

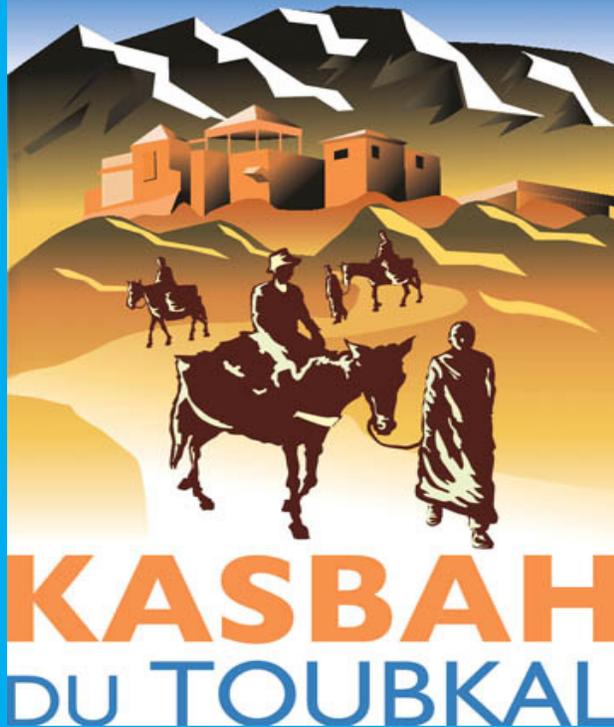
April 2015
Issue Number Two



KASBAH DU TOUBKAL

MOROCCO'S PREMIER MOUNTAIN RETREAT

Morocco's premier mountain retreat



Deep within the High Atlas Mountains stands **KASBAH DU TOUBKAL**, a restored mountain retreat set dramatically beneath the towering Jbel Toubkal, the highest mountain in North Africa.

From its imposing location, the Kasbah offers its guests unparalleled views of the surrounding scenery from seventeen comfortable bedrooms nestled amongst gardens and terraces. Attentive service is provided by the local Berber team.

Although it is less than forty miles from Marrakech, the Kasbah's secluded location makes it a wonderful place to get away from it all.

Kasbah du Toubkal is more than a place to stay, it is an experience never to be forgotten.



We are pleased to be a founding member of the prestigious National Geographic network



UNIQUE LODGES
OF THE WORLD™



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Clear Blue Skies and Crisp Mountain Air

Although there's still snow sparkling on the top of Jbel Toubkal, spring has arrived, with warm days and cool nights – perfect for the thick wool djellaba you'll find waiting for you in your room.

Thank you to everyone who sent us emails after our first issue with comments and suggestions that we'll definitely take note of. In particular, John Burbage of Gosforth who asked us if we could include a book section, which gave us the perfect opportunity to mention the beautiful photo collections of our featured interviewee, Alan Keohane, undoubtedly one of Morocco's top photographers.

If you think that getting to school by bus can be difficult, that's nothing compared to *A Crazy Commute to College*, Education For All volunteer Lucy Goodman's story of visiting a girl's village way off the beaten track.

Marrakech Atlas Etape is well on the way to having a record number of entrants – quite possibly helped by the Telegraph including it as one of the six best cyclo sportives of 2015. Saif Kovach of Argan Xtreme Sports who, along with Mike McHugo of Kasbah du Toubkal, came up with the idea of holding the first Moroccan Etape in 2013, has created a programme to show you the beauty of the High Atlas Mountains from two wheels. If something tranquil is more to your liking, we continue our programme that allows you to enjoy your time in beautiful surroundings while nurturing your body and mind. Planning ahead to August, Perumal Koshy introduces Dynamic Progressive Fusion Yoga, to make you feel refreshed, relaxed and simultaneously energised in the cool of the High Atlas Mountains, away from the summer heat of the city. It's also a great time for trekking.

And don't forget, if you have any comments, photos or ideas, you can contact me directly at

kasbahmagazine@gmail.com.

Derek Workman
Editor





Updates from the world of the Kasbah

Outdoor First Aid Training at Kasbah du Toubkal

Cory Jones, Director of Outdoor First Aid Limited, visited Kasbah du Toubkal in February to offer training in mountain first aid to the Kasbah staff and local mountain guides.

Twenty-four guides were trained on two mountain first-aid courses, which concentrated on developing emergency first aid and rescue skills to equip local mountain guides with life-saving expertise, knowledge that will prove invaluable to both visitors and residents of the locality.

The skills taught during the training included how to deal with unconscious and collapsed casualties, what to do if someone falls from a mountain track or mule, dealing with bleeding and shock, recognition of a range of illnesses, spinal injury management, and also dealing with and prevention of altitude sickness and heat illness.

Over the years the village association has provided an ambulance and funded three defibrillators (AED's) for the villages of the Imlil Valley and the wider community. Eighty percent of cardiac arrest casualties can be saved if an AED arrives within the first few minutes and is used correctly with CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation). Refresher training for Kasbah staff was given on the use of the defibrillator located at the hotel. Cory also provided the local gendarmerie with defibrillator training and refresher training in CPR, so that if someone in the community has a cardiac arrest they are more likely to have access to someone with a defibrillator and who knows how to use it.

"It was a busy week," said Cory. "There was a lot of information and techniques for the guides to absorb, but they worked hard and with great enthusiasm. I was pleasantly surprised by how much they have taken on board, and the training they had is the same that outdoor instructors are provided with in the UK."

Outdoor First Aid is hoping to develop a long-term relationship with Kasbah du Toubkal and the local Moroccan mountain guides. They aim to return to Morocco to ensure the continued high standards of first aid training to ensure that if an accident happens in the Atlas Mountains both tourists and locals alike will receive skilled care.

www.outdoor-first-aid-courses.com



Nipping home for the weekend

When Lucy Goodman from Bournemouth, a volunteer at Dar Ouirgane from January to March this year, was invited to visit the home of Fatima, one of her '37 new best friends', she didn't exactly think it would be the romanticised mountain jaunt depicted in TV travelogues – and it's just as well, because it wasn't! What she did get, though, was a wonderful mini-adventure that she relates with humour in *A Crazy Commute to College*.

Lucy's stay at Dar Ouirgane was only her third in Morocco; the first as a 'complete rudderless hippy on holiday', and the second with a school group doing a tour led by Discover Ltd. "Having worked with Mike and Gilly (McHugo) in France last summer, they suggested I might be a good candidate to come out here over winter, plus it would keep me out of mischief. I feel guilty about how lucky I am sometimes.

The Eagle Has Landed.....

...although in this case it's the bearded vulture and it didn't!

Every year Fabrice Cuzin and photographer Alan Keohane try and work out where the bearded vulture will rest that year. The rare bird has multiple resting sites that can be a large distance apart, so it's always a huge challenge.

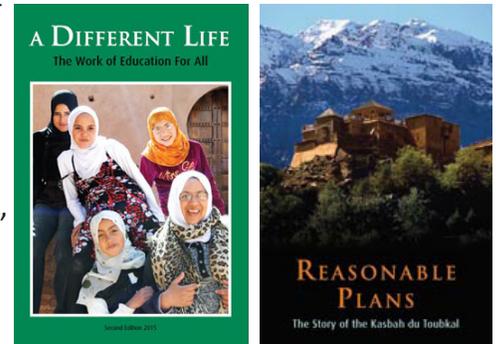
Fabrice has been working on the Bearded Vulture Project for years because this beautiful bird is disappearing from Morocco. In 2014 it appeared on the IUCN Red List (the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, the world's main authority on the conservation status of species.) "It is rare, and often quite difficult to see," he says, "But if you see it once it's incredible, very impressive, a beautiful bird."

"February is the time they do their prenuptial air display, when they do acrobatic flying together around the nesting site they've chosen," comments Alan. "There haven't been that many sightings on the north side of the Atlas, and Fabrice knew that they had a nesting site on the south side so we camped for three nights in the bitter cold in the hope of seeing them. We didn't see them at all, so what it suggests to us is that they haven't chosen their nesting site on the south side and that they are somewhere else."

It's frustrating not getting a photo, but at the same time it's part of the challenge and for both Alan and Fabrice it's just enjoyable being there.

"We've got this hide that Fabrice had built up by

"It took no time to form a good rapport with these girls and I'm so, so chuffed to have received the invitations to go home with them at weekends," she said, shortly before she left Morocco. "Next weekend I'm off to Imlil and surrounding villages with some girls – and that's a piece of cake in comparison to getting to Iznagen. In fact Fatima told me she had another nightmare of a journey getting home last Saturday. It took 8½ hours again – You can read the full story of all these projects and more in that proves that my story isn't just a one-off drama – it's a constant hassle for her to get there and back."



the mountain refuge. Last winter I went up and spent five nights in this tiny little hide and because the vultures are very nervous and can sit on a rock for hours on end, you can't show that you are there. I spent twenty-two hours a day in this tiny cabin over 3000 metres and that's like being in a freezer box. I'd get out at sunrise and sunset for about fifteen minutes, but after that it would be too cold to hang around too much. Three nights camping in the open air was a pleasure compared to being locked in this tiny hut!"

You can read more about the Bearded Vulture Project in *Reasonable Plans*. Alan Keohane is interviewed about this photographic work on page 12.



The House on the Hill



Who could have guessed that an agonisingly painful silly accident would have taken the McHugo brothers, Chris and Mike, off on a tangent that would lead to them buying a hilltop ruin, which would eventually become the glorious Kasbah du Toubkal? But such are life's little quirks – and you never know when they will happen.

In 1989 Chris was lying in a hospital bed in Dulwich hospital in London with his leg strapped up in traction, the result of trying to compete with his son, Matthew at skateboarding. Bored out of his mind, he was

glancing through the Financial Times when he came across an advert by King Hassan II of Morocco saying that by Royal Decree he was going to end the bureaucratic hurdles that were stopping inward investment in the country. Despite a lot of talk, previous laws had done little to encourage investment, but the Royal Decree ensured that the talk would become action (very slow action, as it turned out).

In 1978 Mike McHugo started the aptly-named Hobo Travel with his wife (apt, given that clients survived on a diet of sardines in tomato sauce and bread, and slept on the ground with a tent over their head only if they weren't too tired at the end of the day to erect it). One of his most popular holidays, and a personal favourite, was trekking up Jbel Toubkal in the High Atlas Mountains, at 4167m North Africa's highest peak, using Imlil village as a base.

"I used to look up at the ruin from the roof of Maurice's house," (Hajj Maurice, who later became part of the Kasbah's ownership group). "There was basically nothing there other than one small building with the roof fallen in and a bit of a wall that stuck up like a rotten tooth. It was just one of those things that was there and you never really gave it much thought." But

Chris did.

Shortly before Chris' accident their father had died and when Chris was able to walk the brothers took their mother and some neighbours on holiday to Imlil. With the King's decree fresh in mind, Chris looked up at the crumbling ruin on the top of the hill and said to Mike, "Why don't we see who owns the land and try to buy it?" Because of its situation they knew that someone would buy the land and quite possibly convert it into a fancy private house or expensive hotel. Chris thought that it would be as safe in their hands as anybody else's.

A few simple words – and five years of hoops to jump through to get the paperwork sorted out. The Royal Decree may have made it possible to buy land, but Moroccan bureaucracy did not make it easy.

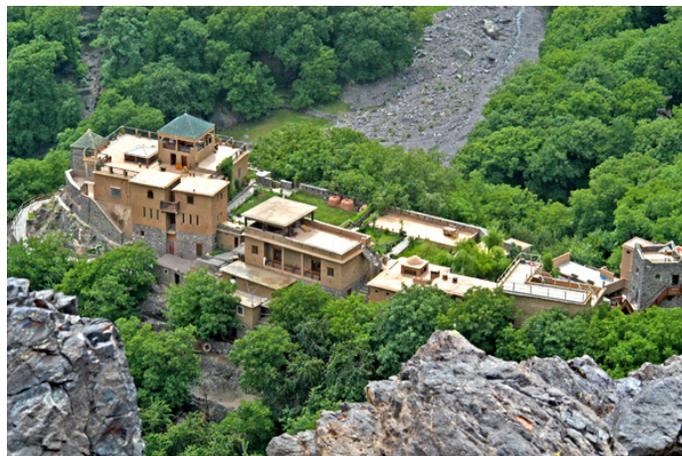
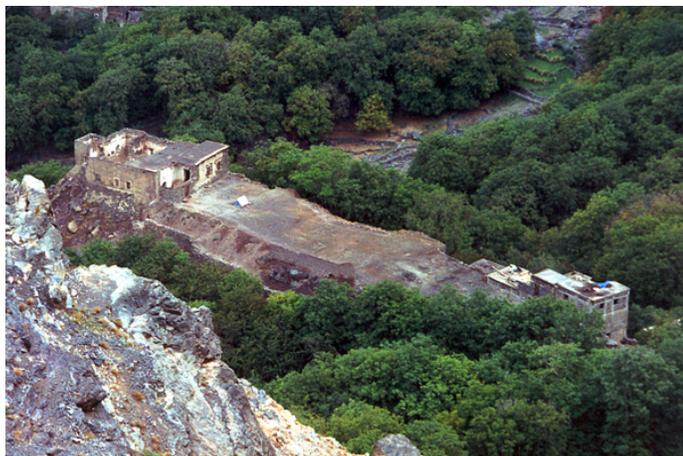
"When we bought the land in 1990 we already had The Eagle's Nest open in France, which was set up for school groups and was what we intended the Kasbah for," says Mike. "It didn't start making money until 1991, and we had to convince the

investors that, yes, we did know what we were doing – although obviously we couldn't be sure – and could we please have some more money. It became known as Elephant Two, based on the Mulla Nasrudin folk tale." (See below.)

By 1995, with the image of completed paperwork hovering on the horizon, the company, now called Discover Ltd, began basic building, but it was through a chance encounter with John Bothamley, an architect highly regarded for his sensitive designs and understanding of vernacular architecture, that Kasbah du Toubkal as we know it now began to take shape. Between 1995 and '99, John drew sketch after sketch with nothing being built other than accommodation for schools groups and a couple of attractive rooms



There was basically a bit of a wall that stood up like a rotten tooth



for their teachers. From '99 on, progressive building transformed a barren hilltop to a haven of colour and comfort, which in 2003 won the Kasbah the British Airways Tourism For Tomorrow award in the Built Environment category.

Because of its unique situation there is no road access – and never will be if Mike and Chris have anything to do with it.

“Someone said why don't we bulldoze a road in because it would make it a lot cheaper to bring materials in,” comments Chris. “We've always refused to do that because from the very beginning, before any plan was drawn or stone laid, we said that we would only work with the environment and in the best interest of the people of the Imlil Valley. It made it much more expensive to build because everything was carried up the hill on the backs of mules, and strangely enough, something as simple as sand was one of the most expensive transport-wise because of the relative cost and weight and the cost to mule it up the hill. But we refused to compromise.”

Building in the High Atlas has changed beyond all recognition over the last few years, but most of the materials used in the construction of the Kasbah come from the locality; stone from the river, walnut wood from the surrounding valleys.

“The local builders have the knowledge of how to build in inaccessible places in their genes,” adds Mike. “They have an understanding of terracing, and even these days if you look around you will see homes being

built in places we would never think possible. We've tried to work within the building traditions of the mountains using local skills.”

A good example of that is the tower that appears to stand guard over the gated entrance. The plan was always going to be to build the bottom level in stone and then build the upper levels in breeze block and cover it in rendering to make it look like mud, as the Kasbah looks. The stone masons themselves asked if they could carry on in stone, so the company said yes. The builders said that this is how they used to build, with the decorated wood of the old ceilings that are a feature of the whole of Imlil.



“The riads in Marrakech have been credited with bringing back many of the restoration skills that seemed lost because no-one wanted them anymore. What the riads did in Marrakech we did in a different way in Imlil. We haven't brought new skills, we've resurrected old ones that were beginning to die off because people thought

they weren't wanted. Our success has made others copy us, which is the greatest form of flattery, and as far as designs are concerned, we would like them to be copying us to make their villages look as traditional as possible from afar, even if they are using cement in the construction. That's understandable because many of the older houses are made of mud brick. I've been in Imlil way back and had to dig people out of a house because mud in heavy rains falls apart. We never wanted them to stop developing, but we wanted it to look architecturally a bit like it used to look.”

Dreams are only the plans of the reasonable



REASONABLE PLANS

tells the story of **Kasbah du Toubkal**, its origins, its life within the community and the benefits that the Magical 5% has brought to the Imlil Valley and beyond.

Mulla Nasrudin and the Elephant

The wise Mulla Nasrudin was roaming the countryside on his donkey one fine summer's day when he entered a beautiful village. He felt as if he were in Shangri-La but the villagers were all very miserable.

"Why are you so unhappy when you live in such a wonderful place?" asked Nasrudin of the headman.

"It's because of the elephant," came the reply, the headman pointing to a huge beast devouring its weight in food. "The elephant is eating all our food; we are starving and the mothers' milk is drying in the breast."

"That's easy," said the mullah, "get rid of the elephant and you will be happy again."

"But we can't," said the headman. "The Emperor Tamberlaine passed through the village last Autumn, gave us the elephant and told us to look after him, and everyone knows how ferocious a temper the Emperor has."



Nasrudin, being a man of wisdom, declared that they must get rid of the elephant or the whole village would starve. The headman, being no fool himself, asked the mullah if he would plead their case at the court of the Emperor, upon which Nasrudin agreed on one condition, that the whole village would attend with him. Certain that with someone of the distinction of Mulla Nasrudin at their head they would succeed, the villagers agreed.

The assembly travelled many days to the court of the Emperor Tamberlaine, and spent equally as many awaiting the Emperor's pleasure. When at last they were in his royal presence Nasrudin stepped forward to present their case.

Tamberlaine looked down from his high throne and asked, "Yes, what is it?"

"It's about the elephant your Highness," replied the mullah.

Tamberlaine glared at Nasrudin, and in a voice fit to shake towers bellowed, "AND WHAT ABOUT THE ELEPHANT?"

Hearing a rushing noise behind him Nasrudin looked around and saw that the crowd of villagers had disappeared. Slowly returning his gaze to the Emperor's glowering countenance he said in a voice full of terror and the certainty of execution,

"We'd like another one please."

Taking care of you at the Kasbah

Each month we will be bringing you photographs and a potted history of some of the people who take such good care of you at the Kasbah du Toubkal. We begin with.....



Rachid Isoukhan

One of the first faces of Kasbah staff you will see when you arrive at the Remote Reception in Imlil village will be Rachid's. He'll arrange your escort to the Kasbah or a ride on a mule if you don't want to take the 'rugged route' uphill on foot. He could well be the staff member that escorts you on one of the Kasbah's free daily walks.



Lahcen Igdem

Once you get to the Kasbah, receptionist Lahcen will welcome you in the traditional Berber manner, with fresh water to wash your hands and dates to dip in milk. There's little Lahcen can't arrange to make your stay at the Kasbah unique, as well as being a fount of information about life in the seven villages that make up the Imlil Valley.



Mohamed Idali

Mohamed has been a receptionist at the Kasbah from 2010, and each day he 'commutes' from his home in the village of Aguersioual. He is married to Latifa and has a lovely 18 month-old daughter, Safaa. If you would like to practice your Spanish, Mohamed is the chap to do it with, a bit of a surprise this far up in the High Atlas.

CREATING HISTORY

“We have this idea we have a right to privacy. When you go abroad and you see that people are interesting, a different culture, they look different, dress different, different life style, and it is very fascinating, and there is this urge to take a photograph, to get a memory of it. We kind of forget that they are just like us and that they too have a sense of privacy. We can say that in an Islamic culture it’s not good to take photos of women, but it’s bigger than that, it’s a basic human thing, we have a sense of privacy, and so we have to be sensitive to that. If you want to take photographs of people then one of the things to do is to try and have a connection with them, have some kind of even the most shallow kind of relationship with them, which allows them to feel open enough to let you take photographs of them.”

Alan Keohane’s comments aren’t just rhetoric, they come from his years of experience photographing mountain Berbers in their villages and the nomadic Bedouin.

“The first time I came to Morocco in 1986 I was taking people trekking for three months, and I spent those three months taking black and white pictures of the Berbers I was working with, some of who lived in Aremd, a village way up in the High Atlas. I also took pictures of the village. When I went back the following year I took an album and gave it to the guy I worked with. He took that album to the Mosque and after Friday prayers he showed it to all the men in the mosque, and the question was “What do you think of Alan doing these pictures?” The message I got back was, “As a community we give you permission to carry on, we approve of what you are doing,” and the reason was that they felt that they were portrayed as individuals, they weren’t just exotic, they felt as if it was really about them.”

The photographs were taken between 1986-89, and became *Berbers of Morocco*, published in 1991, a major part of which was photographed in Aremd. But more than just a selection of images, the book has taken on a special significance for the people of the village.

“I’ve been in Aremd and sat with people and families with that book, and one of the things that they’ve said to me is, Alan your book is our history, our way of life is no longer the same. We now have a historical record of a life that no longer exists. We value it from that point of view.”



A regular comment about Alan’s work is that his images are a very gentle approach to looking at people, not taken in an aggressive way, his photographic style mirroring his mild-mannered character.

“I’d never want to take a picture of someone that they would be ashamed of, that they would not be proud of. It comes from an interest in people, people and the world they live in. It comes from the sympathy, a curiosity and an admiration of who my subjects and their lives. Even if it’s animals and nature, it’s still an admiration of the mountains, a love of the beauty of nature. With the people it’s the love of us as people. So it’s that that drives me to take photos in the way that I do.”

Alan Keohane might have become one of Morocco’s foremost photographers, but his approach to his work stems from his studies in fine art print-making at Aberystwyth University. You could be forgiven if you thought that some of his work looks painterly in fashion, for example *Pomegranates*, a study of a young girl peeling pomegranates in the courtyard of a riad.

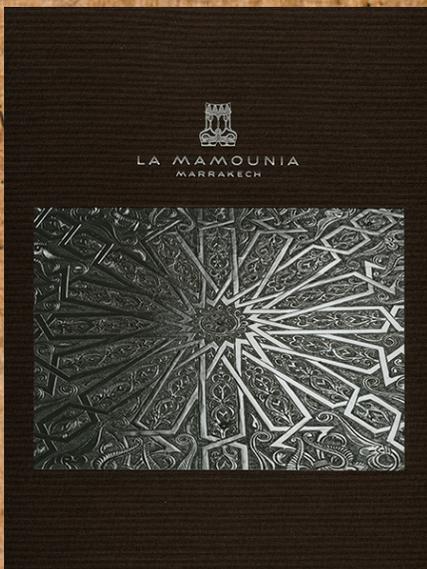
"I've never worked consciously in a painterly way. To me a photograph is an object and it's all about the tones and colours and how they work on a piece of paper. I did an exhibition of portraits of the nomads at a gallery in Marrakech and the gallery owner printed some pictures of old master portraits and compared them to my photographs. He kept pulling out all these pictures of paintings and saying, look there's so many similarities between these painted portraits and the way you are taking photographic portraits.' I think it's true, but it was quite surprising and quite unconscious to me."

Anyone who has come across Education For All will have seen Alan's work. But why should one of Morocco's top photographers, with a CV that most

would envy, give his time to photographing for a charity?

"I think EFA is probably one of the best development projects, private initiatives that is happening, certainly in the mountains of Morocco. It's very targeted, it's very effective, it's very well done, and I'm very proud to be able to contribute to that because basically the Berbers in Morocco gave me so much. The fact that I'm able to be part of something that is giving something back to them is very good for me. These girls are the new face of Moroccan Berbers and it's interesting and it's important that when you are photographing them you are not always trying to sell the idea of a romantic past. There is a real today that's different. People's lives are changing, they see themselves differently than their parents did."





Photographs with the kind permission of Still Images



See page 23 for more information about Alan Keohane's books
Bedouin and *The Berbers of Morocco*



Yoga with Perumal



Perumal Koshy, born in India, has a teaching experience spanning over two decades across America, Europe and Morocco.

At 13 years of age he began his teaching career, a path that led him to develop Dynamic Progressive Fusion Yoga. The practice is built on a 6 part underlying foundation (pranayama, preparatory, salutation, strength, stretching and meditation) to feel refreshed, relaxed and simultaneously energized. A progressive approach will allow the student to achieve the right state of flow in order to improve mobility, breathing and circulation while strengthening muscles, tendons and ligaments, leading to genuine mental and physical wellbeing.

Perumal's yoga classes are adjusted to the physical abilities of the individual. Those participating in his classes walk away with results of calm and clarity with heightened energy. Yoga Journal Italy, Esprit Yoga France and Yoga Magazine Holland frequently publish articles written by Perumal.

The Six Parts:

1. Pranayama - Settle into practice * Let go of the outside world * Open and clear breath * Detoxify sinuses
2. Preparation - Joint Safety * Move synovial fluid * Warm up core
3. Salutation - Unite breath and movement * Align skeletal system * Relieve constipation * Detoxify body
4. Strength - Increasing circulation * Prepare fibers for deeper stretching * Improve physical strength
5. Stretching - Relieve muscle tension * Free spinal tension
6. Meditation and Relaxation - Accomplishing previous steps enable meditation and or relaxation.

1st- 6th August, 2015
 Dynamic Progressive Fusion Yoga
 led by Perumal Koshy
 Further information can be found by
 clicking the logo above.

A Stroll around the

Medina



It never ceases to amaze me, the quality of workmanship that comes out of a workshop measuring about four metres square. There are certain parts of the *medina* dedicated to particular products; the metal workers' souk, the djelaba sellers' souk, but if you drift out to the periphery, away from the tourists around Jemaa El Fna, you come to what are basically workers' suburbs, but not suburbs as we might know them.

Lined along the streets and in tucked-away little back alleys, a barber with one chair patched with electrician's tape and a cracked mirror will work next to a tinsmith slowly turning a piece of metal, as he punches ornate designs into it to make the beautiful lamps that cast starbursts of light when illuminated; alongside him woodcarvers and masonry workers etch intricate designs into their chosen materials, a butcher whose sole stock consists of a camel's head suspended from a hook and a pile of congealing grey innards. (If you want to find out what camel's meat tastes like, get down to the food stalls in La Place at night and you can delight your taste buds.) Dark caverns lit by a single fluorescent tube selling olives, olive oil and vats of preserved lemons for that emblematic Moroccan dish, *poulet au citron*; single-portion tajines cooking on a hot-plate beside a food stall made from a couple of paper-covered low tables and a few old stools, with the cook selling battered fish deep-fried in a blackened old frying pan. A shop with a collection of beautiful antique tea pots on display shows, on further inspection, shelves of second-hand kettles for sale at the back.

Those who can't afford a shop will have a carton of

Marlboro open on a cardboard box counter, selling cigarettes individually, (you can recognise the itinerant cigarette seller by the sound of the coins he jingles in his hand as he walks around); a family-sized block of almond chocolate is cut into narrow strips, each offering four small, square bites; carrots tied in small bundles and spicy green peppers sold in threes, just enough for a tajine. Estate agents buy, sell and rent from bedraggled hidey-holes furnished with a beaten-up old desk and a couple of 50s tubular steel kitchen chairs. Their properties must all be filed in their heads because there is no sign of paperwork. Five-hundred-year-old doors with great studded nail-heads, lacquered with layers of ancient brown paint, stand open to reveal walls tiled in a mixture of gaudy 70s factory rejects.

And above all, the ubiquitous mint tea. DW



Best of *Both* Worlds

5, 6, 7 nights or more – you decide!

This holiday package combines a visit to the spectacular High Atlas Mountains of Morocco with a stay in the exotic city of Marrakech, the fabled red city, which has been a magnet for travellers for centuries. This two-centre holiday has been designed to allow you the maximum amount of flexibility in terms of duration and gives you the opportunity to book locally the excursions and activities of your choice – how much or how little you do is entirely up to you. Our flexible package allows you to purchase in advance the key elements, namely comfortable accommodation on a half-board basis at the Kasbah, B&B in Marrakech, and transfers between centres and the airport, so all you need to do is decide how long you want to stay and book your flights! A perfect holiday for early or late summer, when you can relax in the cool of the mountains after the heat and bustle of the souks, the fascinating selection of museums, and the glorious gardens of Marrakech.

The High Atlas Mountains

Relax at the Kasbah or trek the mountains – your choice!

Whilst at the Kasbah you may choose to take a trek with us. Treks follow ancient footpaths and mule tracks that connect local villages and navigate through dramatic landscapes comprising apple orchards, walnut groves and terraced mountainsides. In the villages you will have a glimpse into a way of life that has barely changed for centuries and where traditional values and hospitality are largely unaffected by the outside world.

Marrakech

Marrakech is a fascinating city that is high on the list of places to visit by the discerning traveller. It comprises the medina, the old Arab quarter, and also the new town of Guéliz, which boasts modern restaurants and bars, fast-food chains and big brand stores. But no visit to Marrakech is complete without a stroll through Jmaa el Fna, the world's biggest open-air restaurant, with its tantalising aromas of the exotic.



The Telegraph

names Marrakech Atlas Etape as one of the six best cyclosporives of 2015

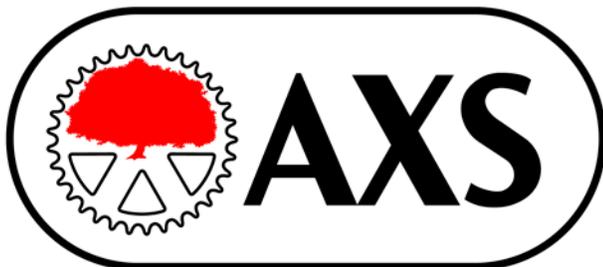
2015 sees only the third running of the Atlas Etape, an all-day ride from Marrakech.

The route takes riders from arid plains on the outskirts of Marrakech to the ski resort of Oukaïmeden in the Atlas Mountains. At 140km, it sounds like a relative walk in the park, but consider this: although it's an out-and-back route, the first 70km are all uphill, gaining 2,129 metres of ascent, in some serious humidity.

Once you reach the mountain-top, you turn round and go hell for leather back to Marrakech.

Get on board before everyone's doing it; the 2015 edition of the ride takes place on April 26.

The **MARRAKECH ATLAS ETAPE** takes off on Sunday 26th April. For late bookings visit the **MAE website**.



ARGAN XTREME SPORTS

“It is by riding a bicycle that you learn the contours of a country best, since you have to sweat up the hills and coast down them. Thus you remember them as they actually are, while in a motor car only a high hill impresses you, and you have no such accurate remembrance of country you have driven through as you gain by riding a bicycle.”

Ernest Hemingway

After the two previous Etapes many people expressed an interest in discovering more about cycling in Morocco and Education For All, the charity the Etape raises funds for. And now you can. Argan Xtreme Sports have created a joint package that uncovers the glorious countryside of the High Atlas Mountains (with some of the best cycling you will ever have experienced), and an opportunity to meet the girls of EFA and let them introduce you to life in the boarding houses.

There are three options, so you can make the most of your stay in Morocco:

- Option 1. Arriving Friday, leaving Monday, 3 Nights / 4 Days
- Option 2. Arriving Friday, leaving Tues, 4 nights / 5 days. Include MAE ride.
- Option 3. Arriving Friday and leaving the following Friday. 7 nights / 8 days. Includes MAE ride.

Includes bike hire, helmet, hotels, meals, transport, support vehicle and fluids and is based on shared accommodation. If you'd like to bring your own pedals or seat we will fit it for you.

For further information contact: info@argansports.com or [download](#) the PDF



The Atlas Mountains: Morocco's hidden travel gem

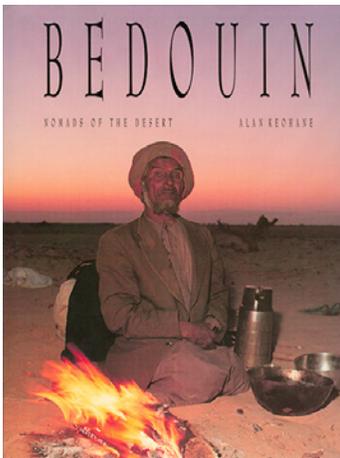
CNN's Inside Africa reports on the lives of the Berber people living in the Imlil Valley. The programme also highlights the harshness of Berber life during the winter months in the High Atlas.

Travel Channel USA were at Kasbah du Toubkal in March with a crew of sixteen to film a travelogue. We'll tell you more in our next issue.



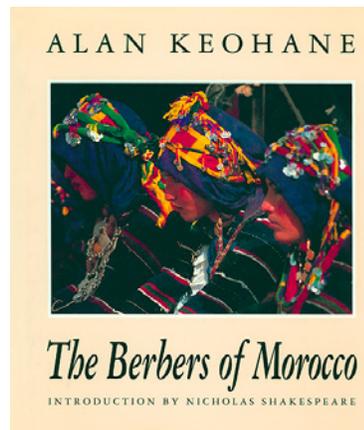
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A Personal View...through the eye of Alan Keohane



Bedouin is a unique and beautiful portrait of the Arab nomad's life, rich in colour and culture. It uncovers the mystery that surrounds an ancient tribe and their struggle to survive in hostile conditions, barren lands and the threat of westernisation. This is a deeply moving portrait, captured exquisitely through stunning photography

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Within the borders of Morocco, and unknown to many of the thousands of tourists who visit the country each year, live the Berbers, whose way of life has hardly changed for centuries. For two years Alan Keohane lived among them. He travelled with nomads, stayed in villages, participated in family life and joined in local celebrations and festivals.

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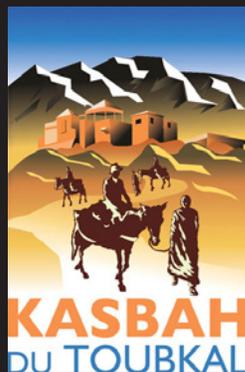
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