

NO LIMITS



Photographer Matt Cherubino on the other side of the camera.

Whether he's shooting the Himalayas from a helicopter or solo hiking Patagonia in search of the ultimate image, Australian photographer Matt Cherubino lives life on the edge.

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WE'RE TREKKING TOWARDS Annapurna Base Camp when 23-year-old photographer Matt Cherubino lets slip he's packed only one t-shirt for the entire trip. He explains that every personal item he packs means less room for camera gear.

"Doing my job comes first, and I come second," explains Matt as we kick back with a Sherpa beer at a teahouse along the trail. "So if that means wearing the same t-shirt for a week, then it doesn't matter. You have to do what you have to do to make opportunity happen."

First discovering photography as a restless 14-year-old growing up in the 'burbs of Melbourne, the photography prodigy has now visited more than 35 countries while working on commercial, editorial, documentary and adventure sport shoots.

"I always knew from a young age that I wanted to pursue photography," he says. "It was really clear to me."

Like many other teens, Matt found plenty to do besides homework, namely practising camera techniques and researching locations around the world. On the weekends, he found adventure in his own backyard, getting together with his mates to explore the underground tunnels that lie beneath Melbourne – a risky rite of passage peppered with close encounters with rats. They'd also hop on their bikes with a few dollars in their pockets, then pedal in one direction for as long as they could with no idea where they would end up.



A motorcyclist in the Mojave Desert, training for the Baja 1000.



A perfect shot of Patagonia makes a trying trip worthwhile.

When he finally got the opportunity to hit the road with his camera, he was able to unleash his creative obsession on the world. From snapping camels in Jordan to shooting motorcycle mechanics working in ramshackle sheds in the Mojave Desert, Matt has built an enviable career documenting interesting landscapes and people.

No shoot is too risky. He's shot from helicopters, light aircraft, motorcycles and quadbikes. But this willingness to work in extreme conditions has led to some hair-raising moments – and juicy stories to tell around the campfire.

Learning to ski tour (skiing uphill with skins on your skis) on the west coast of New Zealand was a personal highlight, but the trip wasn't without drama.

"We got a helicopter up to the Franz Josef Glacier," Matt remembers. "I was travelling with freeskiers who were competing on the Freeride World Tour, but I'm no ski pro. It was a crazy experience standing on a glacier looking down over the ocean."

Soon after, Matt had a close call while shooting alone at sunset. Not roped to a harness, he fell 10 metres into a crevasse.

THE PEOPLE YOU MEET

"I heard a noise like wind rushing," he recalls. "I felt my stomach drop as I fell down into a crevasse, ending up at the bottom of an ice cave."

Lucky to not break his arms, legs or camera, like any good photographer, even one who's just endured a near-death experience, Matt took a moment to check out the view: "It was an eerily beautiful moment because it was the closest I've ever been to nearly dying, but I couldn't help but admire the golden and pink light flooding into the cave."

After strapping his skis onto his bag, he used an ice axe to climb out of the crevasse. Despite being in shock, he still photographed the team skiing against the sunset.

"To create great work, you have to put in the work."

"The next day I skied 15 kilometres with a painful, blown-up knee," he says. "Turns out I had a fracture in my femur from that fall. But I got to shoot one of the best sunsets I've ever seen, so I was humbled and grateful for the experience."

Shooting the gruelling, 24-hour Baja 1000 off-road motorsport race from a helicopter was another standout: "It's one of the gnarliest races in the world, but logistically it's one of the hardest shoots I've ever worked on. We covered so much terrain."

Matt believes his best work comes from pushing himself to the absolute physical and mental limit.

"To create great work, you have to put in the work," he says. "I love that feeling of being absolutely wrecked, working on zero sleep and just pushing on."

From his body of work, you'd think that Matt's life is too good to be true, but he's also had his fair share of travel failures. Anyone who has travelled long enough ends up having one of those calamity-filled, disaster trips that seems cursed by the travel gods. For Matt, that was a solo journey to Patagonia.

"Pretty much the whole trip was a fail," he explains. "I had issues crossing the border, I got fined, ran out of food in a few days, and at one stage I had to drive 250 kilometres with four flat tyres, which I kept pumping up and rotating along the way."

With his flights out of Patagonia cancelled due to strikes, he did a *Cannonball Run*-style 1,500-kilometre drive from Argentina to Chile to secure flights home. Instead of writing off the trip, Matt's grateful for what proved to be a formative experience.

"I was a wreck by the end of the trip, it broke me. I went through so much but I got one image I was stoked with, so it was worth it." ☒

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