

MILLENNIUM SUPPLEMENT: EXPLORATION

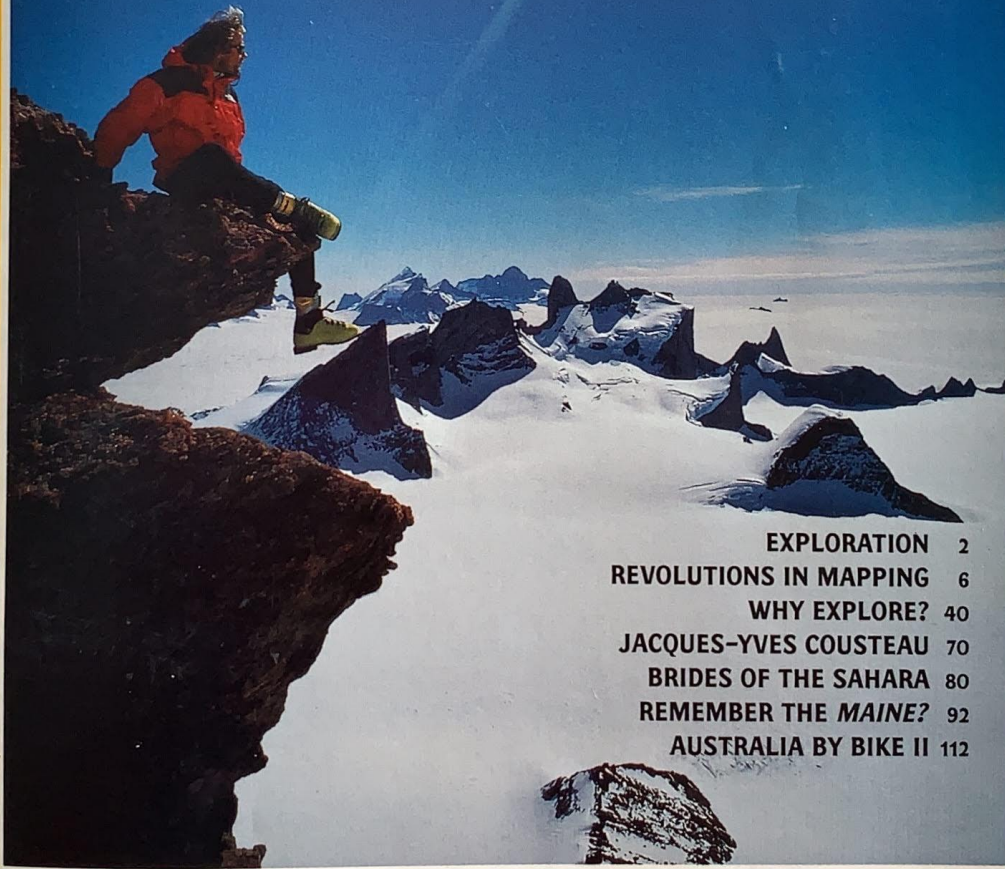
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SEE "SEA MONSTERS: SEARCH FOR THE GIANT SQUID," FEBRUARY 25, ON NBC



Plotting a course across his Illinois farm, Doug Harford demonstrates his use of the Global Positioning System—a satellite network that gives precise geographic coordinates. Detailed maps can target areas of low yield (right, red and yellow) for applications of costly chemicals.

(Continued from page 17) connecting all parts of the world. By some accounts their liberating concept emboldened Columbus, who likely used only a single chart and the advice of a cosmographer to plot his course, to undertake his *Enterprise of the Indies*.

Ultimately, though, Columbus would be ill-served by mapmakers. On a 1507 map Martin Waldseemüller wrote across the southern continent of the New World, in the region of Brazil, the word “America,” after another explorer, Amerigo Vespucci. The name stuck; such is the power of maps.

IN THE VATICAN MUSEUMS I join a throng of tourists headed for the Sistine Chapel to have their breath taken away by Michelangelo. The way leads us through the Gallery of Maps, an ornate corridor longer than a football field. Commissioned by Pope Gregory XIII, Egnazio Danti, a cosmographer and the papal architect, designed the cycle of Italian wall maps beginning in 1580, while also directing a revision of the calendar in the Vatican’s Tower of the Winds. Much of the actual work was done by mannerist painters, working mainly from existing maps and drawings. To a remarkable degree the shapes represent reality.

“These maps are not there to get you to the autostrada,” says Arnold Nesselrath, the museums’ director of Byzantine, medieval, and modern