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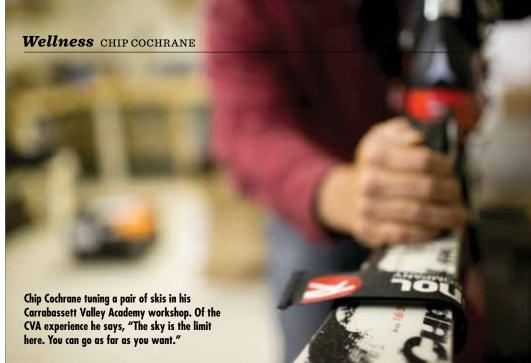
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Wellness by **SOPHIE NELSON** Photographs by **MATT COSBY** A Natural Pursi CHIP COCHRANE FINDS FULFILLMENT IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS 36 maine themainemag.com









Carrabassett Valley Academy graduate Bode Miller, for another. But he doesn't dwell on those accomplishments, and neither do I. I would rather learn about how he built a life around what he loves most-being outdoorsand the affect that has had on his health and happiness.

"I think it's what people need to feel good again."

After his dream of being a downhill ski racer was cut short, Chip went right into coaching. He couldn't stay away from the mountain, though years of premier competitive skiing have taken a toll on Chip's knees, and he walks with a slight limp. "I've wrecked my knees a few times, so I've had a knee replacement. But my artificial knee works great." These days Chip spends his slope time on the sidelines, teaching kids how to ski fast. He loves the work. "The kids here have the same passion. They enjoy the outdoors. We all have that in common, which is the bond that keeps this whole place together," he says.

He doesn't underestimate the impact a happy heart and physically satiated body can have on a person's intellectual and emotional growth, and we discuss how a passion for skiing and snowboarding fuels his students' studies in the classroom. Chip knows from experience that the best kind of learning occurs on multiple levels; the subject (or the sport, as the case may be) must touch the heart to grow the mind and the body. As a ski coach, Chip is shaping lifelong learners by teaching them the art of

resilience. He is teaching students to challenge themselves on the slopes, but also later on in their lives, whether they find themselves on mountaintops, in boardrooms, or at operating tables. Above all else, he's helping them realize their need for nature. If they don't know it now, they'll learn later on that getting themselves outside can become increasingly challenging, but that it's a challenge always worth meeting.

While running Allagash Canoe Trips with his wife, Lani, Chip encounters people from near and far craving a connection with nature. These are people who might not have the knowhow to execute a trip of such proportions, but who are willing to get out of their comfort zones. Chip tells me that spending a week in nature has a tremendous affect on their psyches. A noticeable shift occurs after 24 hours, and the purification deepens every hour that follows. "I think it's what people need to feel good again," Chip says. He's speaking about specific people—the people who write him effusively thankful letters in the weeks, months, even years following a canoe trip down the Allagash. But the phrase seems to speak to an even larger cultural disconnect, one we've had for so long we don't even recognize it anymore. Chip still feels that craving come on, and he feeds it by kayaking, canoeing, skiing.

The sunlight falling through the window in his office suddenly shifts in color, and we peer out the window toward its source. A ceiling of cloud has cracked apart to reveal blue sky and bright sun. If it were ski season, Chip would be on the slopes at this hour. "I have trouble being cooped up, and it's probably going to be a problem for me when I'm an old man," he says, again with a laugh, always with a laugh. "I'll have to have a house of windows." But I suspect nothing but the unfiltered woods will do. +