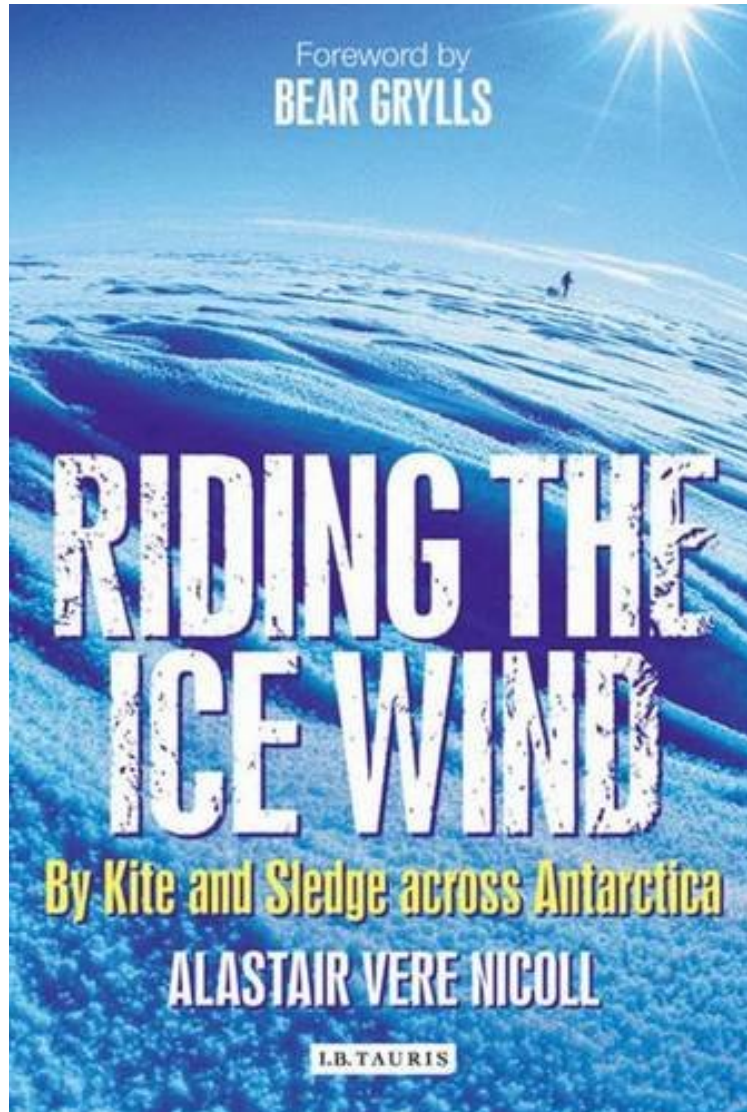


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Riding the Ice Wind: By Kite and Sledge across Antarctica

Alastair Vere Nicoll

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#5293189 in Books 2010-08-31 2010-08-31 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.45 x 1.08 x 6.231, 1.45
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Alastair Vere Nicoll : Riding the Ice Wind: By Kite and Sledge across Antarctica before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Riding the Ice Wind: By Kite and Sledge across Antarctica:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. an ordinary man in the antarcticBy flioppInitially I purchased this book because of the kite angle as I have personal interest in snowkiting and expedition kiting. I soon realised that was not the case as the guys were not very experienced kites and also did not have that much wind during the expedition.However, I read the whole thing because this is a good book with a new angle that separates it from other

expedition books. This is a book about an ordinary guy pursuing his dream, but also doubting whether he has enough of the "right stuff" reach his goals. The narrator doubts about his abilities in the Antarctic desert and his constant thoughts about his unborn child and pregnant wife at home gives the story an existential/philosophical edge that actually I found very much worth while the read. Thus the book turned out something quite other than my initial expectations, but still I kept on reading. On the downside it could be said that the author lets his thoughts run free and sometimes the digressions from the actual story becomes tedious. To my knowledge this is the author's first book so I'll give him the benefit of being a debutante. And so I look forward to the next piece of literature from this guy. Maybe a bit more kiting, little less philosophy next time, huh? 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A great South Pole adventure story!! By Bill in SoDak This book was a recommendation when I bought Bear Grylls book FACING THE FROZEN OCEAN. I'm glad I bought it. I've read dozens of books on mountain climbing and polar expeditions but I prefer those written by those people that were actually there, not just researchers. Too many expedition books are too detached from the characters and emotional saga that goes with expeditions. This book covers it all. If you have ever dreamed about going on an adventure such as climbing Mt Everest or going to the North or South Pole then you will like this book. At times I felt as though the author was writing about me as I've had the same feelings and reservations planning an expedition. For anyone that has obligations of a job, children, spouse, mortgage etc but still have dreams of exploring then this book is for you. Can a group of guys actually make it across Antarctica pulling sleds and using just skis and kites? I won't spoil the details for you but they do run into obstacles and have setbacks unlike other "feel good" exploration books on the market where you already know the ending. Over all I'm very pleased I bought this book and I'm sure I'll read again. Wild Bill 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting Insight Into How Adventure Happens -- Above Average 3.5 Stars By Pam If you have read Krakauer's Into Thin Air, Tabor's Blind Descent: The Quest to Discover the Deepest Place on Earth, Viesturs' K2: Life and Death on the World's Most Dangerous Mountain or even Danziger's Travels, then you should know that "Riding the Ice Wind" is nothing like them. Whereas those books maintained a certain tone of detachment, what you will find in Alastair Nicoll's book is a very personal, exceedingly intimate account of his journey across Antarctica. In some ways Nicoll's introspection brings a new light to cold-weather expeditions as the author gives us insight into the intricate maneuvering that's necessary to 'pull it all off'. The problems of finding the right team members, doing the right training, and finally finding the funding. Not to mention the angst that comes from uprooting yourself, throwing your life into a tizzy as you say goodbye to your family -- in this case, the author has to leave his new bride who will probably have their first baby while he is gone. In many ways though, these 'human' elements override the landscape, wretched conditions and sense of adventure in the tale. I came away from the book admiring the men and how important humor and openness was to the expedition. But I was frustrated by the less than solid grasp I had of the kiting aspect of the trip. And alas, there wasn't a single picture in the book of what the blasted kites looked like. (Though the pictures that were there were phenomenal.) Overall, well written. It's rather apparent that the author had a top notch British education and I enjoyed his quotes and ruminations. The adventure was interesting and the perspective that the bleak loneliness produced was fascinating. But all-in-all I wasn't quite as awestruck with this book as any of the ones previously listed. It was just too angst-y and self-focused for me. Though to be honest and fair, the problem may lie more with me than with the book, because you see I'm not a fan of intimate first person adventures. And at times I felt that the personal information overrode the physical continuity of the adventure, BUT just as this makes this only a middlin' read for me, it will probably be a great 'hit' and stunningly good read for others. Pam T~mom/blogger

Leaving the security of friends, work, and a wife, Alastair Vere Nicoll joined a team of young men to harness the katabatic winds and haul and kite-surf across Antarctica: the coldest, windiest, most violent continent on earth. Not since Shackleton nearly perished attempting the same thing in his Endurance expedition had such a crossing been attempted. This is the story not only of the first West-to-East traverse of the continent of Antarctica, but of the crossing of two phases in the author's life from youth into manhood, fantasy into reality. It is also the story of a race against time, as he fought to get home for the birth of his first child. As Alastair battled through the freezing wastes, exploring the earth's wildest continent and his deepest self, he was haunted by the ghosts of past explorers and by the question of what it is to be a modern man.

This is a heart-led account of one of the longest, hardest polar journeys of recent years. It is a testament that enduring hardship isn't about bravado but about a quiet, at times faltering, daily decision to endure. -- Bear Grylls, Man vs. Wild *It's extremely heartening to discover, through a text that is beautifully and powerfully written, that a younger generation of adventurers has got what it takes - and more. They prove themselves worthy successors to their heroes, Amundsen, Shackleton and Scott.* -- John Hare, author of Mysteries of the Gobi *An original and compelling book that really gets into the psyche of adventure and the conflict between the call of responsibility and the desire for freedom. I thoroughly enjoyed it.* -- Jonny Bealby, Wild Frontiers *...fresh as a daisy... challenging, intelligent and thoughtful. Riding the Ice Wind reminds us that decent writing about tough adventure need not be a thing of the past. A hundred years ago there was a great explorer with a literary soul and the ability to write well. Alastair Vere Nicoll

may not be Ernest Shackleton, but he's living proof that while the literary explorer may be an endangered species, there are still a few out there, if you know where to look.* -- Nick Smith, for Bookdealer*...lovely descriptions of the wilderness. The real voyage at the heart of the book, though, is the attempt to discover meaning in a life the writer had found increasingly mediocre.* -- Clove Stroud, Sunday Telegraph*...A superbly engaging account of an impossibly hard trip. Its originality, however, lies in its sensitivity to the purpose of such expeditions to the have-it-all generation.* -- Richard Lofthouse, Oxford Today, Hilary Term edition