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#REVIEW #IXS #TRIGGER #FF
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#ISSUE88

#APR2023

#RIDER #CEDRICTASSAN

#COVER #CEDRICTASSAN



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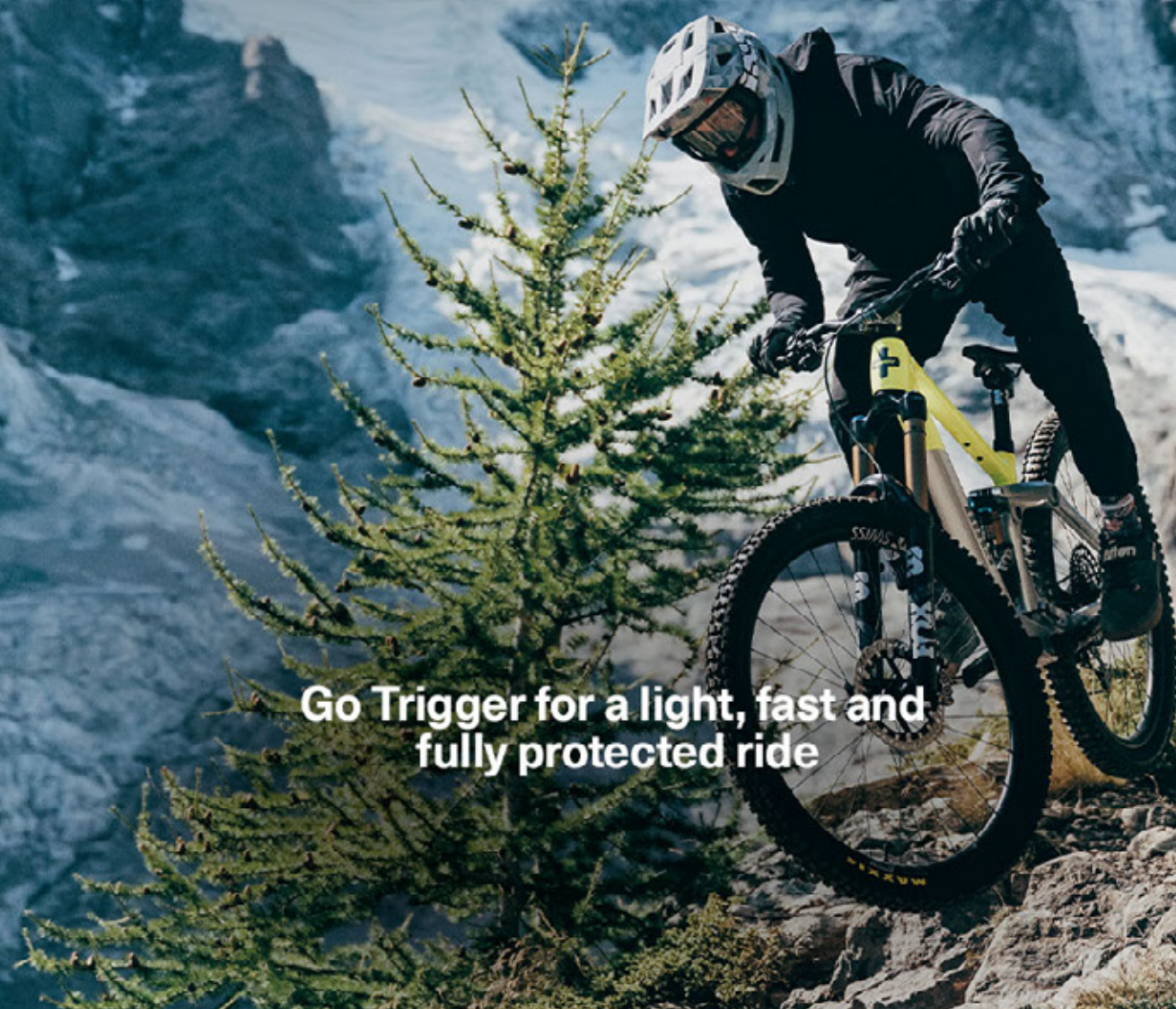
TRIGGER FF HELMET

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CEDRICS
SOLO
PROJECTS

PHOTOS: CÉDRIC TASSAN

WORDS: CÉDRIC TASSAN

KAZAKHSTAN



MANGYSTAU: THE LAND THAT HAS LOST WATER

The Mangystau region is located in the southwest of Kazakhstan, east of the Caspian Sea. With just over 600,000 inhabitants for 165,000 km², this region has one of the lowest population densities in the world, but behind this immense desert expanse hides an absolutely incredible landscape. To see all these stones, one would think that throughout history, man has avoided this region. And yet, from the fascinating underground mosques to the exploitation of underground resources, the Mangystau has always been able to attract people. It

is in this region of the world that Cédric Tassan decided to make a complete crossing of more than 600 km from West to East, from the shores of the Caspian Sea to the last rocky fortresses at the Turkmenistan border.

I started working on this destination at the end of 2019. I had seen an exhibition near my home by an adventure photographer and immediately fell in love with the landscapes. The pandemic has been there, like everywhere, hampering all travel to Kazakhstan. Every cloud has a silver lining, this gave me more time to prepare and plot my route. When I contacted the locals,

they all advised me not to come here by bike alone. It is an inhospitable desert, without water, without living souls. However, I am not discouraged and continue my research. By working on aerial views, I see that the tracks traced by the vehicles are numerous. This means that there is passage! Looking carefully, I come across houses scattered in the middle of nowhere, structures, yurts. Short of life! I build a route where every evening I should manage to find supplies. But the deeper I look into the desert, the fewer villages or houses I encounter...

Therefore, for such an adventure, you need a lot of gear to carry. I have several bikes in my garage and I have to make a choice. My

Kern EN is an enduro bike, more suitable for technical downhill than long distances in the desert. That will stay in France. My Venture would be the perfect companion, it's a gravel bike made for wide open spaces and wide tracks. However even if the Mangystau does not present much vertical relief, I do not know what surface I will have to deal with. I fear being tired beyond reason on the bumpy paths. The one that seems to me the most suitable remains my Shamann. It's a 10.4 kg XC bike, with 100 mm front and rear that will bring me comfort, I can also lock the suspension to improve my performance and its tyre treads are designed to deal with rocks.

On the luggage side, I will dress it with bikepacking bags. At the front I fix 2 bags on the fork which will contain my water, at least 8 litres. This should allow me to last 2 days without refilling. On the handlebars, I fix my GPS and a headlight, in case I have to ride at night. I also attach 2 bags: the first contains my camping equipment, the second all my external batteries. A spare tire and a carbon tripod complete the load on the handlebars. I top it off with an IIW solar panel to charge my devices. At the back, a long bag under the saddle contains my survival kit, warm clothes, a derailleur, a chain and a shock pump. I add to that a bag under the frame with my mattress and on the top tube, a small pack that contains my

repair equipment. I complete my bike setup with a bottle cage and a mini pump. On my back, I opt for an ultra-light backpack and I stuff in my camera, drone, first aid kit, satellite phone, batteries and cables...

To make matters worse, I'm going in the middle of Ramadan and Kazakhstan is a mostly Muslim country. Admittedly, I hadn't paid attention to that at all when planning my adventure, but I will have to manage this because it will not be possible for me not to eat and drink during my long days of effort...

I arrive at Aktau airport, in the middle of the desert, this city is located on the





edge of the Caspian Sea, it is the capital of Mangystau with 182,000 inhabitants. In the 19th century, a journey to the eastern shores of this sea was considered not just difficult but dangerous. The deserts were almost as inaccessible as the Sahara. And not just because of the extremely harsh climate, or the absence of vegetation, or even because of the scorching winds which raise dust storms: the problem was that there was no drinking water. In 1850, the great Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko, exiled here by the Russian government, wrote: "A desert without any vegetation - only sand and stones. You would look around and feel so sad you might as well hang yourself. The Mangystau was once

called Mangyshlak a "land that lost water". Now we call it a "land that found water". Aktau, which emerged from the ground in the 1960s, built by prisoners of the gulag, is the only city in the world that lives entirely on seawater.

I am welcomed by Yersultan, my local contact from Ata Trip. We have been in discussion for several weeks and he has taken care of some of my logistics. And in particular to find me accommodation with the locals during my crossing. As agreed, we head due north. The extreme monotony of the landscape and the drought that reign here impress me. For now, I am sitting in an air-conditioned vehicle, but in a while I

will be on my own in the desert heat. After several hours on the road, we arrive at the end of the Mangystau, on a rocky plateau which dominates the Caspian Sea. It's time to unload the equipment and prepare my bike. Yersultan brought me water and food for tonight and tomorrow. My first night is going to be spent here, like a vigil. The car pulls away, I stay alone here with the Caspian Sea in my sights. From now on, there is no more human noise, only the wind fills the immense emptiness that I feel here. In order not to sink into an inner panic, you have to occupy your mind: check your load, take a few photos and find a place to camp. I decide to leave the high plateau swept by this strong wind. I know that lower down



I will be less exposed. Quickly, I find an old ruin, so I can put my bike against it and prepare the bivouac. For weight reasons, I did not take a tent. I tell myself that in the desert, it must not rain often...

I sink into my sleeping bag under a heavy sky. Bad luck, in the middle of the night, I woke up to a fine rain. I decide not to move. But quickly, it becomes more important, I quickly take refuge under my poncho, covering the soaked down... I wait for it to pass and decide to redo my camp in the light of the full moon. I dry my mattress then position my poncho on my sleeping bag. In case of rain, all I have to do is pull it over my head and stay calm... A second

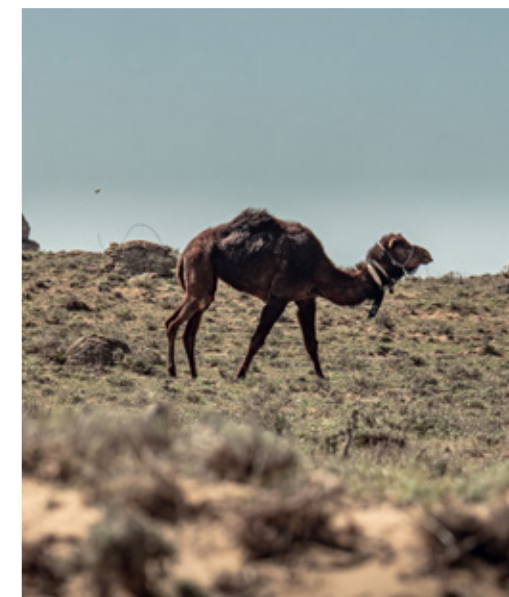
downpour disturbs my night, I shiver from the cold. But stunned by fatigue, I wake up around 7am.

I attack my crossing by making my way on the many tracks traced by the 4x4. Going down from the plateau, I find my first necropolis in the middle of the desert, a magical moment to see one of these magnificent mausoleums. A 4x4 comes to meet me, this is my first contact with locals. The paths are multiple, a real labyrinth, fortunately my GPS is there to guide me. My route is close to the Caspian Sea. I am called from afar by a group of busy men near large rocks, they are 4 fishermen: 2 Kazakhs and 2 Russians, they invite me to share the grilled fish caught

a few minutes ago.

After 35 km on the bike, I cross a canyon and discover my first troglodyte mosque opposite. I enter the site of Shakpak Ata. The mosque was built 1,000 years ago. The name was given in honor of the Sufi Shakpak-Ata, a Kazakh sage-healer, who lived here with his disciples. The interior space surprises these visitors with its purest whiteness, because its room is dug into the chalk cliff. One immediately feels the special atmosphere of the ancient sanctuary. Around the mosque, many tombstones lie. The story goes that they belong to the followers of Shakpak-ata. As it is not known exactly where the Sufi is buried, you have to walk around here with





caution and pay special attention to each grave. Another 35 km of desert and at the end of the day I come across the small town of Taushik surrounded by sand. I ask for Nurzhan Akim's house, he is supposed to welcome me tonight. A truck and a horde of small motorcycles escort me to his home. For this beautiful evening, we all dine as a family, food is in abundance.

I leave early the next day and the first 15 kilometers of tarmac serve as a warm-up. When I leave the road to head east through the desert, I find myself facing the wind. I feel that the day will be hard because until the end I will travel in this direction.

Monotony sets in, the landscape flat and bland. Only a few camels emerge from the horizon. Gradually round rocks dot the steppe. After a last climb, I come across a magnificent valley where these balls of rock are more than 3m in diameter! I make my way through this vast field of sedimentary rocks formed 150 million years ago. In the center of these spheres are shells, fish teeth and bones, and plant remains. This is proof that the Mangystau is indeed a land that has lost water. I still struggle against the wind, cross a huge salt lake and meet a new road. I am happy to find the tar, progress will be aided. Further on, I discover the magnificent rock of Sherkala, a majestic mountain in the shape of a yurt. After a detour of

a few kilometers to better appreciate it, I continue to the Etno el Kogez camp. I spend my night in a peaceful yurt, ready to face the rest even if I receive an SMS alert on my mobile phone announcing a windstorm for the next few days.

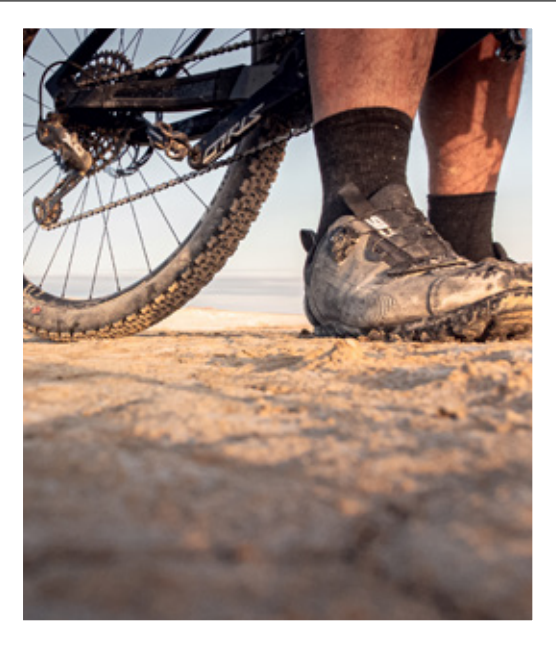
The next day, I have 2 options: follow the road directly to my next stop or try to cross from the north through the desert. The decision is made in a few minutes, I leave the tarmac and plunge into the unknown. The landscape is sublime this morning, I ride at the foot of a huge mountain. The wind is still blowing from the front, but the beauty of the place makes me forget the effort. Further on, I come across a deserted

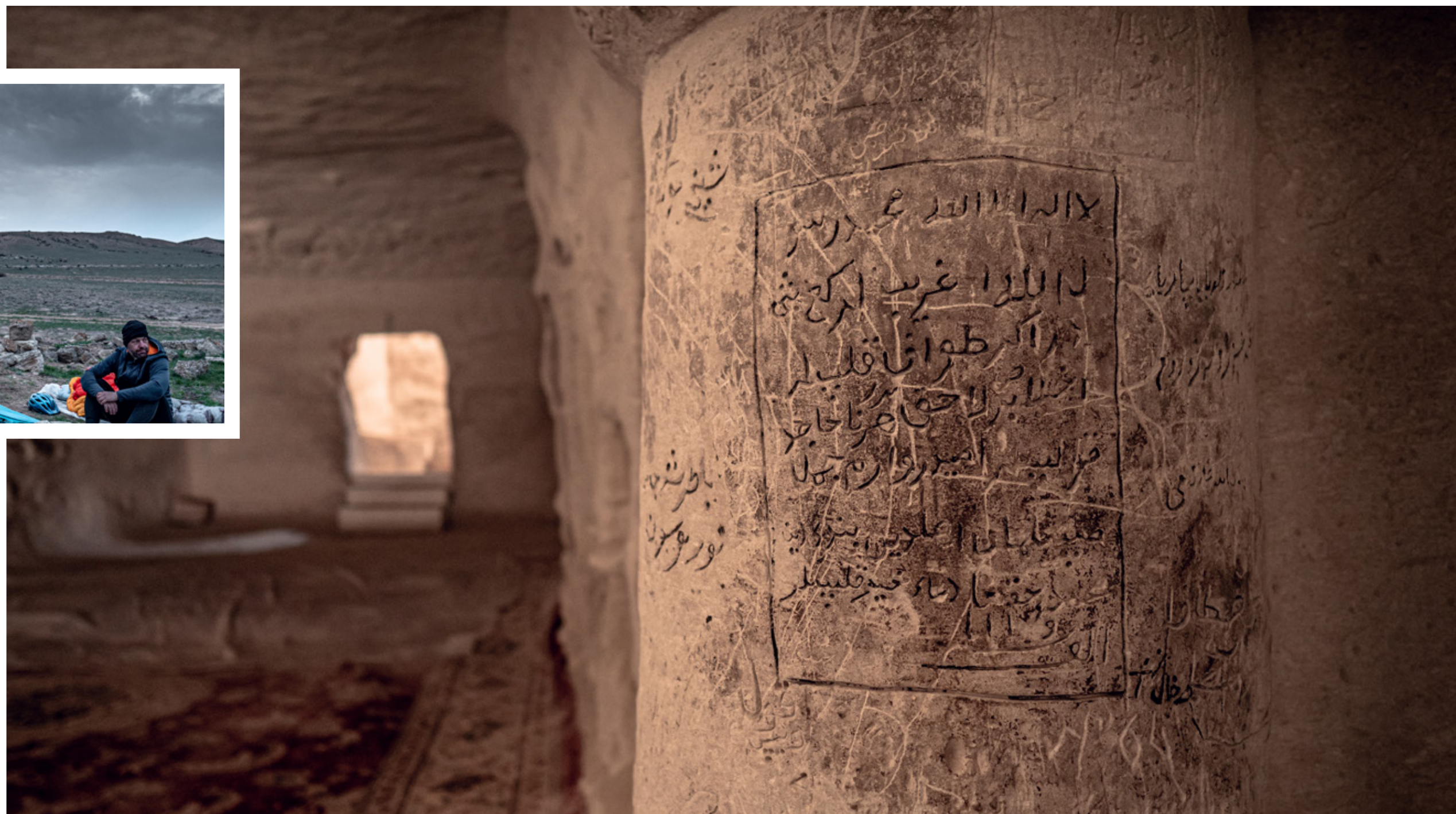
camel farm. The track slants due north and forces me to cross a long sandy area: you have to push. Further on, I climb a ridge, gain height and quickly find myself without a path. I trace straight, crossing several steep canyons then find a new track. I'm still pulling full east against an increasingly strong wind. I painfully reach Zjamysh, a small village in the desert. I am given the same welcome as in the previous village, as a horde of motorcycles escort me to Masqat's house. His family is very religious and respects Ramadan to the letter. In the evening everyone is gathered around a good table to work up an appetite with many small dishes. But the traditional meal, the besbarmak, arrives a little later, laid out

on mats on the floor. Meat, boiled paws, potatoes and onions are eaten with the hands. At the end of the meal, the sorpa, a meat broth is served. Satisfied, I go to bed for a short night.

From now on, I am sinking into the desert and I will have to be self-sufficient in food and water for 2 days. No refueling is possible. I have 160 km ahead of me to cover. This morning, the wind has turned, I have it on my back. Suffice to say that the 40 km of tar are achieved very quickly. Then it's time to leave the road and head for the site of Sor Tuzbair: huge chalk cliffs on the edge of a gigantic salt lake. But I quickly became disillusioned when I arrived there. The locals

had however certified me, wrongly, that there was a track to go down: I only see a vertical cliff 100 m high and 100 km long! If I can't get off, my adventure is in jeopardy. Because a detour would make me lose at least 1 day on the bike and I do not have the necessary food. I spent 3 hours surveying this cliff and ended up finding a very steep passage in a labyrinth of very steep chutes. I have to dismantle my panniers and go back and forth several times to find myself at the bottom. Satisfied with this discovery, I also know that the trap is closing in on me. Impossible to turn around, I will have to move forward at all costs. The night at the foot of its magnificent cliffs and against a rocky block is one of the best I have been





able to spend outside.

The next day, I start very early and go straight across the huge salt lake. I navigate by sight, without following any leads. But the closer I get to the center of the lake, the more the ground slips away under my weight. The anxiety of being stuck in this clay pushes me to remain cautious and turn off very quickly in the event of an alert.

After 40 km, I leave the salt lake and find a railway line and a small building. I lie down on a cement slab and give myself a good snack and a nap. I continue my crossing of the desert and at the end of the day, after 80 km totally alone I reach the religious site

of Shopan ata, a magnificent necropolis and a troglodyte mosque. After visiting the site, I enter the buildings that welcome pilgrims and visitors. Here we find lodging and cover for free. This site is like an oasis in the middle of the desert. There are no other villages nearby. I spend the evening in the company of the locals, trying to follow their traditions as well as possible. In the dormitory where we sleep on the floor, the night is restless, noisy. The comings and goings between the dining room and the room are incessant. During Ramadan, Kazakhs get up at night to eat. Finally around 5:30 am, I decide to get ready to leave, I can't sleep anymore. I leave Shopan Ata at night and turn on my headlights to follow another new road built

3 years ago. After 70 km, I reach another necropolis, Beket Ata and take 2 hours to visit it.

The rest of my trip is nothing but dazzling! Because I discover the spectacular site of Boshzira, which is without a doubt for me, the most beautiful landscape I have seen on earth! Where the rocky plateau ends, it gives way to an immense plain from which rock needles emerge. The geology is totally incredible and immense. I ride for the whole day battling with the sand which is becoming more and more present. My last stop is in the lost village of Ak Kuduk. Here, no road, the first town is 5 hours away by 4x4! I am warmly welcomed by the locals. No one in



memory has ever seen a bicycle arrive here. People live on little, a few camels, a few goats, that's all. Zhandarbek wants to host me for the night, I do not say no. We spend a memorable evening of laughter with his wife and children.

It smells like the stable, I have more than 80 km left to complete my crossing. Because beyond the point that I have set myself, there is nothing. These are the last rocky lines and then the border with Turkmenistan. I absolutely must not cross it because I have no visa. But the Mangystau won't release me anytime soon. The sand dunes follow one another, I have to push my bike regularly and the wind blows from the front. After

passing a military garrison, I reach a small lagoon where a pretty river flows, water in the desert! That's when Yersultan and the driver join me. I know that now nothing can stop me. The 4x4 opens the track for me but I let it go very far in order to maintain my isolation. A long climb, the longest of my entire crossing, concludes my 630 km adventure. At the top, it's an incredible sight. I arrive where the earth stops, where the rocks emerge from the clouds. The reading of the landscape is stunning: an immense salt lake opens up in front of me from which emerge monumental cliffs: Karynzharyq will be the last fabulous landscape of Kazakhstan that will remain etched in my memory.

Thanks

Yersultan and Ata Trip @atatrip.kz on Insta. I strongly advise you to use his services to visit the region.





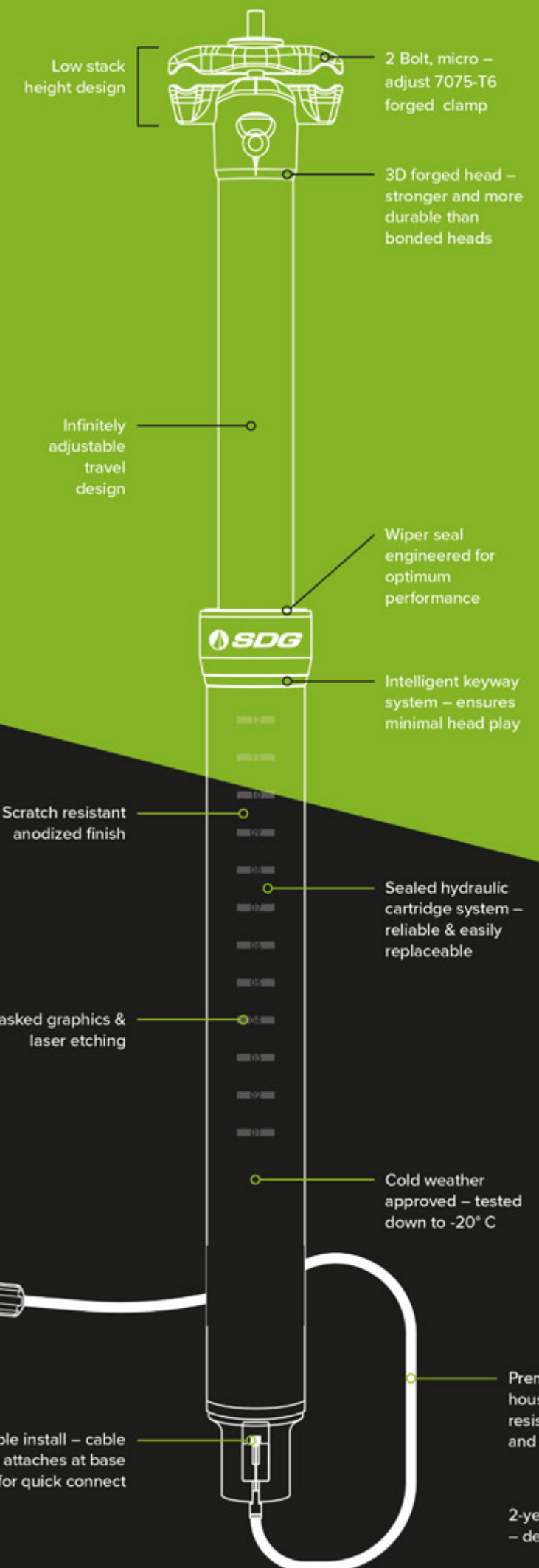
Reliability, Redefined — For 20+ years, SDG has delivered cutting edge, dependable products. And today, after 2 extensive years of global testing, the Tellis seat post is no exception. Simply put, it just works, drop after drop.

TRAVEL	DIAMETER	LENGTH	WEIGHT	P/N
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125mm	31.6mm	390mm	530g	07541
150mm	30.9mm	440mm	552g	07560
150mm	31.6mm	440mm	573g	07561

* Weight does not include remote lever
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TRIGGER FF HELMET



mtbman



PHOTOS: IXSMTB, LIU WEN QIAN, MESUM VERMA

WORDS: MESUM VERMA



Look:

With your first look at the helmet you will know, it's a proper full face helmet. Not like an Enduro helmet with chin guard. It looks just like a normal Gravity helmet. But you can notice, there are more vents than normal for a full face downhill helmet. But it looks like it can take a beating.

One the trail:

The helmet is light and it can be easily tagged on small backpack if you want, or you can wear it like a normal open helmet. You feel almost nothing of the helmet and you can breath without feeling the chin guard in front of your mouth. The ability to strap the goggles under the visor when you're not wearing them is a nice feature, but it will fog the goggles during colder times, so then, it's still better to take the goggles off completely.

Taking your helmet off is so easy, as the lock comes with a magnetic buckle, you can open it with one hand. The fit of the helmet on your head is also simple, you can adjust it with the ErgoFit on the back of your helmet.

Personally, I know the helmet is made for racing and crashing. I had a hard crash on a Enduro Race in Thailand. I broke my T5 vertebra. The helmet did not get broken, so it saved my head. Although I must say, I missed having more padding in the helmet, which would have prevented the hard hit to the head. There is almost no damping at all for that. But I guess there is a compromise to make, either a super light helmet or it will weigh a little bit more.

Overall:

A very nice helmet for almost everything which involves going down fast but also has some uphill in it!





THE iXS TRIGGER FF IN DETAIL

One of the lightest (+/- 595g) all-mountain, trail and enduro full-face helmets designed for all day comfort, regardless of your riding discipline. The Trigger helmet provides unrivaled protection with patented inmould technology, in which the helmet shell is directly fused to the internal EPS material. Boasting a high-level of innovation, the Trigger FF remains to be the only helmet on the market designed with the unique and patented technology of one complete and seamless EPS liner unit, with inclusion of the chin guard. Because of this, the rider benefits from increased structural strength due to elimination of joints, reduced weight & volume, and increased ventilation.

The numerous ventilation openings have been strategically angled and positioned to offer superior air circulation, supplying a continuous cooling system during the entire duration of your ride. Precision interlocking ErgoFit Ultra allows you to adjust the fitting ring both vertically and circumference-wise, guaranteeing a precise and comfortable fit for any head. With the 2-level visor adjustment capability, there is sufficient space to rest your goggles along the forehead yet below the visor. Completing the entire package is a Fidlock magnetic buckle which makes for a quick, efficient closure and release without compromising security.

ADRIEN LORON TESTED THE FULL FACE HELMET

„It's the perfect helmet for races like the Trans Madeira. On a full day of hard racing the perfect ventilation keeps your head cool. You feel like wearing a half shell helmet but with a lot of extra protection thanks to the full face construction.“



Trigger FF MIPS

Go Trigger for a light, fast and fully protected ride

Mips brain protection system

Patented all-in-one Inmould technology, external and internal ventilation channels

Adjustable, goggle compatible visor

Dial adjuster with precision interlocking

ErgoFit Ultra system for horizontal and vertical adjustment

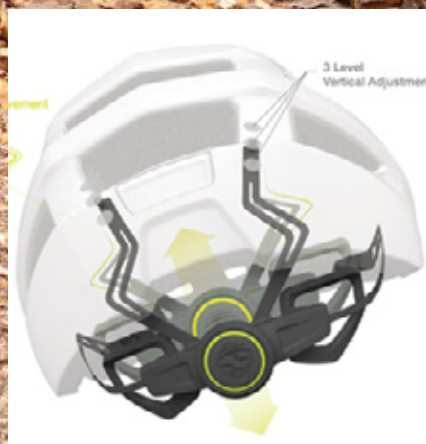
Double-Inmould, 360° Inmould shell

Adjustable straps

Magnetic closure

+/- 595g (SM 54-58cm)





FROM: 279.00 EURO



बेनिचान्ज्युवाङ्ग बेनिचान्ज्युवाङ्ग न्हर्वा



PHOTOS: TEJSON KUNWAR

WORDS: RAD RIDES





A pine forest situated on the outskirts of Kathmandu valley, planted by scouts in the late 80's, has now turned into a mtb and outdoor-park, thanks to the effort of TRAILBUILDERS NEPAL and RADRIDES.

Bhanjyang Bike-Park is a patch of forest in a place called Sainbu, Bhanjyang. Accessible in around 30 minutes from any part of the city, it is easy to visit the bike-park, the first around Kathmandu city to be so convenient.





First conceived by locals Tejson Kunwar aka Fastson and Anup Khatri, it is now managed by RADRIDES in order to connect the visions and expertise of TRAIL BUILDERS NEPAL and TESSELLATE DESIGNS, with cooperation and funding from the local government of BALKUMARI, LALITPUR Ward-18.

The construction for the park began in late November 2022. It was built by TRAILBUILDERS NEPAL ADVENTURE, and RADRIDES managed the build and documented the process. For the full video of how the build went, you can check on our youtube channel.





The trail is a pedal-friendly loop trail. It measures 250m in length and drops 40m from its start to the finish. Three corners leading into features such as rollers and pumps were designed in order to maximize the length of the trail with a good flow. It takes an average of 1.2 minutes to finish the downhill, and 3-5 minutes to pedal up again.

It took around a month's time to complete the build. From making tools for building the trails, to collecting the materials and manpower necessary for every phase, it was all handled by the TBN team. Working a minimum of 4 hours a day, the team quickly cleared the forest and laid out the skeleton of the trail.





After this stage, the team excavated necessary parts with a mini bobcat (which was only 3ft wide), as it would be a good width for the path that was going to be. After that, on the 3rd week the team started to line up and add features to the trail. The trail was quickly taking its final shape. Weeks 4&5 were spent on finishing of the trail. From the start to finish we figured out many things that had to be done better or worked on in other builds.





Today, the park is open to the public. There are many future programs that can be done in such place, and it is also going to make a huge difference in helping provide the necessary skill-set to riders who want to train. The team is constantly working towards the betterment of the park for the future.



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