

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

ADVENTURE

DREAM IT. PLAN IT. DO IT.

FALL ESCAPES 2004

Where
To
Live

& Play
Now!

10 Great
Adventure
Towns
(YOU MAY STAY FOREVER)

CANADA'S SECRET WILDS

The Classic American River Trip

New Fall
Sports &
Travel
Gear

SEPTEMBER 2004
www.nationalgeographic.com



Exclusive Interview
ARON RALSTON:
THE SURVIVOR'S TALE

EXPLORING
THE UNIVERSE
(FOR \$4,000
OR LESS)

48 K2 at 50: The Bitter Legacy

Fifty years ago this summer, the world's most vicious mountain—Pakistan's 28,250-foot K2—was first conquered. For the Italian climbers who stood on top, the ascent brought lasting fame. For their teammate Walter Bonatti, it launched a lifetime of acrimony—and a personal quest that would change climbing forever. **BY DAVID ROBERTS**

54 The River Wilder

The summer crowds have retreated, the famous New England foliage is beginning to turn, and savvy paddlers know it's time to head to the Allagash. **GEOFFREY NORMAN** follows Henry David Thoreau on a river journey deep into Maine's restorative North Woods.

62 Finding Your Place in the Galaxy

A 30-year-old obsession with stargazing, and a touch of telescope-envy, led wildland firefighter and author **PETER LESCHAK** to plunk down \$4,000 on some high-end optics. What did he get in return? The keys to the universe.


FALL SPECIAL: ADVENTURE TOWNS

70 Do You Have Asheville Syndrome?

Symptoms include an overwhelming propensity to spend all your free time climbing, biking, and paddling in the Appalachian Mountains. And the odd assortment of people who've flocked to this North Carolina town seem to have no desire to find a cure. **BY DAN KOEPEL**

77 Nine More Tempting Towns

Warning: Spend a week in one of these enticing base-camp towns and you may decide you can never go home. **BY MELISSA WAGENBERG**



THE CITY LIFE: Biking outside Rossland, British Columbia, one of the adventure towns profiled in our cover story. See page 77.

★ COVER PHOTOGRAPH OF LAKE TAHOE'S SAND HARBOR, BY COREY RICH. INSET PHOTO FROM ENSA COLLECTION/EDMONS GUERIN

Rossland (Population 3,800) Where the Pros Go

The insanely steep ski slopes at Red Mountain, the 60-plus miles of mountain bike trails, and access to the glaciers and peaks of the nearby Purcell and Selkirk Ranges are drawing a growing cadre of pro athletes to Rossland, a laid-back community of bike and ski bums just across the Washington state border. Visit now and you'll catch this old mining town at the optimal point in its rise as a holiday destination—luxury services (sports clinics, spas, shuttles, etc.) are slowly expanding, and residents are still eager to share their favorite routes.

The folks at Revolution bike shop (\$27 a day for rentals; 250-362-5688) will give you the skinny on Rossland's world-renowned mountain biking network. It's a freerider's heaven that's marked for difficulty ski-resort style (www.rosslandtrails.ca). Rossland Mountain Adventures (877-550-6677; www.rosslandmtadventures.com) is the source for exploring the nearby Selkirk and Purcell mountains. Their one- to three-day outings (\$20 to \$260) include hikes through old-growth forests and past towering ferns and tumbling waterfalls, as well as mountaineering expeditions to icefalls and alpine lakes. Back in town, check out a tamer scene at the Rossland Trail Country Club (\$15 for 9 holes, \$24 for 18; 250-362-5045; www.bcrockies.com/golf), where locals go to rest their battered muscles. The public golf course has a jocular, putt-for-beers vibe and, in typical Rossland fashion, a par 3 so steep that a tow rope drags tired golfers up the fairway.

Visitor Vitals: Rossland is a half-hour from Castlegar Airport, seven hours from Calgary, Alberta, and three and a half hours from Spokane, Washington. The cozy Ram's Head Inn (\$53 and up; 877-267-4323; www.ramshead.bc.ca) is on Red Mountain. For access to Rossland's tiny downtown, try the Uplander Hotel (\$67; 250-362-7375; www.uplanderhotel.com). Rossland has two upscale restaurants, *Idgie's* (250-362-0078) and the Mountain Gypsy Café (250-362-3342). For a pint and pub food, hit the Flying Steamshovel (250-362-7323).

RE MOTENESS
FACTOR 1 2 3 4 5

4

RELOCATION PLAN

WHY STAY? You're ready to trade your career for ski-touring gear, a climbing rack, and a mountain bike.

\$300,000 BUYS: A five-bedroom, three-bath, 3,400-square-foot secluded bungalow on a half-acre—times two.

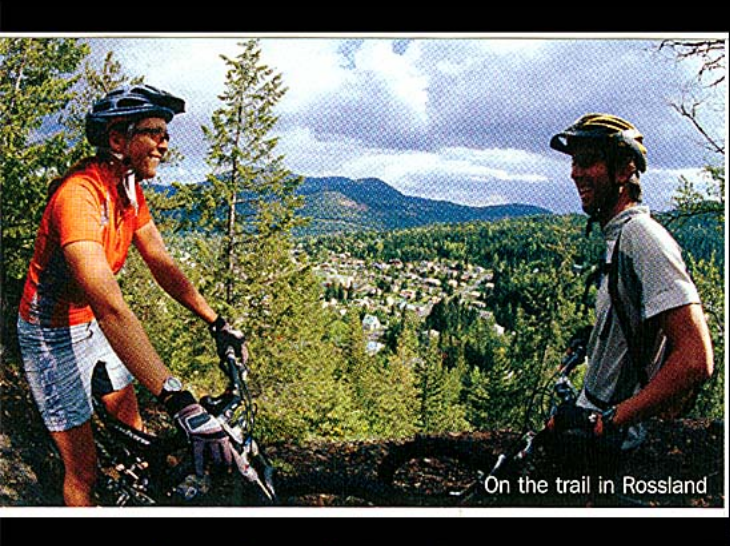
JOB MARKET: Work to ski and, if possible, ski for work.

MEET THE LOCALS: Pro athletes, including extreme skier Alison Gannett and mountain bike hall of famer Cindy Devine.

DRESS CODE: All function, no style: cycling spandex in summer and ski pants in winter.

TALK YOU'LL TIRE OF BY MARCH: "Check out the fresh!"

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: "We have a lot of gear shops, but no clothing shops, no food shops open past 9 p.m., and, in summertime, no nightlife," says Vince Nitchie, co-owner of Adrenaline Adventures.



On the trail in Rossland

British Columbia