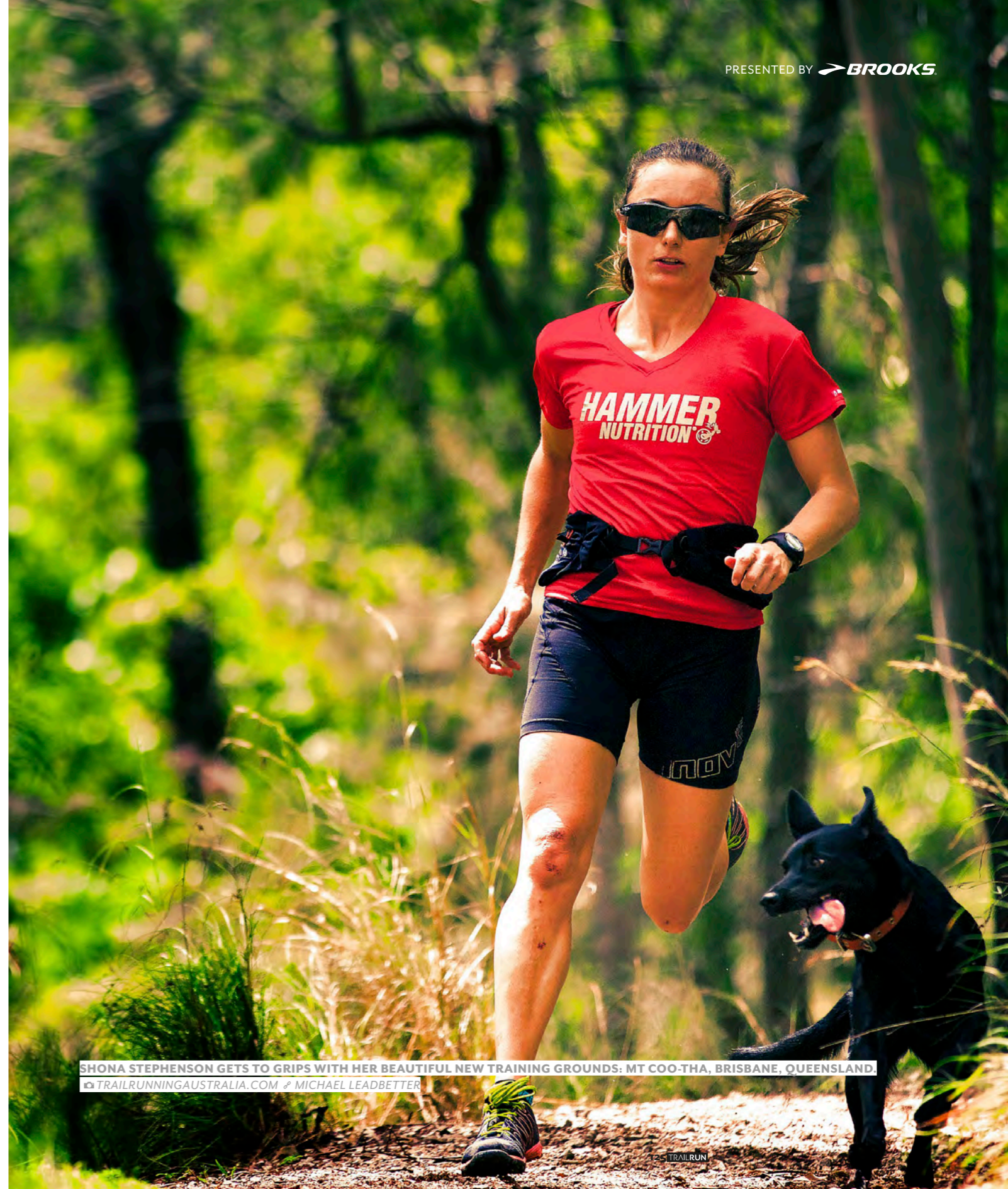


MOTATAPU ADVENTURE RUN,  
NORTH ISLAND, NEW ZEALAND.  
[MOTATAPU.ORG.NZ](http://MOTATAPU.ORG.NZ)  
© JIM POLLARD

MOVING THROUGH HIGHLAND BUTTON GRASS PLAINS MOUNT  
OSSA DURING THE 82KM CRADLE MOUNTAIN RUN, TASMANIA.

📍 CRADLEMTNRUN.ASN.AU

📷 PHIL BEESTON



SHONA STEPHENSON GETS TO GRIPS WITH HER BEAUTIFUL NEW TRAINING GROUNDS: MT COO-THA, BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND.

📍 TRAILRUNNINGAUSTRALIA.COM 📷 MICHAEL LEADBETTER

JOSH COLEMAN-WATSON TEARS  
UP LEURA FOREST IN THE BLUE  
MOUNTAINS, NSW.  
LYNDON MARCEAU  
MARCEAUPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



MATTY ABEL TRAINING HARD AT NORTH CURL CURL, NSW.

LYNDON MARCEAU  
MARCEAUPHOTOGRAPHY.COM



# AUTUMN



**MT COO-THA, BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND**

128

You know they're there: those pristine trails. Close. Not far from your doorstep. You can smell them...

Or maybe that's just the sweet waft of dirt not-long ground into the lugs of your trail shoes, which sit by the front door – a welcome reminder of the weekend's mountain jaunt.

But the blood screams for more. The legs are sore, yet they pine for a warm down. A warm up. A flat out blast along some winding, wet, wonderful singletrack. But where to go? Only got an hour (which you know can stretch to three).

Trail Mag has the answer(s). Here. In this guide. Each edition we'll bring you step by step trail run guides, all within an hour of a major city or town in Australia, New Zealand or Asia, all between 5km and 30km, all worth zipping out to for a trail fix.

We've also included some post-trail goodness 'cause we're human; we're caffeine freaks too (strong latte – sometimes double espresso, but only on race days), and we love the smell of fresh eggs and bacon after pounding the paths. Welcome to the goodness guide.

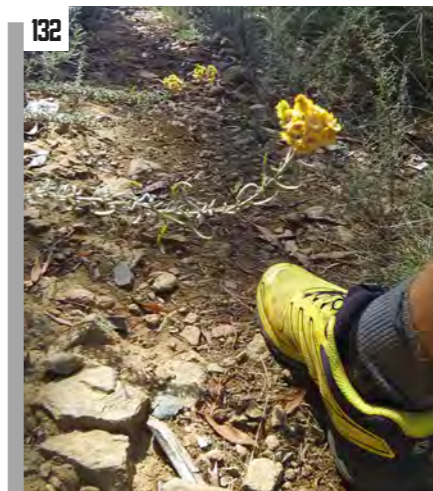
# BLISS

PRESENTED BY



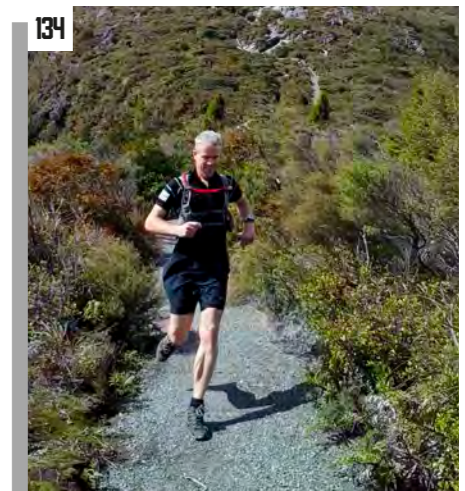
**OPARARA VALLEY  
WEST COAST, SOUTH  
ISLAND, NZ**

130



**MARYSVILLE,  
VICTORIA, AU**

132



**KAUAERANGA VALLEY,  
NTH ISLAND, NZ**

134

Win Salomon gear!

We need trail correspondents! If you think there's a cracking trail the world needs to know about, go research it, write it up, shoot a photo and send it in. We do have a bit of a style going, so be sure to check out the guidelines and download the pro forma before you do at [www.trailrunmag.com/contribute](http://www.trailrunmag.com/contribute)

If your guide is chosen as the 'Editor's Pick' of the issue, you'll win some great Salomon Trail Gear. The best guide submitted to be published in Edition #13 (out June 2014) will receive an Agile 17 Hydro Pack (RRP \$119), a stretch fit 17L beauty perfect for longer missions, plus a 1.5L Salomon bladder (RRP\$59.99) and a 237mL Salomon soft flask (RRP\$24.99).

So go running, get writing and start window shopping at [www.salomon.com/au](http://www.salomon.com/au)



1-1.5hrs  
LOOP



IMAGE: MICHAEL LEADBETTER



# COO-THA CALLIN

MT COO-THA, BRISBANE, QLD

**YOUR GUIDE // STEVEN KERNOHAN**  
**BRISBANE TRAIL RUNNERS**

## RUN IT:

**1.** Start from the car park at the end of Gordon Rd, Bardon and head up the fire trail for a couple of hundred meters until you come to a lagoon, take the second fire trail on the right (this is Kulgan Circuit). Follow the fire trail until you come to a clearing 1km in. Here, continue right to hit your first climb leading you onto some tight climbing single track.

**2.** Continue following the single track and let the brakes off because this section is fast and flowing. You'll hit another fire trail – blast straight through it following the single trail on to the downhill section, which has some really tight sections with stairs towards the bottom.

**3.** When you meet up with the fire trail again, follow it around to the left. The lagoon encountered at the beginning of the warm up loop is on your right as you pass over a small bridge and hit another decent climb of about one kilometre.

**4.** When you hit the next fire trail, stop for a breather (you'll need it) and a drink. Turn right and keep climbing until you see the single trail on your left (Maculata Track). Take this and relax into some free flowing trail with a few steps dotted along with roots and loose rocks. Pick up your feet or be prepared to be applying Betadine on that gravel rash later on.

**5.** You'll soon find yourself pop out onto Sir Samuel Griffith Drive (the main ring road around Mt Cootha). Keep an eye out for cars and cyclists as you cross the road straight into some more single trail (Stringy Bark Track).

**6.** While enjoying Stringy Bark Track remember to look out to your left for views of Brisbane's CBD and all the way to Moreton Bay. This trail is fairly technical with a lot of rocky stairs and roots to contend with but a lot of fun as you start descending.

**7.** At the end of Stringy Bark Track, you arrive at Simpson Falls and a junction of sorts. A trail to the left heads down to the base of the falls: you can continue straight ahead across the falls but take a very sharp right turn onto yet more single track (Eugenia Circuit).

**8.** Follow this trail until you come out onto some bitumen path, turn left for about 50m until you find the trail on the left which gets you off that boring bitumen.

**9.** A snaking climb takes you up to fire trail (Powerful Owl Trail) where you turn left. Follow the on for a couple of hundred meters than take the single trail (Eugenia Circuit) on the left. Take those brakes off again as this is one to really stretch out and have fun on. The first downhill section takes in some wide stairs which you can bomb, then a slightly downhill flowing trail leads into some rocky technical downhill sections before arriving back at Simpsons Falls.

**10.** Head across the top of the falls again (beware after heavy rainfall as the water can be very fast moving) and you will find yourself at the junction from earlier. Head straight through and up the stairs onto Stringy Bark Track and homeward bound, crossing Sir Samuel Griffith Drive (watching for cars and cyclists) and onto Maculata Track. Really watch your footing along here as I have seen and been a victim myself of fatigue causing people not to lift their feet and end up rolling an ankle or kissing the dirt stuntman style!

**11.** Quick turn right onto the fire trail then a quick left and prepare yourself for a rip-snorter of a technical downhill bomb ..... yewwwwww!

**12.** Cross the small bridge to find yourself back at the lagoon, chuck a right and follow the fire trail back to your car.

## POST RUN GOODNESS:

The Chelsea [www.thechelsea.com.au/](http://www.thechelsea.com.au/). You're always guaranteed to find something a little off the wall on this frequently changing menu. Slide into a booth, or on a fine day, take one of the tables in the courtyard to the side. But don't expect to get out without blowing a week's worth of calories .....awesome coffee! **RUN**

## TRAIL TIPS

**Name of Trail Run:** Mt Coo-tha

**Nearby City:** Brisbane (approx. 5kms/10mins from CBD)

**Exact Location:** Car Park at the end of Gordon Road, Bardon, Qld.

**Total Route Distance:** 9kms

**Total Ascent/Decent:** 442m /432m

**Time to run:** 1hr-1hr 15mins

**Type of Trail Run:** multiple single track loops

**Difficulty:** moderate to hard

**Defining characteristics:** Fairly challenging technical rocky single track with some stairs, roots, short sharp climbs... everything you could wish for.

**Features of interest:** fantastic views of Brisbane CBD and onwards towards Moreton Bay and the surrounding Islands, waterfalls

ONLINE

MAP

2.5-3.5hrs  
LOOP



# PINNACLE RUN

KAUAERANGA VALLEY, NTH ISLAND, NZ

## YOUR GUIDE: VICKI WOOLLEY

A jaunt to The Pinnacles in the Kauaeranga Valley, in the Coromandel region, is included in the 'AA 101 Must-Do's for Kiwis' for good reason ([www.newzealand.com/au/article/the-pinnacles/](http://www.newzealand.com/au/article/the-pinnacles/)). It's difficult to imagine packhorses laden with supplies for goldminers, kauri loggers and gum diggers negotiating the steep, rocky and narrow trail - but the trail is virtually unchanged from the original laid down for those horses in the 1900's. It's like running back (and up) in time.

## RUN IT:

1. The Kauaeranga Kauri Trail starts at the very end of Kauaeranga road. A short way down the track, cross the swing bridge and follow the river as the track begins climbing through lush forests of nikau and rata.
2. Rocky though it is, the trail is fully runnable, albeit with steep stepped sections that will challenge your quads. The trail itself is fascinating as it was built specifically to enable packhorses safe passage to the kauri and gold camps. In parts it is very difficult to imagine how the burdened horses managed to keep their footing!
3. After 4km you reach the Hydro Camp junction and clearing. Stay on the main track which bears left of the clearing, and continue climbing. The foliage changes as you head higher and drier, and the broom and Manuka stands provide less shelter from the sun and wind. Topping a ridge at 6km, you are rewarded with a view across to the luxurious 80-bed Pinnacles Hut, and first glance at your destination, looking impossibly far away.
4. The track eases off underfoot as you descend through scrub to the Hut turnoff. Head right: your route to the summit is clearly visible as a wide, gravelled path with long flights of steps. The fun begins immediately

beyond the well-formed steps as you to make your way up and over lava plugs towards the 759m summit. A series of ladders and rungs are more than adequate to assist you in the final scramble for the summit platform with 3600 views of the Hauraki Gulf and Plains, Coromandel Peninsula and the Bay of Plenty.

5. Return the way you came until you reach the Hydro Camp clearing. Look hard left and over the clay pan - more-or-less doubling back on yourself - and you will see Billy Goat Track disappearing into the dense forest.
6. Billy Goat Track climbs steadily with occasional stunning glimpses of the Kauaeranga valley below until around 12km, when you begin descending towards the road-end. An information panel at the top of the Incline describes how kauri logs were lowered down this treacherous descent, and a short stretch of railway track is still in place.
7. The run out follows the old tramline and takes you through some beautiful stands of bush - be sure to pause and look down and back for dizzying views of Billygoat Falls (180m). Pass the Short Trestle campsite, cross the swing bridge and turn right to trot a few hundred metres on the gravel road back to your vehicle.

## POST RUN GOODNESS:

Visit Cafe Melbourne, 715 Pollen Street, Thames (ph. 07 868 3159). The place has gorgeous food, a good soul, and an intriguing concept with an art shop, boutique wine store and deli under construction around the cafe. Oh and did I mention the coffee? Brilliant. **RUN**

## TRAIL TIPS

**NAME:** The Pinnacles Track  
**NEARBY TOWN/CITY:** 22km (gravel road: 30mins) from Thames  
**EXACT LOCATION:** Kauaeranga Valley road end (stop and visit the DoC Visitor Centre 13km up the Valley, with 24hr information panels).  
**TOTAL ROUTE DISTANCE:** 19km  
**TOTAL ASCENT/DESCENT:** 1484m elevation gain  
**TIME TO RUN:** 2.5-3.5hrs  
**TYPE OF TRAIL RUN:** Loop  
**DIFFICULTY:** Moderate  
**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS:** Rocks, ascents  
**FEATURES OF INTEREST:** Views, historical references

ONLINE

MAP

90\_min

# MARYSVILLE MARVEL

MARYSVILLE, VICTORIA, AU

## YOUR GUIDE // TEGYN ANGEL WWW.WILDPLANS.COM

Tourists have been either scared away by the thought of a burnt out mountain wasteland marred by the ghosts of Black Saturday; or they come specifically to honour the fallen, and spend money in the township of Marysville that suffered so, in a meek but good hearted attempt to do their bit towards rehabilitation via visitation. But few venture up to the mountain range hamlet specifically to run. [The La Sportiva Mountain Running Series](#) draws a crowd once a year further up, on Lake Mountain, but recreational runners are a rarity. More's the pity as Marysville and its region offers great running amid a landscape that is reawakening, and that offers a uniquely wild experience.

## RUN IT:

1. Park at Gallipoli Park or by the Visitors Centre, grab one of the free Marysville Trails maps and a feed from the bakery or a coffee from Fragas.
2. Head through the redeveloped park and past the small lake before crossing the footbridge onto Tree Fern Gully trail.
3. Follow for approximately 1.4km before crossing a small footbridge and immediately turning right onto the Keppel Lookout trail.
4. Cross Falls road and start a pretty decent ascent to a false summit (about 1.5km)
5. Descend quickly before starting the real climb to Keppel Lookout (about 1.5km). This ascent starts in a similar condition to the last 1.5km but quickly narrows and at the time of writing there was a bit of Thistle that could do with a slash. At one point you'll come very close to the unsealed vehicle road that ascends to (and beyond) the lookout. Toward deteriorates to a well-trodden goat track briefly before becoming well groomed and even featuring some retaining walls right before the lookout.

6. Upon reaching Keppel Lookout you're presented with great views of Marysville and the surrounding hill country and you begin to appreciate how horrific the 2009 fires must have been. The dead, grey trees covering all the nearby mountains are skeletons left behind by an inferno that ripped through the area.

7. From Keppel Lookout, follow the signs to Steavenson's Falls. This begins as a narrow fire trail and turns into some of the most enjoyable single track I've run in a long time about a 1.5km prior to reaching the falls.

8. Check out the falls, a local attraction and another easy road access point. The falls are even brightly lit at night and are quite fun to discover by head torch. You run out of the spooky gloom into a surreal film set just waiting for quirky characters and dramatic music.

9. Leaving the falls, follow the signs and the undulating, well groomed walking track back to Marysville/Tree Fern Gully Trail, approximately 3.5km along the Steavenson River.

10. Add on a loop of Red Hill and Michaeldene Trail for a little bit extra, or Wilks Creek for a good chunk more.

**Note:** there is no reliable water along the trail that we're aware of.

## POST RUN GOODNESS:

For an immediate pick-me-up, pop into Fragas Café on the main road into town for a decent cup of Joe and some good food. However, if you can wait half an hour, drive back through the Black Spur to Healesville and pop into the White Rabbit brewery ([www.whiterabbitbeer.com.au](http://www.whiterabbitbeer.com.au)) for a mean micro-brew. Right next door are the Beechworth Bakery for those on a budget or Innocent Bystander for those who aren't. All three options are preceded by great reputations and are often packed on weekends. **RUN**

## TRAIL TIPS

**NAME:** Keppel Lookout - Steavenson's Falls Loop

**NEARBY CITY:** Melbourne CBD, 90mins/100km; Healesville, 30mins/33km

**EXACT LOCATION:** Marysville Information Centre, Gallipoli Park, Marysville

**TOTAL ROUTE DISTANCE:** 14km

**TOTAL ASCENT/DESCENT:** 565m/565m

**TIME TO RUN:** 90mins

**TYPE OF TRAIL RUN:** Loop

**DIFFICULTY:** Easy to moderate with one hard climb and a section of moderately technical single track.

**DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS:** wide single track through typical Victorian scrub. A couple of decent climbs given the length.

**FEATURES OF INTEREST:** Gallipoli Park redevelopment, bushfire scars, Keppel Lookout, Steavenson's Falls, Tree Fern Gully Trail.

ONLINE

MAP

1.5-2.5rs

# OPARARA VALLEY

WEST COAST, SOUTH ISLAND, NZ

## YOUR GUIDE: VICKI WOOLLEY

Setting foot in the Oparara Valley with its ancient forest, fascinating geological formations and fossils (including moa bones\*) is a literal step back in time. With less than 100 people venturing onto the trails each year, you may well have the place to yourself - and in the Oparara, that is a wonderful thing.

## RUN IT:

**1. LONG-RUN OPTION:** Drive 1.5km past the main Oparara Valley car park, where a short track takes you to the Box Canyon and Crazy Paving Caves. These beautifully preserved and presented caves are somewhat of an enigma to geologists, and house fossils, cave weta and Gradungula - a rare type of cave spider found only in this area. Return to the gravel road and jog back the way you came: look for the signpost to Mirror Tarn on your left just before the main car park (continue from 3, below).

**2. OPTION TWO:** From the main Oparara Valley car park, take the short trail on the left just beyond the interpretation panels. After approximately 1km you reach soaring Oparara Arch, the largest limestone arch in the Southern Hemisphere. Return the same way to the car park.

**3.** Run up the gravel road and just over the Oparara Bridge you will see a trail on the right signposted to Mirror Tarn. Just 600m along the trail, the Tarn appears on your left. After the obligatory WOW moment, continue along the Moria Gate/Mirror Tarn Link Track.

**4.** Around 3km you catch sight of picturesque Moria Arch hanging over the river. Turn right at the junction with Oparara Valley Track and follow the flagstones (count the moa prints!) over the Moria Arch. Turn left and descend into and under the arch for a surreal view.

**5.** Clamber back up and return over the flags to the junction with Oparara Valley Track: turn right and the next 9km of mossy track undulates gently through ancient native forest accompanied by a variety of birdsong: keep an eye/ear out for kea and kaka, among others. The gorgeous burnt orange of the Oparara River contrasts beautifully with vivid forest greens, and harbours blue ducks (whio).

**6. OPTION THREE:** After 8km you come across a left turn to view Adams Creek gold workings (8km out-and-back); another 5km out-and-back takes you to Fenian gold workings.

**7. OPTION FOUR:** Immediately after passing the Fenian Track junction, a trail indicates left to Fenian Caves. Although a lot of fun, the cave loop is highly technical and requires route-finding skills. You WILL need a torch as the trail passes through one of the caves. Expect to add at least an hour and 3.5kms to your journey. Take extreme care during or immediately after periods of heavy rainfall.

**8.** Once back on the main trail, you have a gorgeous soft, flowing 5km downhill run to Fenian Road.

**9. \*OPTION FIVE:** Guided tours are available to Honeycomb Hills Caves, which house the bones of 50 extinct species of birds - including moa.

## POST RUN GOODNESS:

Stagger across to the Dome Valley Tearooms, where the All Day Breakfast menu is served quick and hot; the coffee is good, and they have ginger beer! [RUN](#)

## TRAIL TIPS

### NAME OF TRAIL RUN

Dome Valley Track

### NEARBY TOWN/CITY

74km (1hr) north of Auckland on SH1, Dome Forest Conservation Area

### EXACT LOCATION

7km North of Warkworth on SH1, Dome Valley Tearooms (on right of highway)

### TOTAL ROUTE DISTANCE

12km return, 14km one-way option.

### TOTAL ASCENT/DESCENT

800m

### TIME TO RUN

1.5-2.5rs

### TYPE OF TRAIL RUN

Return (one-way option available, requires car shuttle)

### DIFFICULTY

Moderate

### DEFINING CHARACTERISTICS

Short, sharp ascents; rooty.

### FEATURES OF INTEREST

Views, Kauri grove, nature trail.

[ONLINE](#)
[MAP](#)



ADVENTURE TOURISM CONSULTANCY • MEDIA PRODUCTION  
DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT • GRANT AND FUNDING ACCESS • PUBLISHING

— OUR PUBLICATIONS —



VERTICAL LIFE



PADDLE MAG



TRAIL RUN

▶ What we're about



adventuretypes.com



# TRAILRUN



WWW.TRAILRUNMAG.COM

f e