



Into the MOUNTAINS we go!

Erik Kleinmans is back in SA after an epic Alpine riding trip with his long-time mentor Christoph Sauser. Here's the low-down on their latest trip.

So what do you do after retiring from a lucrative mountain bike career spanning 20 years at the top of the sport, which entailed lots of suffering... interval training... and culminated in quite a few World Titles and World Cup wins?

You just ride some more!

For some people life is all about riding your bike. I like to believe that I rode my bike for the love and exhilaration of it all, before it became a job, and I still love the freedom. I love the feeling I get from just pedalling around, anywhere, outside, and I know that it is the case too with my freeride trip partner Christoph Sauser.

I believe trips like these are what mountain biking is all about; feeling free in the mountains. Even though I wrote about my trip to World XCM Champs in the last issue there was so much interest about our journey, I just had to show of some more pictures!

We don't really plan anything; we just study the maps and choose a town where we would like to sleep over, most of the time these towns have a hotel at the very least so we have almost never ended up in trouble, without a bed for the night.

With lots of climbing each day, the skill is all in the packing of



ALL PHOTOS BY ERIK KLEINHANS

Views like this make the climbing worth-while.

your backpack. A proper rain-jacket is crucial, and another light weight warm jacket, an extra set of freeride kit you can wear to dinner while the others dry in the Hotel, one pair of Specialized SWAT bibs (which have to get washed every night), your cycling shoes, spares to fix most issues and a good sense of humour is all you need to pack.

This year both of Susi and I used

the Specialized Stumpjumper FSR with 140mm of travel. You definitely need the 140mm of travel, because apart from the odd downhill track, most trails are super technical hiking trails which even put Sauserwind and me (a little bit more) on the limit! But aside from the riding, hiking up steep climbs, and the excitement and rush of the downhills, it's the mountain views that get me every time! **FS**

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Even at the height of summer there's snow on the high Alpine peaks.



Susi and Erik relaxing during a lunch stop.



RECM se **Erik Kleinmans** is een van Suid-Afrika se gewildste bergfietsjaers. Hy is nou die eienaar en kaptein van die RECM bergfiets

span, en moet net so hard werk op die span admin as op sy oefening. Volg hom op Twitter by **@erikkleinmans**.