No map. No guide. A 2,200-mile race across India on three wheels to outrun the idea of modern travel.

Story and photography by Scott Yorke
The city of Jaisalmer protrudes from the Thar Desert like a dirty iceberg cooled by herds of wild camels. The desert sanctuary city, an hour from the border of Pakistan, is built around an 800-year-old fortress whose walls stand about 4,000 people still live. With only eight inches of rain each year, nothing grows more than knee-high.

On this December day however, the streets are populated with weary young Westerners strolling under the sun in delicately costumed—turbans in Piramal groups, Union Jack suits. Who’s Wild? outfits. Locals on mopeds try to tame them into street stalls, but these Westerners aren’t here for sightseeing. They’re here to race.

I’m here looking for a ride. The sweltering city is the starting point of the Rickshaw Run—a daring and dangerous 2,000-mile trek through the entire women’s circuit of the world’s second most populous country in a three-wheeled, seven-horsepower petrol of shit with a fickle lean-mower engine. Eighty teams have flooded in from Norway, Taiwan, Philippines, New Zealand, Italy, Ireland, Belgium, the U.S. and especially England and Australia. Today is my chance to jump in with any car willing to take me along.

Brightly painted Rickshaws cluster in the sandpit, but the vibe is far different from the starting line of a Formula One race. For matters, the thin metal exterior of a Rickshaw feels much as a mini-submarine made out of corrugated cardboard. Teams who submitted their paint-job designs ahead of time arrive to find local artists’ literal interpretations. The pale, ethereal portraits of three oil-rich Norwegian teens have come out decidedly darker, with thick eyeliner making their sides even longer than they’ll ever be able to grow. Australian siblings prep a rickshaw with a swastikas-styled pattern complete with a levitating portrait of a space-looking Rick James. Tassel, lights, flowers, streamers and a disco ball hang from the black vinyl roof. As I climb the box, ice-cream stick jugglers fill the air emanating from a Rickshaw covered in ice-cream cone graphics and surrounded by Kiwis handing out frozen snack bars.

This is the “jumping” portion of the movement’s race preparations, when teams can outline their white. Once the test driving begins, you do the slip show. Sand swish as drivers take in a five-minute crash course that covers how to start a Rickshaw motor with the elbow-swimming band-aid that just from the floor. Bummers just the grip shift into first gear and rip down to the hot dirt, struggling, running out of gas and crashing into bystanders. The health ruff, clad in green Nehru jackets and orange turbans, waves through the chaos, carrying silver planters loaded with disproportionately priced beer.

While I weigh my options, a team of American girls is busting for an ambiguous traffic law. It is enough for a cop from the local traffic ministry to threaten to shut down the entire event. For a minute it appears as if the Rickshaw Run is over before a single teddy bear hits the highway. A series of discussions ensues, and the officer is eventually bailed, rather easily, with a new laptop. The Rickshaw Run will go on.

“Out humble little planet is used to step humans almost the checks with iconic sites of adventure that every single day is the path used by the Adventurers, the impressive British company behind the Rickshaw Run. A major downside to societal progress, it changes—everyone’s a lone ranger. A classic cottage-class of travelers who no longer kill in the back of the backpack. 1. In northern China, the Great Wall is the world’s longest military fortification ever made. 2. To the north it starts from the border with Kazakhstan. 3. To the west it starts from the border with Afghanistan. 4. It is 21,196 kilometers long. 5. It is about 1,500 years old. 6. It is made up of a fence, a road, a river and a forest. 7. It is about 1,500 years old. 8. It is made up of a fence, a road, a river and a forest. 9. It is about 1,500 years old. 10. It is made up of a fence, a road, a river and a forest. 11. It is about 1,500 years old. 12. It is made up of a fence, a road, a river and a forest. 13. It is about 1,500 years old. 14. It is made up of a fence, a road, a river and a forest.
The Mongol Derby re-creates Ghenghis Khan’s 6,608-mile postal route across rural Mongolia on horseback. And there’s the Motorland Jockey, off-roads the length of Peru on a motorised bicycle through the Andes and across the Amazonian rainforest.

The Adventurers’ website warns, “Your chances of being seriously injured or dying as a result of taking part are very high. Individuals who have taken part in the past have been permanently disfigured, seriously disabled or lost their life. You really are putting both your health and your life at risk.” There are plenty of crashes, injuries and every problem of international diplomacy. One team spent 28 days stuck at the Russian border, the whole while refusing to give up. A rioblock team trapped in the middle of the Bolivian Amazon suffered to find an arrow stuck in the side of its vehicle. The Adventurers’ guiding principle is that there is no pretense of smooth sailing. Expect things to go very wrong, probably in a very remote location. The company is no less chaotic. Based in Bristol, U.K., with remote employees in Mongolia, Peru and India, the outfit stages events that are remarkably discriminatory—a suitable precaution for the whole experience. A handful of teams show up in Jaisalmer to find their rickshaws broken. Several motors won’t start. There are many reminders of the danger and breakdowns of order that lie ahead.

“India is like a fucking trip (trip. Don’t try to classify it, you will lose.” This is the best advice from Diex, who knows the Adventurers’ India route andunited motorcycle rally. Jaisalmer, or on the eve of the year. Diex’s gangster presentation book is one of the most informative, entertaining and informative of the military zones to avoid. The safety warnings are immediately lost as the excitement builds over, along with louder. Any number of people eager to drive wildly tin cans across India moves ready grannies, and won the frigid hotel pool fills with a crew of dotty bitches. The Jaisalmer gangster presents his book while Australian ink-ink tattoos on the faces of5 out of 5 comrades. A Norwegian throws a wooden chair into the hotel as a hotel porter beams up a drunken taxi driver who has crashed the party. I wind up sharing a room with a

76-year-old British man who plays a mean blues harmonica but has to be carried to bed three nights in a row, having pinned himself at least once.

There is no set demographic of people who are willing to pay roughly £2,500 to drive three-wheel death machines across India. I meet a group of Swiss adventurers, a marketing executive from the Indiana Motor Speedway and the coach of Mexico’s Olympic skateboard team. There is a set of hallowed-born girls being driven by their cowboy hat-wearing, pre-smoking father, and a pair of American less well-endowed in the American man, for whom they are after hearing about it from a girl in Bolivia who was rubbed at gunpoint on the previous year’s run. When I ask a 45-year-old English woman with four kids why she is doing the run, she makes a go-swing motion and says, “My husband is really losing.” My quest for a racing team actually began several months earlier, in the States, “I’m pretty sure” (continued on page 124)
It is nearly nine o'clock when I step off the train in the southwest suburb of Prawn and a young alcoholic worker helps me negotiate the ride. Ralph advised me to hire a taxi outside the city because of taxi regulations on Mumbai trains. The driver, owner of several commercial taxis and a 20-year driver of cabsilder around me as we crouch kilometers behind and avoid other made-up expenses. The chief of traffic police, according to my information, gives his phone number and departure, "You do this at your own risk, it is not safe.

The lucky driver who gets the nod is a local man in his early 20s named Salim. He discusses with his wife at the thought of making more than a few cabs that night. Salim: another driver named Muhammad is on the same journey. The radio cab is equipped with blue lights and a 4,000 rupee bond the size of a telephone.

I feel good about our chances of making it to Goa and we zoom on out these times on the highway entrance ramp and a friend is summoned to clean and break the taximeter. Adding my anxiety in the race along the deadly NH 17 known as the Mumbai Highway. In 2012 the highway saw 190 people killed and 2,200 injured in 5,117 accidents.

That Muhammad and Salim are both professional drivers does not fail to amaze me. The international journal of Geographical Rights published a study that noted on how drivers' accidents' prevention experience. The conclusion: "Experience characteristics with lower scores of reasoning, logic, communication, and emotional stability are common in commercial taxi-drivers."

On top of it all it lovely sea, we'll be driving at night, which the information about us is close to zero.

On his little cell phone Salim has one

song—Michael Jackson's "Dangerous"—and we listen to the track on repeat until I introduce Janis Joplin's 1968 album, which promptly blows his mind. "This is wonderful music," he repeats for each track, bubbling his head with joy. The moon swings west and Muhammad sings loud Hindi songs, shaking his head to stay awake while Salim and I huddle under a thin covering for warmth.

I remember that 50,000 vehicles travel this 280-mile highway every day, but travellers' tales are barely humanised. The radio cab is equipped with blue lights and a 4,000 rupee bond the size of a telephone.

The mine is the foot track the fine sand on Goa's只有Farnham Beach. I am greeted with elbows and bear from a crowd of Australian, Kiwis and British taxis drivers who have completed the hundred kilometer journey. The taxi-crew are invited to join traditional Indian wedding ceremonies, one of which is held in an open, spacious, palm-fringed setting. The setting is the only location where they can be seen in their full attire.

The centre of attraction is the bride and groom and they make their way to the groom's house. The couple then join hands and show up to watch them eat dinner. While the groom's rig is back into place with black electrical tape, the driver's rig is driven to his school uniform store where we are going.

"We're not many great, friendly people," one Canadian tells me. "Everything from drunk nosskarens giving us their money while driving, to dog attacks, to being dragged into religious blazes."

For the next leg we saddle up with the ice cream vendor, David King. We drive for two days past large plantations lined with coconut trees. The guys make for a rather company, and we spend hours discussing American movies, debating religion and talking about our favorite bands from the 1990s. We sing along to Rolling Stones songs.

"Fawkes times awake, ey" pops out of the handsome motorbike, fairly picked up from a concert background.

I finish the last days of the run riding with two Australian probate named Nathan and Hasdon. The architect and a diesel mechanic, they are the least safe of any team I've encountered, with just a map and no technological lifelines, which necessitates spontaneity. They navigate by pulling out your name of their next destination, averaging the most consistent response and waving it from there. They wake up later than every other team, take long lunches and yet somehow maintain a firm progress.

Earlier in the trip they got lost in a rural town that is said to be frequented by sealers. A group of about 15 people then set off to find keys to the only hotel in town. The centre of attraction was the local and showed up to watch them eat dinner, yelling and doing strange things to churn up the crowd.

We are 18 miles outside the finish line when the carwash drama from our engine. While the engine rig is back into place with black electrical tape, the driver drags his school uniform store where we are going.

"Bedtime," we say.

"In flat things?"

Up and running again, we spot the finish line alongside a trickle of other runners, all expressing a mixture of relief and excitement.

"We got more injuries at the finish line because people get so unbelievably excited," Morgan had warned. "We usually have to pay for some sort of damages."

I can see why. Five jugglers sit slams at the crowd. Furniture is broken, clothes are ripped off and every drop of alcohol is consumed. Strangers and friends run off to the bushes and bathrooms and beaches to hook up, then return, straightening their new Indian clothes.

Robots and Jupe (actual) along with stoic. An Australian woman rolls in a school bus full of 15-year-olds and sang them Boyz II Men songs. A few crew members accidentally joined a pickup crowd for the prime minute. Followed roiled sounds of meet banter for hommes but to take photos. The Rich James siblings were framed in a head newspaper along with a phone of them lounging on the beach. A British woman survived a head on collision that sent her through the windshield, which a friendly man repaired for free within a few hours.

All three outcomes would please Morgan. "It's too late to decide if the trip is going to be boring or a chance," he says. "All we provide is the framework for chaos."

"I'm never going to quit smoking this way."

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