



GOING
GREEN

THE NEWEST CROP OF EARTH-FRIENDLY GEAR

ALBERTA'S
DIRTY SECRET

THE MESS IN THE OIL SANDS

explore

CANADA'S OUTDOOR MAGAZINE

CANADA'S
BEST

Outdoor Towns

PERFECT PLACES
TO ESCAPE THE BIG
CITY AND START
LIVING THE LIFE

[Jasper, AB]



RUNNING THE
TOUGH-MAN RIVER
BIG-ASS CRITTERS
ON THE ROAD
PEDALLING 100
HELLISH MILES



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Canada's latest adventure-racing stars; a new speed record for the Seven Summits; where to browse for Ms./Mr. Outdoor Right; great balls of wood in the B.C. forest; celebrating the history of DEET; a storm chaser takes to the small screen; Mother Nature lays the boots to the West Coast Trail.

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Cycling 100 miles in one day was the perfect challenge...sort of.

BY ALISA SMITH

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PHOTO BY BRAD WROBLESKI



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Finally ready to make the break from the urban grind? Then check out our picks of some of Canada's primo adventure towns, where the grass really is greener. BY IAN MERRINGER AND JACKIE DAVIS

52 Taking on the Tough-Man River

They were a group of engineers, celebrating a near-middle-aged reunion by attempting one of the Yukon's gnarliest whitewater streams—with only three bag-in-a-box wines. No wonder the rocket scientist was worried. BY BRUCE KIRKBY

58 Dirty Secrets

How the tar-sands boom is quickly but quietly ripping up the forest and turning Northern Alberta into a global environmental hot spot. BY ANDREW NIKIFORUK

66 Holy Supersized!

They're larger than Pamela Anderson and a lot more real. An intrepid photographer takes the measure of some of Canada's giant roadside critters. WORDS AND PHOTOS BY DARYL BENSON

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Seven Summits Trail

funded crew of locals that coordinates the cutting and maintenance of trails with an unheard of seven full-time summer staff. **MOUNTAIN BIKING:** The jewel of Rosslund's crown of crenellated cycling is the Seven Summits Trail, a 30-kilometre alpine cross-country ride that was the second trail in Canada to be awarded an "Epic" designation from the International Mountain Biking Association. The area also has plenty of arthritis-inducing downhill (one stretch of Oasis drops 1,400 feet over 3.6 kilometres), and Red Mountain's bike park. **SKIING:** If you're a serious skier, you already



Red Mountain

★ Rosslund BRITISH COLUMBIA

"Canada's Alpine Town" rushed into being in the 1890s when gold was discovered on the flanks of Red Mountain. So many prospectors and related hopefuls arrived in town that within a few short years, Rosslund—perched a kilometre above sea level deep in the Monashee Mountains—had become the largest city in British Columbia. The miners didn't spend all their time under the mountains though. The Scandinavians in particular spent their leisure hours on the crust of the increasingly hollowed-out mountain looming over town. In 1896, Red

POPULATION: 3,550
 AVERAGE HOUSE PRICE: \$270,000
 NUMBER OF TIM HORTONS: 0
 WAL-MART: No

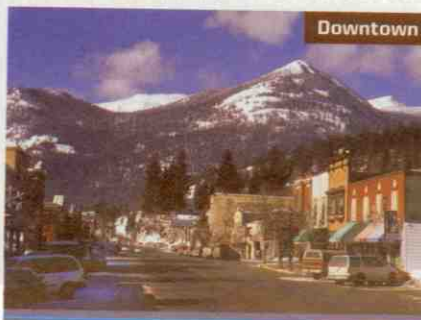
Mountain hosted Canada's first downhill ski race, and 50 years later volunteers at the ski club built Western Canada's first chairlift. Rosslund's Wild-West history defines it still, with a wide main street that remains a passable setting for a few swinging-door saloons. Though it has shrunk some since its boom days, it remains a town unto itself—not beholden to a larger urban centre—and emits its characteristic unhurried tempo with its own radio station, weekly newspaper and mountain film festival. And while the mines shut down long ago, the prospectors of the 21st century—largely professionals who have migrated in search of the good life—are finding their own gold in them thar hills.



Mountain know about Red, which may have the planet's best collection of lift-served steep-tree skiing. Across the road, the Black Jack Ski Club offers one of the best-blanketed cross-country networks in the country.

ABOUT TOWN

Rosslund may be on the small side, but it's not lacking for civilized touches. Those who like their food will find plenty of decent options, especially if they enjoy a little historic ambiance. Idgie's Fine Foods, located in one of Rosslund's heritage buildings, is a local favourite for Italian, while the Old Fire-hall, a new restaurant in-surprise—Rosslund's historic fire hall, offers more than 40 wine varieties. There's also the Flying Steamshovel pub, named after the helicopter that made the first flight in North America—and then crashed spectacularly near the site of the bar.



Downtown

OUTDOOR LOWDOWN

HIKING: There's a trailhead at every corner of town and an unparalleled network of hiking (and biking and horseback riding) trails in the area thanks to the Kootenay-Columbia Trail Society, a well-

OTHER FACTOIDS » Home to Le Roi, the only historic hardrock gold mine in Canada that's open to the public » former hometown of Nancy Greene-Raine » no traffic lights

PREVIOUS SPREAD: MIKE TITTEL; THIS PAGE TOP: RYAN GREARY; MIDDLE AND LOWER: DAVE HEATH; MAPS BY GARY DAVIDSON