

THE MOST FAMOUS MEN IN THE WORLD

PART 1 OF A
3-ISSUE SERIES

Esquire

MAN AT HIS BEST

MAY 2013

DICAPRIO

OUR GUIDE TO
KICKING
ASS AT
WORK.
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YOU KNOW...

HE'S THE
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A

WOMAN

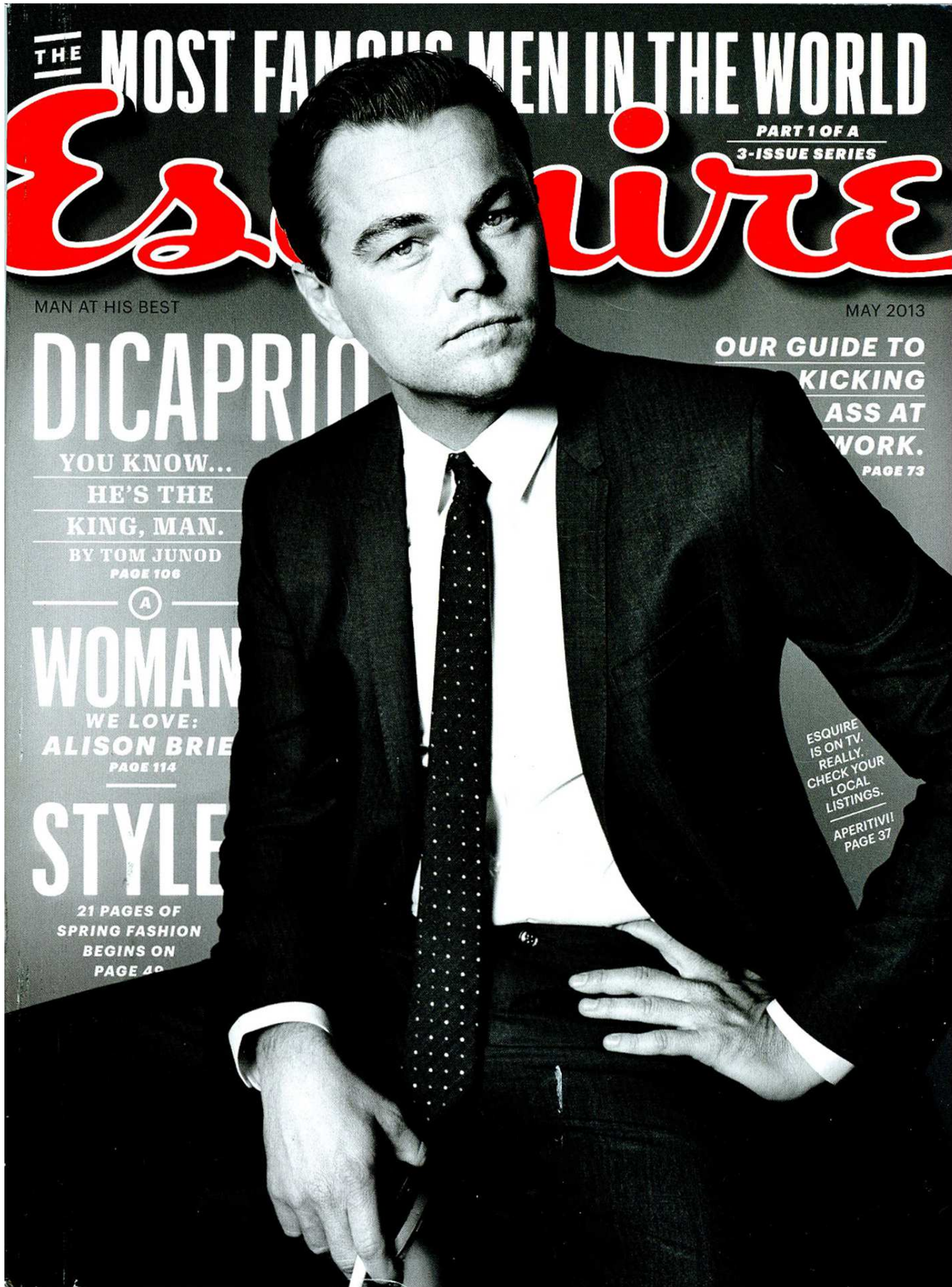
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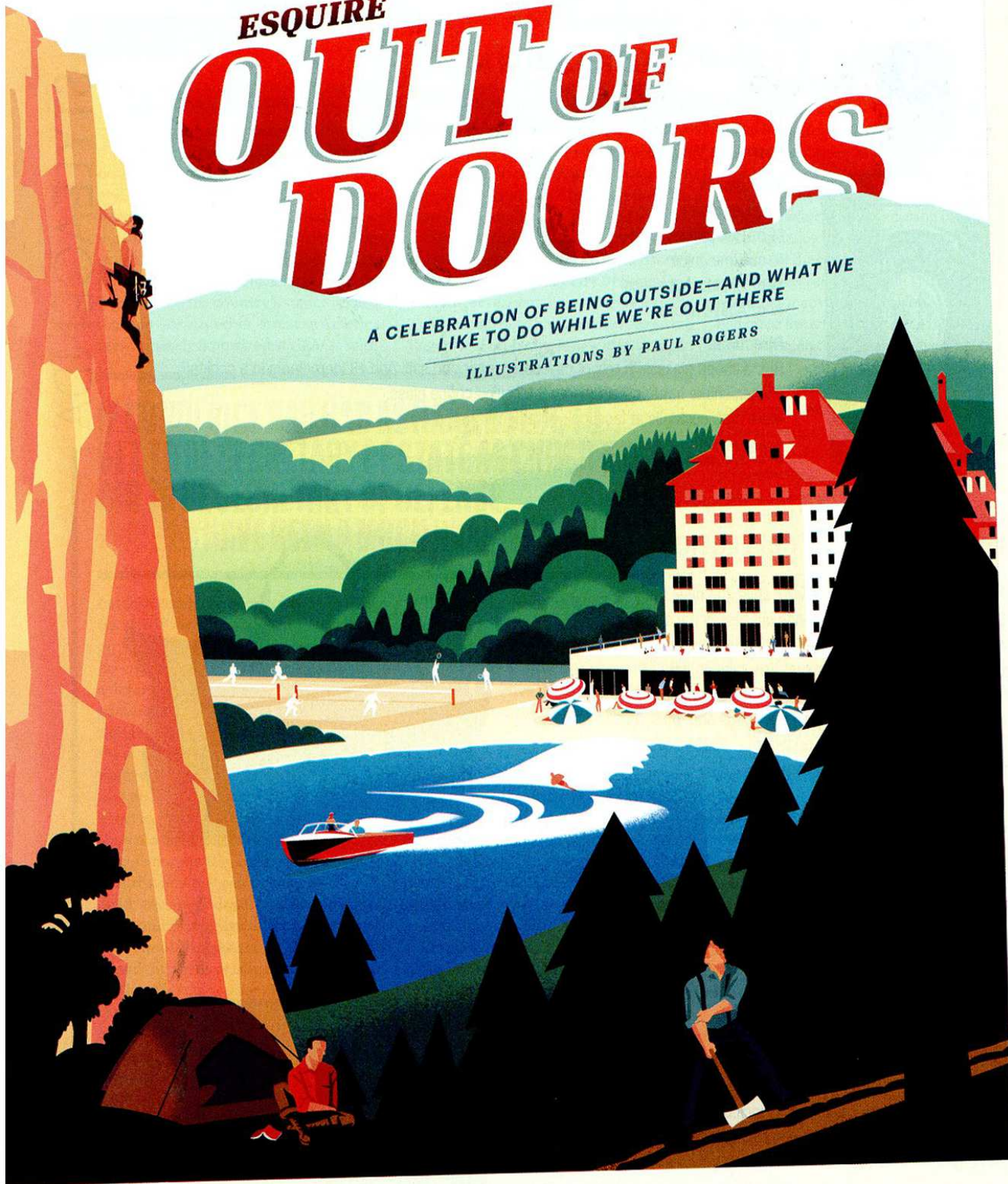
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ESQUIRE OUT OF DOORS

A CELEBRATION OF BEING OUTSIDE—AND WHAT WE
LIKE TO DO WHILE WE'RE OUT THERE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY PAUL ROGERS



Winter is over, and temperatures have returned to a level hospitable to creatures with warm blood. So get off the couch and into some shorts. Maybe put on a little sunscreen. It's time to get outside again.



When a Man Learns to Slalom

AS MUCH FUN AS IT IS ALREADY, WATERSKIING CAN BE EVEN BETTER—AS SOON AS YOU GET A LITTLE HELP

BY PETER MARTIN



The best thing about waterskiing—aside from the rush of skimming over the water at the top speed of a Kia—is that everyone can do it, from a kid to a grandpa. And that's where the trouble starts: You start to think you know what you're doing. Which is dumb. You wouldn't take up the oboe with only a few pointers from a neighbor, and you shouldn't do it with waterskiing, either.

My dad taught me to ski, just like he taught me to throw a baseball and tuck my undershirt directly into my underwear. But unlike baseball, no coach ever took over for waterskiing. And unlike my Hanes undersuit, waterskiing didn't solve itself the first time I walked in front of a mirror. On the water, I was limited to what he could teach me and what I could figure out on my own. Which was fine, until I got bored and wanted to slalom. No matter how much advice my dad gave or how many times I watched him, I couldn't get out of the water. It sucked. And it hurt. I'd basically given up, and then I spent time with Boca Raton ski instructor and former national barefoot champion Mike Frankenbush (\$140 per hour; walkinonwaterski.com). What I couldn't learn in two weeks, he taught me in two hours. And he didn't seem to care or know that I took a leak while he did it.

SOME OF HIS TIPS:

BALANCE LEG: To know which foot to use, start on two skis and try the skier's salute: Raise the tip of one ski high in the air while balancing on the other. Use whichever leg you can stay up on for ten seconds.

PREP: Ball up like a cannonball, with your forward knee touching your chest. Your back leg should be out of the ski and extended behind you, and your ski should be barely above the surface of the water, with the smallest angle you can get between tip and water.

STANDING: When you think you should stand, wait. Let the ski fully plane before you attempt to extend your leg. Then—and this is the most helpful thing a beginning slalom skier can learn—to gain balance, jam your back foot into the wake like a rudder. You may not look that smooth, but your rear foot provides support until your front leg is under control.

SKIING: Everybody wants to lean back, but you should actually keep your knees bent and your body centered over your feet. Once you're up, slalom is actually easier than two skis. And a lot more fun.

CONFIDENCE: Don't ask about the alligators until after you've headed in for the day.

REQUIRED DEDICATION



HO Sports Burner Pro: Wide, with a deep V bottom for improved stability. (\$215; hosports.com)

THE ENDORSEMENT

THE OUTDOOR SHOWER



Movies. Drinking. Children. While perfectly enjoyable indoors, they all become exponentially better when brought outside. And those are just run-of-the-mill joys. Now think about your shower. Inside, it's a sanctuary. Outside, it's a celebration of luxury and privacy. Without steam to smother you, your body feels every degree of difference between the chill of the air and the heat of the water. Your mind relaxes, distracted by the beauty around it, but there's also a pleasant tension—a sense that, purely by being unclothed, you're doing something illicit. Embrace it. After all, you're outside, just as God intended. Naked, just as God intended. And in a private space, just as your neighbors prefer. —P.M.

300 Feet Up

ROCK CLIMBERS ARE EITHER HIGHLY TECHNICAL, OR DEAD

BY DAVID CURCURITO



Rock climbing is a lot like golf:

You'll be a beginner for the rest of your life. It's also not at all like golf, in that picking the wrong club won't end with you falling to your death. The sport requires constant precision, which means climbers are nothing like your average jock. There's not a lot of ass slapping or chest pounding. There's no time for that kind of thing. Not when you have checks, double checks, and triple checks to follow. Your life depends on the choices you make—and the mistakes.

A FEW PLACES TO GO



WHITE-WATER RAFTING ON THE SNAKE RIVER
HELLS CANYON,
OREGON

Category IV rapids in the deepest river gorge in North America. One boat goes ahead to set up lunch and camp, so it's ready when you get there. (three-day trip, \$990 per person; rowadventures.com)



My Acre

WHERE I CAN DO, LEARN, AND FELL WHATEVER I WANT

BY RYAN D'AGOSTINO



Long before my wife and I bought the house, some forgotten storm had knocked over an oak, and it had landed at the base of a birch. No one ever cleared the oak, and its rotted-out hulk sat against the trunk of the birch,

redirecting its growth, forcing it into a gnarled arc hanging like a gallows over what is now my driveway. My father looked at it when he was helping us move in.

"You'll probably want to get a chain saw and do something about that," he said.

Soon enough, I forgot about the birch. There was so much to do, and in the first few months I tackled jobs that seemed more urgent, like painting, and removing the nest mice had built in the engine of my car. Also, there was the fear. It would be embarrassing to cut off my leg with a chain saw so soon after moving to the country. Not



Stihl MS-271: Compact and powerful, with low emissions to help you feel green. You know, while you're cutting down trees. (\$440; stihlusa.com)

that I mentioned the fear to my father, who is not afraid of anything.

I called Stihl, because Andreas Stihl invented the chain saw. I told them my story: new house, medium-sized tree, not scared at all. They suggested the MS-271, a workhorse. They also suggested bright orange chaps, a helmet with a mesh mask and built-in earphones, gloves, and goggles. I got it all. I also spent a good hour with Mark at Bethel Power Equipment, asking him to show me one more time how to start it, what to do if it kicks back, the right stance.

Finally, one warm Saturday, I called my dad and asked if he wanted to come check out the saw. He loves this stuff. If it's outside and there's two-cycle-engine oil involved, he's in. An hour later we were standing next to the birch. I wore the helmet with the built-in earphones and the mesh mask, the gloves, the orange chaps. I looked like an ironworker dressed up as a smoke jumper. My dad wore old khakis. He showed me how to cut a notch so the tree wouldn't bind around the blade.

I braced the chain saw against the ground with my boot, as Mark had shown me. I pulled the starter and the chain saw roared into the spring air like a turboprop. I tightened my grip, aimed the blade at the invisible mark my dad had drawn on the trunk with his finger. I held it close to the wood. I was nervous.

Three seconds. That's probably what it took to make the notch. Then another ten to draw the blade through the trunk. I barely felt it—that's how powerful a chain saw is. My whole body was tensed, guarding against a kickback. I was imagining, even as I sawed, what all those tiny tooth blades could do to my leg if they could float through a tree trunk that easily.

"Nice one," my dad said as the birch fell.

"I gotta admit," I said. "I was a little scared."

And he looked over at me and said, "That's good."

I removed my giant helmet. "Yeah?"

"Oh, yeah," he said. "You always want to be a little scared of a chain saw."

REQUIRED DEDICATION

LOW HIGH

Your most important choice is your climbing partner. You need to trust him with your life. Your first climb will probably go something like this: "Um, so you've got me, right? This rope will hold me, right?" Then you climb a little and ask again. You climb a little higher and you lock up—staring directly ahead, gripping the rock so tightly your arms shake. Your hands are sweating like crazy and you yell to your partner, "I can't do this, I'm going to fall, I'm going to fall." Then your arms give out and you fall—four to six inches.

You feel the weight of your body in the harness. You pry your eyes back open and think, *I didn't die. That's not so bad.* Also: Look at the size of my junk in this harness. And so you try again, but this time you have more trust in the equipment, your partner, and, most important, yourself. Eventually you learn to rely on your feet and legs—not your arms, as people assume. It's about the small movements, not the leaps and dangles. When done well, climbing looks effortless, like a dance. And it's thrilling. Hanging three hundred feet

above the ground on a vertical slab, your heart pumping, the wind blowing in your hair, and a small pee stain on your pants—you get a real sense of accomplishment, a workout, and a fantastic view. No matter how good you get, one thing you never want to lose in climbing is fear. Use it to your advantage. A climber with no fear is probably dead.

REQUIRED DEDICATION

LOW HIGH



PIKE FISHING IN SASKATCHEWAN MISAW LAKE LODGE, SASKATCHEWAN

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The Joy of Tennis

BUT ONLY WHEN YOU'RE WINNING

BY RICHARD DORMENT



I can tell you the last time I loved playing tennis. It was late in the summer of 1990, and I was playing the only other eleven-year-old I knew who could beat me with any consistency. He was a pint-sized McEnroe—all serve and volley and *Are you KIDDING me?!?*—and I was a little Borg, holding the baseline, chasing down the ball, waiting for his returns to go long or wide or in the net. I broke him late in the first

set, and he slammed down his racket, screeched, and broke down in tears. It was brutally hot and impossibly sunny, and as I waited for his tantrum to subside and felt my sunscreened sweat burn my eyes, I remember thinking, *This is fun.*

It didn't last long. He beat me that day in three, and after working relentlessly on his game the following winter, he'd never drop a set to me again. Other kids our age also started to get serious about

COOKING

HOW TO COOK OUTSIDE

BY JEREMY SEWALL
CHEF,
ISLAND CREEK OYSTER
BAR, BOSTON



I come from a family of lobstermen. Growing up, we would have big clambakes on the beach, with lobsters caught that morning. You can recreate this pretty much anywhere with a classic New England bonfire. Dig a hole in the sand or dirt, one foot deep and two and a half feet by two and a half feet across. Build a big fire inside. Use hardwood if you have it—apple, oak, birch. Wait until the flames burn down and you have a bed of really, really hot coals.

First thing to do is get some potatoes going. They take about an hour. Wrap each one in foil and set them around the edge of the fire, right in the coals. Spin them 180 degrees a couple of times as they cook. Next, prop a grill grate eight inches above the coals. Put a few sticks of butter in a pot and set it toward the edge so the butter melts while you get the fish ready. (Keep your seafood in a cooler on a layer of ice until you're ready to cook it, but never let the ice melt so much that your clams or lobsters are in standing water. They'll drown.) Lay hard-shelled clams like littlenecks or cherrystones directly on the grill and let them open up. Grab them off the grill with tongs and dip them in the melted butter. You can do the same thing with oysters, minus the butter.

Split live lobsters in half lengthwise by laying each one on its back and driving the tip of a knife through the head—this kills them instantly. Then just continue cutting down the length of the lobster. Crack the claws a little so the meat gets exposed to the heat—claw shells are thicker than the rest of the body. Throw on the grill and turn them while they cook. When the tail meat is nice and white and feels firm, the lobster is cooked.

There are no rules to this. Let everyone graze around the fire all afternoon and into the night. You'll have some fresh lemon you're squeezing on everything. Everyone will be eating with their hands. And you'll never want it to stop.



SCUBA
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GREAT BLUE HOLE
BELIZE

Drop into the warm water of this beautiful, enormous circular sinkhole and you'll quickly find yourself deeper than you've ever gone before. Then look up to see the unmistakable silhouettes of curious sharks. Dozens of them. Maybe hundreds. Don't forget to breathe. (\$225 per person; frenchiesdivingbelize.com)

tennis—about topspin and pronation and strategy. And they would eventually kick my ass, too.

I never wanted to get serious. I only wanted to have fun, and those easy lessons on long summer days were all the fun I ever needed. I wasn't smart enough to realize until it was too late that winning, or even the prospect of winning, was the fun part for me, and once I let my peers get so far ahead of me in form and technique, the fun pretty much stopped. I would spend the next twenty years not playing a game that had filled my bookshelf with trophies, and I now look back on that time the way friends of mine talk about their early soccer stardom or Little League no-hitters: *I was really good as a kid, you know.*

That's how I found myself taking daily lessons at Manhattan Plaza Racquet Club in New York City. Bored with the gym and facing another summer sitting on my ass, I convinced myself that with intensive practice and a little discipline, I could recapture what I'd lost and maybe even improve on it. I bought some Federer Nikes (ugly, but comfortable), borrowed a racket (see right), and committed myself to becoming the best eleven-year-old player I could possibly be.

My instructor, Hunter Holbrook, was once a DIII all-conference player (and a former intern at this magazine), and after hitting with me for an hour on my first day, he was encouraged. "Good fundamental stroke mechanics," he wrote in his notes (which he



Wilson Steam 99S:
A new stringing technique improves topspin, which Wilson claims virtually lengthens the court by up to a foot. (\$220; wilson.com/tennis)

shared with me in full after I'd completed my training with him). "Understandably very rusty considering lack of time on court in recent years... but the ability is there." I tore up my feet and hands with blisters, pulled muscles in my shoulders and hips. I looked at first like John Candy huffing and heaving his way through the racquetball game in *Splash*. But gradually, I did get better. With each lesson, which typically ended with a few games of competitive match play (with Hunter playing at around 30 percent), I'd sense that once familiar feeling creep up on me. Was this fun? It was fun. *I was having fun!*

The last time I played with Hunter, his notes read, "With the right amount of time on court, you could really make great strides." And this got me to thinking about one of our lessons early on. There were two matches going on on neighboring courts. On court one: two guys roughly my age and build, hitting and spinning the shit out of the ball and locked in some kind of grudge match to settle a bar tab. On court two: an older married couple thick with age, dinking the ball back and forth, complimenting each other's points, laughing at each other's faults, and having what appeared to be a blast. What a great way, I thought, to spend an afternoon. For them. I had to get back to my ground strokes.

REQUIRED DEDICATION



UPDATE

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How to Camp Alone

YOU CAN'T KNOW WHAT'S ESSENTIAL UNTIL
YOU'RE LEFT WITH NOTHING BUT

BY STEVEN LECKART



In my twenties, I embraced treks into the wilderness because, like any liberal-arts major hopped up on Kerouac, I craved adventure and Zen and nourishment for the soul, man. Now a thirty-something

husband and dad with far less time (and marijuana) on hand, I've discovered that camping does, nevertheless, offer more than a reprieve from domesticity. Yes, I savor the break from broken garbage disposals and diaper changes. But it's not like digging your own toilet, building a fire, and climbing trails with thirty-one pounds of gear on your back is any less of a slog.

I choose to camp because it's Pack Sabbath: Time alone just to exist with what little you can carry. Stripping away all the material stuff you don't need (a hardback best seller, spare underwear) and prioritizing everything you do (water, complex carbohydrates, two-ply toilet paper) is a reminder of what's essential in this world. You don't have to journey far, or for long, to appreciate this. Recently, I spent a night on Angel Island, a small state park in San Francisco Bay with more deer than campers and magnificent views of the Golden Gate Bridge. It's not the backwoods of Alaska. But it worked.

I also got more than I'd expected: At dinner, my headlamp illuminated two glowing green eyes in the bushes. "Our raccoons," a park ranger had warned me that morning, "are particularly aggressive." If you find yourself in such a predicament, here is what will go down: You will pull out your pocketknife, and you will bellow to no one in particular, "I got this." And when that furry little bastard charges, you won't hesitate. Or maybe you'll just shuffle briskly into your tent, zip it shut, and keep swigging from a flask until you conk out at 8:17 p.m., only to awaken two hours later to something from outside slapping against your leg. And you'll kick whatever-the-fk-that-is until it scampers away, allowing you to slip back into a not-so-deep sleep.

Either way, you'll awaken when the sun decides you should. The tent will feel more cramped than it did the night before. You'll reek of bad breath, bourbon, and nutsack. But stepping back outside to look around, you will feel refreshed. And you'll fire up

your little stove, and brew a cup of black coffee, and sip it leisurely, because there is nowhere you have to be, and nothing else to do. Not right now. ▮

REQUIRED DEDICATION

LOW HIGH



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