

# AUSTIN FIT

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# magazine

**+21** of the Healthiest Beers

**Run America Run** Makes Its Debut

**>Tips** for the Traveling Runner

**+Get the Stank Out!** Germ-free Gym Bags & Shoes

**RUNTEX Founder & CEO**

**PAUL CARROZZA** is one of

**25** Local Entrepreneurs Trying to Keep Austin Fit

**BORN  to RUN**

**New & Improved!**  
More pages, higher quality, cool, new sections

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OCTOBER 2009

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### JENNIFER MULL

Backwoods.com

This CEO brings style and substance to the outdoor fitness industry



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BY KARIE MILEWSKI, M.ED. & DREX EARLE, PH.D.; PHOTOS BY BRIAN FITZSIMMONS  
This month, we take a closer look at 25 visionary entrepreneurs who've made an impact on Austin's health and fitness landscape, while building successful businesses from the ground up.

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BY LAUREN STANAT & WESTON CARLS

PHOTOS BY NICOLE STORY AT THE FLYING SAUCER

Here we breakdown the healthiest beers in the state, country and around the world.



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New!



photo by TYR Sport, Inc.

## RUN+BIKE+SWIM

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BY BOB WISCHNIA

We show you how to keep a hectic travel schedule from ruining your regular running routine.



# Backwoods

**Jennifer Mull** ([backwoods.com](http://backwoods.com))

For Jennifer Mull, CEO of Backwoods, there's no such thing as a "typical day at the office." In between emails and phone calls, she could be testing the climbing wall at a store grand opening, signing off on a new line of travel luggage or leading a trip up the highest mountain in the Alps.

Although relatively new to Austin, the first Backwoods store was opened by Mull's father more than more than 35 years ago. What began as one man's desire to find products for his outdoor pursuits has grown into much more.

"The concept in 1973 was the extension of my father's love of the outdoors and his inability to get quality clothes and equipment," explains Mull. "The 're-invention' of Backwoods in 2003 built on that concept with the vision of evolving the company into a retail experience that resonates with today's consumer."

Since purchasing the company in 2003, Mull's "re-invention" meant adding two retail locations (one at the Hill Country Galleria), an online store, an adventure travel division, an exclusive line of clothing and moving the company's headquarters to Austin.

"Austin provides many recreational opportunities, a vibrant, diverse community and a city that people love living in," says Mull. "It's also great for recruiting talented team members."

Mull puts a premium on staff experience, knowledge and expertise, even providing "use the gear days" as part of the company's benefits package. This paid "vacation" allows employees to learn new skills and try out Backwoods gear and clothing, giving them first-hand experience to draw upon during customer interactions.

"We expect a customer's experience to be outstanding, and for them to leave Backwoods with the knowledge and products necessary for them to have the adventure they choose — whether that be in their backyard or on the other side of the world," explains Mull.

Like many of our featured entrepreneurs, Mull seems to have merged passion and profession, each new endeavor an extension of her desire to inspire active, adventurous lives. However, even with Backwoods' growth, Mull is intimately involved in each new project. Her muddy hands mark the homepage of the company's blog and the artwork on the Backwoods Collection clothing tags is from a photo taken on Mull's trip to Machu Picchu last year.

"I've learned that it is critical to have a vision, communicate it, believe in it, and stay true to it; to develop a culture that empowers staff and rewards creativity," says Mull. "You can make a difference in people's lives in amazing ways if you are open and love what you do."