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# *An* Amazing RIDE

PHIL KEOGHAN BIKES THROUGH  
BERMUDA FOR A CHERISHED CAUSE





**A**s the host of 20-and-counting seasons of CBS' hit adventure show *The Amazing Race*, Phil Keoghan estimates that he has stood on the finish mat in more than 100 countries. And even on his supposed "time off" from all that travel, the 45-year-old native New Zealander doesn't sit still at home in Los Angeles; instead, he literally just switches gears.

An avid cyclist since age 10, when he began pedaling a yellow Peugeot bike around the family home on Antigua, Keoghan teamed up last year with the pharmaceutical company Novartis to create a professional women's cycling team dedicated to fighting multiple sclerosis and raising awareness about the disease.

BY JIM COLUCCI  
PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER ROSS



# KEOGHAN'S RIDE TO BEAT M.S.

Seven years ago Phil Keoghan, an avid cyclist, got involved with the Bike MS fundraising ride in Ventura County, Calif. "I loved the idea of doing something for myself—and all the while also for someone else," he explains. Meeting people living bravely with multiple sclerosis, Keoghan felt immediately connected—and this was before he found out that his father's first cousin, a former rugby player and current fishing show host in their native New Zealand, had been diagnosed with the disease.

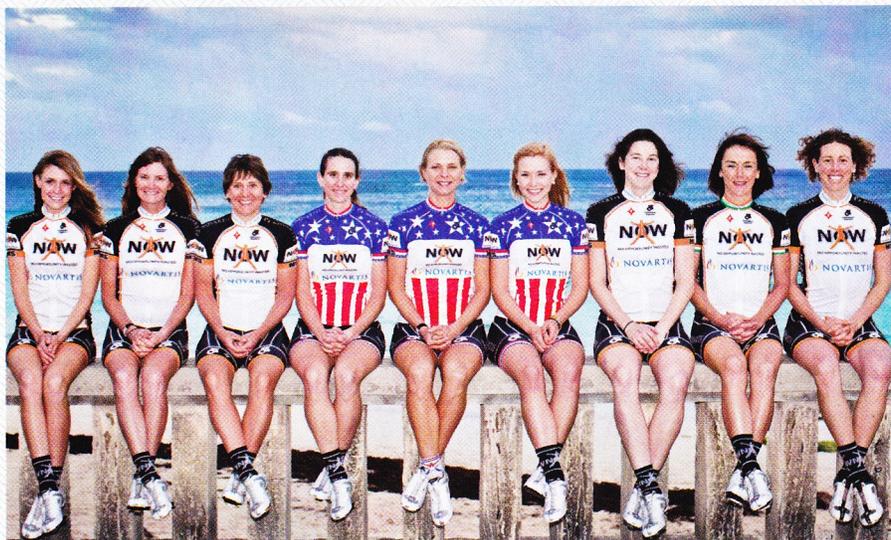
As Keoghan approached 40, he was inspired to combine his passions, and plotted a fundraising bike journey from Los Angeles to New York. Spending 41 days on two wheels, the indefatigable TV host pedaled an average 100 miles per day—and then in his off time met with fans and donors, appeared in local press and uploaded video blogs about each day's events.

Named partly for Keoghan's own lifestyle brand, No Opportunity Wasted, the NOW and Novartis for MS team will compete nationally this year as part of the U.S. professional women's cycling race circuit. The team's members—top pros from the United States, Canada and Ireland—were selected by sports director Kurt Stockton, himself a former U.S. champion.

"There is an endless amount of talent on this team," Keoghan explains. "There are people at the Olympic level who have decided not just to be professional athletes but to do something for other people—particularly, people with M.S."

## BERMUDA AND BIKING SHORTS

The Bike MS movement began about two decades ago, pairing the sport with fundraising to combat the disease. "It makes



NOW and Novartis for MS team members, from left, Ashley James, Christina Gokey-Smith, Anne Samplonius, Beth Newell, Robin Farina, Addy Albershardt, Devon Gorry, Olivia Dillon and Alison Powers.

Keoghan and his producing partner and wife, Louise, ultimately turned the video footage into a documentary, *The Ride*, which he screened in select cities in 2011 and which is currently available on iTunes and Amazon; proceeds from the film go to the National MS Society.

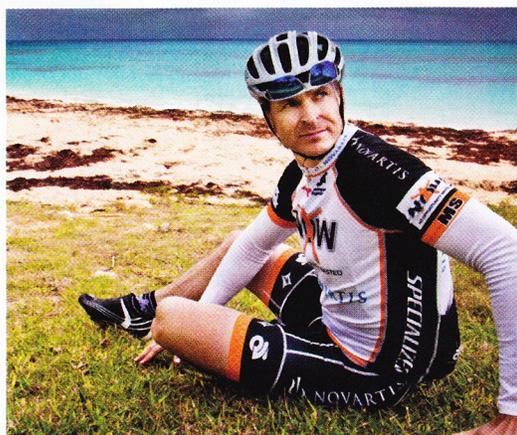
This athlete is also a savvy businessman; he has helped create a line of

energy bars, which powered him through rough days on the road, and designed a line of luggage. Most recently, he licensed the film to Showtime for a February airing, garnering a fee that put *The Ride's* fundraising total over the \$1 million mark. That's the same sum as the grand prize on *The Amazing Race*—and even more nobly earned.

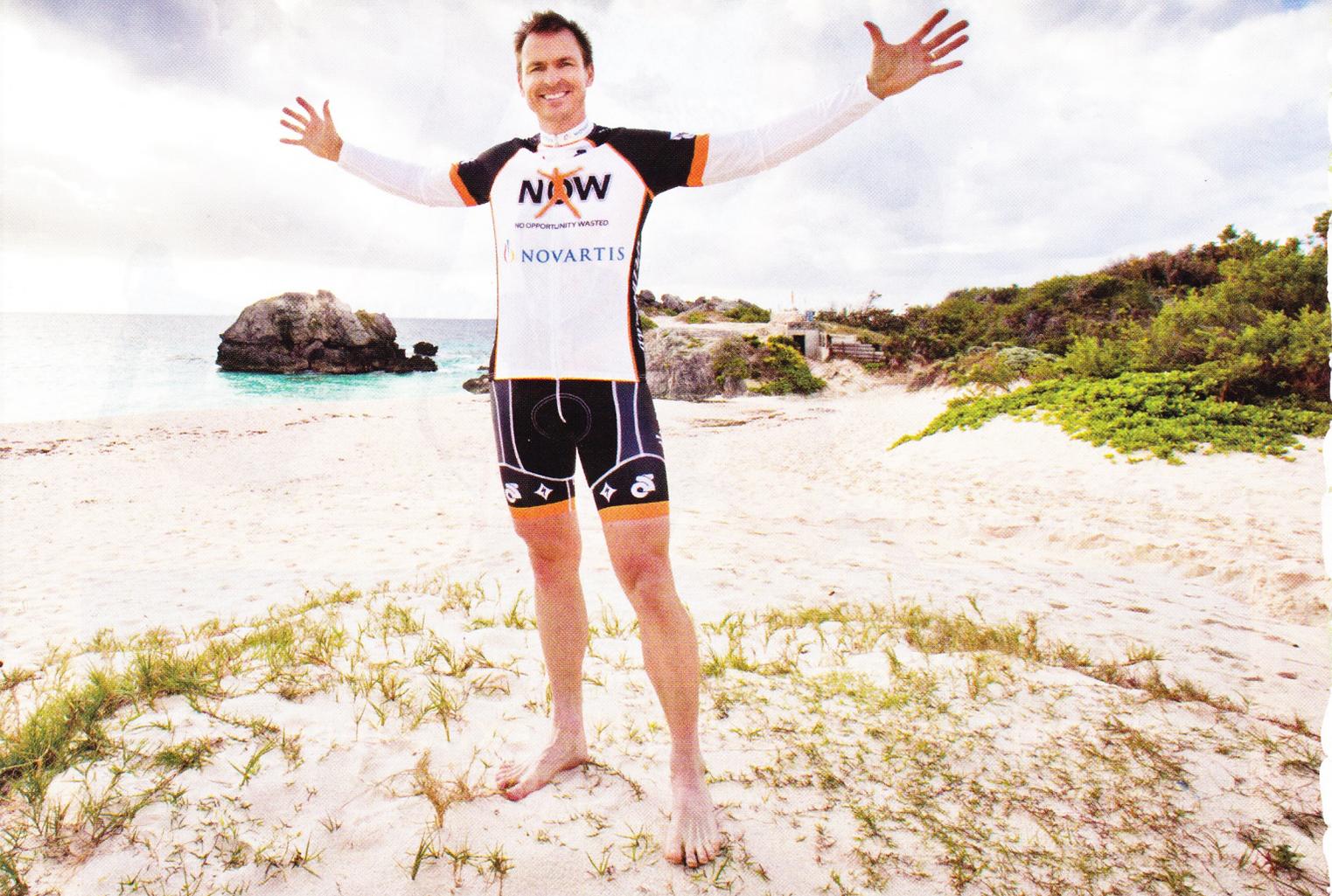
sense," Keoghan surmises. "M.S. takes away movement, and so the rides encourage people to 'move it' to beat the disease." Now, there are more than 100 annual Bike MS rides in the United States, with 110,000 riders taking to the pedals.

Using these established events as a template, Keoghan helped to found a ride close to home in Auckland, New Zealand. And earlier this year, he brought his tires full circle to Bermuda, where the NOW and Novartis for MS team will participate in about two dozen races during the season of about 70 days, and where Keoghan also hopes to establish an annual ride.

When a world traveler like Keoghan bestows a compliment upon a country, as he does when he refers to Bermuda as "idyllic," his millions of fans will undoubtedly listen—and that's why Keoghan also wants to work with the Atlantic nation's tourism board to create package deals for visitors to come to the country to ride.



“M.S. TAKES AWAY MOVEMENT, AND SO THE RIDES ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO ‘MOVE IT’ TO BEAT THE DISEASE.”

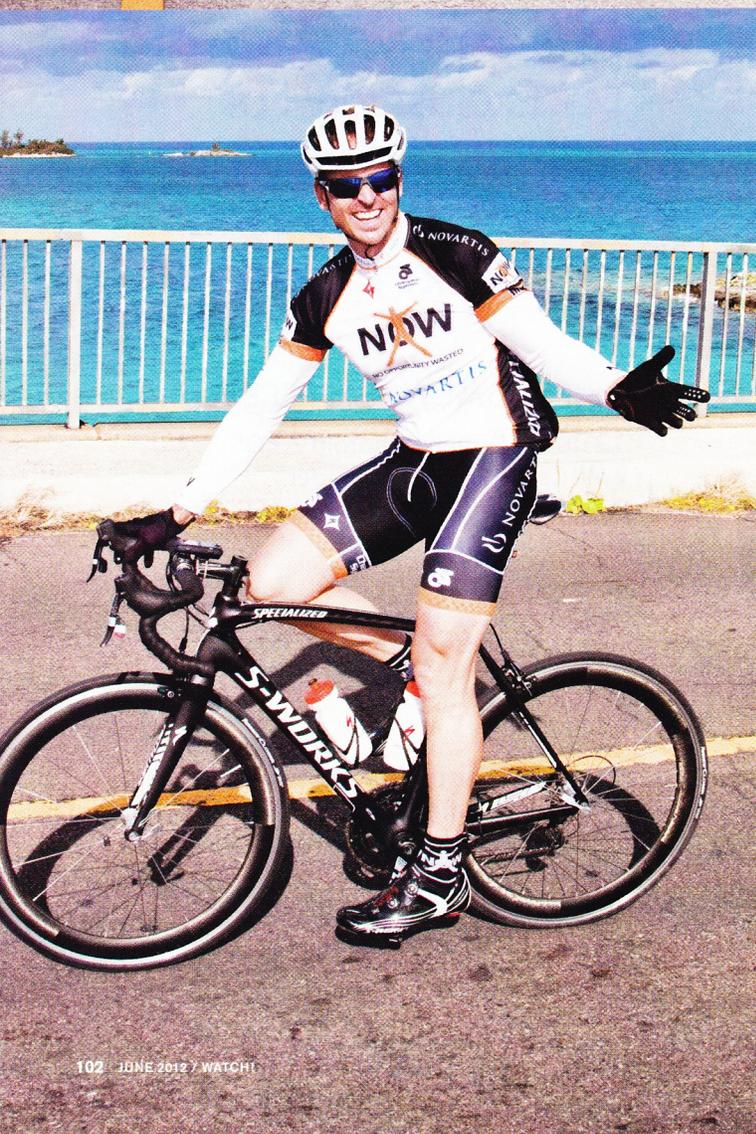


“There are lots of reasons biking makes sense here,” Keoghan says from the oceanside dining room of the Elbow Beach Hotel. “Bermuda has perfect roads and courteous drivers,” he says, recalling a moment when the pedaling posse passed a police car at about 30 miles per hour, and wondered if they would get pulled over; instead, they just received a friendly wave. And, he says, another hidden asset this long archipelago has to offer, as his team members’ sore legs would soon learn: “Bermuda has these rolling hills. You end up surprised at how much you get to climb.”

### THE BERMUDA EXPERIENCE

Back in 2009, Keoghan cycled across the continental U.S., and made a documentary about his journey. (See “Keoghan’s Ride to Beat M.S.,” page 98.) While in Bermuda he hosted a benefit screening of the film; the evening before, the Bermuda MS Society had thrown a gala dinner in Keoghan’s honor, attended by the nation’s premier, Paula Cox. In all, Keoghan’s visit raised more than \$24,000 for this local MS Society chapter—which, as its president Carolyn Armstrong stresses, is desperately needed to offset her country’s M.S. sufferers’ medical expenses,

“EACH OF THE WOMEN ON OUR TEAM HAS ... BEEN ON A TANDEM RIDE NOW WITH PEOPLE WITH M.S.”



which with the newest, most promising drug regimen can exceed \$60,000 per year.

Armstrong adds that she hopes that the weekend—which also included a visit from five couples who had won a sweepstakes sponsored by the makers of Keoghan's NOW energy bar, and was dubbed “The Ultimate Bermuda Experience”—will turn out to be the first of many annual events to show off her homeland paradise.

After all, as NOW and Novartis for MS team captain Robin Farina adds, there's no better way to get a complete perspective on Bermuda than from behind handlebars. “We've covered every inch of this island by bike,” says the 34-year-old 2011 USA Cycling National Road Champion. “We've been on three- to four-hour rides each day, and we've met the locals, seen the landmarks and experienced everything Bermuda has to offer.”

Already on the short list for the 2012 U.S. Olympic road cycling team, Farina hopes to benefit from the training the charitable Bike MS rides provide, as she tries out for the teams for other cycling events. Either way, though, she says her true reward is satisfaction. Having worked for years with the MS Society chapter in her native Charlotte, N.C., “one of my personal goals is to continue the fight for the cure,” she says.

“Each of the women on our team has, if not personal experience with the disease, been on a tandem ride now with people with M.S. It brings your understanding to a whole new level,” Farina says. “Those tandem rides really stress the idea that those living with M.S. do not need to be defined by the disease. You can do whatever you put your mind to.”

Keoghan, too, says this many times over the course of his visit—maybe his mantra comes from observing the teams on *The Amazing Race*: “With hard work and support, you can accomplish anything.”