



Founder of Hilleberg tents, Bo Hilleberg still loves to get outdoors whenever he can.

FAMILY TIES

Hilleberg CEO Petra Hilleberg loves working with her folks and inspiring the next generation.



INTERVIEW **BRENT MCKEAN**
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PETRA Hilleberg is an integral part in her family's company. Her father Bo founded the tent making company in 1971 and has continued to reimagine

tents. Petra takes five with *Great Walks*.

GRW: Hilleberg is a family business. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working so closely with family?

The advantage is that I work closely with my family! What my parents have built is amazing and to be able to continue that legacy is special. We put our name on every product and that has a lot of pride to it. Every detail on the tent is there for a reason, everything we do we stand behind and we take that very seriously. When I first started with the company I set up the US office in 2000. When anyone would complain about anything I would get really upset. I'd be like, 'My mum made that!'. We have a great working relationship and that's been good. Of course there are disagreements every now and then but we work really well together and my father and I think very similarly.

GRW: The company's Responsibility Code (promoting sustainability and a proper work ethic) is excellent but how easy is it to adhere to?

It's easier for us because we are fairly small and we handle our own production so we know every step of the manufacturing process. Ever since my dad started the company it's never been a goal to grow massively fast or be huge. We've always had quality as a first priority. So with that, it's to make sure that working conditions and materials in general are good and also that we make a product that lasts for a really long time. It's something we've always done.

GRW: What is it about the outdoors that inspires you?

What *doesn't* inspire you about the outdoors. I pretty much grew up in a tent. I've always been outdoors and in nature. Inspiration can be anything from being really, really far away or simply as having a wonderful day like we're having here (Petra is based near Seattle, Washington, USA). It's an absolutely perfect fall day. The colours and weather are just gorgeous. I think just having access to nature and green spaces is really inspiring.

GRW: What's your earliest memory of being outdoors?

The first time my brother (Rolf, who is a director of Hilleberg) and I slept in a tent by ourselves I was three-and-a-half maybe four and he was about five. My parents set up a tent for us in the forest about a kilometre from our house. My brother and I had our little dinner and we slept. We woke up in the morning and ate our breakfast and then we went home. It was the middle of summer in Sweden and it turned out we had got home at 3.30 in the morning because it was so light out. I still remember that.

GRW: With young people so technology focussed is it hard to get the message to them about exploring the outdoors?

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That's a challenge we all have in the industry. We have to make the outdoors accessible. There's a lot of talk about these hard expeditions where people have gone the fastest or the steepest or have suffered the most. But we have to try to make people understand there doesn't have to be suffering when you head outdoors. In fact it should be the opposite. Sure if you want to climb mountains then great but you can go out and just enjoy the nature. ⚙️

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