

# TAKING DOWN THE NINES

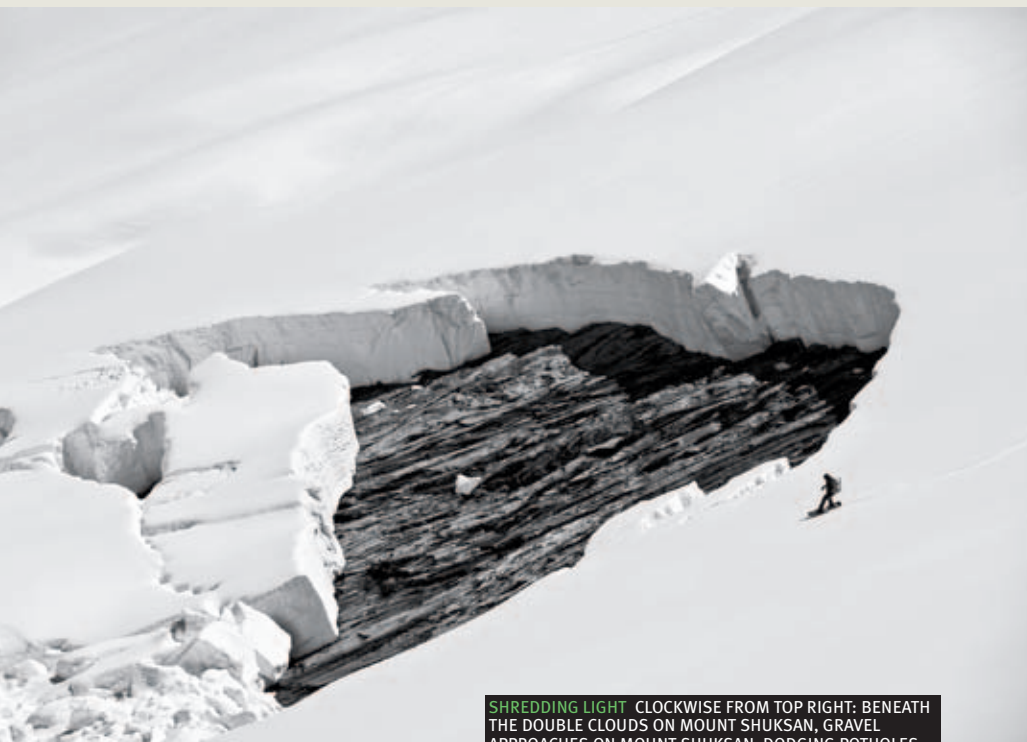
MILLER AND HUMMEL ARE THE FIRST EVER TO TICK WASHINGTON'S NON-VOLCANIC TEN

BY DAN KOSTRZEWSKI

**FOR OUT-OF-STATE SKIERS**, it's tough to understand the sheer scale, technical exposure and wintertime remoteness of Washington's ten highest non-volcanic peaks. But those who have summited even one of the heavily glaciated 2,700-metre-plus (9,000-foot) objectives truly understand: splitboarder Kyle Miller and skier Jason Hummel's achievement of becoming the first two to tick the highest rideable lines on all ten of the Washington Nines dramatically

PHOTOS BY JASON HUMMEL





**SHREDDING LIGHT** CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT: BENEATH THE DOUBLE CLOUDS ON MOUNT SHUKSAN, GRAVEL APPROACHES ON MOUNT SHUKSAN, DODGING POTHOLES ON DOUGLAS GLACIER, UPPER FACE OF MOUNT BONANZA.



**THE PROJECT CULMINATED IN A 48-KILOMETRE (30-MILE) ROUND TRIP TOUR TO THE AGGRESSIVE SLOPES AND HANGING GLACIERS OF 2,770-METRE (9,087-FOOT) MOUNT LOGAN, WHERE MILLER AND HUMMEL TICKED OFF THE LAST LINE ON THE LIST.**

elevates the pair's standing in the history of Northwest self-ascent riding.

In 2009, Miller, a 31-year-old long-time Crystal Mountain local and pioneering Northwest spiltboarder, met Hummel, a 33-year-old former financial advisor and current pro ski photographer, through Washington's close-knit ski-touring circles. They teamed up for the Nines project due to a shared amount of time and motivation, as well as a deep mutual appreciation for the untapped ski-mountaineering potential of the Cascades.

One peak at a time, the touring partners logged more than 24,400 vertical metres (80,000 vertical feet) and more than 275 kilometres (170 miles) of challenging approach and descent on a project that moved forward quietly over the course of three winters in the North and Central Cascades. "The Pacific Northwest is known for massive volcanoes, but what isn't known is that we have huge, aggressive, isolated and glaciated non-volcanic peaks with a deep maritime snowpack," Miller says. "But the approaches are brutal, the foliage is like jungle or swamp, and the trails have numerous creek crossings and are often buried under five feet of snowpack, if there is a trail at all." *(continued)*



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KYLE MILLER



Some Jason Hummel photos courtesy of Eddie Bauer



**SUMMIT TO SUNSET** CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: ADAM ROBERTS ON THE SUMMIT PYRAMID OF MOUNT SHUKSAN, SUNSET ON JACK MOUNTAIN, GIVING ROAD-WEARY FEET A WELL-DESERVED BREAK.



The undertaking accelerated this past spring with a high-pressure trip to Holden Village, a remote Lutheran hamlet and former mining outpost above Lake Chelan, where they bagged 2,755-metre (9,040-foot) Mount Maude and 2,774-metre (9,100-foot) Seven Fingered Jack after completing 2,890-metre (9,511-foot) Bonanza and 2,819-metre (9,249-foot) Mount Fernow from the same boat-only access point the previous winter. The project culminated in a 48-kilometre (30-mile) round trip tour to the aggressive slopes and hanging glaciers of 2,770-metre (9,087-foot) Mount Logan, where Miller and Hummel ticked off the last line on the list.

“I was used to volcanoes, which have far more vert, but these mountains had so many more elements to them,” Miller summarizes. “Not only do we have amazing volcanoes, but we also have a huge mountain range that goes largely untouched by anyone. A lifetime of climbing them will only scratch the surface.”



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