

TEN TOP TOURS

NORTH AMERICA IS CHOCK FULL OF GREAT TOURS. HERE ARE TEN OF THE BEST.

Edited by Aaron Teasdale

British Columbia's Flathead Valley

If you like touring in wild places, and don't mind rough dirt roads and the occasional grizzly bear crossing your path, then the gloriously untamed Flathead Valley in British Columbia's far southeastern corner is for you. Bordering Glacier and Waterton Lakes national parks, the Flathead certainly doesn't lack for spectacular scenery, but the valley's greatest draw is its unbridled wildness. Called the "Serengeti of North America" by biologists for its unrivaled wildlife populations, it's the last major valley in British Columbia to be completely undeveloped.

Fortunately for backcountry bikepackers, the valley is not without its travel corridors — lightly used dirt roads and old exploratory tracks run the length of the valley bottom and across the mountains on both sides. Possibly the valley's premier ride starts south of Fernie near Morissey, follows

the Cabin Creek Road over the MacDonald Range into the valley, and then climbs to Akamina Pass on the Continental Divide and into Waterton Lakes National Park (see "The Wildest Valley" by Aaron Teasdale in the September, 2005 issue of *Adventure Cyclist*). It's possible to hire a shuttle in Fernie to haul you and your gear to either the starting or end point, depending on where you've left your car.

There are myriad other possible tours in the valley and every side-valley route holds high adventure potential, whether on foot or mountain bike. Ultralight mountain bikers should note the old tracks over the rugged passes of the Clark Range that offer multi-day-loop potential into the Castle River valley. The Flathead also makes for a great loop off the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route, which parallels the MacDonald Range to the west. Wherever you go, there are no services of any kind anywhere in the valley. You're completely on your own.



Wilderness starts here. Preparing for another big day in British Columbia's Flathead Valley.

Late June through September is the best time to visit. Camping spots and water sources are abundant. The most convenient airport is Glacier International in Kalispell, Montana, though airports in Missoula and Calgary are also options.

There are serious proposals to expand Waterton Park into the valley, but equally serious are current proposals for coalbed methane sites and mountaintop removal coal mines. In other words, ride the wild Flathead while you can.

Resources: *Kootenay Taxi*, based in Fernie, is the best option for arranging shuttles: www.kootenaytaxi.com. *The Flathead Wild* site has lots of information on the valley: www.flathead.ca. Backcountry Biking in the Canadian Rockies by Doug Eastcott describes some of the Clark Range passes. *Bike, BOB trailers, and car-rack rentals at Glacier Cyclery:* (406) 862-6446, www.glaciercyclery.com.

-Aaron Teasdale



Adobe universe. Touring in New Mexico.

The Delmarva Peninsula

In the heart of the bustling East Coast there is a place where cyclists can find over 2,000 miles of rural roads through a picturesque landscape of small towns, farms, inlets, coves, and beaches. Flanked on the west by the Chesapeake Bay and on the east by the Atlantic Ocean, the Delmarva Peninsula (named for its geographic confluence of

Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia) is filled with superlative cycling on low-traffic roads through tidal marshes and coastal forests. Riding alongside an abundance of birds and wildlife, cyclotourists can camp in natural areas or B&B hop from town to town.

Delmarva Low Impact Tourism Experience (www.delmarvalite.org), a

coalition of Delmarva conservationists, has created a cycling map with 2,500 miles of routes that connect more than 70 wildlife sanctuaries. *The Great Delmarva Bicycling Trail Map* identifies the safest country roads and pinpoints birding habitats and pastoral harbors where you can try kayaking or crabbing.

The ideal time to visit is the Indian Summer of September and October, when beach-bound tourists are off the roads and the weather is consistently sunny and mild. Being the off-season, most towns on the "Eastern Shore" (as Delmarva is also known), have reduced prices but shops and restaurants remain open. This is also the ideal time for relishing the bounties of the Chesapeake Bay and the harvest of local farms. Blue crabs, rockfish, tomatoes, and sweet white corn are some of the region's delicacies.

A few highlights: Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge near Cambridge, Maryland with its year-round population of bald eagles; Assateague and Chincoteague to see wild ponies frolic in the surf; and Cape Henlopen, Delaware, with its soaring sand dunes. For a true Chesapeake experience visit the historic, vibrant town of St. Michael's. Located in Talbot County, Maryland, it offers cycling routes to Oxford and Tilghman Island where you can tour nineteenth century villages still occupied by watermen and oyster fishers.



Stay with the flock. Birds and cyclists alike take flight on the wildlife-rich Delmarva Peninsula.



PAULO BOISVERT PHOTOGRAPHY

No causeway for alarm. Riding the 363-mile Lake Champlain Bikeway is one of the finest tours in the Northeast.

Resources: For a map of Delmarva bike trails and a list of lodging options and events, see the *Delmarva Low Impact Tourism Experience* site at www.delmarvalite.org or call (443) 944-8097. Check out www.EasternShoreVisitor.com or www.delmarweb.com for campground locations and amenities. *Carolina Tailwinds*, www.carolinatailwinds.com, and *Inn Tours*, www.inntours.com, offer guided tours in the region.

-Renee Sklarew

Northern New Mexico

No place blends the Old and New Worlds in quite the way that northern New Mexico does. This expansive state hosts a scant population of two million, predominantly congregated around Albuquerque. That leaves plenty of room to take flight via pedal along spectacular, sparsely trafficked alpine desert routes that blend European-style villages with native, Hispanic, and distinctly New Mexican cultures.

A challenging 415-mile loop, with saddle time ranging from five to eight days depending on load and desired pace,

takes in everything from the big city of Albuquerque to the "city different" of Santa Fe, the mountain town of Taos, rural crossroads of Tierra Amarilla, hidden atomic city of Los Alamos, and the villages in between that truly define the region. Riders should consult area maps and local shops for specifics but, generally, follow NM 14 from Albuquerque to Santa Fe; the High Road to Taos; Route 64 west to Tierra Amarilla; Route 84 south to 502 through Los Alamos; Route 4 past Jemez Springs; and 550 to NW Loop, Unser Boulevard, to Northern Boulevard through Corralles, to the Bosque bike path, and back to Albuquerque.

Expect a blend of fantastic foods and smells (with the green chili in all of its forms topping the list), life-altering vistas and clear night skies, opulence and high-art juxtaposed with dusty ramshackle towns, and a destination worthy of its reputation for enchantment.

Sitting at an elevation of 5,000 feet, Albuquerque represents the journey's low point. Most of the terrain hovers around

7,000 feet, with stretches over 9,000. Therefore, ideal travel time is between May and October — but check local conditions to avoid late-season snow. Take altitude into account when calculating travel pace and prepare for lots of climbing. Bring plenty of layers and, although it's typically dry, expect quick, dramatic weather shifts.

Overnight options dotting the route include camping in state parks, cheap motels, and quaint B&Bs. Musts for the trip include: Santa Fe's plaza; the Santuario (healing church) in Chimayo; exchanging bike yarns at Taos Cyclery; green chili stew at Eske's Brewpub; Tierra Wools in Tierra Amarilla; roadside hot springs in Jemez; and Georgia O'Keefe's Abiqui landscape.

Resources: For equipment, *The Bike Coop, Albuquerque:* (505) 265-5170, www.bikecoop.com. For information and supplies *Taos Cyclery:* (575) 758-5551, www.taoscyclery.com. *New Mexico Touring Society* (www.nmts.org) for a plethora of route maps.

-Josh Liberles



Along the Cassiar. Traffic jams are not a problem on this wild northern byway.

Lake Champlain

Riding around Lake Champlain is a cyclist's delight. Bounded by upstate New York's Adirondacks, the spine of Vermont's Green Mountains, and Quebec's Richelieu River, the 363-mile Lake Champlain Bikeway around the United States' sixth largest lake is a prime touring destination. The route leads through a postcard land of rolling countryside, small town charm, and village greens, with fresh farm-stand produce, cheese, maple syrup creations, and Vermont-based Ben and Jerry's ice cream. The Bikeway is part of a 1,400-mile network which affords map lovers many bike touring options.

Named after the French explorer Samuel de Champlain who sailed there in 1609, modern two-wheeling travelers circumnavigating the nearly 400-foot deep lake can enjoy stopping in classic general

stores where local customers are greeted by name. Or they can linger by regional staples like white-steeped churches, red barns with horses grazing, small museums, and wooden covered bridges. Fishing (with license) and bird watching (with binoculars) are undemanding diversions. In Quebec, a simple *bonjour* goes a long way.

Keep an eye out for Champ, the legendary monster Champlain reputedly saw and described as "a 20-foot serpent, with a horse-shaped head and body as thick as a keg." Bicyclists definitely will see cows. And in fall, hills ablaze with color. Inn-to-inn cycling is popular, while campgrounds are plentiful.

It's not all rural, with two compact cities: Plattsburgh, New York, and Burlington, Vermont. Burlington was recently named the healthiest city in America and is loaded with bikeways, including a 13-mile rail-trail

that goes along the lake, abruptly stopping at a boater's cut with seasonal ferry service allowing riders to continue through to the gently rolling roads and bridges of the Lake Champlain Islands. Stateside ferries and bridges crossing sections of the lake are wonderful resources to shave off some miles if time, or a sore saddle, become an issue.

Resources: *Lake Champlain Bikeways* is a nonprofit organization that produces a series of maps and guides to cycling the lake and larger region, www.champlainbikeways.org, (802) 652-2453.

-Marty Basch

The Stewart-Cassiar Highway

British Columbia's Stewart-Cassiar Highway offers an inspirational ride through one of our continent's most pristine and remote corners. Running parallel to the northern Coast Mountains for about 450

miles, the Cassiar, or Route 37 North, as it's officially titled, is a grand-scale wilderness trail lined with lofty peaks, crystal clear lakes, and soothing forests.

From Kitwanga and the Yellowhead Highway, the 90-percent-paved Cassiar heads north to the Yukon border and its junction with the Alaska Highway. Along the way it swings relentlessly from one watershed to another as it crosses over the upper reaches of some of Western Canada's mightiest rivers and bisects the traditional territories of the Gitksan, Tahltan, Kaska, and Nisga'a first nations.

Camping (and a few rental cabins) are available at regular intervals along the Cassiar. There are well-stocked food stores in Iskut, Dease Lake, and Good Hope Lake, but loading up in either Terrace or Watson Lake is not a bad idea. Snacks and very basic supplies are available at Meziadin Lake Provincial park, Bell II resort, Tattoga Lake, and Jade City.

Like any great wilderness ride, the Cassiar is difficult to reach, with the closest airport in Prince George, British Columbia. For a great 10- to 14-day trip from there, take a Greyhound bus to Terrace, ride the Nisga'a Highway (Route 113 North; food supplies available in New Aiyansh) and then a sweet dirt road that follows the Nass River and connects with the Cassiar. Then ride the Cassiar to its terminus near Watson Lake, Yukon, and hop the Greyhound back to Prince George. If you have more time, follow the Alcan Highway all the way to Whitehorse, Yukon. Better still, for a memorable one-month summer adventure, fly into Juneau, Alaska, board a southbound ferry to Prince Rupert, pedal to Whitehorse, then steer a course for Skagway on the exhilarating Klondike Highway, and board another ferry back to Juneau where homebound flight awaits.

Resources: *The Stewart-Cassiar Tourism Council*, www.stewartcassiar.com or (866) 417-3737. *Northern British Columbia Tourism Association*, www.nbctourism.com/members/Stewart_Cassiar_Tourism_Council or (800) 663-8843.

-Pierre Bouchard

Colorado's High Country

There's a reason why adventure seekers,



Getting seriously high. Roadside respites are required in Colorado's thin-aired high country.

red-blood-cell-thickening Olympians, and John Denver sing such high tunes about the state of Colorado — *altitude*. Colorado is loaded with over 50 peaks 14,000 feet or higher, and it's the only state located entirely over 3,281 feet. For touring cyclists, it may be the ultimate destination to redline

your cardiovascular system and wow your eyeballs out of their sockets.

This rider's favorite route covers 350 miles, over five passes 10,000 feet or higher, from the ski town of Frisco to the mountain hamlet of Telluride. Layovers include enough mountain towns, restaurants, and watering

Simply the best

The passionate goal of our development team: A touring tire that can do everything. The result: MARATHON SUPREME. Extremely light (460 g/37-622). Astounding grip on wet roads (new Magic Compound). Maximum High Density puncture protection. The best of the Marathon series. www.schwalbetires.com

SCHWALBE



Threading the needles. Touring an arid stretch of the Texas Hill Country on the 100-Mile Mountain Loop.

holes to transform even an average sea dweller into the ultimate high-altitude metabolizing, pizza-destroying machine. Camping and hotel options along the way will accommodate the wallets of both tent-toting and credit-card cyclotourists. This route is best attempted on a fat-tired rig with low gearing in late summer, after gravelly backroads and high passes are free from snow.

Leaving Frisco, the trifecta of Freemont Pass (11,320 feet), Cottonwood Pass (12,126 feet), and Kebler Pass (10,000 feet) will add a coveted notch on the belt of even the most accomplished touring cyclist. These climbs are interspersed with iconic views of the Rockies, colorful aspen stands, and a gentle descent through fly-fishing country along the Taylor River. Don't miss pit stops at Bongo Billy's Coffee house, Mothers Bistro, and Cottonwood Hot Springs in the burgeoning adventure town of Buena Vista. Enjoy microbrews and enormous pizzas on

the patio at the Brick Oven and a bargain priced bed and shower at the hostel in Crested Butte.

The route's king climb is a gravel jeep track over 13,000-foot Engineer Pass. One of the highest roads in the country, it's not for the faint of heart but rewards riders with well-endowed vistas and a curvaceous descent along the Million Dollar Highway to the Ouray Hot Springs. From there, enjoy endless views of the San Juan Mountains along the Dallas Divide and into the spectacular box canyon environs of Telluride.

Resources: *Bicycle repair, shipping, and receiving at Wilderness Sports in Frisco: (970) 668-8804 and Telluride Sports: (970) 728-4477). The Colorado Department of Transportation (www.dot.state.co.us) provides regular update on pass conditions and road closures.*

—Gregg Bleakney

Texas Hill Country

Eighty miles west of Austin, the Texas Hill Country is a scenic, uncrowded region of wooded hills and clear, spring-fed streams that offers some of the best road biking in America's Sunbelt, especially fall through spring when most northern states are buried in snow. The two top cycling areas are, first: the network of low-traffic backroads that web the hills around Fredericksburg, a town founded by German pioneers where *biertgartens* and German culture still flourish; and second: the spectacular 100-Mile Mountain Loop in the western Hills where it's more like Switzerland than Texas.

In a single week, this author's favorite bike tour takes you exploring the most exciting and rewarding roads in both areas (see Resources). While pedaling the full length of the 100-Mile Mountain Loop you will ride for miles through the canyons of rivers like the Frio and Nueces, and wind

along high ridges like Horse Collar Bend, the highest road in the Hill Country.

Then I recommend you spend three full days cycling the rolling hills near Fredericksburg, where one loop ride takes you to Enchanted Rock, a huge pink dome of bare slickrock. On another, you cycle to the Willow City Loop, famed for its stunning panoramas and blazing displays of bluebonnets each spring. Both rides take you through the heart of the Hills, past stone and log farmhouses built more than a century ago by German pioneers, and through miles of open range where herds of sheep and goats often wander on the roads.

Motels abound in Fredericksburg, which is an excellent place to overnight, as are Kerrville, Laekey, Rock Springs, and Junction. State parks with campgrounds also exist near most overnight stops. My recommended route will have you pedal nearly 400 miles, with an average day's ride of 55 miles, all on paved roads. Though it's possible to ride the Hill Country year-round, the best times are spring and fall — mid-March through mid-May, and mid-September through mid-November.

Resources: *The website www.tourvelo.org/txhills.html covers every aspect of Hill Country bike touring, including maps, when to go, state park campgrounds, overnight accommodations, caveats, and a complete day-by-day tour itinerary with a route description.*

—Norman Ford

Wisconsin's Historic Trails

When most people think of Wisconsin they picture cheese, beer, and the Packers. Bicyclists, however, should be thinking of low-traffic county roads that pass forested

hillsides, acres of cornfields, and family farms straight out of a Norman Rockwell painting. Better still is the 715-mile state trail system. Most feature a crushed limestone surface (asphalt within some city limits), but are easily ridden with full

Lake State Park — a collection of interesting geology, diverse fauna, and prehistoric effigy mounds — is only a short ride.

The town of Reedsburg is your next destination. The 23-mile 400 State Trail begins here, the first of three continuous



The oldest trail. Wisconsin's Elroy-Sparta Trail is America's first rail-trail.

touring gear on tires as narrow as 28C. The concentration of trails in the west side of the state running from Madison to LaCrosse makes for a top-notch bike-touring route in a state full of riding opportunities.

I rode there in 2007, and here's the route I recommend: from Madison, go west on the Military Ridge Trail, a bucolic 41-mile trail that follows an 1855 military road. Exit the Military Ridge Trail at Mt. Horab and travel north to Merrimac, crossing Wisconsin River via a free ferry. From there, Devil's

trails that will take you along 76 off-road miles to LaCrosse.

The 400 Trail connects you with the 32-mile Elroy-Sparta Trail, reputed to be the first rail-trail in the country. It also features three exciting tunnels, which require lights. As an important part of the local economy, cafes, B&Bs, and campgrounds sit along the trail or a short ride from it. At the old rail depot in Kendall, now the trail headquarters and museum, you can purchase a shower or buy a few bike sup-



Join the fun in the Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure!

June 20-27, 2009 • GOBA's 21st Annual ride across Ohio!

3,000 People • 7 Days & Nites in June • 350 Miles
It all adds up to the biggest and best bicycle tour in the East!
Register Now! 614-273-0811 or www.goba.com





DENNIS COELLO

Missouri's other arch. Limestone cliffs and caves punctuate the greenery along the Katy Trail.

plies. At trail's end you enter Sparta, where you can pickup the 24-mile La Crosse River Trail and ride it to La Crosse.

For those lucky enough to continue from here, you have the option of continuing north to Adventure Cycling's North Lakes Route via the 24-mile Great River Trail, or you can cross the Mississippi River to pick up Adventure Cycling's Northern Tier Route.

Resources: *The Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin has maps at www.bfw.org (click on order). Learn more about the area's rail-trails at www.bike4trails.com. Travel Wisconsin has state cycling maps available at www.travelwisconsin.com/maps_guides.aspx.*

-Lou Melini

The Katy Trail

As the longest rail-trail in the country, Missouri's Katy Trail features a 225-mile, car-free ride with a front-seat view of the Missouri River. Limestone river bluffs, cornfields, and a tree canopy fill the cyclist's vision while pedaling across the Show Me

state. The trail starts near St. Louis in St. Charles, an old city with brick streets and quaint shops, and stretches across nearly the entire state to Clinton, passing through dozens of cyclist-friendly small towns along the way.

This is where Lewis and Clark first ventured west to find passage to the Pacific, and much of the Katy Trail follows their route. While times have certainly changed since then, you'll still find a rural landscape teeming with birds, turtles, fishing holes, and limestone caves. Civilization is kind to cyclists on the trail in many ways, with a steady stream of bike-friendly bed and breakfasts, small town eateries, abundant tent spots, and train depots that have been converted into "bike depots" with bike racks, water, and bathrooms.

The Katy Trail terrain offers a flat crushed limestone surface best suited for touring and wally flat for its entire length (except for a few mildly hilly miles between Boonville and Pilot Cove), making it perfect for young and beginning riders. There are

many wineries along the route to visit and summer riders can escape the heat at the public pool in the town of Sedalia with a three-story high waterslide.

The best time to ride the trail is early summer and fall. May is the wettest month, while July and August offer oven-like temperatures. In mid-October, perhaps the best time to ride, the landscape blazes with oranges, yellows, and reds.

Resources: *Check for accommodations, wineries, businesses, services, and shuttle services at www.bikekatytrail.com. The Complete Katy Trail Guidebook — available at www.pebblepublishing.com — offers a bounded version of how to plan your ride.*

-Kathy Kyle

British Columbia's Gulf Islands

Nestled between Vancouver Island and the west coast of Washington and British Columbia, carved by the last retreating glaciers, lay several hundred islands. Most

continued on page 46



thewaytogo

new routes • new regions • new tours
on our new website

www.irondonkey.com



Waterfront diggs. Keep an eye out for orcas along the coast of British Columbia's Gulf Islands.

continued from page 18

are small and uninhabited, but a handful offer some of the continent's finest cycling opportunities. Like Washington's San Juan Islands to the south, the Canadian Gulf Islands offer spectacular scenery, beach-side camping, hiking, kayaking, and up-close-and-personal wildlife viewing. But be prepared: roads here are rarely flat, gaining up to 2,300 feet in some places.

Ferries run from Anacortes, Washington, or Vancouver, British Columbia throughout the day so it's easy to take a day trip and explore one island or spend several days discovering each of the five main southern gulf islands — Saltsprings, Pender, Mayne, Galiano, or Saturna.

Saltsprings, the largest island with 10,000 inhabitants, is a great place to begin riding. Ruckles Provincial Park, located at the southern tip, is about six miles from the ferry dock. There are no services, so stock up on food at the ferry landing. With over 70 walk-in campsites on the water, it's one of the most picturesque campsites on any of the islands. It's not uncommon to see orcas surfacing close to shore or harbor seals sunning themselves at your feet. A hike up Mt. Maxwell affords incredible views of the entire island chain and the mainland.

Saturna Island, the least populated island with only 350 people (no camping, but a few B&Bs), offers a chance for quiet, peaceful riding, as well as beachcombing or kayaking along the coastline. Ornithologists should definitely plan a trip to Galiano, home to over 130 species of birds and an ancient native village.

Resting in the rain shadow of the Olympic Mountains to the south and Vancouver Island to the west, the Gulf Islands enjoy a Mediterranean-like climate that is perfect for riding. May through September are the driest and best months to visit.

Resources: www.gulfislands.net. Ferry schedules are available at www.wsdot.wa.gov/ferries.

-Chelle Davidson **AC**

Aaron Teasdale is a diehard wilderness bikepacker, writer, photographer, and Deputy Editor of this magazine.

Renee Sklarew is a freelance writer, recreational cyclist, and mom from Maryland. Her work focuses on travel, sports, and parenting.

Josh Liberles is an elite road racer who blends his need for speed with a love for two-wheeled explorations. He's the editor of Cyclo-CLUB.com.

Marty Basch is a longtime Adventure

Cycling member, award-winning author, and avid bikepacker who lives on a New Hampshire dirt road. Reach him through www.martybasch.com.

Pierre Bouchard has been living on a mountain bike since 1990, calling the road both his home and office. He and his partner Janick Lemieux are currently completing their "cyclovulcanic" quest, a decade-long circumnavigation of the Pacific Ring of Fire on bikes.

Kathy Kyle lives in Hendersonville, North Carolina with her daughter and husband. When not cycling, she teaches and hikes with the Carolina Mountain Club. She rode the Katy Trail with her sister in June of 2008.

Gregg Bleakney is currently publishing a book of short stories and photography that document his 18,500-mile, two-year bike tour from Alaska to Argentina.

Lou Melini of Salt Lake City is the touring coordinator for the Bonneville Bicycle Touring Club and a contributing writer for Cycling Utah. He rode across America in 1975 and continues to tour in various corners of the country.

Chelle Davidson's dream job is to cycle the world, write about it, and make enough money to keep cycling around the world. She's ridden the Canadian Gulf Islands each of the last two years.

Norman Ford lives in the Hill Country and authored the cycling guidebook 25 Bicycle Tours in the Texas Hill Country and West Texas.

DAVID HARRP

Open Road Gallery

A TRUE TEST

by Sarah Raz Photograph by Greg Siple



IN AUGUST OF 2008 WHEN ASHLEY JOHNSON STOPPED BY THE ADVENTURE CYCLING OFFICE with her boyfriend, Dan Ohart, she wasn't the first TransAmerican cyclist to do so with a trailer in tow. What was unusual about Ashley's trailer is that the mechanical engineering student had designed it herself. Dan helped her fabricate their pair of trailers — named BRAT Country Cargo Trailers (BRAT stands for Bike Ride Across The Country) — from lightweight, high-strength aluminum, and, to put them through the ultimate trial by fire, the couple rode from Yorktown, Virginia to Astoria, Oregon.

Ashley had actually decided she wanted to ride across the country when she was a college freshman, but wasn't crazy about any of the cargo trailers on the market, so for her senior project Ashley decided to design, create, and test the BRAT Country. A runner at heart, Ashley had never ridden a bicycle more than 44 miles before the trip and had never ridden loaded. During the tour, she says the couple utilized their featherweight carriers "to carry about 40 pounds of cookies and chocolate — so much for traveling light!"

Currently employed as an engineer at Lockheed Martin, Ashley says she thinks about her TransAm tour every day and can't fathom a better way to travel. In the future she hopes to create more than just cargo trailers: "it's my dream to design equipment for cyclists and other athletes." While the prototype performed well on its first trip, she plans to make a few design improvements and assess them on another long-distance expedition.

Imagine if all engineers put their inventions through such rigorous examinations: our days of frayed shoelaces, leaky travel coffee-cups, flavorless chewing-gum, poorly functioning low-flow toilets, and printer paper-jams would be long gone!

From Adventure Cycling's National Bicycle Touring Portrait Collection. © 2009 Adventure Cycling Association.