

FEARLESS femmes

What qualities must a woman possess to make it in the world of adventure? Is it all about bulging biceps, hairy armpits and a desire to conquer, or do feminine wiles have a place in the wild outdoors?

WORDS Emma Francis

THE OTHER DAY, I finally plucked up the courage to take myself surfing. Yep, completely solo; no boyfriend to point out the rips and reefs. Just me, the ocean, and about 20 blokes all vying for the wave of the day.

Yes, I was intimidated. Yes, I felt out of my depth, splashing in a sea of testosterone. But I was going for a surf, goddamn it, and no preconceived notions of gender were going to stop me.

After successfully negotiating the impact zone and making it out the back, I was feeling pretty chuffed; so far so good. Then a briny dude, who looked like he'd spent the better portion of his life in the drink, cruised by on a stand-up paddleboard (SUP) and took it upon himself to appraise my paddling technique from his lofty position.

"You're lying too far back on your board," he offered, without invitation.

I promptly wriggled forward.

"Now you're too far forward – move back a few inches."

I wriggled back.

"Nah, you're too far back again – you want your chest to be right over the pink hibiscus."

Suddenly, my blatantly feminine surfboard, replete with pastels and petals, seemed incredibly lame.

"Oh, I don't really have a clue what I'm doing out here," I giggled, surrendering all my hard-earned experience, knowledge and common sense to this oracle of surfing wisdom.

"You'll get there, babe."

And with that, my self-confidence abandoned me. It promptly retreated back to the beach to sulk between the flags. "Stick to yoga and boxercise," it sneered. "This is no place for a girl."

In offices, boardrooms and bedrooms across Australia, women may be forgiven for thinking they can have it all. Feminism has come so far it's almost redundant, and girls are building empires, burping babies and gyrating to Lady Gaga in equal measure.

But outside, on the oceans, mountain peaks and polar ice caps – where brawn and bravery rule the day – it is still very much a man's world. For a woman to make her mark in adventure she needs rare qualities; she needs to abandon her female proclivities and think like a man. She needs to be totally devoid of fear, and have self-confidence on tap. In short, she needs balls.

NOT NECESSARILY, SAYS LEGENDARY Australian mountaineer, Brigitte Muir. Despite having romped through some of Mother Nature's most fearsome playgrounds, the Belgian-born adventurer from Natimuk in country Victoria, is well acquainted with the demons of self-doubt, and insists they can be a woman's best friend when properly harnessed.

"I think it's very natural for women to lack self-confidence, not to believe in themselves, and always think that the person next door is much more experienced," she sympathises, after listening to my sad surfing tale. "It's something that affects us from our teenage years on, and I've often felt it myself."

"But it's how we use those fears and doubts to our advantage that matters, and I haven't let them stop me from putting myself on the line and taking on things that many people may think are not possible."

As far as adventure cred goes, Brigitte is in a class of her own. In 1997 she became the first Australian woman to summit Mount Everest, and the first



Adventure cyclist KATE LEEMING, who is currently two thirds of the way through her 'Breaking the Cycle' expedition, pedalling more than 23,000km across Africa from west to east. bicycle.com



GET OUT THERE

KEEN FOR ADVENTURE but don't know where to start? Ease into it by joining an organised group trek. The following companies specialise in women-only adventures and cater for first-timers and beginners right through to more seasoned trekkers.

ADVENTUREPLUS.COM.AU Learn the ropes of mountaineering from a legend. Brigitte Muir regularly leads treks through Nepal and the Himalaya, and has a special interest in tailoring adventures for all-women groups.

WILDWOMENONTOP.COM From leisurely weekend walks along the Australian coastline, to epic adventures abroad, Wild Women on Top tailors treks to all levels of fitness and experience. Founder Diane Westaway has a wealth of trekking and fitness experience behind her, and promises to get even the most sedentary sisters excited about the great outdoors. If you need inspiration, read about WWOT's Seven Summits team – a courageous group of 'ordinary' mums who are already halfway through a quest to summit the highest peaks on all seven continents.

WOMENSOWNADVENTURE.COM.AU From Tibet to Tuscany and anywhere in between, Women's Own Adventure has a huge variety of women-only treks and cultural walks to choose from.

ADVENTUROUSWOMEN.COM.AU Besides offering a vast range of single and multiday women-only adventures, both in Australia and overseas, Adventurous Women hosts the Women's Adventure Club, a social networking site where women can swap stories, share advice and hook up with other intrepid ladies.

MORE INSPIRATION?

Girls Outdoors – a wealth of information online about the world of adventure through female eyes. girlsoutdoors.org

National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame – there are plenty more tales of brave and adventure-loving women in the annuals of Australian history. Check them out at pioneerwomen.com.au

Girls on Top – home of Macpac Girls on Top adventure racing team (pictured above during the XPD, see page 30). Their motto: 'Train like Jane, race like Tarzan'. The group (including non-racers) meets on weeknights to get outdoors in the Land of the Long White Cloud. girlsontop.co.nz



WIN! A PAIR OF MERRELL WOMEN'S SIREN SONG MID TRAIL BOOTS VALUED AT \$239

How? Simply nominate the adventurous women you know of who should have made the list and explain why. We know there are plenty out there. The best argued case will win the shoes from Merrell. Email your entry to editorial@outer-edge.com.au. Entries close 30 September 2010.



Australian to summit the highest peak on each continent – a 'Seven Summits' odyssey that took her nine years to achieve. Today she uses her leadership and motivational skills to serve and inspire others, leading treks for World Expeditions, making documentaries, and running her own charity to help improve literacy among the Nepalese women she now considers family.

Anyone reading Brigitte's dizzying CV could be forgiven for thinking she hails from an established mountaineering pedigree. But, far from it, the 52-year-old describes herself as the black sheep of the family, and attributes her intrepid spirit to Tin Tin comics and a tomboyish disposition.

"I actually lived in a very industrial valley, with factories everywhere, so for a long time, the great outdoors was a bit of an unknown for me," she says. "Then I met a girl at school who was into caving, and she was always coming back into class with bruises and scratches. I thought, 'Oh, what's that all about?' and decided to find out for myself."

Brigitte describes her introduction to caving as a "revelation", and despite some heated debates with her mother about the proper conduct of young ladies, she was soon acquiring an impressive collection of bruises and scratches to call her own.

But it's a steep ascent from the caves of Belgium to the summit of Everest, and it would take more than just a sense of adventure to see Brigitte achieve her lofty goals, especially in the male-dominated domain of mountaineering, where physical strength and an all-conquering attitude are often seen as essential attributes.

But it was that very 'boy's club' mentality that ignited Brigitte's Seven Summits ambition. In 1988, Brigitte's then husband, legendary adventurer Jon Muir, was invited on a bicentennial expedition to Mount Everest, but Brigitte, who'd been leading expeditions in the Himalaya for several years, wasn't.

"That really annoyed me," she says. "I thought, 'Right, if you're going to Everest, then I'm going to climb the highest summit on each continent, so there.' That's how it started, really, as a dare."

Asked whether or not she compared herself to Jon during their years of trekking together, and whether or not those comparisons undermined her confidence as a mountaineer, Brigitte is disarmingly frank.

“ I also think there is a more insidious thought process at play - that if a woman can do something, it must be less difficult to do, and perhaps that's why our achievements aren't as valued. ”

"Well, we're not married anymore!" she laughs. "It's hard to live with a hero, basically, and jealousy and competition can come into it. But that doesn't mean it can't work."

"I've got girlfriends who are trying all sorts of different things and they sometimes get a bit annoyed because their husbands are stronger than they are. But that doesn't mean we can't push ourselves and achieve in these traditionally male-dominated fields. We just need to utilise our strengths and do it in different ways."

WOMEN POSSESS MANY INTRINSIC TRAITS that set them up for success in the wilderness, says Diane Westaway, founder of women-only expedition company, Wild Women on Top. She has spent the last 10 years observing the unique ways in which women approach adventure, and has some very firm opinions about how gender plays out in the great outdoors.

"I recently went from a very remote trek in Nepal with 18 women, to a mixed trek up Everest led by men, and the contrast between the two experiences couldn't have been more stark," she says. "The women were very much team-oriented and really looked after each other, whereas on the Everest trek, there wasn't any sense of team, from my point of view."

"Basically, I think the male psyche is much more ego-driven and goal-focused, whereas achieving the goal together, with everyone happy and healthy, is the key thing for women."

According to Diane, the women who seek out her treks place good food, breathtaking views and forging new friendships ahead of blazing trails and breaking records.

"I think that's a very female thing. Women are looking for those magic moments and want to take the time to absorb them," she says. "I also think

that women, as natural communicators, want to share their experiences with friends, and are much less inclined to go off and do things on their own. Perhaps that's one of the reasons female solo adventurers are such a rare breed – they have something very specific to prove to themselves, whereas most women don't think like that at all."

Nevertheless, once in a while, what starts out as some fun with the girls can stir greater ambitions.

At 50, Linda Beilharz, is the newest inductee into Australasia's trekking hall of fame, having, in May this year, become the first Australian woman to walk (assisted) to both the North and South Poles. She has also crossed the Greenland Icecap, and now has the Patagonian Icecap firmly in her sights to complete the quadrella.

The humble Bendigo mum insists her expeditions were never intended as world firsts, but evolved naturally from her love of frozen landscapes.

"I have a group of female friends with whom I've done a walk every year for the last 12 years," she explains. "Within that group, two of my strengths ended up being navigation and leadership, and I think doing that with those women friends is what gave me the confidence to do the bigger things."

A series of mountaineering courses in Australia, New Zealand and Canada helped consolidate Linda's passion and skills, and before she knew it, her 'Four Icecaps' mission had reached critical momentum – there was no turning back.

"To be honest, I never dreamt I could do anything like the things I've done. I had kids when I was 21, and then I was after a career, so adventure was secondary," she says. "But once I had the time, and started taking those small steps to build up my skills, I realised it was possible."

Linda says she owes a lot of her confidence to a book called *To the Pole*. Written by British adventurer Caroline Hamilton, it tells the story of five British women who, in 2000, became the first all-woman group to reach the South Pole. Linda says the humour and disarmingly honest language used by Hamilton helped demystify the task at hand.

"The way she wrote about their story was a bit different to what you read from men, which is far more about defying death," she says. "They also didn't set themselves up as experts – they set themselves up as ordinary women simply doing something they wanted to do. And that made Antarctica seem do-able."

However, according to Linda, such positive messages about women in the outdoors are few and far between in a media obsessed with stereotypes. She believes many women underestimate their abilities, not because they lack physical or mental strength, but because they lack role models.

"Most of the messages that society gives us are not about women in the outdoors," she says. "The media doesn't value women being physical, and I guess we don't feature much in terms of adventure because we don't fit the categories that they're interested in, which are mostly to do with sex appeal."

"I also think there is a more insidious thought process at play - that if a woman can do something, it must be less difficult to do, and perhaps that's why our achievements aren't as valued."

Try telling that to kiteboarding extraordinaire, Natalie Clarke. In March this year, the Melbourne

became the first person in the world to kiteboard solo across the notoriously treacherous Bass Strait, in the process smashing the record previously set by a pair of fellas, Victorian friends Ben Morrison-Jack and James Weight.

"I haven't heard anyone say they think they might go and try it now that a woman has done it!" she laughs. "In fact, I think it's more of an achievement if a woman has done something, not because we are the weaker sex, but because it's not accepted for us to put our lives on hold to pursue a dream. If a woman can fit her dream into her life, now that's an achievement."

Natalie is unique among women adventurers in that she fits her derring-do around work and motherhood. While many women pursue adventure later in life, when work and family commitments no longer demand their undivided attention (or, indeed forgo traditional child-rearing roles altogether), the 36-year-old is living proof that women can pursue their personal adventure goals and still be good mums and wives.

It just takes oodles of preparation, and a very patient husband, says Natalie.

"Time to prepare for the mission was a huge issue," she explains. "I think guys can get away with letting family take a back seat for a big event, but it's much harder for women. A mum is still expected to make sure the kids have had breakfast before they go to school, pack their lunch, collect them from school, arrange their after-school activities, know who their friends are and what they want for birthday presents."

"I was lucky that my kids understood my passion for kiteboarding, and that I have a husband who is willing to look after the kids on weekends and do stuff around the house, but it's still difficult to fit everything in around a life-risking adventure."

Indeed, according to Natalie, the preparation for the crossing was almost more taxing than the actual journey.

"When asked what I was going to do for up to 15 hours kiting across Bass Strait, I joked that it would be 15 hours of peace where I wouldn't be required to do anything," she laughs. "No one expects you to make school pick-up the day you're setting a new world record!"

So how exactly did she manage to fit it all in? Natalie says her secret was to not over think things, and do her best to ignore the naysayers.

"People would always ask me what I was doing to keep fit and how many gym sessions I was doing a week, and I when I told them that I kited whenever I could, swam with my squad sometimes, and scooted with my kids to school, they'd look at me like, 'What makes you think you can do this?'"

Like Linda, Natalie's world record attempt wasn't borne of any burning ambition to be number one. Rather, her intentions were far more altruistic – she simply saw it as a great opportunity to raise awareness and money for her charitable foundation, Swim 4 All, which teaches autistic and special needs children how to swim.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the desire to encourage and nurture others is a common theme among elite women adventurers, who often feel compelled to "give back" after undertaking such profoundly life-altering experiences.

"Setting a record certainly helps justify the expenditure, but if you did it just for that I think it would be empty," says Linda, who is one of the founders of Journeys for Learning, a not-for-profit

organisation that works with schools, community groups and workplaces to teach teamwork, resilience and environmental sustainability through the stories of adventurers.

"For me, being in the outdoors is about an appreciation of the environment," she says. "I think that, unless we get people out in the bush, we become distant from it and don't understand our connection to the natural landscape."

And that's a sentiment all four women share: that, at the end of the day, it doesn't matter much if we're not setting records or defying death, so long as we're paddling out the back, soaking up the landscape and enjoying the moment – briny dudes notwithstanding.

TAKING IT TO THE EDGE (clockwise from top): mountaineer Brigitte Muir; climber Louise Shepherd; adventurer Helen Thayer; expedition cyclist Kate Leeming; mountaineer Pat Deavoll; adventure tour leader and mountaineer Diane Westaway.



women ON TOP

AUSTRALASIA'S LEGENDARY FEMALE ADVENTURERS

"Each time a girl opens a book and reads a womanless history, she learns she is worth less," wrote American educator Myra Sadker in her book *Failing at Fairness*. Shame on the media then, for neglecting the many fearless femmes who explore and adventure just as hard as the lads who hog headlines and history books. There are, of course, plenty of brave women out there. Here's *Outer Edge's* pick of the most legendary Australasian women adventurers and their achievements. Got your own ideas about who should make the list? Email them to us at editorial@outer-edge.com.au.



Kate Leeming EXPEDITION CYCLIST

> **KATE LEEMING IS** the first woman in history to cycle the Canning Stock Route (CSR), completed as part of her 25,000km Great Australian Cycle Expedition, (2004–2005). The nine-month journey included 7000km of off-road cycling on isolated tracks, the CSR, which crosses four deserts and approximately 1000 sand dunes, being the most arduous stage. Her book, *Out There and Back*, details the story of the Great Australian Cycle Expedition, one of the first projects under the banner of the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005–2014). Kate is also the first woman in history to cycle the breadth of the New Russia, having organised and led the five-month, 13,400km Trans-Siberian Cycle Expedition from St Petersburg to Vladivostok aiding the children of Chernobyl. The journey included traversing 1500km of 'the Swamp' in eastern Siberia, where in 1993 there were no through roads and vehicles could not pass. Kate is a fellow of the Royal Geographic Society and, as *Outer Edge* goes to print, is 17,000km into her 20,000km Breaking the Cycle expedition cycling west to east across Africa. btcycle.com

Sue Fear OAM (1963–2006) MOUNTAINEER/CLIMBER

> **AFTER GAINING EXPERIENCE** with Outward Bound and then as a wilderness guide with Wilderness Expeditions, Sue Fear's climbing career took off in 1997 when she led the first successful ascent by an Australian team of Makalu II (7680 metres) in Nepal. Between 1997 and 2006 she climbed five of the world's 14 peaks that stand over 8000 metres. She followed Makalu II with ascents of Cho Oyu (8201 metres) in 1998 and Shishapangma (8046 metres) in 2002. In 2003, Sue climbed Everest (8848 metres) from the more difficult Tibetan side on the North Col. She was the first Australian-born woman and the second Australian woman after Brigitte Muir to do so. She then summited Gasherbrum II (8035 metres) in Pakistan in 2004. Her final climb was to Manaslu (8156 metres) in 2006, which she successfully summited before tragically falling into a crevasse at 7800 metres while descending. Her body remains on Manaslu's slopes, honouring a request that if she were to die while climbing a mountain, her body would be left there. A plaque in memory of Sue lies just above the town of Bandipur on a small hill facing Manaslu. suefear.org



Louise Shepherd CLIMBER

> **LITTLE KNOWN OUTSIDE** the close-knit climbing fraternity, Louise began climbing in 1979. She quickly proved her mettle by becoming one of the first women to regularly climb grade 25 routes on sight and is credited with a string of significant ascents in Australia and around the world. In the 1980s she was one of the top – if not the top – female climbers in the world, leading routes such as *Tales of Power* (26/27) and *Separate Reality* (26) in the US, *Lord of the Flies* (26) in the UK, and completing the first onsight ascent of Trojan (25) at Mt Arapiles. Her gear placement on lead during some of the hardest onsight ascents is something not often matched by today's top climbers. Louise went on to influence new routes in the Grampians such as the popular *Amnesty International* (24) and *Diazepam* (25) at Mt Stapylton. She remains a Natimuk local, working as a freelance rockclimbing guide and instructor. louiseshepherd.com.au

Helen Thayer ADVENTURER



> **AT THE AGE** of 50, New Zealand-born explorer Helen Thayer was the first woman to journey solo to the Magnetic North Pole, accompanied only by her dog Charlie (who saved her life when a polar bear tried to attack her). The achievement meant she was first

woman to walk and ski to either of the poles. At the another extreme, Helen walked 3860km across the Sahara Desert and 2400km across the Mongolian Gobi Desert, becoming the first woman to do so on both accounts. Helen then walked 2400km through the High Atlas Mountains in North Africa, studying Berber culture en route, and backed that up by a 1300km trek through the Western Sahara and a 3400km sojourn on foot through northern Alaska and Canada. On water, Helen kayaked 1900km along two remote Amazon Rivers, along the way photographing three species unknown to science. For a year, she lived wild among wolves in an attempt to understand their annual lifecycle and, earlier this year, she lived with a remote Bushman tribe in Africa. Prior to all of her adventures, this amazing woman represented NZ in the 1961 Commonwealth Games, represented Guatemala in international track and field meets from 1962–1965, and in 1975 represented the USA on the national luge team, winning the national championship. Now a US resident, she has been honoured by the White House and National Geographic, being named one of the Great Explorers of the 20th Century by the Society. Her books *Polar Dream: the First Solo Expedition by a Woman and Her Dog to the Magnetic North Pole*, *Three Among the Wolves: a year of Friendship with Wolves in the Wild* and *Trekking the Gobi: Desert of Dreams and Despair* recount her biggest exploits. Her next aim is to walk with the Indigenous people of Australia and New Zealand as part of her educational adventure program. helenthayer.com

Freda du Faur (1882–1935) PIONEERING MOUNTAINEER

> **FREDA WAS AUSTRALIA'S** first great mountaineer; a blazing pioneer in a time when women were, according to social mores, supposed to keep the home fires – rather than campfires – burning. In 1910 she made history as the first woman to climb New Zealand's highest peak, Aoraki / Mt Cook (or just Mt Cook as it was back then). With New Zealand guides Peter and Alex Graham, she went on to achieve a number of first ascents in the Southern Alps, even naming a few. Her journey to the peak of Mt Cook began at the end of 1908, when Peter Graham agreed to teach her snow and ice craft. She also completed three months training under the care of her life-long friend Muriel Cadogan at the Dupain Institute of Physical Education in Sydney, before returning to New Zealand in 1910. There she undertook a series of increasingly difficult climbs. Guided by Peter and Alex, Freda climbed Mt Cook (3760 metres) in the then-record time of six hours. In the same season she climbed Mt De la Beche (2979 metres), Mt Green (2828 metres) and Mt Chudleigh (2944 metres, a first ascent). Late in the following climbing season, she conquered a virgin peak now named Mt Du Faur (2389 metres) along with Mt Nazomi (2953 metres, also a first ascent), Mt Tasman (3497 metres, second ascent), Mt Dampier (3430 metres, first ascent), and Mt Lendenfeld (3192 metres, second ascent). In her final season she made first ascents of Mt Pibrac (2567 metres) and Mt Cadogan (2398 metres), both of which she named. Then, in 1913, she accomplished the feat with which her name will always be associated – the first grand traverse of the three peaks of Mt Cook, still regarded as the classic climb of the New Zealand Alps. The same party made the first traverse of Mt Sefton (3149 metres). In 1915 Freda published *The Conquest of Mount Cook and Other Climbs* in London. Saddened by the death of her partner Muriel in 1929, she returned to Australia filling her time with plenty of bushwalking. Tragically, she died of self-inflicted carbon monoxide poisoning in 1935.

IMAGE COURTESY OF George Manning / Canterbury Museum



Tanya Faux
EXPEDITION KAYAKER AND ENVIRONMENTALIST

> **ONE OF THE WORLD'S** best paddlers across steep creek, whitewater and freestyle disciplines – she recently came away with two wins and a second in the Teva Mountain Games, (see page 42) and a third in the ICF 2009 World Freestyle Championships in Europe – Tanya is also one of our best expedition paddlers. As expedition leader on an unsupported trip to the Kimberley in 2008, she led a group of paddlers on two first descents (the Moran and Mitchell Rivers) spending 24 days on the water, an achievement that backed up her first decent of King Edward River in the same region in 2007. Her team endured constant 35°C temperatures and 100 per cent humidity, while paddling world-class grade five whitewater rapids in the spectacular Grand Canyon-like sandstone gorges of the Moran. They then carried all their equipment for three days over a range of mountains to the Mitchell River. In 2008 she was named *Outer Edge's* Australian Adventurer of the Year, she was the 2007 Australian Female Canoeist of the Year, and won the world championships at the ICF World Cup Freestyle in 2006. A 'Teva Life Agent', Tanya has also taken multiple titles at the Teva Cataract Extreme and Teva Lea white water events in Tasmania. In the adventure world, she's known as one of the most dedicated athletes, tackling wilderness extremes with a training regime that puts others to shame. A staunch advocate for environmental protection, especially of the Kimberley region, Tanya is currently planning another major expedition to northern Australia in 2011.

teva.com/tribe/team/kayaking/tanyafaux.aspx



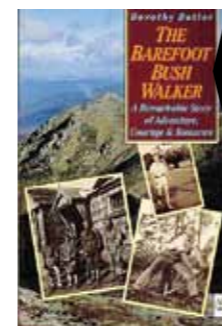
Emily (Caroline) Creaghe
(1860–1944)
EXPLORER

> **IN 1883, AGED** only 22, Caroline Creaghe became the first white woman explorer to travel on horseback across the vast expanse of Australia's unmapped Gulf Country. In the company of expedition leader (noted early explorer Ernest Favenc) and her husband, this extraordinary adventurer covered more than 2000km, travelling overland from Normanton in Far North Queensland to Darwin in the Northern Territory. Their route crossed inhospitable terrain, some of which had never before been surveyed by

Europeans and where attacks by Indigenous clans (a result of the ever-increasing pastoralist expansion into tribal hunting grounds) were a constant fear. Along the way she faced dire hardships, including the death of one of the touring party, all the while riding sidesaddle and wearing a whalebone corset and full Victorian collar. "We none of us ate any salt meat, or anything that would tend to give us a thirst... We are now in unexplored country where no white man has been before, so it uncertain when we may see water again," she wrote in her diary. After finding a copy of Creaghe's diary in a secondhand bookshop, artist Gemma Lynch-Memory retraced the explorer's route, and the result is a travelling exhibition, *emily:explorer*, which will continue to tour Australian cities and rural areas through 2010–2011. gemma Lynch-memory.com/_emily_explorer_

Sorrel Wilby
ADVENTURER

> **AN ADVENTURER, FILMMAKER,** author, photographer and artist, Sorrel Wilby has flown under the radar of late, but she's still out there, adventuring on forays away from her Norfolk Island base. Popularly she's best known for her nine-year role as a host on Channel Nine's *Getaway*, but in our estimation it's the achievements far from the bright lights and red carpets of television for which she should be remembered. Sorrell first trekked alone for more than 3000km through Tibet, an experience recounted in her highly regarded book *Tibet – a Woman's Lone Trek Across a Mysterious Land*. Along with her husband, Sorrell then completed the world's first complete traverse of the Himalaya, trekking, walking, crawling and climbing ultimately covering 6500km, recounted in her best-selling book *Across the Top*. Africa was next with the pair climbing all the major mountains on the continent. Again their extraordinary story was recorded in the book *Africa - A Timeless Soul*. Sorrell has also ridden 17,000km solo on a bike throughout Asia. And she's still at it, leading trek tours for World Expeditions and the Australian Himalayan Foundation. worldexpeditions.com



Dorothy Butler (1911–2008)
BUSHWALKER, MOUNTAINEER AND CONSERVATIONIST

> **IN A RARE** 1937 photo, there are six rugged looking men from the 'Tigers', a subgroup of the Sydney Bushwalking Club. All are attired for the bush, including stout walking boots. And there are the two women, one of whom is barefoot. It was a walking trait of Dorothy Butler to go bush sans footwear, establishing her moniker 'the Barefoot Walker'. Dot was one of Australia's pioneering bushwalkers and mountaineers, who, after joining the Tigers in 1931, went on to push the boundaries of trekking in this country and overseas. Her 120km walk through trackless Blue Mountains bush

(including nearly 3000 metres of climbing) in three days has likely not been equalled by any woman since and she was the first to climb Crater Bluff in the Warrumbungles. Dot went on to climb ice mountains in Peru, the Yotunheim in Norway, and the Sierras in the US. In one day, barefoot, she walked 80km in the old Burraborang, and, on another day, the length of the Grose River (54km). In 1969, the then-58-year-old Dot organised and joined a team of eight young men to climb 27 peaks in the Andes as part of the Australian Andean Expedition. Even formal occasions prompted her affinity for adventure: she cycled from Sydney to Melbourne for her wedding. Dot was 60 years with Sydney Bushwalkers, 40 years with the NZ Alpine Club (of which she established the Australian branch) and 25 years teaching mountaineering to young Australians in New Zealand. For this she was given the Australian Geographic Gold Medallion for Adventure in 1988. In her 80th year she climbed the Three Sisters, again barefoot. Over many years she has been involved with numerous fights to protect the environment, including those of Lake Pedder, the Daintree, Kakadu and the Myall Lakes National Park. Her autobiography *The Barefoot Bushwalker* was published in 1992 by ABC Books.



Pat Deavoll
MOUNTAINEER/CLIMBER/KAYAKER

> **SUMMITTING MOUNT COOK** at the age of 17 is impressive. So is climbing all of New Zealand's 3000-metre peaks while still in your teens. In the decades following these achievements, New Zealander Pat Deavoll climbed her way to being one of the Southern Hemisphere's top mountaineers, with a tally of alpine expeditions from New Zealand's Southern Alps to Pakistan, Nepal, China, India and Alaska. Not content to stay on the slopes, and bitten by the kayaking bug in the 1990s, she took on first descents down rivers in Nepal and India and was the second New Zealander and first female credited with descending the famed Nevis Bluff grade six rapid on the Kawerau River, NZ. But her main game has always been mountaineering: she was the first woman to ascend the Hidden Balfour Face of Mt Tasman and claimed the first female team ascent (with her sister) of the south face of Douglas Peak in 2000. She also succeeded on a 2004 ascent of the technically demanding Caroline Face of Mt Cook. Pat then achieved the first ascent of Xiashe in Tibet (2005), and the first ascent of Haizi Shan (2006), also in Tibet, by its north face, after 10 previous expeditions had failed. In 2007 she summited two unclimbed and unnamed peaks, naming one Wahine, Pakistan, and the other Miandi Peak (6400 metres) in India. More recently, in 2009, Pat Deavoll made the first solo ascent of Pakistan's 6180-metre Karim Sar, and, despite breaking her back in a recent sport climb in New Zealand, still has her sights set on 6805-metre Jankuth, in India. patdeavoll.co.nz



Kay Cottee AO
SOLO SAILOR

> **LONG BEFORE THE WORLD** became enraptured with 16-year-old Jessica Watson, there was Kay Cottee, if not the youngest (she was 34 at the time) Kay was the first woman ever to sail solo, unassisted and non-stop around the world. Leaving on 29 November 1987 from Watsons Bay she sailed back into the harbour 189 days later on 5 June 1988 on her 11.2-metre *First Lady*. The feat was the result of a childhood ambition, one that perhaps began unknowingly when she was first taken on a boat by her yachting family – she was only a few weeks old. The voyage was not without incident, with Kay suffering extensive bruising when in the Southern Ocean her boat capsized and she was washed overboard. She was awarded Australian of the Year in 1988 and went on to write two books, *First Lady*, about the circumnavigation, and *All at Sea on Land*, about life after the accomplishment. From 1995 to 2001 she was chair of the National Maritime Museum, now the permanent home of her yacht, *First Lady*. kaycottee.com

One hundred years ago, travelling right meant 17 leather cases, five safari suits, three hat boxes, two musket guns, one specimen logbook and, for added comfort, one tin bath. Which made searching for a misplaced quill rather difficult.



These days, travelling right means travelling light.

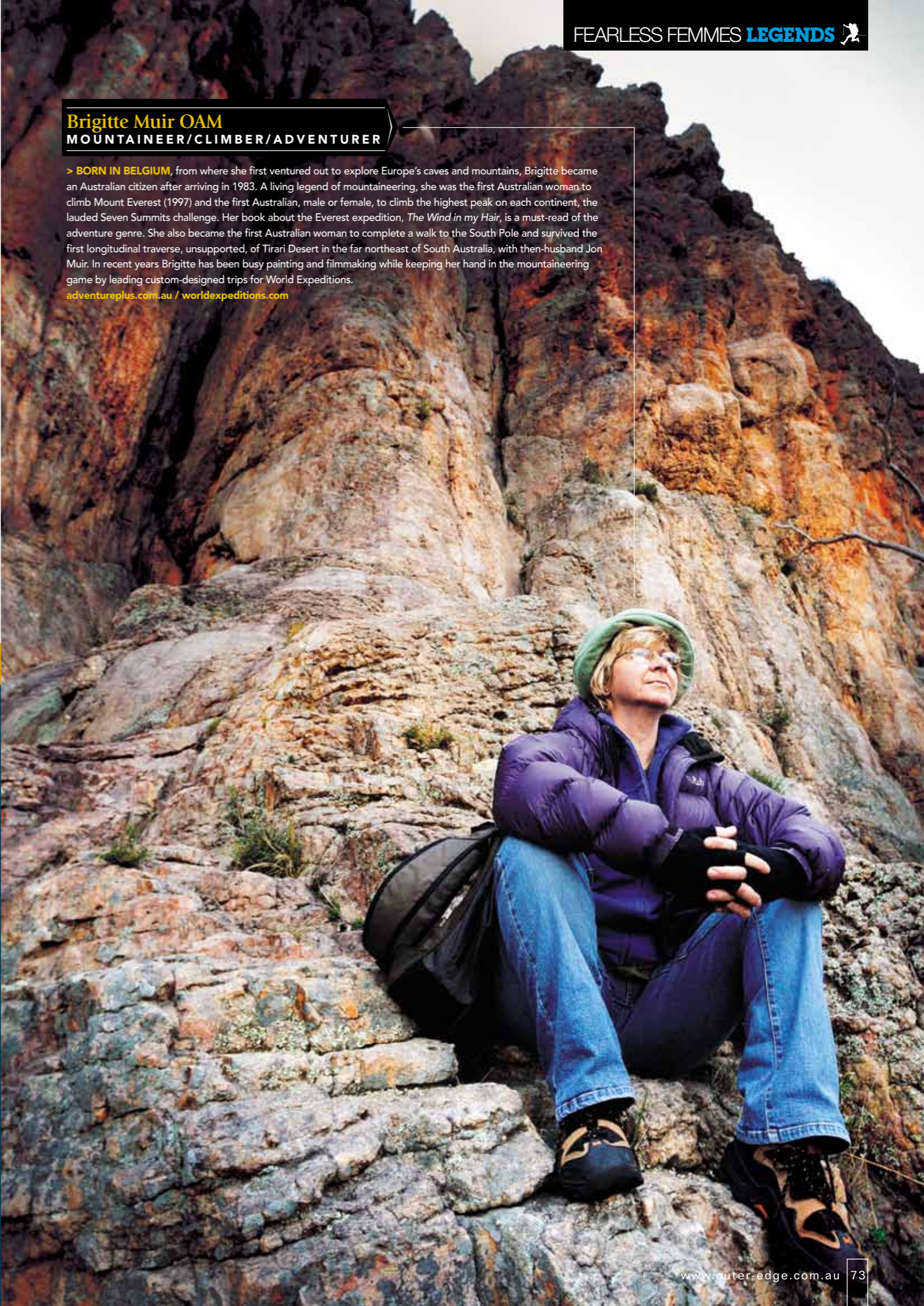
Avoid excess baggage fees, arduous repacking and searching for misplaced items by organising your luggage. This means less time in airports and hotels, more time enjoying the adventure.

Travel changes. Move with the times.



Brigitte Muir OAM
MOUNTAINEER/CLIMBER/ADVENTURER

> BORN IN BELGIUM, from where she first ventured out to explore Europe's caves and mountains, Brigitte became an Australian citizen after arriving in 1983. A living legend of mountaineering, she was the first Australian woman to climb Mount Everest (1997) and the first Australian, male or female, to climb the highest peak on each continent, the lauded Seven Summits challenge. Her book about the Everest expedition, *The Wind in my Hair*, is a must-read of the adventure genre. She also became the first Australian woman to complete a walk to the South Pole and survived the first longitudinal traverse, unsupported, of Tirari Desert in the far northeast of South Australia, with then-husband Jon Muir. In recent years Brigitte has been busy painting and filmmaking while keeping her hand in the mountaineering game by leading custom-designed trips for World Expeditions. adventureplus.com.au / worldexpeditions.com



- Travel Wallet (Med - 84g)
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- Toiletry Cell (Small - 62g)
- Money Belt (One Size - 58g)
- Eye Shade (One Size - 23g)
- Packing Cell (Small - 44g)

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