

Tourism De Force

Lonely planet? Not for these local journeymen, whose digital travelogues are the toast of the web | By Nikki Novo | Photography by Oliver Requeiro |

David Hoffman and Carlos de Varona know about occupational hazards. In the name of work, they've driven an Alfa Romeo off a cliff in Gubbio, Italy; boarded a 10-hour flight from Ireland to Miami while nursing newly broken ribs; and fended off Moroccan policemen who sought to confiscate their equipment.

Hoffman, 23, and de Varona, 22, aren't stunt men. They're the team behind *DaidsBeenHere.com*, a viral, voyeuristic venture that was born, like so many Internet-age companies, from the sort of simple idea you can't believe you didn't have first. "Since I traveled so much growing up, my friends were always asking me for travel advice. That's when I realized I could make a living doing this," Hoffman explains. A born businessman notorious in high school for his contraband muffin operation, Hoffman conceived the interactive travel website as a senior at the University of Miami. A year ago, he teamed up with de Varona to launch the site, which can be likened to

a YouTube for young travelers—except that the content is original. De Varona, a music-video industry alum, shoots the under-five-minute videos, while Hoffman acts as the virtual tour guide.

The business entails traveling 300 days a year, sampling international cuisine and investigating the local party scenes with the dedication of cultural anthropologists. Yet de Varona insists it's not all fun and games. "We're like rock stars on tour, except we can't party every night. Imagine if we were shooting and slurring our words," he says.

In June, the duo departs on a 180-country tour. The site, which to date averages 5,000 unique monthly visitors, had to be revamped to accommodate all the video they expect to produce. With no return date scheduled, Hoffman acknowledges another danger of the vagabond lifestyle: "It's hard to keep a relationship," he admits. "But it's a sacrifice we're willing to make. Why give up our dreams for a possibility?"

DAVID'S HOTS *Prada meakers, Elysians.com, doppio espressos, summers in Eastern Europe, Croatian women, German beer, 50 Cent, BlackBerry Messenger, Miami International Airport*

DAVID'S HOTS *Cold weather, climbing in Old Navy sandals, lawless countries, fast food, falling in love on tour*

CARLOS' HOTS *Ecuadorian cigars, cliff jumping in the Galápagos, Bougainvillea's in South Miami, Moroccan mint tea, Prismacolor markers, room service, Quentin Tarantino*

CARLOS' HOTS *Mosquitoes, people walking in my frame, lack of WiFi in other countries, credit cards*



FANTASTIC VOYAGERS
Hoffman and de Varona
enjoy a rare stint in
hometown Miami.