

Vietnam course design update from Maddess



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Michael Maddess the Vietnam course designer (1st place in the 150km Sabah Adventure race 2 weeks ago with Salomon teammate Ritcey and 100km HK trailwalker in 12 hours 44 minutes in 2009) has spent a lot of time in this North West part of Vietnam running trails.



He's chosen what he feels is some of the best terrain to explore, not making it too technical or difficult, but with FUN and VIEWS in mind.

Traveling west of Hanoi, this mountainous area of North West Vietnam is still a relatively untouched area of the country. Beautiful scenery and idyllic villages makes the whole area worth the visit for both explorer and marathon categories.



Traditional Thai hill tribe stilt-houses, fertile valleys snaking thru mountain passes will be explored in this 2010 designed Action Asia Event course.



The start area is a collection of villages, farms and huts spread out over a large beautiful area with ethnic White Thais, distantly related to tribes in Thailand, Laos and China. Hiking and running along jungle trails, dirt roads thru villages and single-track trails separating the villages with opportunities too see the homes of the H'mong village people. The Vietnamese inhabitants around these parts survive mainly by either farming the land or selling food out of the back of there home.



The course is designed for both beginner hikers and experienced trail runners in mind with the shorter explorer option (55k over 3 days) broken down covering 20km day 1 thru a lower valley village area with panoramic rice paddy views, numerous Vietnamese working the fields, ladies carrying vegetables on their back, men carrying long bamboo pieces for their homes to buffalos inches away on the tracks. Finishing with a short 4km mountain climb with rice paddies and the odd brick factory view amongst the mountain karst formations lining the sky. Day 2 will explore an estimated 25km of some stunning scenery higher in elevation exploring more of the mountain areas with breathtaking views. Day 3 finishes with a much easier 12 km valley

run finishing on the water for a boat ride for 57km total over 3 days. Option to shorten day 3 slightly if overwhelming majority want shortened but stunning area with easy running on dirt roads and single track trail next to water well worth the hike, shuffle or run depending on your speed and level of fitness.



Water stations estimated every 10km along the route for both categories.

The more adventurous participating in the 100km category will start with an immediate short mountain climb (nothing technical as easy buffalo tracks) then non-stop villages along a route spanning 38 km. After this day 1 warm-up, the fun really starts on day 2 with an immediate climb up a stoney dirt single track trail into an ethnic hill tribe area shut off from the outside world with numerous stunning views of large valley's and opposite mountain range. Some great running on fantastic dirt road trails with no cars except the odd motorcycle carrying bamboo.



Great shots of local ethnic hill tribe people doing their weaving and generally working the fields (their only source of income) before running gradually going down in elevation to more grass rice paddy fields, small villages on the side and cows and buffalo. The day finishes with a mountain single-track route same as explorer category taking in sweeping valley majestic views and arriving in the rice field finish area for a total of 48 km on day 2. The final day same as explorer category with 12km category finishing on the water with 12 km for a total of around 98km (give or take a km or so due to GPS). If participants REALLY want 100km easy to add 1-2 km in so many villages or at start as non-stop trails...



So yes bring your camera (lightweight) in your waist pouch for easy fast action shots as they're will be hundreds of opportunities of cows, buffalos, hill tribe villagers, bulls with horns, rice fields, karst mountain formations, stilt houses, buffalo carts pulling grass, locals carrying bamboo on their shoulders too the unusual bright colors of the ethnic hill tribe villagers or the odd old man smoking water pipes or caves along the trails.



We stated to bring your own freeze dried food for the villages as up to

you but there is options to pay the locals for simple food as some of it is very good (local chicken, cabbage and fried pork with onions a must. As having fried eggs with baguette and local mountain coffee a great way to start day.



All homes have many showers/toilets to avoid waiting with mats and mosquito nets to sleep on. Numerous chairs and tables for socializing or kicking back and drinking the hard earned beers after the race each day.

The air is fantastic, as you will get a natural high just sucking back the mountain air giving you an extra adrenalin rush to go faster or keep pushing ahead depending on the reason your participating.



You will definitely want to come back to this area at a later date.

Lastly the local coffee is wicked and you'll appreciate it in the morning before each day to give the body the extra jolt. Something about strong coffee and the sound of roosters that Michael keeps saying are still in his head.....



Michael Maddess plans to show some of the photos at the Bonaqua Action Sprint awards at David Cosmans bar near Lan Kwai Fong middle of May.



See some of the pics attached to this page that will be along the course.

Lastly in our last Vietnam race in 2009 funds were used for a local school, local hot water systems and construction of a bridge by the Action Asia Foundation and money raised from participants. For the July 2010 event the idea of doing something educational with an environmental twist is on the cards and ideas will be entertained from confirmed participants.

Action Asia Events is holding a group booking for flights direct from Hong Kong. For other countries suggest you contact Vietnam airlines for the best rates from your country to Hanoi. Buses will leave the airport and go direct to race location with 1 stop in Hanoi for those that are going early.



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