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Cross Country

TRAVEL GUIDE



2010/11 THE PERFECT YEAR!

FOLLOW THE SUN FOR 12 MONTHS
AND FLY 23 OF THE BEST SITES IN THE WORLD
EUROPE - NORTH AMERICA - SOUTH AMERICA - AFRICA - ASIA - AUSTRALASIA

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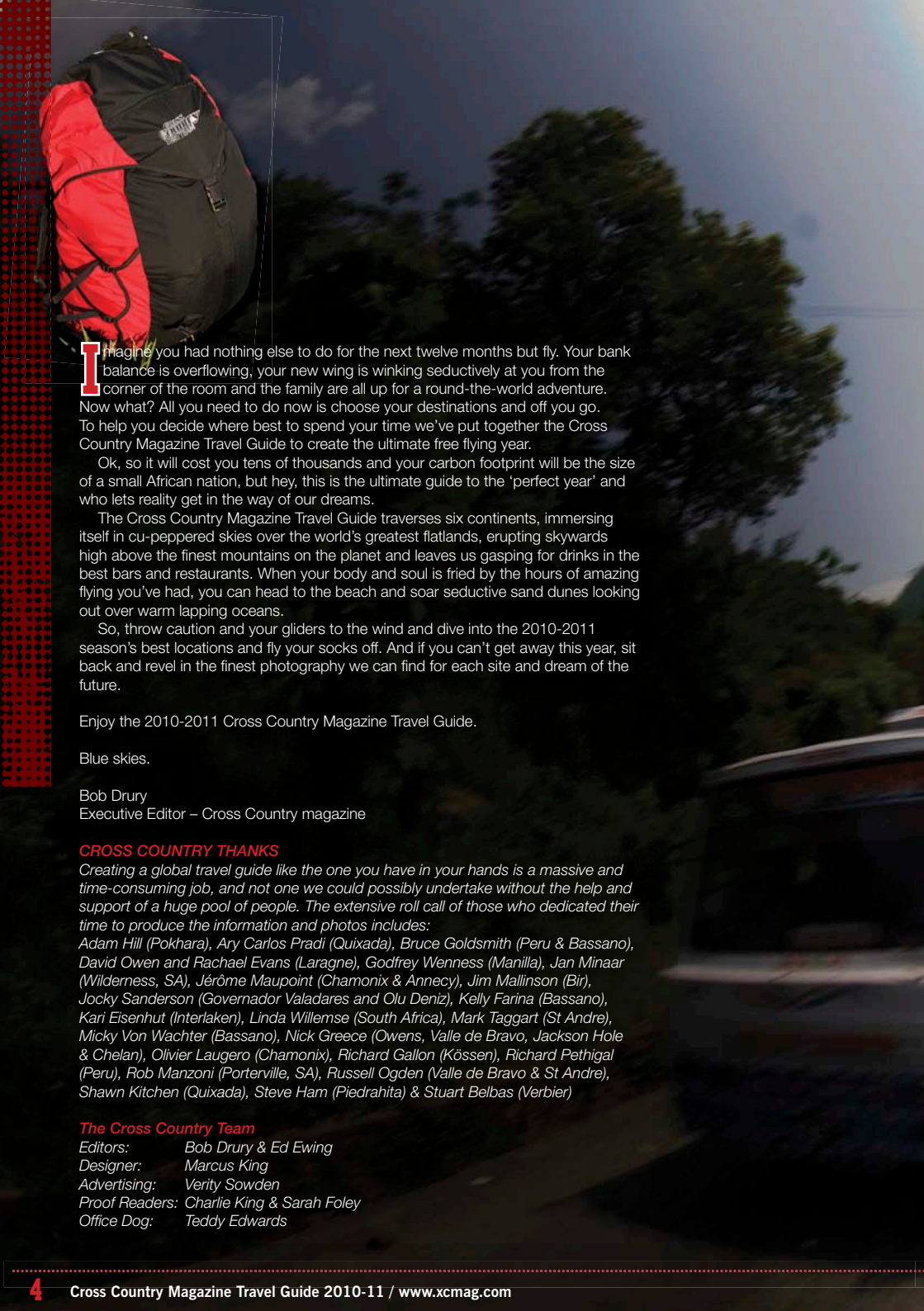
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COVER IMAGE - Flying, travelling: it's all about finding the right lift..." Photo: Jerôme Maupoint. CONTENTS IMAGE – Photo: Peter Wolf



Imagine you had nothing else to do for the next twelve months but fly. Your bank balance is overflowing, your new wing is winking seductively at you from the corner of the room and the family are all up for a round-the-world adventure. Now what? All you need to do now is choose your destinations and off you go. To help you decide where best to spend your time we've put together the Cross Country Magazine Travel Guide to create the ultimate free flying year.

Ok, so it will cost you tens of thousands and your carbon footprint will be the size of a small African nation, but hey, this is the ultimate guide to the 'perfect year' and who lets reality get in the way of our dreams.

The Cross Country Magazine Travel Guide traverses six continents, immersing itself in cu-peppered skies over the world's greatest flatlands, erupting skywards high above the finest mountains on the planet and leaves us gasping for drinks in the best bars and restaurants. When your body and soul is fried by the hours of amazing flying you've had, you can head to the beach and soar seductive sand dunes looking out over warm lapping oceans.

So, throw caution and your gliders to the wind and dive into the 2010-2011 season's best locations and fly your socks off. And if you can't get away this year, sit back and revel in the finest photography we can find for each site and dream of the future.

Enjoy the 2010-2011 Cross Country Magazine Travel Guide.

Blue skies.

Bob Drury
Executive Editor – Cross Country magazine

CROSS COUNTRY THANKS

Creating a global travel guide like the one you have in your hands is a massive and time-consuming job, and not one we could possibly undertake without the help and support of a huge pool of people. The extensive roll call of those who dedicated their time to produce the information and photos includes:
Adam Hill (Pokhara), Ary Carlos Pradi (Quixada), Bruce Goldsmith (Peru & Bassano), David Owen and Rachael Evans (Laragne), Godfrey Wenness (Manilla), Jan Minaar (Wilderness, SA), Jérôme Maupoint (Chamonix & Annecy), Jim Mallinson (Bir), Jocky Sanderson (Governador Valadares and Olu Deniz), Kelly Farina (Bassano), Kari Eisenhut (Interlaken), Linda Willemse (South Africa), Mark Taggart (St Andre), Micky Von Wachter (Bassano), Nick Greece (Owens, Valle de Bravo, Jackson Hole & Chelan), Olivier Laugero (Chamonix), Richard Gallon (Kössen), Richard Pethigal (Peru), Rob Manzoni (Porterville, SA), Russell Ogden (Valle de Bravo & St Andre), Shawn Kitchen (Quixada), Steve Ham (Piedrahita) & Stuart Belbas (Verbier)

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THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO THE 'PERFECT YEAR'



Photo: Peter Wolf. Insert Bag image: Fred Gustafsson

PERU CUSCO





THE LURE

Get blasted to 6,000 m in powerful thermals and look down on the land of the Incas. Then dine in historic Cucso before dancing the night away in one of South America's most popular tourist destinations. Once you're flown and partied out, use whatever energy you have left to trek the famous Inca Trail to Machu Picchu, the mysterious Lost City of the Incas.

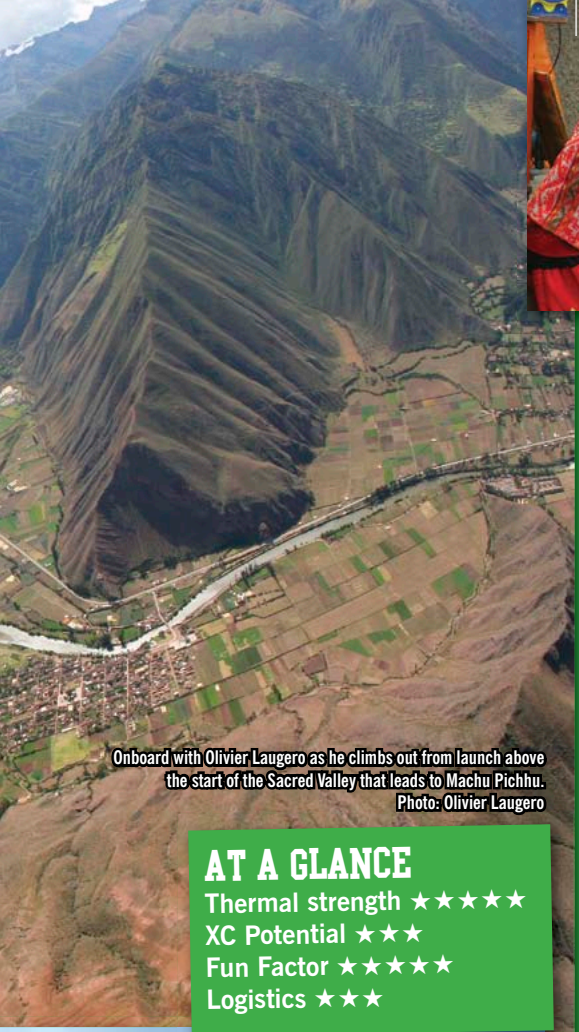
THE SET UP

Cusco is a historic Peruvian city built on the remains of ancient Inca ruins. Just above the town is the ruin of Sacsayhuaman, a walled complex that dates back to 1100 AD.

The city lies at 3,300 m and is one of the major tourist destinations in South America. Travellers flock to Cusco as it is the launch point for treks to Machu Picchu, so the city is brilliantly set up for visiting pilots to holiday in. There is a fantastic selection of bars, restaurants and nightclubs to keep you happy through the evening and early hours and a wealth of interesting museums and ruins to occupy you through the day. Be aware that Cusco is high, so take it easy the first few days as you acclimatise to the altitude.

The main launch is a half hour drive from town at 3,600 m ASL and 900 m over the Urubamba valley floor below, which leads towards Machu Picchu. It's a roomy, two-wing grassy launch staring straight at the Urubamba mountain range, which has three glaciers leading to peaks of over 5,600 m. Close by, Rachi launch is further away but offers a beautiful grassy hillside looking into the same valley.





Onboard with Olivier Laugero as he climbs out from launch above the start of the Sacred Valley that leads to Machu Pichhu.
Photo: Olivier Laugero

AT A GLANCE

Thermal strength ★★★★★
XC Potential ★★★
Fun Factor ★★★★★
Logistics ★★★



Photo: Bob Drury



THE NITTY GRITTY

FLYING CONDITIONS
Cusco pumps in the heat and rarefied high altitude air. 8 m/s climbs are the norm with 12 m/s often lurking in the cores. Base is often at over 6,000 m so if you are susceptible to altitude take oxygen. If not, drink copious amounts of mata de coca like the locals do.

At this altitude the heat and thermals create a thermal breeze so expect winds of around 20 km/h in the afternoon. Overdevelopment will cause excessive winds. Evening restitution often occurs after 4 pm.

WHEN TO GO
April to November

ALTITUDE
LAUNCH: 3,600 m ASL
LANDING: 2,700 m in the valley, 3,600 m on the altiplano behind launch
CLOUDBASE: 5,000 - 5,500 m in May going to 6,000 - 6,500 m in August

HANG GLIDER ACCESS
Both launches are reached by car and are spacious enough for hang gliders

MUST BE FLOWN
The 30 km XC back to Cusco is classic. Start in the Sacred Valley, cross over the altiplano of the high mountains and end up over the Sacsayhuaman ruins and the city of Cusco. Land next to the White Christ statue near the ruins. Do not land in the ruins themselves, as it's illegal!

Follow the Sacred Valley east to Pisac. A beautiful flight over high grassy peaks with the option of good landings in the valley should you have a problem. Be careful of switching valley winds near Pisac, as four valleys meet there.

WATCH OUT FOR
Although the Peruvian approach to airspace is very relaxed due to the very small number of free flyers in the country, there is still airspace to the south and south west and over Cusco city itself, plus airlines sometimes approach from the west. When flying into Cusco, enter over the mountain range between the lake at Chincheros and Cusco to be on the safe side.

PERU CUSCO

MORE NITTY GRITTY

WATCH OUT FOR CONT'D
Given the altitude and ferocity of the sun, thermic turbulence is always a danger in Cusco. Dust devils can start as early as 9 am and pilots should be wary of encountering extreme lift and its associated turbulence during the day.

ACCOMMODATION
Cusco has everything from $5 backpackers' hostels to five star luxury hotels. Chose somewhere within a few hundred metres of the Plaza de Armas, as it's a nicer area and where all the action is happening.

GUIDES AND COURSES
For great advice contact Richard Pethigal of Cloudwalker Paragliding who has been running a tandem operation from Cusco since 2000. Richard is in Cusco from May until Oct.
cloudwp@gmail.com
Local pilot Leo Fantas owns the local paragliding school.
www.cusco.net/leo-paragliding/

EXPERT'S OPINION
"High altitude flying made easy, in a fantastic holiday location that is only missing a beach." Bob Drury

THE BIG TICKS
Flying over ancient Inca ruins.

TAKE THE FAMILY
Great for older kids with lots of cultural and historical adventures to have. Many agencies offer tours around the Inca ruins or go rafting, horse riding or trekking.

RAINY DAYS
You'd struggle to get bored in Cusco. Visit the Sacsayhuaman ruins, take a tour of the city, raft the Apurimac River, take the train to Machu Picchu or hike the Inca Trail. If you're feeling lazy then hang in town and eat and drink in the myriad of fantastic cafes and bars whilst Inca musicians serenade you.

WEATHER INFO
Cusco is a micro-climate in a country with poor meteo information. You need your own judgement here.

GETTING THERE
Fly into Cusco from Lima or La Paz, Bolivia. Or beat yourself sore on a Peruvian bus with chickens and goats.

USEFUL CONTACTS AND WEBSITES FOR THE AREA
www.cuscoperu.com


Kari Eisenhut crossing the high plateau behind launch enroute to victory at the Cusco Breitling Open. Photo: Bob Drury


Taking the high route to Pisac. Photo: Bruce Goldsmith

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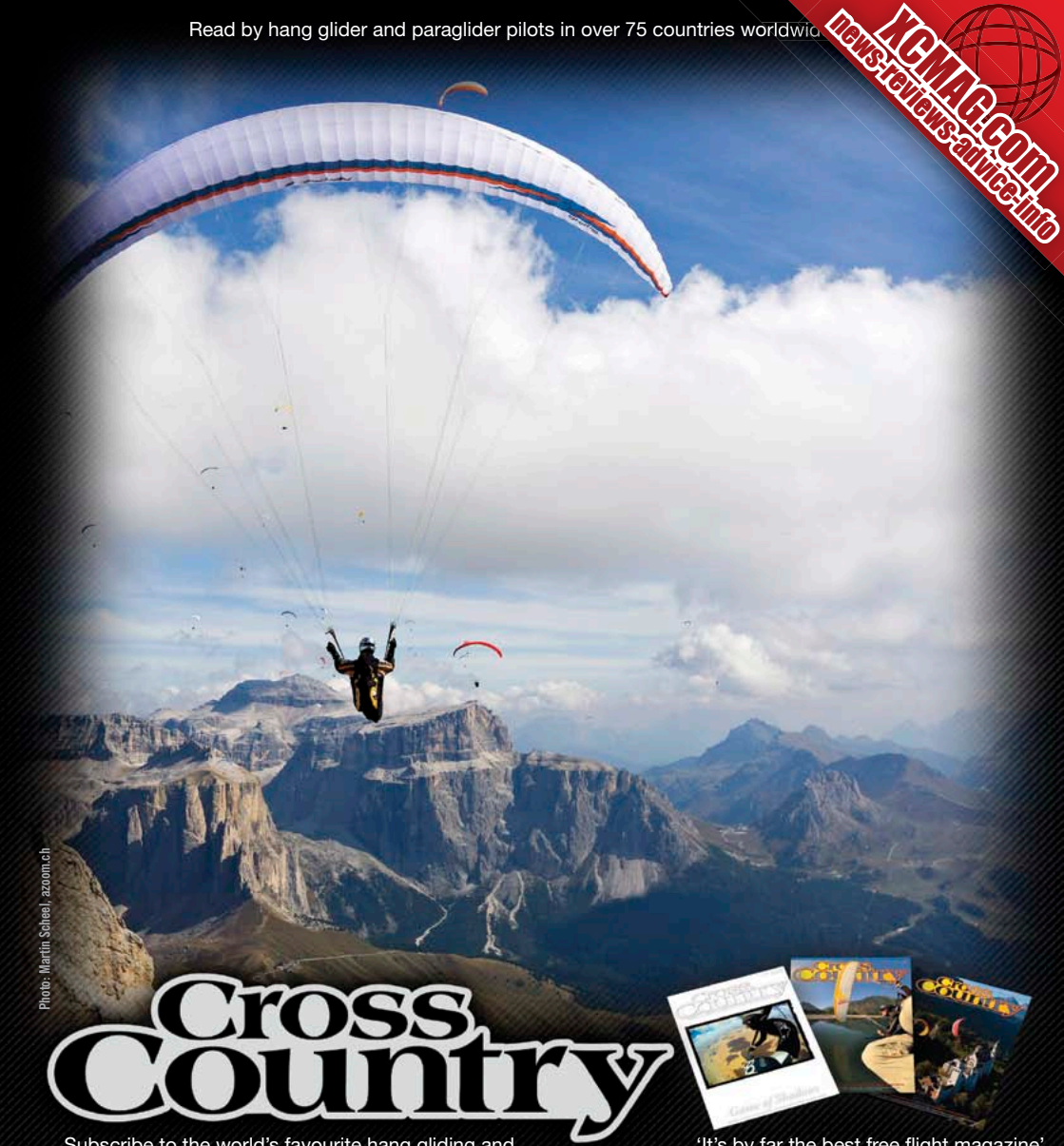


Photo: Martin Scheel, azoom.ch

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TRAVEL GUIDE

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