

Fall 2013

WildJunket

Travel Light, Travel Far

Northern Territory

Secrets under the sand

10
Cycling
Trips!

Cuba, Tasmania
Costa Rica, Cambodia
and more...

Nepal

Bisket Jatra Festival in pictures

Honduras

In search of the toucan

South India

Finding Pi in spiritual Puducherry

Jordan

Desert temples, Bedouins, and Arabic hospitality:

Our 10-page guide to Hashemite kingdom



+ Bangladesh | Tasting Madrid's Heritage | Zimbabwe's Safari Stay



ON THE COVER: Kings Canyon (Marco88) - Fotolia

WildJunket Magazine is a digital travel magazine with a focus on outdoor adventures and sustainable travel. Our mission is to inspire readers to travel light and travel far. It is published quarterly.

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NEXT ISSUE

**Crete
Chile
Lapland
Nunavut
Antarctica
Mozambique
10 Active
Winter Trips**

On sale 18 Nov 2013

EDITOR'S LETTER

What Dreams Are Made Of


"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams." — Eleanor Roosevelt.

Lately, while researching for my new book, my thoughts have been revolving around dreams and how they bring meaning to life and travel. *WildJunket* has come a long way towards turning dreams into realities. With this in mind, we've come up with the theme for this Fall 2013 issue: **Dream Trips**. Featuring dream destinations from around the world, this issue promises to bring you through vast wilderness areas, culturally-rich enclaves and bustling European cities.

With a cover feature on Australia's Northern Territory (p18), we'll unravel the wildlife and Aboriginal heritage hidden under the sands of the Red Center. We'll also bring you to the land of Bedouins with our 10-page Jordan guide (p77) and the fictional setting of the blockbuster *Life of Pi* in the South Indian enclave of Puducherry (p30). Then feast on culinary tales in Madrid (p54) and stories of hospitality in Bangladesh (p62).

As usual, you can find more stories and previous issues on wildjunketmagazine.com. This issue can also be accessed on your PC, iPad, Android or any other mobile device.

We'd love to hear from you! Share what you think about the latest issue with us on **Twitter**, **Facebook**, or email us at contact@wildjunket.com.


Nellie Huang
Editor-in-Chief & Publisher



Contributors

Interested in contributing? Refer to our website for details.



Charli Moore

Freelance writer and blogger Charli Moore has lived in six countries and driven 250,000km across Australia. Follow her as she travels around New Zealand on *Wanderlusties*. As our new editor-in-chief, she wrote this issue's Trip Ideas (p14).



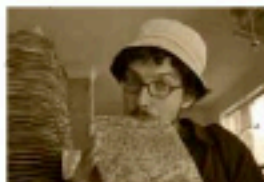
Laura Cook

Laura Cook is an award-winning humanitarian photographer who believes images can change the way we look at the world. Follow her journey to unique corners of the world on lauracooksphotography.net. Read her story on *Puducherry* on p30.



Barbara Weibel

Barbara Weibel left a corporate career to pursue her passion for travel, photography and writing. Her work has been featured in *Huffington Post*, *Travel+Escape*, and *Lonely Planet*. She blogs at RobertandBarbara.com. Check out her photo essay on *Nepal* on p66.



Marco Ferrarese

Our regular contributor Marco Ferrarese has lived in United States, China, Australia and Malaysia. He blogs at *Monkey Rock World*. His first novel *Next Going* will be released later in 2013. He writes about *Bangladesh* on p62.



Jessica Festa

Jessica Festa is a New Yorker-turned-nomad who enjoys going beyond the guidebook and having unexpected adventures. You can follow her journey around the world at jessicafesta.com on a *Journey*. She writes about *Jordan* in this issue (p77).



Sarah Gibbons

Sarah Gibbons is a UK-based travel journalist, blogger and editor. She loves to travel off the well-trodden tourist path and blogs about food, travel and life on *The Two Scoops*. In this issue, she shares her culinary tales from *Madrid* (p54).

Reaching for the Gods

Photo Essay

Thousands gather for Nepal's biggest religious festival each year at the Bisket Jatra Celebrations

With an infectious energy in the air, the crowd pulses forward and back with the tug-of-war combatants on Taumadhi Square in Bhaktapur, Nepal. When the main tugging object – the wooden chariot – unexpectedly lurches, spectators jump out of its path onto the three-foot high platform where I stand. In the chaos, I am thrust toward the edge and I topple over the side into the sea of people.

I have fallen, literally and figuratively, for this country so steeped in religion and cultural traditions that neither of its superpower neighbors – China and India – can overshadow. Fascinated by the unique customs, food, and language of its 300 or so ethnic groups, I am drawn here each year like a junkie in search of a fix.

This year I have come to attend Bisket Jatra, the Nepali New Year celebration that draws thousands to Bhaktapur, an ancient town in the eastern edge of the Kathmandu Valley. As the most celebrated festival of the year, Bisket Jatra is commemorated through a series of ceremonies, processions and temple offerings, which go on for nine days. Today is the first and arguably most important day of the event, as contingents from different parts of town meet in the center for a symbolic battle.

Earlier that day, the figure of Bhairav, a fierce manifestation of the god Shiva, had been paraded around town and ceremonially tied to the prow of the iconic chariot. Throughout the afternoon, worshippers made offerings to the idol as workers painted finishing touches on the chariot's giant wooden wheels and draped its pagoda roof with red and gold silk. Thousands of Nepalis slowly streamed into the square, forming a massive street festival with everyone in high spirits.

Now that the sun is setting, every square inch of Taumadhi Square is covered with spectators, as are the surrounding rooftops, balconies, and temple steps. From where I'm standing, I see thick hemp ropes unfurling from both ends of the chariot. A roar rises from the crowd as competitors grab hold. Veins pop on brawny arms and sweat beads on foreheads as contestants pull with all their might, knowing that a win earns their district the god's favor during the ensuing year.

When the crowd careens in my direction, I lose my balance and fall off the platform into a tangle of bodies. A dozen helpful men kindly pick me up and send me, hand over hand, to safety. From the far distance, I cannot see which side wins but it no longer matters to me. In the midst of all these exuberant Nepalis, I find myself cheering and rejoicing — not just for the tugging competitors, but also for this country and its amazing people who have completely captivated my heart. **WJ**



WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARBARA WEIBEL