



# my trail

## Katie Holden's summer shredding grounds

**THE RIDER:** Katie Holden is one of the United States' rising female downhill stars. She won the first Pro GRT race in 2009 and followed up last year by winning the Pan American Mountain Bike Championships in Guatemala. What's more, she is one of a small handful of women who have landed a backflip. And this year, she will race the World Cup series for the Specialized USA Factory Racing team. It might come as a surprise then, that Holden didn't start out by riding motorcycles, or BMX—or any of the usual paths to racing downhill bikes. In fact, her love of mountain biking is the result of a lucky coincidence. It started in 2002, when her high school deemed air travel too dangerous in the wake of 9-11 and canceled its annual class

trip to Europe. To replace the trip, the students had to attend a pre-arranged activity, and by the time Holden signed up there were only two activities left: A film festival and a downhill mountain biking course. She hated the idea of sitting all day watching movies, so she rented a hardtail from the local shop and gave downhill a go.

**THE SCENE:** In 2003, Holden packed up and moved to Whistler. The high concentration of talented riders in this town meant there were always faster riders for her to learn from. "When surrounded by people pushing it to the limit," Holden says, "the whole perception of what's possible on a bike changes." Factor in the help of coaching companies like Camp of

Champions—for which Holden now works—and it's nearly impossible to live in Whistler and not be fast.

**THE TRAIL:** Living in Whistler can make even the most exciting trails in the Whistler Bike Park seem boring. To keep things fresh, locals use their creativity to string together the best bits and pieces of trails into continuous runs. Not surprisingly, Holden's favorite "trail" string is a long one: Freight Train–Original Sin–Goats Gully–In Deep–Little Alder–Expressway–Too Tight–Angry Pirate–Crabapple Hits–Samurai Pizza Cat–World Cup Singletrack–Monkey Hand–GLC Drop. This run has a bit of everything, from big senders to tear-inducing wide-outs to sniper singletrack—perfect for World Cup training.—RYAN LABAR

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THE QUOTE



"I love riding solo when the clouds are low on the mountain and it's pissing rain at the top of Garbanzo. Pinning it through the mud and over wet roots in the clouds is the best."

STERLING LORENCE