

# Cross Country

## **GUIDELINES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO CROSS COUNTRY MAGAZINE**

Many thanks for your interest in contributing to Cross Country magazine. We try to read all submissions, however, as we always have far more material than we can ever run, we only publish the crème de la crème; so to save you time and direct your creative juices in the right direction here's some information to give you an idea of the kind of stuff we are looking for.

XC mag is an international magazine that is read in over 75 countries. It aims to have a very wide and international appeal and we hope that the material we print reflects that. Consequently some of the stuff you see printed in individual national magazines doesn't find a place in XC mag.

In a nutshell XC Mag aims to bring interesting and topical stories and reports to the international flying community. We seek diverse and unusual stories that reflect the emotion, ethos and adventure of what we do. We try to blend that with advice and opinion from the world's most experienced and qualified pilots; in a world that is overrun with unqualified on-line experts XC Mag works hard to be the place where readers know that the writer has the knowledge and experience to be trusted.

XC Mag material generally falls into ten main categories:

- 1 Travel and adventure stories
- 2 Real life experiences
- 3 Educational / technique articles
- 4 Technology articles
- 5 Topical news
- 6 Competition / event reports
- 7 Interviews
- 8 Eye candy
- 9 Hang gliding articles
- 10 Others

### **Travel and adventure stories**

I don't mean day by day travelogues telling us that you went from A to B to C, met nice people, had a nice time and took cable car for 5 bucks to get to a launch in the woods. We get inundated with this kind of stuff and it's all over the Internet too. Instead we'd rather read a short account of an strong experience, flying or non flying, that gives a flavour of the places you visited and then we can pin the boring stuff like the logistics of the place around the article in additional info boxes.

Most XC articles are around 1,000 to 2,000 words. Occasionally they might go to 3,000 to 4,000, but that would be a large spread with a lot of strong pictures, or an outrageous story.

### **Real life experience stories**

Real life stories of real people's lives work very well. From 'there I was hanging from a cliff by three lines' to how someone recovered from a life threatening accident to get back in the air. It works on TV and it works in magazines too. If you come across anything that you feel fits into this category we are very interested in reading it.

### **Educational / technique articles**

This subject is one of the fundamental reasons people buy magazines like XC mag: to learn from the experts. So to write an article like this you have to be someone who the readership would trust as an expert in the given field, or someone that we as a magazine can put our names behind and tell the readers that you are someone to trust.

The subject matter can be very varied. Meteo and flying techniques are old favourites, but by no account do the subjects dry up there. A great example is Masterclass, where Adrian Thomas, an Oxford University professor of animal flight and ex-British paragliding champion, discusses what we as pilots can learn from nature.

### **Technology articles**

The latest breakthroughs, what's coming up in the future and understanding our past. These don't necessarily require an expert to write, but they do require lots of facts backed up by comments and quotes from those in the know. If you have

a particular passion for a subject, and you're interested in researching and writing about it, please get in touch. XC mag has contacts throughout the industry and could help add credibility to your research and help you produce a great and informative piece.

### **Topical News**

Everything from a 200 word report on an event you've been to, to the latest gossip on the hill. If you have an idea please throw it at us and we'll let you know if we'd be interested.

### **Competition / event reports**

Unless it's the Worlds, Euros or the PWC tour it won't get more than a page or so in Surveillance. We are just not that interested in another Task 1 we flew 50 km, Task 2 day we flew.... it just gets bland publishing this stuff issue after issue to a readership that wasn't even there. However we will normally publish results in the 'news in brief' or run a surveillance piece on a selection of events around the world. If a comp has a very unusual format or if something really unusual happened we would consider giving it more space.

### **Interviews**

Well written interviews with stars, past or present, or with someone straight after a news breaking event are all considered. However, with email opening up direct access to so many we generally conduct interviews ourselves to keep the formats and styles similar. If you think you have a Future Hero on your hands please get in touch with the details explaining why and we'll discuss.

### **Pure eye candy**

If you have the shot, we want it. We don't often publish purely photographic portfolios nowadays, however, if you have an amazing set of shots please send them in as we can often find a way of using them.

### **Decent hang gliding articles**

As common as the lesser spotted unicorn nowadays! If you see one catch it! We are looking for profiles of pilots, adventures and technical info. We will also publish short news pieces on HG comps. 500 words ish.

### **Other diverse stuff**

Please don't think that by outlining the subjects above means we wouldn't consider even the most diverse of articles. We're really just trying to save you time by describing what we are not after. We like to keep Cross Country diverse and vibrant so we will consider most creatively and well written articles. Consider issue 101 when the features were Storm Chasing, Flying with Birds, Snow Kiting and a guide to wingovers. Apart from wingovers they were all a little off the normally trodden path, but they were well written and backed up with very strong photography.

### **Notes on photography**

Hopefully you read Cross Country and can see that the photographic expectations of the readership are very high. The best way for us to use a strong set of images is with an article that relates to the subject in the images. If you can provide us with a good story to run alongside your images there is a stronger chance we'll publish them. Occasionally we receive a set of pictures and then write an article ourselves to run alongside them, for this to happen the images have to be very good. For covers, parting and opening shots etc we are only interested in the very strongest and most evocative images. If you feel you have an image like that send it straight to us, we want to see it.

If you have a set of decent images that you think we might like to see, select a few and send them on. Even if we don't use them straight away we keep them on file and then, if you've sent them in a high enough resolution, they might get pulled out and used at the last minute when we are hunting around looking for a particular picture.

Please don't send us a CD with 500 snaps you took on your last flying holiday. Sorry, but after the first thirty or forty we might not even look at the rest as we are very busy, it's better just to send us your best ten.

Unless an article is absolutely mind blowing it often won't get to print without strong photographs to back it up. We can often find images to compliment your words, but if you are supplying the words it often works better if you can source appropriate images to run with your story. If you can't we can start looking but, as I said earlier, unless the story is amazing it might limit its chances of publication. Exceptions to this might be a philosophy piece or something similar

where a nicely designed page or a drawing will carry it well enough; the Weekend Warrior series was a great example of this.

We accept most digital image files nowadays: either by CD, email or FTP. If you are emailing please send Jpegs compressed no further than level 7.

### **UNIQUE CONTRIBUTIONS**

Finally we won't touch anything that has been published in any other English language flying magazine. Sorry, but we work hard to keep XC mag fresh and vibrant, not re-running already published stories.

### **PAYMENT**

We pay 60 euros per page printed, be it pictures or text – again a great advantage of taking good photos to accompany your piece - otherwise the page fee is split with the photographer. An average feature is 6 pages long but could go to 12.

Send me any ideas you have, articles you have written and we'll keep in touch.

Regards

Bob and Marcus  
XC Editorial Team