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Men's Journal

LIVE THE INTERESTING LIFE

AUGUST 2010 | VOL. 19 | NO. 6



Brett Favre

The Private World & Tough Choices of a Very Happy Man

5 Meals Every Man Should Master

The Jock's Guide to Getting Arrested

by Matt Taibbi

//SPECIAL REPORT//

The Well from Hell

Inside the Deadly Final Hours of the Deepwater Horizon

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David LaChapelle *for* Rolling Stone

Young people do everything online. Like order millions of magazines.

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Contrary to popular misperception, the phenomenal popularity of the Internet has not come at the expense of magazines. Readership is actually increasing, and adults between 18 and 34 are among the most dedicated readers. They equal or surpass their over-34 counterparts in issues read per month and time spent per issue.

What's changed isn't people's affinity for magazines but the means by which they acquire them. Last year, nearly 22 percent of all new paid subscriptions were ordered online.

And just as the Internet drives magazine subscriptions, magazines drive Web searches – with nearly double the effectiveness of the Internet itself. Some might call it ironic.

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A MAN'S MEAL

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*EPA-estimated. V6 coupe with automatic. Custom vehicle shown. See dealer for details.



Ford

Drive one.

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LETTERS



Adventure race as marriage therapy? The 151-mile New Zealand Coast to Coast.

I JUST FINISHED "WHAT DOESN'T KILL US WILL SAVE OUR Marriage" [by Brad Wieners, May] and have to say it was one of my favorite articles. So many dudes — myself included — can relate to having an insane appetite for adventure when their wives/girlfriends would sometimes rather take it easy. It's all about balance and convincing her (sometimes easy, sometimes hard) of how awesome it will feel to accomplish something outside of her comfort zone. My wife and I realized this a few years ago (she's now three marathons deep) and have promised that we will take trips that alternate between crazy and cozy. Thanks for reminding us of the key to a great relationship. *—Dave Mann, Brooklyn, NY*

BIG ON DOWNEY

I LOVED MAY'S COVER STORY ["Robert Downey Jr.'s Cosmic Punishment," by Stephen Rodrick]. It's a succinct insight into a complex character.

—JOHN DONEY
Norwich, England

RDJ MAKES PERFECT SENSE to me. I just wish he could share his wisdom with more people.

—JANE CAIN
Austin

WAR TORN

SEBASTIAN JUNGER CLAIMS war is exciting ["Q&A: Sebastian Junger," by Corey Seymour, May], but he did not write about his Achilles tendon torn in Afghanistan because "it wasn't that interesting." From everything I have read about war as well as my own experience in the military, uninteresting is exactly the nature of the experience. Nor did he mention that 30 veterans attempt suicide every day, with 18 succeeding. That is 20 percent of the total 30,000 suicides committed in this country every year. Mr. Junger, that is no "liberal fiction," but straight from the *Army Times*.

—PAM HARMS
Dumfries, VA

TAIBBI THE GREAT

AWESOME ARTICLE ["THE NFL Draft, Decoded," by Matt Taibbi, May]. It's entertaining and funny as hell. Taibbi's comparison of quarterbacks to cats and teenage girls: genius.

—JOSEPH S. NICOLA
Fort Worth, TX

TAIBBI WRITES THE BEST sports column since Hunter S. Thompson's "Hey Rube." I nearly soiled myself at least three times while reading him.

—MICHAEL S. SMITH
Dacula, GA

I'M SLOWLY COMING TO THE conclusion that Taibbi's writing is worthy of the genius tag. I really don't agree with this dude's politics, but I have to admit what I am seeing — that he's the best, most original columnist in the world right now, by a mile. Bill Simmons, watch your back: Your time at the top has ended.

—SAM SHAH
from mensjournal.com

BORN AGAIN

ABOUT FIVE YEARS AGO, I was a junior in college working at a gym in Wisconsin when I saw an article in *Men's Journal* about Colorado and the life to be had with a physical lifestyle. I moved to Denver a week after graduation and am now in outdoors shape — I snowboard, hike 14ers, camp, mountain bike, etc. — rather than gym shape. I live a life that I never imagined possible. I have been an off-and-on subscriber for years, but just thought that I would send a thank-you for inspiring a life change in myself and, I am sure, in others.

—JEFFREY RICE
Denver

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David Katz

"THE HUMAN MISSILE," *page 48*

"My beats as a writer seem to be personal humiliation, sexy women, and food," says Katz, who in this month's piece on high-altitude skydiver Felix Baumgartner explores another subject he's dabbled in. "I've skydived...once. I think the thought was that I would get to dive with Felix and perhaps wet myself, but that didn't work out." Katz, 35, recently left New York for L.A. to write for the new William Shatner sitcom, *Sh*t My Dad Says*.



Victor Juhasz

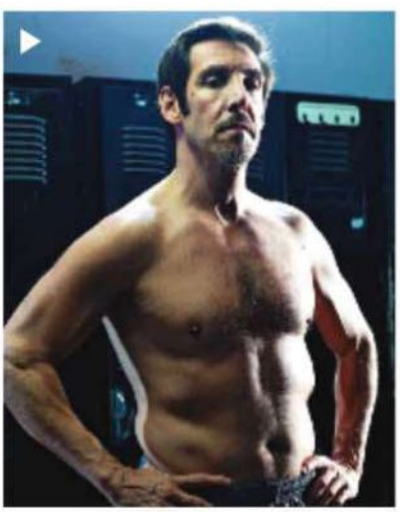
"THE JOCK'S GUIDE TO GETTING ARRESTED," *page 58*

Juhasz has illustrated Matt Taibbi's sports column since it started two years ago. And though the two have met only once, they're kindred spirits. "We share a similar sense of despair about our species, and I try to convey that through the drawings," says Juhasz, 56, who has illustrated several highly acclaimed children's books.

Paul Solotaroff

"CONFESSIONS OF A STEROID ADDICT," *page 88*

"This story's been burning a hole in my memory and imagination for the past 30 years," says Solotaroff, 55, about his fall into steroid abuse. It took him more than five years, but the MJ contributing editor's story, adapted from his new book, *The Body Shop*, is finally finished. What's next? "I'm going to sleep for a year."





Bret Anthony Johnston

"DANNY WAY AND THE GIFT OF FEAR," *page 106*

"I started skating because I saw *Back to the Future*," says Johnston, who grew up in Texas obsessed with the sport. "At 38 I still skate a few times a week." The author of *Corpus Christi: Stories* and winner of a National Book Award for writers under 35 (he's also the director of creative writing at Harvard), Johnston is one of our go-to book critics and an obvious fit for this month's profile of skateboarder Danny Way. "Although we never skated together — which ego-wise is for the best — we could speak in shorthand because of shared experiences."



FROM OUR CONTRIBUTORS

Peter Heller's Fantastic Voyage

ONE MORNING *MEN'S JOURNAL* CONTRIBUTING EDITOR PETER Heller had a bright idea: He'd drop everything, pick up a surfboard, and learn to surf in six months. He started in Huntington Beach, California, and traveled down the Baja coast, learning a few things along the way: Do not just paddle into the lineup at the Huntington Beach pier and start talking to the bros like it's a cocktail party. Do not tie your boards to the roof of your car nose-first or let out a rebel yell when you do manage to stand up. And when a ripper with a snake tattoo running down his neck hurts your feelings by yelling, "You f@%*ing kook, get the f@%* out of the water!" do what the nice man says. In the end he survived, became a damn good surfer, *and* wrote a damn good memoir about the experience, *Kook*, out on July 13 via Free Press.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY DAVID KATZ; VICTOR JUHASZ; COURTESY BRET ANTHONY JOHNSTON; EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM; ERIC OGDEN


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WISH YOU WERE HERE

Antelope Canyon,

near Page, Arizona

FROM JULY THROUGH AUGUST, THE high-noon sun that shines directly into Antelope Canyon — a sandstone slot carved out of the expanses of desert near Arizona's northern border — is called God's Beam. But photographer Scott Spiker prefers the early mornings, when the canyon has few tourists and the sun serves more as an illuminator than a spotlight. "It's one of the most beautiful phenomena I've seen," says Spiker, who was touring the quarter-mile slot canyon when he got this shot of an unknown hiker last summer. Located on Navajo land, the canyon offers visitors two tours: the Crack (the upper canyon) or a more arduous hike through the Corkscrew (the lower canyon, seen here). Both are accessible only with a Navajo guide and come with some degree of risk: A flash flood washed through the canyon in 1997, killing 11 hikers. A few security measures, including metal and rope ladders, have since been added (*$26 for a lower-canyon tour, including park-permit fee; navajonationparks.org*).

—DACUS THOMPSON

NOTEBOOK

AUGUST 2010



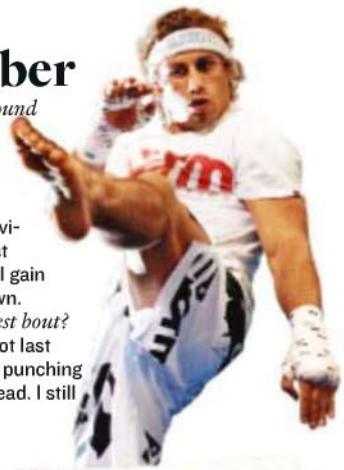


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ATHLETE TO WATCH

Urijah Faber



You're the former 145-pound division world champion in cage fighting. What's next?
I dropped 10 pounds to fight in the 135-pound division on August 18 against Takeya Mizugaki; then I'll gain 20 to try for the 155 crown.
What's been your toughest bout?
In round one of a title shot last year, I broke my hand by punching a guy on the top of his head. I still finished the fight.



Ball Bag

Designed by the members of Manhattan's Chinatown Soccer Club, the Incase Soccer Bag allows you to chuck your ball and cleats into one end and your 17-inch MacBook into the other *($200; goincase.com)*.

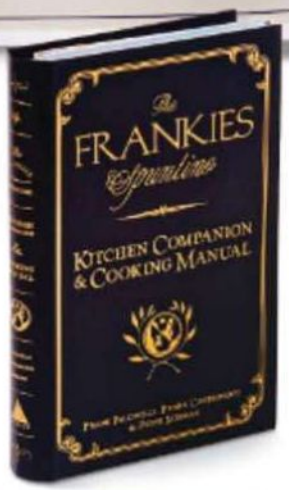
WHAT'S NEW

AUGUST 2010



Wake and Rock

The draw at Wakestock — the world's largest wakeboarding event, in Collingwood, Ontario — is the boarders getting huge air and nailing tricks that seem like suicide missions. Second billing? A show by Public Enemy *($20; wakestock.com)*.



Home Cooking

The guys behind Brooklyn's Frankies Spuntino restaurant have made high art out of casual Italian food. Their new book explains how you can, too *($25)*.



Sailor's Delight

The new iNavX iPhone app puts thousands of maps and charts — essentially every harbor and coastline in the United States and Canada — at your fingertips, with GPS-enabled real-time chart plotting and current tide and weather forecasts to boot *($50; apple.com)*.



Stay Free

Through October 12, volunteer for five hours over a five-night stay at Soneva Gili or Soneva Fushi — two spectacular resorts in the Maldives — and get the next five nights free *(from $2,675; sixsenses.com)*.

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Extend the Summer

SIX EXCELLENT GETAWAYS FOR LABOR DAY AND BEYOND

by ROBERT EARLE HOWELLS



Soaking and sunbathing in the pools near Mammoth Lakes

PERFECT WEEKENDS

FOR MANY, LABOR DAY SIGNIFIES THE LAST GASP OF summer, but it doesn't have to — in fact, the week immediately after the holiday is often the best time to stage a full-on summer vacation. Book one of these trips and you can cram a whole season's worth of R&R into one long weekend, or unwind for a full week while the weather's still good and most of the tourists have gone home.

BIKING & PADDLING

Mammoth Lakes, California

GIVE IT: Five days
SHELL OUT: $$
ADRENALINE FACTOR:

MAMMOTH'S SNOWFALLS ARE SO, well, mammoth that it's easy to forget how glorious summer is around the Sierra resort. Day-hiking trails such as Mammoth Crest (three miles) hint at the surrounding high country, but most of the buzz is on the mountain itself. Freeriders can grab a gondola to the 11,053-foot summit and bomb runs like Twilight Zone, which incorporates a new 50-foot wall ride (think two-wheeled halfpipe). But more than 70 miles of trails mean ample singletrack that's groomed so masterfully you'll finish runs that look unrideable at first glance. Bike rangers aid the lost, the queasy, and the flatted, and shuttles connect the trailheads (*$42; mammothmountain.com*). Finally, take a day to paddle nearby Mono Lake. You'll thread through tufas that rise from the lake's intense brine; make your way to the creek inlet, where migrating birds muster by the thousands (*$110; calderakayak.com*). The resorts at Mammoth almost always have rooms, but for a smaller lakeside retreat, try Tamarack Lodge & Resort (*$109; tamaracklodge.com*).

RAFT, RIDE & SWIM

Lehigh Gorge, Pennsylvania

GIVE IT: Two days
SHELL OUT: $$
ADRENALINE FACTOR:

YOU'VE GOT TWO WAYS TO RUN Lehigh Gorge, a 1,000-foot vertical drop through the western Poconos — by raft, courtesy of dam releases that will rev up the Lehigh River's whitewater on both September 4 and 5, and by bike, thanks to a 25-mile hard-packed gravel trail skirting the river. Our advice? Do both. Pocono Whitewater's raft run is a half-day of Class III — plenty of thrills, but still G-rated. If anyone's squeamish about it, just wait till Monday when it settles down to Class I and II and some stretches become swimmable (*$60 and $40 respectively; whitewaterrafting.com*). The same outfit rents bikes and operates shuttles, so you can choose to barrel downhill for either 15 miles or the full 25,

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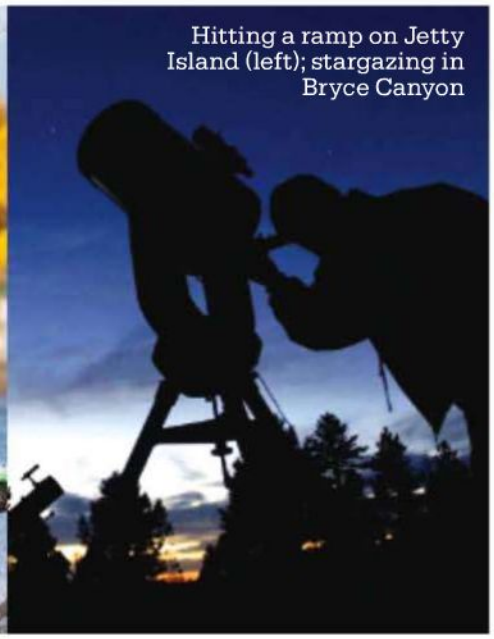
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Hitting a ramp on Jetty Island (left); stargazing in Bryce Canyon

then get a lift back (*$40*). The trail is small fry–friendly, too; the outfitter rents kiddie cabooses, child seats, and even pet carriers. The nearby town Jim Thorpe has a host of B&Bs, and the full-service Split Rock Resort & Golf Club has lakeside rooms (*from $183; splitrockresort.com*).

KITEBOARDING

Jetty Island, Washington

GIVE IT: The full three-day weekend
SHELL OUT: $$$
ADRENALINE FACTOR:

ALL OF THE UNIVERSE'S LEARN-TO-kiteboard elements are in perfect alignment in late August and early September on Jetty Island, an unpopulated sandbar a half-mile offshore from the Port of Everett. There's wind steady as a blow-dryer, surprisingly warm (65 to 70 degrees) shallow water, and a kiting school offering one-on-one sessions with a Jet Ski–mounted instructor who gets you upwind in addition to doling out the usual personal attention. The result? All the rush-inducing parts of kiting without the boring, hard parts, so you get hooked immediately and progress quickly. Seattle Kiteboarding Center will set you up with a six-hour lesson (*$299; gokiting.com*) and then let you demo gear the rest of the weekend to polish your new skills against a backdrop of bald eagles soaring and the shadows of Baker and Rainier looming. The Inn at Port Gardner in Everett is a short walk from the free Jetty ferry and offers special rates to kiters (*$100; innatportgardner.com*).

CANOEING, KAYAKING, FISHING & BIKING

Au Sable River, Michigan

GIVE IT: The full three-day weekend
SHELL OUT: $
ADRENALINE FACTOR:

CONVENTIONAL WISDOM SAYS THE Au Sable River has the best trout fishing and canoeing in the Midwest; ask a local, though, and they'll likely pit their river, with its gin-clear, easily wadable water, against almost any stream in the country. It's no slouch for scenery, either, particularly where it runs through the pine forests near Grayling (ditto the equally fishable Manistee). Penrod's Au Sable River Resort is in the thick of it all and rents cabins (*from $64; penrodscanoe.com*), canoes, kayaks, and mountain bikes. The Class I water makes for easy paddling, and nearby Hartwick Pines State Park has a 7.5-mile all-terrain loop. If you go for the fish, try Old Au Sable Fly Shop in Grayling for rentals and hatch advice (*oldausable.com*).

HIKING & SKYWATCHING

Bryce Canyon, Utah

GIVE IT: Two days
SHELL OUT: $
ADRENALINE FACTOR:

BECAUSE NEARBY LIGHT POLLUTION and haze are minimal, Bryce Canyon National Park's night sky is among the darkest in the Northern Hemisphere. Its firmament is jaw-dropping to behold: so black, and its heavenly bodies so bright, that *planets* cast shadows (namely, Jupiter and Venus). The viewing on Labor Day weekend, though, is especially spectacular. An absence of moon means conditions are absolutely perfect for observing an unusual double conjunction of four planets: Venus and Mars in the early evening and Uranus and Jupiter around 11 PM. With field scopes, you can see each pair in a single field of view (*nps.gov/brca*).

FIRST-LOOK FILMS

Telluride, Colorado

GIVE IT: Five days
SHELL OUT: $$$$
ADRENALINE FACTOR:

SO HIP IS THE TELLURIDE FILM FEST (September 3–6) that it doesn't even announce its programs until the afternoon before opening night. But given that every film is a North American premiere, the buzz is pretty zingy (*Brokeback Mountain* and *Juno* opened here). Despite the star power (Sean Penn is a regular), Telluride keeps it all relatively real. It's possible for mortals to catch films after passes (*$780*) sell out — there are free shows in outdoor venues, a Cinephile pass to select films (*$390*), late-show tickets (*$40*) — and open seats go on sale for all seven indoor theaters once pass-holders settle in (*telluridefilmfestival.org*).

BEFORE YOU GO

Download these three new apps for your trip.

FOR THE SUN
After selecting your environment and skin type, **Sunblock** will find your location and the day's UV index to calculate how long you should be in the sun and how much SPF protection you should apply (*$2; apple.com*).

FOR THE DRIVE
Plot your stops to save on gas with **GasBuddy**, which shows you all the nearest gas stations and prices, providing driving directions and more info about each gas station — like if it has a car wash (*$3; apple.com*).

FOR THE WAVES
Oakley Surf Report gives updated wave forecasts, calculates up-to-the-minute drive times to the rollers, and provides swell reports and water temps from thousands of the world's best big-wave beaches (*free; apple.com*).

FROM LEFT: JIM STRINGFELLOW; FRANCISCO KJOLSETH/THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE/AP PHOTO

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Day's end in the Heritance Kandalama's infinity pool

WHERE NEXT

Sri Lanka Reborn

AFTER YEARS OF UPHEAVAL, SRI LANKA SHINES AGAIN — WITH STEEP DISCOUNTS AIMED TO LURE YOU HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD.

WITH MUCH OF ITS COAST REBUILT AFTER 2004'S DEVASTATING tsunami and a decades-long civil war that ended last year, Sri Lanka is ready to welcome visitors — so eagerly, in fact, that some of its top resorts have cut rates aggressively enough to make the 19-plus hours in the air well worth it. The luxurious Amanwella resort, for example, recently dropped its suites from $550 to $350 per night (*amanresorts.com*). What's more, the jungle island now boasts well-run rafting trips and wildlife safaris to go with the beaches, food, and historic sites it's long been known for — the ideal mix for an exotic vacation that's never boring.

World-Class Beaches

THE BEACHES IN THE SOUTHERN part of the country are some of the world's finest. And the best of the bunch is Unawatuna. It's on the small side (only a half-mile long), but the semicircular bay is a perfect spot to swim, snorkel, and windsurf beneath the giant stupa (Buddhist shrine) situated on the hill behind the sands. If it's too crowded there, try nearby Goyambokka Beach, a coconut tree-lined spot that, if you're lucky, you might just have to yourself. Book a private cottage at the Palm Paradise Cabanas for less than $40 a night (*palmparadisecabanas.net*); when you need a bit more action, the breaks in Hikkaduwa

MATTHEW WAKEM/AURORA PHOTOS



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PS3

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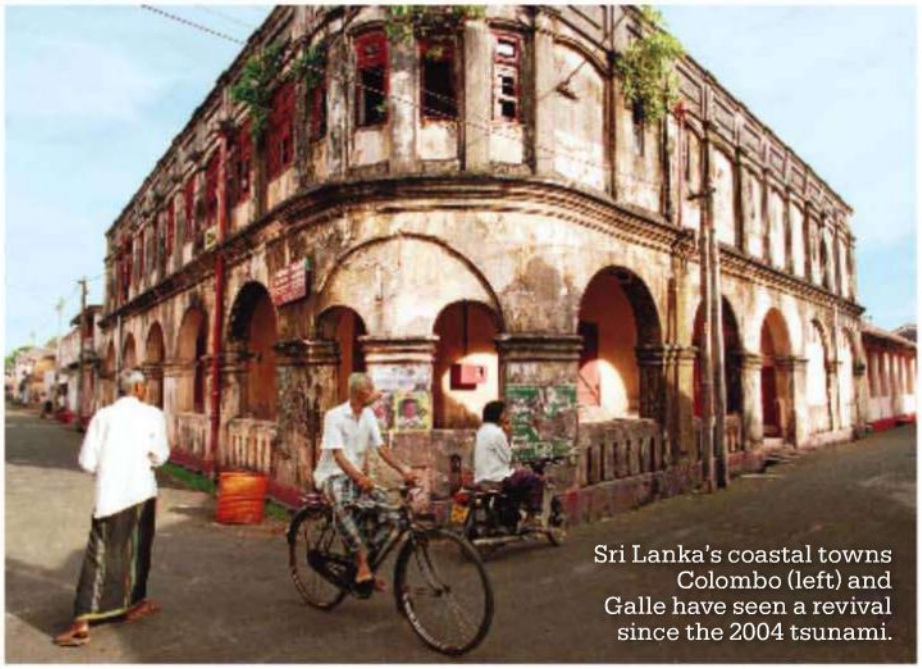
3D world
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Sri Lanka's coastal towns Colombo (left) and Galle have seen a revival since the 2004 tsunami.

on Sri Lanka's west coast and Arugam Bay in the east are near flawless. Or check out the little-known Mirissa Beach near the surf-centric Talalla Retreat, where eight-foot swells are commonplace (*from $70 per night; talallaretreat.com*).

Unique Cuisine

SRI LANKA'S CURRIES ARE DISTINCT — heavy on coconut milk, and lots of fresh red and yellow chiles — and some of the hottest in the world. The country's best curry restaurants, though, are in its hotels, including the Curry Bowl Guesthouse in Hikkaduwa Beach, a garden oasis of calm just off a bustling stretch of sand. But the roadside cafes hold their own too, especially those on the coast, such as the Angler in Colombo, which specializes in freshly caught *seer* (the local mackerel). If you grow tired of curry, try the Italian fare at Il Camino, near the Amanwella resort on the south coast. The Italian-owned restaurant specializes in pasta *al forno* (read: glorified lasagnas), but if you order only one dish, try the bolognese.

Temples from 5 A.D.

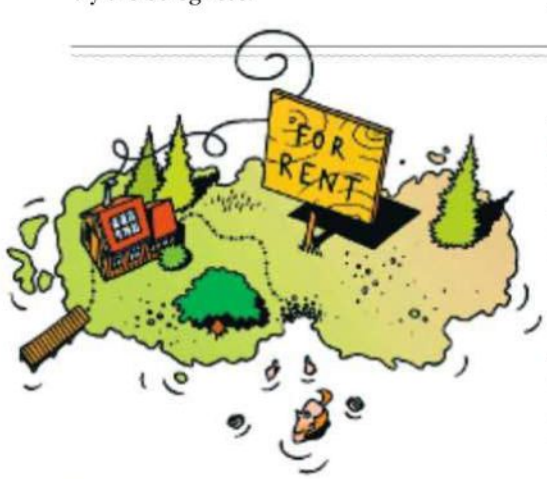
SRI LANKA IS LOADED WITH HISTORIC Buddhist and Hindu sites, including the mountaintop rock fortress Sigiriya, one of Sri Lanka's ancient cities. It's a 45-minute climb to the top, done in part via a metal spiral staircase that seems to barely cling to the edge of the rock. But it's worth the risk — the view from the summit of terraced gardens and lush greenery is spectacular. If you're looking to stay in five-star luxury in the surrounding hill country, book a room at the nearby Heritance Kandalama hotel (*from $140; heritancehotels.com*) before heading 50 miles south to the country's cultural capital, Kandy, a teeming market city of 110,000. Save a couple of days to explore Kandy's rambling colonial buildings and temples, one of which, the Temple of the Tooth, houses the relic of the tooth of Buddha amid the royal palace complex. The city also serves as gateway to the tea plantations in the hills, where you can travel the rolling Tea Trails and spend the night lakeside in one of four peaceful tea-planter's bungalows in the Bogawantalawa Valley at 4,000 feet (*from $197 per couple, all inclusive; teatrails.com*).

Wild Rivers & Wildlife

FOR THOSE LOOKING FOR WHITEWATER, the Kelani River, which runs through Colombo, boasts Class III and IV rapids (movie buffs take note: This is where *The Bridge on the River Kwai* was shot) (*from $20; srilankanexpeditions.com*). Farther north is Minneriya National Park; during the country's civil war, the park's trekking safaris were infrequent and poorly attended, but now they're lively affairs boasting water buffalo, spotted deer, scores of aquatic-bird species, and the largest gathering of Asian elephants in the world. —MATT HENDRICKSON

GETTING THERE

Emirates flies to Colombo from New York through Dubai for about $1,500, or jet to London (we recommend a night's stay there en route), and Sri Lankan Airlines can fly you to Colombo for about $1,100.



An Island That's Yours for the Weekend

The Land Conservancy of British Columbia purchased South Winchelsea Island in 1998 to protect its endangered Garry oak habitat. Three miles off Vancouver Island (a two-hour ferry ride from Vancouver), the whole 25-acre island — and its three-bedroom, solar-powered cottage on the north end — can be rented for just $275 per night. Use the lone trail to access a rocky beach with a view of the Georgia Strait broken only by the odd humpback whale. Get there via crab-boat taxi, or paddle out in a kayak or canoe (*conservancy.bc.ca*). —ROBERT EARLE HOWELLS

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◀ **YE OLDE RUCKSACK**
What the English-made **Albam Summit Pack** lacks in technical features it makes up for in clean style and classic materials: sail canvas and vegetable-tanned leather trim. [*$193; albamclothing.com*]



◀ **PERFECT SHOT**
Blending SLR-style swappable lenses with pocket-cam portability creates the best-of-both-worlds **Sony Alpha NEX-5**. [*$650; sonystyle.com*]

THE WISH LIST

WHAT WE'RE COVETING THIS MONTH



▲ **THE BEAUTIFUL GAME**
The curvaceous, aluminum-framed **Audi Design Soccer Table** brings supercar panache to your game room. [*$16,000; original-leonhart.com*]

▼ **LUDDITE ESPRESSO**
Requiring only hot water and brute strength, but no electricity, the **Presso Espresso Maker** delivers eco-friendly java. [*$150; presso.us*]



▲ **HARD HITTER**
The carbon-fiber **Donic CarboTec 100** allows for more power and control than a wood paddle and oozes intimidation. [*$99; donic-schildkroet.com*]





▲ **WALL WATCH**
The **Bremont Marine Clock**, with its custom mechanical movement, is like a Rolex for your yacht's bridge. [*$58,000; bremont.com*]

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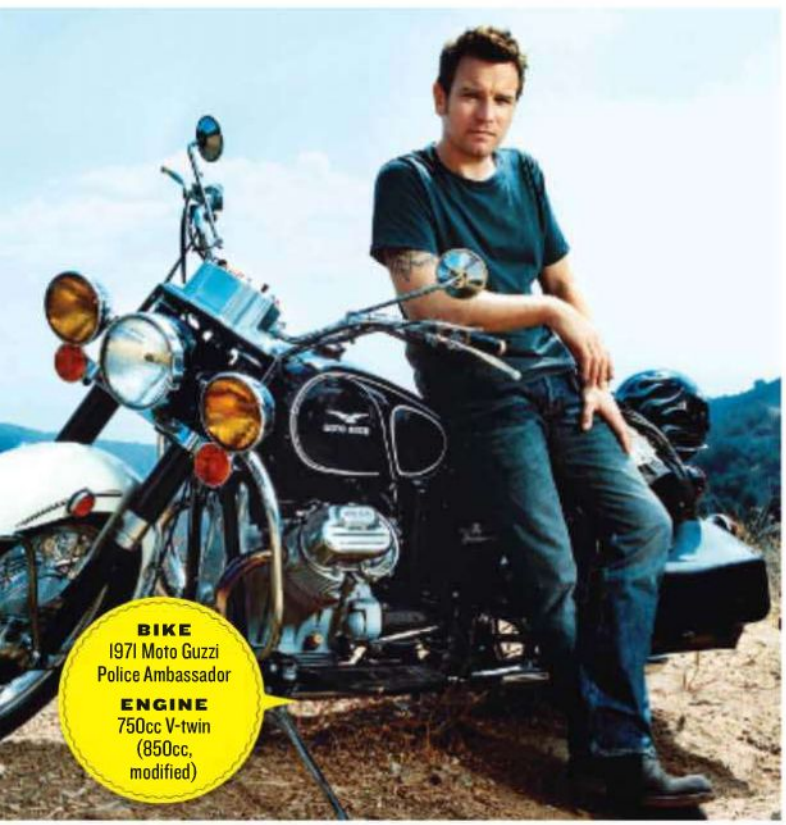
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My Ride

WE ASKED A HANDFUL OF THROTTLERS ABOUT THEIR FAVORITE MOTORCYCLE ROUTES AND THE BIKES THEY TAKE ON THEM. WHAT THEY TOLD US STARTED OUT WITH DIRECTIONS — BUT VEERED INTO HARD-WON ROAD WISDOM.

by **DARREN REIDY**



Ewan McGregor's Highlands Ramble

ENDPOINTS: John O'Groats, Scotland, and Gairloch, Scotland
ROUTE: A836W, A897S, B873W, A832W **DISTANCE:** 210 miles
ESTIMATED TIME: 5 hours

ON A TRIP WITH MY FRIEND Charley Boorman down to Cape Town in 2007, we had the most extraordinary off-road riding through northern Ethiopia. Still, I think the most beautiful riding anywhere is on the small single-track roads — B routes, and some high-numbered A routes — of the Highlands, in the northwest of Scotland. If you meet someone coming the other way, you could be in trouble, but that adds to the excitement. The scenery is stunning. It's very often raining, but if you get a good day, there's nothing like riding in the fresh Scottish air. My everyday bike is a 1971 Moto Guzzi Police Ambassador. If I'm going with my dog, Sid, I'll take my 2009 desert-colored Ural — the sidecar bike that the Russians have been making since the Second World War.

McGregor and actor-adventurer Charley Boorman filmed their long-distance motorcycle odysseys for the Long Way Round *and* Long Way Down *television documentary series. McGregor's last film was* The Ghost Writer.



Billy Joel's New England Coastline

ENDPOINTS: Salem, Massachusetts, and Portsmouth, New Hampshire
ROUTE: 127N, 133W, 1AN, 1N, 1AN
DISTANCE: 86 miles
ESTIMATED TIME: 2 hours 40 minutes (one way)

WHEN WE GO ON TOUR, I bring sometimes half a dozen motorcycles for me and a couple of guys on the crew. We've done the West Coast, Napa Valley, British Columbia, the southwest, and Louisiana, and I own a house in Miami, so I ride in Florida. But to me the best riding is in New England. You start in Salem and you go up Route 127 to Gloucester along the Massachusetts coast. Then you go all the way around Cape Ann, which probably has remained close to what it originally was for a couple hundred years now. You come back around the top end of Cape Ann and hit Route 133, which will take you up through Essex and Ipswich. From there you can pick up Route 1A, which you take north to Newburyport, near the New Hampshire border. You go north from there on Route 1 for a bit, then jog back to Route 1A and head up the coast again to Portsmouth. I try to do this route once a year in late summer, early fall. There's not a lot of high-speed riding, but you're going along the coast for a good amount of time. It's scenic, with picturesque seaside villages, beautiful countryside, and nice twisty roads. It's a Zen ride.

After finishing a yearlong world tour with Elton John, Joel is taking some time off to ride.





ENDPOINTS: Richmond, Virginia, and the George Washington National Forest
ROUTE: 711W, 522N, 6W, 29S, 56 to the Blue Ridge Parkway
DISTANCE: 120 miles
ESTIMATED TIME: 2 hours 15 minutes (one way)

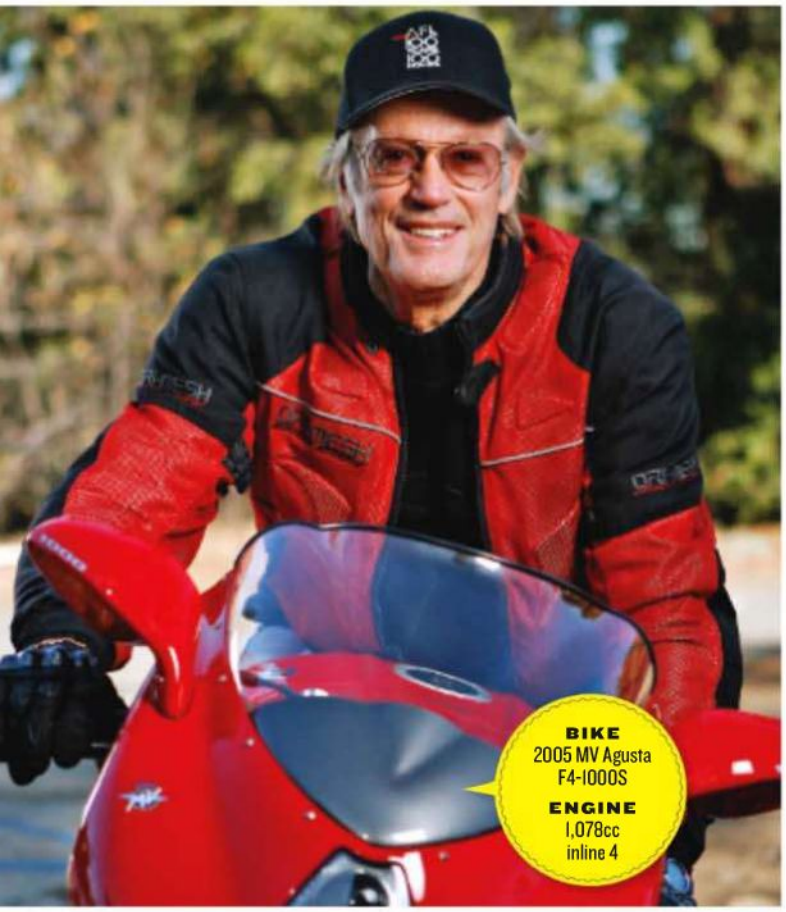
MATTHEW CRAWFORD'S BLUE RIDGE CLIMB

I like to go out on Route 711, just outside Richmond, Virginia, and from there to Route 56 across the top of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The curves have just the right rhythm — they connect to each other in just the right way. I don't do this enough since having kids, but I like to strap on a pack and ride up there — what we call motorcycle backpacking. The Appalachian Trail runs through there, so I'll leave my bike, a Honda CB360 that I tore down to the frame and rebuilt, at a trailhead and hike up the Priest, a 4,000-foot peak that looms over Route 56. It's a pretty hard climb — about 3,000 feet of elevation gain. There's also a waterfall, Crabtree Falls. I'll hike there, start at another trailhead, climb down that way, and then hitchhike on 56 to get back to my bike.

Crawford is a motorcycle mechanic in Richmond, Virginia, and the author of Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry Into the Value of Work.

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Peter Fonda's Colorado Mountain Cranker

ENDPOINTS: Thermopolis, Wyoming, and Four Corners Monument
ROUTE: South. Just south. **DISTANCE:** 690 miles
ESTIMATED TIME: 14 hours (one way)

AROUND LOS ANGELES I CAN split traffic, squeeze my way by. Stop signs, stoplights — they don't bother me at all. If I piss somebody off, they have to catch me to make it count. But my favorite ride is up and down the mountain passes of Colorado. I come down out of Thermopolis, Wyoming, through Rifle, on my way to Four Corners. I always take the roads that are the least traveled by cars. I never want to ride on a freeway — it's fast, but it's extraordinarily boring and five times as dangerous. So I take the winding roads and really crank it on. Several of these passes are over 10,000 feet, but as long as you know there are no rocks on the road, you're cool. I ride till dusk and then just find a motel, or if I have a sleeping bag I'll just jam it down and crash. In the last couple years, I've had my right ankle fused and my left hip replaced, but I'm not going to stop riding. It's liberating. My secret is: Don't ride freeways, and don't use a map. You take chances — the road might be closed or a bridge may be out — but if you just know where you're riding, everything becomes a new experience.

Fonda portrayed a Hells Angels president in The Wild Angels *and Captain America in* Easy Rider.





SONNY BARGER'S HOLLISTER RUN

ENDPOINTS: Cave Creek, Arizona, and Hollister, California
ROUTE: U.S. 40 to California, to Route 58 over to U.S. 5, and then up to U.S. 152 to Hollister
DISTANCE: 800 miles
ESTIMATED TIME: 11 hours (one way)

I just want to ride — I don't care where I'm going. But if I had a favorite route, it would be going to Hollister, because that's where it all started — the lifestyle, I mean. The American Motorcyclist Association put on a gypsy tour in every state, and in 1947 California's was at Hollister, and they ended up making the movie *The Wild One* out of it. I wasn't there — I was nine — but myself and another club member initiated the 50-year anniversary there. On July 4 weekend, the place is like a small Sturgis — but the rest of the year it's quiet. We rode through 127-degree heat the last time we did this trip; we had to stop every 15 miles to drink water, and we were still dehydrated.

Barger is a founding member of the Oakland Hells Angels and the author of books including Let's Ride: Sonny Barger's Guide to Motorcycling.



Richard Ford's Glacier-to-Banff White-Knuckler

ENDPOINTS: Missoula, Montana, and Banff, Alberta, Canada
ROUTE: 93N, Going-to-the-Sun Road (across Glacier National Park), and, in Canada, highways 2N and 1W (Trans-Canada Highway)
DISTANCE: 443 miles
ESTIMATED TIME: 9.5 hours (one way)

A GOOD ROUTE IS TO RIDE FROM Missoula to Calgary and then over the top of the mountains at Banff down on the British Columbia side, and go back into Montana on the west side of the mountains. I did it twice with my wife on the back, about 2,000 miles total. Now I know that coolness is a really important part of your equipment as a big-bike rider, but it's never been a part of mine. When I'm riding I'm always in one state or other of terror. Out on the plains in central Montana, the wind just blows all the time across the highway, pushing on you from one side, and you're kind of leaning into it, like a cushion. But then you're going to hit a pocket in the wind one of these times and off you're going to go. You see Peter [Fonda] in *Easy Rider* riding down the road as though he was sitting in an easy chair, talking back and forth and making gestures and laughing and doing everything but having a cocktail. Me? No. I'm in a heightened state of fearful awareness the whole time. Of course, to some people, riding a bike is the stupidest thing in the world. But I would always say, Well, you have to have something around in your life that will reliably kill you. And that's kind of funny, and it's kind of true.

Ford is the author of six novels, including Independence Day, *which won the Pulitzer Prize, and, most recently,* The Lay of the Land.

FROM LEFT: MYUNG J. CHUN/L.A. TIMES; MARKOWENSPHOTO.COM; COURTESY ANN BEATTIE


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RECORD BOOK

Everest's Youngest



In May, 13-year-old **JORDAN ROMERO** became the youngest person to summit Everest. The Big Bear Lake, California, eighth-grader has been on a mission to scale the seven summits since he saw a mural of them at his elementary school at age nine. With his father, Paul — a high-altitude search-and-rescue paramedic — his dad's girlfriend, Karen Lundgren, and three Sherpas, Romero reached 29,035 feet just hours after falling ice killed a climber 80 feet away. Still, the hardest part, Romero says, "was waiting for the weather...and the training." He hopes to climb his final summit, Antarctica's 16,066-foot Vinson Massif, by year-end. —JAIME LOWE



Solo Rowing the Atlantic



When **LEO ROSETTE** turned 57, Uncle Sam forced him to retire from the U.S. Marshals Service. Earlier this year Rosette showed he had something left in the tank when he became the oldest American — 59 years and eight months — to row alone across the Atlantic. After a failed first attempt, Rosette added 25 pounds of muscle to his 5-foot-10 frame before taking off from the Canary Islands. On April 14, after 3,200 miles and 101 days at sea, Rosette docked his boat, Halcyon, in Guadeloupe. —BRION O'CONNOR

VESSEL STATS

SIZE: 23.6 feet by 6 feet
WEIGHT: 1,700 pounds
MATERIAL: Fiberglass
COST: $80,000

SLEEPING QUARTERS
Rosette slept five or six hours a night in a cone-shaped compartment in the ship's stern.

POWER SOURCE
Two solar panels on the stern and one on the bow charged the Halcyon's four batteries.





Trekking in the Dark

In March **MIKE HANSON** set out to hike the Appalachian Trail, intent on becoming the first completely blind person to bag the full 2,179 miles unassisted. Armed with just a pair of walking sticks and a Loadstone GPS, the 45-year-old Minneapolis attorney aims to prove his self-sufficiency on the epic trek from Georgia to Maine. "This hike is about independence," he says. After averaging nearly nine miles a day and fighting through the flu and a sore ankle, Hanson is on track to complete the hike in early November. "Those of us who are blind do things differently, but we get them done," says Hanson.

—JOHN ROSENGREN

BY THE NUMBERS



Army staff sergeant Ben Borger broke his own record for **HORIZONTAL DISTANCE FLOWN IN A WINGSUIT** on April 14 when he soared 11.5 miles over Oklahoma's Altus Air Force Base. Borger reached a top speed of 100 mph during his six-minute, 35-second fall. —CHASE SCHEINBAUM



At 96, Mohr Keet became the **WORLD'S OLDEST BUNGEE JUMPER** after leaping 709 feet off of Bloukrans Bridge in Eastern Cape, South Africa, in April. Next up for the World War II vet and former POW, who started bungee jumping at 86: a tandem skydive. —YANG-YI GOH



On March 22, after two years of planning and preparation, 36-year-old Oliver Kern broke the records for **DISTANCE SKIED IN AN HOUR (18,000 FEET)** and **DISTANCE SKIED IN A DAY (200,000 FEET)**. The German just barely beat out the old marks at the Speikboden resort in Italy. —NICHOLAS AYALA

PHOTOGRAPHS, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: COURTESY SCOTT CAMPOS; TANIA GOETZEE/REX/REX USA; COURTESY SKIRESORT.INFO; COURTESY MIKE HANSON; COURTESY FAYE VITALE; COURTESY TEAM ROMERO (2); ILLUSTRATION: COLIN HAYES

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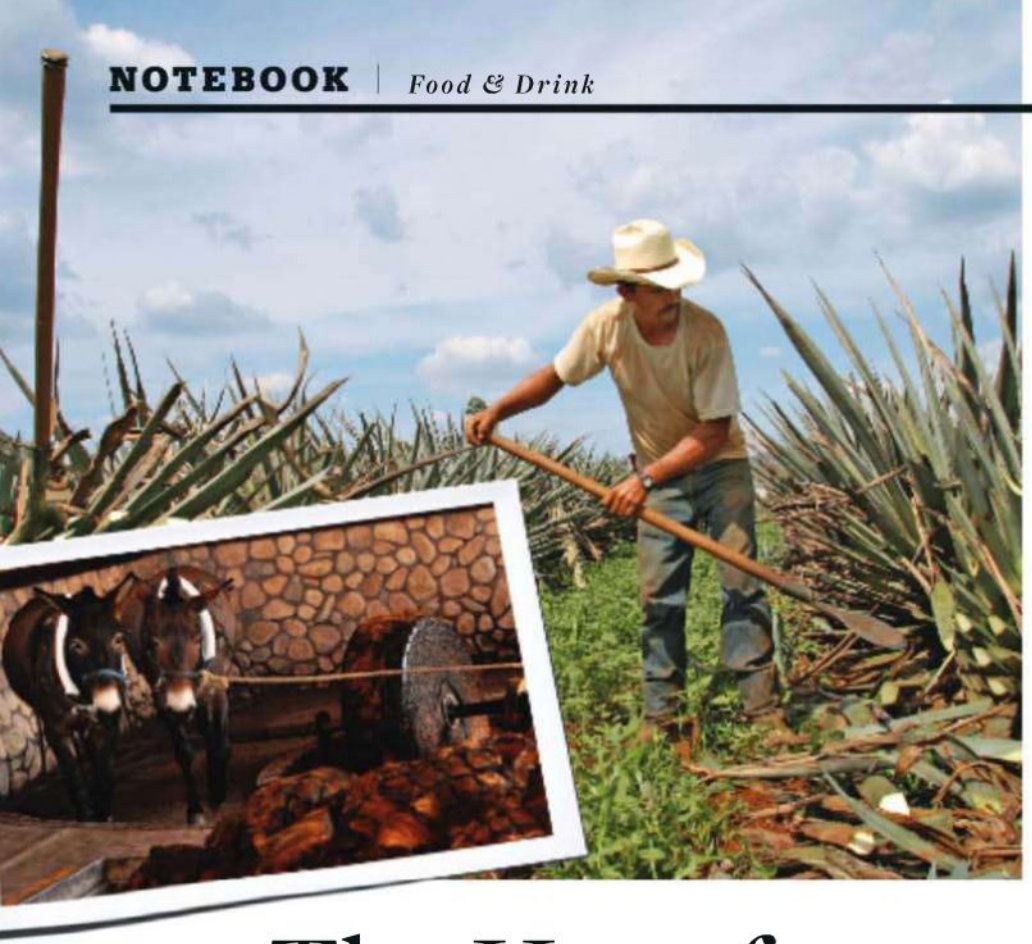
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The Hunt for Sublime Tequila

TO FIND OUT HOW THE SPIRIT WENT FROM ROTGUT TO EXQUISITE, **JASON FINE** GOES TO THE SOURCE.

A FEW MILES OUTSIDE OF Arandas in the mountains of Jalisco, Mexico, the paved roads turn to rutted red clay, and fields of lemons and garbanzos give way to plantations growing a single crop: blue agave. The spiky, sun-scorched plants spread out across the valleys and up the ridges, shimmering like a spectacular blue-green ocean.

Most of the world's tequila is made within a half-day's drive of here — high in the mountains outside of Guadalajara, in a part of Mexico not many Americans visit, an agricultural heartland home to a fast-growing, multimillion-dollar global export still produced in much the same way it has been for almost 400 years.

I've come out here to discover how tequila is made — and to find the best. "Tequila is simple to make, technically," says Marko Karakasevic, a 13th-generation master distiller who recently expanded his family's California vodka and whiskey business to include a small-batch tequila called Charbay. "But it's complicated to make really good tequila. It's like wine — it's complex."

As the sun sets over the Sierra Madre mountains, Karakasevic draws a bottle of Charbay Blanco that's been hiding under a sweatshirt in the console of his Dodge SUV, takes a pull, then passes it to me. The taste is smooth and earthy up front, sweet going down, with hints of fresh honey and chamomile — nothing like the gasoline-charged shots that gave you a three-day hangover in college. "Tequila's gotten a bad rap," he says. "The good stuff is magical."



For a tequila country itinerary, go to mensjournal.com/tequila.

Until relatively recently, it was difficult to find high-end artisanal tequila in the U.S. But since Patrón opened the luxury-export market in the 1990s, dozens of smaller, hand-crafted brands have started to find their way onto the shelves of upscale U.S. bars and restaurants, and even casual drinkers are discovering that — contrary to queasy spring-break memories — good tequila is not only extremely drinkable; it's capable of carrying the kind of refined and nuanced subtleties that have long been associated with fine wines.

"People are starting to break through the old stereotypes," says Mark Alberto, owner of the Sayulita Fish Taco Tequila Bar, a six-stool joint in the surf town of Sayulita, north of Puerto Vallarta. Alberto stocks almost 400 varieties behind his varnished-wood bar — everything from a plastic water bottle decorated with a hand-drawn skull and crossbones to an ornate ceramic bottle of Clase Azul Ultra Extra Añejo, a rare aged tequila that's locked in its own iron case and goes for $420 a glass. But Alberto prefers to share the simple, well-crafted brands he loves most — lesser-known names like Centinela, Siete Leguas, Tesoro. "No salt, no lime, no cigars here!" he announces. "I want you to taste the tequila."

Ninety-eight percent of all tequila is made in Jalisco, in two distinct regions: the arid, volcanic Lowlands around the sleepy town of Tequila, population 25,000, where old-school giants José Cuervo, Herradura, and Sauza are based; and the Highlands region to the northeast, where the altitude keeps the agaves smaller, with more concentrated flavors, which many connoisseurs believe makes the best tequila.

With four or five days and a rental car, you can tour spectacular countryside and visit dozens of distilleries — from huge modern places like Cuervo to new boutique producers like Casa Noble, where you can rent a deluxe bungalow overlooking the agave plantation. The tequila region is old-world, rural, and religious, with most towns built around shady squares dominated by massive cathedrals. Driving into any of these places, you'll see men selling plastic jugs of moonshine by the side of the road. (The Consejo Regulador del Tequila, which regulates the tequila industry, advises wariness of street vendors. "You don't know what you will get," says CRT spokesperson Monica Campos. "Tequila — or something that might make you crazy.")

Lodging in the area is no-frills and cheap, and the food is exceptional, eaten casually at open-air taco stands (which specialize in delicate cuts of beef and spit-roasted *al pastor* pork with pineapple) and roadside joints like the incredible Carnitas Jaime in Arandas,

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM TOP: COURTESY PATRON TEQUILA; ERIC M. SCHANTZ. MAP: JOYCE PENDOLA



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Five Great Blancos

Unlike with most spirits, age isn't everything with tequila. Blancos, which are bottled soon after distilling, are the connoisseur's choice, offering the pure essence of the drink without the distractions imparted by wood aging found in reposados and añejos.

HOW TO DRINK IT
Sip it straight or mix into perfect margaritas using two parts blanco, one part lime juice, and one part simple syrup.



LOWLANDS

FORTALEZA
Made in a 19th-century factory with vintage equipment using agave grown on Fortaleza's plantation, this full-bodied tequila is earthy, rustic — and as soulful as any liquor you'll taste (*$45*).

CASA NOBLE
Organic and triple-distilled, Casa Noble is smooth and clean but still imparts plenty of taste, with light hints of honey, herbs, and pepper (*$40*).

HIGHLANDS

CHARBAY
The first tequila made by these veteran California whiskey distillers is no typical gringo export — it's full of herbal flavors from chamomile to cinnamon (*$50*).

EL TESORO
Mashed with a tahona, slow-roasted, and expertly distilled, this is a sweet, smooth go-to tequila (*$50*).

SIETE LEGUAS
Made with a blend of agave crushed with a tahona pulled by donkeys and agave mashed by modern machines, this defines the Highlands style — warm and full-bodied, with notes of sweet citrus and black pepper (*$35*).

where farmers feast on all varieties of fried pork, along with hundreds of local tequilas.

One thing you learn after a few nights of tasting tequila in the local bars is that while no one agrees on which one is best, all good tequila must follow a few simple rules. First, it must taste like the plant it comes from. You wouldn't want your vodka to taste like potatoes, but tequila must taste like agave, full of earth, spice, fruit, herbs.

There are two basic types of tequila: On the lower end are mixed tequilas like Cuervo Gold that contain a minimum of 51 percent agave (the rest of the ingredients can be additives like sugar or caramel); on the higher end are tequilas made from 100 percent agave (the bottle must be labeled this way) and water, nothing else.

Once tequila has been distilled, it is either bottled almost immediately for *blanco* (silver), or aged in whiskey or wine barrels: up to a year for *reposado*; up to three years for *añejo*; more than three years for *extra añejo*. The longer the tequila stays in the barrel, the more it mellows and takes on the flavors of the wood — and the more expensive it is. Americans schooled on cask-aged spirits like scotch generally assume that older is better, but unlike with whiskey, aging tequila often just masks the flavor. "Blanco is the pure form," says Fernando Gonzalez de Anda, owner of Siete Leguas, one of the finest Highlands makers. "Reposados and añejos can hide flaws. With blanco, there's nowhere to hide."

The process of making tequila involves only a few steps, but each one can be performed in different ways that radically affect the taste. After the agave plants are ripe, they can be roasted slowly for days in a brick oven or cooked in a high-pressure autoclave for as little as 45 minutes; they can be mashed using a large wheel-like stone called a *tahona* or by automated sugar-cane shredders; they can be fermented in wooden barrels or steel vats. I met one *tequilero* at a tiny company called Gran Jubileo who plays classical music in the barrel rooms where the liquor ages once it's distilled. "I believe the vibrations of the music give the tequila depth and character," he says.

One of my favorite Lowlands tequilas, Fortaleza, was created by Guillermo Erickson Sauza, the fifth-generation heir to the Sauza tequila empire, who advanced his family's art by reinstating near-primitive production techniques. At a time when multinational corporations were taking over the tequila industry and automated machinery was changing the way the spirit was made, Sauza reopened one of his grandfather's old factories in downtown Tequila, refurbished the original equipment, and began producing a rustic, bold-flavored tequila using only estate-grown agave in the same exacting style as his grandfather a century earlier.

If Fortaleza is about old-fashioned style, Casa Noble, located in the hills across town, blends tradition and technology into one of the finest new-school tequilas today. Growing all its own agave on a lush 22-acre plantation, Casa Noble mashes the plants with an electric shredder designed by co-owner Carlos Hernandez Ramos and distills the liquor three times (most tequila is distilled twice) for smoothness and clarity.

Every tequilero I met has his own secrets, and third-generation Highlands maker Carlos Camarena, who along with his brother Felipe runs the companies El Tesoro and Tapatio, has more than most. Trim, handsome, and much younger-looking than his 72 years, Camarena led me on a detailed tour of his pristine El Tesoro factory, accompanied by his Siberian Husky, Maya — named for Mayahuel, the goddess of agave.

"Tequila is a very different animal from any other liquor," he says, leaning against his Ford pickup in front of the distillery. "It takes seven or eight years to grow the agave — so you have a big investment before you've even started." Many distilleries use enzymes like ammonia and sulfites to speed up the fermentation, but for masters like Camarena, it's important not to rush the process.

"There is no single way to make great tequila," he adds. "All great tequila is made in a very personal way, and that is what's special about this drink. If it's done right, all that personality goes right in the bottle." ■

WHERE TO TASTE:
Three terrific tequila bars in the U.S.

LOS FELIZ
109 Ludlow Street, New York
212-228-8383

TOMMY'S
5929 Geary Boulevard, San Francisco
415-387-4747

CANTINA MAYAHUEL
2934 Adams Avenue, San Diego
619-283-6292

ROBERT BUCKLEY (5)

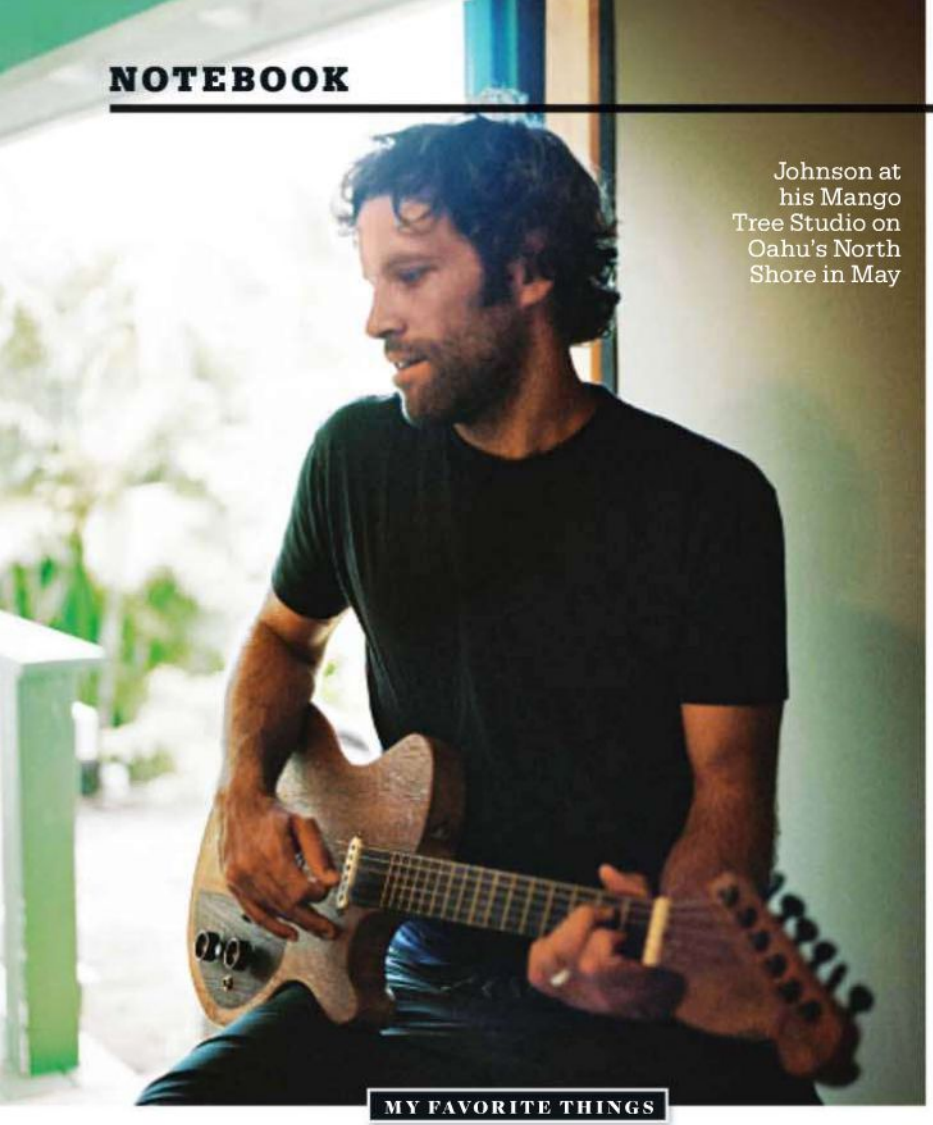
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Johnson at his Mango Tree Studio on Oahu's North Shore in May

MY FAVORITE THINGS

Jack Johnson

by **AUSTIN SCAGGS**

"WHERE I LIVE, THE MARKET, THE RECORDING STUDIO, AND THE KIDS' school are all a bike ride away, so we have a pretty major bike setup," says Johnson, 35, who, on the heels of his sixth studio album, *To the Sea*, is in the midst of a 55-city world tour. On the road he'll keep that two-wheeled mind-set. "We always bring the fold-up bikes with us, and we have these little snap-on kid seats you can put on there, so we can cruise around with the family," he says. Here, Johnson talks about building stuff, creative collaborations, and take-no-prisoners ping-pong.

MOVIES

I've got a good little collection of westerns and samurai films. My favorite is *A Fistful of Dollars*, which is actually a remake of the samurai film *Yojimbo* — same story, at least — starring my favorite actor, Toshiro Mifune.

RECENT GIFT

▶ Ben Stiller came out to Hawaii to direct the video for our song "Taylor," and we schooled him pretty hard on my ping-pong table, which was weather-beaten and had little bubbles all over it. A week later I got a giant box from UPS: Ben sent us a new Kettler ping-pong table and demanded a rematch, saying my old table "didn't fairly represent my skills."

ACCOLADES

▼ I have a couple of Na Hoku Hanohano Awards, which are like Hawaii's Grammys. People joke about how mellow I am, but in Hawaii, people think I'm rocking out.



SURFBOARD

▼ The board I ride the most is my Pyzel twin fin. It goes fast, and it's perfect for waves head high or a few feet overhead. The design is a little retro — it borrows from the '70s.

AUTOGRAPH

▼ We just had our annual Kokua Foundation fundraiser [which supports environmental education], and Ziggy Marley played and brought his family. We played "Three Little Birds," and Ziggy gave me this photo of Bob and signed it. The Marley signature's on it — so cool.



PORTABLE STUDIO, BOB MARLEY; SURFBOARD, AWARD: EMMETT MALLOY; PING-PONG TABLE: COURTESY KETTLER INTERNATIONAL, INC.

INSPIRATIONS

To make his new album, *To the Sea*, Johnson relied on a few friends and a couple of standbys.

GUITAR: One night before the Pipe Masters, Kelly Slater was so nervous that we stayed up all night in my dad's shed and built this guitar [left] out of stuff that was lying around. I used it on *To the Sea*. **PORTABLE STUDIO:** I take this TASCAM DP-004 battery-powered four-track [above] everywhere. It's got two built-in mics and a guitar port, so if I have an idea, I can lay it down right there. I wrote a lot of the new album on a camping trip my family took in a VW bus through Big Sur and Yosemite. Four rechargeable batteries, a solar recharger, and you're in there. **UKE:** I got one of the last ukuleles made by Sam Kamaka Jr. [next page]. The Kamaka is the Gibson guitar of ukes — the best. It's made out of a cigar box and has a grainy tone. I jam on it every day. **CD:** Eddie Vedder gave me a CD of songs he wrote and recorded, playing ukulele — songs that have never been on Pearl Jam records. He made the sleeve for it out of an airplane evacuation plan.

portrait by **EMMETT MALLOY**

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Mariana Trench Descent
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SANCTUARY
▲ There's a spot 25 steps outside the door of my studio at home, underneath a monkeypod tree, that takes me a world away. When I leave Hawaii, it's the spot I think about. If you sit there and strum a guitar long enough, little birds start fluttering around and whistling.

GADGET
I find a headphone splitter essential — so I can plug it into my laptop and listen to music with my kids. We listen to everything from Raffi to Led Zeppelin.

CARD GAME
▼ My family can get into some Uno action. I've got one deck that's been with us for a while.

DINER
There's a Baja food place called Luibueno's that just opened on the North Shore. It's packed every night. The owner's a family friend, though, and he'll hold a table for me. It makes me feel like Tony Soprano.

FLOAT
▼ I have a Hobie Mirage Adventure Island, which is basically a kayak with two outriggers, so you can't flip it. It's got a 15-foot sail, and it's unreal! I'll put my boys on either side, and we can sail around the island. I went out the other day by myself and got close to the whales.

QUICK FIX
▲ My neti pot. Stick it in one nostril and let the salty water run through your sinuses. If you feel a cold coming on, rock that thing. I do it every time I get off a plane.

TOUR STOP
When the band goes to Barcelona, we always spend a day at Parc Güell, which was designed by Gaudí.

SURF FILM
▼ When I was a teenager, my brothers and I would watch *Wave Warriors III* over and over. It was guys like Christian Fletcher getting air off waves. Then we'd go try to copy them.



TREE: NETI POT: UKULELE: UNO: EMMETT MALLOY; CHRISTIAN FLETCHER: FLAME/A-FRAME: KAYAK: COURTESY HOBIE CAT



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Pat Tillman (left) with his brother (and fellow Army Specialist) Kevin in 2003

The Power of Myth

YOU MAY THINK YOU KNOW THE PAT TILLMAN STORY, BUT THIS STUNNING NEW DOCUMENTARY WILL SURPRISE YOU.

IN THE HANDS OF A LESS GIFTED filmmaker, the story of the Bush administration's campaign to transform the 2004 friendly-fire death of NFL star and Army Specialist Patrick Tillman into a stirring patriotic fable could easily have degenerated into a finger-wagging screed, but director Amir Bar-Lev proves himself to be that rare journalist who is comfortable with nuance, and what he's managed with *The Tillman Story* is nothing short of masterful.

Bar-Lev dispenses altogether with the talking-head polemicists who might have been summoned to pile on, preferring instead to let the facts speak for themselves and focus on the principals: the soldiers forced to carry water for the Pentagon's cover-up; the lieutenant general made a scapegoat once the plot was revealed; Tillman's family as they became more and more determined to learn the truth (even if it diminished their dead son's "hero" status). Most compelling of all is Tillman himself, the former Arizona State All-American infamous for brutal tackles who also read philosophy and Emerson. In Bar-Lev's subtle, understated approach, each fact becomes all the more devastating, while archival footage gives the film a whodunit urgency and unexpected emotional force.

Among the many startling images: footage from the military's own forensic re-creation of Tillman's demise, his brother's blasphemous eulogy, and a halftime memorial ceremony at University of Phoenix Stadium in 2004. For the occasion a gargantuan jersey — half the size of the field — emblazoned with Tillman's No. 40 is passed hand over hand through the stands as thousands of fans roar in approval. Curiously, the only discordant note comes from Tillman's family, who, occupying a place of honor at midfield, observe the spectacle with expressions of puzzlement, even unease. In its kitschy extravagance, the moment is uncomfortably reminiscent of the Nazi Nuremberg rallies of the 1930s, and it underscores how readily the public appetite for idols can be exploited.

This may seem a churlish view given the sacrifice Tillman made for his country, but the very best documentaries don't set out to provide answers so much as to raise questions, and it is here where *The Tillman Story* joins an exclusive group. Through the prism of Tillman's life and death, Bar-Lev has crafted a lasting meditation on the seemingly innate human need for heroes. By the end of the movie, Tillman reemerges as a hero — just not the one we were sold. If you watch a single documentary this year, make it this one. —SCOTT ANDERSON

The Short List

WHAT TO WATCH AND LISTEN TO THIS MONTH



Rubicon on AMC

TELEVISION

Having already delivered *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad*, AMC seems close to perfecting the well-scripted, smartly produced dramatic series, and its latest, **RUBICON**, looks to bring them closer still. The pilot presents a familiar but ever engaging premise: a brooding hero (in this case, a brilliant intelligence analyst at a mysterious government agency) drawn — reluctantly, of course — into a shadowy world of violence, intrigue, and deserted parking garages. Think conspiracy thriller in the vein of *Three Days of the Condor*, with **JAMES BADGE DALE** (last seen in HBO's *The Pacific*) playing our hero, Will — the anti–Jack Bauer — with a sad and weary grace (*premieres Sunday, August 1, 8 PM*). —WOOK KIM



Nigeria Special: Volume 2

MUSIC

If you're after that same thrill of discovery you got from Buena Vista Social Club, look no further than Miles Cleret's Soundway label. Cleret, 37, has traveled across Africa for years, scouring junk shops and abandoned recording studios for the continent's (largely discarded) musical heritage. Start with either volume of his **NIGERIA SPECIAL!** compilation, and you'll find sounds, instruments, and entire genres you didn't know existed. Put this on when your reggae collection's feeling stale — or anytime you're looking for blissed-out exuberance (*soundwayrecords.com*). —COREY SEYMOUR

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY DONALD LEE/THE TILLMAN STORY/THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY; COURTESY CRAIG BLANKENHORN/AMC; COURTESY SOUNDWAY RECORDS

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Felix Baumgartner makes a test run from 15,000 feet. He'll be jumping from eight times that height.

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The Human Missile

"FEARLESS" FELIX BAUMGARTNER HAS FREE-FALLEN ACROSS THE ENGLISH CHANNEL AND BASE JUMPED FROM ONLY 95 FEET. NOW HE'S TRYING TO SKYDIVE FROM 120,000 FEET — AND HE'S A BIT WORRIED.

by **DAVID KATZ**

OUT COMES THE DUCT TAPE. That this isn't ideal can be read on Felix Baumgartner's face, at least the part visible through his helmet's open visor. When you're about to bungee jump off a crane wearing a pressurized space suit — the reason Felix has come to these empty fairgrounds in Lancaster, California — the sudden need for duct tape on the platform doesn't inspire confidence. And when you're training to break the world skydiving record, to fall farther and faster than anyone ever has, you *crave* confidence.

Baumgartner, 41, is the world's most renowned BASE jumper, maker of unrepeatable leaps from "buildings, antennas, spans, and Earth." Now he's leaving Earth. He will jump from a balloon 120,000 feet up, smashing the skydiving record of 102,800 feet set in 1960. If his plan — dubbed the Red Bull Stratos mission — works, he'll be the first person to break the sound barrier with his body. As the project's scientists explain (with the morbid glee scientists reserve for relating uncertainties), no one knows what happens to a body at Mach 1. It could be nothing. Or it could throw Baumgartner into a spin that detaches his brain from his spine.

The goal this afternoon is to choreograph his step-off from the balloon-capsule platform, which would be cake for him if not for his outfit: a near-rigid space suit, chest pack, chute, two oxygen canisters on his back, and fishbowl helmet. Hence, the practice bungee.

A crane lifts Baumgartner high above the baking asphalt as Stratos engineers pressurize his suit, as will be done at 120,000 feet. But before he reaches the top, Felix waves them off, aborting the mission. "I can't stand up straight. The suit is pulling me forward," he says back on the ground. "It's pushing me off the edge." A Stratos team member suggests jerry-rigging handles, like the ones on the real capsule, onto the bungee platform.

As techs tape down the makeshift grips, two engineers ease the suited-up Baumgartner into a beach chair. Just standing in the 103-pound getup is exhausting, but under the bright sun it gets so hellishly hot inside that engineers have to pump the suit with a cool-


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THE HELMET
One of the more difficult tasks was developing the visor's heating element. It had to be adjusted just right to prevent fogging and icing but not melt the visor.

THE GLOVES
Each mitt has a mirror on the back of the hand, since Baumgartner won't be able to turn his head to be sure his chute has deployed.

THE SUIT
Baumgartner's pressure suit is the first that NASA supplier David Clark Company has built for a non-governmental space program. It's a necessity: At 120,000 feet high, air pressure is so low that nitrogen "boils" out of the blood without external pressure. His suit serves as a prototype for the next generation of low-pressure protective gear.

DROP ZONE (1)
After a 2.5-hour ride, the balloon levels off at 120,000 feet. The capsule depressurizes, and Baumgartner's suit expands to compensate, becoming so stiff that just opening the hatch is taxing.

THE JUMP (2)
After steadying himself on the platform, Baumgartner jumps, using a small bunny hop. He needs to be in perfect position, as there's no air resistance up here to right himself. That lack of drag also means he'll accelerate rapidly.

5–34 SECONDS
Baumgartner gets into "Delta" position (head down, arms at sides) for max control. If he starts to spin uncontrollably, a drogue chute will deploy to stabilize him — otherwise, he could black out or hemorrhage.

35–36 SECONDS (3)
He reaches 690 mph — the sound barrier at 102,000 feet. Certain parts of him (like his helmet) may break Mach 1 before others, which could send dangerous shock waves over his body.

37 SECONDS
Denser air slows Baumgartner and allows him mobility. He can't pull his chute this early, though, because the crew wants him to land as fast as possible for medical attention.

5 MINUTES, 37 SECONDS (4)
At 5,000 feet, Baumgartner deploys his main chute. He focuses on landing and hamming it up for cameras below.

15–20 MINUTES
Baumgartner should land within 10 miles of the launch point. The team uses GPS in his chest pack to pinpoint his location.



ILLUSTRATION: GOLDEN SECTION GRAPHICS

ing agent so he doesn't pass out. Baumgartner hates the thing, finds it claustrophobic, but he is willing himself to love it. "I'm trying to find the right concept," he says. "I'm going to a hostile place, and the only way to survive is with this suit. I can't go as Felix Baumgartner, but wearing the suit, it's like I'm Iron Man."

A camera crew recording every moment of the training hovers over him. The DP zooms in on Baumgartner frowning through the visor. It's not hard to guess what he's thinking: If we can't get our shit together at 200 feet, how am I supposed to survive a 120,000-foot drop? Then one of the techs working on the handles has an inspired idea: "I got some Gorilla tape in my truck," he jokes. "It's stronger." Baumgartner doesn't laugh.

TWO DAYS BEFORE THE BUNGEE TESTS, Baumgartner sips coffee in a Santa Monica hotel lobby, fighting jet lag. He flew from New York the night before and from his home in Salzburg, Austria, a few days before that. He's fit, tan, and wryly confident in an understated way. When you jump off buildings for a living, there's no need to shout.

Baumgartner was raised in Salzburg, and like a lot of restless boys, he loved climbing trees. What set him apart was the persistent desire to jump off them. The moment he

photograph by CHRISTOPHER GRIFFITH



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Baumgartner at David Clark Company in Massachusetts for his suit adjustment

turned 16 — the minimum legal age — Baumgartner went to the local skydiving club and signed up for his virgin jump. When he turned 18, he enrolled in the Austrian army and soon joined its competitive skydiving team. He continued to compete when he got out, but by 1996 falling from a plane had become routine for Baumgartner. Looking for a new challenge, he switched to BASE jumping. Within three years he had set the record for the highest and lowest leaps.

Just before dawn on December 1, 1999, Baumgartner scaled the face of the Christ the Redeemer statue overlooking Rio de Janeiro, perched himself on its benevolently outstretched right arm, and leaped. A mere 95 feet off the ground — the lowest BASE jump ever attempted — he had only 1.5 seconds to pull his chute. In April of that same year he had leaped from the world's tallest building at the time, the Petronas Twin Towers in Kuala Lumpur, but the Rio stunt made that jump look like falling into bed at night. "If it was a success, I knew my picture would be in every newspaper in the world," he says in accented English. "It would turn me from a nobody into a somebody."

The plan worked. Baumgartner has since free-fallen across the English Channel using a carbon-fiber wing (2003) and jumped into Croatia's pitch-dark Mamet Cave (2004). Along the way he earned the nickname "Fearless Felix." It's a lie; for him, fear is a given. "Jumping is not fun," he says. "When I land and it turned out like I planned, that's fun. But while I'm doing it, it's no fun at all."

Thrill-seekers do it for the rush, but he jumps to get noticed. "It's not only that I like the attention," he explains. "It's important if I want to be sponsored. I always wanted to make money out of this. So every time I did something, I brought a friend with a camera." With every jump, Baumgartner seeks the "perfect image." He means that literally — the way a building frames his falling body, or how the sunlight fractures behind the Christ the Redeemer statue — but also metaphorically. He carefully considers the stunts' narratives, how they play in the public imagination.

"AS A BASE JUMPER, IT'S ALWAYS ABOUT MY OWN SKILLS. NOW I'VE GOT TO TRUST PEOPLE WHO HAVE NEVER WORKED TOGETHER. IT'S SCARY."

"To get on top of Jesus, I shot an arrow with a steel cable from a crossbow," he says. "I saw that in *The Rock* with Nic Cage. There was a locked door at the bottom of the statue I could have used, but if you shoot an arrow with a crossbow, people love it."

The Fearless Felix nickname also undercuts the meticulous planning that goes into his stunts — made necessary by the fact that BASE jumping is usually illegal. To sneak up to the top of the Petronas Twin Towers, for example, Baumgartner spent weeks studying the office building and its tight security. He snuck a snapshot of a worker's clearance badge so he could forge one on his computer. Then, on the day of the actual jump, he entered the building wearing a business suit, a newspaper tucked under his arm, and his parachute hidden in a briefcase. He successfully jumped, landed, and eluded police. But then he got cocky and BASE jumped off his hotel's roof a few nights later. The local police nabbed him. "I got out of it by playing the stupid tourist," he says. "I told the police that in Austria, when you pay for a hotel room and you land on hotel property, it's not a crime."

He has always been the man in charge, planning every detail, from concept to final cut. In fact, Baumgartner and engineer Art Thompson (the mission's technical project director) cooked up the Stratos jump about four years ago and pitched it to Red Bull. But Baumgartner is not a scientist, and a lot of the technical stuff is way over his head.

"As a BASE jumper, it's always about my own skills, and I know what my limits are," he says. "Now I've got to trust the people who made my suit, the people who built the balloon, the mission control center. They have never worked together. Just because somebody delivers on a test doesn't mean they'll deliver on the jump itself. It's scary."

But Fearless Felix accepts the fear because its flip side is glory. Stratos is Baumgartner's chance to cap a career of stunts with an achievement that will impact aeronautic science for years to come. His fall will test the limits of human physiology and contribute to the design of safer high-altitude escape suits used by astronauts (his is a prototype). His Stratos fall will also be his last, he says. "I could BASE jump again, but what would it mean to go off the highest building after breaking the speed of sound? Everything would be a step backward."

THE CRANE LIFTS BAUMGARTNER AND the jumping platform for a second try. He steps to the ledge, using the new handles for support. He pauses, then takes a gentle bunny hop, falls feet first, arms crossed at the chest... *smoothly*. After a second the bungee cord catches and throws him skyward for a couple of less graceful bounces. As he dangles from the cord, waiting to be lowered, his team members applaud.

Once on the ground, he flips up his visor to reveal a smile. "I think we just broke our first world record — the first bungee jump in a space suit," he jokes to the hovering camera crew. Baumgartner throws his arm around Joe Kittinger, the current skydive record holder, hamming it up for the cameras.

Today's exercise was low stakes — one of many tests that must be undertaken before a firm jump date can be set. (It could take place anywhere between August and December.) Yet Baumgartner managed to invest even this relatively minor milestone with drama. Because for him, every jump is a story, and Stratos will be his magnum opus. ■

SVEN HOFFMANN FOR RED BULL STRATOS





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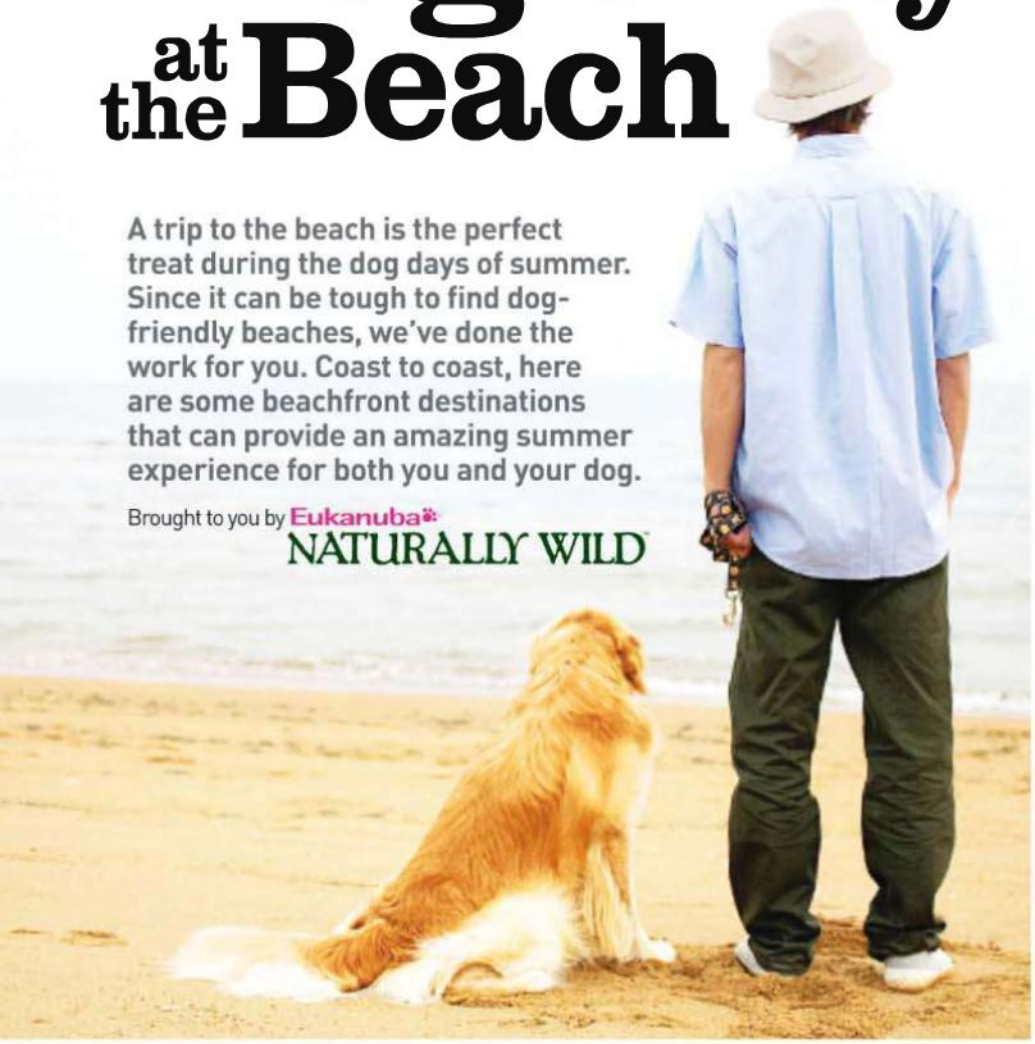


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A Dog's Day at the Beach



A trip to the beach is the perfect treat during the dog days of summer. Since it can be tough to find dog-friendly beaches, we've done the work for you. Coast to coast, here are some beachfront destinations that can provide an amazing summer experience for both you and your dog.

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Carmel-By-The-Sea, CA

One of the most pet-friendly locations in the United States, the city of Carmel features restaurants, stores, art galleries and resorts that all cater to dogs. Carmel's City Beach allows dogs off-leash and in the water during the day.

Bonita Springs, FL

Also known as the "Lee County Off-Leash Dog Area," Dog Beach is nestled between Fort Byers and Bonita Beaches in Lee County, Florida. You guessed it – dogs are allowed off-leash and in the water at this Gulf Coast location.

Sears Island, ME

Located at the top of Penobscot Bay, Sears Island is one of the largest uninhabited islands on the east coast. While it is best known for its hiking, kayaking and bird watching, dogs are free to roam the beaches off-leash at any time.

WATER SAFETY TIPS

Swimming can be the most enjoyable activity you do with your dog, but don't let safety take a back seat, as dogs require special attention at the beach. Here are some tips to make sure the two of you avoid any mishaps.

TIP 1: BRING FRESH WATER

Sun and exercise lead to a thirsty dog, but make sure he's not drinking salt water. Ingesting salt water is terrible for your dog's health. Bring a portable bowl and take frequent breaks for water.

TIP 2: STAY IN THE SHADE

Just like you, dogs can get sunburned on exposed skin, so make sure to limit his time in the direct heat. You might also consider applying some sunscreen to his nose and ears.

TIP 3: CHECK THE REPORTS

Rough waters and strong tides can lead to exhaustion or worse. Before you go out, check the weather and tidal reports to make sure there aren't any dangerous rip tides in the area.



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THE BREEDS

Here are several breeds that have a particular love for surf and sand



Springer Spaniel

The loyal, even-tempered Springer Spaniel craves regular exercise of any kind, but has a special affinity for swimming. If you live near the shore, get that pup in the water as often as you can.



Golden Retriever

Golden Retrievers are on the larger side, easy to train, very faithful and, of course, love the water. Fetch is the name of the game for this breed, so take him to the beach and make sure all toys can float.



Newfoundland

Another large breed, the Newfoundland has a special adaptation that suits it to the water: webbed feet. Originally bred in Canada as workers for fisherman, this dog has a natural love for swimming.

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The Last Real Ferrari

A moment of appreciation, please, for the Ferrari 458 Italia. As tricked-out vehicles lessen driver involvement and electricity usurps oil, the fuel-swilling, corner-devouring supercar may be the last of its kind.

I HAVE A STANDARD ANSWER WHEN PEOPLE ASK ME which car I would buy, money-no-object. You can spend more and you can go faster, I say, but cars don't get any more fun than Ferrari's track-bred coupe, the F430. Well, here I am in the hills of the Emilia-Romagna region of Italy, screaming from switchback to switchback, and I have a new answer: You can spend more money, and you can go faster, but I don't think it gets much better than the F430's replacement, the Ferrari 458 Italia (cost: about $225,000).

With its 4.5-liter V-8 behind me and the cabin pushed forward on the wheelbase, the 458's driver's seat feels as if it's directly behind the front wheels, a sensation I imagine is like piloting a fighter jet. You can watch each corner's apex disappear under the sinister crease of the front fenders, which peek into your field of vision like a rifle sight. The steering is so quick — 30 percent quicker than the F430's — that you need never move your hands from nine and three, even on 180-degree switchbacks.



I am an easily distracted person, but out here in the sticks of Italy, in this car, I slip into a hyperfocused driving fugue deepened by the unending concurrence of curves: Stand on carbon-ceramic brakes, pull left paddle for downshifts, turn in, feel face crawl sideways around head, apply accelerator, scream up to 9,000-rpm power peak, pull right paddle for upshift, repeat through two more gears, stand on brakes, repeat again. Even the free-range chickens I nearly flatten give me a look that says, "Right on, man — that was awesome."

The 458 allows boneheads like me to drive faster than boneheads have ever driven, thanks in no small part to its nearly overwhelming amount of technological wizardry. Never before have I had a readout in the dash tell me when the motor and tires are warm enough to unleash hell. The new dual-clutch, seven-speed transmission shifts gears as fast as my neurons fire, which explains why Ferrari buyers voted out the manual (no longer even an option). And the engine's direct fuel injection provides instantaneous response along with a downright silly 562 horsepower (up from the F430's quaint 483), produced by only 4.5 liters' worth of naturally aspirated engine. That's like extracting enough juice from a D-cell battery to power Oprah's mansion. Zero to 60 takes less than 3.4 seconds, nearly a half-second faster than the F430. Progress is a wonderful thing.

Mostly, that is. At times the 458 feels satisfyingly raw and belligerent, particularly when the variable muffler system goes into straight-pipe mode, resulting in an unholy wail. And I won't pretend that I fully disengaged the 458's stability control — the system that saves the car (and you) if it starts to spin — because if my balls were that big I'd have to check them at the airport. But this supercar is also slightly more anesthetized than its predecessor. When you crack off an early upshift, the exhaust doesn't shoot flames, exploding like an M-80 in a trash can, as the F430's did. The F430 never, ever warned you that your tires were too cold. Even if you turn off all the nannies on the 458, a computer is still working the gears, which means you can't possibly flub the second-to-third shift.

This in itself isn't cause for alarm — with every successive generation in the 458's lineage, Ferrari engineers out some of its predecessor's rough edges, the endearing inefficiencies known as character, in the quest for speed. But the fact that Ferrari is currently showing off a hybrid concept and talking about implementing hybrid technology into its cars within five years suggests the clock is ticking for internal-combustion masterpieces like the 458. Someone call the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and get this prancing horse on the endangered species list.

Now, people have been bitching about technology infringing on the driving experience since the invention of the pneumatic tire. ("Nothing gives you the feel for the road like a wooden wheel!") Improving fuel economy is a laudable goal, and one that isn't necessarily at odds with Ferrari's insatiable demand for demented, terrifying speed. But the quest for efficiency seems always to lead to greater automation of the driving experience. More computers, less mechanical control. And that's a little bit sad. An electric motor may make for a faster, more eco-sanctified Ferrari, but it will never make your hair stand on end like the piercing shriek of the Ferrari 458 Italia's V-8, a 9,000-rpm protest against its own looming obsolescence. ■

DYER: MICHAEL WARREN

illustration by SONIA ROY, COLAGENE.COM

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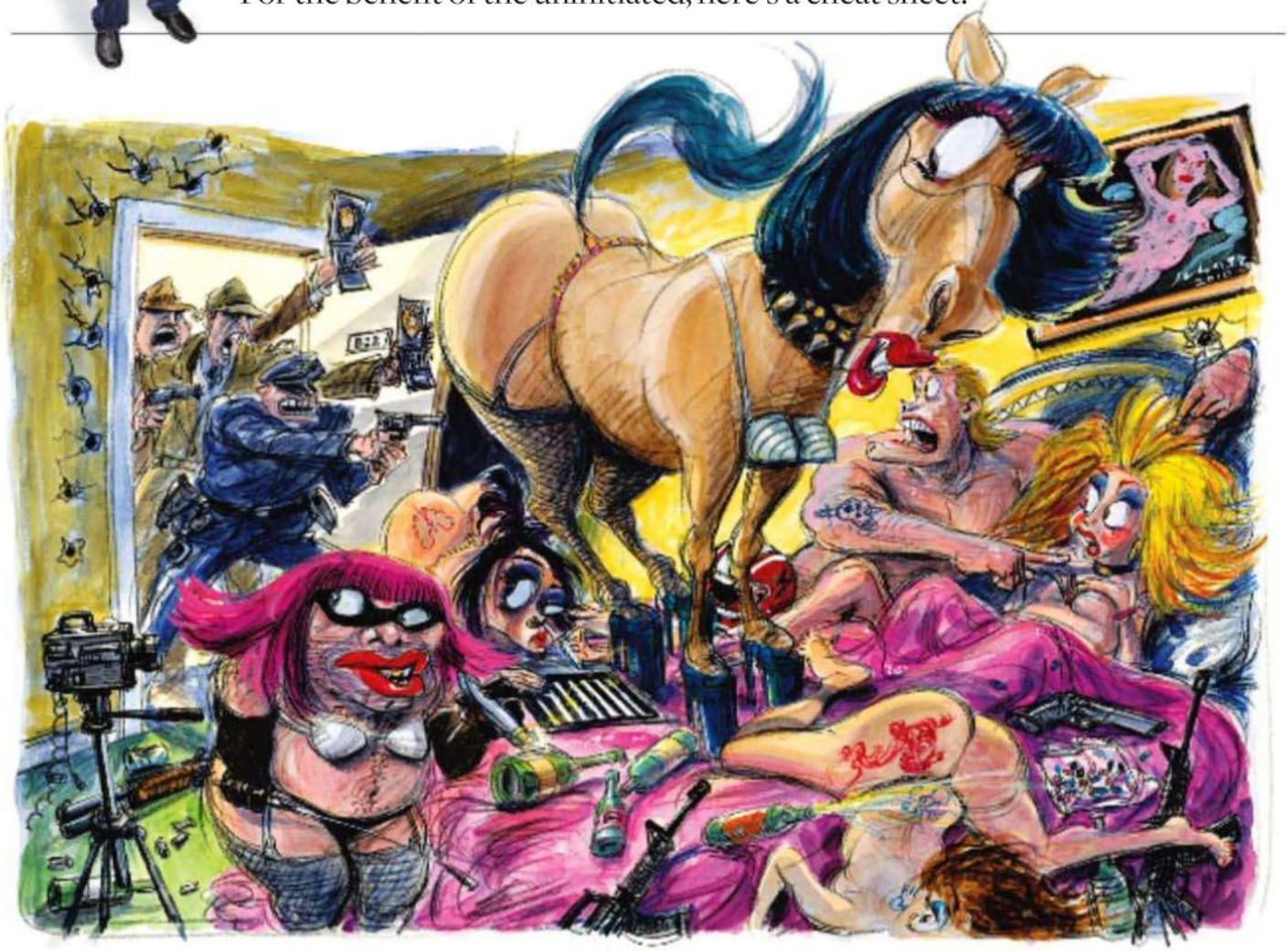
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The Jock's Guide to Getting Arrested

Most players take years to master the art of getting busted. For the benefit of the uninitiated, here's a cheat sheet.



FOR MOST AMERICAN MEN, THIS TIME OF YEAR means the kickoff of NFL training camp — the start of the New Year on the couch-potato sports calendar. But for me it's a sad time. It's the end of Arrest Season.

In terms of jock crime sprees, no other stretch rivals late June and July. Why? For one thing both the NHL and NBA seasons have come to an end, unleashing on places like Vegas, Atlanta, and Miami a torrent of millionaire Slavic and Scandinavian power drinkers and seven-foot NBA jism-spewing machines, all with eight months of rigorous dieting and physical training to undo.

Plus, there's this: Every year the NFL welcomes about 300 rookies into the league, and it's during the midsummer months that most of them are introduced to gobs of money and near-total freedom for the first time in their lives. No more agents, coaches, and parents following them around all day, no more classes — just a brand-new apartment in an alien city, unlimited sexual opportunities, and 24 long hours in each and every day. At least until camp begins.

Thus, this is the only time of the year when rookies and veterans from three of America's four major professional sports leagues are free to really relax and enjoy life — the last chance they're going to have to get double-Tasered in fights with nightclub security guards or buy alcohol for pairs of under-17 girls in the sleazy hotels of Covington, Kentucky, or ride around on a three-wheeled motorcycle with a pistol in a pant leg and a shotgun in a guitar case.

And just like fighting through a high screen or defending the slant and go, there is a right way to get arrested and a wrong way.

1 MAKE SURE YOU DON'T SUCK

Before you go out and start committing crimes, it's important to first make sure you're at least slightly better than the 30 or 40 guys the team's assistant GM could instantly pull off some practice squad to replace you. Otherwise you will become fodder for the team's zero-tolerance discipline policy. Conversely, if you're awesome, the line will be, "There've been some bumps in the road, but hopefully he's learned from that." Take defensive back Willie Andrews, a seventh-round Patriots pick who barely played and sucked when he did. Two days after the disastrous 2008 Super Bowl loss to the Giants that he did absolutely nothing to prevent, he was caught driving around in

ROGER HAGADONE

illustration by VICTOR JUHASZ



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an unregistered Crown Vic with a half-pound of weed. Four months after that, right smack in the middle of Arrest Season, he got pinched for allegedly waving a gun at his girlfriend's head. Unamused, Bill Belichick sent a strong zero-tolerance message by cutting Andrews the very next day. Meanwhile, ultra-awesome Pats cornerback Ty Law was arrested twice — once for muling some E across the Canadian border (he skated on that) and once for a bizarre 2004 traffic incident in Miami that culminated in the ultimate arrest-related shame for an NFL skill-position player: getting caught in a foot chase by a policeman. Despite all this, Law was kept on the roster for another year — perhaps because he was the only guy on the team who could cover Marvin Harrison. In sum: If you're on the "bubble," smoke your weed at home, and when your girlfriend starts tripping about all those chicks on your Facebook page, don't give in to instinct and hit her in the mouth with a brick; let it slide. Once you've got a lock on at least the second-string job, you can let your hair down. But remember:

2 DON'T COMMIT WEIRD CRIMES

You know what the difference is between current NFL player Ronnie Brown and current Desoto Correctional Institution inmate Cecil "The Diesel" Collins? Both were star running backs in the SEC (Brown for Auburn, Collins for LSU), both got drafted by the Dolphins, and both got arrested. The difference is that Brown got arrested for DUI — practically a rite of passage for young NFL players — while Collins was arrested three times for breaking into women's homes to watch them sleep, the third time resulting in a 15-year prison sentence. Collins failed to understand that while driving under the influence is dangerous and irresponsible, breaking into women's houses to watch them sleep, especially if their husbands are home, is weird. Grasp the fine line: Normal, hyperlibidinal violence and irresponsibility are okay; crimes that reveal you to be both irresponsible and a psychosexual dissident are not. Chiefs tackle Victor Riley climbing into his SUV and ramming a car containing his wife and infant daughter: okay. T-Wolves center Eddie Griffin driving while jacking off to porn: not okay. Likewise, Kobe Bryant kicking a Colorado hotel employee out of his room when she refused to let him spooge on her face (that's "my thing," Kobe explained to investigators): okay. Fucking your 15-year-old sister: not okay. As Abilene Christian tackle and registered sex offender Tony Washington found out, you'll go from top prospect to undrafted for that. But even for "normal" crimes, if you do get busted:

3 DENY EVERYTHING

No matter what you are arrested for, you absolutely must refuse to take any responsibility for anything, right up until the moment the jury comes in with a guilty verdict (at which point you must instantly move on to item number six on this list). Your team-recommended lawyer will take care of the legal denials and may also, depending on how expensive he is, take on the necessary job of publicly smearing/threatening your accuser. Your job, and it's an important one, is to believe you're innocent and go out in public draped in real anger and looking struck to the bone with self-pity, like a Jewish mother whose sons went to a Knicks game the day she was having her spleen removed. The first time he was accused of sexual assault (charges were never filed), Ben Roethlisberger did it just right. Hyperventilating and dressed in a maudlin brown pinstripe undertaker's suit at an ad hoc press conference, Big Ben appeared near tears as he railed against the "false and vicious" allegations that he had surprise-Nazi-humped a Harrah's hotel employee in Reno after calling her to his room on the pretense of a broken TV set. The public will completely buy this "I was unfairly targeted because I'm a rich sports star" act exactly one time, so don't waste the opportunity. As Roethlisberger demonstrated the second time around, once you play the persecuted-Christ-figure card and get accused of the same crime again, your teammates (and, more important, ESPN) will turn against you. An essential corollary to rule three is:

4 THOSE DRUGS BELONGED TO MY COUSIN

If you get caught in any kind of drug/illegal-substance scandal, even if the drugs are on you, it doesn't matter: They belonged to your cousin. Even if you don't have a cousin. A-Rod, outed last year for steroids, produced a cousin sporting the name of a Soviet cosmonaut: Yuri Sucart. The aforementioned Ty Law blamed his cousin, who wasn't even in the area code of the ecstasy incident, for leaving a suitcase at Law's house that just happened to contain seven E tabs and that Law just happened to grab instead of his own suitcase before heading out on a middle-of-the-night run to a strip club in Canada. Vikings running back Onterrio Smith, caught trying to hustle a rubber-dong-and-dried-urine kit called the Whizzinator through airport security, insisted that he was only shepherding the device "to my cousin" — curious, since between Smith and his cousin, Smith was probably the only one who needed a way to beat regular supervised drug tests. Variations on the cousin ploy include letting your friend take the rap for the shit found in your bag (see Anthony, Carmelo, busted on a weed-in-backpack rap in a Denver airport) and saying the drug pipe in your car belonged to a friend from rehab you're trying to help get over an addiction (Michael Irvin, in an inspired performance). And the all-time greatest fall-guy move: supernuts ex-Jaguars receiver Jimmy Smith claiming that the crack and weed that cops found in his car belonged to a mystery guy named "Jahad." If those moves don't work, though, the next tactic is:

5 YOU CAN'T ARREST ME; I'M A PROFESSIONAL ATHLETE

This is the athlete's version of the *Fargo* scene where Steve Buscemi flashes a fifty with his license and registration and offers to settle a traffic ticket "right here in Brainerd." It's not enough just to hint to the friendly officer that he might not want to arrest a famous guy like you; you have to explicitly tell him that he can't arrest you because you're a pro athlete, even using those very words. Ty Law in the Miami incident ("Don't touch me; I'm a professional athlete!") and Gilbert Arenas ("You can't arrest me; I'm a basketball player!") are two of the very few athletes who've managed to pull off this maneuver correctly. You might think that merely threatening the police would be enough — then-Chicago Bear Tank Johnson is probably the textbook example ("You ain't the only one with a Glock") — but it actually works less often than you would imagine. In any case, if you do wind up convicted or suspended, or the evidence is so overwhelming that there's no hope to wiggle out, it's U-turn time:

6 WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS, HAVE YOUR AGENT WRITE AN APOLOGY FOR YOU

There are several critical elements to this tactic. The first, once again, is to invoke your family whenever possible, and even better to have them present, sitting by in mute contrition, when you read your script. The 1993 Arrest Season all-star Vince Coleman famously nailed the public apology by bringing his wife and children to a presser to deny that his throwing a lit M-80 at a group of fans (including a two-and-a-half-year-old girl) meant he was an uncaring, insensitive person. "Nothing more could be further from the truth," he said. The next key step is to use the opportunity of your current temporary disgrace as a way of pointing out how awesome a person you otherwise are. Employ such phrases as "My comments were out of character" (see gay-slurring Hawaii football coach Greg McMackin), or "I have not been true to my values" (Tiger Woods), or "I regret that I have fallen short of the values instilled in me by my family" (Roethlisberger, after rape allegation number two; no charges were filed then either). In a pinch just go with citizen-loudmouth linebacker Joey Porter's memorable public apology, which works in any circumstance: "I have reached out to the owners of the horse and will do whatever I can to help them get through this very unfortunate situation." This is America, after all: If you don't suck, we'll forgive you! ■

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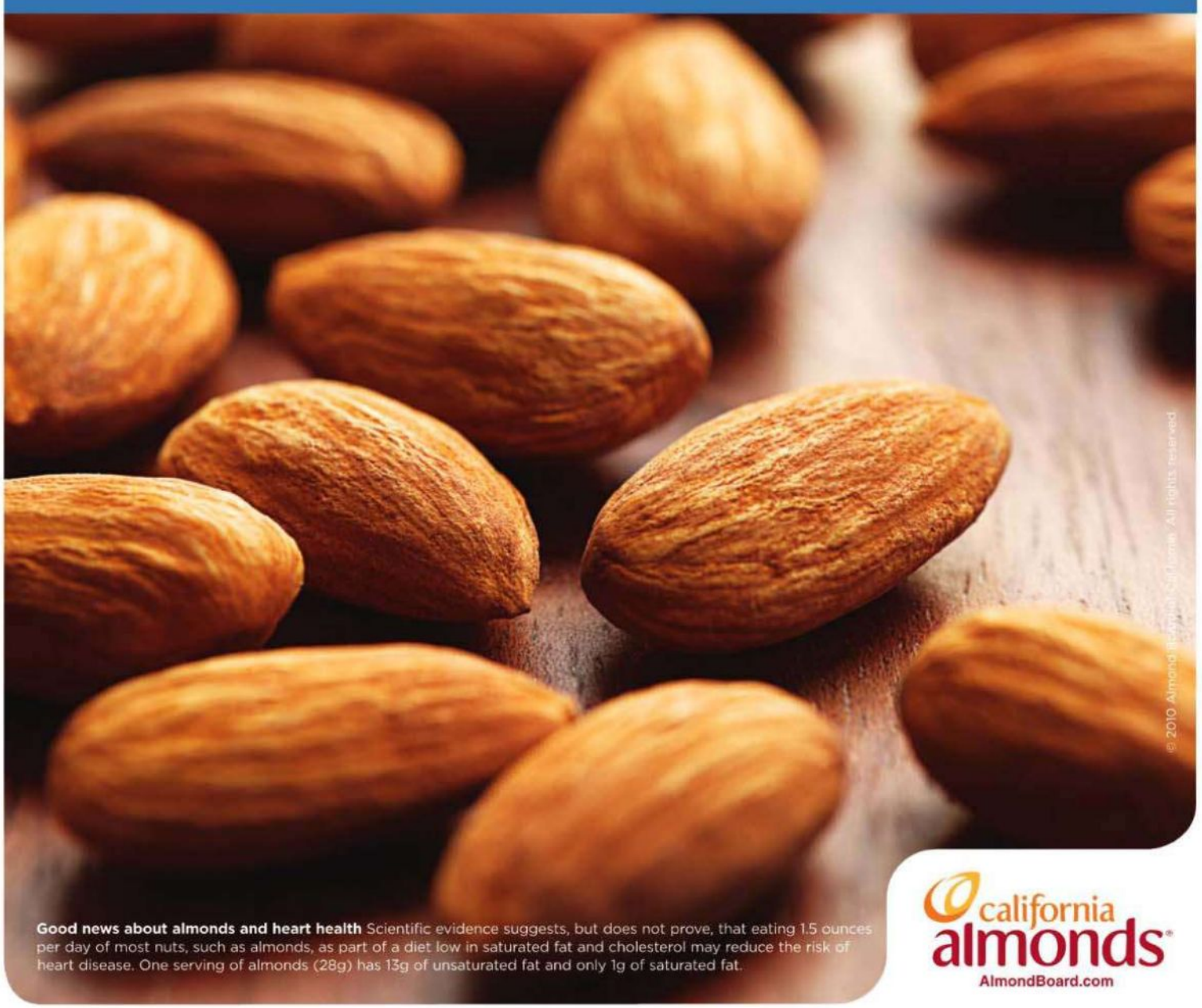
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Good news about almonds and heart health Scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that eating 1.5 ounces per day of most nuts, such as almonds, as part of a diet low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease. One serving of almonds (28g) has 13g of unsaturated fat and only 1g of saturated fat.

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Precision technology used to find the jaw's optimum position while fitting a Pure Power Mouthguard

The Game-Changing Mouthguard

STRANGE AS IT MIGHT SEEM, NEW SPECIALTY ORTHODONTICS CAN DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE YOUR BALANCE, STRENGTH, AND STAMINA. *by* **TIM SOHN**

WHEN SKIER BODE MILLER CROSSED THE finish line to win Olympic gold in Vancouver last February, his exultant smile revealed a mouthguard behind his lower lip. This wouldn't ordinarily be noteworthy, but Miller's wasn't one of those $2.99 boil-and-bite wedges used by football players and boxers to prevent concussions. It was a Pure Power Mouthguard, or PPM, a customized, quarter-inch-thick dental orthotic designed expressly to improve his athletic performance — the same retainer featured on ESPN a few months earlier when some New Orleans Saints players wore them to victory.

"It's pretty hokey, but it makes a significant difference in your physical abilities," says Miller of the PPM. "With the mouthguard in, I feel more stable, and I'm more likely to have a cleaner run."

Miller is one of several pro athletes who swear by the two-year-old device, including Shaquille O'Neal, Evander Holyfield, and a dozen PGA golfers. "It can give you a little more turn, a little more balance, make you a little more relaxed," says acclaimed golf pro Scott Munroe. "And if all those 'littles' translate into a one- or two-stroke gain, that's a lot." Munroe has picked up 20 yards off the tee when wearing the PPM.

Backing up the anecdotal success of the PPM is a 2008 study out of Rutgers University by Shawn Arent, director of the school's ▶

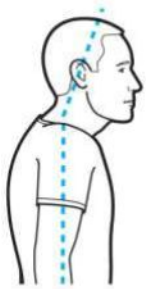
photograph by JUSTIN STEELE

Drop in bad cholesterol from eating just 2.4 ounces of nuts of any kind daily: **7%**

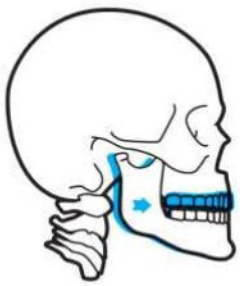
MOUTHGUARD (cont.)

How the Pure Power Mouthguard Works





THE PROBLEM
An incorrect bite that leads to a "forward head posture" — the head slightly in front of the spine rather than in line with it — makes it harder to hold the head up and doubles the strain on the neck and shoulder muscles.



THE SOLUTION
Biting on the mouthguard moves the jaw into its optimal position. This creates head and neck alignment with the lower part of the body and opens up the rib cage, creating better balance and making it easier to breathe.



human performance lab. "The gains weren't huge while people were wearing the mouthguard, but they were statistically significant," says Dr. Arent. "It did improve some of the most important stuff: strength and power."

One man not surprised by the positive feedback is its creator, Dr. Anil Makkar, a Canadian dentist. He began developing the device in 2006 after making one for a lobsterman who was suffering from migraines related to a jaw disorder. Not only did the man's headaches disappear, Makkar recalls, "but he said lifting his 75-pound lobster traps felt effortless."

Makkar claims that 90 percent of the population has a slightly misaligned jaw — an overbite that causes the head to be slightly forward of the spine, rather than in line with it — doubling the strain on our neck and shoulder muscles. Once the jaw is aligned, he says, the neck rolls back, decreasing muscle tension in the neck and shoulders and causing a trickle-down effect that allows the rest of the body to relax. This in turn increases range of motion and opens up the rib cage, allowing for greater oxygenation to the lungs. It also releases pressure on a balance-controlling nerve in the jaw joint, yielding improved equilibrium.

The idea isn't entirely new. Back in 1980 a forward-thinking Long Island orthodontist outfitted the U.S. Olympic luge and bobsled teams with mouthpieces. But Makkar's advantage is patented technology to identify optimum jaw position, something I experienced firsthand upon visiting Dr. Michael Bixby in Red Bank, New Jersey, hoping to assess the potential benefits for the everyday athlete.

THE TEST

"FIRST YOU'RE GOING TO FEEL A little twitch in your eye, and then your jaw will relax," Bixby tells me. On my jaw and neck, Bixby has positioned a half-dozen pads trailing wires connected to a nine-volt battery.

Twitching is an understatement: As Bixby fires low-level pulses of electricity into my jaw and neck every second and a half, my entire torso hiccups. The pulses, Bixby explains, cause the nerves and muscles to fire and relax repeatedly, which eventually puts the jaw into a resting state. After 45 minutes he puts a magnet under my lip and has me strap on an elaborate piece of headgear connected to a laptop, using the information he gleans to map my jaw and find my "optimal" position. When he finds the sweet spot, he makes a silicone mold and sends it off to a lab, where my PPM will be built.

NEWS + NOTES

Eight Years in the Lab: The Ideal Sports Drink

NUTRITION

Stacy T. Sims, an environmental exercise physiologist and sports nutritionist at the Stanford Prevention Research Center, has spent the past eight years testing the effects of sports drinks on dozens of active people, from average Joes to elite athletes, in an effort to find out what constitutes the perfect sports drink. "What I discovered is that, over an hour of exercise, everyone requires higher sodium content and lower sugar content to facilitate the most efficient movement of liquid from your stomach to your blood," she says. "And none of the current drinks on the market contains those correct amounts." During her search for the optimal formula, Sims tested hers against the leading brands by having subjects drink from unlabeled water bottles while running for 30 minutes; the testers then did a one-kilometer race. Subjects who chugged Sims's drink – the recipe for which she's sharing exclusively with *Men's Journal* before it's brought to the market by a yet-to-be-named beverage company – ran 15 to 20 percent faster. —BERNE BROUDY



THE SIMS DRINK
- *32 oz water*
- *1/4 cup sugar*
- *1/4 tsp salt*
- *2 sachets of Emergen-C*
- *1/2 packet of unsweetened Kool-Aid powder for flavoring*

MOUTHGUARD ILLUSTRATIONS: CHRIS PHILPOT. MOUTHGUARD: COURTESY PPM. DRINK ILLUSTRATION: JOE MCKENDRY

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Number of additional calories burned throughout the day by those who cut their television viewing in half: **120**

MOUTHGUARD (cont.)

Though the American Dental Association won't comment, the idea that jaw alignment can affect athleticism is gaining currency among dentists. Under Armour's Performance Mouthguards, which are similar to the PPM but with a less precise fitting process, have been developed by Minnesota-based Bite Tech and retail for $500. Dr. Steve Mills, a Maine dentist and editor of the Academy for Sports Dentistry's newsletter, has followed the concept's progress and is authorized to fit the Under Armour product. He, like other dentists, thinks the idea is valid but still evolving. "It's not magic, but it works," he says of jaw alignment, adding that the results can be fickle. "How well it works and who it works on need to be fine-tuned a bit."

USING THE MOUTHGUARD YIELDED 20 PERCENT STRENGTH GAINS.

The fine-tuning seems to be where the money is. For one of the higher-end versions, which is made using six different points of reference on the face, you're talking two grand. So the question becomes: Does it work so well that it justifies the cash you're spending?

Two weeks after my fitting, my $2,000 wonder-retainer arrived in the mail. Every time I put it in, I had the same experience: It would feel strange for a few minutes, but then I would barely notice it. Sometimes I would bite down on it and other times my jaw would hang open, but it seemed that just having it in forced my jaw to reset its "normal" position and yielded immediate results.

While doing yoga I noticed better balance and stability. And during the jumping and bounding of my one-hour plyometric-focused cross-training workouts, I felt fresher. I also seemed to tire less easily while running, and the effects were evident even while I played basketball: I wasn't jumping out of the gym or hitting more shots, but I did feel more solid, stable, and efficient. Just doing hamstring stretches, I could consistently reach a few inches farther while wearing the mouthguard. But perhaps most quantifiably, I was able to do two or three more pull-ups per set and five to seven more dips every time I was using the device.

And yet, when friends would ask me if it worked, I'd hedge. It's too hard to establish a baseline, I'd tell them, too difficult to say definitively whether it's making me a better athlete. Or maybe it was simply too bizarre to admit that such odd gear had such a positive effect. But in the end it comes down to one question: Will I continue to wear my PPM? Yes, without a doubt. I just had it in this morning. ■

The Flexibility Bracelet

A DEVICE THAT INCREASES YOUR STRETCH BY 10 PERCENT



If you ask L.A. Laker Lamar Odom or champion surfer Andy Irons, performance bracelets keep them balanced and confident. But ask your personal trainer at the gym and he'll probably say it's a scam. The hologram- and chip-embedded rubber straps promise increased strength and flexibility, but the technology doesn't seem to be based in hard science.

The sell goes like this: Our bodies are supposed to operate at exactly 7.83Hz. But since few actually do, we need one of these bracelets to help energy run through us more efficiently. For anywhere from $30 (the Power Balance) to $100 (C-Prime, which claims its antenna won't lose a charge), you too can have better "energy flow."



After a couple of weeks wearing the C-Prime — in the gym, running — it seemed to make a difference in only one area: flexibility. Surprisingly, I could consistently get 10 percent more stretch every time I wore the bracelet, and the results were repeatable over and over. Still, unless I take up yoga, I won't be keeping one in my gym bag. —WILL COCKRELL

NEWS + NOTES

A New Cure for Snoring

SLEEP

Exercise may be the answer to your snoring problem. Researchers at the University of São Paulo Medical School had patients with moderate sleep apnea – lapses in breathing characterized by heavy snoring – follow a three-month program of regular tongue and throat workouts. The result was a reduction in symptoms by as much as 40 percent. Here's the prescription:

- Rub the top and sides of your tongue with a toothbrush five times each, three times a day.
- Place your tongue against the back of your top teeth and slide it backward along the roof of your mouth. Next, press it against the roof of your mouth for five seconds. Then press it against your lower teeth. Repeat five times.
- Make a fish face, and hold for 30 seconds. Repeat six times.
- Open your mouth, hold your tongue against the bottom of your mouth, and pronounce five short vowel sounds ("ah ah ah ah ah") followed by five seconds of one long vowel sound ("ahhhhhhh"). Repeat five times. —JOHN HASTINGS

A More Effective Eye Surgery

VISION

Lenses surgically implanted in your eyes like permanent contacts, known as intraocular lens surgery, may be more beneficial for nearsightedness than laser surgery, according to a recent review of data. People who got the lenses – which cost about $1,000 more per eye than Lasik – report clearer vision compared with those who had laser surgery. "And the lenses are as safe as laser surgery," says Dr. Allon Barsam, who led the study. —J.H.

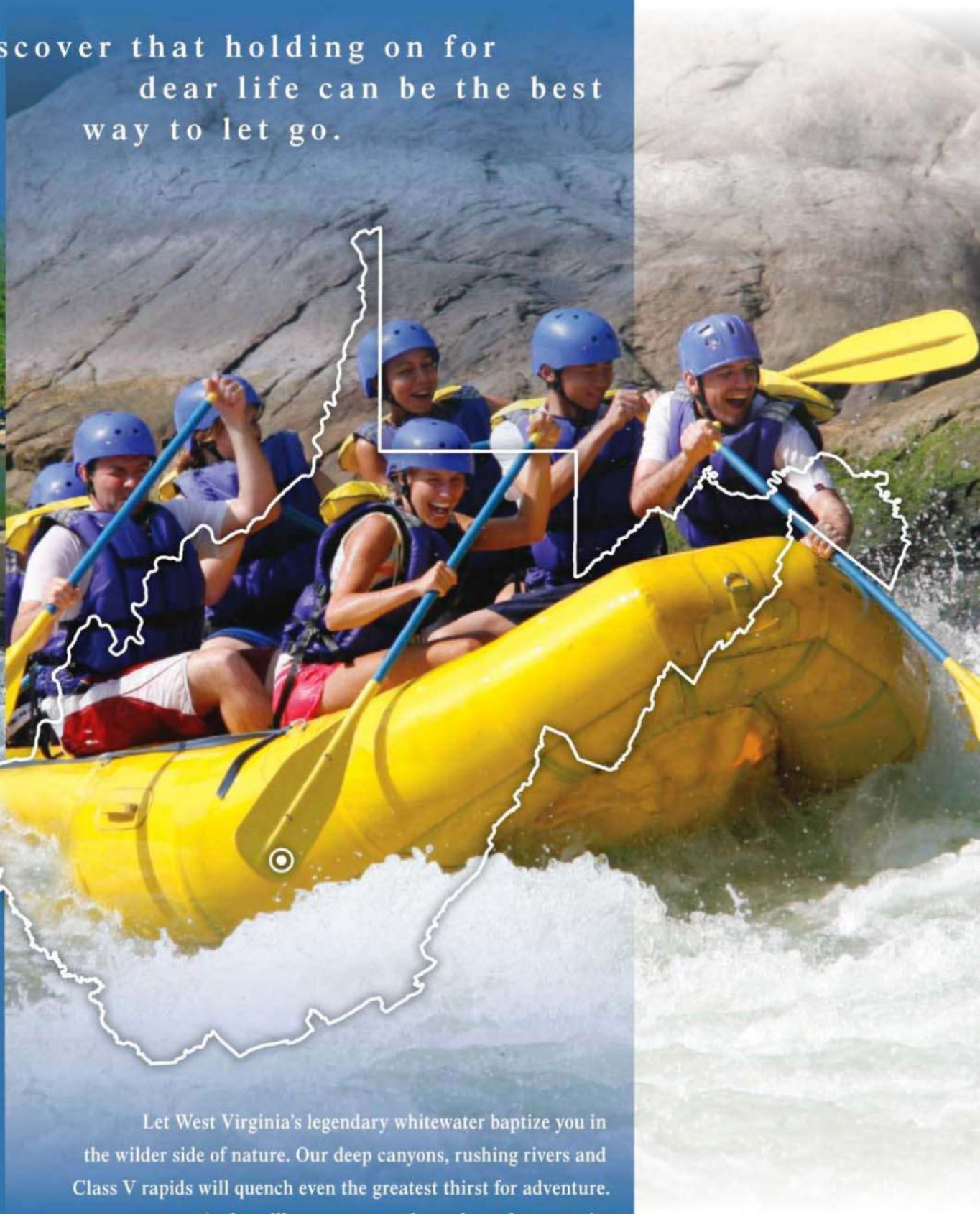
BRACELET: ROBERT BUCKLEY; ODOM: RONALD MARTINEZ/GETTY IMAGES

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WORKOUT

Time Your Training Right

THE SCIENCE TO OPTIMIZING YOUR MORNING, NOON, AND EVENING WORKOUTS. BY CHRISTIE ASCHWANDEN

	MORNING	MIDDAY	EVENING
			
FUEL	Your blood glucose doesn't peak until late morning. Fuel up with 200 calories of quick, accessible fuel — think toast and peanut butter or a glass of juice and a banana — finishing your last bite 20 minutes before your workout.	Save your lunch until after your workout, but be sure to eat some carbs before heading to the gym. Ideally you'll follow your training session with a lunch that includes protein and fiber to boost recovery.	For energy without a crash, eat a small high-carb snack — yogurt, whole-wheat crackers, or an apple — two hours before your workout. 
PROS	You're more likely to stick with morning workouts because you'll finish before life gets in the way, says exercise physiologist Michael Deschenes. Also, if you're training for an a.m. event, morning workouts will help you acclimate.	Exercising midday can ward off the afternoon slump by boosting your energy levels. 	Even among morning people, performance strength, flexibility, and power are best between 4 PM and 8 PM, says Deschenes. Your body temperature is also at its peak, and your chance of pulling a muscle decreases. BEST OVERALL TIME TO WORK OUT
CONS	From a purely physiological perspective, this is the worst time of day to work out. Exercise performance bottoms out in the early-morning hours, Deschenes says. 	Since it's smack in the middle of the workday, you may find yourself rushing through your exercises, which can lead to not finishing your workout or, worse, getting hurt.	Physiologically there's no real downside to an evening workout, but depending on your lifestyle, it can be hard to pull off between working late, happy-hour invites, and your partner's dinner plans.
RULE OF THUMB	Give yourself 20 minutes to wake up and get moving before going to the gym. Don't skimp on your warm-up, says Deschenes, and do cardio before weights to avoid injuring cold muscles.	If you can, opt to work out first, then eat a late lunch to avoid exercising on a digesting stomach, says sports nutritionist Sunny Blende, a San Francisco–based ultramarathoner and instructor at the College of Marin.	Leave at least an hour between your workout and bedtime to ensure a good night's rest, says Stanford biologist Jamie Zeitzer. 

NEWS + NOTES

Build Muscle to Breathe Better

EXERCISE

Breathing well so muscles get the oxygen they need is an obvious yet neglected key to performance. But Indiana University researcher Louise Turner has hit on a simple way anyone can improve their breathing efficiency. She recruited 16 cyclists to train their inspiratory muscles (the muscles that expand your lungs). For six weeks, half of the cyclists inhaled 60 times a day through a device that partially blocked air. The other half breathed normally. At the end of the study, the cyclists deprived of air required up to 4 percent less oxygen during a workout compared with the control group. Want the same results? Purse your lips, making a narrow opening, and inhale forcefully against the resistance; breathe out normally. Repeat 10 to 30 times daily. —J.H.

Drink Beer for Strong Bones

NUTRITION

Good news for beer drinkers: A new study from the University of California–Davis shows that silicon found in beer with lots of hops and malt strengthens bones. Although fruits and vegetables like bananas, olives, asparagus, cucumbers, bell peppers, and lettuce, as well as rice and oats, contain silicon, the silicon in fruits, veggies, and grains isn't assimilated by the body as easily as the kind found in beer. For example, just two bottles of India Pale Ale (which contains the most malt and hops, and therefore the most silicon) easily deliver the average daily intake of the nutrient; you'd have to eat at least four heaping bowls of porridge oats to get the same benefit. —B.B.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DORLING KINDERSLEY/GETTY IMAGES; KICK IMAGES/ISTOCK; GETTY IMAGES; GEORGE DIEBOLD/GETTY IMAGES; JUSTIN STEELE (4)



CONFESSIONS OF A
FORMER ROGAINE® CYNIC

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Amount that eating one serving of bacon, sausage, or deli meat a day increases your risk of heart disease: **42%**

NEWS + NOTES

A Safer Way to Grill Meat

NUTRITION

Cooking raw meat over high heat brings out cancer-causing compounds known as heterocyclic amines. Short of changing your dinner menu, you can protect yourself by using chopped rosemary in your marinade or just sprinkling it over your burger or steak. The herb contains antioxidants that block up to 92 percent of carcinogens, according to a recent study at Kansas State University. Other tasty add-ons can also help: Research has shown that adding both garlic and lemon juice to your marinade will do the trick, too. This recipe for tri-tip includes all three cancer blockers:

- *Pour 1/4 cup of olive oil into a small bowl;*
- *Add 4 medium garlic cloves, chopped;*
- *1 tablespoon of finely chopped rosemary leaves; and*
- *The juice of 1 medium lemon.*
- *Rub salt and pepper on the tri-tip, then brush on the marinade and let it sit at room temperature for about 20 minutes before grilling.* —J.H.

The Sunscreen Wristband

LIFESTYLE

Not knowing when to reapply sunblock is one of the main reasons so many of us are at risk of getting skin cancer. To help you remember, UVSunSense has developed a wristband to which you apply lotion at the same time as you slather it on yourself. When the band fades from bright purple to lavender, it's time to reapply. You'll know you've had enough sun for the day when the band turns pale yellow (*$7; uvsunsense.com*). —J.H.



THE CURE

The Truth About Fish Oil

THE SUPPLEMENT HAS PROVEN BENEFITS, BUT YOU NEED TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT ONES.

FOR YEARS FISH OIL SUPplements have been touted as a miracle cure for everything from heart disease to arthritis. But recent indictments from health watchdogs, who claim they're full of PCBs and mercury, and environmentalists, decrying the damage they cause endangered fish populations, have devotees wondering if they're worth the potential risk.

Fish oil's primary benefit is its ability to reduce inflammation — the swelling and pain caused by infection, irritation, or injury — which has far-reaching positive effects on ailments such as allergies and psoriasis. "No other food has been so proven to promote health as omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids, which are found predominantly in fatty fish and fish oil supplements," says Floyd "Ski" Chilton, an inflammatory-disease researcher at Wake Forest University. In his book, *The Gene Smart Diet*, Chilton cites a 2009 Harvard study that proclaims low levels of omega-3s are the eighth leading cause of death. Other studies, such as one from the National Institutes of Health and another from Purdue, support his claims, showing, respectively, that taking omega-3 supplements reduces the incidence of colon cancer and improves bone density.

TAKING FISH OIL HELPS REDUCE AILMENTS FROM ALLERGIES TO ARTHRITIS.

Humans need omega-3s as part of our diet. The vast majority of us, however, are eating less and less of that fatty acid, while our levels of omega-6s, found in foods like eggs, nuts, and vegetable oil, have increased dramatically. (In the past, when cattle were raised primarily on diets of grass, omega-3s could even be found in beef. But since most cattle now consume omega-6–heavy diets of corn, beef contains little to no omega-3s.)

While both omega fatty acids are good for us, Chilton says that a higher ratio of omega-6s to omega-3s actually increases inflammation throughout the body rather than reducing it. Our hunter-gatherer ancestors, who ate fish all the time, typically had ratios of about 2:1 or 3:1 between omega-6 fats and omega-3 fats; it's common for modern Americans' blood tests to reveal a 15:1 ratio — 20:1 if they eat a lot of fast, processed food. According to scientists those ratios play a role in heart disease, arthritis, and asthma. In fact, recent research shows that people who maintain a high level of omega-3s in their blood reduce their chances of a heart attack by as much as 90 percent.

In order to ingest the right amount of omega-3s, you would either have to eat three and a half ounces of fresh or canned wild-caught salmon, mackerel, trout, or albacore tuna every day, or take one teaspoon of fish oil. Thus, a supplement is probably easiest for most people.

This March, however, a lawsuit filed by health advocate Mateel Environmental Justice Foundation accused eight sellers of fish oil, including Rite Aid and CVS, of peddling products laced with PCBs, the cancer-causing chemicals that were a popular cooling agent used by many U.S. factories in the 1970s. "Fish feed in contaminated areas and bio-accumulate the stuff," says David Rowe, a plaintiff attorney.

There are also moral concerns behind using a fish oil supplement. Environmentalists point out that global warming, pollution, and imprudent fishing practices are devastating the world's marine species, and the production of fish oil is contrib-

TED MORRISON/FOODPIX/GETTY IMAGES

Number of calories you'll burn cleaning your garage for six hours: **2,130**

uting to diminishing fish populations. That complaint has inspired greater exploration of plant-based omega-3 alternatives, but none so far that has proven as effective as fish oil.

"Alternatives like flaxseed oil, rich in omega-3s, simply aren't converted as efficiently as omega-3s from fish," says Stanford University associate professor of medicine Dr. Randall Stafford, a researcher of chronic-disease prevention.

Stafford acknowledges that barely any fish are completely free of PCBs but believes that the benefits of fish oil far outweigh the health risks of contamination. He says that picking a safe oil is as easy as reading the label: "Buy products made from wild-caught baitfish like anchovies and sardines. They're tiny and haven't lived long, so they haven't had time to store toxins."

As for the environmental concern, some are saying the answer is krill — tiny shrimp-like crustaceans near the very bottom of the food chain. While their population has been hurt by global warming, the shellfish are abundant, making krill oil one of the most sustainable options for now. However, as illustrated in the chart below, not all fish oils have the same benefits. The compositions of certain other products may better suit your individual needs. —BRYCE HUBNER

How to Choose the Right Fish Oil

A CAREFUL ANALYSIS OF THE FOUR MOST POPULAR FISH OILS AND THEIR SPECIFIC HEALTH BENEFITS



BAITFISH OIL
Carlson's Very Finest Fish Oil; carlsonlabs.com



COD LIVER OIL
Nordic Naturals Arctic Cod Liver Oil; nordicnaturals.com



KRILL OIL
Source Naturals Neptune Krill Oil; sourcenaturals.com



DISTILLED BAITFISH OIL
Ascenta; ascenta health.com

	BAITFISH OIL	COD LIVER OIL	KRILL OIL	DISTILLED BAITFISH OIL
BEST FOR	Pretty much everyone, but especially those with a history of heart disease or those dealing with pain.	Those living north of Atlanta, where our natural source of Vitamin D, the sun, doesn't shine enough.	Anyone suffering from high cholesterol or diabetes, since krill oil seems to lower blood-sugar LDL.	Those who have family history of cancer, since ingesting PCBs or mercury can trigger cancer cells to form.
PROS	Rich in omega-3s, which have been proven to help everything from heart health to cognitive disorders.	Not quite as rich in omega-3s as standard fish oil, but cod liver oil contains bone-fortifying vitamin D.	A McGill University study says krill oil helps reduce glucose, triglycerides, and LDL-cholesterol levels.	A regular baitfish oil that's distilled in such a way as to ensure that it is free of PCBs and mercury.
CONS	Since it's a supplement, and therefore unregulated, some producers use fish full of toxins.	Less omega-3s means you have to take more, and cod, a larger fish, is more likely to contain toxins like PCBs.	Krill oil's benefits are questionable, since much less research and data are available than with other fish oils.	Some argue that overprocessing fish oil removes many of the benefits, as well as the toxins.
COST	62 cents per daily dose (one teaspoon)	$1.22 per daily dose (five soft-gels)	$1.46 per daily dose (two pills)	$1.14 per daily dose (one teaspoon)

MICHAEL PIRROCCO (4)

NEWS + NOTES

A Pain-Free Colonoscopy

HEALTH

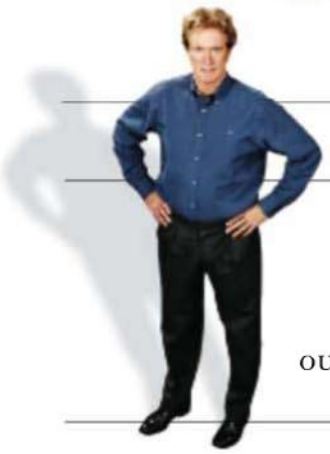
Colonoscopies remain the best protection against colon cancer, but a recent British study reported that a much cheaper, pain-free five-minute exam could reduce the incidence of colon cancer by 33 percent. Called a sigmoidoscopy – wherein a small endoscope is inserted to examine the bottom third of the colon – the exam is done just once in a person's lifetime and has been shown to reduce death from the disease by 43 percent. But critics argue that since cancer can occur anywhere in the colon, a sigmoidoscopy is not enough and that, at age 50, everyone should get a colonoscopy every 10 years. —SARA REISTAD-LONG

The Case Against Pre-Workout Stretching

EXERCISE

"Stretching right before exercise impairs your performance," says researcher Kieran O'Sullivan at the University of Limerick, Ireland. In a recent study, he asked 18 volunteers to perform a static hamstring stretch prior to a workout on one day, and then had them do a gentle aerobic warm-up the next. O'Sullivan found that the hamstring – notoriously vulnerable to tweaks and pulls – was better prepared for activity following the aerobic warm-up. Though it's a small study, it's just one of many suggesting that pre-exercise stretching is a bad idea. Instead, O'Sullivan recommends a light, sports-specific activity. Going for a run? Walk for a minute or two, and then move into a slow jog for another couple of minutes before working your way up to your normal pace. —J.H.

Greater chance that those with poor oral health will develop heart disease: **70%**



Ask Dr. Bob

OUR IN-HOUSE DOC ANSWERS YOUR QUESTIONS.

SAFE TRAVELS

Q I'm going on a trip that will take me to some countries with pretty poor health care. If I get sick or hurt, what should I do?

A Even third-world doctors can handle some substantial procedures, from stitching up a wound to setting a broken bone. I just always follow a couple of rules: Make sure you actually see them take new instruments out of a sealed plastic package or watch them douse the instruments in alcohol before they use them on you; never allow them to suture your face (since a bad stitch job can leave a nasty scar); and make sure to have any work they do on you checked by a doctor when you get home. But it's what you do before you leave that really matters. I stock up on antibiotics that I take for sickness and to prevent infection (tell your doctor where you're going and what you're doing, and he or she should provide you with drugs such as Cipro and tell you how to use them). If the doctor at the clinic where I was treated has given me drugs, I call my doctor back home to make sure they're safe to take. If the situation is more dire, you may need to get helicoptered out of the area — which is what happened when one of my friends came down with severe stomach issues when we were in Albania. We called International SOS (*internationalsos.com*), and within an hour a helicopter picked up my friend and transported him to a hospital in Zurich, where he underwent gastric surgery. The problem with being airlifted is the cost: around $100,000. So make sure to purchase supplemental insurance from Travel Guard (*travelguard.com*) before you go. Sixty-nine dollars for a 10-day trip will cover everything, with no deductible.

POST-MEAL CHILLS

Q Why do I always get cold after I eat a big meal?

A Because you're eating too much. Digestion causes blood to flow to your stomach and intestine, diverting it away from the rest of your body. But if enough blood is rushing to your gut to make you feel cold, your meals are too big. Remember: Eating small portions of food more frequently throughout the day allows us to maintain a healthy body weight and have more energy. The average active guy needs between 2,500 and 3,000 calories a day, but other than breakfast, which should account for about 625 calories, most meals should make up no more than 400 calories.

BOGUS BOTTLED WATER

Q I've heard that drinking alkaline water is healthier than drinking regular water. Any truth to that?

A No. Alkaline water — which is made by a few different water-bottling companies — is created by adding sodium, calcium, and magnesium to tap or spring water. The product is marketed as having the ability to "balance" your body's acid production, allowing you to absorb nutrients more effectively. But it's a scam: Your body is designed to adjust to its optimal pH balance no matter what you ingest. For instance, once alkaline water enters your stomach, your body simply pours in greater amounts of acid to neutralize it.

ZAPPING AGE SPOTS

Q I'm 50 but look as though I could be in my 30s. The one thing giving me away is nickel-size age spots on my face. Is there any way to fade them?

A Dermatologists can do wonderful things with lasers these days to keep us looking younger — from removing veins and wrinkles to, yes, fading age spots. But youth doesn't come easy: The procedure, which takes about a minute per spot, costs around $100 a zap, feels like getting snapped in the face with a rubber band over and over, leaves you looking red and splotchy for a few hours, and makes you feel sunburned for the rest of the day.

THE TRUTH ABOUT NECK CRACKING

Q I crack my neck a lot, but a friend recently told me that doing so is really bad for me and could even cause a stroke. Is this true?

A It feels so good, doesn't it? That's because you're stretching tightened joint capsules and releasing gases within them. The more tightness there is, the more stress on your muscles, and that can cause knots and spasms. But there may be some pitfalls to neck cracking. Some doctors believe that every time you do it, you're wearing away cartilage, which can eventually lead to arthritis. Others think that you're weakening the ligaments, rendering your neck more vulnerable to injuries like whiplash. The one thing I wouldn't worry that much about is a stroke. Neck cracking can cause them, but they're rare: You'd need to already have a blood clot in one of the arteries in your neck. If that were the case, then compressing the clot while cracking your neck could release it into your brain, resulting in a stroke. My advice is to never force your neck into a position that makes it crack. If you want to relieve tight muscles, a handheld massaging device can achieve the same results.

E-mail your questions for Dr. Bob Arnot to dr.bob@mensjournal.com.

MICHAEL WARREN

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[1]pompills.com/research [2]These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. [3]46 men with rising PSA after surgery or radiotherapy drank 8oz 100% pomegranate juice daily for two years. [4]45 patients with coronary heart disease and myocardial ischemia drank 8oz 100% pomegranate juice daily for three months. ©2010 PomWonderful LLC. All rights reserved. POM Wonderful, POMx and Antioxidant Superpill are trademarks of PomWonderful LLC. PP3994

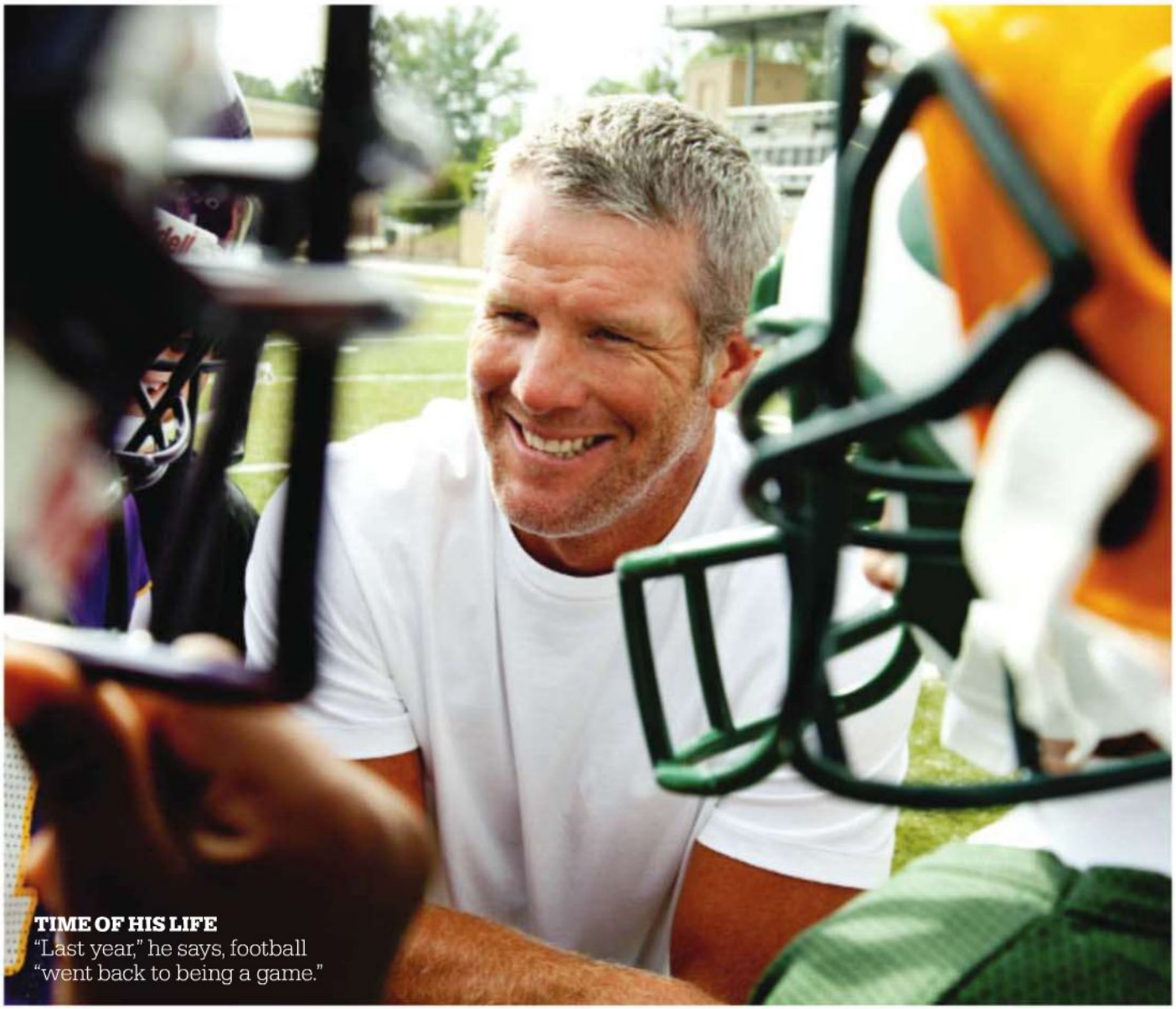
Brett Favre in Overtime

He's 40 now, a grandfather even. But football has never been more fun for him. How does a man know when it's time to walk away?

by **STEPHEN RODRICK** *photographs by* **JIM WRIGHT**



SCRAMBLING MAN
Favre with a kid from a local Pee Wee team near his Hattiesburg, Mississippi, home



TIME OF HIS LIFE
"Last year," he says, football "went back to being a game."

IT'S NOT QUITE 10 AM, AND THE HAMLET OF Hattiesburg is already blowing things up. He has walked the grounds of his Monticello-on-the-Mayberry spread in Mississippi and dispatched two possums with his shotgun. "They were acting weird," he reasoned. "Maybe they had *ray-bees*." That was productive. He then returned an e-mail to an ESPN reporter. That didn't work out so hot.

Three miles down U.S. Route 98, a visitor sits in the empty waiting room of a two-story office building. It belongs to Brett Favre's agent. There are no magazines. There are no pictures of the prince. The visitor waits. And he waits. He watches a paint crew arrive. He watches a paint crew depart. He watches paint dry.

But he hears things. Phones ringing. Phones slamming. Cussing. Lots of cussing. An hour passes. A secretary apologizes for the delay. Finally, a Southern almost-gentleman appears. He's the man behind the salty phone voice, and his face and ears are beet red. There's no suit. Rather, he's dressed in the uniform of the affluent adult child — shorts, sneakers, and golf shirt. He sticks out his hand.

"Bus Cook. I know you're media, but do you know who I hate? The goddamn media! You watch ESPN this morning?"

"No."

"Brett talked to goddamned Ed Werder at ESPN, says he needs ankle surgery. Now why did he do that? I've got Childress calling. I've got reporters calling all damn morning. Goddammit, why does he have to be such a goddamned drama queen? Play, don't play, goddamn, people are getting sick of it. I'm getting sick of it! Why does he have to talk to these people? What good does it do? Ed Werder at ESPN! What's he ever done for anybody other than say, 'Look, look, Mommy, I got this first, ain't I special?' You got problems with surgery, talk to your wife. Why talk to goddamned Ed Werder?"

A giant white pickup truck rumbles into the parking lot. The driver gingerly steps down from his perch. Cook looks out the window. He mulishly paws the rug with his sneakers.

"Goddamn, there's Brett. This is going to be interesting."

The silver-haired Favre is dressed in shorts and a sleeveless T-shirt, looking simultaneously like a kid and the grandpa he has just become. As he comes in the front door, his ruddy face breaks into a sheepish grin, one he's flashed a thousand times, chinstrap undone, at head coaches after throwing across his body into double coverage. He didn't flash it the last time he tried that maneuver on New Orleans turf. He was too tired, too broken. Actually, we may never see that smile again. That's why we are here.

"Hey, Bus," says Favre.

He speaks slowly, a boy trying to delay a spanking.

"I guess I screwed up. I didn't think it was a big deal. I just told him that I might need surgery. He made it into a big thing."

PREVIOUS SPREAD AND THIS PAGE: STYLING BY JOHN OLSON. GROOMING BY KRYSTAL KERSHAW. PRODUCTION BY MICHELLE FAUCHEUX. FAVRE WEARS A T-SHIRT BY J.CREW.

Bus stares him down, but his face crumples into an exasperated grin.

"Jesus, Brett. You never learn. You guys go talk. I've got goddamn phone calls to make." He pokes a finger at Brett. "Thanks to you."

Favre eases himself into a chair with the slight, obligatory groan of the middle-aged. (He turns 41 in October.) He knows what you're thinking. On the field, you want him drawing plays up in the dirt, making things happen without a plan. You don't want to know that's how Favre lives the rest of his life. The ankle surgery kerfuffle — getting the procedure done, the speculation goes, may indicate he's coming back — is just the latest production number in year three of "Will He or Won't He Play," Favre's one-man show. At this point everyone is counting ceiling tiles and looking at their watches.

"You'd think I'd know better by now," he says. He offers a different kind of smile: sad and weary. "I've learned a lot through the years. What I haven't learned is what I'll do and when I'll do it."

BRETT FAVRE LIKES TO TELL STORIES. HE THINKS YOU'D understand him better if he could tell you three of them as we move along. Maybe we'll call them the good, the bad, and the sad. Here's the first one:

THE GOOD: YOU REMEMBER LAST year. You had a strong opinion. Everyone did. Hell, Minneapolis's *Star Tribune* wrote an editorial the day Favre signed, saying, in nice language, that the Vikings were wusses and Favre was a big baby. (Four months later they were printing bonus sections starring Favre's grizzly face.) Brett Favre agreed with you. He thought he'd made a big mistake by coming back a second time after saying six months earlier that he was really, really retiring and, no, this time he meant it.

"I was driving into training camp and I'm saying, 'God, what was I thinking,'" recalls Favre. "I thought, This is a mistake."

For a moment he wanted to bolt. But he changed into the unfamiliar purple and gold, trotted out to the practice field and called "22 Texas," handed off to Adrian Peterson, and all the doubt melted away.

Less than six weeks later, it's the Vikings home opener at the Metrodome, a place that devoured Favre during his Packer years. Many of the weirdos in long beards and horn hats still can't stand him. The team is down by four, with 12 seconds to go, stuck at the 49ers' 32-yard line. No time-outs. Vikings fans stand in the aisles, ready to make a dash to their Vikingmobiles. Sports radio is up on speed dial; Brett-bashing beginning in 4, 3, 2, 1...

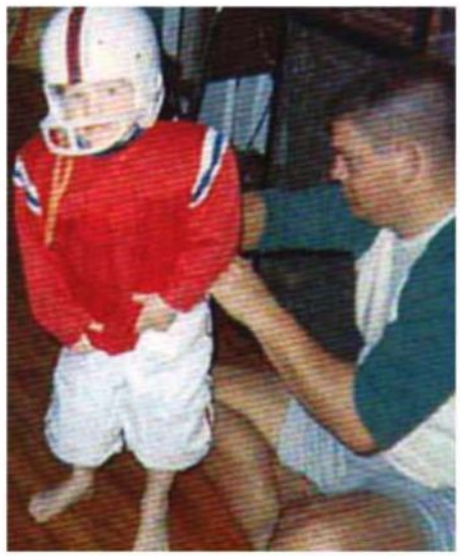
Favre rolls out to his right. He buys some time. Time to let it go. He throws a pass toward the end zone. He gets clobbered. How to describe the pass? It moves like a smart bomb through defenders, wasting no extra time in the air. A receiver named Greg Lewis tiptoeing along the back line of the end zone catches it.

"I hear the crowd roaring, and I said, 'You've got to be shitting me,'" says Favre. "The guys pile on me, and I'm happy but cramping up. I pissed at 11:30 before the game and I didn't piss again till 12:30 AM. I was that dehydrated."

He shakes his head in wonder. He looks like a little kid remembering his first trip to the circus.

"I thought, That's a helluva way to start the season."

"C'MON, BRETT, GODDAMMIT, CAN'T KEEP THOSE GOOD FOLKS waiting."



COURTESY BRETT FAVRE

DRILL-INSTRUCTOR DAD The QB at about three, with his late father, Irvin

Bus and Brett pile into Cook's Escalade for a drive over to a Mississippi state park for Favre's annual Wrangler Jeans–commercial shoot, an exercise as repetitive as the yearly retirement talk.

"Man, the setting is kind of beating a dead horse," says Brett. "I mean, how many times can you go out and throw the football? They're starting to run together. People say, 'Was that commercial from this year or the year before?'"

"*Shee-et*," says Bus.

Bus's Christian name is James. It's best not to call him that. To know Bus is to understand Brett. Brett grew up in Kiln, Mississippi, down on the bayou, son of Irvin, football coach and driver's ed instructor. "He was exactly like Sergeant Carter on *Gomer Pyle*," says Favre. "He had a crew cut, he was always screaming, always raising hell." Bus, 62, grew up in a West Virginia holler, born to a coal miner's wife who was 13 when she married.

"I went there once," says Favre, playfully jabbing Cook. "I think that's where they film the Feed the Children commercials — just awful."

"*Shee-et*," says Bus.

They met in 1990, three years after Favre won his first start at Southern Miss while battling a hangover. Brett was foisted on Bus at Hattiesburg Country Club, where Cook, a real estate lawyer, was a hotshot member. "We played 18 holes and then we went back to the clubhouse," says Favre. "He started buying me vodka-and-grapefruits, doing card tricks, and next thing he's my agent for life."

They've been a duo ever since, the country lawyer and the hick quarterback. Surrogate daddy, surrogate son. Bus has seen his boy throw for more than 39 miles in yardage, he's seen most of the 497 touchdown passes, and he's muttered "goddammit" during the 317 interceptions, all NFL records. Bus helped Brett bury a father, a stepfather-in-law, and a brother-in-law who died on Favre's land. Currently he is swerving the Escalade around a dead chicken snake in the road. Brett reaches across from the passenger side and puts his arm around Bus.

"My daddy wasn't the type to ever do that," says Brett quietly. "He thought giving compliments would make me complacent. He loved to ride to the stadium with me and on the way home tell me what mistakes I made. I mean, for him, moving from the option to the wing-T my senior year was progress. He had some sharp edges."

Bus laughs.

"*Shee-et*. His edges would cut you in half."

Some say Bus is Brett's enabler. All say Bus is the Patton of practical jokes. We pull into the state park, and Bus flashes the devil's smile and dials the Wrangler-shoot coordinator.

"Jeannie, hey. It's Bus. I tried to reach you earlier, but the call wouldn't go through. Brett's got a sinus thing; he's at the hospital."

"Bus, don't pull this shit," whispers Brett while giggling.

Bus waits until the Wrangler woman is hyperventilating on the phone. "Sweetheart, we'll be there in two minutes."

The autograph hounds are already out. Bus drives the last winding mile, passing middle-aged men waving Sharpies. Brett talks about Jerry Glanville, his head coach in Atlanta for a season before he was traded to the Packers. "First day of practice, Glanville comes up to me and says, 'Mississippi, where you go to college?' I said, 'Southern Miss,' and he says, 'Shit, we drafted the wrong guy. I wanted

the guy from Mississippi State.' I thought, What an asshole. It was funny unless you were me."

Favre didn't play much that year but couldn't bring himself to get too excited about Chris Miller, the guy starting ahead of him. "Miller would throw a TD, and I'd give the golf clap but deep down inside I'm thinking, I hope he sucks." He chuckles before getting out of the car. "I don't mean that negatively. I just wanted to play so damn bad."

THE BAD: SO THE VIKINGS GO 8-0 AT HOME, 12-4 OVERALL. Favre put up a season for the ages at age 40. He beat the Packers twice, causing angina all across cheese land. He threw 33 TD passes and only seven interceptions — a shock to most football folks, since over the previous four seasons Favre had almost as many interceptions as touchdowns. Matter of fact, no one was more baffled than Favre himself. "Shit, I've had *games* when I almost threw seven picks," he says with a laugh. "It was unreal. Before last year, I'd reached a point where I was sitting in meetings with guys 15 years younger than me thinking, What the hell am I doing here? Football became work. But last year it went back to being a game."

"It's destiny," he was told by Deanna, the wife who has stood by his side through rehab, retirements, and a Gothic number of family tragedies, including her own battle with breast cancer. "You're going to make it to the Super Bowl."

And she was almost right. Only one game to go before the Super Bowl. They just had to get past the Saints in the Superdome, two hours from Hattiesburg. It's a ragged game — fumbles, interceptions, and Favre getting the tar kicked out of him. Some hits are legal, some are WWF style. His left ankle is twisted; his right thigh is swelling up like an overripe melon.

"I didn't have a side I could limp on," says Favre.

But it's in his hands at the end. Saints 38-yard line with 19 seconds to go. Game is tied. Third down. He just needs maybe five yards, and a field goal will win it. Something safe. The ball is snapped. He stumbles more than scrambles to the right. Maybe he can run for the five yards, maybe there's a safe pass to the halfback. Everyone knows that's not going to happen. He throws the ball across his body, across the field, toward Sidney Rice.

"The previous week against the Cowboys, we did the same exact play to Rice," says Favre. He adds a relevant detail. "We were up about 25 at the time, so it was different. He came back to me on a broken play, and we got 20 yards. This time, when I let it go, I'm thinking he's going to come back to me. As he drifted farther and farther away, I could see the corner come in from the other side, and I'm thinking, Oh, shit."

The ball is intercepted, the second time in three seasons that Favre tossed a year-killing interception in the NFC Championship Game.

"As a player you've got to pull the trigger," he says. "You can't say, Well, is he going to do what I think he's going to do? He wasn't wrong, and in some ways, I wasn't either."

Most everyone disagrees with that assessment. Broadcasters and media pooh-bahs proclaim the interception unforgivable and predestined, part of Favre's pathology. Some say it's the Football Gods settling the score for his yearly tease.

"I don't give a shit about that," claims Favre. "They were the same people who said I'd suck all season. I don't worry about that. A lot of plays go into a game; that was just one of them."

"I've learned a lot through the years," says Favre. "What I haven't learned is what I'll do and when."

But on another day, apropos of nothing in particular, Brett Favre is on his farm and says, "Sometimes I say to myself, An interception? A whole year of making great decisions and it ends on an interception? You have got to be kidding me."

THE SHOOT, AS FEARED, IS EXACTLY LIKE LAST YEAR. IT'S ALL hokey Americana; there's a chocolate Lab, a red pickup truck, a fishing boat, and an unintentional homoerotic moment when Brett pushes a sculpted young man into a lake with all his clothes on. It will end with a twilight scrimmage. Bus disappears to call Vikings coach Brad Childress, telling him the ankle surgery is minor and won't be the deciding factor in whether Favre plays in 2010. There are costume changes and camera fixes, so there's plenty of time for Brett to pontificate. It's been two years since the Packers unloaded him to the Jets, and he's still pretty pissed off about it.

"I'll admit I made the mistake of retiring early," he says, tearing into a giant cupcake. "But I felt they were pushing me toward it."

After Favre reversed that first retirement in August 2008, there was a meeting between Team Brett and the Packers front office at Favre's Green Bay home to discuss what to do with him. The Packers didn't want him back; they were committed to going with Aaron Rodgers, a promising young quarterback. But they couldn't just release Favre for salary cap reasons. That meant a trade. Deanna, Bus, and Brett sat on one side of the table; Packer GM Ted Thompson and head coach Mike McCarthy sat on the other side.

"There was just silence," remembers Favre. He inhales the rest of the cupcake. "I said, 'Well, what are we gonna do?' They made it pretty clear I wasn't going to play there, and I said, 'How about the Vikings or even the Lions?' I wanted to stay in the same division. They said that wasn't going to happen, but maybe Tampa." He swallows the remnant of his snack, but frosting is still smeared in his stubble. "I said, 'Fine, trade me to Tampa. I'll whip your asses in week four.'"

He laughs. "Maybe that was a mistake. I'm flying back to Hattiesburg thinking I'm going to the Bucs, and I get off the plane and Bus tells me I've been traded to the Jets. I said, 'Bullshit,' but they were smart; they released the news so I'd look like an ass if I backed out."

Favre walks onto the phony field. The commercial crew has choreographed razzle-dazzle plays they want Brett to run through in the simulated pickup game. The other guys — a mix of actors and local extras — are mostly a decade younger. They're getting into it, working up a sweat, high-fiving each other between plays. Favre indulges them and joins in, repeatedly screaming, "Incoming!" — making his teammates flinch, thinking that a returning football is about to bash them in the head. Somehow they fall for the joke five times. Then, one pretty boy makes a couple of nifty catches. He makes the mistake of telling Favre he never drops a pass.

Brett just nods and winks at me on the sideline. The camera rolls again. He drops back and unleashes a throw at approximately 10 times the velocity of his previous tosses. The ball hits Pretty Boy's chest like a concussion grenade. Pretty Boy falls over. Pretty Boy doesn't catch the ball. Pretty Boy will have an imprint of laces on his sternum in the morning.

THE SAD: IT'S THE NFC CHAMPIONSHIP GAME, TIED 28-28 at the end of regulation. The Saints win the coin toss and march to a winning field goal. The game's over. Favre has a cry with his family.

They stay and drive back to Hattiesburg without him. Favre heads to Minneapolis with his teammates. The adrenaline has worn off, and his body screams. He used to be a Vicodin and vodka addict, but now there's nothing stronger than Advil in him. The flight drags on. He stands up. He sits down. He tries to catch his breath. The plane lands, there's a bus to Vikings headquarters, and then an eight-minute drive back to an empty house.

He pulls into the garage of his rented home. There's nothing to greet him except two stinky trash cans. The future Hall of Famer begins pushing the cans down the icy driveway. He begins to slide. His legs lock up. He's got no strength left. He just holds on, hoping he doesn't topple over onto the ice, crack his head open, and freeze to death.

"I got to the bottom, took a deep breath, and slowly slid back up."

He tries to explain the meaning of the story. "I know people say they'd kill to trade places with me now just to throw one touchdown pass," he says in a soft voice. "But the same people might see me limping around at 55. They're going to say, 'Man, that's pathetic. I don't want to have anything to do with that.'"

Favre stops talking and his eyes get a little glassy. He shrugs his shoulders and throws his palms upward. "Playing another year probably isn't going to make a difference; the damage has already been done."

TWILIGHT FALLS, AND FAVRE NOW tosses easily between takes. He playfully holds the ball low. "I'm doing it Tim Tebow style," he says with a laugh. "They can say they're fixing his motion, but let's see if he falls back into bad habits when the rush is coming."

Favre's post-Pack exile with the Jets began well with an 8-3 start, but his shoulder ached throughout the last third of the season. The team lost four of their final five and didn't make the playoffs. Favre never seemed comfortable, vexed by everything from terminology ("Everything meant the opposite of what it meant in Green Bay") to the media hordes (Favre refused to do one-on-one interviews during the season) to the long drive from the Jets practice facility to the airport ("It took us longer to get to Newark than it takes to fly from Green Bay to Chicago"). Coach Eric Mangini sucked up to his QB by giving his newborn son the middle name of Brett. In December, when he should have benched Favre because of his shoulder injury, he caved to the legend hell-bent on keeping his consecutive start streak intact, now at 287.

"I liked all the guys there, but I'm not a New York guy," says Favre, as two assistants distress a T-shirt that he's already wearing. "When I got there, I was exhausted, and then they flew me into the city in a helicopter to get a key to the city from the mayor." Favre shakes his head in horror. "I mean, Jesus Christ, a helicopter! I don't need a damn key to the city."

Bus taps his watch. Time for Brett to go. A pickup truck drives him back to the Busmobile. The driver, the navigator, and an old lady who runs along next to the car before losing her race with the internal-combustion engine thrust footballs, posters, and Sharpies at Favre. Favre signs wearily and good-naturedly until we pull up next to Bus's Escalade.

A fat man in a windbreaker approaches Favre. "Brett, will you sign my shirt?" he asks. Brett nods until the fat man opens his windbreaker to reveal a Super Bowl shirt covered with the faces of Drew Brees and other Saints stars. Brett recoils and walks away. He jumps into Bus's car and locks the door. He tells Bus about the Saints fan. Bus laughs.

"Jesus, people are crazy," says Brett. "What world is that guy living in?"

Bus tries to lighten the mood by telling a probably apocryphal tale about buying his mom a burial plot for Christmas in 2008.

"This year I didn't get her anything, and she said, 'Why didn't I get anything for Christmas?' I said, 'Momma, that's because you didn't use what I got you last year.'"

Brett lets out a snort but continues to look out the window. There's a silence. Just before we pull back into the parking lot where the day started, Favre grimaces.

"I can't believe that guy wanted me to sign his Saints jersey."



WOUNDED WARRIOR Being helped off in last year's NFC Championship loss

MORRY GASH/AP PHOTO

IT'S THE NEXT MORNING. A BLACK wrought-iron fence with a regal letter F opens, and a car makes its way up a winding driveway past idle tractors and a guesthouse before coming to the main home. Brett Favre's 11-year-old daughter, Breleigh, pokes her head outside. She points into the woods. "My daddy's out there somewhere," she says.

Daddy pulls up a minute later. He looks like a goddamned Wrangler ad. He's in a Jeep, still unshaven, and trailed by his chocolate Lab, Sam. There are morning chores to do. He drives the 465-acre perimeter.

"We got our land for about equal to what Bus paid for his land," says Favre, shifting into a lower gear as he rolls through mud. "He has a beautiful place. A lot of the stuff I've done out here has been after I've seen it at his place. He's a manicurist."

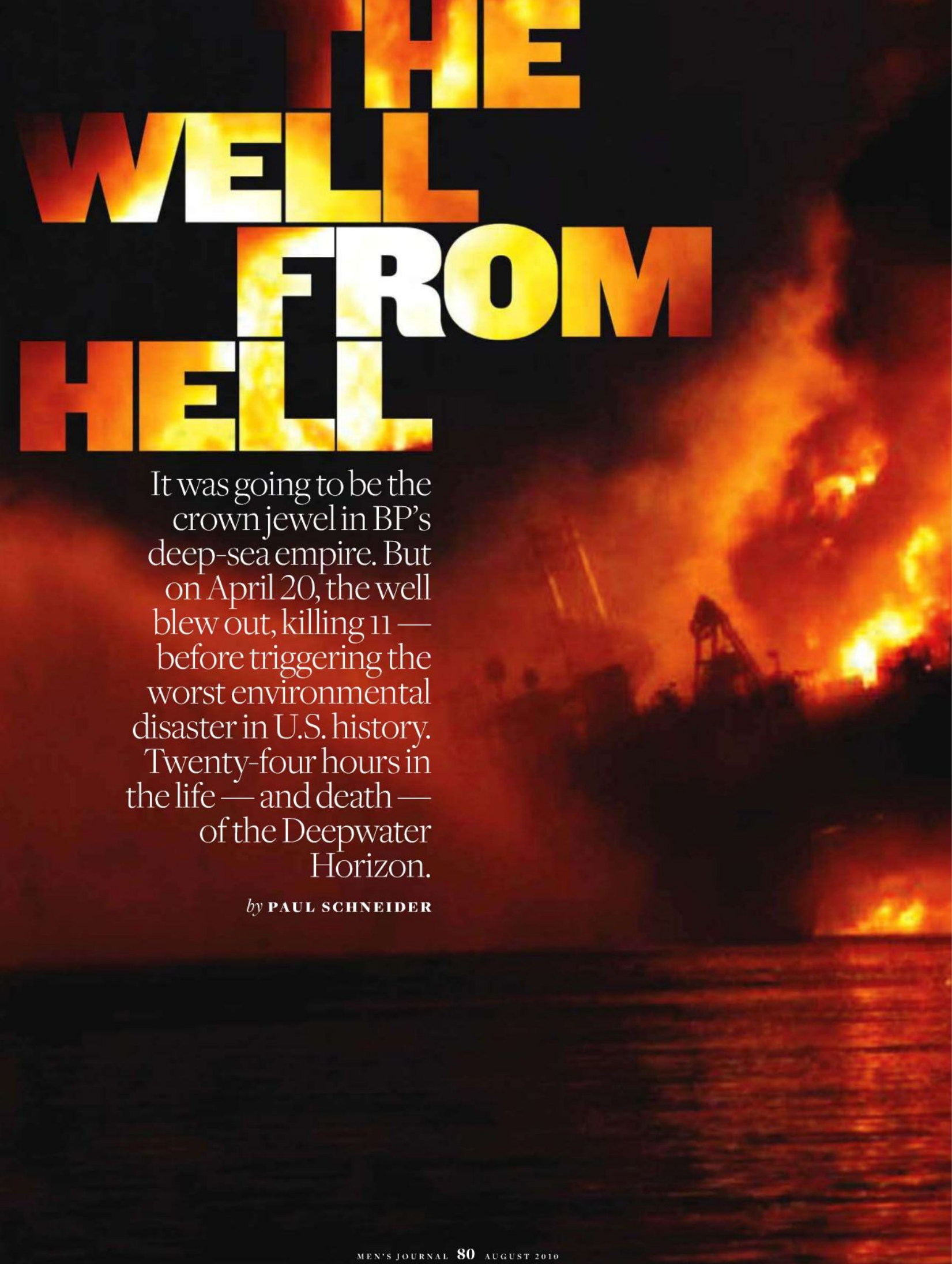
Brett slows and points at a trap. "See over there? I trapped a coyote. They keep digging under my fence. Usually, I just shoot them once they're trapped, but somebody wanted a live one — this guy who's training dogs to run coyotes."

Favre wants to show me something else. Bus has bamboo on his property, and Favre thought it would look good lining his fence as well. He bought some but planted it wrong. "I thought it was just like a tree," he says, laughing at his own idiocy. "There are a lot of times when I don't know what the hell I'm doing. But Bus told me, 'Just pull up the roots. Don't worry about the stalk; find the root.' It's like a vine; you just pull it out and throw dirt over it. See over there? It's coming up nice."

We drive some more, past a wild hog's hole, past dead trees ripped down by Katrina, Sam trotting ahead.

"Every year it becomes harder to leave this place," says Favre. "If you told me when I was younger I'd be into weed-eating, fixing fences, I'd have said, 'Screw that.' But I love it."

It's not an exaggeration to say the property turned Favre from a boy into a man. It was here that he stopped *(continued on page 130)*



THE WELL FROM HELL

It was going to be the crown jewel in BP's deep-sea empire. But on April 20, the well blew out, killing 11 — before triggering the worst environmental disaster in U.S. history. Twenty-four hours in the life — and death — of the Deepwater Horizon.

by **PAUL SCHNEIDER**



IN THE LINE OF FIRE
A lethal combo of pressurized methane gas and crude oil burned with volcanic fury through the night, eventually sinking the entire ship.

ON THE DAY HIS SHIP EXPLODED, Captain Curt Kuchta arrived to begin his three-week hitch aboard the Deepwater Horizon, $350 million of the best seafaring and oil-drilling technology the global petroleum industry can buy. He'd flown from his home outside Baltimore to Houma, Louisiana, where he jumped a helicopter for the 48-mile flight out over the Gulf of Mexico to Mississippi Canyon Block 252 — the location of the deep-sea oil well where the huge vessel had been drilling for the previous two and a half months. At these depths, the drilling rig didn't anchor into the seafloor, but floated on two massive pontoons. After several stressful weeks in which the crew struggled to secure the intractable well, which began on the ocean floor 5,000 feet below and penetrated, incredibly, another two and a half miles into the Earth's crust, it appeared that they were days, or even hours, from capping it. Once they had done so, a less sophisticated rig — a pumping station, really — would arrive to extract the crude while the Deepwater Horizon moved to a new location to bore a new well. That's when Kuchta would assume full command of the ship from the on-site drilling managers and once again become the literal captain of this great machine.

The morning of April 20, 2010, began overcast but bright, calm, the surface of the Gulf glassy. Viewed from a chopper 1,000 feet up and a mile out, the ship appeared almost toy-like, the way all ships look small against the immensity of the sea and sky. Platforms and rigs of all sizes could be seen out the chopper's windows, sprinkled like poker chips across the blue waters of Louisiana and her neighbors. Helicopters are the primary way crews commute to and from the rigs, and the choppers come and go all day long, adding their *thwop thwop thwop* to the constant thrum of the ship's giant engines. Although automation has made life on offshore rigs safer, working out there is still a hard, dangerous duty. Those who work in oil and gas extraction are eight times more likely to die on the job than average Americans. Many of the men actually dread the helicopter rides most of all.



For most of the men, though, the risk was worth it. The Deepwater Horizon was a proud, high-tech beast with a proud, courageous crew: In 2009, the ship had dug the deepest oil and gas well in the world at another site, the Tiber well, almost seven and a half miles (39,180 feet) beneath the surface of the Gulf of Mexico. Longer and wider than a football field at 396 by 256 feet, the main platform had a 24-story-tall derrick at its center, with cranes, mud pumps, and stacks of pipes in virtually every direction. The vessel had a life of its own: It throbbed and clanged and hissed around the clock, and in some respects it was like a giant relay station, too, tapping into an almost incomprehensible amount of ancient energy 18,360 feet below while taking constant navigational cues from satellites miles above the Earth's surface.

When Kuchta arrived that Tuesday, close to half of the 126-member crew was on duty, while the other half slept or relaxed before their shift began at 6. The rig never slept; everyone aboard worked 12-hour shifts for the length of their 21-day rotation.

Working offshore makes for a strange, on-again/off-again way of life, more military than civilian. The pay is good, and few quit; the roughly $50,000 salary for entry-level roustabouts and roughnecks goes a long way in the hot, flat Gulf Coast towns where most of them live. Working on an oil rig is also one of the few remaining careers where a guy can start at the bottom, chipping paint below the waterline, and reasonably expect to make his way up the ladder.

But the greatest appeal for most of the guys was the camaraderie. A core group had been with the Deepwater Horizon since its launch in South Korea in 2001. They hunted and fished together and had fraternity-like rituals, such as shaving a guy's head the first time he crossed the Equator. Often, the men told their families, they thought of fellow crewmen as brothers more than co-workers. Plus, two to three weeks off at home wasn't so bad, either; for every Kuchta on his first day back, there was always someone going home or transferring to another site the next day, as Jason Anderson was. As a senior tool-pusher, Anderson was responsible for the drilling operations during his shift. A 15-year veteran and father of two kids back home in Midfield, Texas, Anderson had been promoted internally eight times and was just two steps away from becoming a rig manager with an office job on the mainland so he could see his family each night.

That day, word had gone around that everyone should be at the

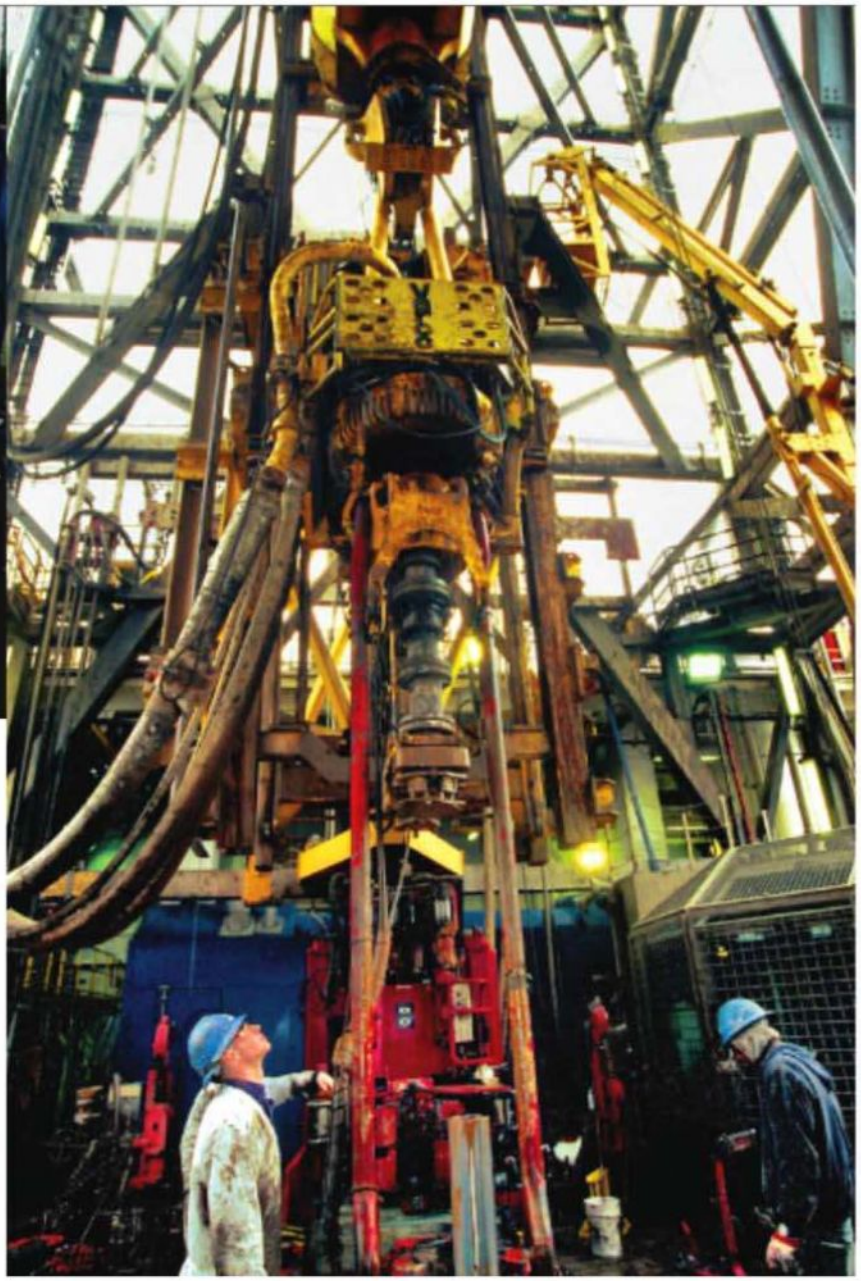
Key Decision Makers During the Blowout



The complicated chain of command aboard the Deepwater Horizon added to the chaos when things went sideways on April 20. Transocean, domestically based in Houston, owned the ship, but BP, the company that owned the well, had ultimate authority over the whole operation. It was BP's on-site company man Don Vidrine (not pictured) who deemed the final pressure test of the well satisfactory and the well secure enough to begin a sealing-off process — when, in retrospect, it wasn't. Jimmy Harrell, Transocean's top oilman onboard, seemed to share Vidrine's optimism that the well had been controlled. He was in the shower (after his 12-hour shift) when the first explosions hit. Transocean's second-in-command, Miles "Randy" Ezell, was also in his living quarters when the well blew out. Captain Curt Kuchta, who took command of the ship while it traveled from one drilling site to another, presumably had the authority to disconnect from the well but waited for an okay from BP. Only subsea supervisor Christopher Pleasant appears to have immediately grasped the peril the ship was in and sprinted to the bridge, where he activated a fail-safe system on the seafloor. As the world now knows, that system failed.

PREVIOUS SPREAD: POLARIS. THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: COURTESY SHELLEY ANDERSON; O'BERRY/U.S. COAST GUARD; PATRICK SEMANSKY/AP PHOTO; KERVER/U.S. COAST GUARD; BORDELON/U.S. COAST GUARD





LIFE ON THE RIG Decent salaries, the chance to work one's way up to a position of real authority, and, above all, the camaraderie are the things that attracted men such as the late Jason Anderson (left, in the foreground), to the life of offshore oil drilling. He and an associate are shown on the main deck of the Deepwater Horizon. As senior tool-pusher, the 35-year-old Texan and father of two was in charge of the drilling during his shifts and was likely at the command center on the rig floor (above) when the first explosion almost certainly killed him instantly. At right, workers tend to the drill near the base of the derrick, where escaping gas transformed the rig into a giant blowtorch.

top of their game because executives from the Deepwater Horizon's owner, Transocean, and the owner of the well and Transocean's client, BP, were coming to check on the well's progress. The visitors weren't CEOs, but VPs with real clout: Don Winslow and Buddy Trahan from Transocean and Pat O'Bryan and David Sims from BP. Whether their presence confused the decision making during that night's emergency (the BP execs held ultimate authority over the well) remains at the center of investigations by Congress, the Coast Guard, and the Minerals Management Service. But, according to Miles "Randy" Ezell, who spent most of the afternoon showing them around, the four execs were there mostly to pat the crew on the back for a job nearly done and to celebrate a superlative safety record — no serious accident in seven years.

That said, no one was going to be sad to say goodbye to Mississippi Canyon Block 252. There is nothing simple about drilling a hole 2.5 miles deep, let alone one located 5,067 feet underwater — near the very limit of what's technically possible — and this well had been more trouble than most. Cracks and fissures in the rock and shale formation periodically caused pressure fluctuations and inexplicable losses of the heavy drilling "mud" — a synthetic fluid in this instance — that oilmen pump down into a well around the drill bit to keep the oil and gas down and the well walls from collapsing in on the drill bit. Four times in the space of 20 days, one crew member recalled, they'd had to pump in heavy-duty sealant compound to try to seal cracks. Another time the drill had gotten stuck altogether. As a result, the crew was a total of three weeks behind schedule and over budget by roughly $21 million. Guys up and down the chain of command had started telling their wives or parents that they'd been asked to cut corners or change procedures that made them anxious.

"Dad, I know what they're trying to do is unsafe, and I know it's not right," Jason Anderson's father, Billy, remembers his son telling him. On his last trip home, his father says, Anderson gave his wife, Shelley, "a will and a list of things that he wanted handled if something happened to him."

Newer guys especially were also getting spooked. Twenty-four-year-old Adam Weise, a floor hand, called his girlfriend back in Texas before and after every shift. He called the site "the well from hell."

ABOUT 5:30 PM

By sheer coincidence Randy Ezell and Jimmy Harrell showed up on the drilling floor with the corporate field-trippers right as Wyman Wheeler and his team were debating why they were getting uneven pressure readings and a flow of drilling mud out of the well. Wheeler, a 39-year-old Mississippian scheduled to go home the next day, was one of the senior officials in charge of the well during the day shift and reported to Ezell and Harrell.

COURTESY SHELLEY ANDERSON (2)

Inside the Final Deadly Hours

Sudden, violent explosions took the 126-member crew of the Deepwater Horizon by surprise. Unable to suppress the fire, the survivors abandoned ship.

1. CARGO VESSEL
Forty feet away from the rig, a 260-foot supply ship called the **Damon B. Bankston** is tethered to the rig by a hose. The bridge of the Deepwater Horizon radios to tell the Bankston to move 150 meters back. Then the channel goes dead.

2. DERRICK
At about 9:47 PM, workers on the Deepwater Horizon hear a sudden hiss of gas. A couple of minutes later, pressure in the well spikes dramatically, causing drilling mud and methane to surge up through the 242-foot derrick.

3. MUD PIT
The first explosion occurs, instantly killing six men working in the mud pit and in the nearby shaker room. The blast throws **Micah Joseph Sandell**, who witnesses everything from the cab of his gantry crane three stories above the deck, to the rear of his cab. As he scrambles down a ladder, another explosion sends him flying 25 feet to the ground. "The whole deck just blew up," said Sandell.

4. BRIDGE
With flames spreading rapidly and the power out, **Capt. Curt Kuchta**, the rig's commander, huddles on the bridge with about 10 others. A 23-year-old navigator, **Andrea Fleytas**, issues a distress call. Kuchta later gives the order to abandon the rig. Elsewhere, flames shoot out of the derrick. Debris falls everywhere. One crane boom melts from the heat and collapses.

5. ENGINE ROOM
Mike Williams, chief electronics technician, is in his workshop when he hears the rig's engines begin to run wild. Explosive gas is shooting across the decks, being sucked into the engines that power the generators. "I'm hearing the alarms," he said. "They're at a constant state now. And my lights get so incredibly bright that they physically explode. I'm pushing my way back from the desk when my computer monitor exploded."

6. LIVING QUARTERS
A second blast blows the door off **Wyman Wheeler**'s living quarters, breaking his shoulder and right leg in five places. Coworkers later carry him to the lifeboat deck on a stretcher.

7. FISHING BOAT
Nearby, in a small recreational boat, **Albert Andry** and three friends witness a cloud of natural gas shooting out of the rig. "When I looked at it, it burned my eyes," Andry said. Later, the Bankston places a small recovery boat into the water and begins the rescue operation.

8. LIFEBOATS
Workers scramble inside the two accessible lifeboats, which hang by cables 75 feet above the water at the bow of the rig (flames and debris cut off access to the two aft lifeboats). Each holds about 75 passengers. Within minutes, the two lifeboats close their doors and drop to the water below. The air thick with smoke, the remaining crew members on the rig attach a 25-foot life raft to a winch, swing it over a railing, and inflate it. But without a motor of its own, it doesn't go anywhere. The crew of the small recovery boat sees that a line attached to the life raft is still connected to the burning rig. A knife is passed over, the raft is cut free, and the last survivors are towed away from the fire.

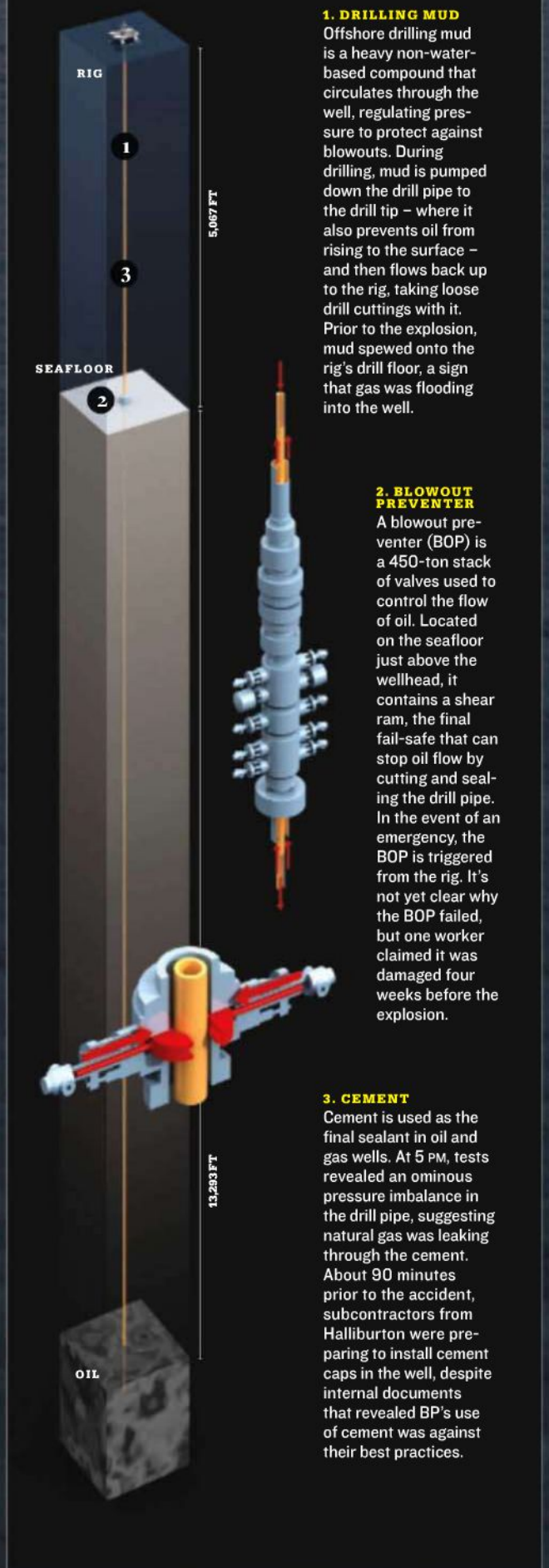
9. DECK
As the last workers pour out of their quarters, they find their routes to safety blocked. Several of them – including Mike Williams – begin jumping directly into the oil-coated sea, a 90-foot leap into the darkness.

THE 11 MEN WHO DIED & WHERE THEY PERISHED



BOTTOM, FROM LEFT: COURTESY CAROLYN KEMP/STACY KRANITZ; COURTESY HARTLEY FAMILY/AP PHOTO; CAROL GUZY/THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY MANUEL FAMILY/EUNICE NEWS; COURTESY ROSHTO FAMILY/MCCOMB ENTERPRISE-JOURNAL; CINDY SHELTON/AP PHOTO; COURTESY SHELLEY ANDERSON; COURTESY REVETTE FAMILY/WAYNE COUNTY NEWS; CAROL GUZY/THE WASHINGTON POST/GETTY IMAGES; CURTIS FAMILY/AP PHOTO; ROGELIO V. SOLIS/AP PHOTO

THE SYSTEMS THAT FAILED



1. DRILLING MUD
Offshore drilling mud is a heavy non-water-based compound that circulates through the well, regulating pressure to protect against blowouts. During drilling, mud is pumped down the drill pipe to the drill tip – where it also prevents oil from rising to the surface – and then flows back up to the rig, taking loose drill cuttings with it. Prior to the explosion, mud spewed onto the rig's drill floor, a sign that gas was flooding into the well.

2. BLOWOUT PREVENTER
A blowout preventer (BOP) is a 450-ton stack of valves used to control the flow of oil. Located on the seafloor just above the wellhead, it contains a shear ram, the final fail-safe that can stop oil flow by cutting and sealing the drill pipe. In the event of an emergency, the BOP is triggered from the rig. It's not yet clear why the BOP failed, but one worker claimed it was damaged four weeks before the explosion.

3. CEMENT
Cement is used as the final sealant in oil and gas wells. At 5 PM, tests revealed an ominous pressure imbalance in the drill pipe, suggesting natural gas was leaking through the cement. About 90 minutes prior to the accident, subcontractors from Halliburton were preparing to install cement caps in the well, despite internal documents that revealed BP's use of cement was against their best practices.

illustration by BRYAN CHRISTIE DESIGN

If Kuchta took charge when the Deepwater Horizon traveled, Harrell, the top oilman on the rig (official title: offshore installation manager), was in command of the vessel while it was drilling during his shift. In late middle age, and with more than 31 years of experience, he wore the well-trimmed handlebars that are popular among oilmen of his generation. He was no paper-pusher. Like Ezell he'd started out as a brawny young roustabout and worked his way up.

"One of the last areas that we went to was the rig floor, where they were already conducting the negative test. The first negative test," Ezell said later. "And the tour group left and left Jimmy Harrell and myself there because they were having a little bit of a problem."

Ezell's "bit of a problem" has since been described by BP as "a very large abnormality" in the pressure readings — most likely caused by gas building up in the well. Highly pressurized methane is almost always present in an oil formation, and if there were leaks or other defects in the walls of the well, this gas could seep in and build up to a potentially dangerous level. In extreme cases, if the pressure from the formation outside (and beneath) the pipe exceeds the pressure of the drilling mud or water inside the pipe, it can lead to a full-on blowout of the well.

The decisions Harrell made next, and the subsequent ones made by the senior BP man onboard, Don Vidrine, would matter more than just about anything that had ever happened in the lives of the crew.

If there is the possibility of a gas bubble, or "kick," in the well, often the procedure is to recirculate all the mud in the pipe from bottom to top to clear out the gas, a process that takes hours. Instead Harrell, not sensing a crisis, chose a quick fix. He told them to bump up the pressure going to the blowout preventer, or BOP, a five-story stack of valves that sits on top of the wellhead on the seafloor and that is supposed to be able to stop a runaway well in an emergency. In a "well control situation," as the oilmen refer to it, when pressurized oil and gas rush to the surface through the well, any one of the different valves in the BOP is supposed to be able to shut off the flow, the way the valve under a sink might be employed if the main faucet is broken. Harrell's solution to the problems Wheeler and his crew were having didn't really address *why* there might be an abnormally high amount of pressure in the well; it just cranked the faucet tighter, forcing the pressure back down the pipe, from 1,500 psi, which is normal, to 1,900 psi, which was high, but not dangerously so.

Harrell's solution worked — for half an hour, anyway, which was long enough for him to consider the test a success and for him to rejoin the visiting executives.

Not everyone was sure that the problems with the pressure test had been solved, however — especially not Wheeler.

"Wyman was convinced that something wasn't right," Christopher Pleasant, a subsea supervisor, recalled later. Pleasant had just arrived on the rig floor for the beginning of the night shift. "Wyman, he was still, like, shaking his head, he couldn't believe it." In part because of Wheeler's unease, Vidrine and another BP rep agreed to repeat the pressure test. But as Wheeler had reached the end of his shift, this new test fell to Jason Anderson, one shift away from his 7 AM helicopter transfer to another rig. Ezell asked if Anderson needed any help.

"Why don't you go eat," Anderson told Ezell. It was now past 6 and Ezell was due in yet another meeting with the visiting execs at 7.

"I can go eat and come back," Ezell said.

"Man, you don't need to do that," Anderson said. "If I have any problem at all with this test, I'll give you a call."

8 PM

Around 8 o'clock, BP honcho Vidrine deemed the second pressure test a success, which meant the cement team could start making their plans for installing the final caps, essentially big plugs intended to close off the well until BP sent a production rig out to begin harvest-

ing the oil. Anderson was instructed to start displacing the heavy mud in the pipes between the rig and the seafloor with lighter seawater, in preparation for the eventual disengaging of the Deepwater Horizon from the well. It's a step that presumes the well is entirely stable and under control.

There were other tests that BP and Transocean could have performed on the cement walls of the well that might have indicated the flaws that, in hindsight, must have existed. Halliburton, the Houston-based oil field services firm subcontracted to do the cementing of the well, had even warned BP two days before that the well walls might be weak or unreliable. (Weeks earlier, on April 1, a Halliburton employee observed that the way the well was being cemented was "against our best practices.") There is also cause to wonder why Harrell, Transocean, and BP chose to trust the blowout preventer despite internal documents that suggest they knew about potential problems with it.

Some members of the Deepwater Horizon crew were aware of these concerns — that test of the blowout preventer, for example, had been delayed and then conducted with less pressure than usual — but few, if any, could see the bigger picture of all the unusual risks BP had assumed to hasten the well's completion. Nor were many aware of the "abnormalities" Anderson had been troubleshooting that night on the rig floor. All over the vessel they were busy cleaning equipment, changing a pop-off valve on the number two mud pump, serving dinner, writing up work orders, or getting some much-needed rest in the living quarters below the deck.



AFTERMATH Survivor Dennis Dewayne Martinez (right) and his helmet, with safety-reminder stickers. Billy Anderson (below, left), father of the late Jason Anderson; Christy Murray awaiting news of her brother Chad's rescue.





9:30 PM

The first hints of real trouble came differently to different people. One sub-sea supervisor was in his office trying to save files on his computer when the electricity went out. A technician was in the engine control room when the engines, now sucking in natural gas (escaping from the well), began to rev up. The execs from BP were on the bridge with Captain Kuchta goofing around with the dynamic positioning system simulator — "they were basically playing a video game," he said — when Kuchta looked out the starboard window and noticed drilling mud dripping off pipes and raining into the water around the vessel.

And yet, even minutes before it blew, the top engineers thought they had a perfectly manageable situation. Around the same time, Ezell called the rig floor one last time to check on Anderson and, Ezell says, Anderson told him, "Go to bed, I got this." Ten minutes or so after that, David Young, the chief mate of the Deepwater Horizon, stopped to see Anderson and asked when he might be needed to help ferry the cement for the upcoming operation to cap the well. Anderson was seeing unwanted fluctuations in the pressure gauges and told Young it might be an hour or two. But if Anderson and his coworkers were alarmed, Young recalled, they didn't let on.

"I don't know what they were feeling," Young said later. "It was quiet. There was no panic or anything like that.... They were 'seeing a differential pressure,' was what they said."

Check this out, a co-worker told Chris Pleasant, drawing his attention to the closed-circuit TV he was watching. Pleasant looked at the monitor and noticed water pouring down over the decks. What the screens didn't show was that along with the displaced seawater, the angry well was also spewing a cloud of gas and, soon after that, drilling mud, a really bad sign.

"Then right away, he's flipping through the channels, he says, 'I see some mud now,'" Pleasant testified to a joint investigation panel of the U.S. Coast Guard and Minerals Management Service on May 27.

"I say, 'You see some mud?'" When the drillers on the rig floor didn't answer his phone calls, Pleasant took off running.

At right about that time, Ezell got a call in his bedroom. Having followed Anderson's advice, he'd gotten ready for bed. "I called my wife and talked to her for a few minutes, and went along 15, 20 minutes, and I had laid there and turned my overhead light off in the bunk, and I was still watching a little TV, and my room phone rang." He hit the light on his bedside alarm. It read 9:50. Anderson's assistant driller shouted into the phone that mud was shooting out of the top of the derrick. In the background it sounded like a jet taking off. Or a hurricane.

"I was just horrified," Ezell recalled. "Do y'all have it shut in?" he asked, meaning safely closed off at the seafloor.

"Jason is shuttin' it in now," came the reply. And then, "Randy, we need your help."

Ezell grabbed his coveralls, pulled on a pair of socks, and headed out into the hall. The next instant he was on the floor, buried beneath

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: STACY KRANITZ; BILLY SMITH II/HOUSTON CHRONICLE; JACK THOMPSON

the shattered remains of the corridor walls and ceiling.

"It blew me probably 20 feet against a bulkhead, against a wall in that office, and I remember then that the lights went out, the power went out. I could hear everything deathly calm," Ezell testified. "I had a lot of debris on top of me. I tried two different times to get up, but whatever it was, it was a substantial weight. The third time something like adrenaline kicked in and I told myself, Either you get up, or you're going to lay here and die."

On that third try, whatever it was that was pinning Ezell's leg gave way, and he stood up only to find himself gagging in the thick smoke in the top half of the room.



Coast Guard medical staff help a victim early on April 21.

"So I dropped back down and got on my hands and knees. For a few moments I was totally disoriented," he said later. "I had to crawl pretty slowly because that end of the living quarters was pretty well demolished. Debris everywhere.

"But I made it to the doorway, and what I thought was air was actually methane, and I could actually feel, like, droplets; it was moist on the side of my face. I continued to crawl down the hallway slowly, and I put my hand on a body. And it was Wyman Wheeler. I didn't know that at the time, because there was no light. I couldn't see."

Wheeler, the tool-pusher who had finished his shift at 6 o'clock with a distinctly bad feeling about the well, was not dead. His shoulder was fractured, and his right leg was broken in five places. But he was alive and conscious.

Ezell sat down beside him in the pitch black of the ruined hallway, wondering how he was going to get his hurt friend and coworker out. Seconds that felt like forever passed, until at last they saw a beam of a light. It bounced crazily about as someone made his way over the broken walls, fallen tiles, and furniture blown out of stateroom doors.

All over the living quarters of the Deepwater Horizon, scenes played out that were similar in flavor, unique in detail. In the engine control room, chief mechanic Douglas Brown, too, found himself under a pile of wreckage.

"The first explosion blew me into the control panel and into a hole that was created in the floor. A short time later, a second explosion threw me to the floor again," he later testified. "I could hear people screaming and calling out for help, and I was terrified." He and Mike Williams, the chief electronics technician who later appeared on *60 Minutes* and who was bleeding

(continued on page 128)

One Hell of a Fishing Trip

Fishing under oil rigs is a favorite pastime of sportsmen throughout the Gulf of Mexico. At night the huge lights on the rigs attract clouds of baitfish to the surface, and those fish, in turn, lure major predators, such as tuna. Albert Andry, 23, and his friends loved to fish in his 26-foot catamaran. On April 20 the Mandeville, Louisiana, native and his buddies Ryan Chaisson, Dustin King, and Westley Bourg decided they'd try their luck beneath the Deepwater Horizon, only to end up narrowly escaping a cataclysm. Here is what Andry recalls, in his own words.



ACCIDENTAL WITNESSES Fishermen Ryan Chaisson (left) and Westley Bourg

We got to the Deepwater Horizon around sunset, about 7:30. To catch the really big tuna, you gotta have live bait, so we go right up to the rig, and you throw these little sabiki rigs down there hoping to get some. Ryan was reeling in a blackfin tuna when we noticed all this water rushing down off the rig. Wes knew what it was 'cause he'd worked on rigs before, and he started explaining to me what he thought was going on. But before I could even finish comprehending what he said, gas started blowing out of the rig. And it kind of confirmed Wes's whole theory about the well, and he just started screaming bloody mary, "Go, go, go! It's time to leave! Go, go!"

I pinned the throttle. We got about 50 yards or a little more, and we heard a boom, but there was no fire or anything. So I slowed down and we all looked back, and it all looked fine. The lights were on and nothing was going on. I went, "Oh, maybe it's supposed to do that." Soon as I said that, the lights went off on the rig, and so I hit the gas again. Then as soon as they came back on, the whole thing exploded.

It was an out-of-this-world explosion. When you feel an explosion like that — you think something's actually touching you or going to come and hit you. So I was waiting for debris or something to come flying through the boat. I sort of ducked down behind the center console, and I looked, and I see the other three guys are standing there looking at it exploding.

We watched it for about four hours. A supply boat was parked under the rig the whole time, and everyone who jumped off the rig or whatever just went straight onto that boat. We just sort of drifted around making sure that no one drifted off. We were in and out of a half-mile. I wanted to go in there, but they told us not to, and everybody on my boat was scared out of his mind anyway. The water was on fire and all.

The Coast Guard got there not much more than an hour later. They came in helicopters, and then boats made a circle looking for anyone who drifted off. We all knew there was no way there was anyone left on that rig. It was constantly exploding, and flames were shooting out of pipes on the sides and everywhere. We knew they weren't going to find any of those guys. No way.

FROM TOP: AP PHOTO/US COAST GUARD, VIA APTN; DAYMON GARDNER

Confessions of a Steroid Addict

by **PAUL SOLOTAROFF**



For a long time,
juicing was my elixir.
It got me bigger. It got me stronger.
It got me laid.
But that was before it nearly
got me killed.

photograph by **ERIC OGDEN**



It was the fall of 1975, and I was having such a rough go of it that even my hair was depressed. Styled on David Bowie of *Aladdin Sane* vintage, it was long in back and purportedly spiked on top, but drooped like Three Dog Night in a two-day downpour. I stood 6-foot-1, weighed 150 pounds, and hadn't been laid since Nixon's reelection, making me, like George McGovern, a landslide loser. At the ripe age of 20, I had a mad crush on Ginger from *Gilligan's Island* and organized my day around the 4 PM reruns. I had plenty of time to watch, having dropped out of college and been fired from a series of flathead jobs, including two at which I actually volunteered.

And so that January, I did what middle-class kids do when life gets bored of beating them senseless — ran, hat in hand, back to college. Though the State University at Stony Brook billed itself as the "Berkeley of the East," it was fairer, I think, to call it the "McNeese State of the North," a school whose students were mostly interested in cars and picking up overtime at Sears. To walk the length of my residence hall was to know both the joys of a fierce contact high and the canon of Gregg and Duane Allman.

With the exception of mine, the one door on the hall kept closed belonged to a tall blond kid with big muscles. Actually, *big* doesn't begin to give a sense of the guy. The first time I saw Mark, he was leaving the john, wearing a towel so small it gaped at the hip and thigh. He had cannonball shoulders that looked carved from brass — burnished arcs at the top of his arms that flowed into half-moon biceps. His chest was a slab of T-squared boxes, beneath which knelt columns of raised abdominals that bunched and torqued as he moved. I turned around, slack-jawed, and watched him go; it took all my self-control not to applaud.

For weeks I watched as girls trooped by in hopes of scoping Mark in low-rise briefs. Finally I knocked on his door. He listened to my spiel about being an asthmatic who'd grown up skinny and phobic, and allowed that he himself had been gangly until the summer before his senior year of high school. "What," he asked, "do you want at the gym? D'ya want to get big or you want to get strong?"

My head in a sweat, I pondered the question like a man who'd just rubbed an old lamp. "What I really want is... I want to get laid."

The next day I bought my first pair of Nikes and met Mark at the bottom of Stony Brook's field house. Behind airshafts and pump rooms was a tiny space that constituted the campus weight room. It reeked of old mold and stagnant air, and the sum total of its appara-

tuses — two aged Universals — had oxidized a rusty ambergris. I followed Mark back to the rear machine, where, after a stern lecture about "respecting the room," he had me lie on the bench.

Drawing a breath in, I whistled it out and hefted 70 pounds in the air. They hung there a moment, eyeing the view, then came down much too fast. "*Slowly*!" Mark yelled at me. "*You* lift the weight; the weight isn't s'posed to lift you!" Chagrined, I shoved the bar up again and offered some push-back when it dropped. I did a third rep, and a fourth, when something strange happened. A radiant heat began filling my chest, as if someone had draped a compress across it. I did another rep and the feeling spread, inching past the collarbone toward my throat. I kept on going, losing track of reps, attuned to the muzzy, pins-and-needles buzz that was setting up in my ears. It was sharp and soft, then hot and cool. I forgot who I was and even *what* I was, imagining myself as a two-stroke engine and my arms as pistons firing. Dropping that last rep, I lay there, clinically stoned, wrists hanging limp at my sides, watching fireworks on the back of my lids.

"Up," Mark ordered. "No sleeping between sets."

I stood in a daze, savoring the burn in my chest and the wash of lactic acid down my arms. It was cold enough to see my exhaled breath, and the only sounds that intercut the noonday silence were Mark's bellicose grunts while benching. But when I looked at myself in the unframed mirror mounted crookedly on the wall, I thought, This is the thing I've been searching for; I've found it, and I'm not leaving.

I've been paying for that fix, very nearly with my life, ever since.



A "RUTHLESS" DRUG: The author in 1977, the year after his peak steroid summer and after he had twice tried – and twice failed – to quit.

FORTY YEARS AFTER HIS rise to power as the Moses of self-made muscle, it is hard to overstate Arnold Schwarzenegger's impact on a broad, rabid swath of skinny teens. From 1970, when he won the first of seven (!) titles as bodybuilding's Mr. Olympia, to the fall of '84, when *The Terminator* opened, he changed the operative notion of what a man's man looks like in this country. Lanky seducers like Newman and Redford were elbowed out by Conan and his barbarians — the Ferrignos, the Rambos, the Alzados. Ten years on, we had sprinters built like strong safeties and gyms full of kids with overnight muscles.

With the wisdom of years, we know now what we wrought: a national pastime tainted beyond the telling, a pandemic of wrestlers dying in their 30s and 40s, and high school sophs sized like Pro Bowl tackles, their hearts and livers ticking down to doomsday. It's easy enough to see how we got here. Give a kid the means to rewrite his DNA and what you get, soon enough, is a subset of males who flout the inconvenience that we call rules.

But back in 1976, I saw none of that coming. I'd been training for a month more or less constantly, cutting Anthropology to lift alone, then returning to the gym for an hour at night. Alas, I learned that you can't build pecs from scraps of skin and bone. What's needed to make marbleized, long-strand muscle is the kiln-ready clay of loose flesh, and for the life of me, I couldn't pack it on. Despite lunches dense in complex carbs, all I seemed to get for my gluttony was a series of bowl-busting dumps. At the start of January 1976, I weighed 149. By the end of the month, I weighed 151, and neither new pound waved back at me when I posed in the bathroom mirror.

Then I ran into a kid at a party whom I knew vaguely from the gym. Kenny, as I'll call him, was a poor man's Mark: 5-foot-9 at most and slim through the hips, but he strained the seams of his Huk-a-Poo shirt with a splendid slant-V trunk. He had a nervous way of squeezing his fists open and closed, but it was his eyes that worried me: They seemed to fairly pulse inside their sockets.

He clapped me on the arm, said I was looking a little bigger, and asked what I was "bumping." I scrolled my brief lexicon of bodybuilding. "Um, do you mean *benching*?"

Laughing, he wrote his number on the flap of a matchbook. "Call me tomorrow, and I'll totally get you started. Oh, and I don't take checks, so stop by the bank."

The next morning, I climbed up a snow-slick rise to his off-campus place in a brick colonial. I rang the bell expecting tawdry squalor, his pad done up in early *Hustler*. Instead it boasted a leather sofa, a smoked-glass troika of cocktail tables, and the sound system of my dreams.

Kenny went into a back room. A few minutes later he came back cradling a footed case of fine-grained oak and ash. A voile false panel lifted out, baring a stash box lined in felt, with custom-fitted slots for the goods on offer. And what goods they were, those vials and bottles and old-style chrome syringes. I caught myself gaping at the thin-gauge sharps and unsayable, all-capped names, the decanoates and oxandrolones that read like runic chanting. A shiver went through me, deep and wide: I knew in that spectral moment I'd crossed a line.

"So, if I started out with just some basic stuff—"

"A cycle's what we call it. Or a stack, if you're doing a combo. Why don't we hook you up right now?"

I shriveled. "Um...all right."

He led me down the hall to a bonus space that he'd fixed up as a mini-gym. I watched as he unwrapped a newish needle and filled it from an amp of something called Deca-Durabolin. "Don't worry, dude. This is top-grade gear from the finest labs in East Berlin."

He handed over the syringe and undid his belt; for a moment, I thought he was going to use it to tie off my vein. Instead, he turned around and presented his naked rump. The skin was a crazy quilt of grays and mauves and hardened lumps that looked like topped-out landfills. "Don't worry about the welts; I'm doing a big stack now. It's just to show where you start out spiking."

He gestured for me to face the wall. "Put your weight on your front foot so the skin hangs loose. If you want, I'll do ya this first time. Spare you the risk of swelling up."

"No, I — I've gotta learn. Just give me room."

He moved to the side a foot and knelt to guide my hand. But before I jabbed, I stopped for a second to think it over. Kenny, taking my pause for weakness, shoved the needle in and pressed the plunger. Stunned, I shifted weight to the right (i.e., wrong) foot; the knotted fibers of the buttock yowled, bruising right before my very eyes. From hip to tailbone, I felt a sprawl of heat, as if someone had scattered buckshot in my ass.

"See? You fucked up," Kenny said. "Next time, *listen* when someone tells you. It might just save you a hebe-atoma."

PREVIOUS SPREAD: PROP STYLING BY CHELSEA MARUSKIN FOR PATRICIA MCMAHON. THIS PAGE: COURTESY PAUL SOLOTAROFF

"*What*?" I glared, in no mood for Jew jokes.

"Nothing," he said. "It's a word I learned in Bio. It means *bruise*, and that one there'll be a smoker."

I DIDN'T, OF COURSE, GET BIGGER THAT NIGHT — or the next night, or the one after that. Steroids are black magic, but their sorcery unveils in steady accretions of mass. Synthesized from cholesterol in the 1930s by a team of German chemists, they were hailed as a class of wonder drugs in the treatment of wasting disorders. (The Führer himself took regular injections, according to his then physician, and they were administered, en masse, by Allied medics to starving death-camp survivors.) Steroids work by piercing cells and binding to androgen receptors. There, they signal a suite of genes to perform two crucial functions: maximize the yield of the proteins we eat, and minimize the effects of muscle-wasting hormones like cortisol and clucocorticoids. This, in turn, boosts hunger and the production of red blood cells, and amps the metabolism to burn fatty tissue. In conjunction with exercise and a diet rich in protein, 'roids build size and strength in weeks. Or days, if you overdo it.

I started with modest injections of Deca, 100 migs a dose once a week. When nothing happened, I went to Kenny and bitched. "Up the Deca," he advised, "and add D-bol tablets; you obviously got those hard-grow genes." Days later, I rose from a set of strict dips and saw the first outcrops of sinew: the notch of a midline splitting my pecs, an arrowhead tracing of deltoid. I hugged myself for joy and fired 10 sets of dips, backed by dive-bomb push-ups.

What followed, over the course of the next days and weeks, was an onset of physical madness. My appetite doubled, then doubled again: I ate like a man going to the chair. In a month, I put on 10 pounds of mass and was beating my max daily on benches and curls. If I wasn't in the weight room I was fiending for it, strung out on the flush of tipped endorphins and that gorgeous burn of blood and glycogen that bodybuilders call the Pump. Then there was the other deliriant drug: sudden attention from women. That spring, as the coats and sweaters came off, heads started spinning as I passed. I was 180 pounds of cold-rolled steel, and though I had no game with girls, I didn't need it. Parked one night in her lime-green Bug outside a disco in Freeport, Long Island, the blonde I'd been dancing with eyed me from her seat and said I'd barely spoken two words. I was about to say sorry when her mouth came at me. "Babe, it doesn't matter — not with that body," she said. "Your chest does all the tawkin'."

There were, of course, omens early on. I broke out in acne, tenacious whorls on my neck, and began growing hair on my arms and brow after adding Winstrol, a second injectable, to the stack. Standard symptoms for users, those were first-alert signals of shifts taking place in my biology. As steroids do their work building muscle and bone, they also disregulate crucial male functions, boosting some and braking others. The process starts mildly (increased oil-gland output and a great blooming bush of pubic hair) but gets more onerous as you go. The hair on your head begins falling out, your body cuts production of natural testosterone and converts what it makes to estrogen instead, and eventually your pecs turn squishy-soft, a development that juicers call "bitch tits." All the while, your endocrine system chases its tail to adjust for the testosterone you're shooting, and your testicles shrink from obsolescence until the day they cease working altogether. It should probably be said that knowledgeable 'roidheads rarely come to such ends: They take monthlong abstentions from juice between cycles, use drugs like HCG to restore hormone levels and Clomid to damp the estrogen. But *no one* was knowledgeable back then, not the trainers, athletes, or bioengineers who'd make steroids the cash crop of the 1980s. Besides, I was riding high: For months the only symptoms commanding notice were three pounds of new-grown muscle a week and a dick that wouldn't go down at gunpoint.

Near the end of May 1976, my father drove out to collect me for the summer. It wasn't his fault he didn't recognize his own son, asking if I knew which room was Paul's. "It's me, Dad," I said, shirtless and tan, making my chest pop, a new trick. He took a step back and reached for the wall. "Oh, my Christ," he said, sliding down.

Back in New York, I joined the Midtown Y and fell in with a crew of hard-hat bruisers — vice cops and garbagemen in chalk-smudged Speedos and calf-high wrestling boots. I thought they were giants until the day in June when the *real* size kings walked in. Two of them, Tommy and Spiro, had chiseled trunks and the complicated, quasi-Cubist planes that give away hardcore juicers. But it was the third one, a mocha-skinned guy named Angel, that I couldn't pry my gaze off. When he doffed his Puma jacket and burned through upright rows, I saw the kind of vascular, strand-on-strand rhomboids you find in Da Vinci studies. There was art in what he did and art in what he made: muscle from a fourth dimension. I gathered my flimsy nerve and said hello.

IT WASN'T MY DAD'S FAULT HE DIDN'T RECOGNIZE HIS OWN SON, ASKING IF I KNEW WHICH ROOM WAS PAUL'S. "IT'S ME, DAD," I SAID, SHIRTLESS, MAKING MY CHEST POP.

He dropped into a square-jawed grin. "Yo, you got some pipes there," he said, appraising. "Working hard today, huh?"

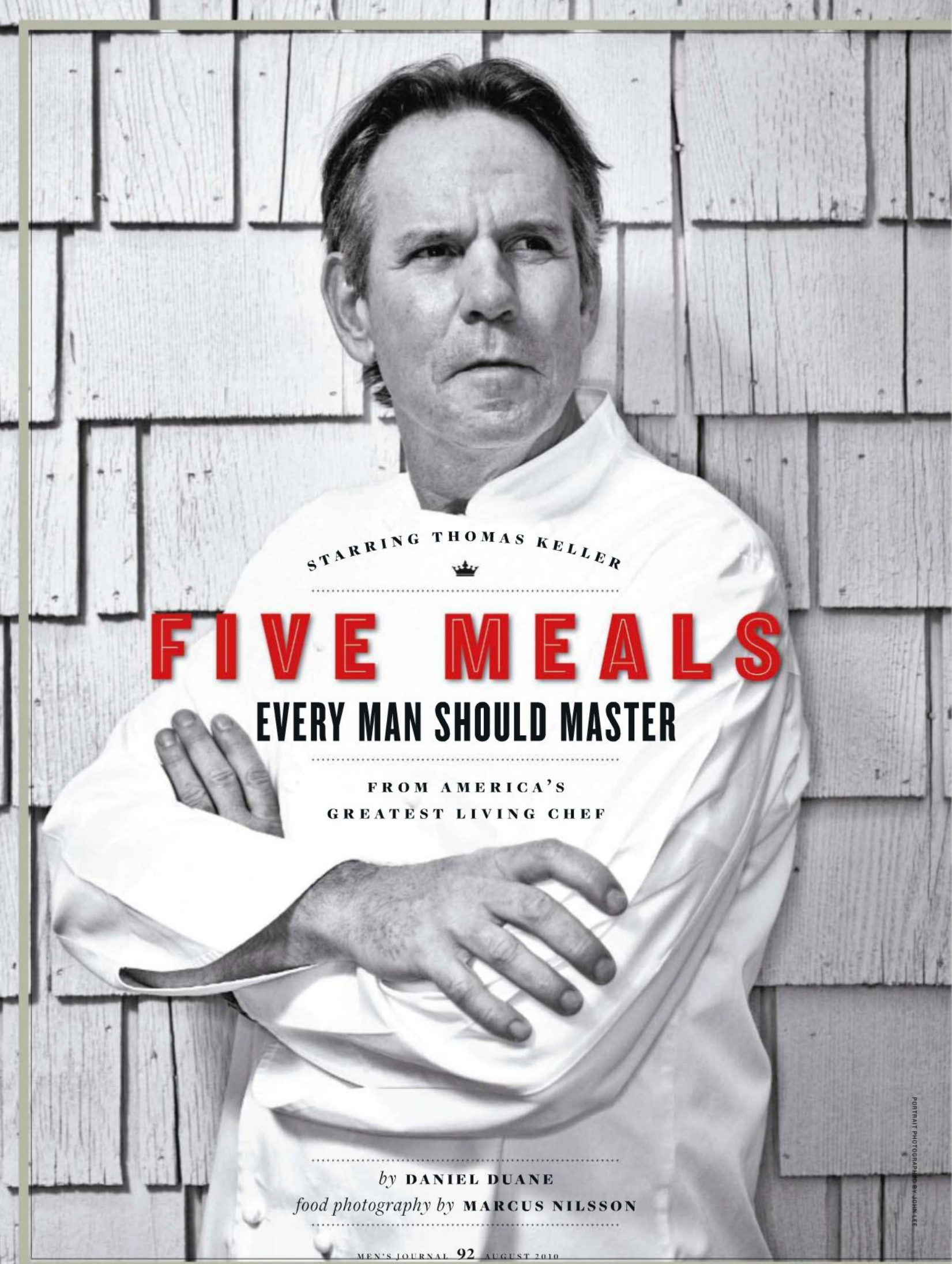
"Well, I was away," I lied, "but I'm trying, yeah. You see my arms next week, they'll be ripped and stripped."

We chatted briefly about gyms in the Village while he sized me up. "You're a new kinda cat," he said, "a college boy with muscles. I see good things for your future." Before he joined his crew in the dumbbell pit, Angel slipped me his business card. "Write your number down on the back of that there. I might have something coming up soon."

Days went by without word from him, and I held off calling him. I knew, in the way that you know these things, that he was trouble. But whatever he was pushing — parties or call girls or new, more potent 'roids — I was prepared to throw in on. My body was in charge now, lunging ahead like a dog that had snapped its leash. All it wanted, with fang-tipped hunger, was everything the world allowed, and the best I could do now was hold on tight for the rough, bloody ride.

ANGEL FINALLY CALLED. WE ARRANGED TO TRAIN AT THE Y. For hours he ran me through a workout so fierce I almost passed out in the john. But there, in the mirror, was the point of all his torture: freakish definition from neck to knees. We went out to grab some lunch, met three girls from a touring dance troupe, and wound up, after a *(continued on page 132)*

THIS STORY WAS ADAPTED FROM THE NEW BOOK *The Body Shop* (HYPERION). THE AUTHOR HAS ALTERED NAMES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CERTAIN PEOPLE TO MASK THEIR IDENTITIES.



STARRING THOMAS KELLER

FIVE MEALS

EVERY MAN SHOULD MASTER

FROM AMERICA'S GREATEST LIVING CHEF

by **DANIEL DUANE**

food photography by **MARCUS NILSSON**

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOHN LEE



CLASSIC ROAST CHICKEN
Keller considers this simple dish the perfect comfort food. For his recipe, plus all his secrets that elevate it to a big-league meal, see page 98.

NEVER BEFORE in human history has mankind been so utterly fire-hosed with recipes — the Food Network, celebrity-chef cookbooks, vast recipe databases on the internet. But how many meals should a man really work to master? How many key moves will allow a guy to shine every time it counts — whether it's the fiancée's birthday, a dinner party, or anytime he simply owes himself a righteous steak?

The answer, it turns out, is five.

Not six, not four, but five.

How do I know? I asked Thomas Keller, the most celebrated chef in the country — the tall, wry son of a Marine drill sergeant, and the only American ever to have two restaurants simultaneously holding three Michelin stars, which is like the food-world equivalent of winning the Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor Oscars in the same year. Keller so enjoys the refinement of the classics and is so good at teaching technique that my personal copies of his 50-dollar coffee table-worthy cookbooks hang together with duct tape and spilled Bordelaise sauce, reassuring me that if I just follow Obi-Wan's instructions, I'll triumph every time. And he not only agreed with my premise, he offered to help define the Ultimate Culinary Short List.

But Keller even went a step further, making an offer that comes along about every 20 lifetimes for a food lover: two full-blown master classes, eight hours total, laying out every nuance of every dish on what is now a definitive list for the ages — first at his Napa flagship, the French Laundry, and then at his Manhattan redoubt, Per Se.



KELLER'S ADVICE

Frenching the Bones "The idea is to scrape the bones completely bare, the way a dentist cleans plaque off teeth. Set the rack down fat-side up, bones to your right. With your knife perpendicular to the bones, cut through the fat cap to the base of the ribs, where they connect to the rack. Now slide the blade right, using the bones as a guide, until you've cut all the meat off the top of the ribs. Then just cut away every bit of meat between the ribs."

FOOD STYLING BY ALISON ATTENBOROUGH. PROP STYLING BY KIM FIGARD.

THE MEAL TO IMPRESS ANYONE

No. 1

RACK OF LAMB

VALENTINE'S DAY, BOSS DROPPING BY, MEETING IN-LAWS for the first time: Nothing beats a "frenched" rack of lamb. "It's one of those elegant dishes royalty ate," Keller says. "It's the most flavorful, tender part of the animal."

On a properly frenched rack — in which the bones have been scraped clean of all muscle and fascia — graceful white fingers arc up beautifully from the crimson meat. Any good butcher can French a rack for you, but Keller encourages doing it yourself — not to save a few bucks, although you will, but for the pleasure of the process, and the pride of craftsmanship. This isn't changing-your-own-oil stuff; it's tying your own flies.

"To me this is what it's all about," Keller says. "Taking a whole rack and breaking it down, using your knife skills, transforming it into something beautiful, but also something satisfying and generous, and very luxurious. Your girlfriend may never even notice, except in a kind of heightened..."

"Awareness?" I offer.

"That's it," Keller says. "Awareness."

THE COMPLETE Recipe

Herb-Crusted Rack of Lamb



INGREDIENTS

1 head of garlic
3 tbsp finely chopped parsley
1/2 tsp minced thyme
1 1/2 cups brioche (or any white bread) crumbs
8-bone rack of lamb (3 lb)
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1/4 cup Dijon mustard

STEP 1

Preheat oven to 425°, wrap the head of garlic in foil, and roast for 40 minutes, until soft. Let cool, slice in half across the cloves, and squeeze each to remove the soft brown roasted garlic within. For the persillade crust, combine 1 tbsp garlic with the parsley, thyme, and bread crumbs, and mix. It should be moist enough to clump; if not, moisten with canola oil.

STEP 2

Using a **paring knife, french the bones** and then **remove all fat** and fascia from the meat. Wrap the bones individually in aluminum foil. Set rack, bone side down, ribs facing away from you, on a sheet of parchment paper or plastic wrap. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Brush the meat with enough Dijon mustard to create a thin, translucent layer.

STEP 3

Spread the crumb mixture onto the parchment paper in front of the rack, then bring the paper to the meat and press the crumbs into it.

STEP 4

Set the lamb on a roasting rack in a roasting pan, put it in the oven, and cook for 25 to 35 minutes, until the temperature in the center measures 128° to 130°.

STEP 5

Let the lamb rest in a warm place for about 20 minutes for medium-rare. Carve the rack into four two-bone chops. Sprinkle with salt and serve.

For gnocchi and asparagus side dish recipes, go to mensjournal.com/lambsides.

KEY SKILL



DON'T RUSH IT Keller shows the author how to take care not to lose good meat with all the fat.

Removing the Fat

If you try to press a persillade crust onto a lamb-rack's fat cap, the fat will just melt during cooking, taking the crust with it. So spend some time rendering the meat a clean, bare crimson (see diagram below).

"You don't have to get it all in one cut," Keller says. "You'll do it in lines, whatever you're most comfortable with."

Needless to say, this takes me a nervous eternity. And when the fat's all gone, there's a layer of muscle fascia — sometimes called "silver skin" — over the meat. That proves trickier to remove, but I finally get to the last strip.

"Now cut it off; there you go," Keller says. "Perfect."

He actually says that: "Perfect." To me.



STEP ONE

With the fat side up, bones toward you, insert the tip of your knife into the fat, about an inch from the right-hand edge of the rack, blade facing right. Slicing right, release a flap.



STEP TWO

Hold flap and gently slice left under it. Repeat until rack is clean of fat and silver skin. Note: At one end there's a layer of fascia beneath a layer of good meat. Do not remove that.

ESSENTIAL TOOL **The Paring Knife**



The five-inch **Mac PFK-50 Pro Paring Knife** is narrow enough to slip easily through the muscle fascia on any cut of meat and short enough not to become awkward with a small, delicate rack of lamb. $67.50; macknife.com

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOE MCKENDRY; PORTRAIT: JOHN LEE. KNIFE: ROBERT BUCKLEY

THE PERFECT STEAK

No. 2

BISTRO STYLE SKIRT

"IF I CAME UP WITH A LIST OF FIVE MEALS FOR MEN AND I didn't include a steak, it wouldn't make sense. People would be like, 'What's up?'" Keller tells me.

He's got a point, and not just because everybody thinks of steak as the ultimate guy food. Seared cow meat and burly red wine really do have some incantational power to stitch a weary male soul together again, reassuring a man that he's living right and all's well in the universe. Anyone can learn to grill a porterhouse, but Keller recommends the classic French bistro steak — an intensely flavored cut known as the *bavette* or, to any good American butcher, the "outside skirt."

THE COMPLETE Recipe

Skirt Steak with Red-Wine Jus and Caramelized Shallots



INGREDIENTS

10 oz "outside skirt" steak, a.k.a. bavette
Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
1 tbsp canola oil
2 tbsp unsalted butter
1 cup thinly sliced shallots
1 tsp minced thyme

FOR THE RED-WINE JUS

2 cups red wine
1/4 cup diced yellow onions
1/4 cup carrots, peeled and sliced
1/4 cup sliced leeks, white and light-green parts only
1/4 cup sliced shallots
1/4 cup sliced mushrooms
1 thyme sprig
2 parsley sprigs
1 bay leaf
6 black peppercorns
1 garlic clove, smashed
1 cup veal stock (MJ alternative: 1 tbsp Williams-Sonoma veal demi-glace)

STEP 1

Combine all ingredients for the red-wine jus, except the veal stock, in a saucepan. Simmer until the wine reduces almost to a glaze. Add the stock and simmer another 15 minutes. (Alternative: Add the veal demi-glace and 2 tbsp water, then stir. No need to simmer further.) Strain through a **fine-mesh strainer**. The jus should have the consistency of a thin sauce. Reduce further if needed. Set aside.

STEP 2

Season both sides of the steak with salt and pepper. Add the canola oil to a large skillet over high heat. When the oil begins to smoke, add the steak.

STEP 3

After about 2 minutes, or when the **steak is nicely seared** and browned, turn it over and set the butter on top. Once the butter begins to melt, **baste the steak** (see opposite page).

STEP 4

After about 7 minutes total cooking time, transfer the meat to a warm place (a cutting board is fine) and let rest for at least 10 minutes — this is key, as it allows moisture to redistribute evenly.

STEP 5

While the meat rests, add sliced shallots to the skillet and cook for 2 minutes, or until soft.

STEP 6

Add thyme, reduce heat, and cook gently until shallots are completely softened and golden brown.

STEP 7

Season to taste with salt and pepper and cook for an additional 2 to 3 minutes to caramelize. Stir juices from the steak into the shallots.

STEP 8

Spoon about 2 tbsp of jus onto a plate; top with the steak (sliced or whole) and then the shallots.

For watercress salad recipe, go to mensjournal.com/steakside.



AGAINST THE GRAIN By slicing straight down, you cut connective tissue, making the meat more tender.

KELLER'S ADVICE

Searing the Steak "Heat some oil in a skillet — I always err toward more rather than less. Once it's smoking, tilt the pan so the oil pools on one side. Then it won't splatter when you set down the meat. Set the skillet back on the flame and, after two minutes, or once it's browned, flip the steak, tilting the pan again."



ESSENTIAL TOOL

The Fine-Mesh Strainer

No technique takes you further down the road to refinement than the straining of stocks and sauces to remove impurities. The **CIA Masters fine-mesh strainer** does the job perfectly and is small enough for a drawer. $27.50; amazon.com

PORTRAIT: MARCUS NILSSON. STRAINER: ROBERT BUCKLEY



KEY SKILL

→ Basting the Steak

The recipe calls for two tablespoons of butter, but I watch Keller plop about half a stick right onto the steak, still in the pan.

"See, if I put the butter directly onto the metal," Keller tells me, "it'll burn and separate before I have time to do much basting."

He's describing precisely what happens every time I baste a steak, except that now I'm seeing the light, because Keller's own half-stick melts luxuriously off the meat, oozing into pretty white foam. Tilting the pan again, pooling the foamy butter, he grabs a spoon and begins basting the meat. The spoon clanks repeatedly into the pan's metal, scooping up melted butter at about the pace you'd knock on a door, if you were in a hurry: *bang-bang-bang*.

My turn.

"Nope, the rhythm's wrong," Keller says. "It's all in the wrist. Watch me."

So I do, and then I try again, but I can hear it: I'm still clanking the spoon way too slow.

"You're pausing each time," Keller says. Once again, he demonstrates: *bang-bang-bang*.

Sweat beading on my nose, I finally understand the problem: I'm scooping and pouring. Keller wants a quick scoop-and-flick motion. I also realize why it matters: Basting is a way of preventing the butter from burning, keeping the meat moist, and heating the meat from above so it cooks evenly. The faster the rhythm, the more constant the moisture and heat.

A MAN'S MEAL

THE SIMPLE GO-TO

No. 3

ROAST CHICKEN

JUICY BREAST MEAT AND CRISPY BROWN SKIN — THOSE are the hallmarks of the perfect roast chicken. And Keller, who loves roast chicken so much he once placed it on a hypothetical menu for his own last meal — along with a half-kilo of osetra caviar ($1,600) and a homemade quesadilla (50 cents) — delivers both in the single easiest roast chicken recipe ever, the one he makes at home.

"People love roast chicken; it makes them feel comfortable," Keller tells me, setting a raw chicken on his cutting board. And then he shows me the critical techniques: getting the entire bird bone-dry before you cook, trussing it up tight, and positively coating it with salt.



THE COMPLETE Recipe

Roast Chicken

INGREDIENTS
2-1/2- to 3-lb chicken
Kosher salt
1 tbsp chopped thyme

STEP 1

Use paper towels to dry the chicken inside and out. This helps the skin to crisp.

STEP 2

Preheat oven to 450° and **truss the chicken**. Leave the bird out for at least 30 minutes before cooking. A room-temperature chicken will cook more evenly throughout.

STEP 3

Salt generously, then place chicken, breast side up, in a roasting pan. Set in the oven and leave alone — don't baste it, don't add butter. Roast for 50 to 60 minutes.

STEP 4

Remove from oven and sprinkle chopped thyme into the pan juices. Baste with the juices; let rest 15 minutes.

STEP 5

Remove twine, legs, and thighs. Cut the breast down the middle and serve each half on the bone, wings attached.

For roasted vegetable and bibb-lettuce salad recipes, go to mensjournal.com/chickensides.

KEY SKILL

Trussing the Chicken

Nothing makes a guy feel cooler in the kitchen than tying up a whole chicken with string — very butcher, very pro — turning the bird into a nice, tight package that cooks evenly. I'd been practicing the technique as outlined in Keller's cookbook *Bouchon* for years, so I ask him if I might truss the bird myself. The moment I begin, he asks, "Is that how you understood my directions?"

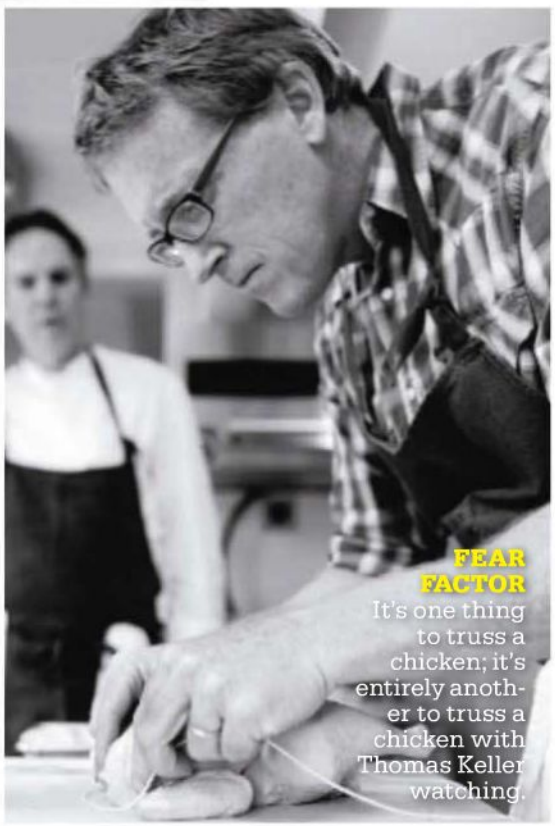
He takes over, demonstrating a completely different technique from the one I thought I knew. Then Keller cuts me a new piece of string and I get the whole deal right, except the final slipknot. So he snips off the string, cuts me another length, and I flub the final knot, once again.

"Don't be sorry; you're going to get it," he says kindly.

"Oh, God."

"It's okay; details matter."

And instead of growing impatient, Keller spends a full 18 minutes, and perhaps 30 feet of string, teaching me a simple knot.



FEAR FACTOR It's one thing to truss a chicken; it's entirely another to truss a chicken with Thomas Keller watching.



STEP ONE
With the breast up, drumsticks toward you, tuck the wings under the chicken. Center a 3-foot length of string on top of the neck end of the breast.



STEP TWO
Bring string down, under, and around the outside of each wing. Draw strands toward you, along underside of each breast. Knot the string tight to plump.



STEP THREE
Draw each strand around a leg bone, and pull the drumsticks together. Tie the string one more time — a bow works fine — to secure.

KELLER'S ADVICE

Salting "Settle on a single brand of kosher salt — I recommend Diamond Crystal — and always salt by hand, developing an intuitive feel for the relationship between your palate and the amount of salt between your fingers. On your trussed chicken, breast side up, hold a big pinch of kosher salt 18 inches above, raining it evenly over the entire skin."

PORTRAIT: JOHN LEE. ILLUSTRATIONS: JOE MCKENDRY

FILET

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A MAN'S MEAL

THE CROWD-PLEASER

No. 4

PORK & BEANS

Part I: The Pork

EVEN THE BEST HOME CHEF CAN'T BE PAN-FRYING FILLET of sole for 12: too much last-minute hassle, no way to nail the timing. That's where the one-pot meal comes in, the richly satisfying braise that actually gets better if you cook it three days in advance, so the flavors have time to develop. A braise takes minimal last-minute effort and can easily be scaled for a huge group or to leave a week's worth of the best leftovers you've ever had.

"And the thing I especially love about pork and beans," Keller tells me, "is all the ways you can repurpose it into other meals." He shows me exactly what he means, whipping up the single best plate of huevos rancheros I've ever eaten (and eat them I do, hunched over his kitchen's counter) and a killer bean soup that takes all of about 10 minutes to make (see mensjournal.com/leftovers for those recipes). But the pièce de résistance is the pork-and-beans proper, a classic Keller dish in which the simplest comfort food becomes a minor culinary miracle.

The Complete Recipe

Braised Pork Shoulder with Slow-Cooker Beans



Braising the Pork:

INGREDIENTS

Kosher salt
Freshly ground black pepper
4- to 5-lb bone-in pork shoulder
4 tbsp canola oil
2 chopped carrots
1 chopped Spanish onion
1 chopped leek, white part only
8 cups veal or chicken stock
1 rosemary sprig
4 thyme sprigs
1 bay leaf
4 diced garlic cloves
1 tbsp black peppercorns

STEP 1

Sprinkle salt and ground pepper on the pork very generously on all sides (don't be shy; you can't really overdo it here).

STEP 2

Place a large cast-iron pot on the stove on high heat, and add the canola oil.

STEP 3

When the oil is shimmering, lower the pork shoulder into the pot gently. Sear on all sides until golden brown, rotating the pork by hand, setting it up on its edge when necessary — then remove the meat and set aside.

STEP 4

Pour out excess oil, then add chopped carrots, onion, and leek. Stir to coat with remaining oil in the bottom of the pot.

STEP 5

Lay the shoulder on top of the vegetables (fatty side up). Add the veal or chicken stock so that it comes only halfway up the side of the pork, then add rosemary sprig, thyme sprigs, bay leaf, garlic, and peppercorns to the liquid. Bring to a simmer.

STEP 6

Cover the pot, leaving lid slightly ajar, and place in a 250° oven. **Braise the pork** for 3.5 hours, or until the meat is tender enough to pull apart with two forks.

STEP 7

Remove the pork from the pot and let cool to room temperature. Strain braising liquid through a fine-mesh strainer, return the pork and liquid to the pot, and refrigerate overnight.

STEP 8

Once ready to finish the dish, **debone the pork** and then cut the meat into 2-inch-square chunks.

RECIPE CONTINUED ON PAGE 102

For beet salad recipe, go to mensjournal.com/porkandbeansside.



KELLER'S ADVICE

Braising "If you ever taste a braise and the meat is dry, you know they overcooked it, or they didn't let it rest. Once the pork has finished braising, you have to let the meat rest in its liquid so it can reabsorb all of that moisture. Nothing wrong with making this dish the day you want to serve it, but it really does have a sweet spot, a moment of optimal flavor, about three days out. Just let the pork cool to room temperature, strain its braising liquid, and then refrigerate the pork in the strained liquid."

ESSENTIAL STEP

Deboning the Pork

Sounds complicated, removing the odd-shape bone, but, as Keller demonstrates, it's easy: Just slip the fingers of one hand between the meat and the big shoulder bone, and remove without a single stroke of a knife.



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THE CROWD-PLEASER

No. 4

PORK & BEANS

Part II: The Beans

A MAN'S MEAL

KEY SKILL



Slow-Cooking the Beans

The dilemma: Dried beans take forever to get tender, and you invariably overcook some, turning them mushy before others lose their hardness. Keller's solution: Rancho Gordo–brand beans, which are guaranteed fresh from ranchogordo.com, and a Crock-Pot or other slow cooker to help achieve even cooking.

ESSENTIAL TOOL

The Slow Cooker



Slow, even cooking — that's the secret to great beans and a whole host of other dishes, like stews and soups. The **All-Clad 6.5 Quart** has the added bonus of a digital timer that can switch the appliance to a "keep warm" setting, allowing you to start beans in the morning and come home to a perfect pot. $300; all-clad.com

ESSENTIAL STEP

Binding the Sauce

Right before combining the pork and beans, Keller creates what the French call a liaison, an emulsification that converts the braising liquid into a luxurious sauce. Keller just puts the drained, cooked beans into a skillet, adds enough of the pork-braising liquid to moisten them, drops in a couple of tablespoons of butter, and then explains the key: "A few drops of vinegar. Doesn't even matter what kind because it's so little you won't even taste it." The vinegar's acid helps the butter and stock bind together and become silky.

SLOW COOKER: TRAVIS RATHBONE

THE COMPLETE Recipe

Braised Pork Shoulder with Slow-Cooker Beans

COOKING THE BEANS:

INGREDIENTS
1 pound Rancho Gordo–brand borlotti or cannellini beans
6 cups veal (or chicken) stock
6 cups water
2 thyme sprigs • 1 bay leaf
Kosher salt • 1/2 leek
1/2 carrot • 1/2 white onion
1 oz bacon

STEP 1
Wash and rinse beans — do not soak — then heat the stock and water in a pot and add to **slow cooker**.

STEP 2
Tie together thyme and bay leaf and put in liquid with 1 tsp salt, leek, carrot, onion, beans, and bacon. **Slow-cook** on high until tender, about 4 hours. Cool and store in their liquid.

FINISHING THE DISH:

INGREDIENTS
3/4 cup large-diced leeks, white parts only
1 cup large-diced carrots
Canola oil, as needed
3 tbsp butter
1 tsp red-wine vinegar

STEP 1
Scrape fat off surface of pork-braising liquid. Discard.

STEP 2
Warm the meat and stock over low heat. Remove the pork. Pour the braising liquid through a fine-mesh strainer into another pot.

STEP 3
Return pork shoulder to its liquid. Simmer until needed.

STEP 4
In a large skillet, sauté leeks and carrots in oil until tender.

STEP 5
Strain the beans and put half in the skillet. Add one cup of the pork-braising liquid, the butter, and the red-wine vinegar to **bind the sauce**. Simmer 20 minutes, until the liquid thickens.

STEP 6
Set pieces of warmed pork in the beans and serve.


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A MAN'S MEAL

THE 15-MINUTE FEAST

No. 5

THE GOURMET BLT

THE SCENE: IN THE 2004 ROMANTIC COMEDY *SPANGLISH*, John Clasky, a three-star fine-dining chef played by Adam Sandler — and modeled after Keller — comes home hungry, late at night.

The challenge, as put to Keller by Sandler himself: What, exactly, would a chef make himself to eat after work? Keller's answer: a sandwich so rich and soul-satisfying I shall forever after consider it the last word in hangover cures, the perfect accompaniment to a Sunday-afternoon ball game, exactly the right put-out for poker with the boys. Put simply, it's a BLT plus melted cheese and a fried egg — but as with all of Keller's food, God is in the details.



THE COMPLETE Recipe

BLT with Melted Cheese and a Fried Egg

INGREDIENTS

2 slices crusty country-style bread
Monterey Jack cheese, sliced thin
Mayonnaise
2 leaves crunchy lettuce, such as iceberg, romaine, or butter lettuce
3 slices tomato
4 slices applewood bacon, cooked crisp
1 egg
1 tbsp unsalted butter



STEP 1

Preheat oven to 400°; toast both slices of bread. Cover one with cheese and set in the oven to melt, approximately four minutes.



STEP 2

Spread mayonnaise onto one side of the other piece of bread, cover with lettuce, then set tomato slices atop the lettuce.



TIP

Keep a layer of lettuce between bread and tomato so your sandwich doesn't turn soggy.



STEP 3

Fry the bacon (press often to avoid curling), then carefully **layer it** onto the melted cheese.



STEP 4

Fry an egg — without breaking the yolk — then carefully lay it on top of the bacon.

STEP 5

Slipping the egg onto the layered bacon, Keller takes care to position the yolk directly in the sandwich's middle. Then he sets the other piece of bread, complete with tomato slices and lettuce, on top. Finally, Keller slices gently through the upper piece of bread, deliberately piercing the egg yolk so that it oozes orange throughout the sandwich. "Are you hungry?" Keller asks me. "I kind of feel like a snack." "Let's have a snack," I reply. And with that, we each pick up half of the best sandwich in the world and wolf it down.



KELLER'S ADVICE

Layering the Bacon

"Every piece of bacon has a wide end and a skinny end, right? So you alternate as you work your way down, for even distribution. Lay one crisp bacon slice after another atop the melted cheese so that its curvature aligns with the upper, curved edge of the bread. Each piece should slightly overlap the piece before it."

ESSENTIAL STEP

Frying the Egg

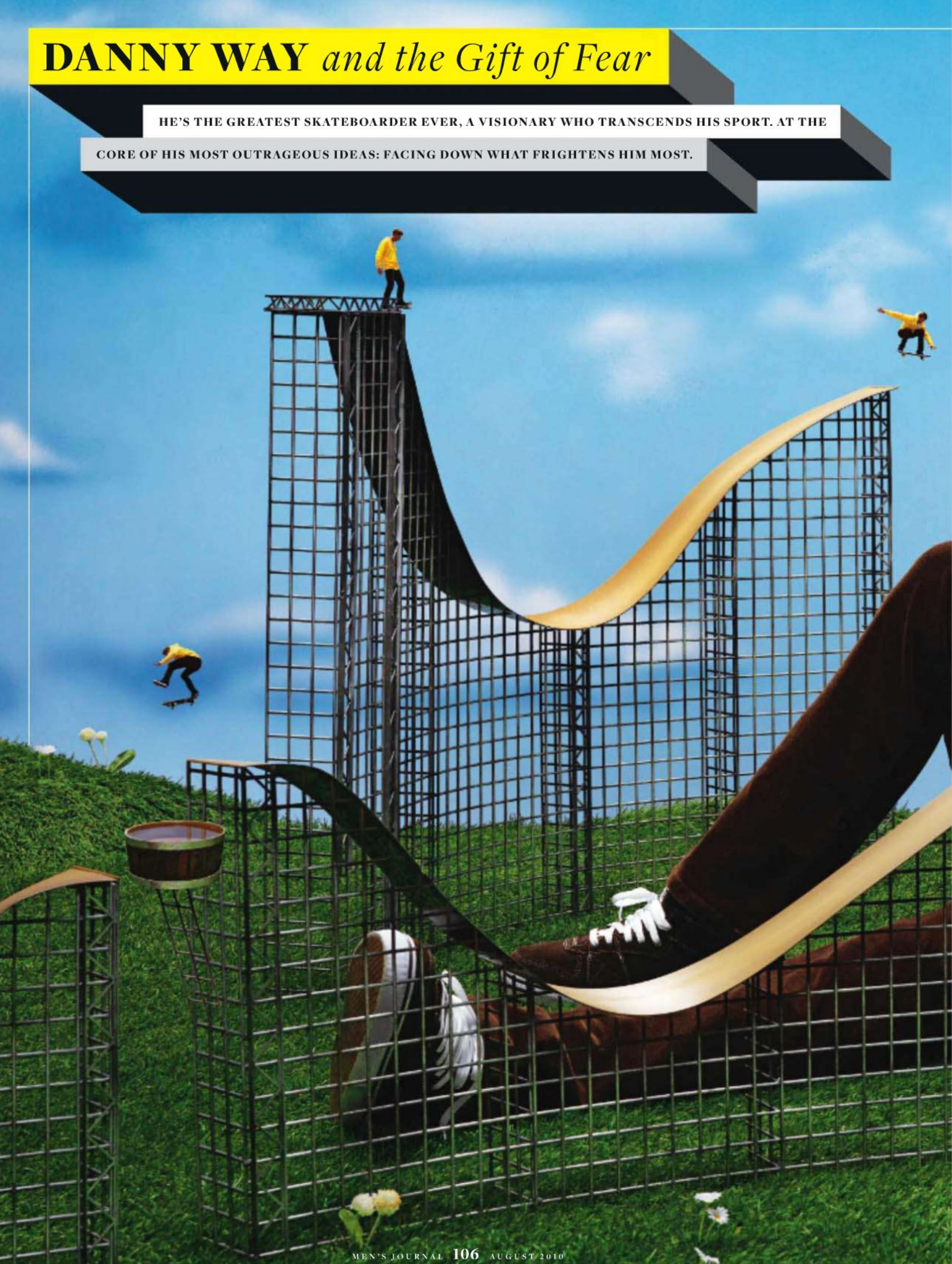
A runny egg yolk is one of nature's great gastronomical miracles, a ready-made sauce of creamy richness, and it's critical to the success of this sandwich. So I'm careful not to break the yolk, as I crack the egg into a small bowl and again as I slip it into a non-stick skillet — one that has a tablespoon of foaming butter in it — over medium-high heat. Once the egg white turns opaque, we move the skillet into the oven, just until the upper surface of the yolk sets.

PORTRAIT: MARCUS NILSSON


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DANNY WAY *and the Gift of Fear*

HE'S THE GREATEST SKATEBOARDER EVER, A VISIONARY WHO TRANSCENDS HIS SPORT. AT THE CORE OF HIS MOST OUTRAGEOUS IDEAS: FACING DOWN WHAT FRIGHTENS HIM MOST.





by **BRET ANTHONY JOHNSTON**

photograph by **HUGH KRETSCHMER**



The End, Which Is Always Something of a Beginning

TWILIGHT INKS THE HILLS OF VISTA, CALIFORNIA. A MURder of crows caw in the trees. Danny Way, arguably the world's greatest skateboarder, is trying to catch his breath atop the monolithic MegaRamp. The Mega stands taller than an eight-story building and stretches longer than a football field; it looks like a plywood ski jump, and after each run, Danny is driven back to the starting point in a golf cart. He's alone and battered, exhausted and punch-drunk and discouraged. His odds of riding away from the trick he's trying, a trick that's never been done, are, at best, equal to those of him slamming so hard he has to be rushed into his 14th surgery. That he's more afraid of not riding away than of getting hurt is unquestionable; Way has been appropriating what scares him since childhood, weaponizing it.

At 36, Way resembles Clint Eastwood — if Eastwood were young, blond, and dressed like a skate rat. He's wearing a Plan B Skateboards shirt, DC shoes and baggy shorts, and full protective gear: heavy plastic-capped knee and elbow pads, a helmet. On the Mega he looks like a gladiator — one who's losing.

Here at the world's only permanent MegaRamp, built on a 12-acre swath of land owned by fellow professional skateboarder Bob Burnquist, a film crew is shooting footage for an upcoming documentary about Danny's 20-plus-year career as a pro, and he's intent on finally landing a trick he's been attempting obsessively for months. We're going on eight hours, and for most of that time, Danny's been wrecking himself. Technically, what he's after is a switch backflip revert. In English, "switch" means he's doing it backward, with his right foot forward instead of his left (think switch-hitting in baseball); "backflip" means an honest-to-God backflip, grabbing his board with his left hand and soaring upside down over a gap the length of two school buses parked end to end; and "revert" (pronounced RE-vert) means that at the absolute last moment, he will twist himself around 180 degrees so that he lands riding forward. It's ridiculous.

Now, without looking at me, he says, "Sometimes it can just go sideways, you know?"

I think he's talking about his hopes for this filming session or maybe about how he's been landing, the revert not coming around a full 180 degrees. And maybe that's all he's saying, but maybe not. Earlier this morning, before giving a motivational talk at an elementary school, Way mentioned how there's no television in his house, how his two sons go to a Waldorf school, how his infant daughter will too, and how he and his wife allow very few plastic toys and maintain an all-organic diet. He described, in other words, the exact opposite of his own childhood. Tricks can go sideways, but so can childhoods, so can whole lives, unless you work tirelessly, ruthlessly, to keep them on track.

Absolutely, I say, it can all go sideways.

"But it's good to sweat. It's like there're vaults in your nervous system, where you store whatever pain and stress and bad memories you have," he says. "My theory is to fight fire with fire. You have to dive back into that trauma, go back and do the same tricks that hurt you, in the same place. If you don't process it out, those traumas will find homes in your body, hold you back."







BIG AIR, BIG DREAMS Clockwise from left: Way with his son Tavin; treating an injured teammate; playing guitar in 2008; the original MegaRamp; his bad fall at X Games 14; skating vert at age 14; his under-construction house in Hawaii.

"Whenever you're ready, D," Jacob Rosenberg, the director of the documentary, shouts from the Mega's landing pad.

"Okay," Way says, adjusting his pads and helmet. "Okay. Okay."

And then, seconds later, he's riding away from the trick so cleanly that it looks like he's coasting along on a wave as it peters out. The kinetic beauty, the velocity and power and precision and sweep of it, is magnificent — imagine the sound of a basket swooshed from half-court, the arch of a ball before it becomes a hole in one, the muscular symmetry of a horse storming to the Triple Crown. But beauty isn't even the most interesting thing about what Way has just done. More interesting is how, in watching him land a trick that's never been landed before, a trick that until he nailed it no one even knew was possible, you can see the full arc of his career. What is

CLOCKWISE, FROM FAR LEFT: BRYCE KANIGHTS; JODY MORRIS; ELYSE BUTLER AND MATT MALLAMS; GRANT BRITTAIN







FROM TOP: MIKE BLABAC; JODY MORRIS; THEO HAND

genius or art or excellence if not the ability to transcend time, the capacity to encompass the past, present, and future in a singular and fluid movement?

But, finally, what's most interesting about him riding away from another trick chased straight from his imagination into reality is that once he's done it, once the cameramen have confirmed that they shot a winner, Way doesn't celebrate or review the video or do anything except limp toward the golf cart. The switch backflip revert is behind him now, perfect and perfectly useless, an artifact of air. He tells the cart driver to go faster, tells the cameramen to keep rolling. He's got an idea for a new trick. He thinks there's still a little light left.

Then, He Disappeared

THAT SESSION ON THE MEGARAMP WAS TWO YEARS AGO, and what followed was actually one of the darkest, most complicated stretches in an already exceedingly complicated life. A few weeks after the session at Burnquist's, he crashed on a botched warm-up air, knocked himself unconscious, and had to be rushed to the hospital in an ambulance. A month later, at X Games 14, live on ESPN in 2008, he suffered what is widely considered one of the worst slams in skateboarding history (more on this later), losing the gold medal to Burnquist. That September, at a MegaRamp contest in Brazil, he came up short on a jump and fractured two vertebrae, taking himself out of the competition; Burnquist won again. Over the next year, Way's marriage dissolved. Then, at X Games 15, he decided against trying to reclaim his Big Air title, focusing instead on a new Mega competition he helped create, the Rail Jam, wherein the skaters launch themselves over the gap and slide or grind on a rainbow-shaped steel rail before dropping onto the bank ramp. He won the contest, but broke his ankle in the process. The injury took him out of commission for months, and then, for all practical purposes, he disappeared.

There were rumors: He'd retreated to Hawaii to build an ultra-private skate compound. He was strung out, addicted to morphine lollipops, and retired from skateboarding. He was reinventing himself as a street skater, riding alone and exclusively at night. He was on TMZ partying at a club. He was spotted in Las Vegas doing reconnaissance at the Luxor hotel, figuring whether he could skate down the side of the onyx pyramid and launch over the Strip. He was in Germany undergoing an experimental surgery not approved in the States. He was flying around the world in Tommy Lee's private jet.

No one knew anything for sure except that Way had dropped out of sight. The documentary went into hibernation. He missed interviews. Photo shoots were scheduled and rescheduled. When I called to check in, his voice mail was full and wouldn't accept new messages. On those few occasions when I could leave a message, he never called back.

And then, in early May, Way finally started returning my calls. He asked if I was going to make it to X Games 16 in July. When I told him I didn't know, he said, "You should definitely try. I'm working on something big. Like, huge."



GREENER PASTURES Way on his property in Kauai, where he's building a revolutionary new skating compound

"What?"

"Oh, man," he said.

"Tell me."

"I don't want to, you know, ruin the surprise. But remember the tricks we filmed at Bob's a couple years ago? The switch back revert? And everything else? Those were nothing compared to this."

"Those were pretty heavy," I said. "No one else has done them since."

"They were nothing," he said. "I was just clearing my throat."



A Short but Telling Incident from Earlier That Day Two Years Ago

DANNY WAY WAS TARDY FOR HIS MOTIVATIONAL SPEECH at the elementary school. He'd hit traffic on the drive from his home in Encinitas to Carlsbad, California, and then the parking lot was full. After circling twice, he said, "Fuck it," and steered his BMW M3 into a faculty-only slot.

Inside, the principal cleared his desk so Way could unload the skateboards he'd brought; they were autographed for two students battling cancer. The inscriptions read FEAR IS AN ILLUSION and MAKE YOUR DREAMS COME TRUE. Way's signature is spiky, like the logo of a heavy metal band.

"Very cool," the principal said. Then he inhaled sharply and asked, "Have you ever done drugs?"

A bewildered expression crossed Way's face, as if he'd misheard the question. "Well," he replied, "I mean, I've tried— "

"We had a pro skater visit last year," the principal interrupted, "and when a student asked if he'd done drugs, he said yes. Our parents were none too pleased."

"Not a problem," Way said.

"These kids need role models. Tell them you've made positive choices and you've followed the golden rule. Tell them you can't get where you are by doing drugs."

"I've got good things to say. I grew up in a pretty dysfunctional home," Way said matter-of-factly. If he elaborated, if he laid out exactly how dysfunctional his childhood was, the principal would likely cancel the speech.

"Very cool," the principal said again. Then he noticed I was hold-

ELYSE BUTLER AND MATT MALLAMS

DANNY WAY GOT SO GOOD SO QUICKLY THAT HE INTIMIDATED EVERYONE, INCLUDING FAMOUS PROS. AT 13, HE TROUNCED TONY HAWK — WHO, EVEN BACK IN THE '80S, WAS CONSIDERED THE MICHAEL JORDAN OF THE SPORT — IN A SKATER VERSION OF THE GAME HORSE.

ing a skateboard and asked if it was mine.

"No," Way answered sheepishly. "That's the board I used to jump the Great Wall of China."

The principal studied the board, possibly expecting Way to admit he was joking. He wasn't. If non-skaters know of Danny Way, it's because of this: In 2005 Way became the first person to jump the Great Wall on a non-motorized vehicle, soaring across a 60-foot gap, and he did it with a fractured ankle from a previous crash. (The last person to try used a bicycle. He died.) Way has never courted the celebrity that Tony Hawk or MTV reality star Ryan Sheckler enjoy, but after images of him spinning a backside-360 over the wall appeared everywhere from the *South China Morning Post* to *The Daily Show*, the door to mainstream culture swung wide open. And yet he promptly and politely closed it. Had he walked through that door, the stunt might have defined him. It might even have controlled him, relegated him to a world of daredevil sideshows, and the progression of skateboarding — which for Danny carries the weight of religion — would have been waylaid, if not completely thwarted. The religion thing is apt. He wants neither a pulpit nor a stage; he wants a monastery. He wants neither an audience nor disciples; he wants fellow believers. Jumping the Great Wall of China doesn't define Danny Way. The days alone on his MegaRamp do.

Early on, Way used the MegaRamp to set world records for height and distance, records he still holds. It served as the canvas for his impossibly progressive part in the landmark DC-sponsored skateboarding video. (In 1993 Danny's older brother, Damon Way, cofounded DC shoes. In 2004, a year after *The DC Video* debuted, Quiksilver bought the brand for $87 million.) Within a year, the X Games had adopted the MegaRamp into its competition schedule, and like that, the landscape of skateboarding was, literally and symbolically, forever transformed. Today, among vert pros, there are two groups of skaters: those who ride the Mega and those who don't. The first group is much, much smaller.

"Tell the kids that if they make positive choices, they'll be able to fly too," the principal told Way.

"We're all good," Way said. Then the bell rang.



Dysfunction: Part One

I FIRST MET DANNY WAY IN THE EARLY '90S, WHEN HIS skating career was just taking off and my own was both beginning and ending. At 19, I was a decent skateboarder, good enough to tour the country with a very low-level professional skate team for about half a minute. I'd been scheduled to skate in a demonstration with Way, but an injury kept me sidelined. I made a show of acting despondent and pissed, when really I felt spared. He was an undersized towheaded kid with a concave chest and braces, and he scared the bejesus out of me. He had inhuman focus when he dropped in on a ramp, a kind of desperate and almost violent grace. He skated with an authority and poise and aggression that reminded me of a young Mike Tyson — how he would charge across the ring just as the first bell sounded, gloves tucked under his chin and eyes locked on his poor, unsuspecting opponent. Watching Way skate, I sensed that, like Tyson, he had more at stake than everyone else. Which he did.

When Danny was eight months old, his father was arrested for failing to pay child support to his previous wife, and after just nine days in jail, he was found hanged in his cell (it was ruled a suicide but the Way family remains skeptical). After her husband's death, Way's mother, Mary, plunged into heavy drug use. Coke. Meth. You name it. With the drugs came a long string of boyfriends who physically and emotionally abused her and her two sons, cruel men who bolted once the mirrors were snorted clean. After a couple of chaotic and traumatic years, however, a good and stable man named Tim O'Dea came along. He introduced Danny and his brother, Damon, to surfing and skateboarding, buying them boards and safety gear and memberships at the world-renowned Del Mar Skate Ranch, near their home in San Diego. (At six years old, Danny was too young to skate the facility, but O'Dea lied about his age.) O'Dea married the boys' mother, but within a few years the marriage went bust. Danny and Damon were devastated. The only reliable thing left in their world was skateboarding — in many ways, their stepfather's legacy. "I felt this connection with my board that I've never felt with anything else in my life," Danny says. "Skateboarding is like therapy for me."

"I remember him as this tiny, tiny kid rolling into these huge bowls at Del Mar," recalls Damon Way, now 38. "The rest of us were scared, but he'd just go for it. That's the blueprint for who he became."

By age eight, Danny's innate talent and obsession with skateboarding became a source of friction. He'd gotten so good so quickly that he intimidated everyone, including famous pros. Older skaters ridiculed him, ostracized him; one soon-to-be-famous pro actually beat him up. At 13, he trounced Tony Hawk in a skater version of the game Horse. (Even in the mid-'80s, Hawk was considered unbeatable, the Michael Jordan of skateboarding, but Way's repertoire — executing complex street tricks while soaring above the ramp, spinning and flipping his board in ways no one else had yet conceived — blew everyone's mind, including Hawk's.) Danny always wanted to be the first to try a trick, even if it meant getting hurt, and he was starting to develop an edge in his personality, a cockiness born of youth and loneliness and physical ability. When older skaters taunted him, Danny refused to back down. "I had to stand up for myself," he says, "because I didn't feel like there was anyone around to do that for me." Even Damon started bullying Danny when he could no longer keep up with his younger brother's rapid progression. "[Damon] was always taking swings at me," Danny says. "It was just typical older-brother stuff, but my only weapon against the physical and mental abuse was to be better than him at what he loved: skateboarding."

At a time when Way felt "lost, confused, sad, unloved," he entered his first two contests on the same day — and won both. Industry sponsors immediately glommed on, offering endorsement deals and a version of the acceptance he'd long craved from his family. He signed with Powell Peralta, which was then something of a corporate empire and, not coincidentally, Tony Hawk's sponsor.

Meanwhile, his brother had started skating with a rougher crew. When Damon was 15, during a scuffle in the school parking lot, he was sucker punched in the temple, leaving him with a career-ending hematoma, and the family had to file lawsuits against his assailants and the school district to cover his medical expenses. Eventually a settlement came through and Damon bought the Rainbow, California, home that he, Danny, and their mother were living in. But Mary's habit threw the household back into chaos. "My mother had so many boyfriends," Danny recalls, "dealers who'd beat the shit out of her and my brother and me." By the time his mother finally moved out, Danny himself had begun drinking and *(continued on page 126)*

BE A LEAN, MEAN, WELL-CONNECTED MACHINE.

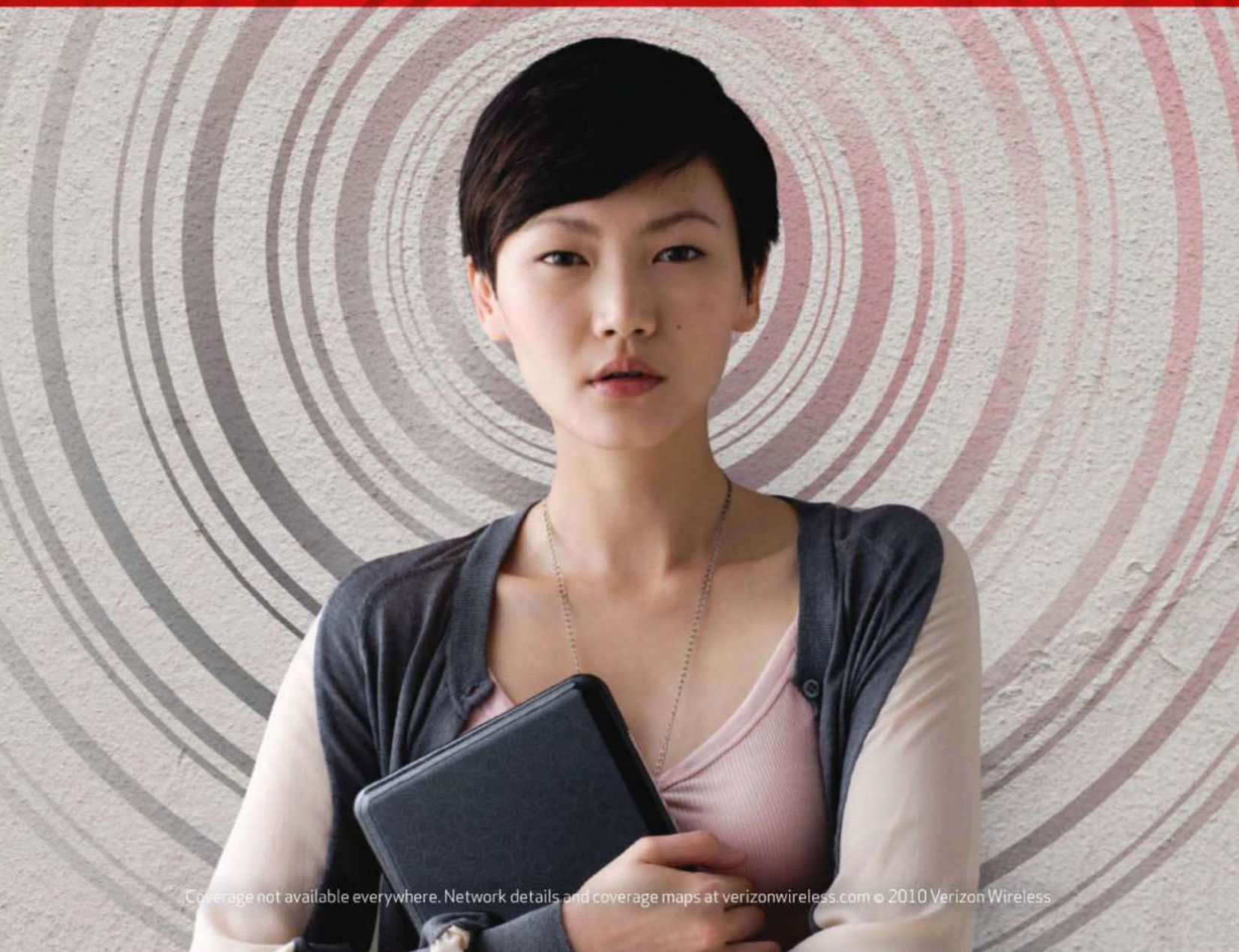
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by **STEPHEN TREFFINGER**

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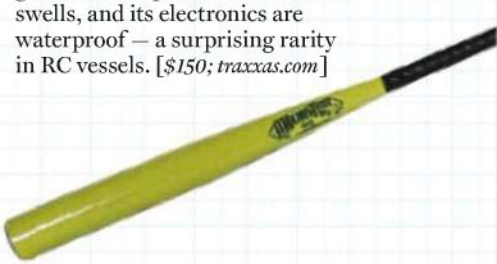
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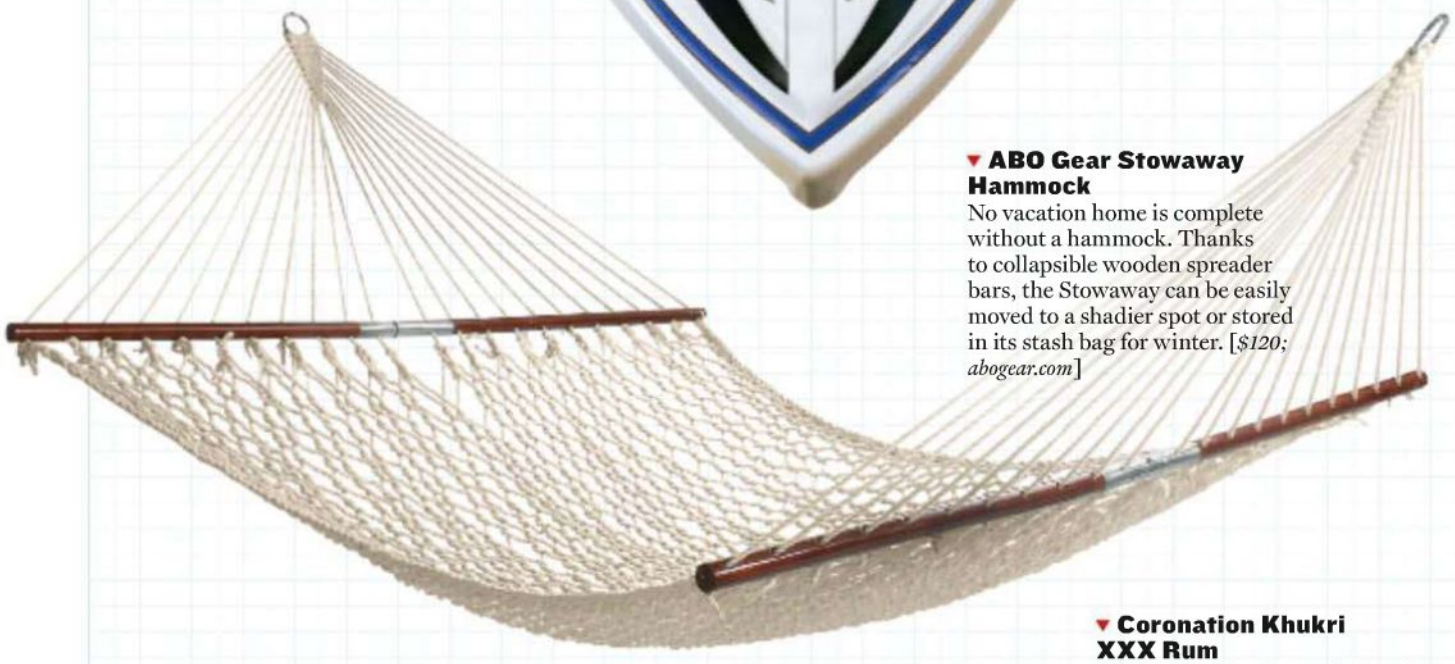
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Despite their obvious utility, water-resistant iPod speakers are disappointingly scarce. Thankfully Etón, makers of stylish emergency radios, created the Soulra. Rubberized for its protection, the beach-ready boombox can play for four hours on its internal, rechargeable battery — longer if you fold out the solar panel. [*$200; etonsoulra.com*]



◀ Traxxas Blast RC Boat
Unlike most radio-controlled boats, the Blast arrives ready to rip (though the decals are DIY). Its 24-inch-long deep-V hull can handle everything from a glass-smooth pool to small ocean swells, and its electronics are waterproof — a surprising rarity in RC vessels. [*$150; traxxas.com*]



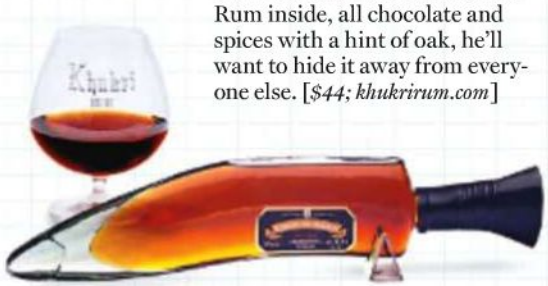
▲ Moonshot SpectraCarb SCX Revolution Wiffle Bat
Yes, it's 50 times pricier than the classic yellow basher. But if your friend is a wiffle fanatic, the trampoline-like effect of the Moonshot's carbon-fiber barrel will make him the Albert Pujols of the afternoon game. [*$180; moonshotbats.com*]



▼ ABO Gear Stowaway Hammock
No vacation home is complete without a hammock. Thanks to collapsible wooden spreader bars, the Stowaway can be easily moved to a shadier spot or stored in its stash bag for winter. [*$120; abogear.com*]



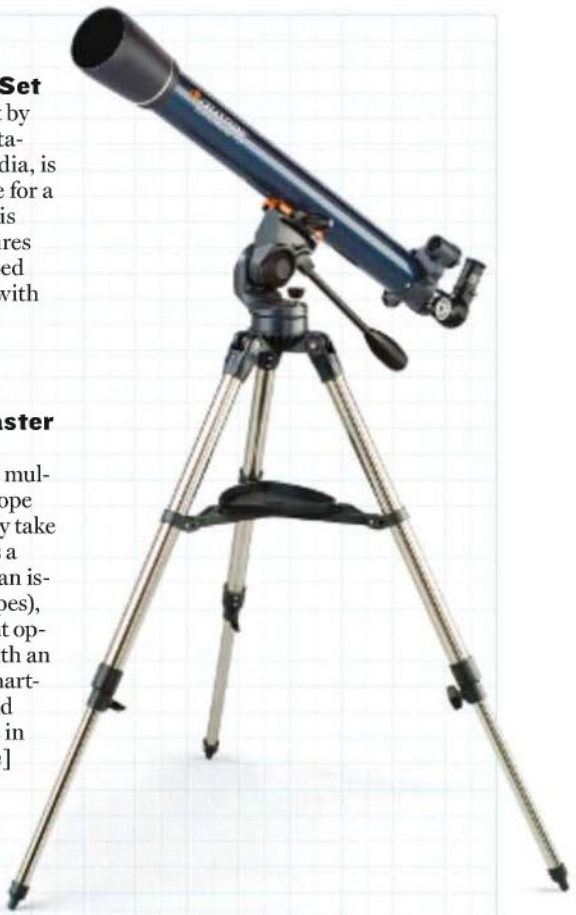
▶ Cuisinart Pure Indulgence Two-Quart Ice Cream Maker
Bring a man dessert and he'll eat for a day, but bring a man an ice cream maker and he'll create his own crazy flavors. The Cuisinart whips up two quarts of ice cream in only 25 minutes. (Just remember to put the liner in the freezer in advance.) Bacon gelato, anyone? [*$80; cuisinart.com*]



▼ Coronation Khukri XXX Rum
When your friend sees the handmade glass bottle, shaped like a ceremonial Ghurka dagger, he'll want to show it off on his mantle. But once he tastes the Nepal-distilled Coronation Khukri XXX Rum inside, all chocolate and spices with a hint of oak, he'll want to hide it away from everyone else. [*$44; khukrirum.com*]



Seletti Badminton Set
Badminton, brought west by British military officers stationed in 19th-century India, is the genteel sport of choice for a post-beach afternoon. This '20s-style Italian set features metal rackets with wrapped (not plastic) grips, along with everything else you need. [*$59; conranusa.com*]



Coleman 4D XPS LED Duo Lantern
Whether going for a midnight stroll or bolting from the bonfire to the bathroom, you won't get far without a lantern. The Duo's twin removable LED panels ensure that no one gets left in the dark, glowing for 56 hours when clipped into the base and 2.5 hours when detached. [*$60; coleman.com*]



Celestron AstroMaster 70AZ Telescope
Out in the sticks, the stars multiply, and this powerful scope will let you and your buddy take advantage of the show. It's a cinch to set up, it's stable (an issue with other budget scopes), and it comes with excellent optics for the price. Pair it with an astronomy app on your smartphone, such as Planets, and you'll be scouting galaxies in no time. [*$130; celestron.com*]

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To Each His Own Boat

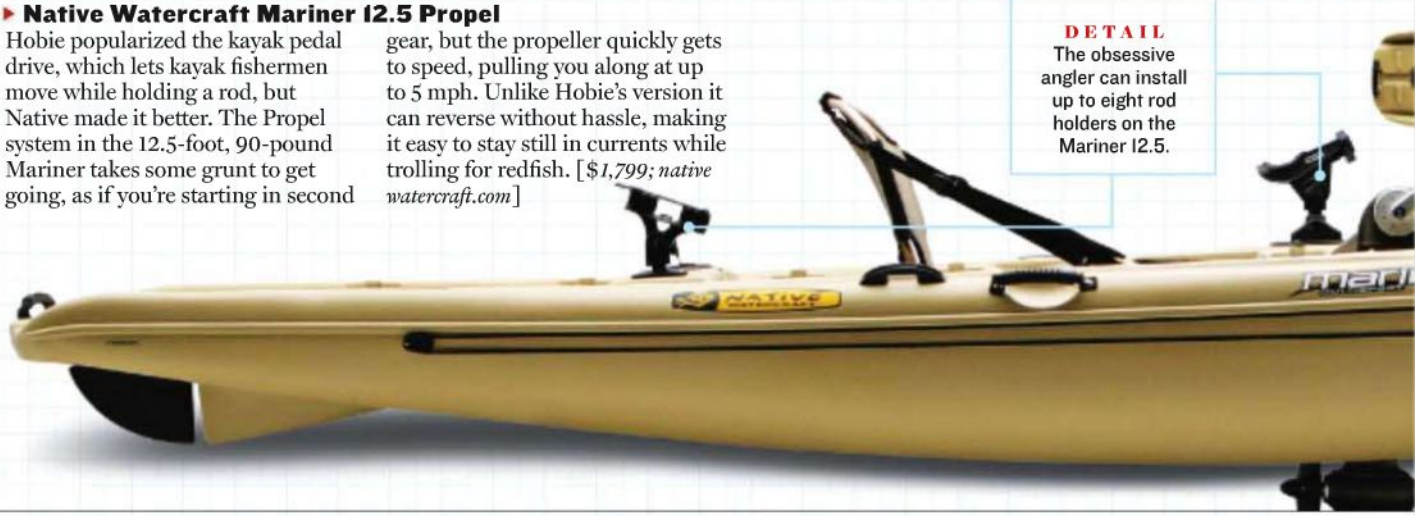
BEST IN CLASS

FISHING

Native Watercraft Mariner 12.5 Propel

Hobie popularized the kayak pedal drive, which lets kayak fishermen move while holding a rod, but Native made it better. The Propel system in the 12.5-foot, 90-pound Mariner takes some grunt to get going, as if you're starting in second gear, but the propeller quickly gets to speed, pulling you along at up to 5 mph. Unlike Hobie's version it can reverse without hassle, making it easy to stay still in currents while trolling for redfish. [*$1,799; nativewatercraft.com*]

DETAIL
The obsessive angler can install up to eight rod holders on the Mariner 12.5.



TOURING

Necky Looksha Elite Composite

If you want to go fast, you need a sleek, lightweight composite hull. If you want to go far, you need lots of storage. The 17-foot, 49-pound Elite ticks both boxes. During one test session off the coast of North Carolina, we ignored 35-mph winds and a small-craft advisory, and the slender Elite glided upwind smoothly. (In calmer conditions the boat cruises like it's on the aquabahn.) Two hatches totaling 200 liters of cargo space mean it can schlep lots of gear, too. [*$3,799; neckykayaks.com*]

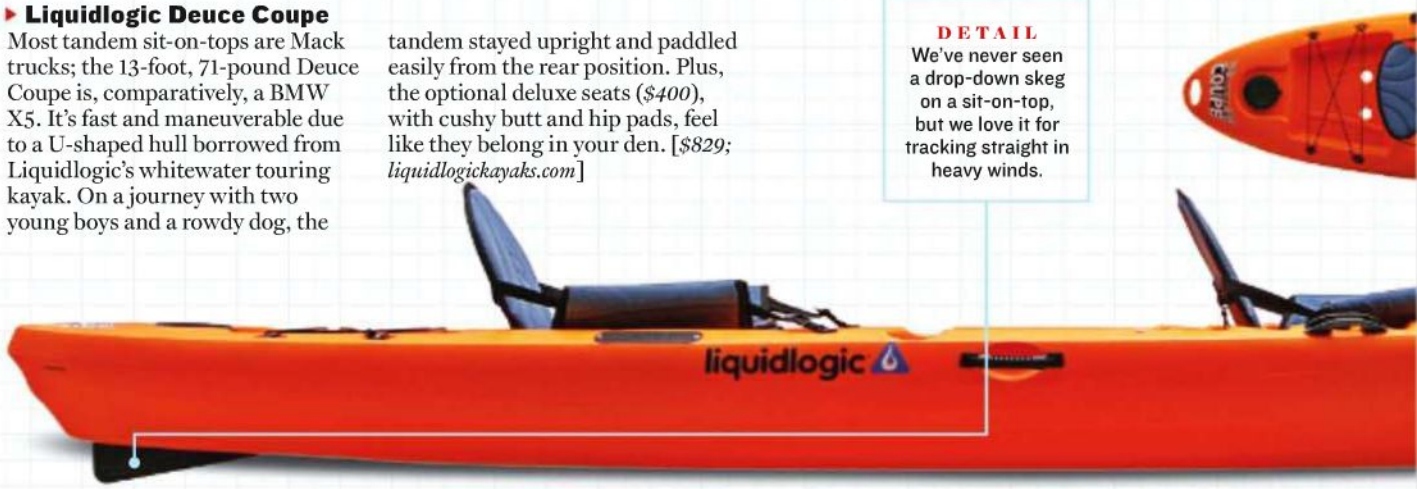


SIT-ON-TOP

Liquidlogic Deuce Coupe

Most tandem sit-on-tops are Mack trucks; the 13-foot, 71-pound Deuce Coupe is, comparatively, a BMW X5. It's fast and maneuverable due to a U-shaped hull borrowed from Liquidlogic's whitewater touring kayak. On a journey with two young boys and a rowdy dog, the tandem stayed upright and paddled easily from the rear position. Plus, the optional deluxe seats (*$400*), with cushy butt and hip pads, feel like they belong in your den. [*$829; liquidlogickayaks.com*]

DETAIL
We've never seen a drop-down skeg on a sit-on-top, but we love it for tracking straight in heavy winds.



Have paddle fever, but don't know what to buy? We've rounded up the best in three categories. If you want to go far, fast, then you'll want a touring kayak. Slow and steady sit-on-tops are perfect for playing on lakes and rivers. And fishermen will appreciate new, angler-specific kayaks, rigged with rod holders and fish-finder mounts. *by* **MARK ANDERS**

BEST VALUE





▲ Wilderness Systems Commander 120 Angler

If you're standing and casting from a kayak, it needs to stay dry-side-up, and the 12-foot Commander's tunnel-style hull is stabler than a two-parent home. It's equipped with three rod holders, a trolling motor mount (BYO motor), and an anchor trolley, but our favorite feature is a seat so plush it makes a La-Z-Boy look like a park bench. It also tucks under an elevated perch for a better view of the fish and can be removed for use in camp. [*$1,195; wildernesssystems.com*]



DETAIL
Extra volume behind the cockpit adds stability, so newbies will feel less tipsy.





▲ Jackson Kayak Journey 14

What makes the 14-foot, 60-pound Journey stand out in a crowd of midlevel touring kayaks is its confidence-inspiring steadiness and surprising amenities. Its edges are smooth and predictable, which makes rolling the kayak easier for novices who find themselves upside down. Even when we encountered 20-mph winds with an outgoing tide, the pedal-controlled rudder, similar to that of the pricey Necky, let us keep a line without issue. [*$1,299; jacksonkayak.com*]







▲ Perception Tribe

Sit-on-tops exist to make kayaking as simple as possible, and the 11.5-foot Tribe works hard to minimize hassle. The seat, grab handles, footbraces, and cup holder are molded into the hull, so there's nothing to break. Despite being wide, the 51-pound craft feels more agile than its classmates thanks to extra curvature in the hull. And since the boat was created by renowned whitewater-kayak designer Robert Peerson, it even surfs waves well. [*$595; perceptionkayaks.com*]

Liquid Lunching

THE PERFECT JUICER IS POWERFUL, EASY TO CLEAN, AND, UNLIKE A SQUEEZER, CAN HANDLE VEGETABLES. OLYMPIC NUTRITIONIST ADAM KORZUN TESTS FIVE. *by* **JOSH FULMER**



▲ Juiceman JM400

At a minimum, a good juicer does two things: chop up fruits and veggies, then extract their nectar. The Juiceman failed at both tasks. Large chunks of produce evaded its stainless-steel blades, and the 700-watt motor choked on a red pepper. "It definitely wouldn't handle two quarts of carrots," said Korzun. Worst of all, the juice it produced was grainy and oddly bitter. [*$100; juiceman.com*]

2



DETAIL
A three-inch loading tube lets the Hamilton inhale large hunks of produce.



▲ Hamilton Beach Big Mouth Pro

Neat freaks beware: The Hamilton spat food shrapnel from its intake chute as Korzun fed more into the machine. Disassembly was a snap, but the blade was a magnet for caked-on sludge, which called for post-dishwasher elbow grease. Yet the Hamilton churns out quality juice without wasting much food, earning a nod from Korzun as a "great entry-level machine." [*$80; hamiltonbeach.com*]

7

▲ Oster Wide Mouth Juice Extractor

The Oster rivals FEMA for inefficiency, wasting so much good produce that at one point a quarter of an apple landed in its scraps bin. Korzun also knocked the machine for feeling flimsy, saying, "It's all plastic and looks cheap, so it might break with heavy usage." For the price you're better off with the Hamilton. [*$80; shoposter.com*]

5



▲ Jack LaLanne Power Juicer Pro

A high-speed 3,600-rpm motor turned fruits and veggies into finely pureed juice, yet the Power Juicer Pro was the quietest model tested — a boon for juicers trying not to wake the wife and kids. The only downside: "It empties into a glass — not a large reservoir — so it's tough to juice a large batch," said Korzun. [*$150; powerjuicer.com*]

9



"YOU COULD WEED-WHACK YOUR YARD WITH THAT MOTOR."

◀ Waring WJX50

The commercial-grade model sucked produce dry, wasting no liquids. And its 1.3-horsepower, 1,000-watt motor dispatched citrus so easily that Korzun fed it juicer kryptonite: a sweet potato. The Waring devoured it. "You could weed-whack your yard with that motor," he said. Pulp haters beware, though — the Waring's juice borders on homestyle. [*$485; waringproducts.com*]

9



◀ ABOUT OUR EXPERT

Trained as a chef and nutritionist, Adam Korzun serves up tasty, performance-enhancing meals to the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Team at its Park City training center and on the competition circuit. Though his favorite juice concoction combines carrot, apple, and cucumber with ginger and spinach, Korzun notes that all the juicers tested are capable of making excellent Bloody Marys.

PORTRAIT COURTESY ADAM KORZUN

Men's Journal WEEKEND VAIL APRIL 16-18 2010

Men's Journal **celebrated its annual May "Adventure Issue" at "Spring Back to Vail," the #1 Spring Mountain Party in North America. Over 100,000 visitors descended upon Vail, Colorado to experience free concerts, barbecues, après-ski, late night events and the ever-popular "World Pondskimming Championships."**


Guests in the *Men's Journal* Lounge


The World Pondskimming Championships



The Eukanuba Dog Bar


Guster concert



The Leatherman Station


Wyclef concert with guest Robert Earl Keen


Wyclef Jean at the *Men's Journal* "Underground" after-party



A very special thank you to *Men's Journal* sponsors **Eukanuba** and **Leatherman**, who were showcased in the "Men's Journal Lounge," a large tented area located at the high-traffic base of Vail Mountain.

On one side of the Lounge, Leatherman's two expert Brand Ambassadors were on-site to hold hourly product raffles, display product and answer the many questions from passionate Vail outdoorsmen.

On the other side, the "Eukanuba Dog Bar" catered to the vast array of Vail pups with branded water bowls, beds, tennis balls and free samples of Eukanuba Naturally Wild Premium Dog Food.

Performance Enhancers

WANT A BETTER ROAD BIKE, BUT NOT AN EMPTY WALLET? REJUVENATE YOUR CURRENT RIDE WITH THESE COST-EFFECTIVE UPGRADES. *by* **JAMES HUANG**

1. Wheels: HED Ardennes C2
Besides the frame and fork, wheels are the biggest determinant of your bike's performance. HED's innovative Ardennes C2 uses a wider-than-normal scandium alloy rim for more tire support, which improves both the bike's handling in corners and its ride quality. Despite its midlevel price, the wheel is fantastically lightweight — just 1,430 grams for each pair. [*$1,050; hedcycling.com*]

2. Tires: Continental Attack and Force
Tires are like sheets: The higher the thread count, the better they feel. Most have 60 threads per inch, but the Continentals have 330 for a suppler ride. The narrower front-specific Attack wears grippier rubber for better cornering and braking traction, while the wider rear-specific Force offers more cushioning. Puncture-resistant belts prevent flats. [*$121 per set; conti-online.com*]

3. Tubes: Maxxis Flyweight
Swapping in Maxxis's paper-thin Flyweight inner tubes can lop off nearly a quarter pound of rotating weight — better handling! quicker acceleration! — while simultaneously improving ride quality. No need to worry about flats if you're running puncture-resistant tires, and the tubes' high-quality construction reduces the chance of defect-induced blowouts. The wallet-friendly price makes these a no-brainer; just be sure to pick up an emergency spare. [*$28 per pair; maxxis.com*]

4. Bike Fit: Retül
Even a $10,000 dream bike will feel no better than a Huffy if it isn't optimized to work with the way you ride. The Retül fitting system — performed by 127 fitters across the country — uses a 3-D motion capture to make your bike fit you like a tailored Savile Row suit. The result: You're not only more comfortable, but faster, too. At the fitting you strap on an LED harness while pedaling your bike on a stationary trainer, and an array of sensors records how your body and bike interact with sub-millimeter accuracy. Then system software analyzes the data and tells a fitter how to fine-tune each adjustment on the bicycle to work with your biomechanics. [*from $150; retul.com*]

Thanks to Larry's 2nd Avenue Bikes Plus [*larrysbicyclesplus.com*] for helping with bike assembly.



MICHAEL PIRROCCO. ILLUSTRATION: NICOLE WILKINSON. JAMES HUANG IS THE TECHNICAL EDITOR OF BIKERADAR.COM AND CYCLINGNEWS.COM.

5. Component Group: SRAM Rival
The high-value Rival component group is the current king of trickle-down tech, with a design, feel, and construction surprisingly close to SRAM's top-end Red package, but at half the price. Not to mention it's two-thirds of a pound lighter than Shimano's similarly priced 105 set. The highly adjustable DoubleTap upshifts and downshifts with a single lever, dual-pivot brakes provide easily modulated power, and the hollow-forged aluminum crank is nearly as light as carbon. Swap in even lighter SRAM Force or Red bits as your budget allows — it's all cross-compatible. [*$976; sram.com*]

6. Bar Tape: Arundel Gecko Grip
Gecko Grip is pricier and harder to wrap than regular tape but worth the hassle. Why? Its textured polyurethane surface is far tackier than the typical stuff, wet or dry, and easier to wipe clean. Dense EVA foam padding squelches road buzz, and the adhesive backing keeps the wrap from migrating down your bars. [*$17 per set; arundelbike.com*]

7. Cables: Gore Ride-On Professional System
Cables turn inputs into action, and the best merit the extra cash. Gore's top setup uses a Teflon-coated cable and low-friction lining for a quicker, more precise feel when swapping cogs and braking. Plus it's fully sealed against dirt and water. [*$65; rideoncables.com*]





INSET: MICHAEL PIRROCCO

8. Pedals: Speedplay Zero Stainless
The size of these tiny Technicolor pucks belies the substantial performance gain they afford. You get no-look, dual-sided entry in a flyweight pedal that offers massive cornering clearance and a Fort Knox-like retention system. Adjustable cleats and optional spindle lengths, shims, plates, and wedges ensure they'll fit anyone. [*$195; speedplay.com*]

Track Your Progress

Thanks to GPS and wireless technology, today's cycle computers offer more data — and more precision. We tested three of the best to find one that fits your needs. —BILL GIFFORD



FOR COMPUTER NEWBIES

The wireless **KNOG N.E.R.D.** packs 12 functions (mostly time, speed, and distance, in various forms) into a rubber-wrapped package with a single button. Its ease of installation makes it ideal for riders with multiple bikes. [*$90; amazon.com*]



FOR LONG-DISTANCE RIDERS

The GPS-enabled **GARMIN EDGE 705** lets you roam without getting lost. It tracks elevation, intervals, and power output (with a PowerTap wheel). And you can upload ride data, such as heart rate and power files, to a PC. [*$500; garmin.com*]



FOR TRAINING TRIATHLETES

From the makers of the PowerTap wheel comes a data junkie's dream, the wireless **JOULE 2.0**. It tracks up to 58 different metrics, and a dedicated "Interval" button makes it easy to capture training data, which downloads to free software. [*$500; saris.com*]

Down Time

WHETHER YOU WANT TO SCOUT A REEF, WALK ALONG THE BOTTOM OF THE MARIANA TRENCH, OR CARRY OUT COVERT OPS, WE'VE GOT YOUR DIVE WATCH. *by* **BEN CLYMER**

BEST FOR
EXTREME SPORTSMEN



▲ Oris Col Moschin
Tested by (and named after) Italy's version of the Navy SEALs, this watch can handle parachuting from 29,000 feet as easily as it does diving to 3,280 feet. It's massive, at 49mm, but lightweight due to the titanium case. Plus, the rubber-covered bezel protects it against hard landings. [*$4,395; oris.ch*]

BEST FOR
SUBMARINERS ON A BUDGET



▲ Luminox Deep Dive 500
Unlike the mortgage-payment Oris, the newest Luminox offers military cred at a palatable price. It wears hardcore frogman features such as a helium escape valve and bezel-locking arm, along with Luminox's tritium-filled tubes on the hands and face, which glow for 25 years, no light needed. [*$1,750; luminox.com*]

BEST FOR
DIVE-BOAT SHOW-OFFS



▲ Pita Oceana
With the Oceana, Pita sought to create a watch able to withstand more pressure than a high school girl on prom night. It replaced the crown with a unique system in which time is set by rotating the caseback. As a result, you can change the time while you're 16,400 feet underwater. [*from $4,125; pita.es*]

BEST FOR
NO-FRILLS DIVERS



▲ Prometheus Ocean Diver
In 2008 Prometheus asked the users of popular watch forum Watchuseek.com to help design a timepiece. This begat the 984-foot Ocean Diver, an affordable watch with high-end details such as an inner-rotating bezel, a GMT hand for dual time zones, and a Swiss movement. [*$632; prometheuswatch.com*]

BEST FOR
BRAGGARTS WITH BIG WRISTS



▲ CX Swiss Military 20,000 Feet Watch
This is horological overkill, able to dive to 20,000 feet — a record for a production watch. Its sapphire crystal is 10mm thick (versus the usual three), and its pushers screw down. It's also huge, measuring 1.1 inches thick and weighing more than half a pound. [*$3,585; swiss-military.biz*]

BEST FOR
WEEKDAY SUITS, WEEKEND DIVERS



▲ Victorinox Dive Master 500
There's no disputing the subaquatic credentials of the 500-foot-capable Dive Master, but it earns our love for being so versatile. With a comfortable 43mm size and a clear caseback showing off its automatic movement, this is an all-purpose timepiece that works both on land and in the sea. [*$1,095; victorinox.com*]

MICHAEL PIRROCCO (6)

SIGHTINGS

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VINEYARD CUP 2010

Join Men's Journal, our sponsors and Sail Martha's Vineyard at the 2010 Vineyard Cup Regatta. This exciting maritime competition takes place off the coast of beautiful Martha's Vineyard, MA and the waters of Nantucket Sound.

vineyardcup.com

The Black Dog
Appleton Estate Jamaica Rum
at&t
Eukanuba NATURALLY WILD
vitaminwater zero

My Gear

Jeremy Wade

Host of River Monsters

YOU'VE SEEN HIM ON HIS ANIMAL Planet show (Fridays at 10 PM) standing in a third-world tributary, smiling, holding a slimy, gill-breathing holdover from the Mesozoic era. For more than 25 years, British biologist Jeremy Wade has hunted demi-mythical freshwater fish rarely seen by humans. Here, he talks about the gear he uses to land them.



Wade holding a Mekong giant catfish in Thailand



▸ Suunto Vector Watch
It has a compass, an altimeter, and — key for Wade — a barometer. As he explains, "there seems to be a link between when fish feed and what the air pressure is doing. But what the connection is, I'm still trying to work out." [*$219; suunto.com*]



▸ Rohan Expedition II Shirt
"Long sleeves for insect protection, quick drying, hard-wearing but lightweight," says Wade of his rip-resistant British-made shirt. "On one Amazon shoot, I wore it for five weeks without a proper wash, just dunking it in the river." [*$80; rohan.co.uk*]

▸ The North Face Base Camp Duffel
Wade packs everything he needs for an expedition in this single-compartment, 90-liter duffel. "It's a very rugged, laminated bag. I also like that it's got backpack straps." He stows fragile gear, like loaded reels, in a plastic briefcase inside. [*$135; thenorthface.com*]







▲ Gamakatsu Live Bait Circle Hook
Its odd design, with the barb pointed inward, means no more sharp tug to set a hook. "Once a circle hook gets to the edge of the mouth, it just turns into position." It's also better for fish, since it usually won't hook if swallowed. [*$11 for three; shop.gamakatsu.com*]

▸ Shimano Tyrnos TYR30-II Reel
Wade needs burly saltwater gear built to land his freshwater behemoths, such as this aluminum-frame Tyrnos multiplier reel. Its two speeds help just as much fighting a 150-pound goonch (an Indian catfish) as a marlin. Plus, "it can take a reasonable quantity of heavy line, 80- or 90-pound test." [*$360; fish.shimano.com*]



▲ American Fishing Wire Big Game Crimping Pliers
Wade uses them to make leaders — short lengths of wire or strong line bound to a hook, then spliced to the line with crimped metal barrels. "Lots of people use single barrels; I use doubles for a stronger joint, so I need these pliers." [*$22; americanfishingwire.com*]

PORTRAIT: COURTESY ANIMAL PLANET

Men's Journal

WEEKEND MARTHA'S VINEYARD

VINEYARD CUP

July 16-18, 2010

WITH HOSTING SPONSOR:

The Black Dog

Join *Men's Journal*, our sponsors and **Sail Martha's Vineyard** at the 2010 **Vineyard Cup Regatta.**

This exciting maritime competition takes place off the coast of beautiful Martha's Vineyard, MA and the waters of Nantucket Sound.

VINEYARD CUP 2010

All proceeds will benefit **Sail Martha's Vineyard**, a non-profit organization dedicated to celebrating and protecting the Island's maritime heritage.

Visit **vineyardcup.com** for more details on this exciting event.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMORY ROSS/VINEYARD CUP

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experimenting with drugs (Mary has been clean for the past two years). He was also starting to make real money and was able to buy dirt bikes and four-wheelers and guns — pistols, rifles, shotguns — that he and Damon would shoot when they hosted parties. And they hosted a lot of parties. "My friends at the time were on a pretty destructive path, and I was a sponge," Danny says. "The easiest thing to do was to emulate the things that were going on around me. I stepped out of my own skin because I didn't have anywhere else to step." Although inherently shy, Danny noticed that the more recklessly he behaved, the more attention people paid him. He'd jump from the second-story roof and land on the trampoline. He'd ride a motorcycle on his backyard halfpipe, full tilt. One afternoon, with nothing more exciting to do, he yanked his braces off with a pair of pliers.

Something Revelatory Danny Way Said After Suffering What's Widely Considered One of the Worst Slams in Skateboarding History

AFTER BOOSTING A 540-DEGREE ROTATION 20 feet over the 27-foot-tall MegaRamp at the X Games two years ago, Danny clipped his shins on the deck upon reentry, did a front flip, and rag-dolled onto his back-head-neck at the bottom of the ramp. His eyes rolled back in their sockets. He lay motionless. It looked career- (if not life-) ending, and is nauseating to watch on YouTube. The on-site doctor called the ambulance and banned Danny from returning to competition. While no one was looking, though, Danny hobbled through the bowels of the Staples Center and made his way back to the top of the ramp in time for his next run. He nailed the trick he'd slammed on earlier.

As Danny awaited the judges' score at the bottom of the ramp, an ESPN reporter asked if he'd be able to take his next few runs, given the fall.

"I'm taking every run," Danny said. His voice was slurred and his eyes were glazed and he couldn't really stand up straight because inside his shoe his foot was swelling to the size of a football.

Then he said: "It's about how much abuse the body can take and come back from."

He thought he was talking about skateboarding.

A Brief Interlude About Fear

ALTHOUGH I'D BEEN HIDING THE FACT THAT I still skated, I'd long entertained delusions of skating the Mega. But once I was there, I saw the sheer absurdity of my thinking. It wasn't the scale of the ramp that intimidated me. It was Danny. Failing to land even the most basic aerial would've been an insult, like he'd offered me a gift and I chucked it into the trash, bow and all, right in front of him. I was afraid to let him down.

And yet he's a man who strives to put you at ease. In his car he asks if you're getting enough air, if you like the radio station. In restaurants he asks about your food allergies — he has many — and then suggests dishes. He gives extremely thorough driving directions, spells out the street names and then repeats the spellings, and you get the sense that he'd take your getting lost personally. Which is how I felt on the Mega — afraid not of embarrassing myself so much, but of embarrassing Danny.

All of which got me thinking about fear, so after his next attempt — where he barely made the full flip and kind of landed on his spine and all of the cameramen nervously looked to each other — I asked if the Mega in any way scared him.

"I was more scared talking to those students this morning," he said.

He did look uncomfortable giving his speech, like an awkward groomsman making a toast.

"It's weird," he said. "Onstage I can't get hurt, but here, where I could get maimed or killed, I feel totally relaxed. I have a lot of things in my memory that I can dig into and unlock to propel my motivation. Skateboarding is my tool for processing emotion and energy. I try to use it that way. It's easier said than done."

Then he dropped in again, slammed again, and just lay at the bottom of the ramp for a long, long time.

Dysfunction: Part Two

IN 1989, WHEN HE WAS ON THE VERGE of being expelled from 10th grade for truancy and his home life was increasingly unstable, Way quit school altogether to skate full time. Powell Peralta, however, wasn't ready to offer him a professional contract, so when he was approached about riding for H-Street, a new and edgy skater-owned company, Danny accepted. The move would prove significant and prescient. Soon, the few titanic companies that had long monopolized the industry would fall to smaller, grittier upstarts that appealed to skaters' insubordinate sensibilities. The break with Powell epitomizes what would become the defining traits of Danny's personal and professional experience, a pathological need for upheaval and an occasionally sadistic aversion to moderation. He feels most safe, most at home, when he's risking everything.

No one recognized how predisposed toward self-destruction Danny was better than Mike Ternasky, H-Street's cofounder. Ternasky was only 22, but he'd also grown up largely fatherless and saw that Danny's recklessness and the way he punished himself daily wasn't unrelated to the tumult at home. He knew taming Danny wasn't an option, but he also knew that the wildness, coupled with Danny's talent and obsessive nature, could be more than a liability. Ternasky earned Danny's trust not by asking him to share his feelings, but by pushing him to float higher airs and land more technical lip tricks, to channel his anger and confusion into his skating. Again, think Tyson. With Ternasky's guidance, Danny won his first pro contest, beating veterans and newcomers alike, and he began collecting monthly royalty checks in the neighborhood of $20K. He was 15.

And then, when everything seemed golden, Danny quit H-Street. He thought the team was getting too big and losing its edge. He couldn't abide such softness, even though he himself was making $80,000 a year before he could legally drive. For a short period, he skated on the Blind Skateboards team (with eventual *My Name Is Earl* star Jason Lee), but he never found the footing or inspiration he'd had with Ternasky. He placed poorly in contests and his board sales faltered. Any savings he had from the H-Street gravy train were gone. Once, while filming a skate video for his wheel sponsor, he was so broke he jumped off a 150-foot cliff into a lake for $200. And, like his brother, he started gravitating toward a more dangerous crowd, skaters who would fight the security guards who tried to run them off and then reconvene at the Way compound to drink and shoot guns. "Have you seen *Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome*? That was Danny's house when he was 16," says Colin McKay, one of Danny's closest friends, his business partner, and a pro skater himself.

"I look back on that time," Way says now, "and I think, How stupid were we?"

Which was maybe what Ternasky was thinking when he called Danny in 1991 and asked him to skate for a new company he was launching called Plan B. Danny, 17 at the time, signed on immediately, and Ternasky assembled the most advanced and influential team in skateboarding around his star athlete. Ternasky intended to build a skater-centered company that he could eventually bequeath to the elder skaters, ensuring that the nonconformist spirit of the enterprise would endure. Plan B became the shadow version of Powell Peralta, an unvarnished and unrivaled group of skaters that seemed both dangerous and soulful, and nowhere was that paradox more present than in Danny. Reconnecting with Ternasky ushered Danny into one of the most productive and creative periods of his career — even today, there are only a handful of pros who can land the tricks he invented in the early '90s, and no one skater can do all of them.

Then the bottom fell out from under Danny again. In 1994, on his way to the Plan B offices, Ternasky was T-boned at an intersection and died of head trauma. He was 27, and with the exception of Ternasky's wife, Danny was the last person to see him alive. The loss gutted him (the initials MT are tattooed under Danny's left arm, a tribute to his mentor). Even skateboarding, the only shelter he'd known since his stepfather introduced him to the sport, could do little to fill the hollowness he felt. The sport was itself dying, as it had a decade before, the result of increased overhead for skate parks and dwindling sales throughout the industry — board shops closed, ramps were torn down, countless pros sulked into more reliable careers or did humiliating demonstrations at amusement parks to pay the bills. Plan B closed its doors in 1995.

Then, while surfing near San Diego,

Danny dove into a shallow break and snapped his neck.

Danny's Plan B

AFTER HE BROKE HIS NECK — WHICH he describes as "my face pretty much hitting me in my stomach" — Danny was partially paralyzed for more than a year. He went in and out of the hospital, bouncing from one doctor to another, and made no progress. He was afraid to lift a carton of milk, convinced that even minimal exertion would cause more damage. He suffered severe depression and spent most days lying on his floor to ease the pain. He was an invalid at 20. Imagine going from jumping off huge cliffs to being scared of something in your fridge. "It's like being in jail," he says. "You lose all your freedom."

Doctors said he'd never skate again. Danny refused to listen. He read everything he could about spinal injuries and experimented with different treatments. Each failure fueled his obsession. Finally he flew to Hawaii and lived with a spiritual healer who guided him out of his "superdepressed" state not with pharmaceuticals, but with meditation and a holistic focus on mind-body synergy. He made slow progress over the course of a few months, exacting the same determination on his recovery that he long had on his skating. When Danny returned to California, he endured months of brutal physical and psychological therapy. Nearly every day, he thought about giving up, but what kept him going was a vision of a ramp so unprecedented, massive, and jaw-droppingly gnarly that it would forever change the face of skateboarding.

As Danny returned to skating — he won a major contest in 1996, shocking the industry that had written him off as a lost soldier — he began experimenting with the size and design of ramps, testing both the physical limitations and the possibilities he'd dreamed up during his long recuperation. "There were no engineers or mathematicians involved," he says. "It was all human trial and error." Which means that until he hit upon a design that worked, he'd try out the biggest ramp in history, destroy himself, then build a bigger one. Between 1999 and 2002, he underwent seven major surgeries. Then, in 2002, the prototype of what's now called the MegaRamp was erected in the desert. Before the weather eroded it, Danny invited other pros to ride the ramp, but only a select few had the requisite skills — and balls.

Danny's high-profile stunts eventually gave him enough cachet and cash to resurrect Plan B Skateboards in 2005. He called back most of the original team members and scooped up prodigies like Paul "P-Rod" Rodriguez and Ryan Sheckler. This March, Plan B partnered with Billabong to increase its market value and visibility. "The partnership will allow Plan B to go bigger and stay true to its core," Danny says. "We aren't going to make girls' clothing. We're going to make the best boards and wheels. We're going to be the modern-day Powell without selling ourselves short." In other words, he's doing exactly what Mike Ternasky had hoped he would. And it was probably because Ternasky would have wanted him to that Danny went to China and built a MegaRamp beside the Great Wall. For Danny, though, it was the means, not the end. He wants to make sure he's given the sport everything he can, everything it will need to flourish in his wake. His concern isn't his legacy, but the future of skateboarding.

As Danny was showing me clips of the new Plan B skate video on his iPhone, he said, "With the window of time left in my career, I'm not interested in proving I'm better than somebody else. I want to push skateboarding into another paradigm."

The new video is called *Superfuture*.

Project Lee-Way

SOME OF THE RUMORS HEWED PRETTY close to the truth. Way did go to Germany — not to have surgery, but rather an experimental treatment where doctors inject bone marrow into the joints to rejuvenate them; it worked. And he had been considering a stunt that involved skating down the Luxor in Vegas, and he had been doing a lot of street skating, but he put everything on the back burner to train for X Games 16, which could be the defining moment in his career. He wants to build an ecologically sound skate facility in Hawaii, but that's a ways off. Right now he's concentrating on erecting a MegaRamp with a foam pit at the Woodward West Skate Camp in California. The foam pit will help him practice his top-secret new trick, but more important, the Mega at Woodward West will make Big Air skating available to anyone who goes to the camp. It will democratize the genre of skating that has, in Way's opinion, been too exclusive. He wants kids who spend afternoons at small municipal skate parks to envision themselves on the Mega, and he wants to hit upon a Mega design that skate parks around the country will adopt.

Since his marriage ended in 2009, he and his ex-wife have been negotiating how to raise their three kids in two different houses. There were rough patches, but they're in the past. Way says, "Everything is chill. No one's right and no one's wrong. We're great friends on different paths, except with the kids. We're walking with them, together."

As for the rumors about him being strung out and jet-setting with Tommy Lee, Way laughs. "I am friends with Tommy, and I've been in his plane, but he's sober and laid-back. Partying wouldn't complement my life right now. What we usually talk about is our kids and our new band. He's a really wise, spiritual dude."

"He's got some stubborn bull in him," Lee says. "We keep each other going in the right direction. I'm on the Danny Way program and he's on the Tommy Lee one. It's all positive. We should brand it, call it 'Lee-Way.'"

Way tells me that the documentary is back on track, slated to hit theaters in early 2011, and he says he thinks he can take X Games gold in both Big Air and Rail Jam this year, if he can avoid injury. Just as the conversation seems to be wrapping up, he says, "If I tell you the trick I'm working on for X, do you have to print it? Can I just tell you for your own information?"

He sounds keyed up and nervous, like a kid with a secret. Then I realize it: He's not just worried that I'll spill the secret to the world; he's worried that I won't be impressed, worried that what he's trying to do won't be enough.

"We can go off the record," I say.

"Cool," he says.

Then he tells me. I ask him to repeat himself because I'm sure I've misheard him. I haven't. And he's right; everything he's done before seems like a warm-up, a throat-clearing.

"Is that really possible?" I ask.

"I'm optimistic," he says.

And then our connection drops. The line goes dead. When I call back, I'm dumped to his voice mail. His outgoing message is addressed to his sons: "Ryden and Tavin, leave a message and Daddy will call you back. Okay, I love you guys. Later."

Where This Has All Been Leading

I'VE LEFT A LOT OUT OF THIS ARTICLE. I haven't mentioned how Danny has twice jumped from a hovering helicopter into a half-pipe, or how one of those times, the first time, he did it with a dislocated shoulder. I've not mentioned his four ACL reconstructions, two of which were done while he was awake. Not the fact that he holds the land speed record on a skateboard. I left all of this, and tons more, out because finally it's irrelevant, which is the definitive difference between Danny Way and, well, you. And me. And most everyone else on the planet. When you add up all of Danny's accomplishments and trespasses, his loves and losses and the times when he's been lost, there's still something missing. And what's missing — it's not fear, but maybe fearfulness — is what the rest of us have an awful lot of. We cling to our fearfulness as tightly as we do our triumphs and traumas; we envision these things as the perimeters of our identities, the irrefutable evidence of our capabilities, and Danny simply, emphatically, doesn't.

Think Picasso, Hemingway, Dvorak. Think Laird Hamilton, Chuck Yeager. And, yes, think Tyson. Consider the likelihood that these men don't possess qualities the rest of us lack, but instead have within them intense voids, empty and expansive chambers of possibility. Maybe these voids — which the men fill with what can only be called art — are innate, or maybe they're the result of damage or sacrifice or failures the artists have endured. The origin doesn't matter. Nor does the medium. True, this is a story of how much abuse the body can transcend, but it's also the story of pushing not merely the limits of skateboarding but the boundaries of the human spirit, the soul. What's most inspiring — and intimidating — about Danny has little to do with his greatness or resilience or the sheer ballsiness of his life; rather, it has everything to do with his ambivalence toward those things. While the rest of us stand in awe, rooted in the past and arrested by timidity, he climbs back to the top of the ramp. He adjusts his pads, hangs his wheels over the edge, and drops in. He throws his weight forward, leaning into gravity again and again, trying to gather the speed he needs.

OIL SPILL *continued from page 87*

badly from a gash to his head, crawled out and made their way to the main deck and from there to the lifeboat station.

Not everyone was so lucky.

Anderson and assistant drillers Stephen Ray Curtis, 40, and Donald Clark, 48, along with 48-year-old driller Dewey Revette, almost certainly died in the first explosion. The blast also killed six crew men around the mud pit: Gordon Jones, Roy Wyatt Kemp, Karl Kleppinger Jr., Keith Blair Manuel, Shane Roshto, and Adam Weise.

The operator of the rig's starboard crane, 37-year-old Aaron Dale Burkeen, had tried to retreat along a catwalk when the blast knocked him off the walk altogether. He fell more than 50 feet to his death, witnesses say.

Rushing to the main deck, Pleasant passed David Young, who tried to get him to help rescue a wounded man, but Pleasant was one of the few people on board with authority to disconnect the Deepwater Horizon from the well and cut off the flow of flammable gas and oil — if, that is, the emergency disconnect system, or EDS, worked.

"I can send you some help, but I got to go," he yelled and sprinted now for the bridge.

"I was coming through the door in the bridge. I said, 'I'm EDS-ing.' And captain told me, he said, 'Calm down, we're not EDS-ing.'"

As the ship's captain, Kuchta could take charge back from the drilling managers whenever there was a general emergency. But he seems to have been one of the last people onboard to recognize the severity of the situation that night. His whole ship was blowing up, and yet when a 23-year-old navigator named Andrea Fleytas took it upon herself around the same time to radio for help from the Coast Guard and surrounding vessels, he reprimanded her.

"Dude, we were, like, 100 yards from that thing when it blew up," says Westley Bourg, 23, one of four fishermen who happened to be fishing beneath the rig when the well erupted. "We could hear this lady on the radio saying, 'Mayday, mayday. Uncontrollable fire, mayday.' And we were on our radio saying, 'Mayday, mayday' too."

Pleasant paid no attention to Kuchta.

"I go to the panel," he later testified. "Don [Vidrine] the company man is standing by the panel. He said, 'They got the well shut in?'"

As the on-duty BP company man, Vidrine presumably could have already activated the EDS, and why he or anyone else on the bridge didn't do so right away, or whether it would have made a difference, remains a mystery. At any rate, when Pleasant announced he was going to disconnect, Vidrine agreed it was time.

All of the right lights on the panel lit up when he did, and the two men waited anxiously to see if the EDS would engage. In the background he heard Kuchta asking Don Winslow, one of the visiting Transocean executives, if it was okay to disconnect from the well. "And Winslow said, 'Yeah, you hadn't already?'"

"And the captain came back over to me, not knowing that I already had hit the button, and said, 'We can EDS.'"

"I said, 'I already did.'"

AROUND 10 PM

For a moment or two, they stood there, hoping, but the "shear ram" in the BOP did not close. The gas and oil feeding the massive conflagration kept coming. At last, Kuchta seemed to get how screwed they were, and, Pleasant recalls, "Eventually the captain said, 'Abandon ship.'"

By that time the vast majority of the crew of the Deepwater Horizon had already concluded that they were getting off of the ship or they were going to die. A few reported to their firefighting stations only to find no one else there. Even if they had electricity for their water pumps, which they did not, it was obvious there was no fighting this fire, and so they headed straight for the lifeboats.

"When we got to the lifeboats, it was complete chaos and mayhem," one survivor testified. "People were screaming and crying that they did not want to die and that we had to get off the rig."

Some jumped 75 feet into the oily and occasionally flaming water. Some held others back from jumping. Some piled into the lifeboats and yelled at the crew to lower them quickly.

"I got into lifeboat number two, strapped myself in, and waited for what seemed like hours," says Stephen Stone. A young roustabout who was asleep at the time of the explosion, Stone recalls that "some people were getting back out of the lifeboat, and another person was trying to get a head count. I was pretty certain I was going to die, so I just sat there and waited for something to happen, for the derrick to fall down and take the lifeboat down."

In the wreckage of the living quarters, Ezell was still trying to get the pile of furniture and other debris off of the injured Wheeler when their boss Jimmy Harrell came out of his room.

"He told me he was in the shower when the explosion happened," Ezell later testified. "And he was grittin' his eyes real hard, and he said there was something in his eyes, and he was having trouble seeing. I looked down and he didn't have any shoes either. And I said, 'Jimmy, I've got Wyman down right here.'"

"Yeah, okay, I gotta see if I can find me some shoes," Harrell replied and made his way off, eventually to the bridge. Another crew member, Chad Murray, came by, and Ezell sent him in search of a stretcher. Before Murray returned, they managed to get Wheeler to his feet and forward a few steps, but the pain in his broken leg was too great.

"Set me down, set me down, set me down," Ezell remembered him crying out. "Y'all go on and save yourself."

"No, we're not going to leave you in here," Ezell responded.

Suddenly there was another voice in the dark hallway.

"God help me; somebody please help me."

"I looked to where our maintenance office had been, and all I could see was feet: a pair of feet sticking out from underneath a bunch of wreckage and debris," Ezell told investigators. He and the others in the living quarters didn't know who it was at first, "but when we got the debris off, we saw it was Buddy Trahan, who was one of the Transocean visiting dignitaries."

Trahan's injuries were even worse than Wheeler's, so when the stretcher appeared, he was taken first to the forward lifeboat station. A few minutes later, a crew member arrived with a second stretcher for Wheeler. Ezell and Murray carried him out, but when they got to the lifeboat station, both lifeboats had already lowered and were motoring away from the blazing rig toward the Damon B. Bankston. A 260-foot ship that by a stroke of good fortune was tethered to the Deepwater Horizon that day (to take on the drilling mud that was expected to be removed from the well once it was capped), the Bankston had a second, smaller boat called a "fast recovery craft" that was used to race around and rescue all of those who'd leapt into the water.

Less than half an hour had passed since the first explosions, making it about 10:15 when Ezell, Wheeler, Kuchta, and about a half-dozen other people found themselves standing on the business end of the world's largest blowtorch watching the lifeboats pulling away. The two lifeboats at the other end of the Horizon were out of the question — no way to get around the fireball at the ship's center — but there were some inflatable life rafts, and Kuchta and another crew member deployed one.

"Chief mate David Young and I got in the life raft, and we were able to catch the head part of the stretcher and assist getting Wyman into the life raft," Ezell said. "We actually fell trying to get him into the life raft."

Some, however, did get left behind when the raft suddenly began to lower. "I don't know if it was an explosion or just a wind shift or something, but the raft filled up real bad with smoke, and it started getting real hot in there, and once it got that bad in there, it was...uh... I don't know what made the raft drop, but the raft dropped, luckily," Young later testified.

Halfway down, the raft flipped about 90 degrees, and everything and everyone got scattered around the raft. It was terrifying, Young and Murray recalled.

For Kuchta and the others left on deck, getting left behind was just one more baffling fuckup in a tremendously bad day.

"As the raft was going down, we knew that there — I knew there wasn't going to be time to hand-crank it back up and repeat the scenario," Kuchta recalled. "Basically we decided — I decided — to jump."

By 10:45 no one who was to survive the ordeal remained on the Deepwater Horizon. But the remaining crew were not yet safe. The rope that attached the raft to the burning rig wouldn't break at its weak link, and no one in the raft had a knife, as it was against regulations to carry one. Ezell and the others inside the enclosed life raft groped madly in the dark and

smoke for the knife that was a part of the raft's supplies, but it had been hopelessly lost given all the tossing and turning that had gone on.

For all his apparent indecisiveness on the bridge, Kuchta knew what to do once he hit the water. He swam from the life raft to the fast recovery craft, got a knife, and swam back and cut the raft free. Then, having collected the rest of the jumpers, the fast recovery craft towed the last of the survivors over to the Bankston.

By the time the Coast Guard helicopters arrived in the area around 11 o'clock, all 115 survivors were onboard the Bankston. Seventeen were wounded, some of them seriously. Heads had been counted and recounted; 11 were missing. No one knew for sure what everyone who saw the hellfires suspected: The unaccounted for had been killed by the explosion and fire and were not somewhere in the surrounding sea. Therefore, the Coast Guard concentrated on searching for the missing 11 for the first hour they were in the vicinity. It wasn't until close to midnight that they turned some of their attention to the dangerous work of bringing the wounded up from the deck of the Bankston in baskets and flying them away across the glowing gulf to hospitals.

At midnight that's how things stood: The rig exploding periodically as the gas and oil continued to spew out of the well and various tanks and pipes burst into flames, sending flares out the sides and occasionally blooming in towering conflagrations. Coast Guard helicopters buzzing overhead, some evacuating the wounded, others still in search of people in the water. The Damon B. Bankston, the fishermen's boat, and other boats that had gathered during the past hour motoring around the perimeter, on the lookout as well. There were to be no other survivors, however. The dead were dead.

"My boy was cremated," Billy Anderson, Jason Anderson's father, says. But he takes some solace knowing his son was doing all he could to improve the odds for the other 115.

As it was the only ship in the area of any size, the Coast Guard ordered the Bankston to stay in the vicinity throughout the night, and most of the senior members of the Deepwater crew gathered on the bridge in various states of stunned disbelief. "That was one of the most painful things that we could have done — stay on location and watch the rig burn," said Randy Ezell later. "Those guys that were on there were our family. It would be like seeing your children or your brothers and sisters perish in that manner, and that put some mental scarring in a lot of people's heads that will never go away."

For more than 36 hours, the listing Deepwater Horizon burned, and then it sank. By then the survivors were back on land, at home, or in hospitals recovering from their injuries. Lawyers, investigators, and reporters were circling, and politicians were posturing. But no one yet had any inkling of the true magnitude of the tragedy. At the bottom of the sea, at the top of the failed blowout preventer, the worst environmental disaster in American history was just beginning. ■

Patient Information

LEVITRA® (Luh-VEE-Trah)

(vardenafil HCl) Tablets

08918646IPM, R.7 12/08

Read the Patient Information about LEVITRA before you start taking it and again each time you get a refill. There may be new information. You may also find it helpful to share this information with your partner. This leaflet does not take the place of talking with your doctor. You and your doctor should talk about LEVITRA when you start taking it and at regular checkups. If you do not understand the information, or have questions, talk with your doctor or pharmacist.

WHAT IMPORTANT INFORMATION SHOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT LEVITRA?
LEVITRA can cause your blood pressure to drop suddenly to an unsafe level if it is taken with certain other medicines. With a sudden drop in blood pressure, you could get dizzy, faint, or have a heart attack or stroke.

Do not take LEVITRA if you:
- **take any medicines called "nitrates."**
- **use recreational drugs called "poppers" like amyl nitrate and butyl nitrate.**

(See "Who Should Not Take LEVITRA?")

Tell all your healthcare providers that you take LEVITRA. If you need emergency medical care for a heart problem, it will be important for your healthcare provider to know when you last took LEVITRA.

WHAT IS LEVITRA?
LEVITRA is a prescription medicine taken by mouth for the treatment of erectile dysfunction (ED) in men.

ED is a condition where the penis does not harden and expand when a man is sexually excited, or when he cannot keep an erection. A man who has trouble getting or keeping an erection should see his doctor for help if the condition bothers him. LEVITRA may help a man with ED get and keep an erection when he is sexually excited.

LEVITRA does not:
- cure ED
- increase a man's sexual desire
- protect a man or his partner from sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV. Speak to your doctor about ways to guard against sexually transmitted diseases.
- serve as a male form of birth control

LEVITRA is only for men with ED. LEVITRA is not for women or children. LEVITRA must be used only under a doctor's care.

HOW DOES LEVITRA WORK?
When a man is sexually stimulated, his body's normal physical response is to increase blood flow to his penis. This results in an erection. LEVITRA helps increase blood flow to the penis and may help men with ED get and keep an erection satisfactory for sexual activity. Once a man has completed sexual activity, blood flow to his penis decreases, and his erection goes away.

WHO CAN TAKE LEVITRA?
Talk to your doctor to decide if LEVITRA is right for you.

LEVITRA has been shown to be effective in men over the age of 18 years who have erectile dysfunction, including men with diabetes or who have undergone prostatectomy.

WHO SHOULD NOT TAKE LEVITRA?
Do not take LEVITRA if you:
- **take any medicines called "nitrates"** (See "What important information should you know about LEVITRA?"). Nitrates are commonly used to treat angina. Angina is a symptom of heart disease and can cause pain in your chest, jaw, or down your arm.

  Medicines called nitrates include nitroglycerin that is found in tablets, sprays, ointments, pastes, or patches. Nitrates can also be found in other medicines such as isosorbide dinitrate or isosorbide mononitrate. Some recreational drugs called "poppers" also contain nitrates, such as amyl nitrate and butyl nitrate. Do not use LEVITRA if you are using these drugs. Ask your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure if any of your medicines are nitrates.
- **you have been told by your healthcare provider to not have sexual activity because of health problems.** Sexual activity can put an extra strain on your heart, especially if your heart is already weak from a heart attack or heart disease.
- **are allergic to LEVITRA or any of its ingredients.** The active ingredient in LEVITRA is called vardenafil. See the end of this leaflet for a complete list of ingredients.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DISCUSS WITH YOUR DOCTOR BEFORE TAKING LEVITRA?
Before taking LEVITRA, tell your doctor about all your medical problems, including if you:
- **have heart problems** such as angina, heart failure, irregular heartbeats, or have had a heart attack. Ask your doctor if it is safe for you to have sexual activity.
- **have low blood pressure or** have high blood pressure that is not controlled
- **have had a stroke**
- **have had a seizure**
- **or any family members have a rare heart condition known as prolongation of the QT interval (long QT syndrome)**
- **have liver problems**
- **have kidney problems and require dialysis**
- **have retinitis pigmentosa**, a rare genetic (runs in families) eye disease
- **have ever had severe vision loss, or if you have an eye condition called non-arteritic anterior ischemic optic neuropathy (NAION)**
- **have stomach ulcers**
- **have a bleeding problem**
- **have a deformed penis shape** or Peyronie's disease
- **have had an erection that lasted more than 4 hours**
- **have blood cell problems** such as sickle cell anemia, multiple myeloma, or leukemia

CAN OTHER MEDICATIONS AFFECT LEVITRA?
Tell your doctor about all the medicines you take including prescription and non-prescription medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. LEVITRA and other medicines may affect each other. Always check with your doctor before starting or stopping any medicines. Especially tell your doctor if you take any of the following:
- medicines called nitrates (See "What important information should you know about LEVITRA?")
- medicines called alpha-blockers. These include Hytrin® (terazosin HCl), Flomax® (tamsulosin HCl), Cardura® (doxazosin mesylate), Minipress® (prazosin HCl) or Uroxatral® (alfuzosin HCl). Alpha-blockers are sometimes prescribed for prostate problems or high blood pressure. In some patients the use of PDE5 inhibitor drugs, including LEVITRA, with alpha-blockers can lower blood pressure significantly leading to fainting. You should contact the prescribing physician if alpha-blockers or other drugs that lower blood pressure are prescribed by another healthcare provider.
- medicines that treat abnormal heartbeat. These include quinidine, procainamide, amiodarone and sotalol.
- ritonavir (Norvir®) or indinavir sulfate (Crixivan®) saquinavir (Fortavase® or Invirase®) or atazanavir (Reyataz®)
- ketoconazole or itraconazole (such as Nizoral® or Sporanox®)
- erythromycin or clarithromycin
- other medicines or treatments for ED

HOW SHOULD YOU TAKE LEVITRA?
Take LEVITRA exactly as your doctor prescribes. LEVITRA comes in different doses (2.5 mg, 5 mg, 10 mg, and 20 mg). For most men, the recommended starting dose is 10 mg. **Take LEVITRA no more than once a day.** Doses should be taken at least 24 hours apart. Some men can only take a low dose of LEVITRA because of medical conditions or medicines they take. Your doctor will prescribe the dose that is right for you.
- If you are older than 65 or have liver problems, your doctor may start you on a lower dose of LEVITRA.
- If you have prostate problems or high blood pressure, for which you take medicines called alpha-blockers, your doctor may start you on a lower dose of LEVITRA.
- If you are taking certain other medicines your doctor may prescribe a lower starting dose and limit you to one dose of LEVITRA in a 72-hour (3 days) period.

Take 1 LEVITRA tablet about 1 hour (60 minutes) before sexual activity. Some form of sexual stimulation is needed for an erection to happen with LEVITRA. LEVITRA may be taken with or without meals.

Do not change your dose of LEVITRA without talking to your doctor. Your doctor may lower your dose or raise your dose, depending on how your body reacts to LEVITRA.

If you take too much LEVITRA, call your doctor or emergency room right away.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF LEVITRA?
The most common side effects with LEVITRA are headache, flushing, stuffy or runny nose, indigestion, upset stomach, or dizziness. These side effects usually go away after a few hours. Call your doctor if you get a side effect that bothers you or one that will not go away.

LEVITRA may uncommonly cause:
- **an erection that won't go away (priapism).** If you get an erection that lasts more than 4 hours, get medical help right away. Priapism must be treated as soon as possible or lasting damage can happen to your penis including the inability to have erections.
- **color vision changes,** such as seeing a blue tinge to objects or having difficulty telling the difference between the colors blue and green.

In rare instances, men taking PDE5 inhibitors (oral erectile dysfunction medicines, including LEVITRA) reported a sudden decrease or loss of vision in one or both eyes. It is not possible to determine whether these events are related directly to these medicines, to other factors such as high blood pressure or diabetes, or to a combination of these. If you experience sudden decrease or loss of vision, stop taking PDE5 inhibitors, including LEVITRA, and call a doctor right away.

Sudden loss or decrease in hearing, sometimes with ringing in the ears and dizziness, has been rarely reported in people taking PDE5 inhibitors, including LEVITRA. It is not possible to determine whether these events are related directly to the PDE5 inhibitors, to other diseases or medications, to other factors, or to a combination of factors. If you experience these symptoms, stop taking LEVITRA and contact a doctor right away.

These are not all the side effects of LEVITRA. For more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

HOW SHOULD LEVITRA BE STORED?
- Store LEVITRA at room temperature between 59° and 86° F (15° to 30° C).
- **Keep LEVITRA and all medicines out of the reach of children.**

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT LEVITRA.
Medicines are sometimes prescribed for conditions other than those described in patient information leaflets. Do not use LEVITRA for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give LEVITRA to other people, even if they have the same symptoms that you have. It may harm them.

This leaflet summarizes the most important information about LEVITRA. If you would like more information, talk with your healthcare provider. You can ask your doctor or pharmacist for information about LEVITRA that is written for health professionals.

For more information you can also visit www.LEVITRA.com, or call 1-866-LEVITRA.

WHAT ARE THE INGREDIENTS OF LEVITRA?
Active Ingredient: vardenafil hydrochloride
Inactive Ingredients: microcrystalline cellulose, crospovidone, colloidal silicon dioxide, magnesium stearate, hypromellose, polyethylene glycol, titanium dioxide, yellow ferric oxide, and red ferric oxide.

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BRETT FAVRE *continued from page 79*

drinking back in 1999. "I thought I didn't have a problem because I wasn't doing it all the time," he explains. "But I'd go on two-day vodka-drinking binges. Finally, I just knew it was time to quit. AA works for some people, but if I need to rely on calling someone else at 3 AM, then I'm screwed. Some people just know when it's time and say, 'I'm done.' That was me."

We come into a clearing where there's a large guesthouse and a big barn. The grass is manicured, Bus-quality. Favre goes quiet and stops the Jeep by two well-maintained benches. Back in 2004 Favre's brother-in-law Casey was staying on the farm while on a break from his oil-rig job. One afternoon, Casey tried to ride Brett's ATV through a gravel pile, flipped the vehicle, and suffered traumatic head injuries. A helicopter airlifted him to a nearby hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

"I still feel guilty and think about what would have happened had I not had this place," says Favre. "You build a haven, a refuge where you feel safe and where everyone else feels safe, and if you want to go out and ride you should be safe. That obviously wasn't the case." He points at the two benches. "He was killed right here. His girlfriend was eight months pregnant."

Favre parks the Jeep in the barn. He waves to Johnny, a contractor who is hauling soil around the property. We grab Cokes out of a well-stocked fridge. He points at the guesthouse up on a hill where Deanna's mother and his stepfather-in-law, Rocky, used to live. Brett cracks a big smile.

"When I first met Rocky, he had a rat tail. He was an old biker, and he looked after the place for me. We didn't know what the hell we were doing. We'd break something and shrug and Rocky would say, 'All right, I'll fix it.' There might be some duct tape involved. I was as close to him as to my dad, maybe closer. I could tell him things I couldn't tell anyone. When I would leave every year, he would cry and I would cry. I loved him. Then he up and passed away. He was in his mid-50s, great shape, not an ounce of fat, going to the doctor regularly, doing everything right."

Favre angrily rubs at his eyes and squints into the morning sun. "I don't know, for a while it just seemed every time I left, something bad happened. My dad died during the season. Katrina hit. Casey. Rocky. And I was gone."

I ask him if one of the reasons he keeps playing is because the memories of the ones he has lost are all intertwined around football weekends and steak dinners late on Sunday evenings after his work was done.

"That's probably part of it," he admits, "but I think part of the reason I thought about stopping playing was just fear. I just hated the idea of walking away and people saying, 'He stayed too long.' I worked so hard, and I don't want people left with that."

He breaks into a shit-eating grin.

"Then last year happened. I mean, 33 touchdowns and only seven interceptions! Jesus!" For a moment, there's just pure joy on his face, amazement at what he has done. Then his brow creases and his brain wavers in real time. "But what are the odds that I have another season like that, even if I play real well?"

At this very moment, a TV crew is waiting outside of a Habitat for Humanity project in Hattiesburg, where Deanna is volunteering; they're hoping for some news. Favre cranks up the Jeep. "C'mon, Sam, let's go." He looks over at me. "So, with all that in my mind, I have no idea what I'm going to do this year."

And he laughs the saddest laugh I've ever heard.

THAT AFTERNOON I DRIVE 70 MILES south to Favre's hometown of Kiln. The locals know it as "The Kill." Katrina knocked trees down and tossed cars around in Hattiesburg, but down here it was as bad as New Orleans. Two dozen relatives took refuge at the Favres' place, and Brett had to rebuild his mother's house from the ground up. It's now been five years, but the storm's detritus remains. Five miles from the bayou, I drive by a small fishing boat in the middle of a farmer's field, surrounded by grazing goats.

It was a late spring day, and the oyster and shrimp men waited patiently for the Gulf oil spill to snuff out their livelihoods. There's a gas station where the side used to be painted with a big Packers helmet, but Favre's late-career meanderings meant that had to be replaced by smaller renderings of his multiple teams. Across the road is the Broke Spoke, a dark biker bar where the ceiling is decorated with the bras and panties of Packer fans who for more than a decade made the trip down to Favre's hometown bar. Big Dave, a ponytailed, bearded bartender with a cane and an episode of *Cops* blaring, remembers the year the Packers won the Super Bowl in New Orleans. Green Bay fans blocked the streets of Kiln for miles. "I'd make a thousand dollars in a night," says Dave. "I played for his daddy, too. A tough son-of-a-gun. Brett used to come in here with shorts, no shoes, and no money."

But times change. Last year the Broke Spoke divided the bar into Saints and Vikings sections, and the nearby Saints had more rooters. And that's okay with Favre. He's fine with the legend. "I love those guys," he says. "But I swear I may have been in the Broke Spoke three times."

Visitors are often directed to Hancock High, where a statue of Favre now stands. But that's not where Brett played. His high school years were spent eight miles back up the road at the old high school now deemed too small for that use. It's now a grammar school. The green grass of Favre's youth is yellow and weedy. But visiting the Favre statue at the new place isn't without value. Under the bronzed Favre is a particularly apt inscription from Vince Lombardi: THE GOOD LORD GAVE YOU A BODY THAT CAN STAND MOST ANYTHING. IT'S YOUR MIND YOU HAVE TO CONVINCE.

I WAS ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED TO HAVE dinner with Bus my last night in Hattiesburg, but Favre mock-shuddered at that possibility. "Let me save you from that; we're grilling steaks."

The wrought-iron gate opens again. But this time the property is aglow and there are six or seven cars parked in the driveway. Inside, it's Southern Rockwell. Favre's 21-year-old daughter, Brittany, cradles her newborn son, Parker, while Deanna plays with her grandson's tiny fingers. There are friends, a brother-in-law, and a veterinarian who is telling the story of a hound dog that got a possum's jawbone lodged in its gullet.

Cajun sausage is served, chased by sirloins wrapped in bacon. Everyone is telling tales. "I remember we were at a Bears game in Chicago when I was 17," says Brittany, burping the only boy with a grandfather playing in the NFL. "Everyone seated around us seemed to have Googled our family's problems. They knew everything we'd done wrong. It was just rude."

Brett tells a hunting story that involves baying dogs, some chicken wire, and a companion with a pistol in his waistband. That cracks everyone up.

"Oh, God, please don't tell that story," says Deanna, half-joking. "We don't want to get in trouble with the ASPCA."

And then Bus appears. He's been on the golf course most of the day, his eyes long gone rheumy. Favre's face lights up.

"C'mon, Bus, do your card tricks! You've got to do your card tricks!"

Bus grumbles, eats a steak, and then cards magically appear. He's good, guessing my card over and over again. Brett starts to rub his hands together.

"Bus, are you going to call the Wizard? I think it's time to call the Wizard!"

Bus picks up his cell phone and dials a number. He asks for the Wizard. Favre's eyes are the size of saucers. "This is a good one!"

Bus shushes him.

"Hello, Wizard? Okay. You sure? Thanks, Wizard."

Bus hands me the phone. A voice says, "This is the Wizard. Your card is the five of clubs."

Actually it was the four of clubs.

Brett looks crestfallen. Deanna pats Bus on the shoulder.

"I think that works better if you call the Wizard from the land line."

It's getting late and time to go. I try and find my way out but blunder into Brett's weight room. I bump into Bus, who is leaving too.

"*Shee-et*, that's the least-used room in this house." He chuckles and heads into the night. In three weeks, he and Brett will head to Florida to have the ankle surgery done.

I loop back to the kitchen and say goodbye again. Brett waves and then goes back to telling a story. It's the hunting tale he told earlier, but there are some new listeners. The Hamlet of Hattiesburg is adding details and fresh twists, improvising as he goes along.

At this moment, not even he knows how the story ends.



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STEROID ADDICT *continued from page 91*

daylong, drunken debauch, cabbing back to his place with the dancers. And so was I enlisted, and so sworn in, to Angel's crew of hard boys on the make: with a night-and-next-day, cocaine-addled orgy. By week's end, his recruitment of me was complete: a trip to Charivari, the men's store of the gods, for a starter kit of Pucci and Nik Nik dress shirts, and a posh revision of my Mott the Hoople hairdo. And a nasty new regimen of 'roids.

He put me on a blitz of "catch-up juice" — fat bumps of Deca and test-cypionate and 20-mil tabs of Dianabol — and pushed my protein load with a midnight meal of Breyer's-and-raw-egg shakes. The jump-off, as he called it, brought swift returns. In a fortnight I'd added 10 pounds of mass and was sporting new ripples in my quads. Ravenous and speedy, I'd sleep four fitful hours and bound out of bed at 6 AM. Wolfing a five-egg omelet clotted with sausage and bacon, I'd go and wake up Kate, the girl I'd started dating, and gobble her like a short stack with syrup.

By then I'd gleaned the point of Angel's grooming. He ran a going business of gym-toned strippers, booking them for birthdays and bachelorette parties. The bulk of his trade was in the outer boroughs, catering to lusty cosmeticians and big-haired secretaries, but my "debut," as he called it, took place at a bridal shower in Long Island, where "the classier people" lived. Alas, we got lost on the drive there. When we arrived, hours late, there were 20 tipsy women chanting "Man-ass! Man-ass!" as we apologized to the furious bride-to-be. I was so unnerved, I forgot to strip, shuffling, knock-kneed, in my Dickies work suit to a Nancy Sinatra cover of the Beatles' "Day Tripper." By midnight, skulking around in a Star of David G-string, I'd been groped by three generations of Jews, including a couple of aging aunts who tipped me in change and those chocolate coins they give to kids at Purim.

If steroids made me big, they couldn't make me bold. To function as an "entertainer," I'd need a booster drug. It was mostly Angel's coke that unlocked my inner wild man, coupled with bourbon and tonic. I did what I could to hedge the risk, using blow only on nights I worked. But the party was just beginning when the skin show ended, and by the time I stumbled home from a club crawl with Angel, I was strung so tight I had to take a quaalude to get to bed. A few weeks in, I was waking at noon and gulping Benzedrine to part the mists. Not that I got much rest, or wanted it. Where Angel went, I followed, joining Tommy and Spiro in a crew we dubbed The Four Whoresmen, staging swing-club romps through the Flower District, hoot rides to discos in Brooklyn and Queens or shoot-the-vapids tours of East Side fern bars. I'd soon be back at school, parsing Cavalier poets and wondering how to make a world of that. For now, here was life with all the Swiss-cream frosting, and I shoveled it in.

And then I got sick — very sick — and there went the body I'd worked to build. It wound up being the least of what I'd lose.

IT STARTED AS A SERIES OF SYMPTOMS that didn't slot together or scare me straight. The first puzzle piece was my zigzag mood, a loop-de-loop of sentiment and short-fuse fury. I belly-laughed at things like the *Tonight Show* monologue, which had always left me stone-faced before, blinked through tears over State Farm commercials, and blew my stack without warning or cause, seized by feelings I could convey only through big, weepy hugs and property damage.

Next came the spasms, onsets of cramps in my biceps, back, and legs. I'd be out to brunch, reading the Sunday *Times*, when the muscles in my arm would tremble. I'd let the arm dangle, then shake it loose, but 10 minutes later my calf would seize, clenching until I mashed it with a fist. Blaming these fits on the coke and speed, I resolved to quit them both once back in school. That fall I kept my word to myself and also reduced the juice, but instead of tailing off, the weirdness doubled. Fear set in, a free-range conviction that someone lurked behind me, plotting harm. I felt him in the crowd as I walked to class, pressure on the nape of my neck.

From there the tailspin deepened by the month. Muscle melted away as I tried, three times, to stop taking steroids cold turkey. Without them I was in grinding pain, as if my joints were rubbing together, bone on bone. And then there was the ceaseless worry that I was getting *smaller*. No one had warned me how ruthless 'roids are, conspiring, as they do, with your self-contempt to distort what you see in the mirror. Even at your biggest, you obsess about "flaws," moaning over a forearm that's soft or calves that don't swoop like bellows. Invariably I'd get back on the juice, resolving to take only the minimum needed to keep my hard-won cuts.

I hoped I'd hit bottom after my asthma came back after years of free-and-clear breathing. But at night, staring at holes in the dorm-room ceiling, I started hearing my heartbeat go on crazy runs. What none of us knew then was that a steroid habit can change the shape of your heart, swelling the left ventricle so its timing is wrecked or the organ fails completely. Then one night I let myself into the gym, where I worked part time and had swiped the keys. Benching by myself, I stood after a set and felt a swoon come on. I leaned against the weight stack for the faint to pass when my heart started thrashing in its cage. I grabbed at my chest and sank to the bench; the pain in my ribs was a chisel. I screamed, but the blade just dug in deeper. Death, I remember thinking, hurts like hell.

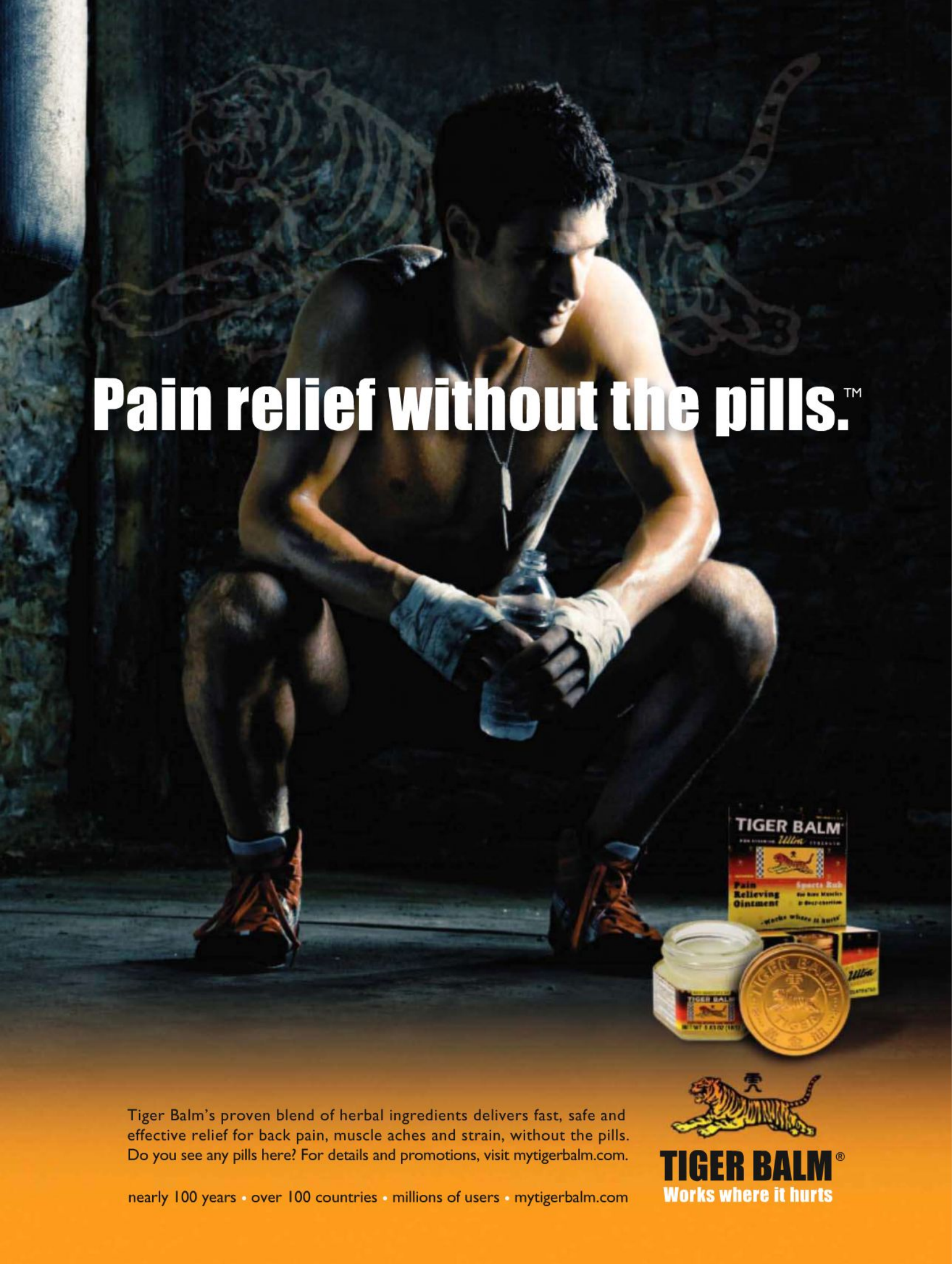
A couple of hours later, at the hospital I'd been rushed to, I had a tense chat with the doctor. Having done a thorough workup on the severe arrhythmia that he called a "heart event," he grilled me about the tracks on my ass and the drugs "that brought this on." I lied my fool head off, blaming a virus; he glared at me over the chart. "Quit or you'll be back here in full arrest. It's a really dumb way to die young."

I did quit, finally, with the help of a good shrink who connected my tension and pendulous moods to my stop-and-start romance with juicing. But if I was done with 'roids, they weren't done with me. My nerves, rubbed raw since the Summer of Juice, grew more threadbare by the month. In the spring of my senior year, I had a hell's-bells panic attack that lasted for hours and hours. The next night, like thousands more to come, the panic resumed in full cry. Nothing suppressed the terror, not booze, not Xanax; the only option was to ride it out, watching the tube till 5 AM.

These episodes continued for 11 years and wreaked havoc on my life. In the course of that lost decade, I dropped in and out of grad schools, went days and often weeks without leaving my room, and — the topping cruelty — shrank down to my old weight: 150 pounds of hair and bones. I'd treated my body like a science project, played fast and loose with potent hormones mixed in someone's bathtub, and though I was a kid at the time, my punishment was earned. When it comes to messing with your genotype, stupidity is no defense.

TWENTY YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE I found my way to the psychiatrist who set me free. Minutes into my rote recital of symptoms, he pegged my condition as panic disorder and prescribed a new medication that quelled it. My appetite returned, and some portion of the old vigor. I went back to training after years in exile and slowly, gratefully built a body out of battered parts. My shoulders were shot, torched by bursitis; my elbows whinged after preacher curls, and anyone fool enough to time me in the mile would have needed to pack a flashlight and a lunch.

But bit by bit I saw it in the health-club mirror: the pound or so a month of hard-won muscle; the medial delts rounding into view. Eyeing my reflection, I wanted to cry. That torso reminded me of me at 20, the kid I'd mistreated and done grave harm to before he had a chance to really live. His immune system is ravaged and can't be fixed (I have asthma, arthritis, and a list of allergies longer than the healthcare bill), and his neurology hangs together on pantloads of Paxil and too much Xanax when he flies. I'm doing what I can now to make it right — egg whites, long walks, light-rep sets — but I owe this body more than I can pay. And so, four times a week, I load up a bar and strap my weight gloves tight. It isn't about size now, or the attention of women. It's the reward of those first, clean, humming strokes: the arms firing up like piston rods, the air going out in metered breaths. By the fifth or sixth rep, I'm halfway stoned on a deep-brain dopamine flush. Pain and exhaustion melt away, and all I hear, as the breath goes out, is that pins-and-needles buzz in my ears. The last couple of reps are soft explosions, the pulse in my eardrums roaring up as I rack the bar, depleted. I lie there, spent but whole again, alive in a deep way, waiting for the next set to start.



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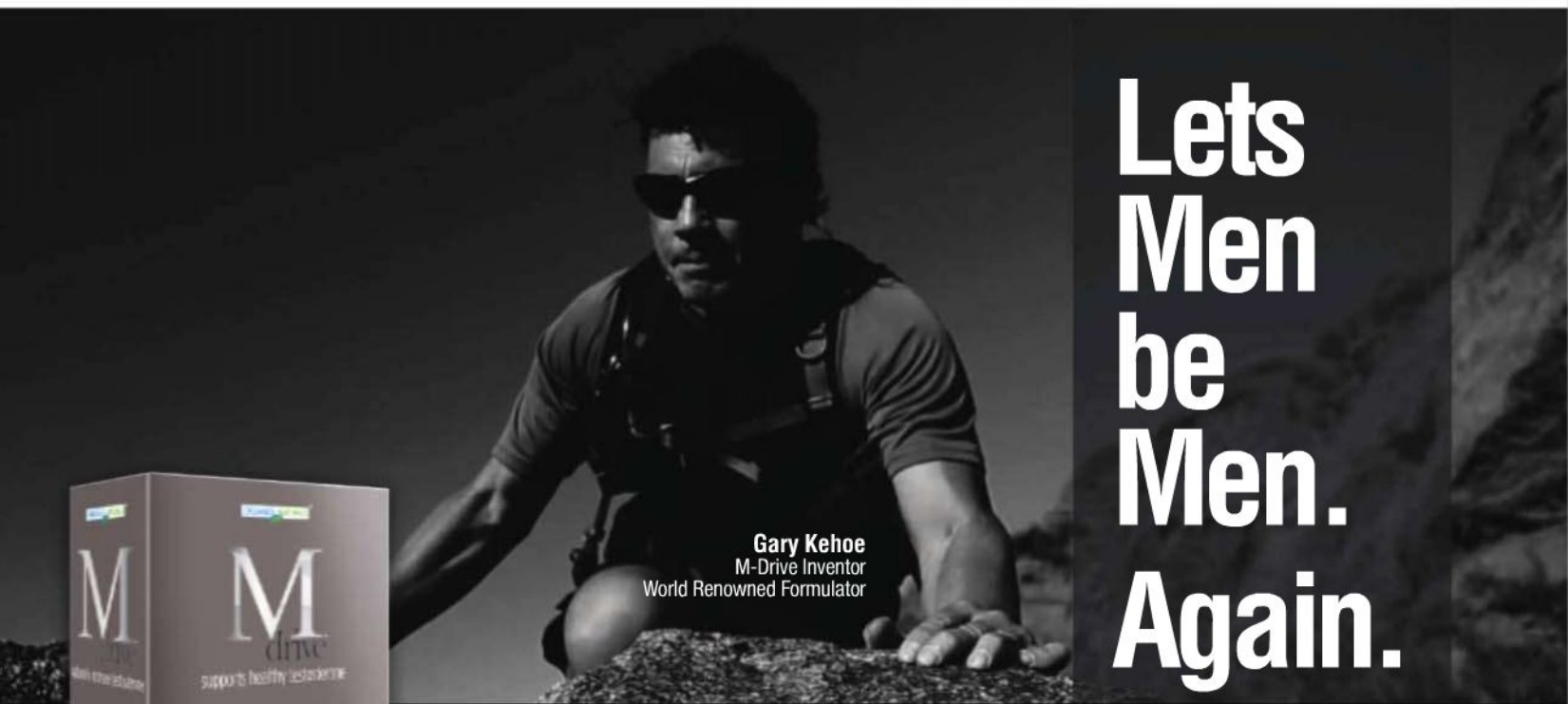
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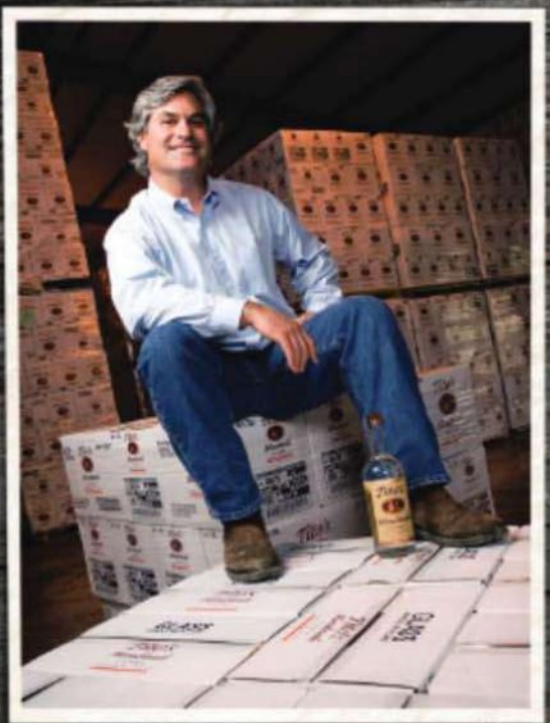
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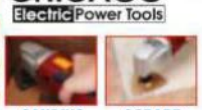
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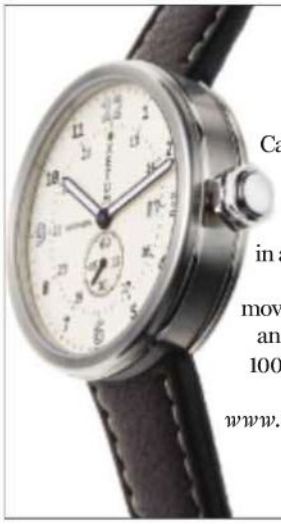
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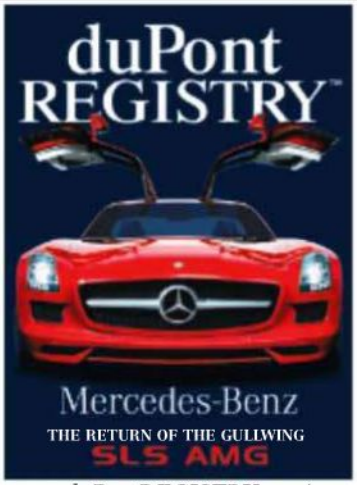
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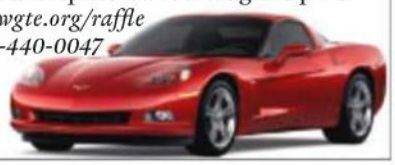
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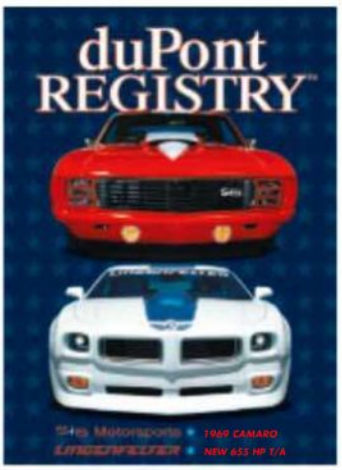


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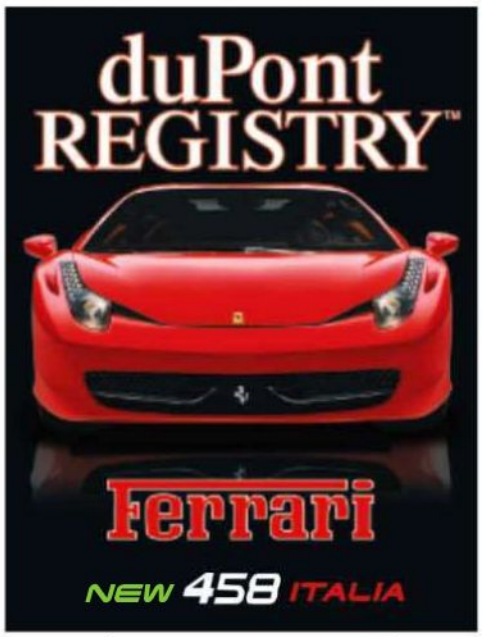
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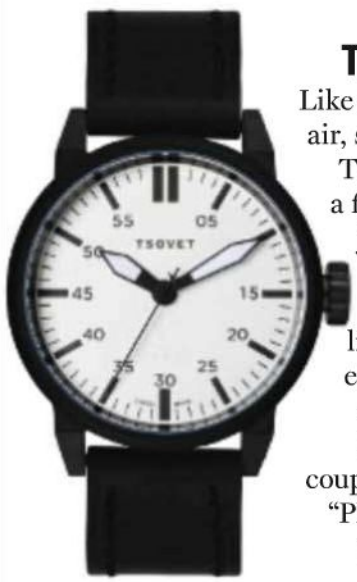
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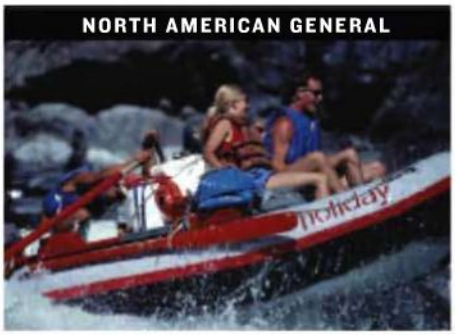
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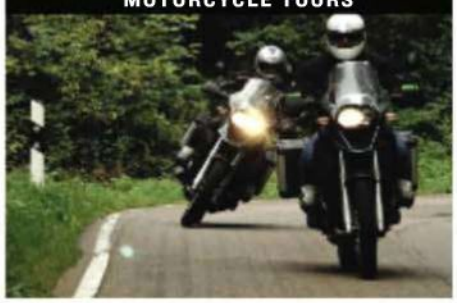


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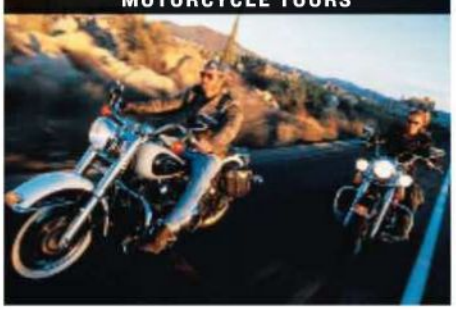
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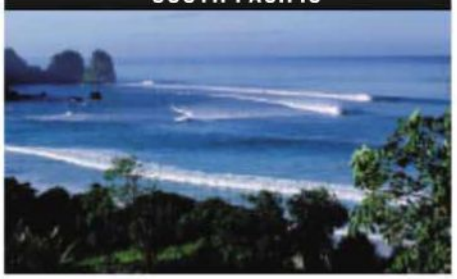
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The playwright and director, 62, recently created a comic book, The Trials of Roderick Spode.

What's the best advice you've ever received?
When I was a kid in Chicago, I knew this woman named Frannie who'd take photos of people at Wrigley Field for $10 and get their addresses to mail the photos, but there wasn't even any film in her camera. Anyway, I'd just had my heart broken by some girl, and Frannie told me, "It's all in a lifetime." She meant that things happen, but you get over it. I've always treasured that advice.

What should every man know about money?
As the old Yiddish proverb had it, "Rich or poor, rich is better."

How does a man best face his fears?
I've played piano since I was four, but I had a phobia about playing in public. About a year ago, Woody Allen asked me to sit in with his jazz band at the Carlyle hotel in New York City. I thought I had a very good excuse not to do it — that I'm a coward — but knew that I wouldn't be able to live with myself. So I got very drunk and played piano with his band.

What's the best way to impress a woman?
Courtesy.

What article of clothing should every man own?
A black turtleneck sweater. You can wear it with anything, it makes everybody look better, and if it's very good wool or, God willing, cashmere, it will keep you warmer than anything.

What book should every man read?
When I was young, I was very influenced by Theodore Dreiser, because before that my experience with literature was all about F. Scott Fitzgerald and Thomas Wolfe feeling out of sorts in New York City. Who cares? Dreiser was writing about things I actually saw and experienced in Chicago, about getting a job and not knowing how to start your life and getting along with women. Start with *An American Tragedy*.

What's the best survival skill you know?
Sit down and take a deep breath.

Have you ever cheated death?
About 20 years ago, I was taking a walk in the woods in Vermont and got turned around. I was underdressed and didn't have a compass. The sun was going down and I started to panic. When you panic the blood rushes from your head, and as your body temperature falls, you get hypothermia. One of the symptoms is that you begin to lose your mind and run around and throw your equipment away. I had just gotten to that point when I stumbled upon a road and found civilization. I still go into the woods, but now I take five compasses.

What advice would you give the younger you?
Another Chicago writer, Nelson Algren, said to never play cards with a man called Doc, never eat at a place called Mom's, never sleep with a woman whose troubles are worse than your own. I would add one to that list: Never trust a Jew in a bow tie.

What skill would you still like to master?
My wife introduced me to a bunch of genius Japanese directors, like Yasujiro Ozu and Masaki Kobayashi, whose movies I didn't know previously. I'd love to learn Japanese so I can watch them without the goddamned subtitles.

What's your biggest regret?
Not serving in the Vietnam War. It was the '60s. I thought I shouldn't go and wasn't smart enough to realize that it was too easy an excuse because a lot of people were going in my place. It's a young man's responsibility to defend his country.

How should a man handle getting older?
The body changes, so you have to adapt. For example, I really like to drink, but I got to the point where my body couldn't take it. The answer was to stop. It was unfortunate in one sense. In another sense, how great to have a remedy straight at hand.

—INTERVIEWED BY STEVEN RUSSELL

What skill should every man have?



I II III

The ability to tell if a knife is sharp enough. Here's how: (I) Hold the grip with the hilt lightly in your right hand and (II) rest the blade on your thumbnail. (III) You impart a slight motion to it and see if it skitters off, which most knives will. If it doesn't, if it simply rests there of its own weight and doesn't move, then the knife is very sharp indeed.

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