

guadalajara
Reporter
the colony



Search our site
Any date By Date
From 30-Oct-04
To 29-Oct-04

ADVERTISE WITH US

Home
Special Sections
Weather
Week in Pictures
Financial
Classifieds
Books
Weekly Calendars
Art & Ent. Listings
Write to the Editor

Subscribers

Subscribe
National
Regional
Metro
Chapala
Puerto Vallarta
Manzanillo/Costa Alegre
San Miguel de Allende
Business & Finance
Features
South of North
Arts and Entertainment
Language
Bridge
Mail Bag
Food and Drink
Obituaries
Consumer Survey
History
U.S.-Mexico
Canada-Mexico
Health
Nearby Guadalajara
Living in Mexico
Education
Sports
Other Links
Commentary
Meet our Writers

Webmaster/Design



Full Story

CONTACT US:

email: remax-fenix@laguna.com.mx

Visit our WEBSITE:

www.mexconnect.com/amex/fenixindex.html

Global traveler welcomes companions on way through Mexico



Photograph by : T Campi

Chris Charlton shows the customized Land Rover Defender he is driving on an expedition around the world during a stop in Guadalajara September 10.

Story by : Tarah Campi

For the next three years, Chris Charlton of the United Kingdom-based Namaste organization will traverse the world in a customized Land Rover Defender. The expedition started in Halifax, Canada in April and will cover approximately 200,000 miles through 110 countries on seven continents.

Namaste, which Charlton founded in 1998, specializes in management consulting for an international client base that includes businesses of all sizes. The company's other focus is organizing adventures all over the world — everything from climbing the Himalayas to scuba diving off Africa's east coast to biking 1,500 miles in Scotland.

The global exhibition is Namaste's latest, greatest adventure.

Mexico marks the final stop in the North American leg of the journey, which has taken its participants to Alaska, British Columbia and the continental United States. Charlton took a ferry in to Mazatlan at the end of August and will proceed through Central and South America throughout the fall.

Charlton passed through Guadalajara on September 10, on the way to explore other sites in Mexico before heading for the Yucatan Peninsula and the Caribbean coast. The expedition will then move into Guatemala and continue south.

Having already tackled an ascent of Mt. McKinley in Alaska's Denali National Park, Charlton will go on to attempt the highest peak on each continent. Next on the list is Aconcagua near the boarder of Argentina and Chile in March 2005. Charlton will be accompanied by climbers from Norway, England and the United States.

Does this sound like your idea of fun? If so, visit www.namaste.co.uk.

Anyone is welcome to join the expedition, and many already have. Charlton can accommodate up to three passengers at a time and only asks that you can pay your own way and are physically capable of the many adventures planned, which can include anything from hiking and mountain climbing to sailing and horseback riding.

A contest ended this month in which the person who recruited the most individuals to visit the Namaste web site won the opportunity to come join the expedition. The winner is from Finland and will join Charlton in Bolivia later this year. The web site readership includes 2,000 friends and clients in 35 countries and the site is updated with a monthly newsletter detailing Namaste adventures.

The word "Namaste" is a greeting from Nepal which, translated from Hindi, means "the spirit within me greets the spirit within you." Charlton

Continued on Page 2

recalls a weary descent from a 22-hour climb 20,000 feet into the mountains of Nepal some years ago. As he emerged from the hills he was greeted by a small boy who called out "Namaste" and invited him inside. The boy's grandfather opened his home to Charlton and they shared a meal. "He gave me half of what he had," he recalls. That generosity of spirit left an impression on Charlton and became an expression of his personal and professional ideology.

Aside from seeing the world, Charlton also aims to raise awareness of local and international development issues and support projects focused on environmental protection and conservation. For example, a regional story involving the plight of the children who survive on the refuse of others in Mexico's dumps was brought to his attention by individuals he met on the road, and he plans to give publicity to the issue on his web site.

Charlton has been planning the worldwide trek for 10 years, meticulously researching the transportation, medical and legal aspects, including insurance and entry to the various countries. The expedition is largely self-financed.

Trained as a paramedic and carrying copious medical supplies, Charlton says he is prepared to take care of many medical situations that could arise. In terms of safety, Charlton says his military training in a specialist unit in the United Kingdom is a good background for handling challenging situations. He also cites simple tips like avoiding driving at night in dangerous places and making sure to know in which areas hostage-taking is common.

Charlton will bypass Colombia because of safety issues, and will probably avoid Israel because other Arab countries are not as likely to admit travelers who have been there, he says. His travels in the Middle East will depend somewhat upon the political situation in Iraq. After making his way through Africa, Asia, Australia and Antarctica, the expedition will conclude in Europe in 2007.

The customized Land Rover that makes the expedition possible took three months to design and was engineered by a specialized team assembled in the UK. The vehicle is capable of traveling in almost any terrain and provides what Charlton calls "five-star camping".

"It's become my house," Charlton says. The vehicle includes tent accommodations for four including a queen-sized mattress, and everything from a hot shower, electricity, an auxiliary heater and a refrigerator to complex antitheft mechanisms. Charlton has a mobile and satellite phone, GPS system, technology to utilize various types of phone lines, and even 120 DVDs to watch on the laptop computer.

Charlton says he has worked hard to be able to make this journey. He says money is not an end but a means to achieve his dreams and help others realize theirs. The Namaste organization is about living and creativity: Its founder has worked to organize a business that allows him to pursue those values. "Happiness is my motivation," he says.