

anned. Their team, Icebreaker R&R
cluded some of the best known names
port: Matt Woods, Haydn Key, Mark
and Sarah Fairmaid.

ing an extra dash of spice to the
tion was the sibling rivalry between
and her sister, Sonya, on the Powered
et team.

ing experimented with a five-day
the Southern Traverse returned to
e traditional three-day length this
e wanted to go back to a shorter race
with an emphasis on navigation, avoid
tional extreme physical exhaustion for
but still provide a night-time racing
said Hunt.

er teams might say they still
enced a fair degree of that 'extreme
il exhaustion', but the two top teams
look comparatively easy, staying out
the whole way.

il the mountain bikes on the second
ey were neck-and-neck and it was a
tical problem with one of the bikes that
put some distance between them, with
ed by Velvet pulling out to a 90 minute
the end of the day.

ey were able to build on that and crossed
ish line - 199km after crossing the start
in a total time of 21 hours 44 minutes,
tr two hours ahead of their arch rivals.

erwards Christison was quick to point
w close things had been: "It's never over
ou cross the line and it was always going
se. Anything can happen, you just need
ak a bike chain and things change."

www.southerntraverse.com for full
and more.



Peaks and troughs

Mtn running Hong Kong
By Steve White



Only in Hong Kong. The two-day Raleigh International Mountain Marathon (RIMM), held in March, always throws up a few random moments and this year's race was no exception.

The basic format combines direction finding between checkpoints while trail running through Hong Kong's countryside. But the territory, though greener than many outsiders guess, has its limits and often the race links hills and sweeping views with less-loved landmarks such as scrap metal dealerships and pig farms.

It's real alright, and in a way captures something of the essence of Hong Kong, but every year there are grumbles about the amount of road running. For us, this year's new low was an especially grim stretch of dual carriageway leading into Yuen Long and a checkpoint at a public toilet!

That said, you can guarantee the RIMM will take you places you have never been and my teammate Paul Arkwright and I been everywhere from isolated grave-studded hills and heritage villages to abandoned military installations and go-cart tracks. Some of them were even on the course!

Yes, the mish-mash of waypoints complicates navigation, and comes on top of what seems to be a wanton abuse of the grid references on the part of the organisers. It's not our map reading, honest.

Then there's the joys of running a course that occasionally requires you to equip yourself with a stick or a stone against feral dogs. The mandatory equipment inevitably buried deep in your pack when you need it for a kit check. The rustle-filled overnights spent in a space blanket because you didn't want to carry a sleeping bag the whole way.

Most of all, there's the envy that comes from being a two-man team in a race that admits four-person teams in a softer category. They eat real food from real plates on folding chairs by the light of a gas lamp; we sit in the grass slurping noodles from the pan by the light of a headtorch.

Come to think of it, the RIMM is a two-day full-on physical/emotional rollercoaster: pain and relief, fatigue and adrenaline, frustration and excitement, envy and camaraderie.

All that AND pig farms. That's it. Count me in again for next year.

See www.rimm.hk for full details.