

100 Emotions in 100 km - My 2014 Vibram Hong Kong 100 Adventure

My first solo 100 km. What to expect ?

No trail walker team mates to keep pace and motivation in check.

Quizzing friends, on the course, nutrition, poles - where to collect ?

Feeling nervous

My biggest personal challenge yet.

Early rise and race down to the taxi

Friends huddled in the back.

Something forgotten ? Yes ! No arm warmers !

Feeling flustered.

Race back to the flat.

Dawn breaks and Hong Kong awakes

Crisp and bright in the morning light

A snake of taxis as we near Pak Tam Chung

Delivering eager runners one by one

A sea of colours assembles for the start.

All ages, all sizes all nations taking part

Camaraderie and good cheer

The start of our adventure is near

Last minute photos, waves. Good luck !

Feeling excited

Bang !

We're off !

Fast and furious

Try not to trip !

Runners unleashed

Passing on all sides at a clip

The sea of runners, squeezed to a trickle, as we hit the first stairs;

Watching feet and gasping for air

Beautiful views out to Sai Kung, but

only a few km done

Feeling anxious.

Try to keep calm !

The trail twists and turns,

And the runners thin.

We rejoin the road

The East dam glistens

In the morning sun.

The wind is strong and spirits high

Runners relaxed, taking photos, kilometers speeding by

Nora and Patrick ahead... and hard to catch

Relieved when I do

Finally I relax.



East Dam reached,
Encouragement from Nic,
Then we climb.
Stunning views out to sea
We contour the mountain, staying high.

Meeting friends - we chat as we run
Sandy beaches, follow Ham Tin and Check Point 1.
Still feeling good,
21 km done.

The steady pace train reaches Check Point 2.
A hive of activity here, both runners and support crew
Banana and water topped up
Got to keep going
Don't stop !



Great support as we pass through Check Point 3
Rocky and bumpy trail follows
Tumble territory for me !
Sure enough, I loose concentration, as with Nora I chat
Bang !
I fall,
Luckily just a scratch.

The pace quickens on the shady, concrete path
Struggling now.
Can I keep up ?
Back into the sun
Water running low.
How far is Check point 4 ?
Does anyone know ?



Such a boost to see Hannes & the HKTR
support.
Swiss potatoes and encouragement.
Time is short
Nora and Patrick I don't see.
Already on the trail ?
Wait for me.

A New Zealand girl shoots past
"How many women in front?" She asks

We cross a stream and on the opposite bank
Find a Spanish girl stopped, doubled with
cramps.
Salt tablets despatched
We are on our way
I continue searching for Nora & Patrick
Albeit in vain.

The sun beating down
Gives a different perspective to the trail
Varied and interesting
but longer than I recalled !

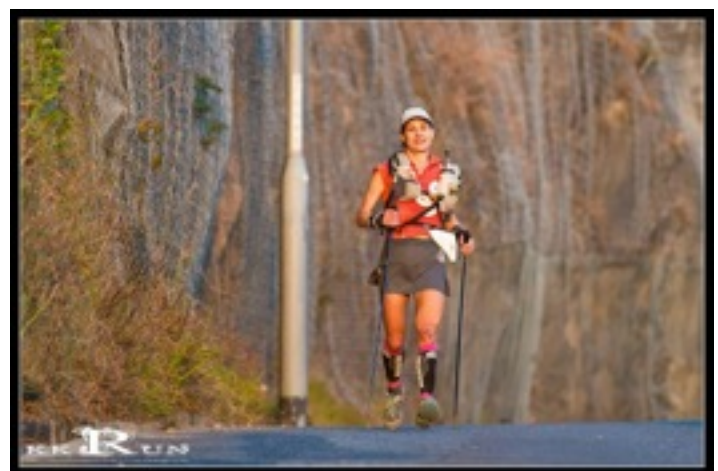
Welcome relief from the shade of the trees
Here I find Vince, Check point 5
And the ever supportive HKTR team !

Alice brandishing Hannes' cow bell
I can't help but grin.
Refuelled and energised
Nic sees me across the road.
52 km done



Poles in hand,
I try to get a rhythm on the climb.
Spanish girl now ahead, recovered and
looking fine.
The longest section between
checkpoints
I knew it would be tough.
But rewarding with fantastic views from
the ridge high above.

As the sun begins to set
Down hill and closer to Sha Tin Pass I get
Cooler now and all alone.
Enjoying the sense of freedom, serenity
and calm.



Darkness closes in
The thick, shady forest steals the remaining light.
I hold off getting my head torch.
Hoping Beacon Hill and Check Point 6 will soon be soon in sight.

Steeper and longer than I remembered
I continue to climb
Through the blanket of darkness
Twinkling fairy lights - blue and red- eventually shine.

"Runner coming, runner coming"
Enthusiastic voices chime.
"Chocolate", Tea? What can we get you ?
Feeling fine ?

These kids were wonderful hosts.
Nothing too much trouble
And in positive energy,
They gave the most.

Feeling quite ravenous
I spied a current bun
This was to be my staple
For the rest of the run.

Night had now fallen
Leaving Check Point 6 was hard
Juggling poles and food
Whilst trying to negotiate
Impossibly steep and uneven stairs.

Constantly passed
I was hopelessly slow
And my morale became low
But I knew I had to focus and find a pace
That would keep me going for the rest of the race.

I arrive at Shing Mun
Although didn't realise it at the time
With the tiredness, confusion had overcome
my mind
Where were all the monkeys ?
I could only spot a few
Perhaps I was somewhere else entirely ?
Still best not eat
For fear of being attacked on cue !

The clicking of my poles was soothing as I
climbed
And I began to observe the runners all around
Head torches off, they stole through the night



Great idea I thought
And follow suit.

Crest of the hill reached
The novelty of descending in darkness feels good.
A small section of trail and we arrive at the reservoir BBQ site
Further on than I thought..!

Yet my mind was still a fog
Which way now ? No checkpoint in sight
But that was to come... Just by the bridge
With offerings of hot Miso soup and current buns
My trail running cravings
Satisfied all in one !

83 km done.
I leave Check Point 8.
The New Zealand girl along side tries to
make conversation,
But in vain
I'm focussed on current bun refuelling
For the Needle Hill climb ahead.

The atmosphere is magical
As I ascend all alone.
Clear view of Tai Mo Shan to the left
Twinkling flash lights in the sky high above
From runners in a different zone.



I reach the summit, the trig point in sight
A cry of relief !
Wonderful descent now
But with mixed emotion on this night

I pass my good friend Brendan
Struck with injury and hobbling at this point.
Huge respect for this amazing runner
Who to the end would fight !

Flicking through head torch settings
I amuse myself, climbing Grassy Hill
Alone in the darkness
Everything still

So happy to reach the grassy descent into Lead Mine Pass
I can smell the finish now
Just Tai Mo Shan
That climb, the last !

As I leave Check Point 9
(more current buns in hand)
I realise I could finish and within a good time if I tried

The next section would be testing
I'm always clumsy on those rocks
Just focus on staying upright, not twisting an ankle or getting lost !

As I navigate the technical trail just before the road.
Another runner appears right behind
I try to let him pass
But he won't !

We reach the road
I'm elated - knowing the technical trail is now done
The runner turns out to be French
So we chat as we climb up Tai Mo Shan

Finally at the top and the last descent.....
Legs protesting at first,
Knees feeling the impact of every step...
Poles not helping, so I fumble to tuck them away
I can smell the finish and will do my all to get there whichever way.

A beautifully clear night
Lights twinkle in the valley far below
Breathing heavily
Try to relax and let yourself go !

Looking for markers
How far now ?
There is the barrier in the road
But where exactly is the finish ?
Could I remember ? Did I know ?

Tiredness playing tricks with my mind.
Have I missed a marker ?
Do we go off road?
Is there more trail ?

At last, bright lights through the trees.
Could it be there ?
I listen for the sounds....
Yes, yes...The buzz of the finish
Volunteers cheering, waving wildly in the air.

What's this ? A ramp ! Nearly trip up...
The finishing line
Bright lights
My friends all lined up.

Elation
I have arrived !
My first solo ultra
In under 15 hours.

