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## ⊕ THE PURIST

In 1972, 8-year-old Rok Sribar launched a homemade wooden raft onto the Savinja River with his younger brother, Luka, 7, near their home in the small Slovenian village of Šempeter. They didn't have paddles. A few years later they traded in their raft for a canoe. Then one of their friends got a used kayak from Germany—a 4-meter fiberglass whitewater slalom boat. They made a mold from it and built kayaks of their own. By the time Rok was 17, he and Luka were regularly running the decidedly committing Class V Soca River Canyon. And that was just the beginning.

In 1989, Sribar came to the United States to attend Cornell University. He received his Ph.D. in Theoretical and Applied Mechanics (read: physics) and spent the next five years paddling on the Eastern Seaboard and Quebec. He would road-trip on weekends to the Ottawa, Black, Moose, Youghiogheny, and Green River Narrows while writing his doctoral thesis, which eventually landed him a job doing R&D at General Electric. He authored six patents in about a year and a half.

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Sribar married his wife, Sara, in 1995. Not long after, he and his brother decided to travel across the country, paddling the best, and hardest, whitewater they could find. On May 28, 1996, Luka perished after a swim on the Class V-plus Golden Gate section of California's South Fork American.

“Anyone who has ever paddled C-2 knows what it means to have a brother that shares a boat with you,” Sribar says. “I was devastated, but with the help of good friends, my dear wife, and with kayaking, I eventually recovered.”

Now a Silicon Valley executive, Sribar still makes time to paddle 180 days a year, huck 70-plus foot waterfalls in South America, and his annual descent of the Middle Fork Kings, his favorite multi-day—all while teaching his two daughters, Lea, 6, and Ria, 10, how to kayak. He's hoping to take Ria down the Grand Canyon this spring.

“Kayaking is the love of my life,” he says. “You make the time for the things you care about. And I plan on kayaking until I die.”

— *Dave Costello*