

# ARIZONA DRIVER

THE ENTHUSIAST'S GUIDE TO LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

VOLUME 2 NUMBER 4

JULY/AUGUST 2003

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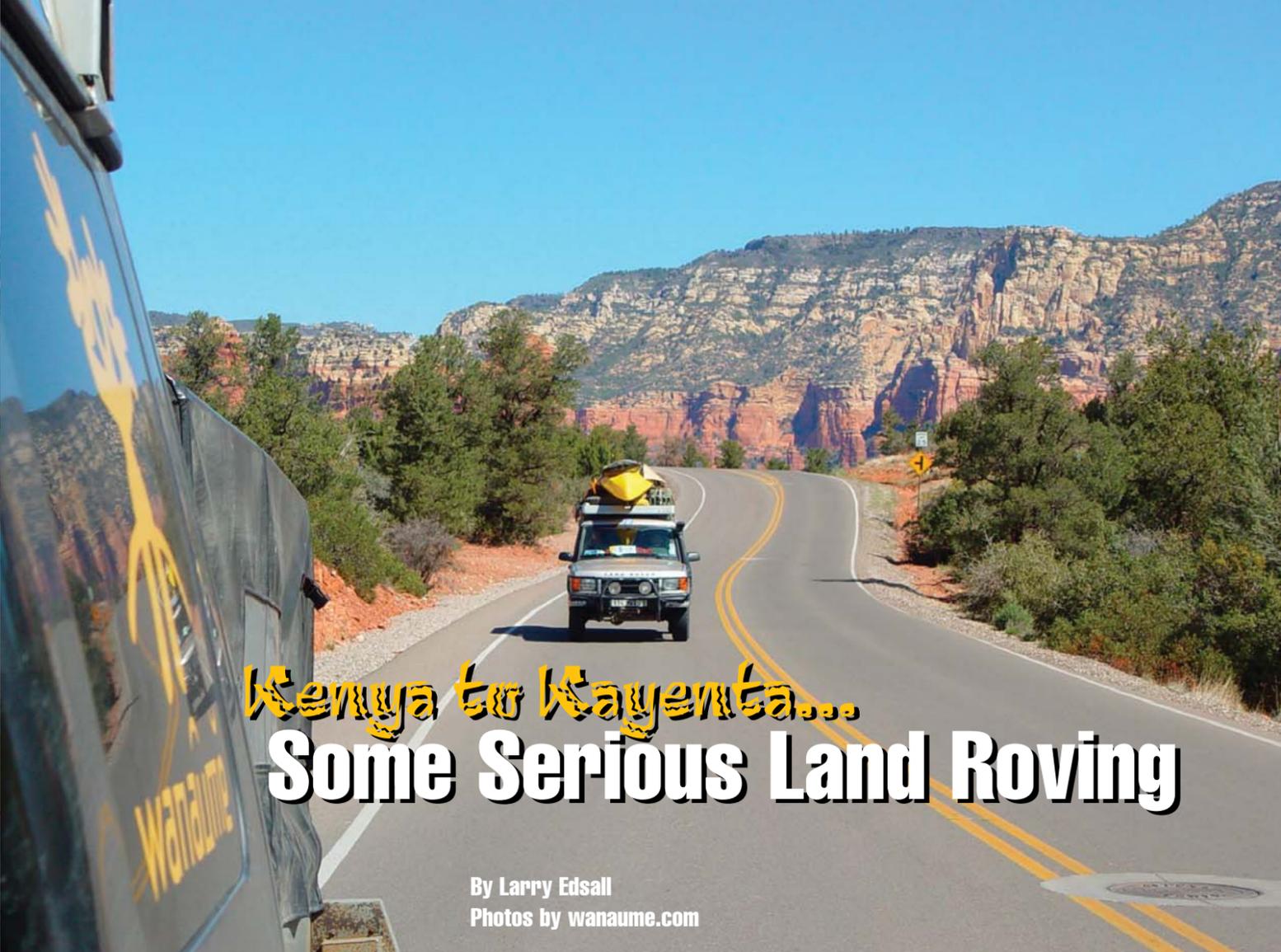


## Round-the-world Wanaume Expedition comes to Arizona Through Africa to Route 66 and Sedona via Land Rover Discovery

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# Kenya to Kayenta... Some Serious Land Roving

By Larry Edsall  
Photos by wanaume.com



After driving from France across Europe, through the Middle East, then down through Africa and up through South America and Mexico, what's left to see?

Well, Arizona and its Grand Canyon, obviously, and that's where 30-year-old Sebastien Ledoux and his friends were headed after spending a few days in Phoenix catching their breath.

After three years on the road, Ledoux and his crew were nearing the completion of at least the first section of one of the world's great driving adventures. Ledoux thought his round-the-world route would consume 15 months max. Instead, after three years he'd completed only two-thirds of his original route by the time he reached Arizona.

Didn't his family think he was crazy when he quit his job at age 25 to drive around the world? "They didn't think I was crazy," Ledoux said. "They knew I was crazy."

Ledoux had grown up fascinated by the world and its cultures and wanted to see them for himself. He convinced Land Rover of France to give him two diesel-powered Discoverys, which he named Kikaya, after an ancient Angolan kingdom, and Kikuyu, after the main tribe in Kenya. He called his expedition Wanaume,

the Swahili word for "people."

Perhaps his favorite story from the trip came from one Sunday morning when they were driving across the Masai Mara, a huge game preserve in Africa, and found people standing beside a church bus that was stuck in the mud.

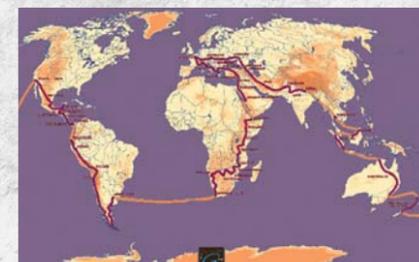
The people began cheering as Ledoux's vehicles approached. They were cheering because they were certain their prayers had been answered when they saw their own name printed across the top of the windshield of one of the vehicles; they were the Kikuyu people.

Ledoux's Land Rovers pulled the church bus out of the mud.

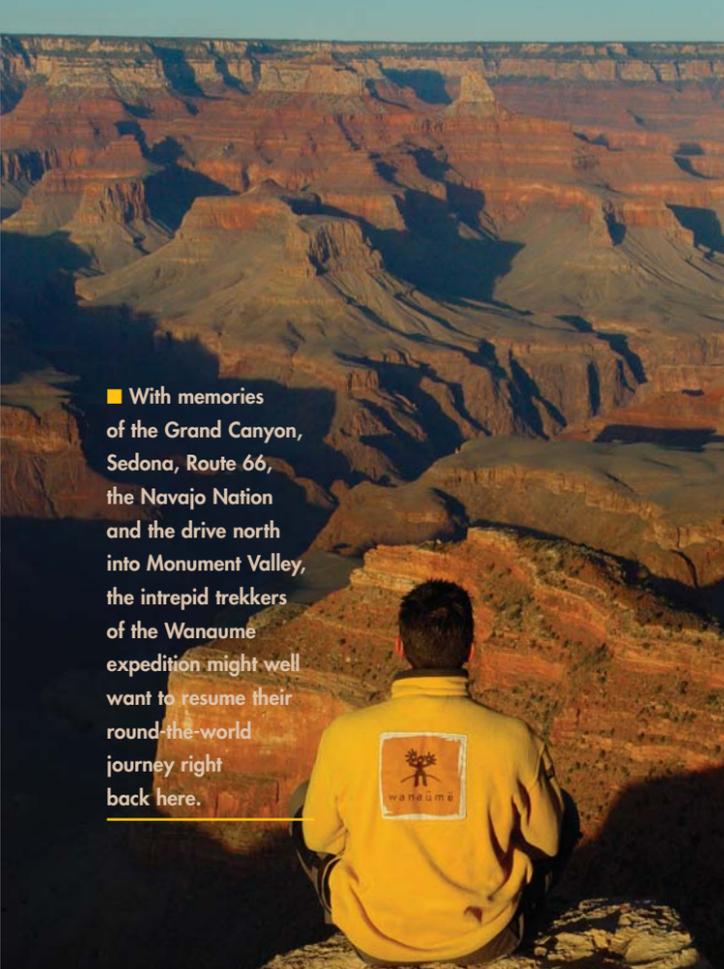
"We were on the TV news the next day," Ledoux said. "They called it a miracle."

Also miraculous was the way that people would come to Ledoux' aide. For example, local Land Rover distributors and dealers equipped his Discoverys with special equipment they'd developed for use in their local environments, including an amazing two-tiered roof-rack system in South Africa.

Ledoux arrived in the United States just as Americans were



KEEP RIGHT >>



■ With memories of the Grand Canyon, Sedona, Route 66, the Navajo Nation and the drive north into Monument Valley, the intrepid trekkers of the Wanaume expedition might well want to resume their round-the-world journey right back here.

>> WANAUME - cont'd

rebuking French fries because of France's position against the invasion of Iraq. But Ledoux preferred to deal with people, not politics. "We always have felt safe," Ledoux said. "We had no bad food. We were never attacked. We had no serious problem with the cars," although one vehicle had to be replaced after tumbling off a cliff in Argentina.

In Mexico, he'd met a teenager who'd had to quit school because his father was in jail. Convinced that the father was wrongly accused, Ledoux worked through the French ambassador to find an attorney to take on the father's case so the youngster could return to school, and Ledoux promised to help

underwrite the teenager's education.

"It costs me nothing, maybe 500 bucks," Ledoux said, but it could change the youngster's life, could help him, as Ledoux put it, "to have a future."

Ledoux' immediate future involved that visit to northern Arizona, the Grand Canyon, Kayenta and Monument Valley, then driving cross-country to New York, where the team appeared at the Land Rover stand at the New York Auto Show before heading back to France. Ledoux is going back to work long enough to underwrite his return to the road. Perhaps we'll see him in Arizona again. After all, his original route map (see previous page) ran from here to the coast, across the Pacific to Australia and New Zealand, then across southern Asia to France. ■



After working as a sports editor for daily newspapers in Michigan, **LARRY EDSALL** was on staff for 12 years at *AutoWeek* magazine, most of it as managing editor. He has driven more than half a million miles testing cars on four continents. He moved to Phoenix to help launch [www.izoom.com](http://www.izoom.com), an automotive website, and also helped to found PAPA, the Phoenix Automotive Press Association. His book on concept cars is scheduled for publication in Italy this fall.

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