

Tourleader NEWS

WWW.EXPLORE.CO.UK/TOURLEADERAWARDS

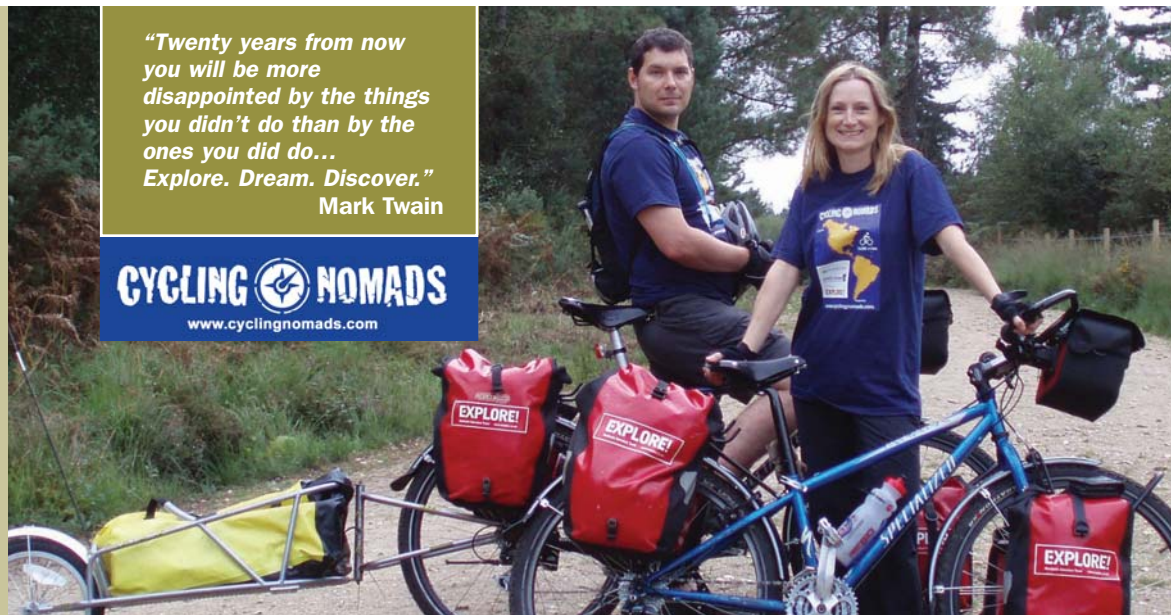
CYCLINGnomads

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the ones you did do..."

Explore. Dream. Discover."

Mark Twain

CYCLING NOMADS
www.cyclingnomads.com



Adventure flows in our veins here at Explore – and nowhere more so than within our tour leaders'. In our last issue we reported about some of their extra-curricular challenges, from JO VELLINO'S ARCTIC FOXES expedition and ANTONY JINMAN'S POLARVENTURE to the CYCLING NOMADS.

Well, after months of preparation, the Nomads are finally off, pedalling their way from the southern tip of Argentina up to Anchorage. (Not that you could, but still...) don't try this at home, even if your intentions are as good as theirs.

2 AMERICAS ON 2 WHEELS

15,000 miles / 18 months / 2 charities / 1 spirit

"Notices have now been handed in," reads the Nomads' website, "our families have been informed and the wheels are in motion for carrying out our grand plan... 15,000 miles across the Americas. Who knows what the future may hold. But one thing is for certain: we won't look back and say, 'if only...'"

Between them, former tour leaders **Kelly Jordan** and **David Whiddon** share an enviable adventure portfolio – achieved outdoors mostly (but not entirely: Kelly's CV includes dressing up as a clown and pixie). School teacher, Kelly, was addicted to two wheels from an early age (in Gibraltar, where the climate and lack of TV ensured children played outdoors). Sea survival instructor, David, also grew up abroad – in a small, whitewashed village in Andalucia, where cycling freely was his main childhood

EXPEDITION FACTS

- Ushuaia to Anchorage = 15,000 miles / 18 months
- 2 + 2 + 1 (trailer) wheels
- 4 + 4 panniers + 5 bags
- Over 140 items of equipment including:
 - 1 spot satellite messenger
 - 1 solar charger
 - 4 gear cables, 10 spokes
 - 1 furry Wise Owl mini-mascot



preoccupation. After 8 years as a Royal Marine (nicknamed 'The Lung' on account of his biking stamina), a couple of years as an outdoor instructor in California and some indoor jobs in London, David's itchy feet took him leading for Explore in Spain, Cuba and Peru. It was whilst tour leading in Peru that the couple met and hatched their first grand plan: to cycle around Spain. The rest is history (and geography, too).

The five-week challenge that took them through 2,000kms of Iberian peninsula may have been trifling compared to this one, but it was a start – especially the Pyrenees. Beyond teaching them the importance of travelling light, they also learned that, after living together in a tent and being in each other's pockets day in, day out, their relationship had passed the test as well.

Explore are proud to be sponsoring the Nomads and we look forward to following their progress. We are also aware of the extreme terrain and weather conditions they're facing (especially cycling northwards). And we share their spirit too – their thirst for discovery; the exhilaration of achieving your day's target; the surprise of freewheeling into a village and enjoying warm hospitality when least expected. And, all along, leaving minimal impact on the environment they cycle through. Along the way, Kelly and David hope to raise £20,000 for **Julia's House**, a Dorset based children's hospice and the international charity **SOS Children's Villages**; they also plan to visit schools along the way and create educational links with their local ones back in the UK. Explore has donated £2,000 towards these causes.

To support Kelly and Dave go to www.cyclingnomads.com Visit explore.co.uk/cycling for our full two-wheeled programme.



NOMINATE YOUR TOP TOUR LEADER NOW!

Was your tour leader an absolute star? Why not nominate them now for the 2009 Explore Tour Leader Awards.

explore.co.uk/tourleaderawards

2008/9 AWARDS

A passion for all things local... bags of people skills... the ability to organise effortlessly... in short: host, guest and leader all in one – that's what we expect of a leader.

The Explore Tour Leader Awards were launched last year with the precise intention of recognising your skipper's part in the success of your holiday. Don't miss the chance to nominate yours in 2009.

THE EXPLORE TOUR LEADER AWARDS

2008 Awards: the background . . .

We proposed 4 categories in which you could enter your favourite Explore tour leader. The nominations (in their hundreds) were narrowed down to 16 names – 4 in each category – and, frankly (excuse the cliché), picking the victors was mighty tough. Any of the 16 shortlisted had the right cards to win something – in more than one category – and deserve the highest recognition and our sincere thanks. They truly are a credit to us.

The winner of each category won a prize of £500 and the overall winner, £1,000 – with 50% going to a charity of their choice.

The panel of judges consisted of three Explore staff with comprehensive experience of Explore tours and a thorough understanding of the tour leader's role; and two established travel writers who have travelled with us several times:

Amar Grover and **Diana Preston**

. . . and the Winners

Chris Siviter (UK) – Overall Winner

Chris' knowledge of Belize, where he has settled with his young family, is outstanding – from ornithology and botany to current affairs and grasp of local languages.

Chris (pictured right) has donated 50% of his prize to STACA, Steadfast Tourism and Conservation Association, who manage the Billy Barquedir National Park in Belize – a 1,500-acre area

located south of the Manatee Forest Reserve. STACA has an impressive track record in conservation: after protecting the Upper Mullins River Basin (now a National Park) for almost a decade, they have been entrusted by the Belize government with rural tourism initiatives and grass roots conservation projects at the heart of the Billy Barquedir.

Tolga Kanik (Turkey) – Local Knowledge

With a background in wilderness rescue, and outstanding local knowledge. A true ambassador for his country.

Pascale Suter (UK) – Organisational Skills

Has dealt with logistical crises almost effortlessly, from strikes in West Bengal to sudden weather changes in the Azores.

Maxwell Wood (UK) – People Skills

With a caring and amiable personality, Max enjoys an easy and smooth rapport with customers, locals and ground staff alike.

Diego Torres (Ecuador) – Respect for Local People

The generous feedback outlines Diego's respect for his country, passion for the culture and empathy with his own people.

For full details of the Winners' chosen charities, visit explore.co.uk/tourleaderawards

