

# THE JOURNAL

In partnership with Mountain Designs



August 2019.

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# Volume 3

This journal is in partnership  
with Mountain Designs.

This month has been one of our favourite's. Constant sunrise to sunset days and a whole lot of good light, weather, memories and people. We spent almost two weeks in Wyoming, a state that we never knew much about nor ever really wanted to visit. That was until Daniel (@dgsc) asked us whether we wanted to go out to the Grand Tetons. With not much of a plan ahead of us, we couldn't say no. This is the beauty of living on the road, having long summer days and so much motivation to get out there and explore new things. The month ended with a short backpacking trip in the Sierra's again, heading up to the highest point we've ever hiked, at 3250m. Hope you enjoy the next installment.



## Welcome to The Journal

Hi everyone. Back again for round three. We've definitely come along way since volume 1, having travelled over 12,000 miles now. Thanks so much for checking out the previous editions and leaving some great comments! This installment will be considerably shorter due to returning to Australia for a few weeks, however we still had a jam packed few weeks on the road and Madison and I are looking forward to sharing this time with you. The temperatures have started to drop out here and we can feel that autumn is on it's way, about time I say. Nights are chilly, days are cool. This is one of my favourite times of the year. We're getting our winter gear prepped as we speak and our thermals have already come out.

If you're new to this, The Journal is a place where we share our adventures from the road. The good, the bad, it's all in here. We're hoping you're liking the images and the stories that go with them.

We did some really memorable hikes these last few weeks, from hiking in the remote backcountry of Wyoming through grizzly bear territory, to a high alpine lake sunrise mission resulting in one of the most gorgeous sunrises of our lives. We just keep making memories and doing so with the help of Mountain Designs gear. Read along and we'll unpack this months adventures.

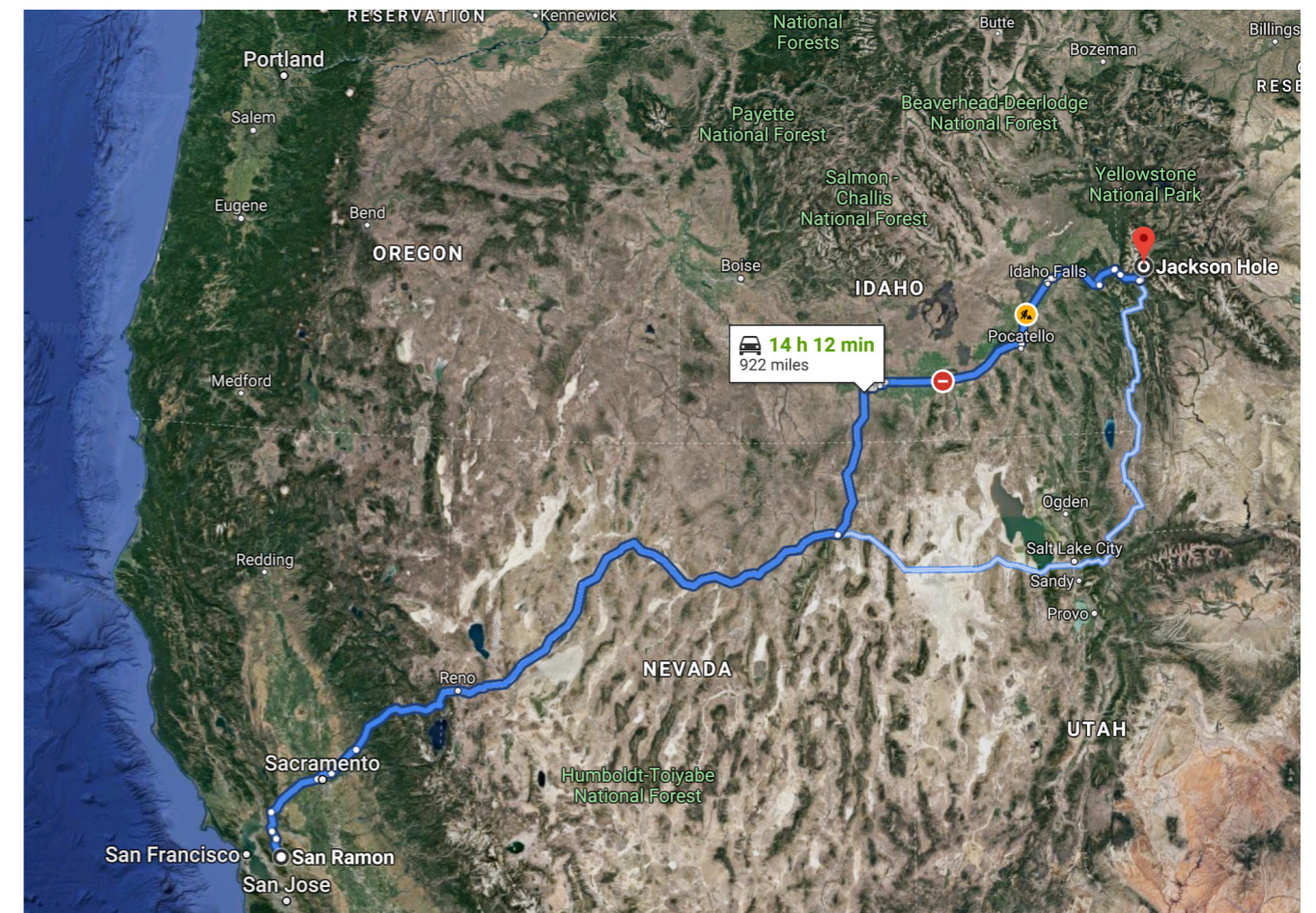


Mens 600 Down Jacket.



# Hitting the open road.

Destination: Jackson Hole, Wyoming



The 10th of August was here. We had no idea how time had already gone so fast. We'd been in the states for already two months, although it felt much longer, which is a good thing. As you can see, we had a lot of driving ahead of us to make it out to Wyoming. Our goal for the first night was a small town called Winnamucca in Nevada, roughly half way in. Arriving around 5pm we got a good nights rest before making the next leg of our journey, early the next morning.

In our classic fashion, we never completely know what the next day will bring, where we'll be staying, what we'll be doing and so on, so it's always interesting to think about our choices at the end of each day and how we ended up where we did.



You might ask, what on earth is out in Wyoming? To be honest we didn't really know. I'm not great on US geography and didn't even know Wyoming was home to Yellowstone NP, however we were ready to learn all about it and experience a real mid-west area.

Madison and I agree that some of our greatest memories have come when we take a risk, step out of our comfort zones, meet new people and go places we would have never gone before.

This trip ended up being one of our best ever and we're so grateful we did it. We made some new lifelong friends, Daniel (@dgsc) and Lee (@\_leegross\_) who are absolute legends. Defintiely follow their work on Instagram for incredible US coastal, mountain and lifestyle vibes.

These moments are what make roadlife so interesting, captivating and inspiring. It's the people you do things with, that make the place so good.

Remember that.



# Deep in Wyoming Backcountry

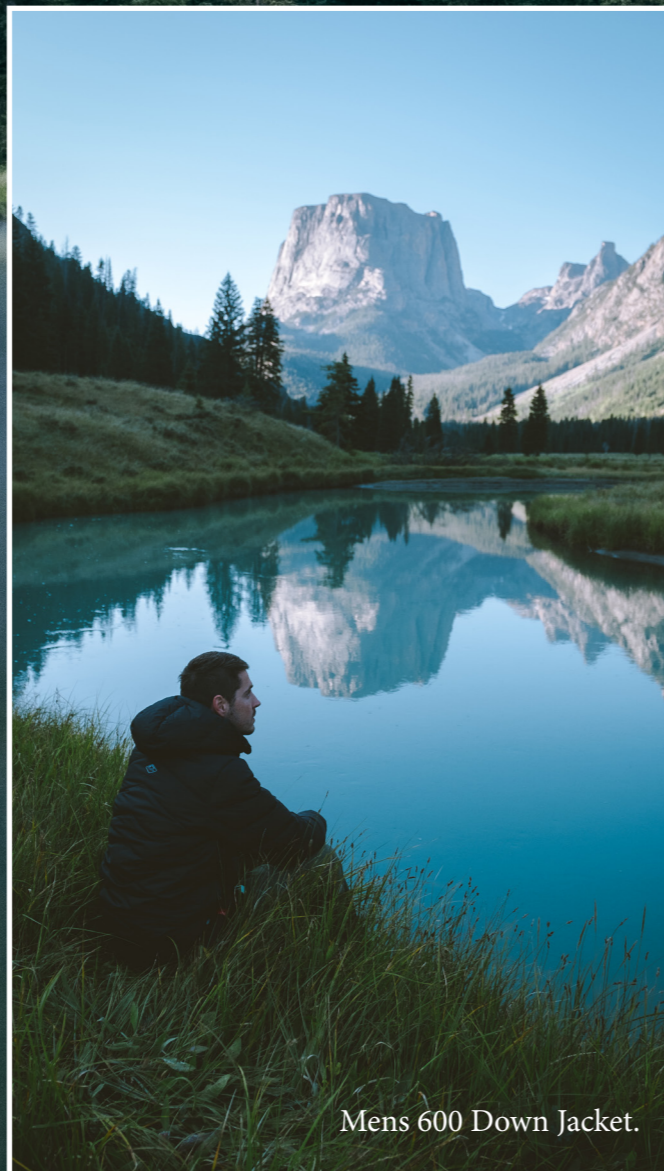
I'm not sure if any of you have ever hiked through Grizzly bear country, but let me tell you it's a scary experience. Let alone doing so at 4am, no moon, 10 miles ahead of us through the most densely populated grizzly area in the state! It was a mission to sleep the night before, with all the worst case scenarios spinning through our minds for our first hike in Wyoming. We contemplated not even doing it, not risking it. The time came, the alarm sounded, we got up quick (Harrison, Daniel and myself) and we drove a few minutes from camp to the trailhead. Our pre-packed Escape 30L Day Pack had all the essentials for a sunrise mission in relatively cold temps. We packed my Ascend Down Jacket and Harrison's 600 Down Jacket while we both wore our respective fleeces to stay warm, the Kodiak and Pro-Elite. And most importantly Harrison had the bear spray holstered, ready to go.

Our head lamps were on and we had worked up a steady pace. Harrison was in front with the bear spray, and we were constantly scanning the forest around us for eyes. The rangers had told us that we were safest in a group larger than two and we should keep a constant conversation going (or play music) to lower the risk of us startling a bear. So we did all of the above - talking, music, lights, 'random loud noises.

We were past half way and had just come out of the forest into a meadow. The temperature literally dropped by a few degrees and we could see the grass had frost on it -just like a scene from a movie foreshadowing something bad was about to happen. In a routine scan of the surroundings, Harrison spotted a set of eyes. They were faint and moved slow. We couldn't tell how far away it was and couldn't be certain of what animal it was but naturally we all assumed it was a bear. As if on queue, a pack of wolves in the distance started howling. We froze for a few seconds while in our heads we were sprinting as far away as possible (Note: this would have been the worst possible thing to do). We raised our voices so it would know we were there, we quickly discussed options: should we turn around? Keep going? Crawl into a ball and cry? We settled on moving forward, now our pace had slowed, our heart rates had increased and we were constantly looking around

for more eyes. You'll all be pleased to know that we did make it to the lake without an attack and we were so glad that we chose to keep going because the lake was even better than we'd imagined, the light was beautiful and the water was super still so the reflection was incredible.

As soon as we stopped walking, our bodies cooled and it was definitely time to pull out the Down Jackets and take some shots. We were 7 miles down the trail at this point and once we had some more light we decided to go another 3 miles before heading back to the car. Such great locations and we were so glad we did it but we still had half the journey to go.



Mens 600 Down Jacket.



Womens Kodiak Fleece

**Location: Secret**  
**Distance: 21km Out and Back**  
**Temperature: 1 Degree Celsius**



Notice the bear spray... locked and loaded.



# MORNING MISSION

One of the finest views we have ever seen. This is why we do what we do.



*To keep places truly wild, I won't be sharing the name of this lake. Hope you understand. If you're determined to make it here, a little googling will no doubt give it away, so go for it!*

*As photographers do, we search for new places that haven't been killed by Instagram. These places often require hard work and determination to get to them, especially if we're talking about a sunrise mission through grizzly bear land and over 800m of elevation through boulders, mossy rocks and cold temps. Bit of a send if you ask me. Two days left in Wyoming, with pristine weather on the forecast. Should we do it, should we not? Lots of thoughts were being tossed around camp, but deep down I knew we had to.*

## 18th August 11:24pm

We're here at our camp, roughly 40 minutes drive from the trailhead. Our new friends Daniel and Lee are sleeping in Lee's car and we're in ours. Madison is asleep but I can't seem to fall asleep... It's the nerves keeping me up, the terrible thoughts going through my head and the possible scenarios all seeming to unfold at once. We're planning to hike to a lake in the morning and I'd be lying if I said I was comfortable about that. Apparently there's no trail for half of the hike and a few large boulder fields to cross in the possibly icy weather. Combine all this with the recently sighted active grizzly bears in the area and the uncertainty of this hike, I'm in complete shambles.

It would be a dream come true to make it up there, for one it hasn't been shot much and we'd love to be the first to shoot it in gorgeous light, but more importantly it would be such an accomplishment for us all, considering the obstacles. We're all feeling it, chatting around the fire tonight about whether we should even do it.



## 19th August 9:30pm

We made it. I've had time to take it all in now and reflect a little. What a day of emotion. The alarm went off at 3:30am, and much to my amazement, I got up straight away as if something had inspired me in my 3 hours of sleep to get this job done. It was cold outside, maybe 4 degrees. I went over to the others and got the thumbs up to start driving. They'd follow me to the trailhead. Madison got ready in the back while I drove for 40 minutes, briefly looking out the window to the imposing silhouette of the range. Funny how mountains can scare you. I was still thinking about whether we were crazy to be hiking at this time of day with grizzlies around. Whatever, it was happening.

So we started hiking, making loud noises and shining our lights everywhere. We had a steady pace, expecting it would take us 2.5 hours to reach the lake. We honestly flew up the mountain, making group decisions on where to go when the trail was no longer a thing. It was steep and tiring but we avoided the boulder field by staying left which made it so much easier.

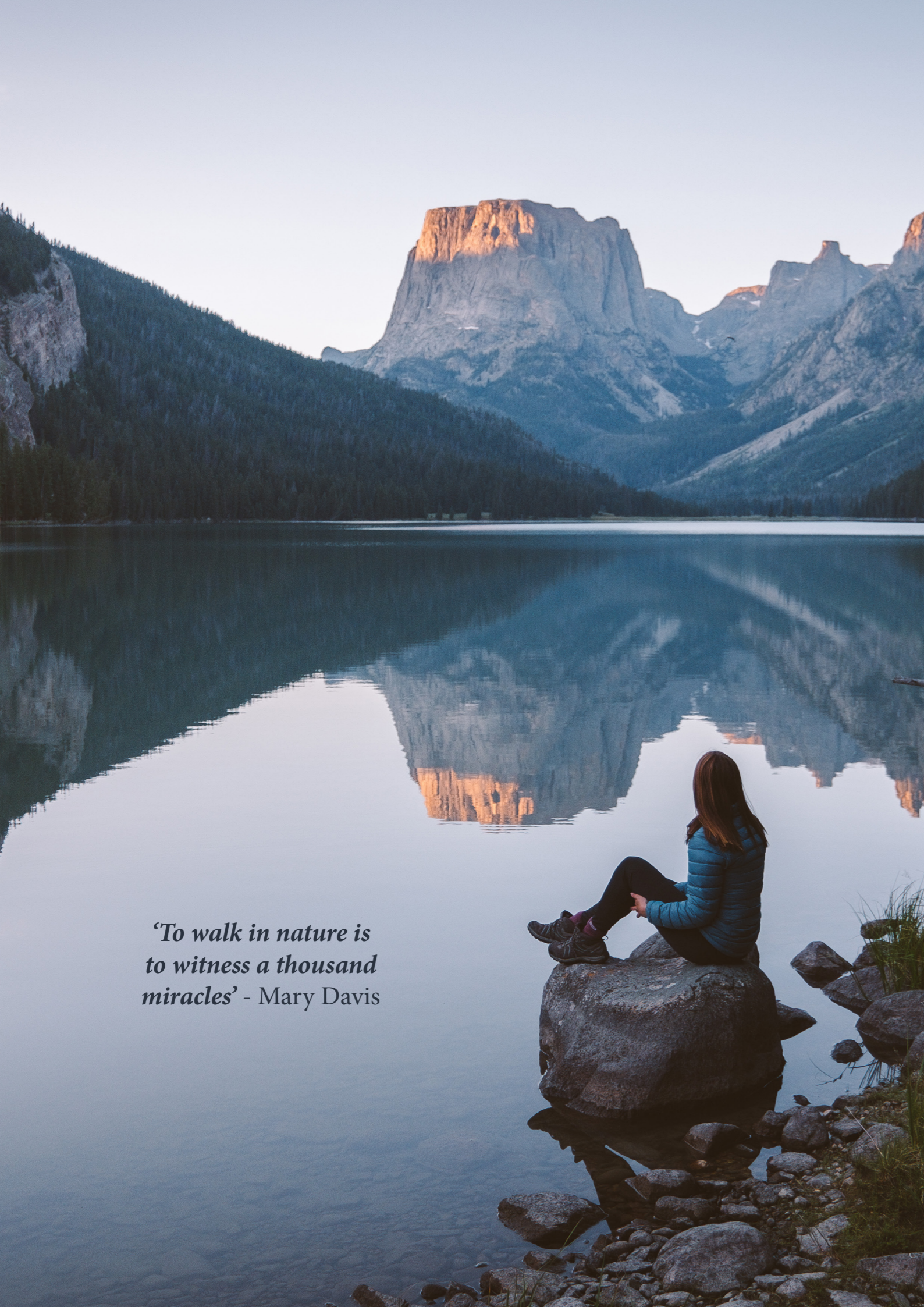
The cover image of the journal is one of my favourite shots of all time. It symbolises friendship and overcoming a fear, coming together to achieve something greater.

That's what it's all about.

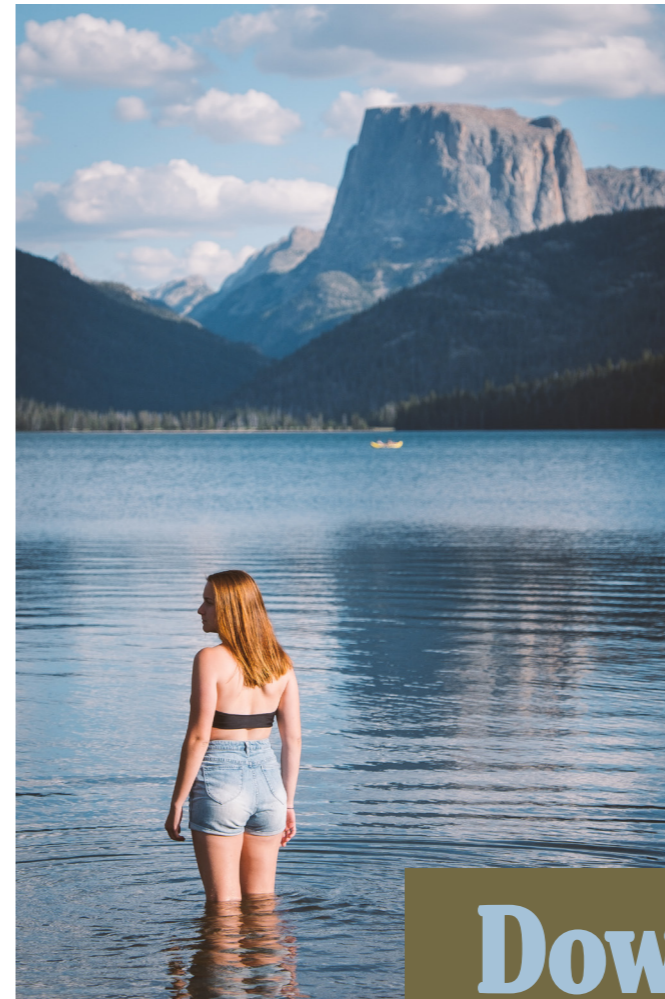


So stoked to be here!

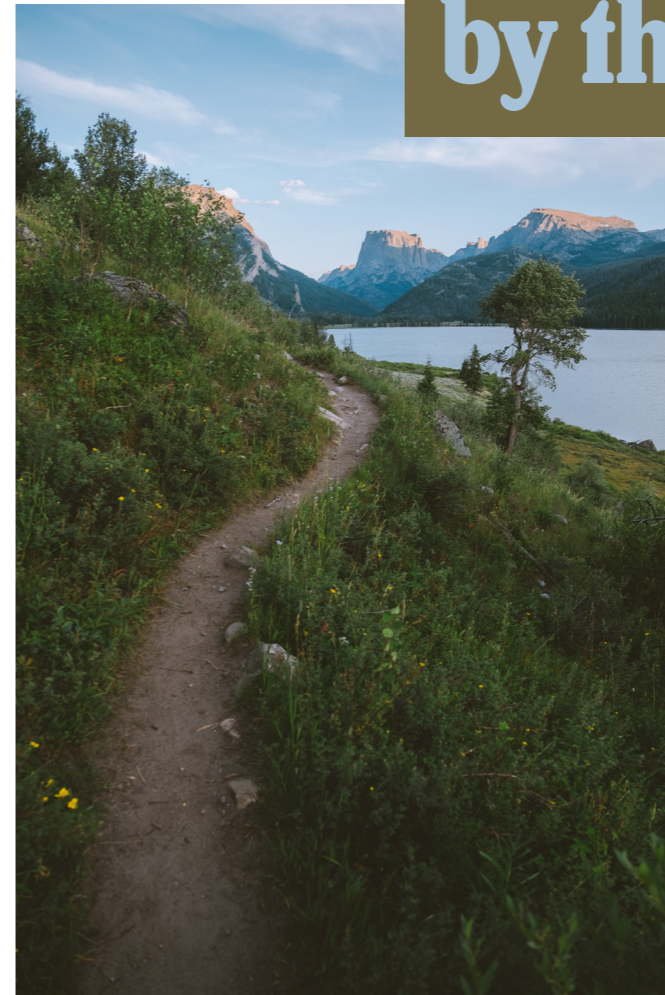




*'To walk in nature is to witness a thousand miracles' - Mary Davis*



**Downtime  
by the lake.**







## Thoughts on the Grand Tetons

These mountains are incredibly beautiful. Viewed differently from so many angles makes driving the Grand Teton highway a dream. Sunrise is when the peaks are illuminated in an alpenglow and at sunset the mountains are golden backlit, with rays of light beaming through. It's a simply stunning area.

Grand Teton stands a huge 4199m, as the most prominent and highest peak of the range, it serves as a point of reference. The Tetons rise straight out of the surrounding plains, more than 2000m higher than the town of Jackson. They feel huge, they look huge. They're imposing. They're simply one of the most beautiful mountain ranges I've ever laid my eyes on. I couldn't get enough, I need to return.



Highway 191.

## Top 5 Photo Ops in the Grand Tetons

From sunrise to sundown there are photo opportunities everywhere in the park. Up first is the famous Schwabacher landing, a small boat landing about a mile off the highway. Make sure you get there about 20 minutes before sunrise to watch the alpenglow on the mountains. Second is Oxbow Bend at sunrise which is magical in the mist and golden light. Thirdly, looking for wildlife along the highway at dawn and dusk is a great opportunity to find a bison, a moose or maybe a bear. Next up, is the famous road view on highway 26 looking directly at the Tetons - this place works at sunrise and sunset. Lastly, the famous Snake River overlook.



Schwabacher landing at sunrise.



Oxbow Bend at sunrise.





## Finding a Place That Feels Like Home.

We officially have a new favourite camp site, by far. Because we are always on the move, typically we only stay at a spot for one night. We then move to the next one, where ever is safe and ideally has phone service. But this spot ticked all the boxes and warranted a 5 night stay. The longest yet.

Our camp was located just outside the National Park, up a mountain in the National Forrest so it had the most superb view out to The Tetons. Something Harrison and I rarely do is have a camp fire - partly because we don't always have room to carry firewood and partly because we are always in such a rush to make dinner that we can't be bothered. But having the three of us there every night gave us the excuse we needed. It became our routine to photograph sunset, head to camp, the boys would set up the fire while I read and then we would cook dinner, have a beer and chat until bed! This little routine made the Teton's feel like home for the week.

### Daily Routine

- 4.00am** Wake up around 4am.
- 4.30am** Drive to the trailhead & start a hike.
- 6.30am** Enjoy the sunrise.
- 7.00am** Hike back to the car.
- 9.00am** COFFEE & breakfast at Jackson Hole. Followed by photo editing/reading/using wifi at our favourite cafe 'Cowboy Coffee'
- 3.00pm** Get supplies & firewood, head back to the park for sunset.
- 7.30pm** Watch the sunset.
- 8.00pm** Back at camp for a camp fire & dinner.



# A Night in the Wilderness

**The two of us, our tent, and under five 14'000' peaks.**

Our objective for the night - to reach a gorgeous turquoise alpine lake nestled below the Palisade Glacier and a few mountains well over 14,000 feet. This adventure was one for the books.

With a forecast of two days of good weather on the horizon, we took the opportunity to hike to the highest elevation we ever had before. We started at an elevation a little over 2370m in the parking lot (which is high to start with). Our goal was to camp above the lake at around 3300m which gave us an elevation gain a little under 1000m. No wonder we were starting to feel some mild altitude sickness. Shortness of breath was an understatement - I had never experienced a lack of breath and the side effects that come with it. Safe to say, when we arrived at the lake, we were completely pooped - but nothing some hot ramen can't fix.

By the time we got there, it was already starting to get dark so after a brief rest and scouting out the area for our sunrise spot, we set up our Geo-2P tent and got cozy for the night. So far, this tent has been our go-to for long hikes as it only weighs 2.6kg and is super easy to set up (it only takes about 5 mins). Plus it has two doors and vestibles which means that our

packs are easily accessed and sheltered during the night. The other thing that we love is that it is free standing, so when we are camping on rocky surfaces like this night, it doesn't matter that we can't peg the tent down. All we needed was two loose rocks to hold the vestibles out.

On this night, we were the only people around and that is how we like it. Complete solitude and windless conditions so we were so excited to see the lake glowing for sunrise. We settled in, read a little and got a good night's rest ready for a spectacular morning view, followed by a grueling hike back to the car.

How do you rate our campsite view? The best views come when you put in the effort. It's in these kinds of places that I am inspired the most. Can't wait to do some crazier climbs to even more remote spots. Nothing beats camping in the mountains.





# Packing List for an Overnighter



Below are the Mountain Designs essentials that we packed into our Explorer 75L hiking pack and the Voyager 65L travel pack for an overnight back country trip.

## **Geo 2Person Tent**

The lightest option for a longer hike over 20km return.

## **Airlite 9 Sleeping Mat**

Super comfortable and relatively small.

## **Inflatable Pillows**

The Mountain Designs pillows are the best, they pack so small and have a valve to adjust firmness.

## **500 & 700D Sleeping Bags**

The warmest and lightest possible.

## **Pants and Shirts**

Larapinta Convertible Pants and breathable Merino Tee.

## **Jetboil**

For dinner & coffees.

## **Hiking Poles**

We knew this trail would get tricky and steep. We usually just take one pole each.

## **Merino Thermals**

An essential base layer.

## **Fleeces**

Our go-to for when we cool down after a hike. Pro-Elite Climber and Kodiak.

## **Down Jackets**

For extra warmth over thermals and fleece in the evenings and early morning. Ascend 600 and Forge 600

Down Jackets.

## **Food & Water**

Water is key. Also lots of snacks for breaks on the trail.

## **Bear Vault**

For storage of food and other scented items in bear country.



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