

DECEMBER 22 / JANUARY 23

WELCOME TO THE FUTURE...

Issue 73 is go! YouTube sensation Remy Metailler sat down for a chat, Tim went to B.C. to learn 10 things and ride his bike on epic trails and we put together a Gift Guide for that last minute shopping. Ali takes you through the best bits in Meribel for the Trail Guide and in Getting Dialed we

try to make indoor training fun. We talked to Colin about FLi Distribution and Reverse components in Behind the Brand and of course there are the regulars Technique, Lightroom and in Tried and Tested we review stuff from Rocky Mountain, 7Mesh, Fox, Etnies, Wolftooth, Pedaling Innovations and much more!

ENJOY THE LATEST ISSUE!



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- REMY METAILLER INTERVIEW -
10 THINGS I LEARNED IN B.C. / THE X-MAS GIFT GUIDE
TRAIL GUIDE / GETTING DIALLED / TECHNIQUE, TESTS & MORE!

FACE
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FRONT COVER RIDER REMY METAILLER
FRONT COVER PHOTO TREVOR LYDEN

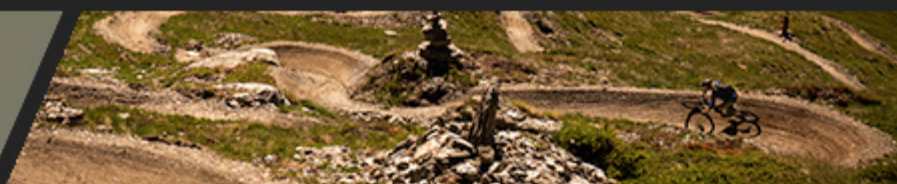
COMPETITION



BEHIND THE BRAND
FLI DISTRIBUTION



EDITORIAL



TECHNIQUE -
RIDING IN SNOW



REMY METAILLER
INTERVIEW



TRIED AND TESTED



TEN THINGS I LEARNED
RIDING IN BC



GETTING DIALED -
INDOOR TRAINING



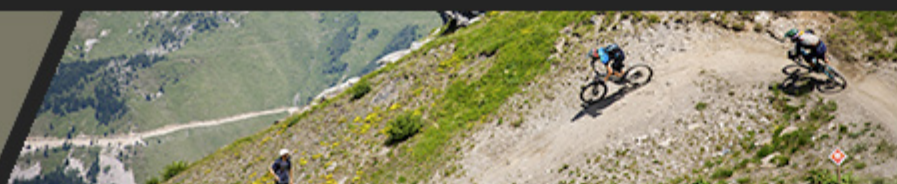
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TRAIL GUIDE MERIBEL



MOVIE NIGHT



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RIDER JARNO HOOGLAND
PHOTO JULIA BIGIO



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ISSUE 73

The Countdown

It's on. The annual countdown until we can ride bikes again without lights, without freezing your fingers off and in double digit temperatures. Depending on your latitude, you either don't know what the heck I'm talking about or know it's at least another 5 months of survival riding.

It's not that I don't enjoy the occasional mudfest or night ride. Don't get me wrong. Riding bikes off the beaten path is regular therapy in my point of view. Break a sweat, scare yourself a few times and move into that narrow field of focus to swap out long term worries (finances, health, economic meltdowns) for short term worries (will I fly over the handlebars, can I avoid that tree).

It definitely has its charm, and with modern technology and some proper preparation it doesn't have to be too uncomfortable. Dry clothes in the van, hot beverages in the Camelbak and some proper clothing make a world of difference. It's also worth choosing the start/finish point wisely. A pub with a fireplace and happy hour is the holy grail in my opinion.

Still, I prefer the sunset on a terrace compared to the drying of mud in front of a fireplace any day. Perhaps a little mid winter escape could be on the cards this year, as we're free to roam once again. Liguria is a classic, or Southern Spain perhaps? Portugal has always been on my radar too. It would save some on the energy bill too, if you're not there you don't need to turn the heating on!

But first it's time to enjoy the result of our work of the past weeks. Together with the IMB team we put another edition together packed with bike knowledge and entertainment. Remy Metailler tells us his story, Ali Jamieson gives us the lowdown on one of the Alps best kept secrets and we lined up the best goodies in the Gift Guide for the holidays. I hope it soothes the soul during the annual countdown.

If it does, please consider subscribing (it's free) or making a donation by becoming a supporter. It's much appreciated.

Jaruo Hoogland

Publishing Editor



INTERVIEW

REMY METAILLER

WORDS JARNO HOOGLAND & REMY METAILLER

When it comes to high quality YouTube content, there are only a few riders taking it to the next level. Frenchie living in Canada Remy Metailler is one of them. Not only does he have great tutorials and a sexy French accent, he continues to amaze people with his sick POV and drone edits. He loves showing you his local trails around Squamish and we were lucky enough to sit down with him and have a chat.

PHOTO TREVOR LYDEN



PHOTO TREVOR LYDEN

" IT'S BEEN A GREAT SEASON FOR ME WITH SOME AMAZING TRIPS "

Remy! For those that have been living under a rock, who are you, where are you from and where are you going?

I was born in France, and started riding there till I moved to Canada in 2013. My career started there after making a few Bike Park edits, and I then focused on Red Bull Rampage, Urban Downhill event and now more trail/freeriding and creating cool content.

2022 is coming to an end, how are you looking back at the past 12 months?

It's been a great season for me with some amazing trips such as the one in Interlaken, Switzerland with my friends from GoPro. I also checked out Sedona, Moab and of course a lot of riding around home, Squamish, BC.

You've been riding bikes for a while, can you tell us who got you into mountain biking in the first place and when?

The scene in France was pretty big in the end of the 1990's with Nicolas Vouilloz and Fabien Barel. Ever since watching WC on TV I have wanted to do it!

Growing up in the Nice area, there is a great climate for riding all year round and a solid group of talented people too. Did you ever ride with the likes of Barel, Vouillioz, Bruni, Vergier?

Yes, actually I did some little local races against all these guys, even when Loris and Loic were a bit younger, before they got these successful.

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MERIDA 



"THE LONGER FORMAT OF VIDEO ALLOWS PEOPLE TO CONNECT MORE WITH ME AND GET TO KNOW ME BETTER AS WELL AS THE PRODUCTS I USE."

You did a few races in your life but never were big into the racing scene itself. How do you look into competition and are you a competitive person?

I'm quite competitive, but I never enjoyed it. I did a few WC but it was not for me. I raced a few Urban Downhill events and actually won a few big events but to be honest what I

enjoyed the most was just riding the course during trainings.

Although you grew up in a pretty nice place for biking, when finishing your studies you decided to go to Canada. What was your plan?

My plan was to ride and ski in Whistler while settling around Vancouver to find a job in Marketing in the bike industry.

What was it like arriving in Whistler the first year and finding your way? Any funny stories from that era?

The first year I had the perfect set up.

Great housing, great friends to show me around, and I ended up working much less than I had planned so I got to ride more than I anticipated. 111 days I believe!

Who gave you the idea to start a YouTube channel and ride as a pro?

As I was no longer going to head to Rampage, I needed to find ways to keep being relevant. Racing Urban Downhill was slowing down, especially with travelling and I tried to think of the best way to give great value for my sponsors. The longer format of video allows people to connect more with me and get to know me better as well as the products I use. It's been awesome as well to share riding tips and seeing the people stoked about it made me keep on going.

" I LIKE TO KEEP IT VERY TIGHT IN TERMS OF CREW NUMBER. I USUALLY AM OUT ALONE WITH ONE FILMER AND THAT'S IT. "

Riding a bike is one thing, but filming, editing and creating content is a whole different game. Who taught you that skillset?

I learnt as I went. Editing, filming and telling a story is definitely not my strength though! It's not easy!

Your current productions are getting more and more professional with camera men, drones and scripts. How many people were involved in the biggest production you've done to date? (and which video was it?)

I like to keep it very tight in terms of crew number. I usually am out alone with one filmer and that's it. Budgets for a 3min video can be absolutely huge, and it's not my style. I'll rather let the riding talk and have a more RAW type of filming.

You have GoPro as a sponsor, but they make a lot of cool different cameras. If you had to choose one, which would you get?

GoPro has been amazing. I have been a fan of their products and exclusively used GoPro as a helmet cam since I bought my first one in 2010. It also helped my career in a big way! Working with them since 2020 has been a dream come true. I love the 11 mini for YouTube headcams, the 11 Black for everything Youtube, and the Max for social media.

For all the starting YouTubers out there, what are your top tips?

Get ready to work much harder than you anticipated it...



PHOTO 7MESH

IMBIKEMAG.COM

PHOTO 7MESH

You recently started a second YouTube channel; Remy Metaller RAW. Why is that?

I wanted to use a second channel to put out less polished types of content. More RAW style POV so my main channel stayed professional.

Besides your sponsors, you also work a lot with affiliate links and discount codes for your viewers. How important is that for you as a pro?

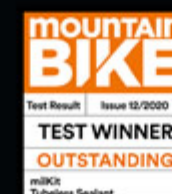
The discounts are really to help my fans save some money here and there since bikes are really expensive. I do not really benefit from it directly but obviously it's nice showing sponsors the traffic it brings them.

**"THE DISCOUNTS
ARE REALLY TO
HELP MY FANS
SAVE SOME
MONEY"**



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"YOU CAN'T REALLY GO WRONG IN THE SEA TO SKY AREA, FROM VANCOUVER TO PEMBERTON."

Same idea for the affiliate, most of the time it's really to track the number of clicks my work generates, and it's also a nice little bonus, but money is not the primary reason why I do it.

Life in BC is pretty good, but there must be some things that can get better. What are they in your opinion?

Oh well, BC is a great place to live for sure. Like everywhere a few things could be improved such as lodging, support for health care, day care.

We hear a lot about the housing crisis in the Sea to Sky corridor, how hard was it for you to find a decent place to live?

I was lucky to find a nice place to buy, but yes prices are wild, so is rent... It is tough out there regardless of your budget. I'm just grateful I don't have to keep looking for a place to rent or buy because that's a lot of stress and struggle.

If you had to move away from Squamish, where would you go?

Whistler, Britannia, North Vancouver, maybe Vancouver Island.

I'm sure a lot of readers want to visit BC, can you give them 5 tips on where to ride, eat, drink and have a good time?

You can't really go wrong in the Sea to Sky area, from Vancouver to Pemberton. For food, there is a lot of variety. I like to try new places all the time, same as for drinks. And for good times, Sushi Village in Whistler never disappoints!



" PEOPLE CAN KEEP FINDING SOME COOL CLIPS ON MY INSTAGRAM, ALSO FACEBOOK AND EVEN TIKTOK "

I saw a post of yours recently that said you want to ride some new destinations for 2023. What's on your bucket list so far?

Still working on it! Sounds like I will head to Quebec and back to Utah as well as Sedona for now.

Last but not least, who supports you in 2023, and where can people follow you and find your content?

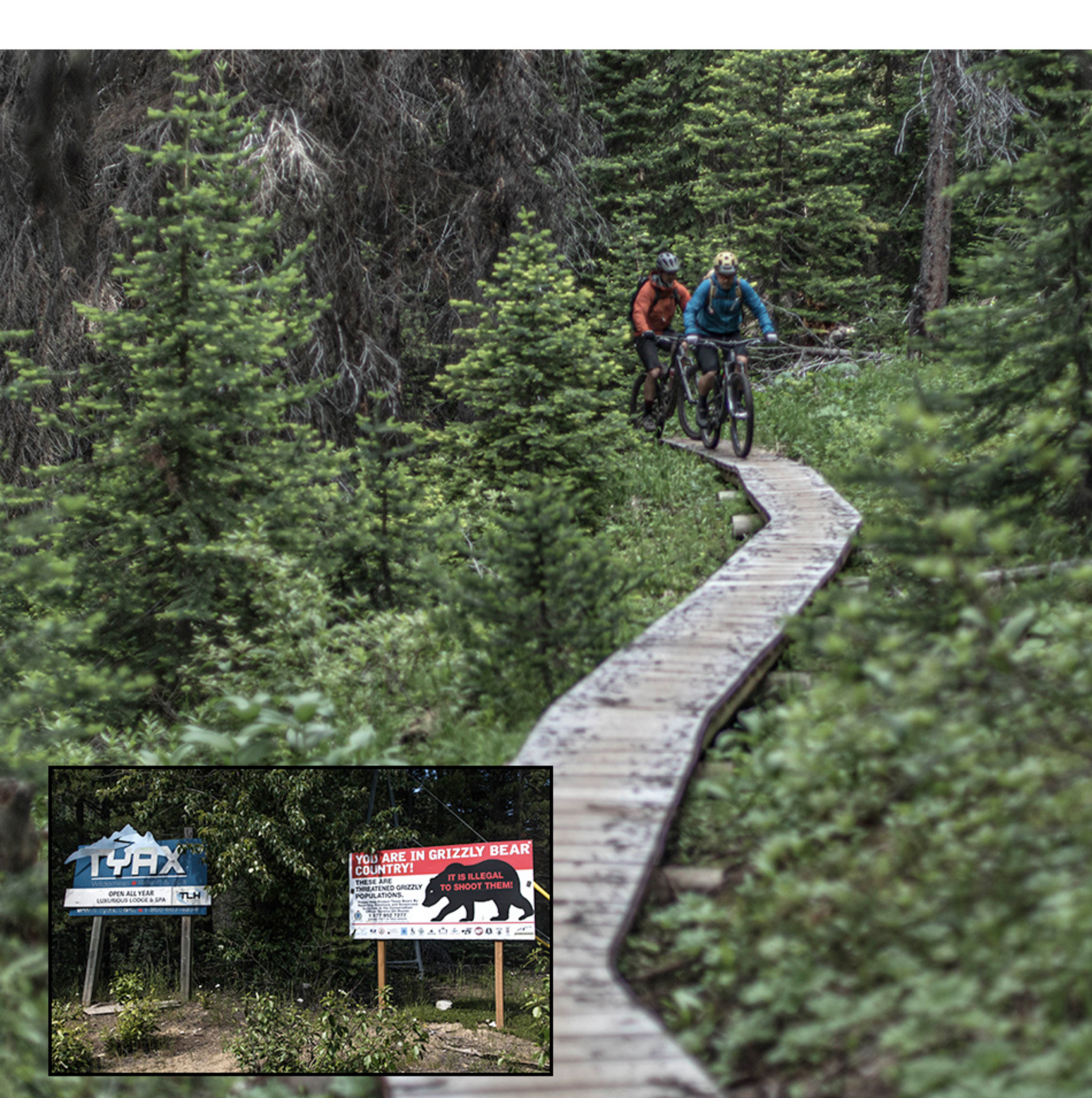
For 2023 as far as sponsors... You will have to wait a little, but some good companies for sure:) People can keep finding some cool clips on my Instagram, also Facebook and even Tiktok... since apparently it's important... and obviously Youtube!

Thanks for reading!

British Columbia a mecca for modern mountain bikers and on many peoples to do list. The riding is epic, the people are friendly and it's one of the few places on earth where you can find true wilderness. I went riding in the Chilcotins and came back with ten life lessons learned.

TEN THINGS I LEARNED RIDING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA





" BOTH OF THEM SEEM TO CONSIDER A NOISY BUNCH OF PEOPLE HOLDING BIKES TO BE TOO MUCH TROUBLE TO BOTHER WITH. "

1. GRIZZLY BEARS ARE A REAL THING

You're not allowed to kill them. Which is fair enough. They, however, are allowed to kill you. In order to improve the chances of not getting your sternum opened with the swipe of a claw, all riders on our trip are required to carry bear spray. This comes in the form of a small fire extinguisher-type thing, slightly bigger than a can of deodorant, which is filled with concentrated pepper spray. Good news? Bears hate pepper spray. Bad news? You won't know how much any actual bear hates it until it's less than ten feet from you, by which time you may well have soiled yourself, fallen to the ground blubbing, or foolishly tried to run. We also have to make noises all the time - shouting 'hey bear' and stuff - and I carry a small bell that rings all the time it's unlocked, which drives everyone else crazy, so I mostly don't use it.

We actually saw two different grizzly bears on two different days, but both of them seem to consider a noisy bunch of people holding bikes to be too much trouble to bother with. Which is, you know, a massive relief.

2. STARTING A RIDE BY GETTING ON A PLANE IS COOL

Our first trail starts at a place called Lorna Lake, at the Southern end of the South Chilcotin mountain range, but we can't get there by car, or on foot, or even on bikes. We get there by packing all our bikes and kit into a small De Havilland float plane,



" SHE EXPERTLY FLIES US OVER MOUNTAINS, CREEKS AND FORESTS BEFORE DROPPING US OFF AT A TINY JETTY ON LAKE LORNA "

which is 61 years old, and trusting our excellent pilot to take off from the surface of Tyaughton Lake, some 45 minutes south of our trailhead. She expertly flies us over mountains, creeks and forests before dropping us off at a tiny jetty on Lake Lorna and leaving us to our own devices.

It's about the most adventurous beginning to a bike trip I've ever had. It feels like something out of an Indiana Jones movie, with the added jeopardy of trying to look

excited for photos while doing your best not to throw up over four other people and the back of the pilot's head.

When we're all gathered there, the plane's turned around and taken off for home, and we're all looking at the steep mountain range, total lack of human activity and imposing skies, it's a sobering moment - thankfully lightened when someone produces a small bottle of whisky to toast the start of the trip.

3. DROPPING YOUR BIKE IN A FAST-FLOWING RIVER WOULD SUCK

This trip is on some well-established trails, and takes us from camp to camp over three days, with a lot of climbing, some hike-

a-bike, and - as it turns out - many river crossings. Due to the presence of late snow - the local peaks are mostly still capped in white - the meltwater has swollen these creeks and rivers more than usual and they're raging. We can't ride through them, or around them, or walk the bikes. We have to hoist the bikes over our heads, wade waist-deep into freezing rapids, and carry everything over one by one.

It's unhelpful, but also unavoidable, to consider what might happen if this goes wrong, but it would likely include:

- Some form of bodily injury as you fell into sharp rocks
- Being totally soaked from head to foot, including all your dry clothes, food, tools communications equipment

" THE SCENERY AND RIDING JUST KEEP GETTING BETTER AND BETTER - WE'RE WHOOPING AND HOLLERING LIKE LITTLE KIDS "

- Watching in horror as your bike rushed away downstream, in a way that would make it impossible to retrieve without further injury to yourself or others, stranding you in the wilderness until you could limp into camp and be helicoptered out

- In my case, having to explain to the nice people at Rocky Mountain that the ten grand ultra-light Element C90 bike they kindly lent me is now part of some remote dam because I dropped it in the river

All of this adds considerable spice to the ride. I recommend it.

4. THE DOWNHILLS LAST FOR A REALLY LONG TIME

No disrespect to UK riding - it's 99% of the fun I get to have on a bike - but when it comes to sheer length of descent, actual mountains are hard to beat. The descent from the top of our first mammoth, 4000ft climb just seems to keep going, and going, and going. And it's like a greatest hits of natural trail riding. Loose fields of scree one minute, slippery roots and creek-splash dips the next, before dropping us into tight corners and rock drops, then hurling us out into open fields of Alpine flowers.

As we make our way down towards the first camp of the trip, in Bear Paw, the scenery and riding just keep getting better and better - we're whooping and hollering like little kids, all thoughts of bears and sore legs banished in a whirl of speed and adrenaline.

It's almost disappointing when it's over and we roll into camp. Almost.





5. A CHEESEBOARD IS ALWAYS WELCOME

This particular backcountry adventure is with the fine folks at Tyax, who organise MTB trips like this one, and helidrop rides, and hiking, and a bunch of other stuff. Not to mention they pay people to stay in the camps we're using all summer, as hosts, and these lovely people have prepared for our arrival. Tents are up, with the most comfortable sleeping bags I've ever slept in cleaned and ready, on solid beds. Our pre-ordered beer and wine is cooling in a crate in the nearby creek. Dinner is cooking. And, slightly ridiculously, there's a table laid with a cheeseboard, a selection of cured meats, and some hummus as well.

"TENTS ARE UP,
WITH THE MOST
COMFORTABLE
SLEEPING BAGS
I'VE EVER
SLEPT IN"



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"THE 29" WHEELS MAKE SENSE FOR LONG XC STRETCHES, THERE'S JUST ENOUGH TRAVEL NOT TO RATTLE ME TO DEATH, AND IT CLIMBS LIKE A DREAM."

You may be thinking that this is far from adventurous, and that if I were a real backcountry rider I'd have packed all my own gear on the bike, and spent the first night eating charred deer meat off a stick after hunting it myself. You might well be right, but after seven hours in the saddle, I guarantee you wouldn't say no when someone offers you a slice of Brie with one hand and a creek-cooled IPA with the other.

6. YOU WILL NOT WISH FOR A HEAVIER BIKE

In normal life, I like as much travel as I can get. I don't mind a slow climb on a bigger bike, and I'm not the world's greatest jumper, so I want all the bounce that's going. But despite the hosted camps, we're all still carrying 3+ litres of water, an extra water bottle, tools, all our clothes, food for the day, etc, and pushing/carrying the bikes in stretches of over an hour at a time. So the Rocky Mountain Element C90 I've been lucky enough to procure for this adventure - weighing in at just over 24lbs - is a choice I don't regret once for the entire trip. The 29" wheels make sense for long XC stretches,

there's just enough travel not to rattle me to death, and it climbs like a dream. Even when we hit some spicy trail features in North Vancouver before flying home, and I mangle them pretty badly, it doesn't bottom out. Don't go burly, people. Think of your spine.

7. NINJA-LIKE PACKING SKILLS ARE ESSENTIAL

There didn't seem much point in checking luggage, as I had to carry everything I needed in a riding pack anyway, but it took some stuffing to get everything in there anyway. Even with resigning myself to wearing the same shorts, top, gloves, shoes and pads for the whole of the riding part, that still meant carrying a decent jacket (I had a lovely Berghaus Goretex number I bought especially, which I left on the train to Gatwick, so had to buy a new Troy Lee Designs waterproof at bike shop prices), another top for the evening,



" SPENDING THREE DAYS HAVING THE TIME OF YOUR LIFE WITH A BUNCH OF OTHER PEOPLE ALL DOING THE SAME IS A GREAT WAY TO BOND. "

some trousers, a pair of trainers, tools, bear spray, phone, washbag, medicine and other bits and pieces. I used every inch of space and filled every pocket of an Evo Explorer Pro 26, and it was just about enough, but I still needed to buy a fresh t-shirt for the flight home or risk being ejected for reasons of six-day bike stink. Also - Merino wool is your friend. A Nukeproof baselayer lasted six days of riding, multiple river dousings, beer spillage and more and still basically smelled OK.

8. THE MORE THE MERRIER

We had a group of ten riders total. Initially, I thought that might be an issue, because the more people you have, the slower you go, and the greater your chances of being held up by mechanicals, tiredness, or being stuck with someone you can't stand for days on end.

It turned out to be one of the best things about the whole trip. I knew some people, but we were all connected by someone, and the mixture of men and women, different abilities, experience levels and ages made the whole thing feel like even more of an adventure. Spending three days having the time of your life with a bunch of other people all doing the same is a great way to bond. We also managed 18-20 hours of backcountry riding without a single puncture, serious mechanical or injurious fall, no-one ran out of energy and we all got on really well. So experience it with as many people as you can.

"MY HANDS END UP HURTING MORE THAN ANY OTHER PART OF MY BODY, AS I'M NOT USED TO GRIPPING THE BARS AND THE BRAKES FOR SO LONG."

9. PREPARE YOUR HANDS

It's always the hands that get me. I live in a part of the UK where the most elevation we can get locally is about 300ft. So my downhill runs are short. Every time I go riding somewhere with longer descents, my hands end up hurting more than any other part of my body, as I'm not used to gripping the bars and the brakes for so long. Never was this more evident than on the last day of the trip, where a 20K trail felt like one long speedy singletrack descent, straight enough in places to encourage the fastest possible lines. We actually climbed 2000ft that day, but all in the form of steep steps back up the trail so the descent could begin again, with the raging rapids of Gun Creek matching our pace to the right as we plunged in and out of forests, hopped off trail rocks, bounced over roots and sprayed off-camber scree down the riverbank.

Next time, I'll spend the month beforehand squeezing a tennis ball or something.

10. BRITISH COLUMBIA MIGHT JUST BE MTB PARADISE

So as well as the three days backcountry riding in the Chilcotins, I also managed to pack in a full day's warm up riding in Squamish, a half day of slabs and rock rolls in Pemberton and an amazing day on the crazy woodwork of Mt. Fromme in North Vancouver. It was slightly heartbreaking to drive past the entrance to Whistler twice and not go in, but there was only so much we could do.





" I FEEL LIKE I JUST SCRATCHED THE SURFACE A TINY BIT, AND THAT'S AFTER SIX DAYS RIDING "

You could rent a cheap motel room in central Vancouver, never drive for more than an hour and hit a different set of trails every day, with a craft brewery, a hearty meal and a helpful bike shop just minutes away from any of them. That's before you even thought about venturing a little further to Squamish, Whistler, Pemberton, Revelstoke, Vancouver Island, the Sunshine Coast...

I feel like I just scratched the surface a tiny bit, and that's after six days riding in four different locations. Cheap? No. Worth every penny? Absolutely.

So next time you're thinking about the Alps, or Moab, or Colorado, make sure you put BC on your list too.

I'm already thinking about how I can get back...

Thanks to Rocky Mountain <https://bikes.com/> and www.hellobc.com for their help with this trip.

BIKERS BEST XMAS GIFTS

With all the new products being released, it's natural that Santa gets a bit overwhelmed with all the options. To help this poor man out a bit, we sat down and made our personal top 10 of the best Christmas gifts for 2022.



1) MILKIT TUBELESS CONVERSION
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Tubeless conversion made easy and clean! A clever designed syringe will not only make measuring the fluid accurate, but also solves the problem of latex milk all around the garage. This is your one stop shop for converting your mountain bike to tubeless tires!



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2) REVERSE COMPONENTS CAN HOLDER -
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Who doesn't want to bring a tallboy to the trail? The Reverse Component Can Holder tightly secures your can to the bike, whether it's a 0,5l Schultenbrau or a 0,355l Pabst Blue Ribbon. Cheers!



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3) MERIDA TRAIL RE E-BIKE BACKPACK -
120 EUR

We know Merida mainly from their bikes, but did you know that they make some really nice backpacks too? The 25l Trail Re pack can be used on your acoustic or electric bike of choice. Not only does it have tons of pockets to stash snacks and spares, there's also a special battery pocket for doubling up on energy for those epic rides!



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2) MAGURA TORQUE TOOL - 108,08 EUR

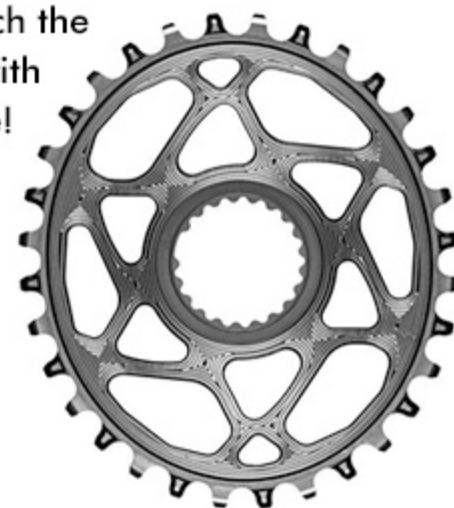
With all the high end components, the last thing you want is to over tighten your bolts and cause damage. The Magura Torque tool comes with a series of Hex and Torx bits and can be adjusted between 2.0 and 8.0 Nm. Must have!



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7) ABSOLUTE BLACK OVAL
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Great gift for the slowest climber of the pack! Oval rings have proven to lessen fatigue and increase power output. Grab one of these and make sure you match the anodising colours with the rest of your bike!



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12) SQUIRT LONG LASTING
CHAIN LUBE - 9,99 EUR

In case you're out of ideas, some high quality chain lube is always a good idea to give to a cyclist. Squirt's unique formula makes for a super long lasting and well lubricating product.



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7) INVISIFRAME DECALS - STARTING FROM 14,99 GBP

You probably know the frame protection from Invisiframe, but did you know that they also make custom frame, fork and wheel decals? Spice up your ride with a different color and if you can't find what you're looking for, they even do custom decals!



[CLICK HERE](#)

8) DAINESE HGR SOCKS - 44,95 EUR

Ah a Christmas gift classic, socks! These Dainese ones are a bit special, as they come equipped with protective padding in the shin area. If you've ever had a rock hit your shin at speed, you know you want a pair of these!



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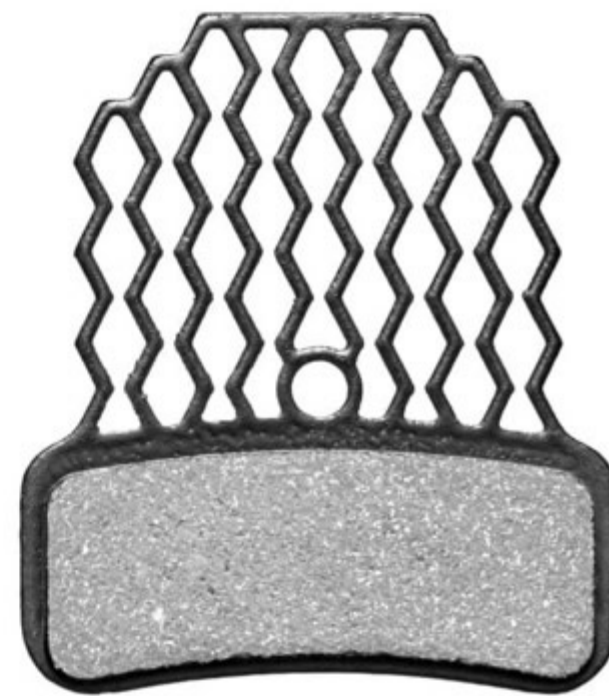
9) ION PRODUCTS K-LITE ZIP KNEE PADS - 109,95 EUR

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11) FACEPLANT RECYCLED SUNGLASSES -
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Copilot is the ultimate backup shell - a durable, waterproof, windproof GORE-TEX PacLite Plus jacket that packs down into its rear pocket AND clips to your bike for bikepacking and trail riding in changeable conditions.



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14) PNW LOAM GRIPS - 24 EUR

Looking for something affordable? A pair of good grips is never wasted. The PNW Loam grips come in two sizes, regular and XL to fit those bigger paws. Available in a ton of colors too!



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15) PEATY'S HOLESHOT CO2 TIRE INFLATOR
29,99 EUR

If you don't like wasting time, or just want to bring an emergency lightweight solution to inflate your tire on your rides, the Peaty's Holeshot Co2 Inflator is your gig. Great gift to for that person who always flats and never brings any tools along!



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TRAIL GUIDE

MERIBEL

HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

They say the best things are often found hiding in plain sight and in my experience, the same can be said of Alpine trails. As a guide, seeking out new adventures has become somewhat of a lifetime's mission... although to be honest, I'd probably have put just as much effort into the task, even if it wasn't part of my day job. Let's face it, who doesn't love the rush of riding an impossibly sublime ribbon of singletrack for the first time; the thrill of having no idea what over the next crest; or better still, hearing whoops of delight from your pals (or in my case, paying clients) as you share your latest delirium-inducing, grin-fest of a discovery.



I'm often asked how on earth I found these trails in the first place; typically after an impossibly sketchy uplift, or when foraging through undergrowth to find the entrance of a forgotten favourite. I wish the answer could be something magical and mysterious..."I found an ancient smuggler's map, scrawled in blood on the hide of a fossilised mountain Chamois" would be most fitting. But the reality is less romantic: 90% of the time, it's always been right there, for all to see on the Topographical (IGN) Map. Hiding in plain sight.

As a part-time local of a village surrounded by many of the Alps' largest ski resorts, Meribel has always been a 30 minute drive from home, but others such as Les Arcs somehow seemed more accessible. Or perhaps more accurately, more often discussed and ridden in my local riding group. A cursory glance at the IGN map using my self-imagined 'trail-o-vision' had mistakenly told me there wasn't much worth searching for over there anyway.

But recently, a combination of COVID-19 lockdown, my first e-bike, and a permanently-broken funicular railway in Les Arcs, gave me plenty of motivation to look again at my Meribel IGN maps and sneak out on the e-bike between passing lockdown patrols of the local police municipale. It didn't take long to start striking trail-gold. If I were the man from Del Monte, I would definitely have been saying "Yes".

" THE REALITY IS LESS ROMANTIC:
90% OF THE TIME, IT'S ALWAYS BEEN
RIGHT THERE, FOR ALL TO SEE "



HUGE WINTER INVESTMENTS IN MERIBEL'S LIFT SYSTEM PROVIDES A
SUMMER SERVICE THAT IS PARTICULARLY COMFORTABLE AND EFFICIENT



“ THE SMALL BUT PASSIONATE CREW OF RIDERS WHO MANAGE THE BIKE PARK HERE HAVE ACHIEVED THE IMPOSSIBLE ”

Despite having an almost unhealthy fondness for all kinds of maps, one thing I'd never do is head straight to the local tourist office and pick up a bike-park map (other than to know which trails I definitely want to avoid). I figure anything crayoned-in as a 'Piste VTT' by whichever toddler they get to draw up these poor-excuses-for-a-map, is machine-built, no fun on an enduro-rig, probably over-ridden and thus bumpier than a herd of camels.

When it comes to Meribel, I was wrong again. In the few years since I'd last paid any attention to this part of Savoie, it turns out a lot has changed. The small but passionate crew of riders who manage the Bike Park here have achieved the impossible, at least by regional standards. They've negotiated official,

shared-use 'Enduro' access to almost all of the best lift-accessed singletrack in the area. Forget Trailforks and wasting time getting lost – it's all right there on the piste map and signposted at each junction out on the hill. Whilst this might go some way to putting me out of a job as a guide, it's an event organiser's dream: No more impossible, metre-by-metre negotiation with local officials about which trail is suitable to use at an event; if the local wild-mushroom-pickers can tolerate the disturbance; if the forestry guys are going to object on the grounds of trail damage (only to destroy the entire hillside themselves during the next harvest)...or more often than not just having my requests ignored entirely. I can't overstate how pleasant it is to ride in a

vast, lift-accessed, single-track heavy region, where you never feel like you are riding where you possibly shouldn't.

Much like Morzine is part of the larger Portes du Soleil system, Meribel is only one part of a much bigger, inter-connected system known as The 3 Valleys – and it happens to be slap-bang right in the middle of it. The system includes Courchevel, Val Thorens, and my personal favourite: Les Belleville. All are world-class destinations in their own right, but together they make up one of the largest lift-accessible domains in the world. Brimming with modern, efficient ski-lifts, oodles of singletrack that is now mostly mapped out and sign-posted for you, and best of all – still relatively deserted.

“ THE BLUE RUNS ARE PARTICULARLY FLOWY AND A REAL BLAST FOR ADVANCED RIDERS AS WELL AS INTERMEDIATE. ”

Like most ski-stations, Meribel centre is located well above the winter snow-line at 1500m altitude. Modern Ski-Lifts leave directly from Meribel going up both sides of the central of the 3 valleys, and in under 20 minutes in either direction you can be dropping into trails at over 2500m. You can choose to descend back towards Meribel, or drop off the back towards Les Menuires & Val Thorens to the West, or to Courchevel to the East. There's the usual High-Alpine terrain, with imposing rocky peaks that tower above you up to 3000m and the Glaciers of the Vanoise National Park just beyond. High up, the terrain is an open mix of rocky moonscape and alpine pasture. Lower down, it's mostly Pine forest riding. In addition to the singletrack 'Enduro' trails, there are dozens of machine-built 'DH' runs to hit-up and the quality of trail building is well above-average. There's something for everyone, although the 'Black' graded DH runs are fewer and less extreme than elsewhere in the Alps. In contrast the blue runs are particularly flowy and a real blast for advanced riders as well as intermediate. That said, Meribel's 2014 World Cup DH Track is exactly as you'd expect: full-on!

At the bottom of Meribel's enormous valley lies Brides-Les-Bains, at 572m altitude – indeed all 3 valleys flow back to here. Brides is better known for its thermal spas with their renowned healing properties (well worth a visit after a hard day in the saddle). A Tourist Office deal has seen free shuttle buses running throughout the day all summer (mostly empty, of course) and they allow direct access to the vast trail network in the lower half of the valley. This historical network of singletrack links together all the old farming villages dotted throughout the hillside – and the gradient here is mellower than a lot of other Alpine mountains,

5-RIDER-PLUS-PARTY-TRAINS ARE A COMMON SIGHT AT THE ENDURO2 RACE IN MERIBEL



ENJOYING SOME GRAVITY-ASSISTANCE ON A
DOWNHILL SECTION OF OUR EPIC RIDGE RIDE

“WHILST TECHNICAL AND ENGAGING
THE WHOLE WAY, IT'S NOT EXTREME
BY ALPINE STANDARDS.”

so tight switchbacks give way to faster, flowier runs, which I must admit makes a nice change from the norm. The forest lower down changes from pine, to beech – and with it comes a unique root system and loam-bonus that can only be gifted to us riders by a deciduous tree. In case you hadn't noticed, yes, that's over 2000m of lift-connected vertical, directly on tap. You'd better pack that spare set of brake pads.

But there's more. The full potential of the 3 Valleys are unlocked by the Telecabine Olympe – a 3-stage cable car which spans an impressive 6.5km from Brides Les Bains directly back to Meribel Centre. It has always been closed in the summer season, but patient

negotiation over many months gave us a one-day-only opening for the Enduro2 race in 2022. 350 riders high-fiving over lunch in Brides Les Bains seems to have got their attention, and now Brides and Meribel have laid to plans for a regular lift-opening schedule all summer, from 2023. Final details are yet to be officially announced, but the inside word is that it will be at least 3 days per week in 2023. You heard it here first.

If you're looking for a one-day ride which takes in the best elements of Meribel, you'd be pushed to beat Col de La Lune ('Corbassiere' on the Piste-Map). Taking the Toungette Lift out of Meribel centre, for the first hour of the ride you'll progress along a huge

singletrack ridge with views directly to the valley floor on both sides yet with very little exposure. There's some pedalling involved; around 400m gain for 1000m down; but at least it's broken up with chunks of fast, fun descending. After about 8 km, your arrival at a distinctive white iron cross marks the start of the descent proper. At 2093m altitude, you've still got over 1500m of vert still in the bank. This black-graded epic takes in a bit of everything along its 16 km length. Whilst technical and engaging the whole way, it's not extreme by Alpine standards. Open pasture soon gives way to pine forest. Following a natural half-pipe in places, there's plenty off-the-brakes opportunity.



STEP OUT OF THE SAULIRE LIFT AT 2740M BETWEEN THE MERIBEL AND COURCHEVEL SKI AREAS. ITS OVER 2000M BACK DOWN FROM HERE.

At around 1250m the forest turns to Beech, and you'll notice a marked difference in both the terrain (earthy, rather than rocky. This natural roller-coaster of a trail has to be in my all-time top-five trails, period. It's fast, so damned fast! If this is your first time down it, I almost can guarantee: no matter how much you eased off the brakes, you'll wish you'd gone just a smidge faster. This particular adrenaline rush is hard to beat.

“ THIS NATURAL ROLLER-COASTER OF A TRAIL HAS TO BE IN MY ALL-TIME TOP-FIVE TRAILS ”

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Fortunately, the option for a second run is on the table, if you want it. After a refuelling stop in Brides Les Bains, you can jump directly back on the Olympe Chairlift (or take the shuttle) which whisks you directly back to where you started in Meribel Centre. It's certainly possible to take in two full loops of this ridge in one day if you start early – taking in any of the several route variations on offer. But if you've only got one day to spare, you'd be better off hitting up some of the other bike park options directly above Meribel. A personal favourite is the 20-minute+ 'Bellevue' blue-graded descent; an old singletrack that has been carefully (but not excessively) hand-shaped for your MTB-riding pleasure. You'll finish in the picturesque St Martin de Belleville and from there it's only a 20 minute chairlift to bring you right back to trails dropping back into the Meribel valley.

For post-ride entertainment, Jack's bar is where it's at. A stone's throw from the main lift and overlooking the central plaza, they do great food and there's often live music too. Get in early for happy hour, otherwise you'll be paying 8 to 10 Euros a pint: One of the downsides of Meribel's 'high-end' status in the winter season.

But if money is no object, why not fly in directly to the on-site Alpine Airstrip? Assuming you have a stomach for its 'extreme' landing strip of only 500 metres & with gradient of 18.6% (remember the opening sequence to James Bond's 'Tomorrow Never Dies'? Yep, that's the one!).

“ IT'S CERTAINLY POSSIBLE TO TAKE IN TWO FULL LOOPS OF THIS RIDGE IN ONE DAY IF YOU START EARLY ”

BIKE PARK OR WALKING TRAIL? BOTH!



INSET - JACK'S BAR - OUR RECOMMENDATION FOR POST-RIDE REFRESHMENTS



MORE 'RAW' BIKE PARK, THIS TIME IN THE LES MENUIRES VALLEY

ESSENTIAL INFO & RECOMMENDATIONS:

Budget: Hotel Les Grangettes – Twin Rooms from 120 Euros B&B.

Premium: Roam Lodge – Chalet with bike facilities
Catering Options

Camping: Le Piat (Brides Les Bains) – Clean,
Family-run site

Airport Transfers (from Geneva) – Cool Runnings

Bike Shop – Fast Riding People (English speaking)

Lift Pass (2022 prices): €24 (1-day) / €52 (3-Day) /
€68 (7-Day)

Trail Maps & Lift Schedules: Detailed Info Here

Guiding & Backcountry Shuttles –
www.trailAddiction.com

Pairs-Format Enduro in Meribel (1-3 July 2023) –
www.Enduro2.fr

GPX & Map of Our Route: Here (via FATMAP)

Drone Edit: High Alpine riding in Meribel and beyond

Ali Jamieson has works year-round as a guide and MTB event organiser. He spends 6 months per year running guided adventures in the Savoie region, and the rest of his time touring in the backcountry of New Zealand's South Island. Ali established The Trans-Savoie multi-day Enduro and his popular 3-Day Enduro2 pairs-format series has visited locations including Davos (Switzerland), Les Arcs (France), and Nelson (New Zealand).



WORDS JARNO HOOGLAND & COLIN WILLIAMS
PHOTOS FLI DISTRIBUTION

BEHIND THE BRAND: FLI DISTRIBUTION

For many years FLI Distribution has been part of the MTB scene in the UK. Not only by making sure the best components got distributed in the U.K. but also by sponsoring riders, promoting the scene and pushing races. We sat down with Colin from FLI to talk about the past, present and future.



"WE WERE THE FIRST TO DO THIS, AND IT'S SOMETHING I'M STILL PROUD OF."

Colin, Reverse components has been on the market for a long time now. Can you tell us how it all started and how FLi distribution got involved?

Back in 2004 FLi Distribution was in its infancy, evolving slowly out of FLi Race Team Management and we were looking for brands to represent here in the UK, looking after the distribution whilst using our races teams to promote. It always made more

sense to promote our own brands. Reverse and their in-house bike brand Solid Bikes, advertised in Dirt Magazine that they were looking for a UK distributor. The timing and relationship worked well for both brands and we grew things successfully here until 2010/11 when we parted ways on good terms.

We helped them develop the brand and it was the FLi XXL bar that helped establish their global brand pushing the products the racers wanted. Bear in mind that XXL back in those days meant 760mm. Can you imagine... a 760 bar, being cutting edge no one was making one. Sam Dale and Micky Boswell were both juniors racing for us and were

putting extensions in their bars to make them wider. We pushed Reverse to make wider and wider bars, so much so they named it after our company, we were the first to do this, and it's something I'm still proud of.

So even in the early years of mountain biking, FLi was one of the driving forces behind the race scene and supported a wide range of riders. Tell us a little about the early days!

I've personally been racing MTB in the UK since the very early days of the sport here in the UK, I think it was '89 that I did my first one. I've been able to race at a decent level, but realised pretty quickly that I'd be able to get a career out of the sport if I set up the teams that I could race for, rather than try to get picked for someone else's team.

" WE WORKED WITH MANY MANY RIDERS WHO ARE NOW MAKING A LIVING OUT OF THE SPORT. "

What was a group of 5 friends, racing for Leisure Lakes Cycle Shop back in the late 90s evolved into FLi Race Team Management, and I very quickly found myself riding, racing and managing the team for Yeti Europe on the UCI World Cup circuit in the early 2000s. As the racing moved into distribution we ran UCI DH teams with a variety of partners to help promote either Solid, if they were on the bikes, or Reverse in partnership with brands like Yeti and SantaCruz.

We were very much a development team, but we worked with many many riders who are now making a living out of the sport. I'm super proud when I see the progress they've made and I know we helped them with their first steps in the sport. Anyone who was racing back in the 2000s will remember Reverse and Solid and our impact on the sport back then.

As a proper German brand, engineering and testing is a big part of the brand identity. Besides using pro riders like Nico Vink for feedback, how does Reverse work when it comes to testing and product design?

The development process always starts with an initial idea, often brought together from a mixture of rider feedback and our own experiences on the trail. Peter (the founder and owner of Reverse) then works with our engineers to go from sketches to CAD to 3D printing the first prototypes, then producing working prototypes to evaluate feel and function, along with FE analysis. For all load bearing parts, they send them to the EFBE Independent test lab in Germany to ensure that all the products meet the highest possible test standards in fatigue testing.





" WE LEARN ALOT FROM BEING ON THE TRAILS AND TALKING TO RIDERS "

Once the products have cleared the testing, they then give the Pro riders a chance to test the products to evaluate the function, feel and durability under real riding conditions. In this part of the process they make the final changes if needed. Once this process is done, graphics and finish are finalised and they go to production.

Reverse has also come up with quite a few interesting and unique products. Sag and Travel measurement tools, beer can holders, single speed conversion kits are just a few of the innovative solutions Reverse pioneered to the market. How do they come up with these?

We come up with these products in response to what we see as the needs of the riders out there. We spend a lot of time in bikeparks around Europe and we learn a lot from being on the trails and talking to riders and seeing the issues they have. Our team riders are also doing the same, providing feedback on products they want to see and how they would change certain things. We always try to create products that work around industry standards, to provide more options, to increase reliability and performance of the bike.

For example the D-2 Stem was created exactly in this way, to provide a stem option that had the ability to cater for both Ø31.8mm and Ø35mm diameter handlebars. This makes it easier for riders to use their current bars and still have the option to change to a Ø35mm if they want to, it's also a lot easier for shops too. We're now working on a D-2 Direct Mount stem which will be available in early 2023, to provide this option for DH/freeriders with Dual Crown forks.



Besides the signature series and Youth series, you also have a full line up for E-MTB's. What makes these products E-specific?

The E Series was first created in response to German regulations for aftermarket components fitted to an e-bike - bike shops were not allowed to fit a different handlebar to an E-bike they had just sold, unless it met a specific E-Bike standard. We wanted to give people more options for customising their e-bike - so they could swap out a handlebar for another with a different rise for example.

" WE WANTED TO
GIVE PEOPLE MORE
OPTIONS FOR
CUSTOMISING
THEIR E-BIKE "

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"WE'RE ALSO ENGINEERING A PRODUCT WHICH IS NEW FOR US, TO SOLVE ONE OF THE MOST FRUSTRATING PROBLEMS RIDERS GET WHEN GOING AWAY FOR EXTENDED TRIPS"

Now the scope of E Bikes has grown massively, the fact is that with an Enduro Bike you might do one lap of a big loop, but with an E-Bike you could do three, so there's definitely increased loads and fatigue compared to normal riding. Now we're basically using e-bikes as shuttles for DH laps, so we're asking a lot from them in terms of the punishment they go through.

Our E-Series products are tested to EFBE Tri Test, which is the highest possible test level, meeting DH standards. The E-Series range is essentially an overbuilt series of products to put up with the abuse heavier e-bikes take when putting in lap after lap on tough terrain, with a wide range of options for customisation - e.g a big range of rise and back sweep options (up to 12°) in the handlebar range.

With supply times coming down slowly after Covid, can we expect to see some new products on the horizon?

Yes we do have some exciting new products

in the pipeline for 2023. We have a Direct Mount D-2 Stem on the way, some new disc rotors, new grips for Enduro/Gravity use and the Black One JR pedal, the bigger brother pedal in our Youngster pedal line, which is available now.

We're also engineering a product which is new for us, to solve one of the most frustrating problems riders get when going away for extended trips, relating to reliability and serviceability of a really essential element of your bike. We can't say much more than that at the moment, but next year it will be out there! Follow us on social media and our website www.reverse-components.com to keep up with our new releases.



TECHNIQUE

RIDING ON SNOW

Winter is here and depending on where you're positioned on this globe this means you get to ride in some murky conditions. Now most people have been out on the bike in the mud before, but when it comes to riding on snow, it's a new ballgame. Grip is limited to an absolute minimum and to make it out alive you need some tricks up your sleeve. In this Technique article we're going over a plan of attack to keep your rubber side down while riding the white wave and if you do choose to head out when the world is white, you'll find out that it will help you gain valuable bike handling skills for the summer months too.

Grip it's a little like money, it's only important when you run out of it. So when you're heading out for a ride where there's snow involved the first move will be tire choice. Now in some northern countries you can actually buy studded tires over the shelf, the downside is that they turn your wheels into a saw blade. Fairly dangerous when your rear end is dangling over the rear tire, you catch my drift? So to avoid slicing yourself or anyone else open, I'd stick to a mud tire or at least a tire with a big open profile. The longer the knobs the better, think of something like a Magic Mary / Maxxis Shorty or even better a Dirty Dan or a Wetscream. Adjust that tire pressure too. Lower is better, offering more grip and better snow clearance.

" YOU'RE GOING TO SLIP AND SLIDE, AND YOU WANT TO BE LIGHTNING FAST WHEN IT COMES TO PUTTING A FOOT DOWN. "

If you're a clipped in guy or gal, then this is the perfect time to give flat pedals a try. You're going to slip and slide, and you want to be lightning fast when it comes to putting a foot down. Beside that, clips don't work that well in snowy conditions. The snow clogs up your pedal and cleat mechanism, often making it hard to clip in, or worse unclip.

Another thing useful when heading out in these conditions is a proper fender / mudguard. Pick one with as much tire clearance as possible because there will be snow building up all over your bike. On the rest of the gear list will be layers. Lots of them to keep you warm, but more layers also helps in regulating your body temperature. A good wind breaker is especially important as the airflow when riding fast in freezing weather gets you cold to the bones.





" WEIGHT POSITIONING IS ACTUALLY ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS WHEN IT COMES TO RIDING ON SNOW. "

Same goes with gloves, and while you're at it, bring some spares too. In these conditions losing a glove can have serious consequences.

Once kitted out with the right tools for the job it's time to head out for a slip and slide! Reading the terrain is always an important part of the tasklist when riding offroad but in the snow it can mean the difference between riding and going over the bars.

The temperature is key, as the warmer the snow gets, the more your wheels sink into it. With deep patches of snow this inevitably means that you're ejected out the front. Keep your eyes peeled for discolorations in the snow, tire marks of other riders and try to detect any soft spots. Avoid them if you can, but if you must cross make sure you stay relaxed, and put your weight slightly off centre to the back of the bike. That way when your front wheel does make a deep dive, you're ready.

Weight positioning is actually one of the most important things when it comes to riding on

snow. Even when riding on a hardpack snow surface like a ski slope you're going to notice how small shifts in your upper body make a huge difference in which direction you're headed. Riding the white stuff is best done by positioning yourself slightly off the back of the bike and lowering your body position. The deeper and softer the snow, the further you need to hang back to prevent the front from diving. When possible, don't hang all the way behind your saddle. Just a little off centre towards the rear will do, as by unweighing the front you also lose the ability to change direction.

Avoid all sudden movements! By making very slow and gentle adjustments in your body position you will be able to point your bike in the right direction,





just do it slowly, almost as if you're doing everything in slow motion. This makes it important to look as far ahead as you can. Plan your line and more importantly where you brake and turn.

It's also key to stay loose and relaxed. It's slippery so the bike will move beneath you, and you shouldn't fight it either. You will lose the fight I guarantee you! Relax those arms and wiggle those hips as you realise you're a passenger on your bike today. Just try to keep that speed in check and look out for those soft patches.

" PLAN YOUR LINE
AND MORE
IMPORTANTLY
WHERE YOU
BRAKE AND
TURN. "

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On the climbs, try to keep a smooth cadence and stay in the saddle. Pick your line carefully and make sure to have fun. You will not get any KOM's on a snowy bike ride!

" WITH THAT AMOUNT OF POWER ON THE REAR WHEEL, YOU'RE BOUND TO END UP SIDEWAYS OR WORSE "

Love them or hate them, E-bikes are great fun in the snow. The added power makes climbing easier and you'll love the feeling of the rear wheel spinning on the way up. Make sure you don't hit the Turbo mode though, with that amount of power on the rear wheel, you're bound to end up sideways or worse, upside down!

Whether you're going to stick to dog walks and pub visits or head out onto the trails, I hope you enjoyed these tips and will help you have a blast next time it snows.

TRIED AND TESTED



Bang, we're right in the middle of winter but we still keep on going and testing the goods. This issue we give you our opinion on SCOTT's Ransom and Rocky Mountains' Altitude Carbon.

The test team put their feet on the most innovative flat pedals out there; the Pedaling Innovations Catalysts, while sticking their head in the brand new Fox ProFrame RS.

7Mesh has a brand new anorak, so we headed out into the cold to see if it kept us warm and skate brand Etnies sent out a SPD compatible MTB shoe for us to review.

Last but not least Wolftooth partnered with Magura to make an even better version of their minitool. We gave that a good inspection too.

BIKES

- 01 Rocky Mountain Altitude Carbon
- 02 SCOTT Ransom 9000 AXS

ACCESSORIES

- 01 ACS - 7Mesh Chilco Anorak
- 02 ACS - Fox ProFrame RS
- 03 ACS - Etnies Camber CL
- 04 ACS - Wolftooth Magura Tool
- 05 ACS - Pedaling Innovations Catalyst Pedals

WORDS AND PHOTOS IMB TEST TEAM
PHOTO THIS PAGE JULIA BIGIO

BRAND ROCKY MOUNTAIN MODEL ALTITUDE CARBON 70 YEAR 2022

"A GREAT BIKE
FOR THE
ALLROUND
RIDER LOOKING
FOR A STEADY
TOOL FOR THE
JOB."

TO VISIT THEIR
WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



AT A GLANCE

Brand: Rocky Mountain

Model: Altitude Carbon 70

Price: 6900 EUR

Rocky Mountains go to Enduro machine, available in 27,5" and 29" wheel size and either Alloy or Carbon. With 170mm in the front and 160 in the rear it will tackle anything you throw at it.

THE PRODUCT

The Altitude has 160mm of rear wheel travel with a 170mm fork, with different wheel size options depending on the frame size – there are 29" options for M, L, and XL sizes, and 27.5" sizes for S and M sizes. Rocky also offers a full carbon and aluminium framed version of the Altitude, with a total of 8 complete configurations to choose from.

Geometry wise it has the Ride 9 geometry, which (you guessed it) allows for 9 different geometry settings thanks to 2 flip chips. In the neutral setting, the bike has a 65-degree head angle and a 480mm reach in the size L. I was riding with the flip chips in the slackest setting, which is also the most progressive suspension curve.

CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE



BRAND SCOTT MODEL RANSOM 9000 TUNED AXS YEAR 2022

"CLIMBS LIKE A
GOAT AND
DESCENDS
AMAZING ON
STEEP AND
PLAYFUL
TERRAIN"

TO VISIT THEIR
WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



AT A GLANCE

Brand: Scott

Model: Ransom 9000 Tuned AXS

Price: 9499 EUR

SCOTT's answer to 'How to ride it all, fast'. The brand new Ransom is kitted with 170mm of travel front and rear and comes with 29" wheels but a flip chip allows you to switch to 27,5" in a blink. It's available in 5 different build kits with either a carbon or alloy frame.

THE PRODUCT

Ever since its launch in 2006 the Ransom has been improved, tuned and updated and when launched in 2022 it is right up there with the top frame tech out there. From the designers based in Switzerland you can always expect a lightweight and strong design with a lot of smart features. For example their lower pivot area is wider compared to the Genius to have more stiffness in the bb area.

When looking at the frame, you can notice the clean lines and well placed protective rubber to prevent chain slap and rocks chipping into the carbon.

CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE

BRAND 7MESH MODEL CHILCO ANORAK YEAR 2022

"IT WILL BECOME
YOUR GO-TO
PIECE OF
GARMENT
BETWEEN
SEPTEMBER
AND MAY."

TO VISIT THEIR
WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



AT A GLANCE

Brand: 7Mesh

Model: Chilco Anorak

Price: 189 EUR

The 7Mesh Chilco Anorak is a thermal hooded pullover designed for everyday adventure, with a quarter zip and easy-access chest pocket.

THE PRODUCT

Made for rides that are more about finding your way than crossing the finish line, the Chilco Anorak features their new proprietary thermal insulation WTV, an advanced, lightweight loft fabric that dynamically retains or releases heat as you ride. Paired with a woven wind protective outer face fabric, the Chilco Anorak is an exceptionally comfortable second layer that also feels great against the skin.

The hood has an elasticated edge and works with or without a helmet. A large dual-zippered pouch leaves plenty of space for snacks, maps or your phone. It has some reflective details to increase visibility in urban riding too.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND FOX RACING

MODEL PRO FRAME RS

YEAR 2022

"FOX HAS RAISED
THE BAR BY A
MILE AND A
HALF."

TO VISIT THEIR
WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



AT A GLANCE

Brand: Fox Racing

Model: Pro Frame RS

Price: GBP 309,99

The ProFrame RS is Fox's top of the line lightweight full face helmet. It is equipped with Mips and has an adjustable Boa adjustable inner liner and comes in 3 sizes and 7 colours.

THE PRODUCT

When releasing the initial ProFrame, Fox set the standard for lightweight and breathable full face helmets. It offered top notch protection, the breathability of a regular open face helmet and it was so light you barely noticed you had it on your head. How can you improve on that? I'm sure it was a tough assignment for the engineers and designers at Fox. Good news is, they managed. For the brand new Fox Pro Frame RS, they pulled out all stops. They focussed on three things: protection, fit and comfort.

On the protection side they partnered with Mips to create a new system called Integra Split. It features two layers of foam with a low friction liner separating

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)

BRAND ETNIES

MODEL CAMBER CL

YEAR 2022

"PLENTY OF GRIP
OFF THE BIKE
AND IT LOOKS
THE PART TOO."

TO VISIT THEIR
WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



AT A GLANCE

Brand: Etnies

Model: Camber CL

Price: 159,99 EUR

<https://eu.etnies.com/collections/bike/products/camber-cl-mtb-black>

Etnies is mainly known for its skate and leisure shoes, but have been in the MTB market for quite some time now.

The Camber CL is their brand new MTB shoe aimed at the clipped in riders out there. It comes in two colours, 17 sizes and of course there's also a flat pedal version available.

THE PRODUCT

For a first clipless shoe, Etnies did a great job of combining a lot of technical features. Most noticeable is the neoprene "sock" that is there to stop any loam or crud entering your shoes while shredding. Of course there is a velcro strap holding the laces in place while adding some extra pressure and support on the upper part of your foot.

The outsole has a pedal-specific tread pattern created with Formula G – an MTB rubber compound that offers double the adhesion compared to standard rubber.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)



BRAND WOLF TOOTH

MODEL MAGURA STACKABLE TOOL

YEAR 2022

"IT LOOKS AND FEELS ACE, THE QUALITY WORKMANSHIP IS EASY TO BE SEEN HERE."

TO VISIT THEIR WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



AT A GLANCE

Brand: Wolf Tooth

Model: Magura Stackable Tool

Price: Magura tool: 19,95 EUR / Wolf Tooth 8 Bit tool: 66 EUR

Wolf Tooth has its name linked to clever and functional design. Their 8 Bit tool is a feat of modern engineering, offering 17 functions in a tight lightweight package. Magura decided to do a collaboration with Wolf Tooth and create a Magura specific add on to the already popular tool adding 5 more functions to the list.

THE PRODUCT

The 8-Bit tool is a lightweight multi-tool with 17 functions. Eight attachments nest inside the handles of master link pliers using magnets and a clever storage system. These attachments then fit into an 8mm ball detent swivel head that has a 4mm opening for hex bits, which adds functionality to the already-versatile master link pliers. This new multi-tool was created to solve almost any minor repair on MTB and road rides alike.

CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE



" I'D HIGHLY
RECOMMEND
THEM TO ANY
FLAT PEDAL
RIDER,
ESPECIALLY IF
YOU HAVE
LARGER FEET! "

TO VISIT THEIR
WEBSITE, CLICK HERE



AT A GLANCE

Brand: Pedaling Innovations

Model: Catalyst

Price: 149 USD

Pedaling Innovations is out to change the way we pedal. Their ultra oversized Catalyst pedals have the biggest platform surface out there. The pedals come in 5 different colours (black, grey, blue, purple and red) and for riders with size 13US/47EU or larger they make an XL version.

THE PRODUCT

The Catalyst pedals are an invention of James Wilson, a fanatic bike rider and strength coach who has worked with top MTB racers like Gwin and Houseman in the past years. In his work and while out riding he came across a good amount of stigma revolving around flat pedals. They're for DH riders only, they lack pedalling efficiency, if you want to make the most of your pedal stroke you need to be clipped in.

Somehow that felt counterintuitive and he decided to dive into the literature to find proof for being clipped in.

[CLICK OR TAP TO READ MORE](#)





GETTING DIALLED - INDOOR TRAINING

I think I can safely say that we all started riding mountain bikes for the joy of being outside. Breathing in fresh air combined with the action of moving at high speeds over varied terrain. So to grab your trusty steed and put it inside to pedal for hours while literally going nowhere is basically the most counterintuitive thing to do. Yet, I highly recommend it.



" YOUR BODY IS LOSING A LOT OF FLUIDS AND WITHOUT THE PROPER MINERALS YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO ABSORB ANY OF IT. "

Not out of some sadomasochistic preference for suffering, but because we now live in a time where indoor training is more entertaining and bearable than ever. With modern technology at your fingertips (or more at the ball of your feet), you can whizz from a warming up ride in The Netherlands to a 12% climb in Riva Del Garda with the click of a button. And yes, although it might seem like you're still pedaling to nowhere, the real benefit will show next spring when you smoke all your buddies on the up.

Even if you're not the competitive type, doing hard stuff while being fitter is always more fun and it's an added bonus to have some gas in the tank once you reach the top of that long descent in the alps. Of course it will never replace 'proper' riding, but for those cold icy wet murky winter months, indoor training is THE way to stay on top of your game.

To help get you off the couch and make the most of those indoor sessions, I decided to write down my top tips to keep things fun and bearable while spinning the legs on the trainer.

1) Airflow

With no wind in your hair, temperatures rise quickly and I guarantee you that even after 5 minutes in warm-up mode the sweat will be gushing down. So make sure you open a window, and get yourself a fan. Even just a small one will make a big difference.

2) Hydration

Some can ride outside without touching a water bottle for an hour or two, but indoors it's a different story. Make sure you have plenty of water within arms reach and throw in some electrolytes too while you're at it.



“ THE SALTS IN YOUR SWEAT REALLY CAN CAUSE RUST ON MANY BIKE PARTS ”

3) Rust protection

Another form of water management is to get a towel or a purpose made sweat cover to prevent dripping sweat all over your bike. The salts in your sweat really can cause rust on many bike parts so also make sure you wipe your bike clean and dry when you're done.

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Google Play

CLICK THE LOGO
TO DOWNLOAD IT NOW!



" I FIND THAT ONCE YOU MANAGE TO INTEGRATE A NEW ACTIVITY IN YOUR DAILY ROUTINE, YOU'RE WAY MORE LIKELY TO ACTUALLY DO IT "

4) Integrate in your routine

Motivation is of course important but like with every habit you need to train yourself to show up first. I find that once you manage to integrate a new activity in your daily routine, you're way more likely to actually do it and keep up the work. See what your daily routine is and plan in the training session accordingly. Or even better, replace social media scrolling with spinning on the rollers!

5) Small bites

Start small. Doing a 2 hour ride indoors is by far the hardest thing you will ever do so cut

down the time in the beginning. From a training perspective, doing 30' each day brings you much more than doing one big 1,5h session per week. Also you're much less likely to get burned out if you keep sessions short and sweet.

6) Remove all barriers

Don't fool yourself, it will be rare that you'll be jumping of joy to start a workout (once you're going you're fine) so it's important to remove any barrier that can prevent you from starting. Just the act of installing the bike in the trainer or finding your cycling shoes can be enough to abort the mission so

make sure you prep your kit and can be ready in no time. I personally like to only keep my riding shorts and shoes next to bed. That way I roll from the mattress, automatically put on riding shorts and as I'm already dressed to ride, I'll just do it first thing in the morning.

7) Gamer vs Realist

Different people, different preferences. You can choose between different software to guide your training sessions. For the competitive gamers out there, Zwift is your thing. You find yourself racing in a virtual world against real people and there are a bunch of scheduled training programs to choose from.

If you're more of a realist, go for the Tacx app. There you see yourself riding in videotaped environments in exotic places like Norway, Italy, the Alps, Netherlands and many more. The feeling is realistic, even the gravel and cobblestones resonate in your pedal strokes!

8) Distraction

No matter how good the software is, you can always use some distraction while on the trainer. Plug into Spotify for some tunes, watch Game of Thrones again or catch up on the latest Podcasts. Now is the time. No idea what to listen to? I won't go and dictate music choice but I can highly recommend the following podcasts:

The Huberman Lab

The Rich Roll Podcast

The Downtime Podcast

Looking Sideways

9) Test

The modern indoor trainer is a great tool for doing a periodical fitness test. By doing a regular FTP (Fitness Threshold Power i.e. what power you can put out consistently for 1 hour) test you can get a good idea on how fit you are and what progress you are making. Beating your personal best on a regular basis is a great way to stay motivated.

There you have it, 9 solid tips on making sure you get the most out of indoor cycling this winter. I hope this is helpful and i'll catch you on the trail again in Spring, fitter than ever!

" THE FEELING IS REALISTIC, EVEN THE GRAVEL AND COBBLESTONES RESONATE IN YOUR PEDAL STROKES! "



FOREST CHASE
PHOTO VERBIER BIKEPARK



Lightbox More shots with no particular place
to go this issue, feast your eyes!

LIGHTBOX

GLOOMY SWITCHBACKS - AOSTA VALLEY
PHOTO CHARGE MEDIA



Lightbox

LIGHTBOX

SEMENUK DROPPING IN AT RAMPAGE
PHOTO CHRISTIAN PONDELLA



Lightbox

LIGHTBOX

BECOMING DWARFED IN THE HIGH ALPINE
PHOTO SOREN RICKARDS

Lightbox

LIGHTBOX

KAOS SEAGRAVE STYLIN'
PHOTO DANNY WALMSLEY



Lightbox

LIGHTBOX

NIGHT TIME ADVENTURES
PHOTO SPECTRA LIGHTS

Lightbox

GODZIEK FLIPPING A HUGE CANYON
PHOTO BARTOSZ WOLINKSI

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SUNSET RIVER SPLASH BY ALESSANDRO
PHOTO CHARGE MEDIA

LIGHTBOX

REMY METAILLER BLURRING PAST
PHOTO ALEXANDRE CHAPELLIER

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LIGHTBOX

SCOTTY LAUGHLAND AT BEINN A'BHUIRD
PHOTO SCOTT

Lightbox

The IMB website is crammed with news and videos every day, we only show the best videos, so to make it onto the site is an achievement in itself.

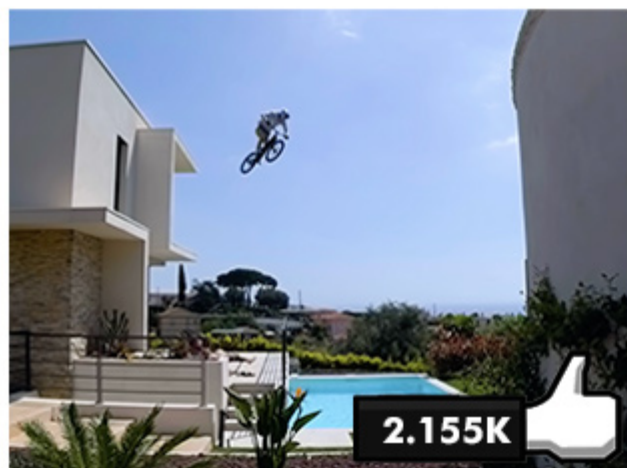
These are the 4 most popular videos that have been viewed on the site as voted for by you with your thumbs up likes in the last 2 months! Check out the full list [HERE](#), and if you see a video you like on the site, give it the thumbs up, it might just help to push it onto this page!

MOVIE NIGHT

#1

VIDEO GAME

Fabio Wibmer's life is a lot like a video game. While filming however he found out crashing does have consequences. Out of action for almost a year, Fabio is back from injury and ready to make your jaw drop in an epic must see edit!


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#2

THE SOUND OF SPEED

Brage Vestavik is a unique and artistic soul who likes to build, create and inspire. This edition of the Sound of Speed showcases his brutal speed and aggressive riding style that will leave you in awe and his rear wheel in pieces.


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#3

8600 FEET

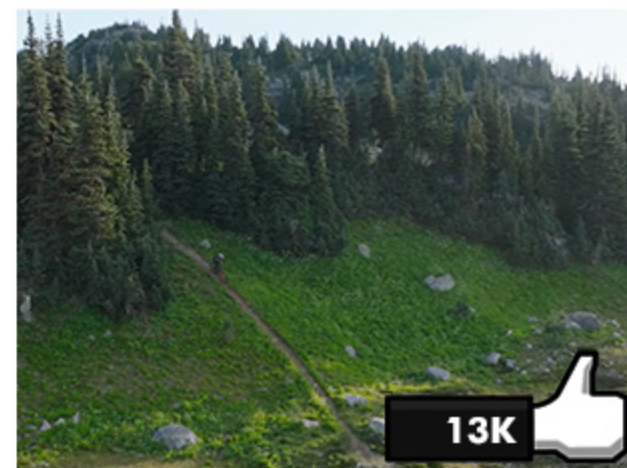
The Whole Enchilada trail is one of the most iconic descents in the U.S. if not the world. Braydon Bringham however sees things from a different perspective, and decides to ride the entire trail backwards, climbing 8600ft in one go.


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#4

A DAY IN WHISTLER

Johnny Salido takes you on an epic day of riding in Whistler B.C. From cruising down the singletrack in the high alpine meadows, down to the world renowned bike park, Johnny likes to mix it up while keeping it stylish!


[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)



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