

# **RAW**

**Rafting Around the World**





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# IRF *speak* **NEW RACE RULES**

## 10TH ANNIVERSARY

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### **PARTY TIME!!!**

The IRF will be turning 10 this year and what better place to celebrate than the 2007 World Rafting Champs in South Korea!

### **Formation of the IRF**

The IRF was formed in May 1997 after a number of years where rafters felt they needed a body to represent them. The key areas for this representation were Guide Training & Education (GT&E) and Sport & Competitions (S&C). The first Congress was held at the 1997 CWWC in Zimbabwe. In Costa Rica in 1998 the rules to govern raft racing were finalised and the first official IRF World Champs were held.

### **Competitive Rafting**

Since then the WRC have been held in Costa Rica (1998) on the Orange River, South Africa (1999), Futaleufu River, Chile (2000), Gauley River, USA (2001), Vlatava river, Czech Republic (2003) and the Quijos River, Ecuador. The biggest WRC yet is to be held in June 2007 in S. Korea.

Besides the World Champs the competitive rafting world has seen the development of a very popular Euro Cup series. Work is being done to launch a World Cup Series where about 4 events will be held around the world each year. These events are open to all, not just the top teams, making them more attractive to all paddlers.

### **Guide Training and Education**

This section has seen great development and expansion of its Award Scheme where many countries are now using this scheme as the official scheme and many companies are using it to prove their high standards guiding. The need for a scheme of this nature is evident in the continual stream of requests that come in from all over the world for guides to be certified on this scheme. The first ever GT&E Conference is being held in France in May this year.

The IRF has recently seen a big leap forward in its activities and in the demand for what it provides. The launch of our new digital magazine – RAW – Rafting Around the World, as well as the upgrade of our website and forum will hopefully grow the communication front with the rafters and their needs.

We all look forward to celebrating the last 10 years of rafting with everyone in S. Korea.

Sue Liell-Cock  
Secretary General



*IRF Committee photo was taken at the Eiskanal in the city of Augsburg, Germany. It was the first artificial course of its kind.*

*>From left to right - Tony Hansen, Thomas Karas, Neil Baxter, Rafael Gallo, Peter Micheler, Sue Liell-Cock, Zeljko Kelemen, Lee Porter.*

The Race Rules were updated in February 2007.

The new rules can be seen on the website together with the changes that were made to the old ones.

## **NEW WEBSITE**

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We have at last upgraded our website. Although some sections are still under construction most of the website is up and running and new sections have been added. We hope you find it easier to use, that it is more interactive and that it has more information for you to use. We've created a Photo and Video Gallery - so let us know if you have footage or photos you would like us to add. Also check out the Rivers Database under Commercial Rafting - we'd like to see this expanding too. Most importantly - go see the new Forum. If you have more forum headings you'd like us to add - let us know! Otherwise get stuck in and use the forum for looking for guiding work or workers, chatting about rafting issues or finding out where some great rivers are to go explore.

## **LOOKING FOR VIDEO GURU**

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We're looking for someone who has the time and inclination to help us edit and put on our website video footage that we can all use. We'd like to see short clips of past World Champs and other events, plus clips that show sponsors how their logos can be displayed at events, plus good clips of exciting rafting at events. And more! We have the footage - now we need an enthusiast!





# IRF *congress 2007*

**Date:** 28 June 2007 (to be confirmed)  
**Place:** Inje, South Korea.  
**Who:** Delegates from all members of the IRF. One delegate from each member will be allowed to vote.

Over the last few years the IRF has had to hold virtual congresses due to the difficult nature of getting so many member representatives to one location. This year we are taking advantage of the large number who will be attending the 2007 World Rafting Championships in South Korea and will be holding our Congress during the event.

## ***Key issues at the Congress***

Most key issues are handled by the relevant sub-committees during the year. But some must be handled by the Congress. These are voting for a new Board of Directors and appointing members onto some of the sub-committees.

## ***We therefore call on members to:***

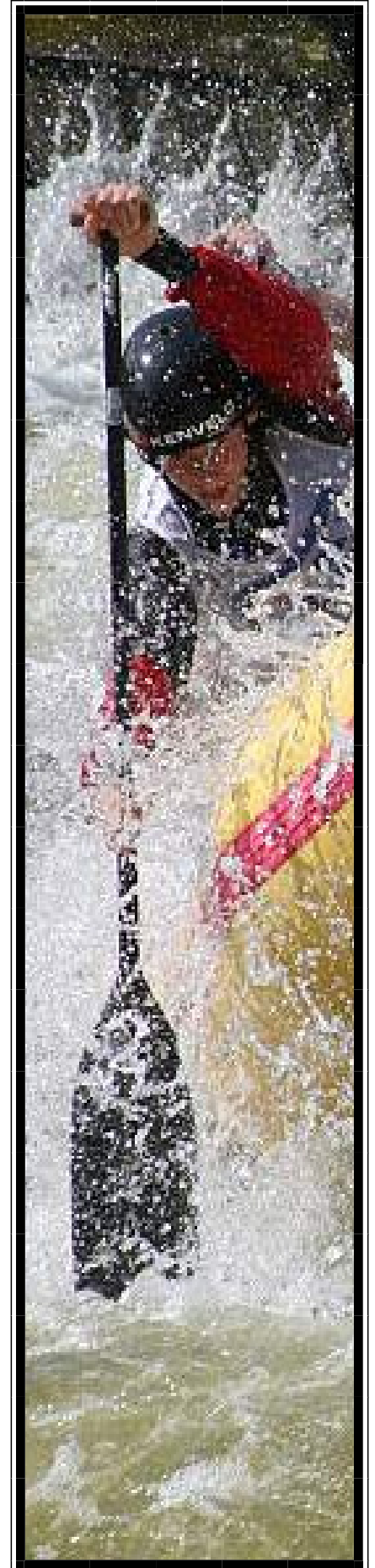
- submit proposals for discussion and
- submit names of persons eligible to stand for the Board of Directors or sub-committees.

## ***The sub-committees are as follows:***

- International Relations  
Commercial Rafting & Conservation
- Marketing / Media
- Euro Race Committee
- Australasian Committee
- Pan-American Committee

## ***The Agenda will include at least:***

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| a) Opening.  | f) Budget for approval.  |
| b) Apologies and establishing of delegates and the quorum. | g) Reports from Heads of Committees  |
| c) Reports on Membership applications.                     | h) Discussions and resolutions on the proposals submitted by National Federations and the BOD. |
| d) Report by the General Secretary.                        | i) Election of office bearers.   |
| e) Financial report for approval.                          | j) Closing of Congress.  |



# IRF World Rafting Championships

## South Korea 2007

The WRC 2007 will take place on the Naerinchon River in the mountainous region of Gangwon Province, east of Seoul, from June 27 to July 2.

The area has been recognized as a world-class venue for raft racing due to its exceptionally clean water, easy river access, swift rapids and breathtaking scenery. Mt. Sorak National Park, a UNESCO-designated World Heritage candidate and favorite among Koreans, is also located nearby. This rafting competition is expected to have a positive impact on the nation's tourism industry and help promote the river area as a rafting venue.

The World Rafting Championships (WRC) are the biggest and the highest level of rafting competition held biennially by the International Rafting Federation (IRF) with 42-member countries around the world.

Only one, top nationally selected team from each country is eligible to compete at the WRC. The men's and women's teams compete in separate categories. Therefore, each member country can dispatch a maximum of two teams, one for the men's and women's categories.

Each team which consists of 6-members with an optional reserve member to compete in three differ-

ent disciplines, Sprint, Slalom and Downriver.

1. Contact the IRF ([worldchamps@intraftfed.com](mailto:worldchamps@intraftfed.com)) first and receive official verification of eligibility.
2. IRF will inform you of your eligibility and send you an invoice for the registration fee.
3. Please pay the inscription fee to the IRF.
4. Once you have completed the registration, the IRF will contact the WRCOC of your official entry.
5. To change the names of more than 2 members after registration has been completed, you must contact the IRF and are requested to follow the procedure listed above (#1-3).
6. Each team member will be required to show a photo ID for on-site registration





# RACEcalendar

## Czeck Cup, and Europa Cup

CZECH CUP, JUNIOR CUP AND CHAMPS 2007					EUROPA CUP 2007 and others international races				
	DATE	the place	R4-R6	cat.	DR / SL / TT	the place	R4-R6	cat.	DR / SL / TT ORGANIZER
MAY	24.								
	25.								
	31.	Sázava river	R4		DR				
APRIL	1.	Krhanice	R4		DR				
	7.								
	8.								
	9.	Easter							
	14.	Kamenice river	R4		DR				
	15.	Jesenný	R4		DR				
	21.	Kamenice river	R4		DR				
	22.	Plavý	R4		DR				
MAY	28.					Dobra	R6	EC + regional	TT, DR SL
	29.					Chorvatsko		legue	SL
						Augsburg	R4	EC R4	TT, H2H SL, DR
						GER			RTA
	5.	Labe river	R4		DR	Sava		EC + regional	TT, SL, DR
	6.	Špindl	R6			Dolinka	R6	legue	TT, SL, DR
	12.								
	13.								
JUNE	17-18.					Salza	R4	EC	TT, SL, H2H, DR
	19.					AUT	R6		
	20.								
	26.	Vltava river	R4		SL				
	27.	Prague -Troja	R6		TT				
	2.					Isarco	R6	EC R6	TT, DR SL
	3.					ITA			Sterzing-Vipiteno
	9.	Cunovo	R4			Cunovo	R4	EC R	SL
JULY	10.	SVK	R6			SVK	R6	EC R4	TT
	16.	Trnávka river	R4		SL				
	17.		R4		TT				
	22.								
	23.								
	28.								
	30.								
						World championship			
JULY	1.					South Korea			
	7.	Svratka river	R4		SL				
	8.	Vir	R4		TT				
	14.								
	15.								
	21.					Vrbas	R4	EC + regional	TT, DR SL
	22.					Bos. a Her.	R6	legue	SL
	28-29								
AUGUST	4.								
	5.								
	11.								
	12.								
	18.	Vltava river	R4		SL	Vltava river	R4	EC R4	SL
	19.	České Vrbné	R4		TT	České Vrbí	R4	EC R4	TT
	25.	Trnávka river		EC R6	SL, TT	Trnávka river		EC R6	SL, TT
	26.	Czech Republic			DR	Czech Republic			DR
SEPTEMBER	1.	Vltava river	R6		SJEZD	Vltava river		EC R6	DR
	2.	Devils streams	R4			Devils streams			
	8.								
	9.	Mašice	R4		SJEZD	Tara	R6	EC + regional	TT klub Soko
	15.	Vltava river	R4		SL				
	16.	Roudnice	R4		TT				
	22.								
	23.								

## INTERNATIONAL AUSTRIAN RAFTING COMPETITION

16-20 MAY 2007

This year the official International Austrian Rafting Competition and part of the European Cup will take place on the river Salza in Styria.

The event is an official competition of the Austrian Canoe Association OKV (Österreichischer Kanuverband).

There will be championships for both categories R4 and R6 and they are part of the European Cup 2007.

The championship organisation Sportklub Wildalpen invites all Rafting friends to this event.

Last year there were 34 R6 and 60 R4 teams from 12 nations on the start.

This race is a perfect possibility of comparison with other European teams and also good training for the European Rafting Championship 2008, which will be at this location.

You can find more information at [www.raftingsport.com](http://www.raftingsport.com).

The raft boats are provided by the organizer.

## The Great River Amazon Raft Race

is a 3 day , 132 mile race down the mighty River Amazon from the small town of Nauta to the city of Iquitos . The four person teams will be paddling near identical lightweight balsa wood log rafts. The organisers are expecting over 50 local teams to compete who will battle against raft crews from Russia, U.S.A. England , Australia , Canada , Ecuador and the Saki Dragonboat Racing Team from Hong Kong are also likely to compete. The Organiser of the race Mike Collis said he expects even more countries to participate as September gets closer.

The teams will be competing for more than \$7,000 in cash prizes, but if history repeats itself foreign teams can only hope to win the Foreigners Prize the "Ernst and Edith Schneider Trophy". Last years race was won by a team from the village of Padre Cocha called "Los Invincibles" who completed the course in an incredible time of only 13 hours and 46 minutes over the 3 days. They were closely followed by their cousins "Los Increibles" from the same village who were only 4 minutes behind. The fastest ladies team were also from Padre Cocha meaning that their village carried away all last year's prize money. These teams, we have heard, are already in training for this years race and they again hope to carry back to Padre Cocha the bag of cash.

[www.iquitostimes.com/raft-race-2007.htm](http://www.iquitostimes.com/raft-race-2007.htm)

# BACK *paddle*



## The Australian Rafting Federation (ARF) National Championships

were successfully held once again in conjunction with The Cataract Extreme Race 13th and 14th January 2007 at Cataract Gorge,

Launceston, Tasmania. This event selected the Men's and Women's teams to represent Australia at the International Rafting Federation (IRF) World Championships on the Naerinceon River, Inje County in South Korea, June 27 till July 3rd, 2007. At Cataract, water was released at 3pm on the 12th Jan 2007, for practice. Competitors from Cairns, Melbourne, Tully, Sydney were all there to win the Australian Championship.

Taking on the awesome Esk River's Cataract Gorge, they gathered from Australia wide to the water powered by Hydro Tasmania. The gorges' Grade 5 white water sections provided many new challenges over a number of events, that included a time trial to set the draw, then the three points events; being 1km raft Sprint, two runs of Slalom (best run counts) and the Marathon which started from the dam wall to the first basin section of the cataract gorge. A section, which rarely displays its rugged beauty and an excellent test to define Australia's best.

The Women's division saw a combined team from Sydney and Cairns/Mission Beach taking on the rest and it was they, the Goodtime Gals, declared the Championship winners.

The racing went down to the wire in the Men's Division with the last event of the Championship deciding the overall winner, in front of a welcoming and enthusiastic Launceston audience. It was the AIS trained Team Dagger, fighting back from the fast finishing, and previously first placed Team Cairns, neck and neck at the finishing post and the video was called for. It confirmed Team Dagger had won by a nose and that they had swooped in and snatched the trophy from Team Cairns grasp.

The Australian Rafting Federation praised the support from the Public, Launceston City Council, Hydro Tasmania and the Teva Extreme Committee. The weather was very kind to us and we hope to see the stature of this event grow amongst Australia's Extreme paddlers on one of Australia's most outstanding pieces of Extreme White Water, and we

## 2007 Italian Rafting Championships

Brugnato (SP)- Indomita Valtellina River has won the three specialities of the 1<sup>st</sup> race of 2007 Italian Rafting Championship, which took place in Liguria, near La Spezia, on Vara River on 10<sup>th</sup> March. The 18 teams competed in Long Distance, Short Distance and One Against All races. Teams were divided into three categories; Open (8 semi professional teams), Women (4 teams), and 6 Tourist boats.

### Short Distance Results

The Short Distance race was really exciting. Indomita Valtellina River

(Sondrio, Lombardia) managed to win ahead of Marine Army Team Maristaeli thanks to a superb second manche with a just a 5 second final gap. Vigili del Fuoco 1 (Grosseto, Toscana) finished 3<sup>rd</sup>, which resulted in a 62 second gap from the 2<sup>nd</sup> position.

The new Women's category of the 1<sup>st</sup> Italian Rafting Championship was made up of 4 female teams, who raced on Vara. The final time of the Girls of Indomita Valtellina River, was competitive also among male results. Pink Brasilas (Roma, Lazio) won 2<sup>nd</sup> place ahead of Rafting Aventure Team (Aosta, Aosta Valley) and Rosso Vodafone (Pisa, Toscana), sponsored by the main sponsors of the race, took 4<sup>th</sup> position.

Canotti Barzotti (Verona, Veneto) won ahead of 2<sup>nd</sup> place getters, Gormiti Team (Parma, Emilia Romagna) and Lao Rafting Adventure (CS, Calabria) taking out 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the Tourist category.

In the Long Distance race, all the results were confirmed aside from the Women's results: Aosta Valley Rafting Aventure Team stopped before than the favourite team, Indomita Valtellina River, and Rosso Vodafone. Roman Pink Brasilas have finished at 4th position.

Finally, the most exciting race was on Sunday the 11<sup>th</sup>. All the teams were at the start line for the **One against All** race. In the Open category, the results were the same positions of the day before. Lao Canyon Rafting (CS; Calabria) improve their performance by joining the 3<sup>rd</sup> position. Women's results were confirmed the Short Distance results.

In the Tourist category, Canotti Barzotti confirmed their supremacy but new teams joined the other main positions: Filnautica (SP, Liguria) confirmed their local knowledge finishing 2<sup>nd</sup> preceding River Action (Biella).



# Splashing around at Victoria Falls

GotoVictoriaFalls.com, is proud to announce the success of the recent 2006 Zambezi Challenge, yet another top notch event for the Victoria Falls region, following hot on the heels of the Victoria falls Marathon held in September last year where over 230 athletes from 15 nations turned out to enjoy a 42,5km run through the Zimbabwe National Park.

The Zambezi Challenge was held from 15 - 17 December as one last adrenalin rush before 2006 came to a close. Comprising five events ranging from a timed, 500 metre Raft Sprint and a gruelling, nine kilometre, down river race, to a down river kayak race consisting of ten world class, seeded kayakers as well as a host of other entrants in kayaks of all shapes and sizes, the



event went off without a hitch, supported at the water's edge by hundreds of spectators, eager to catch a glimpse of the amazing manoeuvres to be performed on the water.

A kayak rodeo event and a further final fun event for those with a bit of creativity, led to some riveting and heart stopping thrills, as paddlers dis-

played great skill and endurance against some of the toughest rapids in the world.

Main sponsors of the event, GotoVictoriaFalls.com, Cansaf, Shearwater Adventures, Wild Horizons and Safari Par Excellence (SAFPAR) were all thrilled with the outcome of the three day event and have all confidently agreed that Victoria Falls is fast becoming a desirable destination for events of all kinds, especially those relating to sport due to the region's amazing variety.

**Zambezi Challenge final results:**

**Raft Sprint Event:** Ilala Lodge

**Raft Down river event:** Tourvest

**Overall raft placements:**

- |     |                             |
|-----|-----------------------------|
| 1st | Tourvest                    |
| 2nd | Ilala Lodge                 |
| 3rd | Spar                        |
| 4th | Victoria Falls Safari Lodge |
| 5th | The Boma Place of Eating    |
| 6th | Swift                       |







By Niko Kyriakou

## PERU'S GREAT AMAZON RIVER RAFT RACE 2006

What may be the world's longest river race on primitive rafts, drew to a close Sunday night as participants from seven countries reached the muddy end-point in Iquitos, Peru.

With sore and soggy hands, eighty-eight people wearily tugged their vessels -- logs lashed together with jungle twine -- ashore after racing some 133-miles down the Amazon over three days.

16 of the 22 teams competing were Peruvian -- most of whose members grew up on the banks of local rivers. But six of the four-member teams came from countries such as Ireland, South Africa, the U.S., Russia, and Australia.

One might guess only the most die-hard or life-weary foreigners would travel thousands of miles; brave biting bugs, pira-

nhas and anacondas; endure scalding heat and wild storms, all for prizes worth less than the trip's cost.

And yet, it was Dale Baskin, a mild-mannered product manager for a genetics company in Seattle Washington, whose team took first prize among the foreigners. He and his team won 3-nights at a jungle lodge near Iquitos. Second place among the foreign participants was a team of four female veterinarians. Last place was won by a team led by 74-year-old Mort Kaplan, from Sun City Arizona.

Randy Quinn from Santa Barbara, California said he joined the race primarily "because my friend Mort is crazy." "I hope to finish and get a t-shirt and have bragging rights for life," he said.

But most foreigners said they signed up for adventure. And that they got.

Teams spent up to 10-hours a day paddling balsa-log platforms through the warm, brown river, which sometimes reached a quarter-mile across. But the race was clearly dominated by the Peruvians, all of who came in hours ahead of the foreign teams.

The first and second place winners overall, were both from Padre Cocha, a nearby village. ([Click here to see the race for first and second](#)) The best cu-

mulative time only 13 hours and 46 over the three-day race was 13 hours and 17 minutes - Los Invincibles de Padre Cocha, followed by 13 hours, 23 minutes - Los Increíbles de Padre Cocha. Third place was over 16 hours.

"The Great Amazon River Raft Race", now in its seventh year, was organized by Mike Collis, an Englishman living in Iquitos. Sponsors included private donor and english businessman Peter Schneider, as well as Dawn on the Amazon, a cruise boat company, and the Iquitos municipality. Prize money was worth 7,000 soles (\$2,248) in all. For more on the race visit [www.livinginperu.com](http://www.livinginperu.com)

It is expected that next year this event will be even bigger so it is important that teams interested in participating should book their place as soon as possible.

Thanks to our sponsors for making this year's race a success!



# Soup and Sari in India

## First commercial descent on the Subansiri



By Claire Scott

How adventures are born... a snippet of the trigger conversation in a noisy pub early 2006:

D: "You fancy a big kayak trip this year?"

C: "Yep... where to?"

D: "India to do the Brahmaputra then Subansiri"

C: "Isn't the Brahmaputra that huge river with the 20ft waves that those really good paddlers talk about?"

D: "mmmm.... possibly?!"

C: "Not sure about that then but the Soup and Sari bit of the trip sounds OK..."

The Soup and Sari turned out not to be Curry soup served up by waitresses in traditional clothes, but the River Subansiri, a main tributary of the Brahmaputra (or Siang) River in North East India.

We figured that it wasn't worth flying all that way for a short time, so settled on spending a month out in India, to do the two main river trips, with a warm-up on the River Ganges first, followed by some tourist sightseeing afterwards.

Having been out to the Himalayas before, I knew the rivers would be big, but as the time to departure grew near and the more I read, the bigger the rivers kept sounding! A talk by Doug Cooper at Glenmore Lodge a few weeks before we were due to fly (which included slides of those 20ft waves on the Siang), finally made me realise... I had to find a bigger boat!

The area of India we would be spending most time in (Arunachal Pradesh), is a remote area in the North East, squeezed between Bangladesh, Tibet and Bhutan. Although our main objective for heading out that way was to paddle the rivers, the promise of interesting cultural experiences with tribal folks in this remote area was definitely an incentive. We weren't to be disappointed by either objective, but first we had a few days to chill out by the River Ganges in Uttaranchal -North of Delhi.

We managed to survive the crazy 6 hour drive on rutted roads full of people, animals, bicycles, trucks, carts etc (with no apparent road regulations apart from the one compulsory rule -to continuously sound your horn) and arrived at the Silver Sands campsite on the banks of the Ganges.

Here we were met by the Aquaterra Company who were to be our hosts for the next month. Here also we were met by the first of many bonus items throughout the trip -HOT SHOWERS! The camp set up was amazing, I've stayed in worse B&B's and here we were at a "camp" with proper beds, comfortable social areas, fantastic food, bed tea in the morning and did I mention hot showers?

**It didn't take long to relax into holiday mode**, and we spent a pleasant few days getting used to the speed of the bigger volume water and sightseeing around Rishikesh. This included attending the equivalent of "Songs of



Praise” -a spectacular evening worship ceremony (*aarti*) which just happened to be televised live round India the night we were there!

All too soon, we were on that crazy road again heading for Delhi airport to meet up with the rest of the expedition group and to catch a flight to Dibrugarh in East India. Waiting in the queue at check-in a very strange bunch of hairy faced guys arrived accompanied by some more pleasant looking gals. The rather dodgy looking 3 amigos and co. were to be our travelling companions down the Brahmaputra (they were the paddle raft team). Luckily they all turned out to be great fun and good company -the trios’ dubious appearance explained away by a charity moustache growing event! (well... so they said...)

The Aquaterra team attended to every detail, and ensured we had window seats on the North side of the plane for the best view of the Himalayas. With an 8 hour ferry boat trip up the lower reaches of the Brahmaputra to Pasighat and a further drive of two days by jeep -it was definitely a more remote experience than I’d had before, but the journey allowed us plenty of time to get to know the group.

While the rafts and equipment were being sorted out at the top of the river, we were taken on an unusual walk up to the local tribal village (*Jedu*). The bamboo bridge full of holes (being repaired as we used it) high over the Siang was exciting but not the most unusual part of the walk. Our guide (Chandan) unfortunately led us accidentally away from the main path through muddy rice fields and very thorny jungle -this certainly added to the entertainment! Thus we arrived bedraggled at the village where we would have been a fascination to young and old anyway minus the thorns and mud!

**Thirty to Forty years ago**, this village (along with others we visited down the Siang valley) would have met very few westerners indeed -mostly only military personnel and would have been cut off from the rest of India with no roads existing in the area. As it is now - the military road is still very basic and probably the only western visitors are those rafting and kayaking the Siang river (1 or 2 groups a year). So we were a fascination to all the villagers with our very white feet and the girls’ young faces but “grey” (blonde) hair causing the most amusement.

With their tribal culture and skills still very much a part of their society, they were a fascination to us too. Throughout the trip we learnt about the areas history,

the different tribes and their hunting traditions; we were invited into their homes, presented with traditional music and dancing and offered traditional foods cooked in bamboo and served on banana leaves; we were also offered local delicacies(!) such as live beetles, roasted rat, marinated beetle nut (absolutely rancid!) and the local homebrew (*Apong*) made from rice. Plus learning about their religious beliefs, marriage traditions, local crafts and discovering that almost anything can be made out of a piece of bamboo -I was certainly not disappointed with the cultural experience!

That afternoon as I surfed 2 ft waves in the EDDY and the rafters had a briefing and warm-up paddle, I began to suspect I wouldn’t be disappointed with the size of the river either...



Unusually for this time of year, the area had had two weeks of rain before we started our trip -meaning that the river was bigger than usual and running at an estimated 17,000 cumecs (for comparison the River Spey in flood runs at about 200 cumecs). This is probably why on the first big rapid as I paddled over the green tongue, I found myself jaw-dropped and frozen -only able to stutter words my mother would not approve of! Some how though, I managed to start paddling at some stage and came through the huge waves on the other side.

Although I was now extremely worried about what lay ahead, the Aquaterra team put my mind at rest. After all, I could always jump on the paddle raft if I met a rapid I didn’t want to kayak and the trip was being lead very safely and expertly by the trip leader Anvesh. So after a few days of challenging rapids, beautiful scenery, idyllic campsites, tasty food and good company -the shaky / nervous moments began to be replaced by more cheesy-grin moments and I started to actually enjoy the big volume!

The scenery along the way was spectacular from the mountains in the distance to the varied rock formations beside the river. The surrounding dense jungle gave glorious colours reflecting in the water. The only disappointing feature was the lack of animal and bird life -due to the local tribes' obsession with hunting. It really was quite strange being amongst such dense plant life with no sign or sound of any creatures!

With several major rapids and a paddle of about 25kms per day, we were glad of a rest day half way down the river. A change is as good as a rest they say -so rather than sleeping the day away in the sunshine on the beach (very tempting), we walked up to a local village for some more fun interaction. This was followed by a tough lesson on the Indian game Kabadi (their equivalent of "British Bull Dog").

The final few days were more sedate with the biggest rapids behind us (all bar one) -so you could either kick back and enjoy the scenery, or entertain yourself by trying to paddle the oar rafts or guide the paddle raft down the smaller rapids. Either I'd begun to relax too much or the last rapid was a bit of a sting in the tail... I had the longest "down time" of the trip here but thankfully managing to roll up before running out of breath (just!).

At this point, we were so glad we had decided to stay on for another expedition -there were a few envious faces as we left the river and headed back to the hotel in Pasighat. Early the next morning we would have to say goodbye to all but one of the paddle raft crew who were heading back home. Little did they know that we would spend the next few days under "hotel arrest" before we were able to embark on the next stage of our journey (that as they say is another story...!).

**Our next trip on the Subansiri would be the first commercial descent** and was going ahead as a reconnaissance anyway with only 3 clients. So... after a few days break we again loaded up the jeeps and headed back up into the hills along bumpy, rutted roads to head off to the Subansiri valley. None of the Aquaterra team running this trip had ever paddled the river before, so we were expecting to face some uncertainties and flexibility in plans but everything ran very smoothly.

Bored with being a passenger for another 3 days drive, I had a go at driving the jeep for a while and learnt when to use the horn (i.e. all the time). Then after commenting that the kit truck in our convoy had a much better horn, found myself driving it too (probably to the relief of the jeep passengers) accompanied by loud Garhwali music from the stereo. With road signs like "*Drinking Whisky, Driving Risky*" to keep me informed, I couldn't go far wrong!

The few days drive passed in a blur of dust, loud horns, uncomfortable bumpy sleep, road-side chai, friendly interaction with locals and small glimpses down through the

leaves to the rapids on the river we were about to paddle. Soon the kayakers were hiking down through jungle to start the river as high as we could in the time-frame. This river although smaller than the Siang, still seemed to be moving pretty fast and was even more beautiful with a deep blue tinge to the water.

The raft support and the other client (Lyle) soon joined us on the river, making the river quite crowded at points with the locals joining us too on bamboo rafts and in wooden canoes. Lyle we believe, was about to do the first Duckie descent of the Subansiri and took his craft through many rapids bigger than we thought he would get through upright!

This river is truly a gem to paddle, with every turn in its course it had a change of character. I lost count of how many gorges we paddled through -all with their individual colours and rock textures. Absolutely stunning scenery and for the last two days, rapids followed by rapids -nothing above Grade IV, just great playful fun. I really fell in love with this river and was absolutely gutted to find a dam being built at the end of the final gorge. To be completed in 3-4 years time, all the rapids since where the rafts put in are likely to be lost and the beautiful rock formations will also be hidden under all the backed up water.

With Aquaterra running this river on a commercial basis for the first time, we actually reached the end of the river sooner than expected. Emerging from the peacefulness of the final remote, unpopulated gorge to a busy dam building site followed by a busy wide river plain was extremely abrupt and a shock to the system. This being our last river day in India and knowing we would have to soon say goodbye to the Aquaterra team too (now all firm friends), we were feeling quite down!

Aquaterra pulled out the stops though and arranged a night of dancing, music, colourful traditional costume and a huge feast (not to forget more Apong and Beetle Nut) at a local tribal village. This was a friendly and lively party and washed all our glumness away (or was that the Apong?).

The next morning we packed everything up accompanied by a glorious sun rise over the river and headed back to Delhi where we spent the next few days sight-seeing. We spent one day down in Agra to visit the Taj Mahal and although it involved a 10 hour round trip drive -it most certainly was worth the effort. No photo can do this place justice, standing in front of it bathed in morning light -just took our breath away. It was a fitting end to a magical month's adventure!

If you fancy heading out to this area -here are some websites to get you started:

<http://www.thunderbowexpeditions.com/>

<http://www.treknraft.com/>



# GUIDE TRAINING & *education*

## CHOOSING THE BEST LINE - the IRF Award Scheme in 2007 and beyond

Dranses river valley, France

May 10 -13, 2007

The IRF Guide Training & Education Award Scheme has been in existence since 1999. In that time it has reached a diverse range of people all over the world. In keeping with the philosophy of adapting the Award Scheme to be as useful as possible to as many users as possible we are currently considering changes on the basis of feedback and comment received over the past few years.

### CONFERENCE and WORKSHOP

#### Purpose

A gathering of Instructors, Assessors and potential Instructors from around the world to benchmark the assessment standards of the updated IRF Award Scheme. New Instructor candidates will also have the opportunity to be assessed on rapids up to class 5.

#### Who is it for?

Current IRF Assessors and Instructors and candidate IRF Assessors and Instructors are invited to participate in this important event on the development of the IRF Award Scheme.

#### Program

May 10	Presentation of the Award Scheme version 3.0 and discussions on assessment standards
May 11	Raft Guide assessments and review of assessment standards
May 12	Trip Leader scenario assessments and review of assessment standards
May 13	Instructor assessments and review of assessment standards

#### How to get there?

The closest airport is Geneva, Switzerland. For further information on how to get there please contact Patrice Feraco of Hobby One ([www.hobby-one-loisirs.com](http://www.hobby-one-loisirs.com)) who is hosting the conference and workshop.

#### Costs

A registration fee will be approximately 60-80€. Registration is free for current IRF Assessors. Assessment fees are Raft Guide 30€, Trip Leader 50€ and Instructor 100€. Raft Guide and Trip Leader candidates attending only the days of their respective assessment will pay one third and two thirds of the registration fee respectively.

#### Accommodation

Limited accommodation is available in a guest house five minutes from the river but must be reserved by March 16 as space is limited. Price with dinner and breakfast is 32 to 35 € /person/night. Please contact Patrice to make your reservation. He can also advise on other accommodation alternatives.

#### Registration

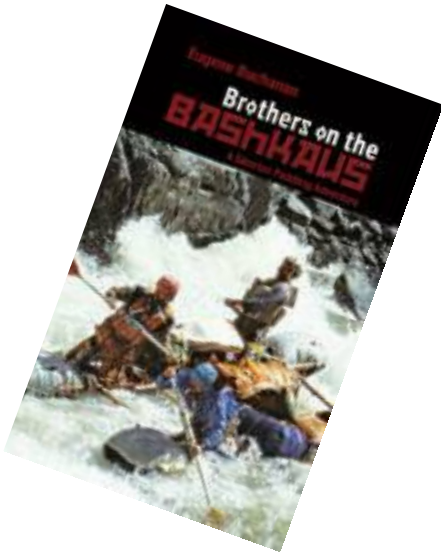
Anyone interested in attending should contact Sue Liell-Cock , IRF General Secretary ([www.intraftfed.com](http://www.intraftfed.com) for contact details) to register their interest. A registration form will then be sent to you at the end of March. More detailed information will be posted on the forum at that time.

#### IMPORTANT IRF Award Scheme version 3.0

The IRF AS is currently under revision. A final proposal for public comment will be available to view on the IRF forum from March 19. You are invited to post any questions, comments or suggestions to the forum <http://www.intraftfed.com/phpBB2/> by the end of March. Just click on the link, sign up and then you'll get an email when you have been approved as a registered user. Then log on and go to the topic GT&E Discussions and other things>>GT&E Award Scheme. Take a look around the rest of the forum too. See you there!

# MEDIA *watch*

## Recent Praise for *Brothers on the Bashkaus*



"A Class-V ride through both big waters and a fast-changing culture."

— **Jon Bowermaster**, National Geographic Adventure author/adventurer

"This is a book in which the author is on fire with his subject. Eugene Buchanan studies, chases, and pours down one of the world's wildest rivers in a journey sometimes terrifying, often chilling, but always mesmerizing and drenched with resonance. The story is swiftly moving, yet it superbly delineates the cultural and political context out of which this expedition arose. Buchanan is a gifted narrator, with seeming total recall and a lucid candor and self-awareness, as well as a talent for painting topographical views of gorges and rapids that have an almost surreal power. *Brothers on the Bashkaus* is, in a fashion, an elegy for a lost moment of cultural and

environmental first contact. It is a torrent of a book... Take the plunge!"

— **Richard Bangs**, founding partner of Mountain Travel/Sobek, author of 11 books, including *Mystery of the Nile*, *Adventures without End*, *The Lost River*, *River Gods*, and *Riding the Dragon's Back*

"Adventure paddling is fun enough, but it becomes epic, zany, and outrageous when it's set in the manic madness of modern Russia. Imagine Hunter S. Thompson — without the drugs — running Class VI. Can't conjure up the image? Sit down on a comfortable chair, get some raw pork fat for munchies, and read Eugene Buchanan's *Brothers on the Bashkaus* for a wild, hungry ride in improbable boats with a bunch of crazies. The book exposes the unadulterated spirit of whitewater adventure — stripped clean of all the fancy stuff, like paddles and lifejackets."

— **Jon Turk**, author of *In the Wake of the Jomon* and *Cold Oceans*

"Buchanan's blood is two parts river. This is a memorable tale of adventure, friendship, and a confluence, or collision, of cultures. Buchanan and his cohorts get tossed almost by happenstance onto the wildest of rivers in a land where the gear is home-made, local horsemen go crazy on strong tea, memorials to dead paddlers perch on the banks, and, as at an execution, nothing can happen until a last cigarette is smoked."

— **Peter Heller**, author of *Hell or High Water*, *Outside* magazine contributor

## LINKS

[www.paddlingLife.net](http://www.paddlingLife.net)  
The ultimate paddling magazine

[www.e-rafting.info](http://www.e-rafting.info)  
European rafting focusing on racing

[www.playak.com](http://www.playak.com)  
According to Google, "The Worlds Most Important Paddling Site"

[www.raft.pagina.nl](http://www.raft.pagina.nl)  
All sorts of links for rafting

[www.raft.startkabel.nl](http://www.raft.startkabel.nl)  
Mostly in Dutch. All sorts of rafting links





# Parting Shot

