

HYPE

MOUNTAIN BIKING SERVED UP HOT!

NINE GREEN BOTTLES

But if one should accidentally fall...

We're well up for it when we meet at Granada Airport and head up into the mountains. Some of the best riders in the world are here: Steve Peat, Will Longden, Tyn Manley - well, if you could smuggle yourself into a list like this, you would, wouldn't you? - Chris Smith, Gee Atherton, Marc Beaumont and Neil Donoghue. Six top talents, 14 features to shoot, Dodd and Behr on words and images and all the mountains in Spain to play with.

We end up in a little white village clinging to the cliffs. The forecast is fine. Tomorrow - bring it on.

Prancing out of the door at first light, I'm blown into the town square like a used tissue. You can just about walk against the wind but if you stop you'll fall flat on your face. It's a day for location hunting. We hammer the vans down tracks they'll never get back up while Michael, our host, points out some sweet singletrack. Fireroads are being blown off the side of the mountains, but Michael points out some even sweeter singletrack - he's obsessed. Then we find a quarry half a mile above the gorge.

"Don't go too close to the edge," warns Steve Behr. So Will puts a wheel over for humour. Michael reckons that if we'd gone over, the last thing we'd have seen would have been some über-sweet singletrack...

That night, Peaty says he's feeling shit. That's bad. Steve never complains. The Don's not feeling great either, and Marc is sneezing. We'd better shoot these guys before they drop dead.

That night, Peaty downs enough paracetamol to destroy Liverpool and he's ready for anything that next sunny day. The invalids ride brilliantly and we shoot three features. Job done, we collapse. Three have flu, four think they're getting flu, one's had it and Will is so determined he won't get it that the virus goes into hiding.

Next day at the quarry, Chris, Gee and Marc are building and going big. Soon, though, Marc's turning green.

STEP-DOWN MADNESS

That's three down. The rest of us begin to hope we're immune. Gee's found a step-down jump about 25 feet high. Chris does a suicide with vulture wings off it. Nice. Gee is up there a long time.

"I don't like it," says Chris. "He's looking at doing something stupid."

"Oh, I don't think so," I say, as Gee backflips into space and all but lands it at my feet. He has another go and lands on his face. Hard. Four down.

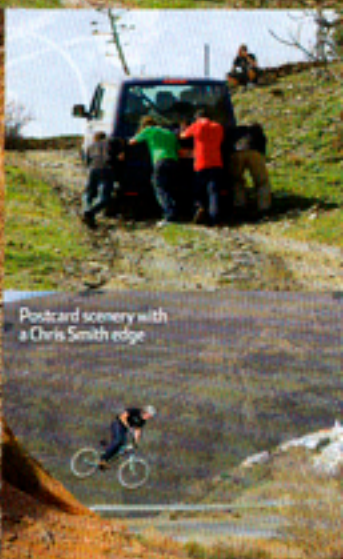
We take him to the Emergency Room. Amazingly, he's discharged. "Wake him up four times in the night and make sure he knows his name," says the medic...

So, we're down to Chris and Will, and the only thing those two can go head to head on is a trials shootout. Gee must have heard that plan, because he turns up in the village square first thing, face hanging off but riding his bike. Donny suddenly feels better. Wonderful. Now we can get everything done!

Full of joy, we head out into the mountains again and are immediately arrested by the Las Alpujarras Parks Police. Evening all...



Gee's crazy flip off the step-down. He's still alive... just.



Postcard scenery with a Chris Smith edge





Apre filu Marc thrashes his Santa Cruz Normad

Peaty rips even when he's ill



The burying Chris's bike trick works a treat



Peaty isn't not to look ill



Our host, Michael, loves his singletrack



The plague reaches the van



Good luck! It's not by accident



FIRST LOOK!

Hope Pro III SP wheelset

Hope's new hubs in a high performance XC wheelset

Not content with releasing a slew of new products while simultaneously undertaking a major factory move, Hope have followed up their superb Pro III hub with a straight-pull version that's only available in a new Hope Hoops wheelset, built up with DT Swiss 4.2 DT rims and triple-butted Super Comp spokes.

The hub gets a straight-pull flange with full INA stainless steel bearings for even better longevity and performance, while inheriting the Pro II ratchet drive system. The weight of the complete wheelset is impressive at first feel, with Hope claiming



the build shaves 200g off a conventional Pro II/DT Swiss 4.2DT rim build. The price? £350 a pair. Contact Hope on 01282 851200 or visit www.hopetech.com.



ROB WARNER
AMBASSADOR FOR UK DOWNHILL

X-Fighting

I had one of those phone calls a couple of weeks ago, one where you think 'that'd be nice if it comes off but it probably won't'. It was from Red Bull, asking if I was available to do some TV presenting in Mexico City for the freestyle motocross event they run, called X-Fighters. Well, a week later I was at Heathrow Airport...

Mexico City is a pretty intimidating place, ranked by many as the most dangerous city in the world, and with a population of over 20 million, it's huge. By midday the smog is so bad that you can barely see skyscrapers a mile away.

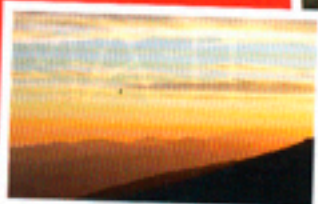
I really enjoy doing TV stuff, it's exciting and spontaneous, plus I got to meet all the FMX riders I've watched on the box for so many years. My TV

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experience is pretty limited and when I was wired up and thrust into the pits to do some interviews, all the blood drained from my body, especially when it was suggested that I 'grab' FMX bad boy and Metal Mulisha boss Brian Deegan for a chat. It could have crushed me but luckily he was a charmer, who talked openly about everything from losing a kidney to missing his kids.

Learning the names of the tricks was the next thing, although the 'as live' (TV lingo) commentary was easy. There's no need for hamming it up because seeing someone lazy boy flip an 80ft gap will get you revved up no matter how many times you've seen it before. The stuff the guys pulled was mental - nearly all the really hard tricks from just a year ago are now pulled upside-down. Next stop on the tour is Dublin, where Travis Pastrana's coming back, and then Moscow and Madrid. I can't wait.

Rob



Michael will be your guide



WIN!

A DOWNHILL HOLIDAY IN SPAIN

Riding in the tread marks of Team MBUK, Gee Atherton and Peaty

We've been all over the world for winter training and photo shoots with top British riders, but the mountains of Las Alpujarras in the south of Spain have given us the best weather and the most staggering terrain - it's so high that the air is thin and you can see Morocco. Usually, we stay with a tour operator who runs cross-country breaks, but this year was different. We were in the village of Bubion as guests of Michael at Switchbacksdh, who runs long weekends especially for downhillers.

Higher in the mountains than most, Switchbacks is close to international downhill runs and plenty of other trails that cry out for a big bike, a full face and a bunch of body armour.

This is a place where there's no word for mud, the sun shines all year round, your host has got the art of shuttling riders down to a fine art and the food and wine are good and cheap. You can check it all out at www.switchbacksdh.com. And, just to give you a taste, Michael is giving away a couple of long downhill weekends for two in July.

This is serious downhill riding, so it's 18+ only. If you win, all you'll need to do is agree the dates, get yourself to Granada or Malaga airport with your bike and kit and enough money for your evening meals - Michael will do the rest.

HOW TO WIN...

First answer this question **In the article called Nine Green Bottles on page 22, Switchbacks boss Michael describes a certain kind of track as "sweet". What kind of track is that?**

Now complete this tie-breaker **In 20 words or fewer, what do you think makes the perfect destination for a mountain bike holiday?**

Send your entry on a postcard or envelope to DH Holiday Comp, MBUK, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW. You can also email your entry to mbuk@futurenet.co.uk.

The closing date is 6 June 2007.

See p12 for full terms and conditions.

WE'D LOVE TO...

- Live in Whistler all year long.
- Have an urban downhill race here on the steep streets of Bath.
- Find time to go on office cross-country epics more often. Must work faster...
- Not hear the same songs on the office radio every ten minutes. Radio playlists need to be more varied.
- Know that the current sunny weather is going to last all year. Dry trails for months...
- See more mountain bike coverage on television.
- Have a year's supply of Riggie Riggie Sauce.
- Have an outdoor office in spring and summer.

THANKS TO

Pendle Bike Racks, Pete Drew and Simon Keitch at Silverfish, Preston Searle for wrapping our vehicle, Citroën and all the girls in Bath who make working here so damn pleasant.

FIRST LOOK!

Manitou R7 MRD fork

Top end fork marks a return to form

Manitou have had a tough time of late, but after becoming part of the Hayes empire, there are signs that the product may be heading back to former glory. With the move of all fork production back to the USA from Taiwan, and concentration on only R7 forks and above - no mid-to low-end forks - Manitou have also resurrected their MRD (Manitou Research and Development) line. The

lightest fork in the Manitou range is the new R7 MRD. Made from machined metal components (no plastic) with 80 (3.1in) or 100mm (3.9in) travel versions, it's said to weigh 2.72lb (1.2kg) for the 100mm version. Here is the R7 MRD Carbon, which features carbon/alu bonded legs for increased stiffness for a small weight penalty, but it looks super trick. See www.hbsuspension.com for more info.

