

Hawaii Explorers Head Off On Extraordinary 1500-mile Alpine Trekking Adventure

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Explorer/über-adventurers Brandon and Cheryl Wilson of Hawaii are taking off on momentous trek of discovery. In June, they will set off on the recently formed Via Alpina for a nearly 1500-mile hike of peace across the length of the Alps.

Their route will take them across eight countries, as they leave Trieste, Italy to trek across Slovenia, Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, and France – eventually arriving at the long-awaited Mediterranean Sea and Monaco.

This Via Alpina red route consists of 161 stages and lots of "ups and downs" so the Wilsons will travel light, carrying just 15-17 pounds (7-8 kilos). The latest ultra-light gear provided by GoLite and Gossamer Gear will see them through the famous unpredictability of the Alps; snowy passes, rain, and high altitude winds. Climbing the Alps from hut-to-hut for up to twenty miles a day will certainly provide a physical challenge for these trekkers, but what a unique (and ecological) way to experience Alpine culture—one-step-at-a-time. It's total immersion into local life, customs, history, and cuisine.

Brandon and Cheryl will follow this unique trail for four to five months as they press on to reach the Mediterranean Sea before the Alpine snows hit in October. At least, unlike their historic 1,000-kilometer trek across Tibet, they won't have to dodge Chinese bullets—but they'll sure miss Sadhu, their equine Sherpa.

As usual, Brandon will chronicle this latest odyssey through daily journal entries and photographs. Those notes and photos will provide grist for his new book scheduled for publication from Pilgrim's Tales publishing in late 2010. His chronicle will allow readers to vicariously share the daily challenges and victories of their latest adventure. After reading it, readers may be ready for an adventure of their own.

Brandon Wilson is an award-winning author of three other true travel adventures set in such rugged locales as the Tibetan Himalayas and wilds of Africa. His most recent book, *Along the Templar Trail*, a 2008 ForeWord Magazine Book of the Year Award finalist (Adventure/Recreation), chronicles his recent 2600-mile trek for peace along what was once the route of the First Crusades from France to Jerusalem.

Like his other adventure books, this one is bound to provide an intimate look at “deliberate travel”. As he puts it, “The Alps are much more than gnomes and cheese. Plus, for folks seeking a little peace and simplicity in these difficult times, I can think of no better solution than to simplify, slow life down, disconnect from the distractions of the outside world and head off the beaten track. In fact, I foresee this new trail developing into Europe’s equivalent of America’s Appalachian Trail.”

The couple, among the first to ever complete the red route, will carry nearly thirty topographic maps supplied by Omni Resource. To better physically prepare for this extreme daily challenge, they have been following a regime of aerobic and strength training at Upcountry Fitness in Haiku, Maui.

This is Brandon’s tenth long-distance peace trek. He has also walked Spain’s Camino de Santiago and Via de la Plata, St. Olav’s Way across Norway, the Via Francigena from Canterbury to Rome, the Buddhist pilgrim’s path from Lhasa, Tibet to Katmandu (as related in his book Yak Butter Blues), and the Templar Trail from France to Jerusalem. He is a member of the prestigious Explorers Club.

The couple is an official partner of the Via Alpina. For details about the various routes, huts, activities, forums, and culture, visit the official Via Alpina website (www.via-alpina.org). For more information about the intrepid couple, visit www.pilgrimstales.com.

Pilgrim's Tales publishes books of adventure, discovery & enlightenment.

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