

Jamie Clarke Co-founder, Out There and LiveOutThere.com

By Lisa Kadane

He's summited Mt. Everest twice and traversed Arabia's Empty Quarter desert by camel, but these days you're more likely to find Jamie Clarke surfing in Costa Rica with his family, or testing new Arc'teryx gear in Chamonix, France.

Over the past decade the Canadian adventurer, 46, has raised two children with his wife, all the while growing his passion for the outdoors into a successful business.

Clarke and business partner George Achilleos launched Out There, an adventure gear store in Calgary, in 2003. They followed that up in 2009 with an online retailer, LiveOutThere.com, that offers even more high-quality outdoor brands.

Business is booming, and last year the e-commerce arm was named one of Canada's 50 fastest-growing companies by *Profit* magazine.

"I'm very lucky that both travel for business and travel for adventure have become one," says Clarke, who sleeps away from home about 170 nights a year.

Whether he's jetting off to conferences to speak about his adventures and business success or travelling to Antarctica to hike in Icebreaker's latest layers, some things never change—Clarke still bags peaks wearing a stylish collared shirt.

How much of your product line have you tested in the field?

The majority of it. The business is growing significantly, so it's getting more difficult to test everything, but it was our philosophy from the beginning that we would sell the gear that we would use.

What trends have you noticed in outdoor wear?

The apparel has more and more been designed by women, for women. It's not men's gear in smaller sizes, which is refreshing.

Favourite Canadian experience

We spent a month one summer mountain biking around Prince Edward Island when our kids were really tiny. What's really cool about P.E.I. is that it's flat, and it's culturally fantastic. We'd just roll through town, and someone would invite us to camp in their backyard, or to come to their party. We had this great adventure. It was my first eye-opening experience to the fun I could have with family.

Top winter adventure

Winter camping or climbing on the Columbia Icefields [remote glaciers in the Rocky Mountains]. That is some of the most incredible terrain on the planet for skiing and climbing.

How do you balance work with a passion for travel and adventure, or turn that passion into a career?

There are two paths. One, you have a job that provides you with the means to follow your passion ... it rewards you time with your kids and the vacations you like. The other path is [harder]. That path requires a willingness to make a trade on the reward, and that means you've got to ask yourself a fundamental question: Are you willing to exchange material wealth for the wealth of experience? Because, in order to do it, it generally requires more time and therefore a pretty lean existence in the beginning. People you love will try to talk you out of it—it's complicated to try to stay that path.



Jamie Clarke's top winter gear picks

from Out There and LiveOutThere.com



ZIPKA headlamp from Petzl, for light



Men's Ghost Whisperer Down Jacket, for warmth



250 mL Nalgene, for "the spirit of your choice"